

# HOSTLER BURROWS

## San Francisco Chronicle

### January art fair frenzy heats up SF social calendars

Tony Bravo | January 16, 2019 | Updated: January 17, 2019, 4:23 pm



Art handlers, Alyssa Menegat and Miles Peterson, installs Frida Fjellman's "Crystal Atmosphere" in the Hostler Burrows Gallery booth during set up for the FOG Art + Design fair at Fort Mason in San Francisco.  
Photo: Amy Osborne, Special to The Chronicle

Each year, certain weeks on San Francisco's busy cultural calendar make it especially tough to get a hotel room: Pride festivities in June, Dreamforce in October. But last year, for the first time, the third week of January also had visitors scrambling for accommodations, city officials say. The reason: a pair of increasingly prominent art fairs.

"It's become quite a full week," said Tom DeCaigny, San Francisco's director of cultural affairs. On overlapping dates, the two relatively new events — the **Fog Design + Art fair and Untitled, Art** — present local and international fine art and design in large-scale settings for as little as \$25 for general admission.

"Last year, hearing people freak out (about hotels), it made me see a critical mass happening," DeCaigny said. "January has grown to be a very important arts month for us."

Likewise, Manuela Mozo, the executive director of Untitled, says the attendance and

exhibitor interest was so great during last year's fair — an estimated 11,000 visitors in the fair's four days — that the event hired a full-time strategic development director to oversee relations between the fair and the Bay Area arts community. It also had to move to a larger venue, Pier 35, this year from its prior location, the Palace of Fine Arts.

“We were looking to move in 2020, but demand was such we had to make the move sooner,” Mozo said.



Gallerists and art handlers set up for the FOG Art + Design fair in the Levy Gorvy Gallery booth at Fort Mason on Jan. 15, 2019 in San Francisco.

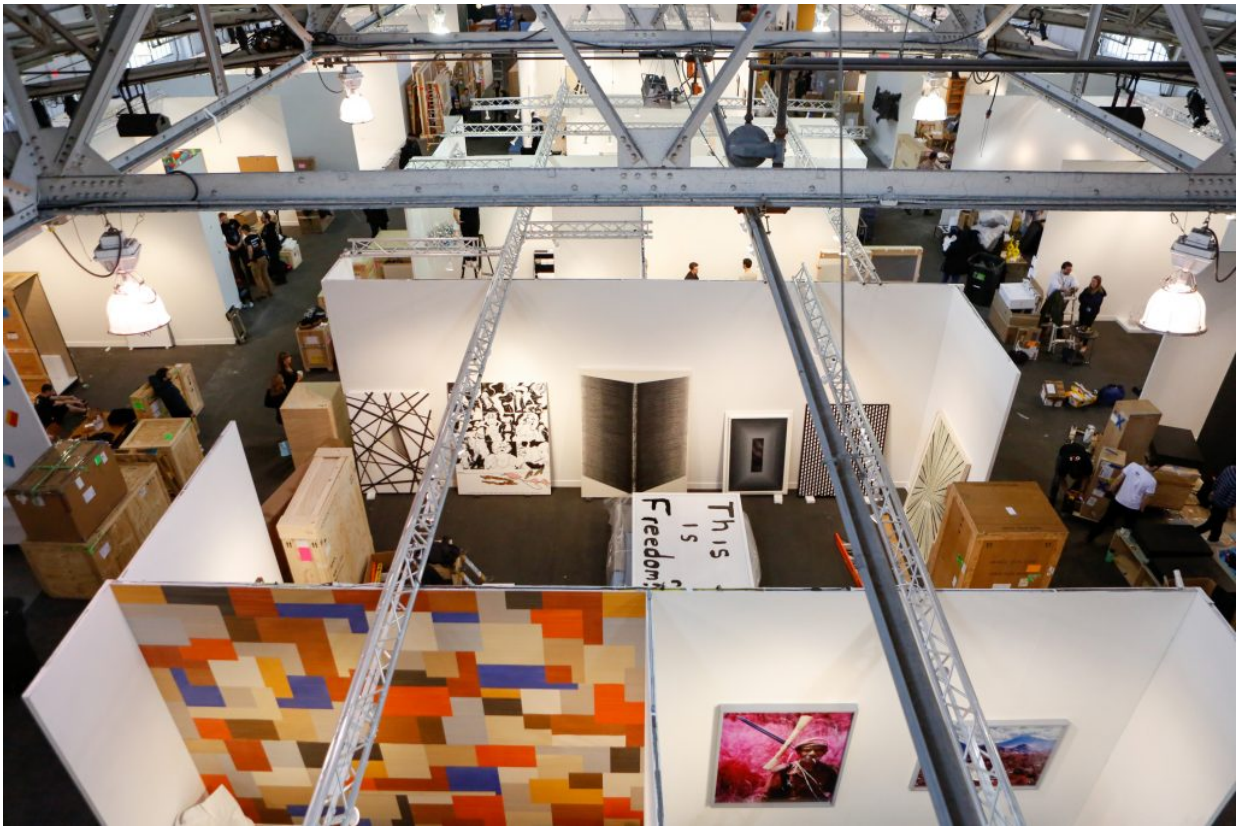
Photo: Amy Osborne, Special to The Chronicle



David DeBoer installs art for the Edward Cella Gallery booth during set up of the FOG Art + Design fair at Fort Mason on Jan. 15, 2019 in San Francisco.  
Photo: Amy Osborne, Special to The Chronicle

The San Francisco social season used to resume after the holidays with the San Francisco Ballet gala near the end of January. But now, the addition of the unofficial San Francisco art week has shifted things back to the third week of January. The Fog and Untitled fairs, known as much for the parties and programming surrounding them as the art and design, appeal to serious art fans and collectors, as well as the flock of social butterflies who never miss a VIP occasion in San Francisco. Fog's opening-night gala on Wednesday, Jan. 16, benefiting the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art — a mandatory event for many in the city's social philanthropy scene — was sold out (tickets were \$175 to \$10,000). Untitled, Art, now in its third year in San Francisco, will have its opening-night gala Thursday at Pier 35 and a party Saturday night at gallery space in Minnesota Street Project in Dogpatch.

But beyond the splashy opening nights, a confluence of lectures, gallery events, luncheons and other happenings has helped the fairs build momentum for several years. Looking at the packed schedule and inboxes full of invitations, it already feels like the week is reaching a pinnacle in 2019 as both the Fog Design+Art fair and Untitled, Art make the city a destination for the international art world and its adjacent glitterati.



Gallerists and art handlers set up for the FOG Art + Design fair in the Lavy Gorvy Gallery booth at Fort Mason on Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2019 in San Francisco.

Photo: Amy Osborne, Special to The Chronicle

Even Stanlee Gatti, one of the founders of Fog and a longtime player in the city's art and philanthropy scenes, was a bit surprised. "It always seemed like a possibility there would be international attention. We knew the evolution (of the fair) would take time, but it's happened pretty quickly."

The Fog Design + Art fair has attracted some of the biggest names in the art and design worlds to Fort Mason since its founding in 2013 by event designer Gatti and steering committee members Douglas Durkin, Susan Swig, Roth Martin, Katie Schwab Paige and Allison Speer.

The fair has also become known for the highly inventive, social-media-friendly installations. Gatti will not be presenting one of his signature 21 Pop installations at Fog's entrance this year in order to accommodate more exhibitors.

"Demand was just too great," Gatti said. "Galleries now from around the world feel like they need to be at the fair to be a player in the (art market) game here."

As with other art weeks, fashion weeks, music festivals and lifestyle conferences, a supporting system of cocktail parties, show openings, public programming and private VIP experiences orbits the fairs like a scattering of satellites.



(L to R) Manola Samaniego directs Bree Zucker and Jonathan Riesco where to move Sarah Lucas' piece at the Kurimanzutto Gallery booth during setup of the FOG Art + Design fair at Fort Mason on Jan. 15, 2019 in San Francisco.

Photo: Amy Osborne, Special to The Chronicle

Designer Ken Fulk said that in many ways, the week is “becoming our Art Basel,” referring to the popular Miami Beach week of art fairs and events in December. “It’s not at that scale, which is a good thing,” he adds. “Art Basel is such a happening, but I think on a smaller, more serious level, Fog is making a name for the city.”

In previous years, just a few events anchored the week, like publisher Nion McEvoy and gallerist Claudia Altman Siegel’s kickoff party and the Fraenkel Gallery’s invitation-only bowling night (co-hosted with New York’s David Zwirner Gallery this year), but now it’s “an entire week that people come to San Francisco to experience,” Fulk said.



Gallery owner Jessica Silverman (right) and Den Sap (left) direct art handlers, Jarrett Davidson and Saif Azzuz with the installation of Andrea Bowers' "It's Ok to be Angry" in the Jessica Silverman Gallery booth during the set up for the FOG Art + Design fair at Fort Mason on Jan. 15, 2019 in San Francisco.

Photo: Amy Osborne, Special to The Chronicle

Untitled sought out San Francisco as a fair location (it's also presented in Miami Beach during Art Basel) because "it seemed like it offered the best potential for development," Mozo said. "It's a city deeply rooted in arts and culture, and there's great collector potential in the bay and West Coast in general, with its proximity to Asia," Also key, said Mozo, is that the region wasn't already oversaturated with art fairs. Scheduling at almost the same time as Fog made sense, said Mozo: "There's only so many times (for collectors and vendors) to visit cities. To get the most momentum, you'd want to align with other institutions, museums and other activities in the city."

The strategy appears to be working. Bellatrix Hubert, a senior partner at David Zwirner Gallery, which has presented at Fog since 2012, said that in its early days, the fair was a hidden gem. "Now the secret is out," said Hubert. "Every year the quality of the art has been getting better and better."

For gallerist Andrew McClintock, the week offered synergy too good to pass up when it came time to plan the opening of his 10th anniversary exhibition at his gallery, Ever Gold Projects in the Minnesota Street Project. The exhibition itself opened Saturday, before the start of art week. The gallery is also hosting a Shabbat dinner with Innovation Alley founder Adam Swig followed by a party with DJ Eug (Eugene Whang) at Chinatown bar EZ5 to close out the week. "The fairs are beneficial to the whole ecosystem," McClintock said.

**Fog Design + Art:** 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, Jan. 17-19; 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 20. \$25. Fort Mason Festival Pavilion, 2 Marina Blvd., S.F. 415-745-3315. [www.fogfair.com](http://www.fogfair.com)

**Untitled Art, San Francisco:** Noon-8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 18; noon-6 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, Jan. 19-20. \$25-\$35; free for children age 12 and younger. Pier 35, 1454 The Embarcadero, S.F. 646-405-6942. [www.untitledartfairs.com/san-francisco](http://www.untitledartfairs.com/san-francisco)  
Follow the art week on social media: Style and culture reporter Tony Bravo, art critic Charles Desmarais and society columnist Catherine Bigelow will be live reporting the latest from the fairs and social scene. Follow on Instagram at [@tonybravosf](https://www.instagram.com/tonybravosf) [@artguypix](https://www.instagram.com/artguypix) and [@missbigelow](https://www.instagram.com/missbigelow)