

KQED

How to Have an Artful(I) Bay Bound Summer

by Sarah Hotchkiss

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For some of us, summer isn't what it used to be. There's no vacation, no fireflies, no rope swings, no lazy days by the lake/pool/beach. It's more of the same nine to five with less sweaters. But just because summer break is a thing of the past doesn't mean we have to abandon the idea of expanding our horizons with new visual experiences.

With plenty of experimental formats, long-awaited shows, artist-led adventures, and some plain old off-the-wall wacky projects coming up in the summer months, this June, July, and August will make you glad you're not off on some glamorous vacation. Forget the Grand Canyon: here's eight art-filled reasons not to leave the Bay Area.



Off Shore

May 28 – July 3

Southern Exposure (3030 20th Street, San Francisco and various off-site locations)

This ambitious large-scale project features new installations, events, lectures, walks, and a celebration of all things maritime. Artists being exhibited include Paul Cesewaski, Constance Hockaday, Marie Lorenz, Chris Sollars and A People's Archive of Sinking and Melting. Even if I didn't work at SoEx, I'd line up to explore the forgotten, largely ignored, watery edges of San Francisco with this talented group of artists. As cities grows ever more crowded, the water becomes another frontier, a shelter, and an encroaching threat.

Cybele Lyle

May 30 – July 4

Et al. Gallery (620 Kearny Street, San Francisco)

Fresh from two simultaneous public installations in extremely tricky locations (one in the SFAC's window gallery, the other in YBCA's front door gallery), Lyle's first solo show at Et al. promises to continue her compelling investigation into landscape and space. Melding video, photography, and collage, Lyle's recent works are multi-dimensional and exquisitely suited to their environments. I can't wait to see what she does in the strange underground lair beneath Kearny Street's Union Cleaners.

San Francisco Time Travel Project

June 3 – November 4

California Historical Society (678 Mission Street)

Once a month from June to November, Odd Salon (a series of curated cocktail-hour lectures) presents a talk at the California Historical Society illustrated by objects and ephemera from the CHS archives. Covering different eras of San Francisco history and focusing on the "weird and wonderful," the series touches on shipwrecks, skyscrapers, speakeasies, and every tantalizing bit of local past in between. Grab a season pass for all six events and get a rare peek at CHS holdings in this intimate and intriguing gathering.

Sights and Sounds of Stage and Screen: David Bayus & Ben Bigelow

S O U T H E R N E X P O S U R E

June 6 – July 5

City Limits Gallery (300 Jefferson St, Oakland)

If the alliterative title isn't enough, this pairing of two artists treading that oh-so-current line between art and technology proves those two words can actually get along. And that the intersection between them can lead to truly worthwhile art viewing. If you still haven't been to City Limits, now's the time.

Forrest Bess: Seeing Things Invisible

June 11 – September 14

Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (2626 Bancroft Way, Berkeley)

Bess, a self-described visionary painter, has enjoyed periodic moments of posthumous celebrity, most recently during the 2012 Whitney Biennial thanks to artist Robert Gober. Now, an exhibition curated by Clare Elliott of the Menil Collection finally makes its way to BAM, showcasing his remarkable paintings and the fickle favor of the art world.

Joe Brubaker And The Exquisite Gardeners: A Visible Transparency Project

June 28 – September 21

Museum of Craft and Design (2569 Third Street, San Francisco)

Longtime educator and artist Joe Brubaker brings "The Exquisite Gardeners" to MCAD, creating a collaborative installation of scrappy and reclaimed materials in the midst of his own sculptural retrospective. Visitors can stop by during the Gardeners' week-long installation period, giving a glimpse into an improvised (and possibly inspirational) creative process.

Project Mah Jongg

July 13 – October 28

Contemporary Jewish Museum (736 Mission Street, San Francisco)

Imported from China, the game of mah jongg entered American consciousness in the 1920s and became inextricably linked to Jewish ladies' social gatherings. This traveling exhibit showcases mah jongg artifacts (scorecards, aprons, packages, and tiles) along with the results of the game's popularity (snazzy mah jongg-inspired fashion), exploring deep connections between this communal game-playing in both Chinese and Jewish cultures. Beef up your skills, grab a National Mah Jongg League playing card, and while away the evening hours with some friends.

Bay Area Now 7

July 18 – September 28

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (701 Mission Street, San Francisco)

For their seventh triennial of Bay Area art, YBCA tries a new, decentralized approach to curating, inviting fifteen local visual arts organizations to stage their own projects within the museum's space. Providing a concentrated platform for some lesser-seen Bay Area arts activity, YBCA shifts focus from a select few artists to a group of venues, projects, and arts initiatives. A full range of events, readings, and screenings provide even more opportunities to learn about everyone from [2nd floor projects] to Important Projects to the San Quentin Prison Project and the artists they work diligently to promote.