



Fraenkel Gallery

A self-destructing sculpture by Gelitin, an art collective from Vienna, towers over FraenkelLab guest curator John Waters.

Dynamic visual year

Headline-making SFMOMA opening isn't only game in town

By Charles Desmarais

The coming year is set to be a whirlwind of major museum events in the visual arts, starting this month with the public openings of 500 Capp St., the environmental work created over three decades by artist David Ireland (Jan. 15), new San Francisco Arts Commission galleries on the ground floor of the War Memorial Veterans Building (Jan. 22), and, the January topper, an extraordinary new building for the Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archives (Jan. 31).

In May we — and all the world — look forward to the center-ring event of the year: the unveiling of the 460,000-square-foot San Francisco

Visual arts continues on E2

Look ahead

What to expect from arts and entertainment in 2016.

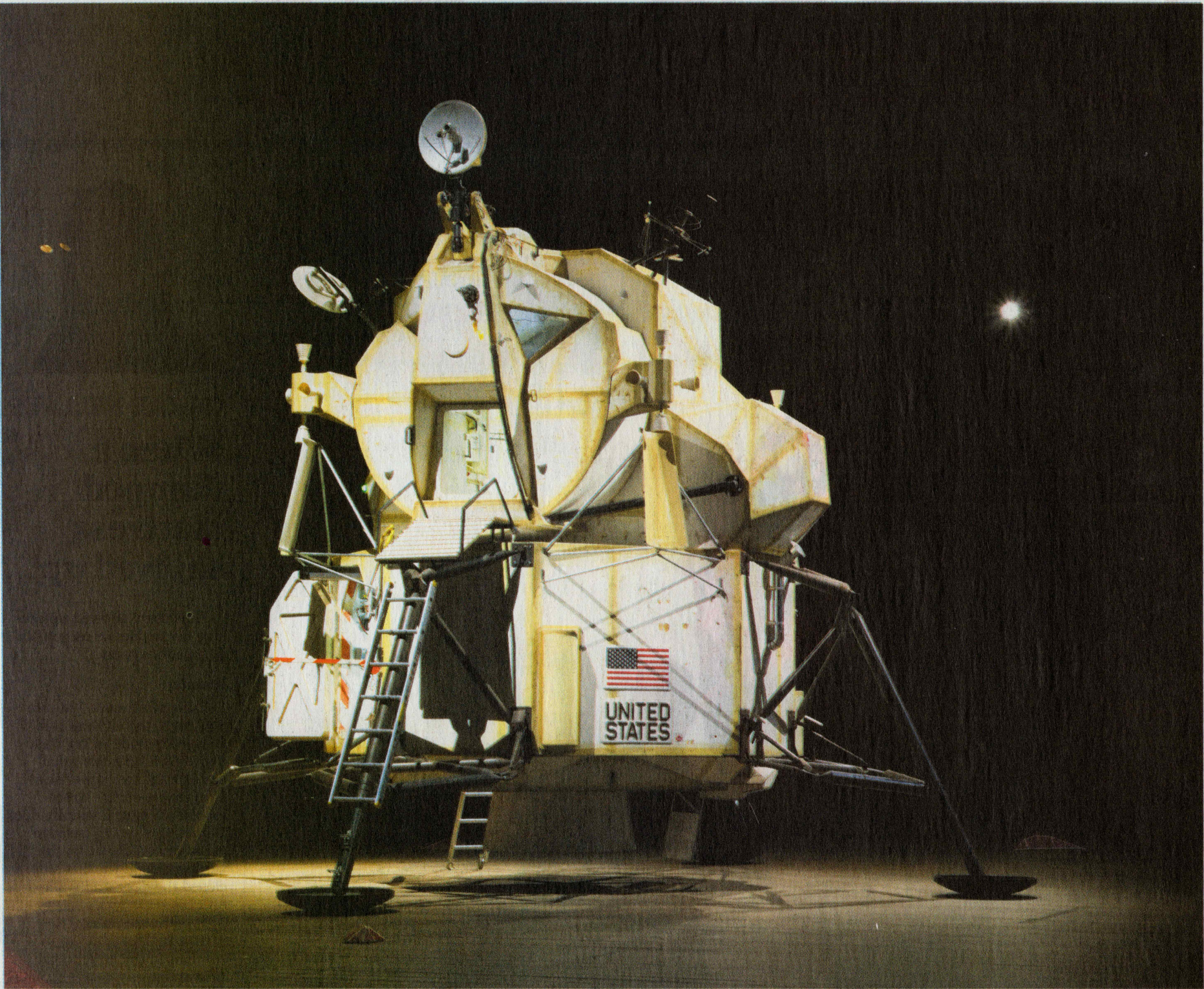
Friday: Movies and classical music

» **Saturday:** Visual arts

Monday: Theater

Tuesday: Dance

Wednesday: Pop music



Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

"Landing Excursion Module" is by Tom Sachs from a past installation. His "Mission to Europa: Tea Ceremony," is scheduled at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

Eye-catching year in visual arts

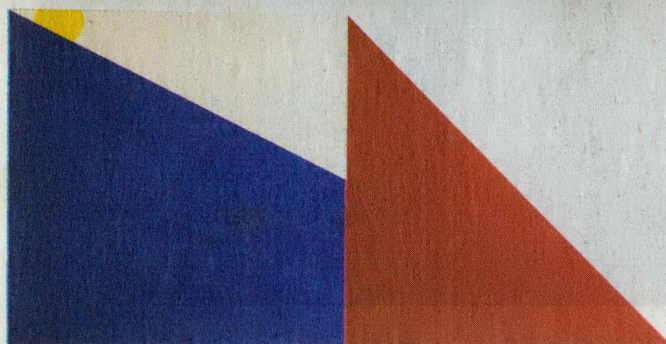
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Museum of Modern Art (May 14). And, finally, in the fall, UC Davis presents its new Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art.

Lest we be dazzled by all the shiny new facilities, though, let's reflect on the rich offerings of actual art we will see in 2016 in the Bay Area. Here, chronologically, are a dozen (or so) exhibitions that I'm looking forward to:

Brian Gross Fine Art's presentation of "**Leo Valledor: Color Space**" (Jan. 9-March 6) promises to be a six-painting retrospective of the artist's bold and bright abstractions. Since his death in 1989, the artist's work seems to have (unjustly) lost favor in the collecting part of the art world. But his reputation seemed secure in the 1960s, '70s and '80s, when the San Francisco-born Valledor was routinely included in major exhibitions and his work entered the collections of every top museum in our region, as well as the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Yale University Art Gallery and elsewhere.

It's not easy choosing favorites from among the tantalizing offerings of the **Fine Arts Museums of San**



Brian Gross Fine Art

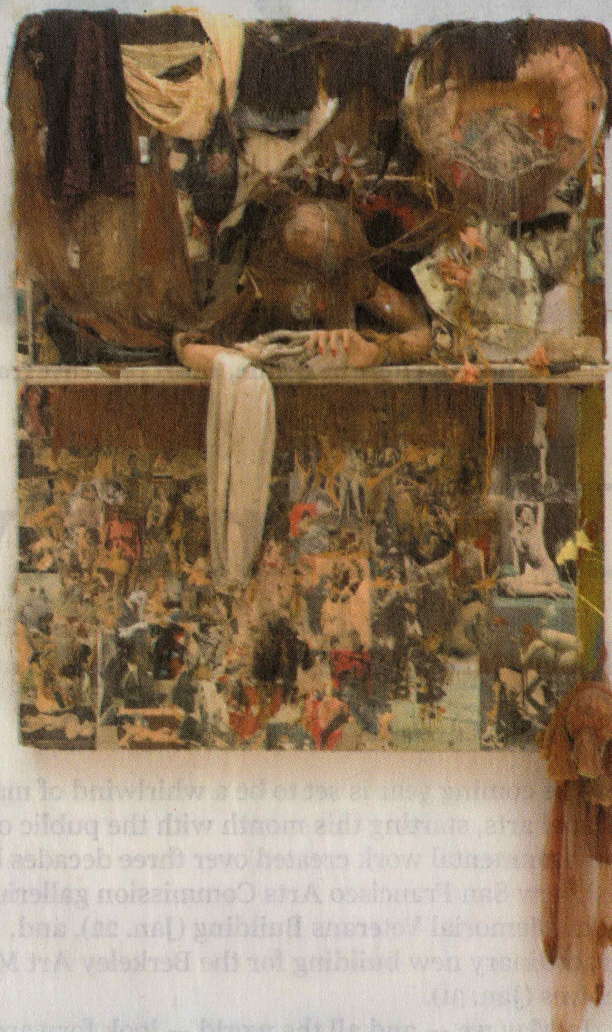
Leo Valledor, "A.I.R. (Artist in Residence)" (1981), acrylic on canvas, 48 by 96 inches.

Francisco. The Legion of Honor will bring us a Pierre Bonnard retrospective this winter (Feb. 6-May 12) and, later, the de Young Museum will feature the critically well-received Frank Stella show (Nov. 5-Feb. 26, 2017) that was recently at the Whitney Museum in New York. But the real test of a museum's overall quality is in the scholarship and judgment of its own curatorial staff. For that reason, I'm eager to see the work of the new European art curator, Esther Bell, whose exhibition "**Sublime Beauty**" is a deep study of Raphael's ca. 1505 masterpiece "Portrait of a Lady

With a Unicorn" (Jan. 9-April 10), and graphic arts curator Karin Breuer's "**Ed Ruscha and the Great American West**" (July 16-Oct. 9), which takes on the tough task of saying something smart about one of the most widely exhibited American artists alive.

"**Myth, Allegory, and Faith: The Kirk Edward Long Collection of Mannerist Prints**," at the **Canter Arts Center, Stanford University**, Feb. 10-June 20. As bountiful as the possibilities are in our region for enjoying visual art, a disproportionate number are

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Estate of Bruce Conner / Artists Rights Society, New York

"**Looking Glass**" (1964) will be part of the exhibition "**Bruce Conner: It's All True**," at SFMOMA Oct. 29-Jan. 22, 2017.

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contemporary shows. Important earlier works are generally rare and fragile, and, thus, challenging to bring from the older cities where they tend to reside. (Also, sad to say, museums chasing audiences — even those with a broad mission — seem to think contemporary art is the way to go.) The Cantor repeatedly bucks that trend with strong exhibitions based in solid scholarship. This selection of about 180 prints derives from Long's private collection of over 700 such works — which, we are promised, represent the best of the 16th century Mannerist style. And with the vogue for figuration in full swing, 500-year-old images may not feel that far off from today, after all.

Fraenkel Gallery seems to be brewing up a good year and an especially strong April, with a show of new work by **Christian Marclay**, whose filmic masterpiece "The Clock" was a smash when it showed at SFMOMA in 2013, and the unveiling (after a quick January preview) of a second venue on Market Street. FraenkelLAB launches with "**Home Improvements**," guest-curated by filmmaker-artist-provocateur John Waters, which the gallery says is sure to be "something out of left field."

Installation artist and filmmaker **Isaac Julien** has not been much represented in San Francisco, despite the London artist's international fame for works that are a mashup of film, theater, painting and sculpture — and that deal with a mashup of race, LGBTQ and other cultural issues. The **Jessica Silverman Gallery** will present a retrospective selection of Julien's photography from 1986 to the present. The show will run April 21-June 11.

The **California Historical Society** is not on every art lover's radar, but it should be, with intelligent exhibitions popping up there regularly. Beginning in May and continuing through summer, photographer Ed Drew participates in CHS' inventive Curating California program, which invites artists and scholars to take a fresh look at the society's collections. Drew received wide notice for a series of 19th century-style tintype photographs of fellow soldiers in the War in Afghanistan — the first such images made in a conflict zone since the Civil War. For the current project, "**The People of the Klamath**," he will counterbalance a CHS collection of original portraits and other images related to the Modoc War of 1872-73 with his own tintype pictures of contemporary American Indians of the Klamath, Pit River Paiute and Modoc tribes.

The **Asian Art Museum** celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2016 with "**Emperors' Treasures: Chinese Art from the National Palace Museum, Taipei**" (June 17-Sept. 18). More than 600,000 works of imperial art left the mainland for Taiwan during the Chinese Communist Revolution, and the Palace Museum is lending more than 100 of the best for this important San Francisco birthday. It's



Dorothea Lange Collection, Oakland Museum of California

Dorothea Lange, "White Angel Bread Line, San Francisco" (1933) will be included in the retrospective planned by the Oakland Museum of California (Nov. 12-April 23, 2017).



Galleria Borghese, Rome

Raphael's "Portrait of a Lady With a Unicorn" is the subject of the exhibition "Sublime Beauty" at the Legion of Honor.

At the Asian, we are promised 30 "extremely rare masterpieces" collected over the reigns of eight emperors.

the first time in 20 years that the NPM has sent a show to the U.S., and we are promised 30 "extremely rare masterpieces" collected over the reigns of eight emperors, beginning in the 12th century.

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts will, for the first time, dedicate its entire campus to a single artist's project



National Palace Museum, Taipei

Lang Shining, "White Falcon," a hanging scroll on silk from China's Qing dynasty, reign of the Qianlong emperor (1736-1795), in "Emperors' Treasures: Chinese Art From the National Palace Museum, Taipei" at the Asian.

(Sept. 16-January 2017). Tom Sachs, who has developed an elaborate, large-scale "space program" over many years, will bring us "**Mission to Europa: Tea Ceremony**." Goofy, charming, makeshift and completely convincing, Sachs' past projects include 2012's "Space Program: Mars," the talk of New York

when it showed there in the vast Park Avenue Armory. Even before the Sachs show, I'll be interested to see "Take This Hammer: Art + Media Activism From the Bay Area" (March 11-Aug. 14). If the title suggests something polemically boring, consider that it's guest curated by Christian L. Frock, who, with Tanya Zimbaro, brought an eye for the visual and a sense of humor to feminist political art in this year's "Public Works" at Mills College Art Museum.

"**Bruce Conner: It's All True**," at **SFMOMA** (Oct. 29-Jan. 22, 2017). The most important San Francisco artist of the final quarter of the last century, Conner is also one of the most difficult to categorize. He didn't make it easy: Several big museum shows were initiated during his lifetime, only to be canceled amid artist/curator conflict. No fewer than five curators from different departments of two museums (MOMA in New York is the other) are collaborating on this attempt. His seminal influence on independent film, photography, performance art and other new media of his day may turn out, upon the reflection this exhibition will afford us, to be even more important than the genre-shattering sculpture, painting and works on paper for which he is best known.

We have waited far too long for a reassessment of the photographer Dorothea Lange. Some of her greatest works are widely known (notably "Migrant Mother," the most iconic image of the Great Depression). Still, Lange is usually assigned second chair in the reputation arena to more self-consciously arty colleagues like Ansel Adams and Imogen Cunningham. "**Dorothea Lange: Politics of Seeing**," a 100-work career survey on view Nov. 12-April 23, 2017, at the **Oakland Museum of California**, could change that: A promised new curatorial approach will look beyond the pictorial to "how her artistry and advocacy swayed minds and prompted significant change in this nation's history."

And a bonus: Far in the future (Sept. 13, 2017 through Dec. 10, 2017) but worth reporting, **Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archive** will present "**Martin Wong: Human Instamatic**," an exhibition that received a warm critical reception when it debuted at the Bronx Museum of the Arts in early 2015. A gay Chinese American who also claimed Mexican ancestry — a "Chino Latino," he called himself — Wong crafted a highly idiosyncratic oeuvre, living in New York and in his hometown San Francisco. He died of AIDS in 1999 at age 53. Wong's work may have its limitations: His topics were timely, his style illustrational. Those who, like me, know the work only in reproduction will have a rare opportunity to see a full-scale retrospective and decide for ourselves.

Charles Desmarais is The San Francisco Chronicle's art critic. E-mail: cdesmarais@sfgchronicle.com Twitter: @Artguy1