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## Art Market San Francisco is back for first time since 2019

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After two years of pandemic-induced hiatus, Art Market San Francisco is returning to Fort Mason April 21-24. Now in its 10th edition, the art fair is doubling down on highlighting local galleries — out of the 80 modern and contemporary galleries that will be on view, 33 are based or have a significant presence in the Bay Area.

This year's edition has a lot to live up to: The last live event in 2019 saw record attendance of over 28,000 visitors as well as record-breaking sales.

I spoke to the fair's director, Kelly Freeman, to get a sense of what collectors and spectators alike can expect from this year's edition in terms of anticipated attendance, the programming and on-site food and beverage options — in addition to what's selling.

"We're bringing back the educational component that used to exist back in its beginning years. It was one of my priorities to really



COURTESY OF ART MARKET

Art Market San Francisco saw record numbers in 2019. Organizers hope that this year is no different.

make the fair a platform for the city," said Freeman. Visitors will notice this reemphasis on programming with the addition of a theater to host conversations about topics that are relevant to the city by the fair's local cultural partners on topics ranging from NFTs (of course) to equity in collecting art. Public installations (which will not be for public sale) also contribute to the non-commercial element, alongside works on sale in gallery booths.

Sales forecasts are high this year, especially as most of us have spent more time in the home throughout the pandemic and may have noticed that the walls need some refreshing. Freeman indicated that collectors looked to acquire more art for the home when travel prospects declined, and many Bay Area galleries learned how to interact with their clients digitally. Those digital relationships aren't going to go away now that pandemic restrictions have eased — but nothing compares to seeing a work of art in person.

Works of art on sale are priced anywhere from the low hundreds to six figures. Democratizing art collecting is at the heart of Art Market and there's opportunity for almost anyone to start a budding art collection.

In an abundance of caution, the organizers opted to integrate an outdoor component which will contain the food and beverage program so that visitors are comfortable removing their masks to enjoy their cocktails (supplied by Oakland-based Grand Lake Kitchen) and tacos (by El Huarache Loco).

An emphasis on the local is what sets this fair apart from others. "Any arts event of this size is great for San Francisco and bringing in visitors to help spur the hospitality economy. The arts are a critical part of what draws visitors to our city and we are thrilled to have Art Market back in full swing for the first time since 2019," said Brenda Tucker, director of arts marketing for SF Travel who works to bring tourists to the city for cultural events.

"This fair is really a fair that's for its city and we want to be as inclusive as possible. This is an opportunity to engage with the artists who live and work amongst you," said Freeman, adding that while there is participation by galleries from around the world and New York, visitors mostly hail from the Bay Area.

Art Market returns on the heels of FOG Art+Design in January and Mayor Breed's announcement to revitalize foot traffic in key city neighborhoods that have been hard-hit by the pandemic. Entry to Art Market for all public days, including its opening evening on April 21, is \$50 while a single day pass will set attendees back \$25.

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