

## 10 Must-See Exhibitions to See During San Francisco Art Week

From painting and performance to technology-driven and materially rooted practices, these exhibitions reflect the Bay Area's singular relationship to landscape, innovation, and social inquiry.

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As the first major art moment of the year, **San Francisco Art Week** sets the tone for what's ahead. The week draws collectors, curators, and cultural travelers to the **Bay Area**, where mild winter weather, coastal light, and the pull of the **Golden Gate** frame a dense calendar of exhibitions and events, including **FOG Design + Art**. While the fairs anchor the schedule, some of the most compelling presentations unfold beyond the fairgrounds, inside galleries across the city's neighborhoods, from the **Minnesota Street Project** to galleries including **Jessica Silverman** and **Anthony Meier Gallery**. Whitewaller compiles a selection of the most striking San Francisco Art Week

exhibitions, offering quieter, more focused encounters with artists working across generations and disciplines. Whether fitting in a morning visit before the fair or winding down with an afternoon of looking, these are the gallery shows to see during San Francisco Art Week.

# Trevor Paglen: “The Horizon Waved, and Nothing Was Certain: 2006-2026”

## Jessica Silverman

*Chinatown*

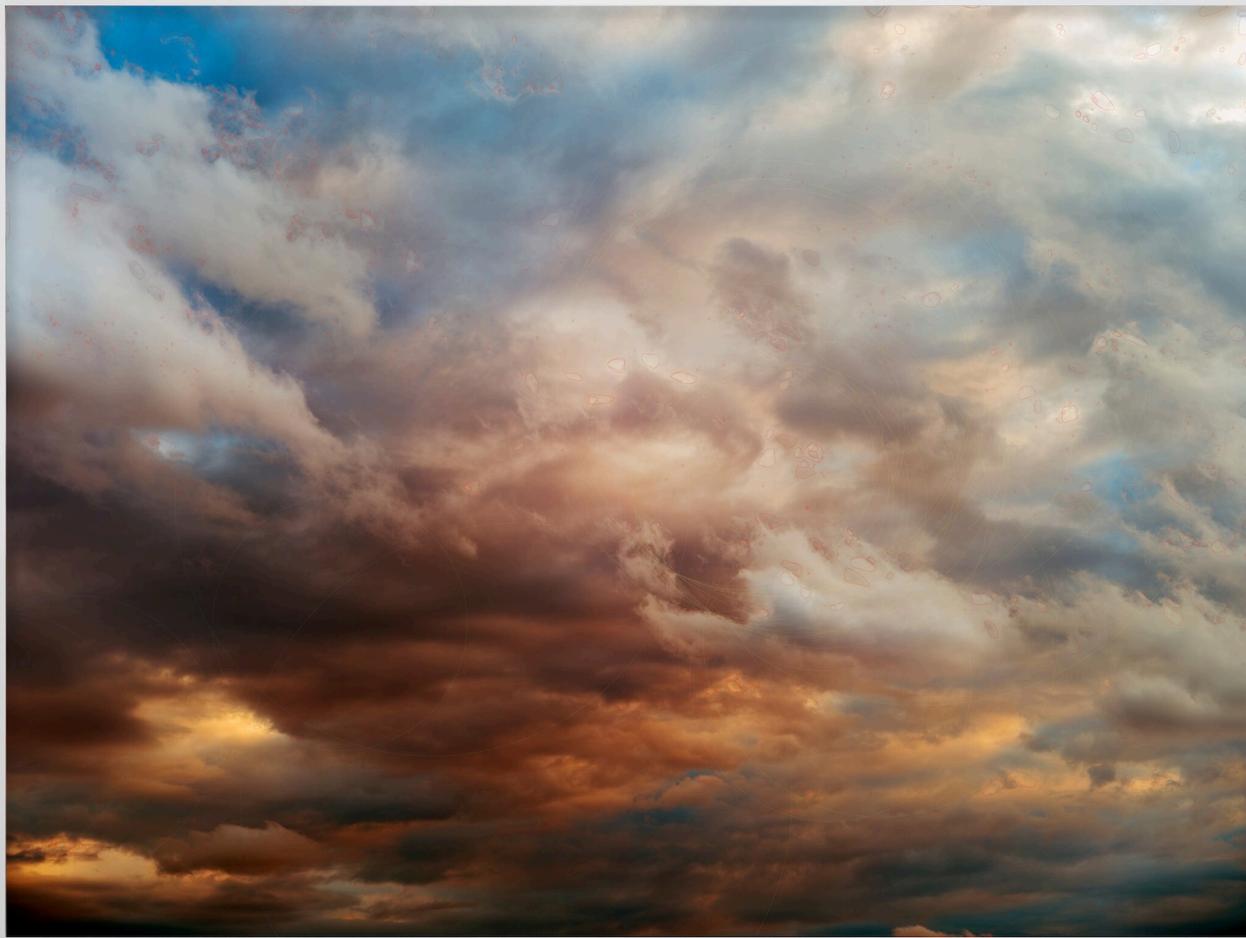


Image Caption: Trevor Paglen, “CLOUD #395 Maximally Stable Extremal Regions; Hough Circle Transform,” 2025, Dye sublimation on aluminium print. Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman.

One of the most compelling San Francisco Art Week exhibitions, **Trevor Paglen** joins **Jessica Silverman** for a solo exhibition of prints titled “The Horizon Waved, and Nothing Was Certain: 2006–2026.” Spanning two decades, the exhibition brings together rarely seen landscapes and skyscapes that examine the expanding reach of **technology**, such as drone surveillance, clandestine military sites, and unidentified objects in Earth’s orbit. The artworks position Paglen firmly within the tradition of the “techno-sublime,” where awe and unease coexist.

Raised as a military brat and the son of an Air Force ophthalmologist, Paglen grew up acutely aware of how American power is distributed across a vast network of global bases, shaping a transient and highly coded subculture. This upbringing, combined with the influence of his grandmother, a painter, and his mother, an Episcopal priest, informs his persistent engagement with idealism, democracy, and systems of belief. Ever experimental, Paglen employs infrared astronomy, using telescopes and imaging software used by NASA, to visualize what typically resists representation.

**What we love:** Paglen’s willingness to pursue the unseen—whether from mountaintops or restricted zones—underscores a practice driven by risk, curiosity, and conceptual depth.

**Trevor Paglen at Jessica Silverman.**

January 8- February 28, 2026

# Marie Wilson: “A Poet of Forms and Colors”

## Wendi Norris

*Jackson Square, San Francisco*



  
**H. Moser & Cie.**  
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*by nature*

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Marie Wilson, "View over the Atlantis," 1958-59, oil on laminated paperboard 6 7/8 x 9 1/4 inches / 17.5 x 23.5 cm. Images courtesy of Gallery Wendi Norris, San Francisco © 2025 Estate of Marie Wilson.

**Wendi Norris Gallery** hosts the first major solo exhibition of **Marie Wilson**, spanning five decades of the artist's career and reintroducing her work to a new generation of collectors. Rooted in Northern California and Bay Area culture, Wilson's practice developed amid early exposure to European Surrealism and West Coast intellectual circles. Her work moves fluidly between biomorphic and geometric forms, evolving from semi-abstract experimentation into increasingly structured, symmetrical compositions in her mature period.

Working across oil painting, ink and pencil drawing, lithography, and ceramics, Wilson explored Surrealism through a distinctly modern lens. Her confidence as an artist is palpable, shaped in part by her proximity to figures such as **Wolfgang Paalen** and **André Breton**. Raised in California, she absorbed avant-garde thinking and Native American imagery; time spent in Paris deepened her engagement with Surrealist philosophy. As Wilson once noted, "I think I was born an artist," a sentiment reflected in the unwavering commitment of her work.

**What we love:** Wilson's meticulous, highly ordered compositions feel immersive and spiritual, inviting viewers into spaces that are both disciplined and quietly infinite.

# Masami Teraoka: “From Here to Eternity, Five Decades of Art Making”

Catharine Clark Gallery

*Potrero Hill, San Francisco*



, "Pussy Riot Kubie Series Masha (Alekhina)," 2022. Courtesy of the artist and Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco. John Janca.

Inside San Francisco's Potrero Hill neighborhood, **Catharine Clark Gallery** opens its 2026 program with a survey exhibition dedicated to **Masami Teraoka**, marking the artist's 90th birthday. Presented across their North and South galleries, the exhibition coincides with a milestone year: the gallery's 35th anniversary and **BOXBLUR**'s 10th.

Teraoka's work is distinguished by its sharp wit and layered social critique, merging historical references with contemporary anxieties. Sexuality remains a recurring theme, evolving from the liberatory spirit of the 1970s to the urgency of the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s, during which Teraoka produced one of the most sustained artistic responses by an American artist. Living in Los Angeles from the 1960s through 1984, he developed his signature ukiyo-e-inspired compositions, often staging cultural collisions between East and West. After relocating to Oahu in 1984, his practice expanded to lyrical waterscapes and, later, oil paintings critiquing religious power through a hybrid of ukiyo-e and Baroque visual language.

**What we love:** Highlights include works from the "AIDS" Series and the monumental "Wave Series," spanning from 1974 to the present.

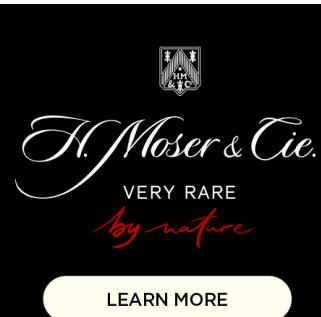
**Masami Teraoka at Catharine Clark Gallery.**

January 10-March 7, 2026

# Heather Day: "Blue Distance"

## Berggruen Gallery

*Yerba Buena*





Heather Day, "Suspended Rhythm," 2026, mixed media on sewn canvas, 57 x 74 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Berggruen Gallery.

One of the standout San Francisco Art Week exhibitions, "Blue Distance," marks **Heather Day's** return to **Berggruen Gallery** for her second solo exhibition. Known for abstract paintings that explore memory, sensation, and landscape, Day draws from her time in the Mojave Desert, translating textures, sounds, and even scent into expansive fields of color and form. Her practice centers on a distinctive cut-and-stitch method, in which biomorphic shapes are painted, sliced, and reassembled—archiving gesture and movement within the surface itself. The result is a meditative approach to painting that mirrors the fluid, shifting nature of everyday experience.

The exhibition's title references an essay by **Rebecca Solnit**, which considers how distance renders light blue. This idea, alongside the art-historical legacy of **Helen Frankenthaler** and **Sam Gilliam**, informs Day's soak-stain techniques and subtle draping effects. Working intuitively, she paints fragments on the floor before cutting, sewing, and assembling compositions guided by fleeting memory and sensation.

**What we love:** Day's paintings quietly transmit solitude and seclusion, capturing the feeling of distance within a single, resonant surface.

# Christy Matson: “Even So”

## Rebecca Camacho Presents

*Jackson Square*



Christy Matson, “Strange Garden,” 2025, acrylic on paper, linen, cotton, and wool, 33 1/4 x 41 3/4 x 1 1/4 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Rebecca Camacho Presents.

At **Rebecca Camacho Presents**, **Christy Matson** returns with “Even So”, an exhibition shaped by the aftermath of the **Los Angeles fires** in early 2025. Developed over the year following the event, the body of work began as small, intuitive sketches that gradually expanded into a constellation of studio remnants—leftover watercolors, diluted acrylics, mixed brushes, and salvaged paper. Rather than serving as preparatory studies, these

aterials became the foundation of the exhibition, grounding Matson as she moved entally and physically through the act of making.

Repetition plays a central role. Layered marks give rise to pared-down landscapes—zigzagging mountains, smoky skies—where memory and process intersect. By incorporating these studies into her broader practice, Matson weaves analog gestures with digital technologies. The resulting woven works remain intentionally small, preserving the intimacy and immediacy of sketching at moments when ideas arrive in excess.

**What we love:** Matson's work resists resolution. It allows complexity to exist without escape, holding space for uncertainty as an active, generative force.

**Christy Matson at Rebecca Camacho Presents.**

January 15–February 28, 2026

# Karen Barbour: “Project Room”

## Rebecca Camacho Presents

*Jackson Square*





Karen Barbour, "Playboy Bunny Centerfold Star Towers with Blue River," 2025. Acrylic, collage, and mixed media on paper, 30 x 22 1/2 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Rebecca Camacho Presents.



Karen Barbour, "Day Bloomers with River," 2025. Acrylic, collage, and mixed media on paper, 30 x 22 1/2 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Rebecca Camacho Presents.

Marking her first Bay Area exhibition in more than two decades, **Karen Barbour** presents a vibrant body of work at **Rebecca Camacho Presents**. Known for her maximalist approach to painting on canvas and paper, Barbour creates densely layered worlds populated by whimsical figures and imagined landscapes. Color, dots, shapes, and repeating patterns accumulate across the surface—often extending into the background itself, leaving no area untouched by visual activity.

Formerly a children's book **illustrator**, Barbour brings a narrative sensibility to her paintings, though the worlds she constructs resist fixed geography or time. Each work develops slowly through an intuitive process that cannot be rushed, allowing imagery to emerge organically. Beneath the playful surface, the paintings quietly examine how individuals absorb and interpret the world around them—filtering experience through repetition, pattern, and sensation.

**What we love:** Barbour's work holds multiple lineages at once—from folk art and textile design to echoes of **Gustav Klimt** and **Paul Klee**—offering layered meanings rather than a single, fixed interpretation.

**Karen Barbour at Rebecca Camacho Presents.**  
January 15–February 28, 2026

# Barbara Stauffacher Solomon: “Garden = Grid = City”

## Anthony Meier

Mill Valley, California



Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, Untitled (Japanese Pagoda Garden Folly Elevated in Part III Landscaped by Architects (front), Untitled (Japanese Pagoda Garden Folly Elevated in Part III Landscaped by Architects (back), 1980s, colored pencil on aged vellum, attached to paper, 11 x 8.5 inches. Courtesy of the Barbara Stauffacher Solomon Estate and Anthony Meier.



Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, "An Urban/Agrarian Landscape," 1987, colored pencil, graphite, vellum, paper, 11 x 8.5 inches. Courtesy of the Barbara Stauffacher Solomon Estate and Anthony Meier.

Though not located directly in San Francisco, **Anthony Meier Gallery** has been a cornerstone of postwar and contemporary art since 1984. This season, the gallery presents one of the most legacy-driven San Francisco Art Week exhibitions from the estate of **Barbara Stauffacher Solomon**, foregrounding her lifelong fascination with the green rectangle across rarely seen works on paper, paintings, and a Supergraphic in the library gallery. The presentation surveys an eight-decade legacy that reshaped how landscape, architecture, and visual art intersect.

Drawing from city grids, gardens, and imagined terrains, Stauffacher Solomon's compositions are highly structured yet contemplative, reflecting an impulse to impose

lder and envision paradise. As she noted, “I produce drawings that stand in an ambiguous position between landscape, architecture, and art.” The exhibition highlights her “Green Architecture” series and her enduring engagement with green space as an organizing principle, echoed in her 1989 book *Green Architecture and the Agrarian Garden*. Rooted in California’s Edenic ideal—and San Francisco’s carved urban grid—her work challenges modernist separations of form and context, weaving memory, logic, and lived experience into a unified visual language.

**What we love:** Seeing a Supergraphic in context feels like a tribute to its originator, an immersive reminder of how Stauffacher Solomon transformed spatial perception at architectural scale.

**Barbara Stauffacher Solomon at Anthony Meier.**

January 15–February 27, 2026

# Carmen McNall: “Unbound Passages”

## Eleanor Harwood Gallery at Minnesota Street Project

*Mission District*



  
*H. Moser & Cie.*  
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*by nature*

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Carmen McNall, Installation Shot of "Unbound Passages," 2026. Courtesy of the artist and Eleanor Harwood Gallery.

Located within San Francisco's ***Minnesota Street Project***—one of the city's gallery complexes—***Eleanor Harwood Gallery*** hosts a solo exhibition by ***Carmen McNall*** that centers on transition, refuge, and continuity. The presentation reflects the gallery's ongoing interest in practices that balance material sensitivity with narrative depth, allowing concept and craft to unfold in tandem.

McNall's paintings explore thresholds—doorways, portals, and interior passages—that open into spaces of protection and possibility. These moments of transition are rendered with a quiet whimsy, where movement between spaces feels fluid rather than fixed. Past, present, and future coexist, echoing architectural forms associated with arrival and transformation. Throughout the exhibition, vessels, hands, and domestic interiors act as carriers of memory and knowledge, while quilted and woven net-like patterns function as systems of support and connection. Female figures anchor the compositions, embodying strength, confidence, and sustained energy.

**What we love:** The exhibition creates a contemplative environment that honors transition and remembrance, celebrating the freedom found in not being contained.

***Carmen McNall at Eleanor Harwood Gallery.***  
*January 10-February 28, 2026*

# Materazzi: “PLAYMATE”

## Eleanor Harwood Gallery at Minnesota Street Project

*Mission District*



Lee Materazzi, Installation Shot of “PLAYMATE,” 2026. Courtesy of the artist and Eleanor Harwood Gallery.

**Lee Materazzi** returns to **Eleanor Harwood Gallery** for her fourth solo exhibition, presenting photographs and sculptures made from what she describes as “materials that are on hand—last week’s garbage,” alongside drawings, jewelry, toys, and fragments of childhood detritus. Over time, Materazzi’s practice has evolved into a kind of visual diary, tracing life stages from early motherhood to parenting a teenager.

In this exhibition, those personal narratives shift into more overtly conceptual territory. Objects associated with childhood are cast in resin, transformed into fixed talismans resistant to time and erosion. The ordinary becomes monumental through preservation. In *Goldstar Crotch*, gold star stickers—typically given as rewards—cover a pair of worn jeans, a molded foot, and a shoe, propped on an orange and photographed. The gesture reframes childhood achievement as a meditation on labor, care, and artistic production.

**What we love:** Materazzi invites slow looking; meanings unfold gradually, often concealed within titles that act as camouflage rather than explanation.

**Lee Materazzi at Eleanor Harwood Gallery.**

January 10-February 28, 2026

# “The Sweet Appreciation of Freedom”

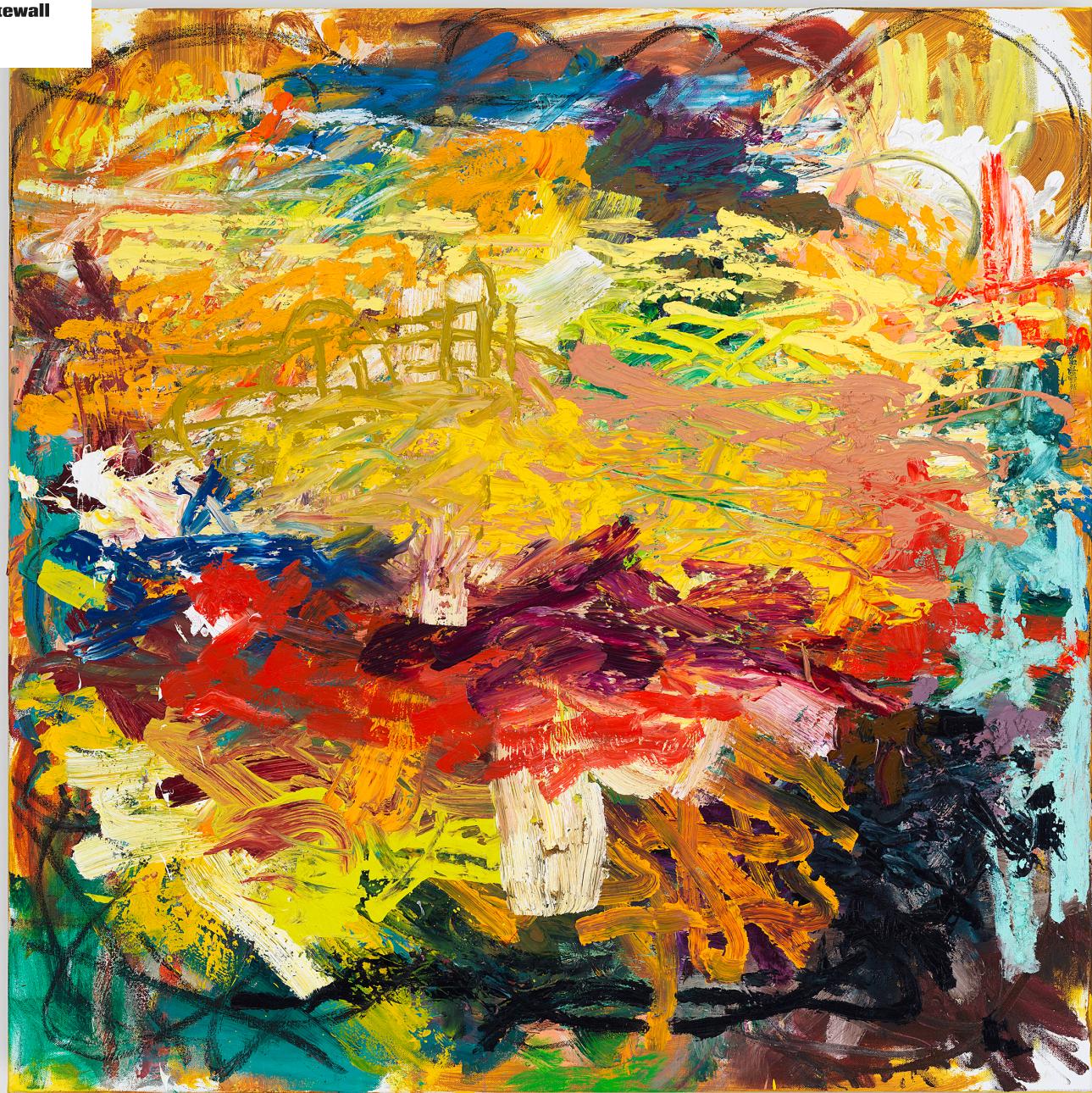
## Jenkins Johnson Gallery at Minnesota Street Project

*Mission District*



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Patrick Alston, "Sequence," 2025, signed verso, Acrylic, Gouache, Oil, Oil stick and spray paint on canvas, 36 x 36 in (91.4 x 91.4 cm). Courtesy of the artist and Jenkins Johnson Gallery.

At **Jenkins Johnson Gallery**, "The Sweet Appreciation of Freedom" brings together contemporary artists of the Black diaspora whose practices address liberation, identity, and resilience in the present moment. Taking its title from a quote by **Malcolm X**, the exhibition coincides with Black History Month. It commemorates sixty-one years since his assassination, underscoring the continued urgency of freedom as an ongoing practice.

**Rindon Johnson**, a San Francisco native, examines systems of capitalism and extraction through materials such as cowhide, wood, stone, and digital environments, reframing the "byproduct" as an existential condition. New York-based **Tariku Shiferaw** draws from

geometric abstraction, music, and diasporic history to interrogate exclusionary systems and spatial power. **Genevieve Gaignard** uses staged photography and installation to explore biracial identity, nostalgia, and political tension in American culture. Blending painting and writing, **Alex Jackson** constructs speculative worlds where Black life exists beyond colonial paradigms. **Patrick Alston** employs color, gesture, and language to channel resilience, freedom, and hope.

**What we love:** One of the most thoughtful San Francisco Art Week exhibitions, the show resists singular narratives, holding freedom as something lived, contested, and continually reimagined.

**"The Sweet Appreciation of Freedom" at Jenkins Johnson Gallery.**

January 17-February 28, 2026

**TOPICS**

Barbara Stauffacher Solomon

Marie Wilson

Masami Teraoka

San Francisco

San Francisco Art Week

Trevor Paglen

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