



At Counterpulse Fest: 'Split' by Fact_SF. Photo of Katherine Neumann by Robbie Sweeny

ARTS + CULTURE

ARTS FORECAST

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Arts Forecast: CounterPulse fest, Bowie Bash, How Wierd, Opera in the Park

By MARKE B. SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

“Liveness and body-based arts have perhaps never felt more relevant and seductive, nor more endangered,” CounterPulse Artistic and Executive Director Julie Phelps told me. “**The CounterPulse Festival** insists on finding a place for both in the changing landscape of cultural production in the Bay Area and beyond.”

Boi howdy, do those words ring true and necessary! I am ready for some experimental performance as a break from the mediocre assimilationism (and just plain battiness) of social media, please. Local independent arts powerhouse CounterPulse is roaring into its annual fest Thu/9-September 18, with a full lineup of happenings designed for “the plasticity of the times”—bringing together people in safe and accessible ways.

Shows will take place “on the hilltop above Monterey Bay at Djerassi Artist Residency Program, the urban oasis of the McEvoy Foundation for the Arts grounds, the ornate church halls at the Saint Joseph Art Society, the lush meadows of Oakland’s Estuary Park, an alleyway turned art space at SkyBridge in the SOMA, as well as CounterPulse’s home in the Tenderloin and online.” I’m particularly looking forward to pieces by FACT/SF, Marc Kate & Julie Phelps, Faluda Islam aka Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and the always incredible Landa Lakes.

Phelps continued, “CounterPulse exists, above all, to make space for people to gather and to be united in collective experiences. “The pandemic has challenged us to shift and expand the ways we bring people together, and we have become stronger for it. At CounterPulse Festival 2021 we want to connect, reflect, and explore how we want to rebuild, taking no assumption from the past and assuming no limits on our future.” You can check out more info [here](#).

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS OF NOTE:



FRI/10 AND SAT/11—10TH ANNUAL BOWIE BASH OK so for obvious reasons this annual concert/drag-fest/incredible salute to David Bowie is not taking place on its usual date, his January birthday—but we’re glad for the wait because we can attend, vexed and masked, together at the Chapel. The First Church of the Sacred Silversexual, led by Tony Lysol-Romero,

puts on a two-night true spectacular, performing entire albums front to back, cover to cover, with tons of special performances and treats and of course a live band. Fri/10 sees *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* and Sat/11 is Hunky Dory! Tickets and more info [here](#) (Fri) and [here](#) (Sat).

FRI/10—BOOGIE IN THE PARK The inimitable Sweater Funk parties started in a sweaty basement in Chinatown and have since drifted around and about, playing the finest funk and jaw-dropping rarities to a crowd of fuzzy-wuzzy lovers (none in sweaters, mostly!). The crew will be hitting the Golden Gate Bandshell this Friday, 4pm-7pm, for a FREE get-down. From the promoters: “What is Boogie? Not to be confused with boogie woogie or piano blues, Boogie is an electronic influenced post disco sound that leans HEAVILY on the funk. Think early ’80s Leroy Burgess, Sharon Redd, While there were some radio hits we try to stick to the more obscure and underground releases of the genre on original vinyl. The one thing that matters: it’s got to be funky!” [More info here](#).

FRI/10—THE HOMECOMING: OPERA IN THE PARK The san Francisco Opera is playing it safe this season-not just requiring vaccination proof and masks at its performances, but programming some lovely operatic comfort food with its current season, including those massive classics *Fidelio*, *Così fan Tutti*, and *Don Giovanni*—plus an exciting premiere by composer Bright Sheng, *Dream of the Red Chamber*. (OK, but we all know that Verdi’s *Un Ballo in Maschera* would have been perfect for our masked moment, or even that original Batman epic, *Die Fledermaus*.) And there will be open air opera too! Including this annual barnstormer, Opera in the Park, featuring a selection of favorite arias and other tunes sure to have you stomping the bleachers. New music director Run Sun Kim directs. [More info here](#).

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Carrie Mae Weems, 'Untitled (Man reading newspaper),' 1990-1999

THU/9-OCTOBER 23—CARRIE MAE WEEMS: WITNESS A favorite and very important artist finds a home for her work in SF. “Fraenkel Gallery is pleased to present a survey of the work of Carrie Mae Weems examining her extraordinary achievement over four decades. *WITNESS* traces Weems’s exploration of history, identity, and the structure of power, in photographs and video from many of her most important bodies of work. Weems’s inaugural show celebrates the gallery’s recently announced representation of the artist.” [More info here.](#)

SUN/12—HOW WEIRD STREET FAIRE It’s wacky, it’s wild, it’s totally SF-style! Music, art, performance, and just plain being intersect at the corner of Howard and Second Streets, noon-8pm, for several blocks’ worth of fabulous time, in the name of world peace. It’s all vaxed and masked, with special treats like an expanded “Green Alley” (relax and roll) and tons of vendors and DJs. [More info here.](#)

Burning Man: The Musical - Official Trailer



BURNING MAN: THE MUSICAL If How Weird doesn't give you a good taste of that ol' Burning Man energy (a renegade version of which went well last weekend, by [some accounts](#)), then this exuberant, partially satirical work, finally making the jump from the Z Space to film. Follow protagonist Molly (get it?) "a promising young tech grad, as she returns to the playa of Black Rock City – this time employed by the very tech company that, unbeknownst to her, seeks to destroy it. After being given the task of acquiring drugs for her boss's exclusive party, Molly finds herself on a journey inward—and through the community of Burning Man finds her true self. It's directed by You can watch it streaming online and throw a little dust in your cocktail for effect: [More info here](#).