The FALL SHOW
Arts, Antiques & Design
BRING OUT THE BEAUTIFUL TO FORT MASON

BY JENNIFER RAISER • PHOTOS BY DREW ALTIZER
A FEW THINGS WERE DROPPED AT THE PREVIEW GALA FOR SAN FRANCISCO’S “swellegant” Fall Show at Fort Mason, formerly known as the Fall Antiques Show. Certainly, names were dropped. With India Hicks, Tony Duquette, and Bunny Mellon all jetting in, there were plenty of references to rakes and royals among the regulars. Hints were definitely dropped, too: the gilded luxe of jewelry booths plying their troves of Van Cleef and Belperron compelled more than a few anniversary and birthday reminders... ahem. And jaws were dropped at a number of pieces on display: a Gustave Caillebotte landscape for $1 million plus and a staggering hand-painted screen depicting Mexico City in the 1730s were some of the many treasures that elicited an impromptu dental exam. The organizers deliberately dropped the word “Antiques” from the event title to update the show to include precious wares more recent than antique, although of equal standard for quality. The show, now in its 38th year, wants to keep up with the tastes of San Francisco’s spendy set, whose modern sensibility includes mid-century and mid-90s (when some of these new buyers were born, mon dieu!). The San Francisco Fall Show: Art-Antiques-Design is now its name, and nobody dropped the ball on that one.
THIS YEAR’S SHOW THEME WAS “WANDERLUST: AROUND THE WORLD WITH ART, ANTIQUES & DESIGN” THE QUARTET OF VIGNETTES IN THE GRAND ENTRANCE REFLECTED FARAWAY DESTINATIONS TO THE NORTH, SOUTH, EAST, AND WEST, CREATED BY ALESSANDRA BRANCA, VEERE GREENNEY, SAGRERABRAZIL DESIGN, AND HUTTON WILKINSON.

Despite the nomenclature shift, the party retained its substantial allure. Its tried-and-true formula of exclusive access, exquisite objects, effusive greeting, and exceptional food was in fine form. The throngs turned out in their best bib and Tucker (hello, show chair!) to see and be seen. McCull’s catering prepared racks and racks of lamb chops and filets to perfection. Tins of caviar were superseded, and the desserts did not disappoint. Apparently, ice cream on top of donuts is a thing. And the line was as long for the candy table at the end of the evening as it was for the caviar station at the beginning. This is a party with its priorities in place.

Most importantly, the show’s beneficiary, Enterprise for Youth, remains resolutely at the center of the substantial effort it takes to conjure this 4-day extravaganza with the opening party at the starting gate. Enterprise for Youth offers under-resourced San Francisco high school students the opportunity to gain professional skills through paid internships and job training. Celebrating its 50th year of youth empowerment, the list of internship hosts includes many show stalwarts, such as Tucker & Marks, Zeterre Landscape Architects, Jay Jeffers, de Gournay, Jonathan Rachman Design, Koeppel Design, and more. Enthusiastic Enterprise students passed hors d’oeuvres throughout the evening, a palpable reminder that the evening served a purpose, too.

This year’s show theme was “Wanderlust: Around the World with Art, Antiques & Design.” The quartet of vignettes in the grand entrance reflected faraway destinations to the north, south, east, and west, created by Alessandra Branca, Veere Greenney, SagreraBrazil Design, and Hutton Wilkinson. Each created their own stylized version of a dreamy destination, backed by hand-painted De Gournay wallpaper, while Ricardo Benedites of iDens Event Design created an aisle of clouds overhead. Indefatigable Show Chair Suzanne Tucker joined forces with Designers and Artisans Circle Chair Ken Fulk to welcome an A-team of donors, whose arrival time corresponded with their level of patronage.

This is one of the few events where everybody arrives on time as a matter of pride. Early arrivals met Honourary Chair India Hicks, a particular pleasure among the cognoscenti. She earned her design pedigree at her father David Hicks’ knee. The multifaceted author and designer also has a lifestyle brand of accessories and jewelry and a pedagogy which includes her grandfather Lord Mountbatten and her godfather Prince Charles. She has raised five children on a remote Bahamian island.

And turn out they did. “Finally, a chance to wear the good jewelry,” quipped one bejeweled patroness, running the phalanx of air kisses and entusiasm on her way to the bar. The party offers a chance to show off a bit of the new, too. Whether a new frock, rock, or bean, there was plenty of pretty to go around.

Among the artists and antiquaries: Denise Hale, Austin and Sara Hills, Niam McEvoy, Paul Pelosi, Frank Caufield, Robert Girard and Phoebe Cowles, Navid Armstrong, an enceintie Samantha and proud Darren Bechtel, Courtney Dallaire, Carl and Yurie Pascarella, Ricky Serbin and Mitchell Benjamin,
Stephanie Ejbat, a resplendent Christine Suppes, Sally Fay, Joe Tobin, Mindy Henderson, Dr. Clara Shapeishvich, Michele Goss, Show Director-at-Large Ariane Maclean Trimmerschat, Interim Show Director Kay Evans, Gala Committee members Barbara Brown, Alison Gelb Finceu, Allison Speer, Dele Wilby, Volunteer stalwarts Jennifer Miller, Theresa Gupta, Suzanna Allen, Cornelia Y. de Schepper, Dan Zelen, Megan Francis, Jennifer Miller, Matthew Macaul Turner, Suzanna Allen, JoEllen Dutcher, Elaine Ng, Arlene and Jordan Schnitzer, Elisa Stevens, Enterprise President Michael Francis, CEO Ninix Calegari, Vetting Committee Chair Peter Fisheback and Vice-Chairs Daniel Stein and Kathleen Taylor, David and Mary Beth Shimmon, Alison Carlson, Beth Townsend, Maria Quiro, Beth Linder, Lisa Zabelle, Kathy Geider Best, David Isaac, Chip Zeechi, Jorge Maunner, Kendall Wilkinson, Holly Holenbeck, Mark Rhodes, Jerome Mollo, Gail Glasser, Jonathan Rachman, Carolyn Chang, Mary and Bill Polard, the great Glady Thascher, Fine Arts Museums CEO Thomas Campbell, Kathryn Lasater, Karen Caldwell, Gus and Babya Mard, Joel Goodrich, Damion Matthews, Malin Giddings, Roman Gronkowski, Toby Rose, James Hormel and Michael Nguyen Hormel, Seth Matarasso, and plenty of new faces to acquaint.

The show had something for everybody, buyers and browsers alike: a rare 48-star American flag, a trove of Georg Jensen silver, a one-of-a-kind Buccellati bauble ... and on and on, each more precious and perfect than the next. The vendors pulled out all the stops to make their booths distinctive and design-forward. While the sensibilities of a majordomo collector and a photography patron may differ, they could reliably count on quality in the show, which has a vetting committee for every specialty field. The opening party is a preview to the show, so determined collectors attend to gaze at the goods, while those on a more modest trajectory were quite happy to check out one another.

As far as we know, the objects were all safe. No paintings, china, crystal, or jewels were jostled. Nothing precious, save a few dollars, was dropped in the making of the Fall Show: Art, Antiques & Design.
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