The San Francisco Fall Show
by Alice Kaufman

The more things change...
The event now called the San Francisco Fall Show, formerly the San Francisco Fall Antiques Show and then the San Francisco Fall Art & Antiques Show, has changed names, dates, layout, rules that called for material to be over 50 years old, and focus.
The more things stay the same....
The show is still gorgeous, still filled with art and antiques that range from minimal to the most extravagant. The show is still populated with prestigious dealers, still host to what many in the antiques world and the San Francisco social world consider the party of the year. The 2019 show was kicked off by an evening preview gala held on October 2, and the show continued through October 6.

“I will say to those who were out of town, this was not the year to miss!”

The focus was on attracting a younger crowd. Show chair Suzanne Tucker said, “First and foremost, we reestablished a ‘Young Collectors Committee’ of the under-forty crowd—high-profile individuals who are philanthropically minded, socially involved in the city, as well as being art and design lovers. They in turn reached out to their peers, bringing them into the fold of the show and its many events: opening night gala, show days, lectures, book signings....”

Tucker continued, “Additionally we are thinking ‘younger’ in the antiques world. We asked our dealers to think beyond antiques and bring one-of-a-kind pieces from antiquity to present day. This has brought a more contemporary vibe to the show and speaks to an energetic mix, which has been well received. Ultimately, for a collector, it is more about the quality, provenance, and uniqueness of the exceptional pieces at the show.”

The appeal to youth continued with the choice of India Hicks as honorary chair. Said Tucker, Hicks “has an amazing Instagram following and an appeal across generations, and this also served the show well. India was the perfect high-profile draw, addressed our ‘Wanderlust’ theme brilliantly, and gave a fantastic sold-out lecture.”

In addition, the show’s PR and marketing team “really stepped up our social media efforts (and we are always urging dealers to do the same): during the show we’ve had Instagram takeovers by India Hicks, Timothy Corrigan, Bunny Williams, Ken Fulk.... This is an ever-evolving work in progress and a crucial component to reach a younger crowd.”

The result, according to Tucker: “The feedback across the board noted a new energy to the show this year. And the gala seemed to have more of a fashion vibe this year, which was fun and definitely not lost on the press. The dealers all felt we successfully tapped into the new, younger buyers—including designers that were previously not considering buying antiques but did this year.”

There were 46 dealers this time as compared to 51 in 2018, “solely because several of our dealers took larger booths. The square footage of exhibitors was only slightly expanded, but it gave the show a more open, airy look which was quite beautiful.”

Did the dates make any difference? Tucker stated, “New dates are always challenging because people are creatures of habit and don’t react well to change. While some dealers will tell you it made no difference because they had successful sales, others will say the opposite. I will say to those who were out of town, this was not the year to miss!”

Dates for 2020? “We are definitely pushing hard to get our dates later in October or even early November, but it’s a tight juggling act with Fort Mason and the multitude of events held there. No news just yet...but mark your calendars for October and the same for 2021, which will be the fortieth anniversary of the show.”

For more information, see (www.sffallshow.org).

An open and shut case: Tony Bravo, a San Francisco Chronicle Datebook reporter, wrote in a story on the Fall show, “The black and white Piero Fornasetti ‘Architettura Trumeau’ secretary cabinet, with its lacquered wood depicting a series of columns and windows on the doors and drawers, was one of the most talked about pieces at the Fall show’s opening night gala on Wednesday, Oct. 2.” Bravo added, “…just a few years ago, the piece would not have been allowed in the Fort Mason Festival Center for the event, formerly known as the Fall Antiques Show.” In 2016 the show dropped its rule that items must be at least 50 years old. The 86” high secretary cabinet at the booth of Milord Antiquités, Montreal, a six-year show veteran, was priced at $45,000.

In the lobby was this vignette illustrating the show’s theme, “Wanderlust: Around the World with Art, Antiques & Design.” The custom-designed hand-painted scenic wallpaper, “The Grand Canal,” was made by de Gournay.

Matisse’s Studio (La Regina, Nice 1941), this 2019 acrylic on canvas by Damian Elwes, was an early sale at the booth of Modernism Inc., San Francisco, and could be emblematic of the new spirit of the Fall show—new, colorful, young. The asking price for the 66” x 66” painting was $90,000. What was new at this show? “More art,” said the dealer.

For more information, see (www.sffallshow.org).
At the booth of Jeff Bridgman Antiques, York County, Pennsylvania, this 1936-38 half-sheet horizontal broadside lithograph for Col. Tim McCoy’s Real Wild West and Rough Riders of the World was sold for $250.

Jeanne Fille, this 14” x 10” oil on paper by Saffi Wasyi, an Egyptian artist, was $5250 from the Los Angeles Fine Art Gallery. Any sales? The gallery reported “a very successful opening,” and said that 15 paintings sold to “younger people who were buying.”

This mid-19th century American cast-iron pilot house eagle of “exceptionally large scale” was priced at $8500 by Yew Tree House Antiques, New York City.

This ebonized and brass-inlaid table, described by the dealer as “in the manner of Peters of Genoa” and “distinctively Florentine in character,” with a marble and pietra dure top, first quarter of the 19th century, 29¾” high, was $68,000 from Carlton Hobbs L.L.C, New York City.

Antonio’s Bella Casa, Los Angeles, offered this Roman marble section of the Empire’s palace in the 2nd Century A.D. and in the 19th Century was the property of Nesfield, who lived in Paris at the time. This piece is priced at $150,000.

This 36” high escalier console table and mirror was designed by Drake Anderson and is part of Charles Burnand’s ICONS collection (England, 2018). Made from gypseum and wood veneer with nickel detail, the set is part of an edition of eight and was priced at $27,000 at the booth of Guy Regal, New York City, where business was good. The dealer said, “We sold several significant pieces on opening night.”

Grace Hartigan’s oil and collage on paper, 9¾” x 13”, was priced at $12,500 by The Orange Chicken, New York City. Don Joint, who helmed the booth, is based in Milton, Pennsylvania, and is a four-year show veteran. He said he noticed more people attending this time and called the Fall show “nicely run, my favorite show to do. The promoters treat us like gold, and that is rare.”

The dealer in the booth of S.J. Shrubsole, New York City, described this circa 1880 “slipper dish,” 18” long, as “one of four such dishes ever produced by Tiffany.” The dish was offered for a price “in the six figures, and the first number isn’t one.” Sales? “Minor sales, major interest.”

The opening night party? “A blast as always.”

Epoca, San Francisco, was asking $23,800 for this “chic pair of French sycamore marquetry open armchairs in the manner of Maurice Jallot.” The chairs have been restored with new boar-skin upholstery. This was the gallery’s seventh year at the show. The dealer commented, “Some booth spaces were different. There were a few new dealers. The show was well attended, and there were good lectures.”

Galen Lowe of Seattle is a 12-year Fall show veteran. “The mix is changing,” he told M.A.D. What’s new? “More art—paintings, prints, canvases, more contemporary. The appeal is to a younger crowd. At the party, where people were dressed to impress, the food was as good as ever. There was a caviar station!” Lowe’s appeal to a young crowd included Train Box Car, a “massive [33” long] pressed steel 20th-century toy boxcar...with 2019 tags and monikers of contemporary artists/graffiti artists.” Lowe was asking $4800 for the boxcar.
Mid-century modern specialist Michael DeAngelis, whose shop is on Valencia Street, one of San Francisco’s hottest shopping neighborhoods, was asking $1800 for the English 1960s leather bulldog footrest. The Danish rosewood chair by “star designer” Ole Wanscher (1903-1985) cost $12,000. “The show is evolving,” three-year veteran exhibitor and longtime show attendee DeAngelis said.

This Chippendale carved mahogany wing chair, Philadelphia circa 1770, 27⅜” high, was $68,500 from Roberto Freitas of Stonington, Connecticut.

Dallas tribal art dealer Joel Cooner was offering just a few pieces of tribal art at this show and was featuring more fine art instead. He described the show now as “more designer” and had stocked his booth with that in mind. This painting by Jean-Marc Louis (Belgian, b. 1959), from the “Giraffe” series, 2018, acrylic and conté crayon on paper applied to board, 33” x 25” framed, was priced at $5800.

Antiques dealer Daniel Stein from San Francisco’s Jackson Square asked $3850 for this 86½” high Irish George III inlaid mahogany tall clock made by John Mackie of Richhill. Stein described it as 18th century and later.

Five-year show veteran Rainforest Baskets Gallery, Portland, Oregon, was selling baskets made in Panama, hoping to get recognition for individual weavers. The 12” x 14” basket at top by Niyra Nefria took 13 months to weave and was $4200. The 10” x 7” basket in front by a Wounaan weaver took six months to weave and was $1290. The third basket was not for sale. Asked why the booth was always busy, the dealer credited “a contemporary look and an approachable price range.”

This gilded beechwood Art Deco bergère “in Louis XVI taste,” Paris, circa 1920, was priced at $9500 by James Sansum of New York City. “Always a great show, the main show on the West Coast,” said the five-year veteran. “The town really supports it. And I love that it supports a charity.” The show is an annual benefit for Enterprise for Youth, an intern/mentoring program for high school students.

Eze et la Cap Ferrat by Gabriel Deschamps (b. 1919), oil on canvas, 28½” x 36½”, was $33,000 from Haynes Fine Art, Broadway and London, England.

This screen is by Jesus “Chucho” Reyes Ferreira (1882-1977), “the greatest Jalisco artist from the 20th century,” who has been called “the Mexican Chagall.” The 77.55” x 86.6” four-panel screen is painted in oil on both sides and was priced at $110,000 by Rodrigo Rivero Lake, Mexico City.

Business seemed brisk at the booth of Foster-Gwin Art & Antiques, San Francisco, where new paintings were being hung mid-show. Shown here is an untitled work by Kazuko Inoue (b. 1946). The 40” x 70” acrylic on canvas from 2000 was priced at $22,000.

This gilded beechwood Art Deco bergère “in Louis XVI taste,” Paris, circa 1920, was priced at $9500 by James Sansum of New York City. “Always a great show, the main show on the West Coast,” said the five-year veteran. “The town really supports it. And I love that it supports a charity.” The show is an annual benefit for Enterprise for Youth, an intern/mentoring program for high school students.