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Writing about the San Francisco Art Scene

### [San Francisco's New York Armory Week](#)

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Last week, [Armory](#) and its counterpart satellite fairs including [Volta](#), [Pulse](#), and [The Art Show](#) took over New York City, attracting thousands more art lovers to the already Mecca-like metropolis for art afficianados. There was mention in a few articles covering the event that there was not only a fewer number of New York City galleries participating, but also a greater amount of international galleries taking central positions in the fair. We also noticed this observation true for San Francisco and Bay Area galleries, as more San Francisco galleries participated this year and attracting lots of attention.

Pulse Art Fair in the Chelsea district was practically elbow to elbow only 15 minutes after opening its doors. At this fair we saw the largest concentration of San Francisco-based galleries. Of some fifty galleries participating, San Francisco's contribution included [Baer Ridgway](#), [Michael Rosenthal](#), [Fouladi Projects](#), and [Jenkins Johnson](#) galleries. We were so happy to hear Baer Ridgway was recently voted the [#1 Must-See booth at Pulse Art Fair](#). Baer Ridgway's well-curated booth with only one artist, far from looking bare, truly allowed the artwork by once Oakland artist [Cassandra C. Jones](#) to reach the audience. Its strength arose from its minimalist composition in contrast to its strong subject matter and intellectual acuity. [Fouladi Projects](#) is a newish gallery in San Francisco, owners Holly Fouladi and Hope Bryson are formally from [Lincart](#) in SOMA. Further into the fair, the Fouladi Projects booth, although exhibiting disparate artists working in myriad mediums maintained a consistent vision of contemporary art.

At Volta NY, located directly across from the [Empire State building](#), we saw far more galleries from the SF Bay Area than 2010. What sets Volta apart from the other fairs is art dealers and galleries must choose one artist to represent at their booth. Each SF gallery was very positive about the attendance of the fair, and the artist whom they chose to represent. [Marx and Zattero](#) booth was packed with attentive audiences gazing at artwork by [Bradley Castellanos](#). Castellanos had a solo show at M&Z this time last year. Combining painting and photography and implementing cutouts and collage, Castellanos' work can be interpreted as an attempt to "create a world composed of disjointed moments." [Jeremy Mora](#) at [Mark Wolfe Contemporary](#) creates intricate miniature sculptures similar to terrariums, dominated by verdant landscapes overpowering the smaller man-made architectural elements like gazebos, bridges, and houses. Mora explains his work is a "relationship between the conceptual underpinnings of the idealized miniature and the evolving relationship between man and nature." [Johansson Projects](#) of Oakland chose [Jennie Ottinger](#) again, who added a new element to her work from last year at VoltaNY. She typically creates roughly-drawn retro-

looking figures semi-painted on canvas, evoking ideas of memory while commenting on ideas of perception and the past. This year she added a series of manipulated book art where she re-creates both the book front with her own artwork, and cuts out pages inside to add her own playful commentary and subjective synopsis of the tale. In this way, she plays with the idea of the necessity of the arts and literature, and yet conscious that our fast-paced world may not allow the time these arts have typically demanded to be appreciated.

At Armory Piers 92 and 94, not only were there more San Francisco galleries at the larger, more contemporary art centered Pier 94: [Rena Bransten](#), [Ratio 3](#), and [Altman Siegel](#), but also [Frey Norris](#) gallery showing at Pier 92, typically “dedicated to international dealers specializing in historically significant modern and contemporary art.” Frey Norris showed [Wolfgang Paalen](#), an Austrian artist whose first solo show was at the [SEMOMA](#) in 1950, representing the significance of San Francisco to the artist’s prominent, but short career. They also received a mention in the New York Times’ [Armory Week review](#) by Roberta Smith, commenting on the strength of Paalen’s artwork and the gallery’s exhibition of it. Frey Norris is very excited about their new gallery location at 161 Jessie Street, but haven’t had much time to be there. Immediately from New York they will be in Dubai for the [Art Dubai](#) faire next week.

We were so pleased to find a growing interest and further prominence of San Francisco galleries in New York during one of the biggest art fairs in the world on the arts calendar. The further attention that will be garnered nationally and internationally will work in tandem with all that continues to evolve and grow in San Francisco and the Bay Area. Observing the greater role San Francisco artists, museums, and galleries are currently playing in the art world and the short amount of time in which it has come, we can only anticipate what will ensue next year at Armory Week for the San Francisco Bay Area.

