

THE SURE SIGN OF A GOOD TIME

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Gallery-hopping in the summertime

Fine Arts

by Sura Wood

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A Volcano Millions of Years Ago, a Rock with Eensy-Beensie Holes (2010) by Mary Anne Kluth: C-Print on aluminum. (Photo: Courtesy of the artist and Frey Norris Contemporary & Modern)

Unlike in NYC, San Francisco gallery owners don't pack up and head for the Hamptons when July hits. Summer in the city here means galleries – and special programs at select museums – hopping with edgy work by emerging and veteran talent, from downtown and the South Bay to the Mission and SoMa.

Frey Norris Visitor Center: Since Frey Norris moved into their new digs, a dramatic, ultra-modern, architecturally renovated space in the Yerba Buena arts district, the works shown there – and visitors – have benefited from the stripped-down yet theatrical setting. It's an ideal backdrop for Mary Anne Kluth's latest project: a re-creation/fantasy hybrid, which draws on dioramas, theme parks and taxonomy for a faux natural history museum whose fabricated props, fog machines, fake cactus, painted geologic specimens, and gauzy landscape displays are supported by totally unreliable information. Kluth utilizes photographs, painting, sculptures and the rock collection of her geologist father for an imaginary trek through earth history, and a meditation on our unknowable immediate families. *Through August 27.* www.freynorris.com

Ratio 3 Margaret Kilgallen: Unheralded Bay Area artist Margaret Kilgallen, who died at age 33 of breast cancer a decade ago, excelled at personal, handmade art. Influenced by American folk art, letterpress printing and mural and sign painting, Kilgallen, along with her husband and collaborator Barry McGee and Chris Johanson, was part of the Mission School that emerged in the late 1990s. (She was also a graffiti artist who went by the tags "Meta" and "Matokie Slaughter.") Working by hand in gouache and acrylic on discarded papers like brown bags and book pages, she was partial to the imperfection – and the humanity – of the results. On view are paintings on canvas that are cut and stitched together, and works on paper of trees, leaves, full lips, female figures and at least one airplane. *Through August 5.* www.ratio3.org

Chandler Fine Art Closed Patterns: The untamed wilderness, mythical beasts, a palette of intensely vibrant colors and the golden light of his native Kenya inform Jesse Allen's multifaceted watercolors and prints. Before his breakthrough exhibition at Stanford in the 1960s, Allen, a self-taught artist, sketched rural areas and the East African flora and fauna of his youth. Those motifs prevail in

detailed, maze-like landscapes teeming with life. One enters a magical kingdom of circuitous trails, multiple scorching suns hanging in endless skies, lush palms and blood-red trees, splendid creatures, predatory birds cruising in packs and exotic imagery distilled in the artist's mind. They're visions of a prehistoric Eden promising beauty and terror, death and innocence before the fall, safely enclosed within the borders of a picture frame. *Through July 30.* www.chandlersf.com

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