

[ART NERD HOLIDAY GUIDE \(HTTP://WWW.KQED.ORG/ARTS/SERIES/ART-NERD-HOLIDAY-GUIDE/\)](http://www.kqed.org/arts/series/art-nerd-holiday-guide/)

## Art's Not Dead: 15 New Projects and Spaces in the Bay Area



Installation view of José León Cerrillo, 2014; Courtesy of Kiria Koula

By **Sarah Hotchkiss**

NOVEMBER 18, 2014

At the November 6 opening of Kiria Koula, a brand new art space in the Mission, the atmosphere was undeniably optimistic. “It feels like things are good, right?” a friend asked. With its well-executed installations, pristine walls and the kind of crisp fluorescent lighting that lends any space an air of credibility, could the Kiria Koula opening, along with a flurry of other new projects, spaces, expansions and initiatives that popped up in the past year, mean all is not lost?

Here are 15 counterarguments for those who think the Bay Area art scene is dwindling. Some are fledgling spaces, others expansions of preexisting projects. Many are dematerialized, a telling marker of the still impossibly high Bay Area rents. A smattering are commercial, but most are run out of pocket. Have other suggestions for burgeoning arts-related endeavors? Leave them in the comments section below!

### **ampersand international arts**

1001 Tennessee Street, San Francisco

[ampersandinternationalarts.com \(http://www.ampersandinternationalarts.com/\)](http://www.ampersandinternationalarts.com/)

Founded in 1999 by Bruno Mauro, ampersand international arts is a contemporary art gallery in San Francisco’s Dogpatch neighborhood. Closed for several years after Mauro’s passing, ampersand reopened in September 2014 under the direction of his daughter, Theodora Mauro. “With so many galleries closing or moving out of San Francisco,” she says, “I decided this was the right time to make sure there is another venue for exhibitions and experimentation in the arts.” The first exhibition was an homage to the gallery’s past — each of the seven artists exhibited previously in the space. Reconfigured in this group exhibition, the artists usher in a new era while attesting to the lasting (and continuing) influence of ampersand on the Bay Area arts community.



Courtesy of Archive and Kala Art Institute

## Archive

[archive-project.com \(http://archive-project.com/\)](http://archive-project.com/)

Archive is a collection of books sourced from the personal libraries of notable people. Asking participants to identify the guides, sources of inspiration or points of reference for their own creative practices, Archive puts the tomes on view, creating a library that is as much an exhibition as it is the foundation for artistic activity in the Bay Area. September through October 2014, Archive lived as a pop-up at Berkeley's Kala Art Institute, part of the [Print Public Program \(http://www.kala.org/print\\_public/\)](http://www.kala.org/print_public/). Though Archive is currently a roving project, founder and organizer Lacey Haslam hopes to open a permanent location and provide public access to the books. Until then, look forward to more pop-ups in 2015 and a growing online catalog.

## The Bay Area Art Workers Alliance

[bayareaartworkersalliance.org \(http://www.bayareaartworkersalliance.org/\)](http://www.bayareaartworkersalliance.org/)

With the aurally-pleasing acronym BAAWA, the Bay Area Art Workers Alliance is a support network of laborers involved in the installation and fabrication of art exhibitions. Founder Aurora Crispin points out, "As the Bay Area economic surge/displacement/fissure/debate continues to bubble up and ooze in a variety of forms, the wild call for solidarity among artists as mutual supporters of one another becomes more crucial." Interested? Visit the BAAWA site and stay tuned for the next meeting at [Omni Commons \(https://omnicommons.org/\)](https://omnicommons.org/) later this month.

## c2c project space

1695 18th Street #413, San Francisco  
[c2cprojectspace.com \(http://c2cprojectspace.com/\)](http://c2cprojectspace.com/)

Run out of the San Francisco apartment of artist Kirk Stoller, c2c pairs a New York City artist with a local counterpart in a two-person show. Part residency program, part exchange program, part artist workspace and part exhibition space, c2c is a unique hybrid. "It is important for artists to support each other as it gets more difficult to live and create," says Stoller. "I thought that having a way for artists from different cities to be introduced to each others' work might allow for not only the sharing of ideas, but also help the work get seen by others beyond the immediate communities." The next project (the space's fifth) features work by NY artist Tamara Zahaykevich and SF artist Amanda Huguen with an opening on February 21, 2015.



Detail of work by Lana Williams in *Trapper Keeper*, 2014; Courtesy of City Limits

### City Limits

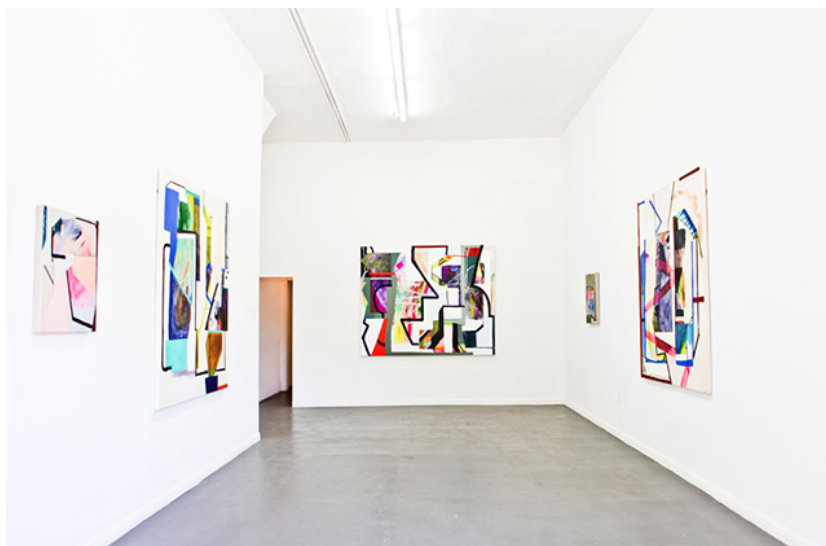
300 Jefferson Street, Oakland  
[citylimitsgallery.com](http://citylimitsgallery.com/) (<http://citylimitsgallery.com/>)

Though City Limits has technically been around since March 2012, when it operated as an apartment gallery in the Outer Mission, in December 2013 it reopened as a white-walled artist-run gallery space in Oakland's Jack London Square. For each exhibition, artists are asked to show brand new work in deviation from their usual art practice. The results range from a 60-person group show to an installation with 4,000 pounds of small rocks covering the gallery floor (a.k.a. consistently exciting). For curators Evan Reiser and Stephanie Rohlf, both SFAI MFA alums, there is a real need for "more spaces to serve the quantity and quality of artists working here." Continually experimenting with new ways of funding the project, City Limits will soon boast a flat files program and an online store, launching in December 2014.

### Congratulations Pine Tree

[congratulationspinetree.blogspot.com](http://congratulationspinetree.blogspot.com/) (<http://congratulationspinetree.blogspot.com/>)

Congratulations Pine Tree is the self-proclaimed number one arts and culture podcast in the Bay Area. More specifically, it's artist Kate Rhoades and curator Maysoun Wazwaz chatting about any number of arts-related subjects, from W.A.G.E. certification (<http://wageforwork.com/calculator/>) to interviews with local artists. While listening to podcasts in her studio, Rhoades recalls, "It was frustrating that most focused on art were based in New York or Chicago, and didn't have much content relevant to the Bay Area." For Wazwaz, the project started while conversations about tech's negative influence on the Bay Area were at their height. "The podcast became a way for us to voice our concerns and frustrations with what's been going on, but through an arts perspective," Wazwaz says. CPT is charming, opinionated and asking all the right questions — highly recommended.



## CULT | Aimee Friberg Exhibitions

3191 Mission Street, San Francisco  
[cultexhibitions.com](http://cultexhibitions.com/) (<http://cultexhibitions.com/>)

Occupying the former Queen's Nails space, CULT is a commercial gallery showing emerging and mid-career artists in drawing, video, performance, installation, sculpture and painting. "Like any good cult," director Aimee Friberg writes, "I hope CULT is a place where people feel an identification or a sense of belonging." With its first year anniversary party coming up later in November, CULT continues to be a meeting place for artists and their audiences in the midst of more formalized presentations.



(<http://ww2.kqed.org/arts/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/11/kiriakoula.jpg>)

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Courtesy of Kiria Koula

## Kiria Koula

3148 22nd Street, San Francisco  
[kiriakoula.com](http://www.kiriakoula.com/) (<http://www.kiriakoula.com/>)

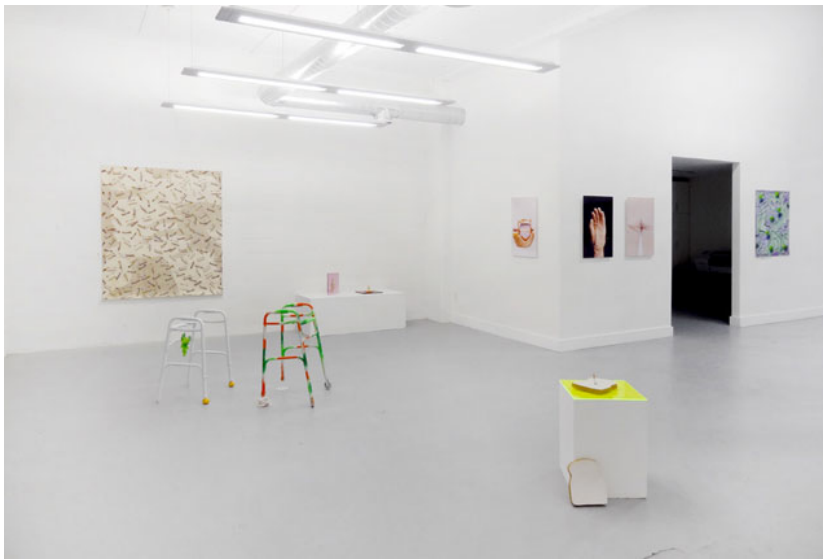
Kiria Koula is a brand new gallery and bookstore in the Mission dedicated to contemporary art and ideas. The exhibitions feature new works by national and international emerging and mid-career artists while the bookstore space hosts an artist's current research interests. Now on view: playful graphic sculptures by José León Cerrillo (based in Mexico City), video and installation works by Ilja Karilampi (based in Berlin) and a collection of books from New York artist Paul Chan. According to director and curator Juana Berrío, "The Bay Area needs places to see and talk about contemporary art. I hope Kiria Koula can be a place where artists, writers, collectors, curators, scholars and students can come to spend some time with art and exchange ideas on a regular basis." If the opening night attendance is any indication, this was the gathering place many were waiting for.

## The Lab

2948 16th Street, San Francisco  
[thelab.org](http://www.thelab.org/) (<http://www.thelab.org/>)

The Lab is old in terms of this list (30 years old), but it's about to become new. Under the leadership of new Executive Director Dena Beard, The Lab is currently raising money to finish an ambitious restoration project, bringing the space closer to its original identity as a union meeting hall. The Lab's experimental approach to programming extends to its fundraising efforts, including last weekend's successful *24-Hour Telethon*. Beard's call to action is undeniable: "The Lab has been a hub of avant-garde activity, alongside Kiki, New Langton Arts, Jack Hanley and others. Now, it stands alone in the homogenous condo-village that once was the great city of San Francisco. The Lab will model the alternative, investing in artists, providing artists with the resources and space they need to change the rules of the game. If we focus on that freedom all else will follow."





(<http://www.kqed.org/arts/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/11/moroso.jpg>)

Courtesy of Moroso Projects

### Moroso Projects

582 6th Street, San Francisco

[moroso-projects.tumblr.com](http://moroso-projects.tumblr.com/) (<http://moroso-projects.tumblr.com/>)

Moroso Projects is an alternative exhibition space occupying the SOMA lobby of Moroso Construction. Co-curator Nate Hooper notes the importance of having their own domain, “A big part of the curating we’ve tried to do at Moroso is about assembling cohesive, experiential and visually rhythmic exhibitions... Having a space to showcase these visual and spacial dialogues has been integral.” Showing experimental emerging artists without the financial pressures of running a commercial gallery, Moroso Projects offers a different approach to the white-walled space, a symbiotic one for both gallery and business host.

### Park Life Gallery

3049 22nd Street, San Francisco

[parklifestore.com/gallery](http://www.parklifestore.com/gallery/) (<http://www.parklifestore.com/gallery/>)

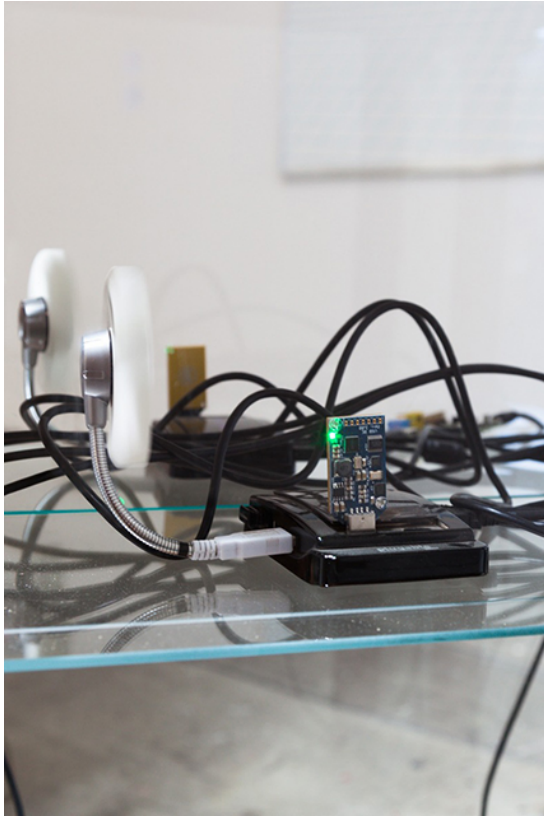
In March 2014, the Inner Richmond destination Park Life opened a second retail location in the Mission, but quickly realized they had a unique opportunity to convert this locale into a self-contained gallery. This shift allowed them to maximize retail space on Clement Street while creating a dedicated space for exhibitions. “Even though we miss the gallery aspect of our Clement Street store,” co-owner Jamie Alexander notes, “we are a part of something bigger in the Mission art community.” Coming up next: a ceramics show featuring Paul Wackers and Jessica Hans.



Installation view *Robb Putnam: Foundlings*, 2014; Photo by John Janca, Courtesy of Rena Bransten Projects

### Rena Bransten Projects

In 2014, Rena Bransten Gallery relocated from 77 Geary, its home for 27 years, to a space on Market Street. According to the gallery's website: "Re-opening as Rena Bransten Projects, the focus of the program will shift to site-specific installations and explorations of non-traditional exhibition models." Gallery programming continued from one space to the other almost completely uninterrupted, save for a brief period during the move. Director Trish Bransten attests to the importance of remaining publicly accessible: "Art is a public good, and the opportunity to have an authentic experience physically is a rapidly diminishing opportunity. Art galleries are free, with the directors and employees accessible to discuss the work; art galleries are a community builder."



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Detail view of Daniel Bouthot's installation *La Machine Célibataire No. 2*; Courtesy of Service Industries

## Service Industries

[serviceindustries.org \(http://serviceindustries.org/\)](http://serviceindustries.org/)

Billed as "a working gallery for working artists," Service Industries is a proposed series of galleries inside bars, restaurants, hotels and other public venues that display art by artists with jobs in the service industry. Open source in nature, the pilot Service Industries installation is a four-tiered glass case inside the Inner Sunset's Little Shamrock bar. Featuring a bitcoin project by artist Daniel Bouthot curated by Marion Cousin, the "sculpture" makes money through rapid online transactions, to be shared with the bar's service staff as tip income. Co-founders David Kasprzak and Luca Antonucci note, "Artists in the current climate work several day jobs to be able to continue living in the Bay, and we would like to honor that rather than looking at working a day job as something to be ashamed of." Next up, an installation at Rock Bar and a second show at the Little Shamrock, featuring artist and service industry worker Lindsay Tully.