

Art

By **Kenneth Baker**

CHRONICLE ART CRITIC

High: “Kurt Schwitters: Color and Collage.” This traveling exhibition, hosted by the Berkeley Art Museum, may have offered more surprises even to knowledgeable visitors than any other museum show in an unusually stimulating year.

Low: “Bay Area Now 6.” Yerba Buena Center for the Arts’ triennial temperature-taking survey ventured little and clarified nothing of the local art landscape.

Most improved: “The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.” have made everyone take them seriously again as venues for and partners in substantial, unpredictable exhibitions.

MVP: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art senior curator Janet Bishop, for the deep research and delicate negotiations that brought us “The Steins Collect,” a feast of an exhibition.

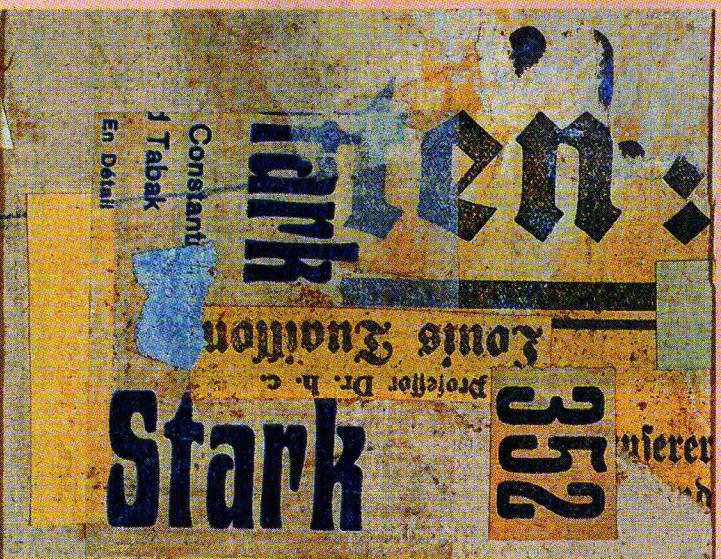
Top 10

Tony May: Old Technology The San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art honored a half-hidden treasure of the Bay Area art scene, a “conceptual craftsman” whose art emerges — sometimes not very far — from house renovation.

Michael C. McMillen: Train of Thought As his swan song project, Oakland Museum of California curator Philip Linhares entertainingly surveyed his Southern Californian friend Michael McMillen’s prolific invention.

Create The Berkeley Art Museum discovered startling gems — fully deserving of museum exposure — in the output of three Bay Area art programs for people with developmental disabilities.

The Steins Collect: Matisse, Picasso and the Parisian Avant-Garde Reconstructing and expanding a pathbreaking 1970 New York exhibition, the San Francisco



Janet Woodward / Menil Collection, Houston

“MZ11 Starkbild (MZA1 Strong Picture)” (1919) was part of the Berkeley Art Museum’s “Kurt Schwitters: Color and Collage.” The traveling exhibition was a highlight of the year’s visual arts scene.

Museum of Modern Art’s sampling of the collections of Gertrude Stein and family brought to town a wealth of great modern artworks and even daringly traced the decline of Stein’s acquisitive eye.

Picasso: Masterpieces From the Musée National Picasso, Paris The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco offered an education in the roots of 20th century modernism with this survey of works that its titanic early innovator kept for himself.

Dutch and Flemish Masterworks From the Rose-Marie and Eijk van Oterloo Collection The Fine Arts Museums scored again with the loan of a remarkable private collection — formed in the past decade — of paintings and prints from the artistic Golden Age of the Netherlands.

The Mourners: Tomb Sculptures From the Court of Burgundy The Legion of Honor gives a somber, arresting presentation (through Sat.) to this ensemble of small, masterly marble carvings from the tomb of a 14th century Burgundian duke.

Rodin and America: Influence and Adaptation, 1876-1936

Building on its stature as a repository of Auguste Rodin’s sculpture, Stanford’s Cantor Arts Center organized this novel study exhibition (through Jan. 1) of challenges the French master posed to a generation of younger American artists.

Richard Serra Drawing The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art hosts (through Jan. 16) the first drawing retrospective of a native son, enhancing and illuminating it with his sculpture as no other venue on its tour has or will.

Masters of Venice: Renaissance Painters of Passion and Power From the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna Yet again the

Fine Arts Museums have brought to the de Young (through Feb. 12) an ensemble of works — this time by luminaries such as Titian, Giorgione, Tintoretto and Veronese — that anyone with an interest in European art tradition must see. ■

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