

Arts R Us: TL is city's hottest art venue

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

THE Tenderloin's arts scene is shaping up as hot, hot, hot this fall. EXIT Theatre's annual two-week Fringe Festival opens Sept. 9. The city's "Arts in Storefronts" is recruiting artists to fill 13 vacant storefronts with their works for a five-month run also starting next month. Two more murals are on tap, at 101 Hyde and 191 Golden Gate, courtesy of the Tenderloin Community Benefit District and Clean City.

And now there's Wonderland, the monthlong, CBD-sponsored arts show with at least 40 artists creating 10 or more multimedia installations or events all over the neighborhood.

"With Taylor Street being revitalized as an arts corridor and Gray Area Foundation for the Arts officially opening in October [at 55 Taylor], it feels like we're reaching a tipping point for the arts in the Tenderloin," Grants for the Arts Director Kary Schulman told The Extra.

Wonderland is a nice fit with everything else that's going on. It started as an abstract concept, not even visualized for a particular San Francisco neighborhood, said curator Lance Fung, but it's quickly drawing in the community, artists and residents alike.

At a July 9 outreach meeting, one of the first questions was, What's behind the name?

Fung said last year he was guest-teaching a graduate seminar at the S.F. Art Institute and had assigned the students to create three site-specific installations. They chose the Tenderloin. The name Wonderland came up during a brainstorming session. It worked right away, Fung said.

"It wasn't artspeak, it evokes a visceral response, it's showy and a little seedy."

The class assignment has evolved into a full-fledged show. Fifteen of the artists are recent MFAs from the Art Institute, California College of the Arts and the Academy of Art University, the rest established and emerging professionals from San Francisco and beyond.

The kickoff will be a party Oct. 17 in Boeddeker Park, with the free exhibitions, some stationary, some moving around the hood, through Nov. 14.

Wonderland is an eclectic show, hard to define. But Fung — a Bay Area native who moved East and founded Fung Collaboratives in Manhattan's trendy SoHo — tried to generalize: "The projects, most of them ephemeral, will range from performance to sound to light to conceptual pieces to visual arts."

Fung believes the key to Wonderland's success will be its scale. He calls the neighborhood "a big place with a long and rich history and an uncertain future. It's an intellectually fascinating blank canvas, truly authentic, gritty and wonderful."

Wonderlandshow.org, has descriptions and photos of all the projects. A sampling:

- Sound artist Ranu Mukherjee, who teaches at California College of the Arts, is recruiting residents



"Offstage," proposed animatronic sleeping bags on Golden Gate Theatre balconies, melds street life and theater arts.

for "Tender Transmissions," to sing and record songs, a cappella, that express their cultures, languages, experiences, interests.

The songs and other audio pieces will be broadcast daily via a one-watt radio transmitter for reception within a one-mile radius around the Luggage Store Annex's Tenderloin National Forest at 509 Ellis, the audio project's operational base. Listeners can pick up the Tenderloin Play List on cell phones, tune to a specific radio frequency or hear the broadcast at 509 Ellis and "listening stations." EXIT Theatre's Eddy Street lobby and the 222 Hyde club are two possibilities, Mukherjee said.

The first three residents were recorded July 10: Rachelle Brookes sang Sam Cooke's "Change Is Gonna Come," Molly Rosenberg sang "To Teberith," a song she wrote while living in Asmara, Ethiopia, and Jawanza Bomani Saunders sang "Be Not Grieved," a tribute to Michael Jackson. Other "Tender Transmissions" artists plan to record the sounds at neighborhood intersections, a play based on interviews with strippers, and Glide youth reading their poetry.

- "Home Away from Home" artists have asked kids at the Boys & Girls Club on Jones Street and TNDC's after-school program to draw their ideas for "a house that moves." The artists will build one portable composite of the fantasy abodes, moving it twice a week to various indoors or outdoors locations. Audiences will view the model, pick up postcards illustrated with the children's drawings, pen a note on the flip side of and mail the postcards to friends, extending the project beyond the Tenderloin.

"One house that's already been drawn is an ice cream cone on wheels," said Wonderland Director John Melvin, who is on this project team. "I'm not sure how we'd build it."

- An installation called "Offstage," dramatically lit, animatronic, cocoon-like sleeping bags mounted on the five Golden Gate Theatre balconies, which look real in the artists' rendering, is still in the talking stage, according to Anne Abrams, who handles PR for SHN (Shorenstein, Hays, Nederlander), owner of the Curran, Golden Gate and Orpheum theaters.

The Website calls the sleeping bags "the iconic object of [transients'] difficult existence" — artspeak for homelessness — and the installation a representation of the "theatricality" of street life.

- "Down the Rabbit Hole" is to be a room in an SRO, as yet unidentified, that will be furnished to replicate where a young female sex slave might live. A clip from Disney's "Alice in Wonderland" will play on a TV in the room, and on the ceiling a video loop will project film shot by the artists — a 12-year-old girl "playing in the park projected into a crib symbolizing a stolen childhood," says the Web description.

Fung is still inviting more artists to participate, though he doesn't want Wonderland to get too unwieldy, he says, especially because it's a "100% volunteer effort of artists and organizers." He says he's more accustomed to curating multimillion-dollar exhibitions such as "The Snow Show" for the

2006 Winter Olympics in Italy and "Lucky Number Seven" for Santa Fe's 2008 Biennial.

Many organization have signed on to help with the show. Hospitality House is involved in three ways, says Director Jackie Jenks: Its Community Arts Program will host a workshop led by one of the show's artists, its two storefront windows will display Wonderland installations, and Hospitality House will train docents.

"The idea is that people who live in the community — in housing units, on the streets, in shelters —



Oscar Lopez, 11, drew this cool mobile home at the TL Boys & Girls Clubhouse for the "Home Away from Home" installation.

sign up to be docents for art installed in an area where they hang out or live," Jenks said. "We'll put out a call for docents and train those who sign up about the particular art they're representing."

The CBD has put up \$7,500 to cover some promotion costs, said Manager Elaine Zamora — \$5,000 of it is from a Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development grant. The CBD has tossed another \$2,500 into the pot for promotion and has arranged for Wonderland admin to be housed in

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



PHOTO BY RANU MUKHERJEE

Rachelle Brookes records her Sam Cooke song for the audio project "Tender Transmissions."

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SPECIAL EVENTS

National Night Out, Boeddeker Park, Aug. 4, 5-8 p.m. Tenderloin Station police host the annual crime- and drug-prevention event, featuring information on local anti-crime programs, food and games for residents, a kids' parade. Info: Sgt. Gaetano Callagironi, 345-7340.

16th Annual Pistahan Parade and Festival, Aug. 8-9. Largest celebration of Filipino arts, culture, cuisine. Aug. 8 opening ceremonies at Beale and Market, 10 a.m., Market St. parade at 11 a.m. ends at Yerba Buena Gardens. Free festivities: Adobo Cook-off, balut-eating contest, pavilions with Filipino cuisine and desserts, cultural exhibits, and the 2nd annual San Francisco Filipino American Jazz Festival. Info: pistahan.net/about/index.html; Gerard Talampas, 218-5664, or Richelle Mae Ruiz, 260-4380.

Survive & Thrive, free seminar for District 6 small business owners about managing during the downturn, Aug. 12, 6-8 p.m., Conference Room A, Main Library. Presented by Culture Connections and San Francisco SCORE. Contact Quentin Fininen, qf.qinc@gmail.com or 260-1870.

Boeddeker "Saturdays in the Park." The park will be open seven Saturdays Aug. 1 through October, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Next day is Aug. 15. Staffing paid by Friends of Boeddeker Park with its Innovator Award from the San Francisco Parks Trust.

ART EVENTS

Concerts at Boeddeker Park, noon-1 p.m. Aug. 13, Franco Nero Jamaican ska band led by trombonist Scott Larson; Aug. 27, North Beach Brass Band. Concerts made possible by TL Benefit District's \$1,500 grant to Friends of Boeddeker Park.

Monthly art lecture series, hosted by visual artist and educator Stephen Wagner, and sponsored by TL Benefit District, 134 Golden Gate, Suite A, 7-9 p.m. Aug. 11: Creating Alternative Venues for Your Artwork. \$10 per session, at www.SFArtistNetwork.org.

Concerts at the Cadillac, once a month on Fridays, 12:30 p.m., Cadillac Hotel, 380 Eddy St. Sponsored by the hotel and the TL Benefit District. Schedule: nom-tlcbd.org/ld71.html or Elaine Zamora, 292-4812.

At EXIT Theatre, both through Aug. 15, 156 Eddy: "The Unexpected Man," a comedy by Tony Award-winning Yasmina Reza, director Stephen Drewes, a presentation of Spare Stage. Tickets: \$20. Info: sparestage.com and sffringe.org. Aaron

Trotter and the "Incident at Bikini Beach," by KFOG's Peter Finch, directed by Jeremy Cole, a Thunderbird Theatre presentation. Tickets: \$18-22. Info: www.thunderbirdtheatre.com.

COMMUNITY: REGULAR SCHEDULE HOUSING

Supportive Housing Network, 3rd Thursday of the month, 3-5 p.m., location TBA. Contact: Kendra Fuller, 421-2926 x304.

Tenant Associations Coalition of San Francisco, 1st Wednesday of the month, noon, 201 Turk, Community Room. Contact Michael Nulty, 339-8327. Resident unity, leadership training.

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

CBHS Consumer Council, 3rd Monday of the month, 5-7 p.m., CBHS, 1380 Howard, room 537. Call: 255-3695. Advisory group of consumers from self-help organizations and other mental health consumer advocates. Open to the public.

Health & Wellness Action Advocates, 1st Tuesday of the month, 5-7 p.m., Mental Health Assoc., 870 Market, Suite 928. 421-2926 x306.

Healthcare Action Team, 2nd Wednesday of the month, Quaker Center, 65 Ninth St., noon-1:30 p.m. Focus on increasing supportive home and community-based services, expanded eligibility for home care and improved discharge planning. Light lunch served. Call James Chionsini, 703-0188 x304.

Hoarders and Clutterers Support Group, Mental Health Association, 870 Market, Suite 928. Call for dates and times: 421-2926 x306.

Mental Health Board, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., City Hall, room 278. CBHS advisory committee, open to the public. Call: 255-3474.

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill-S.F., 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Family Service Agency, 1010 Gough, 5th Fl. Call: 905-6264. Family member group, open to the public.

SAFETY

Safety for Women in the Tenderloin, every 3rd Wednesday, Central City SRO Collaborative, 449 Turk St., 4-6 p.m. Informal, friendly environment, refreshments, gender sensitive to LGBTQ community and sex workers. Discuss how to make Tenderloin SROs safer for women. Information: Alexandra Goldman, volunteer campaign coordinator, 775-7110 x102.

Neighborhood Emergency Response Team Training (NERT), Central city residents can take the S.F. Fire Department's free disaster preparedness and response training at neighborhood locations. See www.sfgov.org/sffdnert, or call LL Arteseros, 970-2022.

SoMa Police Community Relations Forum, 4th Monday of the month, 6-7:30 p.m. Location varies. To receive monthly e-mail

info: Meital Amitai, 538-8100 x202 or mamital@list.org.

Tenderloin Police Station Community Meeting, last Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m., police station Community Room, 301 Eddy. Call Susa Black, 345-7300. Neighborhood safety.

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT

Alliance for a Better District 6, 2nd Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m., 230 Eddy. Contact Michael Nulty, 820-1560 or sf_district6@yahoo.com, a districtwide improvement association.

Boeddeker Park cleanup, 3rd Saturday of the month, 9-noon, organized by the Friends of Boeddeker Park. To RSVP to work or for information, call Betty Traynor, 931-1126.

Central City Democrats, meets four times a year, 301 Eddy St. Community Room. Information: 339-VOTE (8683) or centralcitydemocrats@yahoo.com.

Central Market Community Benefit District, board meets 2nd Tuesday of the month, 989 Market St., 3rd Fl., 3 p.m. Information: 882-3088, http://central-market.org.

Community Leadership Alliance, Monthly meetings and informational forums, Tenderloin Police Station community room. David Villa-Lobos, admin@communityleadershipalliance.net

Friends of Boeddeker Park, 2nd Thursday of the month, 3:30 p.m., Boeddeker Rec Center, 240 Eddy. Plan park events, activities and improvements. Contact Betty Traynor, 931-1126.

Gene Friend Recreation Center Advisory Board, 3rd Thursday of the month, 5 p.m. Board works to protect SoMa resources for children, youth, families and adults. Gene Friend Recreation Center, 270 Sixth St. Information: 538-8100 x202.

North of Market Planning Coalition. Contact David Baker, 771-4765, for information.

North of Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District. Call District Manager Elaine Zamora for times and dates, 292-4812.

SoMa Leadership Council, 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m., The Arc, 1500 Howard St. at 11th. Emphasizes good planning and good government to maintain a diverse, vibrant, complete neighborhood. Contact: Jim Meko, 624-4309 or jim.meko@comcast.net.

South of Market Project Area Committee, 3rd Monday of the month, 6 p.m., 1035 Folsom, between 6th & 7th sts. Health, Safety and Human Services Committee meets monthly on the first Tuesday after the first Monday, 1035 Folsom, noon. Information: 487-2166 or www.sompac.com.

Tenderloin Futures Collaborative, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 10 a.m., Tenderloin Police Station community room, 301 Eddy. Call 358-3956 for information. Network of residents, nonprofits and businesses taking on neighborhood development issues.

SENIORS AND DISABLED

Mayor's Disability Council, 3rd Friday of the month, 1-3 p.m., City Hall, room 400. Call: 554-6789. Open to the public.

Senior Action Network, general meeting, second Thursday, 10 a.m.-noon, St. Mary's Cathedral. Monthly committee meetings, 965 Mission #700: Pedestrian Safety, third Wednesday, 10 a.m.; Senior Housing Action, third Wednesday, 1:30; Information: 546-1333 and www.senioractionnetwork.org.


COMING SOON!

TIP-TOP Grocery Market

90 Turk St. @ Taylor
(Replacing Grand Liquors at Taylor & Turk)

Offering groceries, sandwiches, coffee, fresh meat and produce, frozen food, snacks and candy

We accept major credit cards, EBT/ATM



Proprietor Karim Rantisi and family. Rantisi has proudly served the Tenderloin since 1989.

Wonderland coming to TL

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

unused space near its own offices on the lower level at 134 Golden Gate.

The city sees its small investment in Wonderland as practical — "one of a range of efforts intended to use the arts a tool for community development in the Tenderloin," says Amy Cohen, director of neighborhood business development for the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development, which has been pushing Taylor Street as an "arts corridor."

Arts Commission Director Luis Cancel says his agency has no money to give Wonderland but is a fan of the project, and he plans to throw some weight behind his enthusiasm. "It's such an exciting project," he says. "I'm impressed with Lance's vision for the event and his fascination with the Tenderloin — I think people are curious about the neighborhood and this will give them a reason to come and see it."

Cancel adds that the Arts Commission will produce a segment about the show for "Culture Wire," its 30-minute programs about local artists and events aired on SFGTV.

"We're also going to use our bully pulpit to try to get financial support from foundations and others so Wonderland can print a catalogue," he said.

"Art in Storefronts," a joint program of the Arts Commission and the Office of Economic and Workforce Development, is separate from Wonderland but connected artistically. It offers artists free, temporary exhibition space beginning in September through next February in 10 vacant storefronts along mid-Market — Fifth to Ninth streets — and in three storefronts along Taylor, Market to Ellis, as well as in the Bayview and Mission. Artists at each site receive \$500 to help cover production expenses.

"Anything goes — videos, recycled art, sculpture, paintings," says Judy Nemzoff, program director of the Arts Commission's Community Arts and Education Program.

Along the three-block Taylor Street arts corridors, even the 21 Club, which Esquire calls "the diviest bar in the Tenderloin," has launched a monthly poetry reading sponsored by Central City Extra. ■