

# SFWEEKLY

## All Together Now

Bay Area Now blends experimental workshops, exhibits, and artists

By Karen Macklin  
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Comments 

The contrast between art-making and art-viewing in our society is astounding. Compared with the relatively open and unrestrained creative process, the strict rules that govern the mausoleumlike grounds of some museums make it easy to see how visitors can feel distant from the work they're experiencing. Sure, we can appreciate that the red lines on the floor and the scowling security guards are there for the purpose of protecting the art, but blue uniforms and waving fingers don't exactly encompass a sense of visitor involvement. That's where **Bay Area Now** comes in. In its fourth year at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, this festival of challenging and experimental work by local artists is all about bringing art and people together. Spreading across the two-floor gallery space and beyond, the visual art component of the festival, which opens this week, is curated by Rene de Guzman and Berin Golonu, and speaks to specific themes of interconnectivity and collaboration.

On the connectivity tip, a lot of the art involves maps and systems. For instance, Xylor Jane's bright, grid-shaped paintings are inspired by math. She uses pi, prime numbers, and the Fibonacci series -- a sequence of numbers that appears in nature's own creations, such as sand dollars, pine cones, and tree buds -- to craft magical paint-by-number pieces. Adriane

Colburn's site-specific mapping project consists of intricately cut paper maps that trace the city's sewage system, from the very pipes that serve Yerba Buena Center to the lines that discharge into the ocean, exposing an intimate network that ties people together.



Too Early: Jason Roberts Dobrin stays up late to snap 7:30 AM.

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Bay Area Now 4

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 701 Mission (at Third Street), S.F.

Opens Friday, July 15, at 8 p.m. (and continues through Nov. 6)

Admission is \$3-15

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[www.ybca.org](http://www.ybca.org)

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Meanwhile, in the spirit of collaboration and community-building, the center hosts a number of unusual events during the festival, such as Ted Purves' "Momentary Academy," a makeshift art academy through which BAN4 artists provide free Saturday afternoon classes to the public. Purves' idea, taken from his book *What We Want Is Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art*, is based on a gift economy -- a system of barter and free distribution of goods. Another collaborative project is Helena Keffe's "Familiar Audio Tour," in which the typical museum audio tour is replaced by one that is narrated by those who know the artists best: their friends and families.

In addition to the visual art component, the festival's video segment opens this week and presents, for the first time, YBCA-commissioned work of four local video artists. (The performing arts component opens in the fall.) No one is left out of Bay Area Now 4 -- not even those who didn't make it in. Artist collective Stretcher is hosting a gathering called "Bay Area Not Now," a supportive space created for artists to gripe about their lack of inclusion in this year's event.