Culture Calendar: 17 Things to Do in March 2018

By Rebecca Milzoff on February 28, 2018

Our monthly curated list of cultural goings-on across the globe.

A Japanese novelist blends the borders of reality and the imagined world, the spirit of India is honored in both painting and photography, and an American music icon gets the museum treatment.
“Damien Hirst: The Veil Paintings” in Beverly Hills

Mar. 1-Apr. 14

In a town overtaken annually by the Oscars, it makes sense the art world would join in. Gagosian’s “Oscars show” this year presents Damien Hirst’s series “The Veil Paintings,” inspired by Georges Seurat’s experiments in Pointillism and Pierre Bonnard’s Post-Impressionist creations. The large-scale paintings embrace saturated color and a freedom opposite to the formal grid paintings Hirst is known for, defining a veil as something “solid yet invisible [that] reveals and yet obscures the truth, the thing we are searching for.” Looking at the joyous explosions of color on canvas, the search is also a whole lot of fun. 456 N. Camden Dr.; gagosian.com.
“Reality Projector” in Los Angeles

Mar. 1 - July 31

It’s difficult to settle on one category to encompass the prolific Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson’s work: his multidisciplinary projects have included everything from a seemingly free-floating waterfall in the gardens of Versailles to a simulacrum of the sun inside the Tate Modern, and comprise elements of painting, sculpture, installation, and experiential art. His first major Los Angeles exhibition in over a decade, a site-specific piece at the Marciano Art Foundation, seems simple enough: the installation uses projected light and the space’s architecture to create a shadow play. But as always, the final effect is more nuanced, and Reality Projector turns the gallery’s space into an abstract 3D film, with visitors the unwitting stars. 4357 Wilshire Blvd.: marcianoartfoundation.org.
“Sleep” in New Haven

Mar. 1-3

Writer Haruki Murakami’s entrancing stories, which blend magic and realism with vivid depictions of a kind of in-between world, feel inherently theatrical. So it’s exciting to see one of his short pieces transformed into a work of devised theater, as his *Sleep* is at the Yale Repertory Theater. Directed and devised by Rachel Dickstein and her Ripe Time ensemble, *Sleep* tells the tale of a housewife who suddenly stops snoozing after a terrifying dream—but finds, in her waking nightmare, she’s able to take risks and indulgences she’d never partake of otherwise. The surreal story imagines what it might be like to have permission to step outside the bounds of society, and will only be enhanced by the New Born Trio’s live score. 1120 Chapel St.; yalerep.org.
"The Lure of the Dark" in North Adams

Opening Mar. 3

Throughout art history, the subject of the night and darkness, and the emotions it conjures have inspired artists ranging from Van Gogh to Whistler to Rembrandt and Hopper. In a new exhibition, twelve diverse contemporary artists contemplate the scenes and moods darkness inspires in paintings often completed in one sitting or evening. From William Binnie’s evocation of racial terror in the South to Dana Powell’s ghost-like roadways to Kenny Rivero’s electric depictions of New York nightlife, these works pay tribute to the past while finding inspiration in the darkness of an uncertain future. 1040 Mass MoCA Way; massmoca.org.
The Armory Show in New York

Mar. 8-11

The premier annual fine art extravaganza—now its 24th edition and with an entire citywide arts week—features nearly 200 galleries from 31 countries, almost a third of whom are new exhibitors. The core Galleries section includes a standout array of 20th and 21st-century masterpieces, while the numerous other platforms throughout the fair highlight the work of younger galleries, international spaces, large-scale installations, and much more. Piers 92 & 94; thearmoryshow.com
FotoFest 2018 in Houston

Mar. 10-Apr. 22

This month, the Texas-based photography biennial FotoFest focuses on photography and media from India, with 48 featured artists from the country and diaspora represented. The themes explored are both contemporary—gender and sexuality, the environment, settlement and migration, land rights conflicts—and more ancient, including caste and class divisions and the legacy of colonialism. Expect an exhibition of truly eye-opening images, from Indu Antony’s images of drag kings and Asif Khan’s documentary series of Tibetan refugee camps to Vicky Roy’s shots of young street children, reflecting his own history as a child runaway. fotofest.org.
“Rembrandt and the Inspiration of India” in Los Angeles

Mar. 13–June 24

Little-known to casual museum-goers, many of Rembrandt’s most intriguing works weren’t portraits of the Dutch, but rulers of India’s Mughal court. The master painter’s decision to engage with a wholly foreign culture inspired him to paint and draw in a newly refined style, creating an innovative kind of global exchange in 17th-century art. At the J. Paul Getty Museum, 22 of Rembrandt’s Mughal drawings will receive a rare exhibition, juxtaposed with Indian paintings and drawings of similar composition, illuminating Rembrandt’s innovation, as well as the positive influence of European images on Mughal artists and their work. Getty Center; getty.edu.
Asia Week New York

Mar. 14-24

New York’s art spaces are filled with an almost overwhelming assortment of the world’s most stunning examples of Asian art—so thank goodness for Asia Art Week, an annual tradition offering collectors, specialists, and fans a guide to the best. This year’s edition features five auction houses along with 19 museums and Asian cultural institutions; highlights include rare pieces from India, Southeast Asia, and the Himalayas; ancient Chinese porcelain and decorative pieces; contemporary Japanese ceramics; Korean works on paper; and much more.

asiaweeknewyork.com.
Architecture & Design Film Festival in Los Angeles

Mar. 15-18

The ability to observe paradigm-shifting architecture and design often requires either extensive and cost-prohibitive travel or resigning oneself to pining via social media. The Architecture & Design Film Festival, luckily, offers a happy medium. Along with an inspiring new lens through which to watch design projects develop, this year over 30 short and feature-length films will be shown, devoted to everything from the lives of modern-day icons like Bjarke Ingels and Dries Van Noten to timely topics in urbanism. In LA's Helms Bakery District, six major showrooms will open their doors and screen documentaries, the festival ending with a public viewing of a new film examining how design furthers the mission of a group of cancer treatment centers. Los Angeles Theatre Center, 514 S. Spring St., adfilmfest.com.
“Cosi fan tutte” in New York

Mar. 15-Apr. 19

One of modern opera’s greatest visual imagineers, director Phelim McDermott has brought his funhouse stage vision to the Metropolitan Opera for its new production of Mozart’s Cosi fan tutte. The action of the brilliant comedy of mistaken identity and battling sexes is transferred from 18th-century Naples to 1950s New York, specifically the candy-colored fairgrounds and freak shows of Coney Island. It’s an atmosphere playful but with dark undertones, much like the story of Cosi itself, and one inhabited by a great cast led by Christopher Maltman as Don Alfonso and Broadway royalty Kelli O’Hara as Despina. Lincoln Center, metopera.org.

Mar. 16-Sep. 2

To call Leonard Bernstein a titan of 20th century music, both in America and beyond, is an understatement. An artist of his caliber, who wrote some of the most moving scores for theater, orchestra, and chamber music; became one of the greatest conductors ever; injecting an impassioned social activist impulse into all he did, is incredibly rare. This year is Bernstein’s centennial, and among the multitude of celebrations the world over, the National Museum of American Jewish History’s landmark tribute stands out. Through over 100 artifacts—from annotated scores and his conducting suit to the Hebrew bible he carried—along with film and sound installations, visitors will receive an immersive look at Bernstein’s multi-faceted identity. 101 South Independence Mall East; nmajh.org.
“Al Held: Luminous Constructs — Paintings and Watercolors from the 1990s” in Detroit
Mar. 17-Apr. 28

Leading American abstract painter Al Held came to fame in the 1950s with his “Pigment Paintings,” which mirrored the work of the many of the best Abstract Expressionists. But in the following decade, he developed a style all his own, defined by bold colors and hard-lined abstract geometric shapes. These so-called “Luminous Construct” works aimed to bring a sense of 3D depth to flat canvas, and in doing so created images that bridged the present and the future—and very much bring to mind the look of the digital world. Five of those large-scale paintings are on display in this exhibition, along with intimate watercolors created in the late ‘80s when Klein lived in Italy, absorbing the lasting cultural legacy of the Renaissance. David Klein Gallery, 1520 Washington Blvd.; dkgallery.com.
“Surface/Depth: The Decorative After Miriam Schapiro” in New York

Mar. 22-Sept. 3

Nearly three years ago, one of the pioneers of American design, Miriam Schapiro, passed away. A founding member of the Pattern & Decoration movement, she had lived 91 years without ever properly receiving her due as a trailblazer of feminist art. The Museum of Arts and Design sets out to right that in a new exhibit devoted to Schapiro, centered around her so-called “femmages,” vividly colored and textured hybrid works of painting and collage inspired by both female domestic arts & crafts and the critique thereof. The show juxtaposes 29 works, as well as a great deal of her personal archival material, with 35 contemporary pieces by the likes of Sanford Biggers, Jodie Mack, Edie Fake, Josh Blackwell, and many others. 2 Columbus Cir.; madmuseum.org.
“Network” in London

Through Mar. 24

In 1976, Paddy Chayefsky’s Network—about “mad as hell” newsman Howard Beale who becomes an unlikely star after unraveling onscreen on the eve of his last-ever broadcast—became a four-time Oscar winner and an uncannily prescient examination of modern media. It’s tough to think of a better time for the film to make a return; or a better director to translate the story to stage than the visionary Ivo van Hove, an expert at laying bare the more brutish human impulses in his productions. Bryan Cranston is a superb Beale, balancing dark humor with a tightly-wound, simmering core energy. Combine those elements with an immersive stage design concept, and it’s easy to see why the National Theatre’s run is sold out. But Friday rush tickets are still available— and if it’s anything like a usual van Hove hit, an extended run or Broadway transfer could be in the offing. Lyttelton Theatre, South Bank; nationaltheatre.org.uk.
“Valeska Soares: Any Moment Now” in Phoenix

Mar. 24-July 15

Space, time, and memory blend in a constant interplay in the work of the Brazilian artist Valeska Soares. Her multifaceted, assemblage-tinged installations have a sophisticated and minimalist feel, but below their polished surfaces ask viewers to engage with subjective ideas, drawing on their own personal experiences and knowledge to consider beyond the strictures of reality. The Phoenix Art Museum’s mid-career Soares survey covers the artist’s two decades of work, including film, sculpture, and installation—a visual journey through the mind of a truly imaginative creator. 1625 N. Central Ave.; phxart.org.
Art Basel Hong Kong

Mar. 29-31

Almost 250 galleries, half with exhibition spaces in Asia and the Asia-Pacific region, will show at the sixth edition of Art Basel's Hong Kong, which has grown into a force for young spaces and artists. This year's highlights include curated projects from Yoko Ono, Wilfredo Lam, and Frog King; a film sector curated by Beijing Art Lab's Li Zhenhua, new large-scale installations, and much more. artbasel.com
“Oliver Husain: 'Roving!’” in Saskatchewan

Mar. 30-Aug. 17

The multimedia artist Oliver Husain asks that viewers become fully engaged in the cinematic works he creates, involving both mind and body in his pieces blending moving image, performance, sculpture and installation. His wide-ranging new show at Canada’s contemporary art museum Remai Modern includes five of his film and video works, which explore everything from notions of time and space to character studies and ideas of what future exploration might look like. The works unfold over the course of several months, culminating in *Isla Santa Maria 3D*, an immersive 2016 “experience” in which viewers are transported to a mythical island supposedly formed from replicas of the wreckage of one of Christopher Columbus’ ships. 102 Spadina Crescent E., Saskatoon; remaimodern.org.