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# SFMOMA LAUDS VISION OF ANNIE LEIBOVITZ

For a self-professed control freak, technical difficulties are the devil himself. Yet renowned photographer and San Francisco Art Institute alum **Annie Leibovitz** channeled her '70s-era EssEff cool when a slide-projector clicker recently bedeviled her at the Regency Ballroom.

Hosted by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's Modern Art Council, led by award chair **Courtney Dallaire** and MAC President **Candace Cavanaugh**, most of the 500 fans at SFMOMA's newly branded Contemporary Vision Award Dinner didn't seem to mind the snafu.

However, these modernists eagerly anticipate the month of May, when they move back into the museum's snazzy new Snohetta-designed building.

"There're so many new and younger faces at this event," noted SFMOMA trustee **Katie Schwab Paige**. "I'm so impressed and excited for the museum."

Initially dubbed the Bay Area Treasure Lunch, this 16-year tradition (honoring such creative minds as **Wayne Thiebaud**, **Richard Serra**, **Jony Ive**) has evolved mightily in size and scope as a crucial fundraiser for SFMOMA education and exhibition programs.

"Our honorees are either from or influence the Bay Area," said trustee **Alka Agrawal**. "But the title change reflects that SFMOMA is now a world-class cultural institution."

Following Leibovitz tributes by SFMOMA Director **Neal Benezra** and new Chronicle Art Critic **Charles Desmarais**, guests dug into their Paula LeDuc dinner in between that slideshow and conversation with Leibovitz and Chronicle Books CEO **Nlion McEvoy**, an SFMOMA trustee and passion photographer collector.

While attending SFAI, Leibovitz began her career as a 17-year-old photographer for the then-fledgling rock 'n' roll magazine Rolling Stone.

"Ah, to be young, in San Francisco and working for Rolling Stone; it was glorious to be taken seriously," Leibovitz recalled. "But no one knew what to do with us."

Her former colleague, author-editor **Ben Fong-Torres**, sighed, too, about those dreamy days.

"We were just kids, creating this thing no one understood yet," he marveled. "Occasionally we'd go on assignment together; I'd take notes as Annie set up the shot. To put the subject at ease, she'd casually ask a few questions. And in that process, Annie developed her distinctive visuals."

**Tick-tock:** Time was the essence and on dazzling display via historically exquisite timepieces recently at Fort Mason Center during the 34th San Francisco Fall Antiques Show, which was dubbed "Time After Time: Bringing the Past Present."

The five-day fair kicks off with a glamorous opening-night gala where patrons gladly pay big bucks in support of Enterprise for High School Students' career and college counseling programs.

But savvy connoisseurs also know those ducats buy early shopping-op access and entree to one of the city's most lively and bountiful McCall's Catering cocktail buffets.

"I was so honored to be chosen as show chairwoman," said beloved and talented interior designer **Suzanne Tucker**. "However, I requested three things: designer vignettes return to the entry foyer; more art; and more contemporary dealers. I think we've achieved a real ying-yang among the design and art here."

**Artistic edge:** Among potential shoppers at Hedge Gallery in San Francisco, where Christie's recently hosted a sneak peek of its Nov. 9-13 Post-War & Contemporary Art Sale, were youthful-looking tech types.

All admired the show-stopping works by **Robert Motherwell**, **Joan Mitchell**, **Richard Diebenkorn** and **Ruth Asawa**. But this Lockheed especially drew the coveted "Lockheed Lounge" by **Marc Newson**, which Christie's first sold for a paltry \$105K in 2000.

Fast forward to spring 2015: Newson, the industrial designer who recently joined forces with his pal **Jony Ive** on the Apple design team, created this aerodynamically shaped fiberglass lounge in an edition of 10. At a Phillips London auction in April, the lounge was pronounced "the most expensive design object ever" when it sold for a record-breaking \$3.7 million.

Though a highlight of this November sale, Christie's set its "Lounge" price prior to the Phillips' auction. So with a listed estimate of \$1.5 million to \$2 million, somebody got a bargain.

Not surprisingly, most auction houses are attracting tech types. And April 2015 sales among the top three houses (Christie's, Sotheby's, Phillips) shattered previous records when, combined, they sold a whopping \$2.7 billion worth of art in a week and a half.

"Tech buyers aren't the core of our existing client base, but they're definitely an emerging market," noted Christie's Americas President **Brook Hazelton**, with a smile. "But just to clarify those sales numbers, \$1.7 billion of those total sales were sold just by Christie's."

*Catherine Bigelow is The San Francisco Chronicle's society correspondent. E-mail: missbigelow@sfgate.com*



Photos by Catherine Bigelow / Special to The Chronicle

**Nlion McEvoy** (left) photographer Annie Leibovitz, MAC President Candace Cavanaugh and SFMOMA Director Neal Benezra at dinner honoring Leibovitz.



**Kelly Sultan** (left) film director Phil Kaufman and Leslie Berriman at SFMOMA Contemporary Vision Award Dinner.



**S.F. Fall Antiques Show** committee members Allison Speer (left), designer Paul Wiseman and show chairwoman Suzanne Tucker.



**Team Christie's:** Charlie Adamski (left), Sharon Kim, Ellanor Notides and Christie's Americas President Brook Hazelton at Hedge Gallery.

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