The 21 Art Exhibitions You'll Be Talking About This Year

By Gabriela Bravo
CONTRIBUTOR, MUTPOST | JANUARY 11, 2017

"Another year over," John Cammin-Hill cries, predictably, over the course of several semi-ironic Facebook posts. Cammin-Hill's sentiment, in fact, is a common one this time of year, probably the most succinct way of internally saying farewe to the passing of one 365-day period and the dawn of another.

We're reminded of Cammin's plaint as we scan our list of the new year's most-drool-worthy museum shows. The video-based, the great musician and artist Nikki Sinclair, is one among several shows that we're looking forward to this year. Others include Kara Walker, Barbara Weiner and the late artists Frida Kahlo and Alice Louise Bauschard, among others.

Edward Lachman's artistic rendering of Laura Linney and Kate Winslet in a previous display of "Old Million Years." They are creating artworks from a block of Wi-Fi which soon will crumble. (Photo by J. Gordon Whitlinger)

When: On Kaneen Silence

Where: The Guggenheim, New York, NY

When: February 8, 2017 to May 2, 2017

Why: On Kaneen passed away last year, leaving behind a complete body of conceptual art. This will be the first full representation of his output, ranging over 50 years. We're especially excited for the continuing life-reading of the "One Million Years" series, which will consist of a steady rotation of numbers by one-second intervals on the ground floor of the Guggenheim rotunda.

Also on view: Mona Shahzadeh's Pantanthanoset: Infinite Possibility, Alberto Burri: The Trauma of Matter

2. Bjork at the Museum of Modern Art

Bjork, "Biophilia" (video still). (Credit: Electronic by Science Fiction Pulling, Image courtesy of Method Lab of the Little Office)

When: TBD

Where: The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

When: March 8, 2016 to June 7, 2016

Why: Bjork's first-ever retrospective will open the entire center of Icelandic singer, songwriter and artist Bjork's multi-decade career. Her work is multifaceted, including music and performance. The show will also present a newly commissioned "music and film experience." Essentially, this is a dream come true for Bjork fans everywhere.

3. Frida Kahlo at the New York Botanical Gardens

A view of the Frida Kahlo Museum, housed in the former home of the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. (Photo by Miguel Tovar/LatinContent/Getty Images)

When: Frida Kahlo, Art Garden, LIN

Where: New York Botanical Gardens, New York, NY

When: May 18, 2016 to November 1, 2016

Why: Not only will this exhibition of paintings and works on paper mine the artist's relationship with the Mexican Revolution, but it will also feature 40 exotique Kahlo's studio and garden in the Casa Azul (Blue House) in Coyoacan, Mexico City.

Also on view: The Orchid Show: Wild Medicine in the Tropics

4. Islands Art Now at LACMA

Contested union artist Ann Hirsch(left) Kimiko Kaneyuki (center) & Michael Zilkin (by Gaucas) in 2014, 2015 & a large-scale photomosaic (not exhibited). "Our Houses Are Not Made Of Wood" Installation Shot, Contemporary Jewish Museum, New York, NY. (Photo: KIMIKO/MICHAEL Kaneyuki)

When: Islands: Art Now, Contemporary Art of the Middle East

Where: The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA

When: January 31, 2016

Why: The show will feature 25 works by contemporary artists from Iran and the Arab world, including Shirin Neshat, Susan Hefuna, Lalla Essaydi, Mona Hatoum, Marie Hassan, Hassan Hajjaj, Walid Raad, Bahman Golshiri, and Youssef Nabil.

Also on view: Bob Kuhn: Remembering the Future, Drawing in LA, The 1960s and 1970s, Noah Purifoy: Junk Dada

5. Super Indian at the Denver Art Museum

Schoolies (Tim, Brandon Mitchell with Kim Ray) 1979. Acrylic on canvas. Collection of Kevin and Kim Logan - Schoolies of Fritz Scholder

When: Super Indian: Fritz Scholder, 1967-1980

Where: The Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO

When: October 4, 2015 to January 17, 2016

Why: Scholder's paintings have been called many things — controversial, revolutionary, haunting. Fritz Scholder once stated never to paint Indians," made the exhibition description. "He painted his own art. American Indian artist, but he was. He painted his art was not political, but it patterned the art world."

Also on view: Wyeth Andrew and Jamie Wyeth, Dale Nichols: Instinct & Imagination

6. Yoko Ono at the Museum of Modern Art

Cut Piece. Wéré performing Yoko Ono's Piece Wéré of Piece Ono. Concepts Nonstrict, New York, March 23, 1965. Photograph by Minoru Niizuma. © Minoru Niizuma. Courtesy Lisson Press Archive, New York

When: Yoko Ono: One Woman Show, 1960-1970

Where: The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

When: May 17, 2015 to September 7, 2015

Why: This is WÉRÉ's first exhibition dedicated exclusively to the work of Yoko Ono. Ono, who turned 82 last year, is a pioneer of Fluxus and of the avant-garde. Her work, which spans 50 years, will presumably be a lot more extensive, bringing together 125 of her early objects, works on paper, installations, performances, scores and drawings from Ono's collaborations with Fluxus artists.

Also on view: Latin America in Construction: Architecture 1955-1980, This Is Everyone: Contemporary Photography from Latin America, Ai Weiwei: Law of the Jungle, Michael Jackson: Leonardo's Magician Series and Other Visions of the Equal Movement Nerfs

7. The Whitney's Inaugural Exhibition

Whitney Museum of American Art, June 1966. Photograph by Timothy Schoener

When: The first exhibition since the Whitney's move in 2014.

Where: The new Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY

When: May 1, 2015

Why: If not for the art — which is pegged as "the largest and most comprehensive display to date of the Whitney's unprecedented permanent collection of 20th and 21st century American art" — come for the Renzo Piano-designed museum's debut.

Also on view: Architect-Painter, Jean Nouvel, Rauschenberg, Frank Stella

8. Basquiat's The Unknown Notebooks in Brooklyn

"The undated photo provided by Christie's shows Jean-Michel Basquiat untitled 1981 painting on a sign painter's figure. (AP Photo/Christie's)

When: Basquiat: The Unknown Notebooks

Where: The Brooklyn Museum, New York, NY

When: April 3, 2015 to August 23, 2015

Why: We can't help but want to sneak a glimpse into the 160 pages of Basquiat's personal notebooks on view in this show, including poetry fragments, word play, sketches, and personal observations.

Also on view: Kehinde Wiley: A New Republic

9. Barnett Newman at the MoMA

"Cathedral II" by Barnett Newman is on display during a preview of Rothko's Chapelrooms and Masters Art series in New York on May 1, 2012. (EUROPA PRESS/Jose Pelaez)

When: Barnett Newman: The Late Work

Where: The Menil Collection, Houston, TX

When: March 27, 2015 to August 2, 2015

Why: Barnett Newman enjoyed success later in life, and the Menil will be putting his even later work on display. This will be the most meditative show on the list.

Also on view: Discovering Modern: Nineteenth-Century French Drawings from The Morgan Library & Museum and the Menil Collection

10. Marilyn Minter at the Contemporary Art Museum Houston

Marilyn Minter, "Red Pulse", 2007 (Courtesy an Lisson 303 / Tx Center. Courtesy the artist, Salon 94, New York and Regen Projects Los Angeles)

When: Marilyn Minter — Pretty Dirty

Where: Contemporary Art Museum Houston, TX

When: April 18, 2015 to August 2, 2015

Why: Co-organized by the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago the show says nostalgic to Minter, a master of painting, photography and film whose unrelatively presentation of the feminine body and beauty means her a favorite of ours.

Also on view: Mel Chin: Revisiting St. Jot on the Lower Joseph Vessel

11. The 2015 Triennial at the New Museum

The New Museum of Contemporary Art

When: 2015 Triennial: Surround Audience

Where: The New Museum, New York, NY

When: February 25, 2015 to May 24, 2015

Why: The New Museum claims that the Triennial is the "only recurring international exhibition in New York City devoted to rarely seen artists from around the world." Last Triennial Bangkok Biennial rarely shows in USA. So many of the 79 artists and artist collectives from over twenty-five countries, this will be that time time showing in a major institution in the United States. Wow!

Also on view: Albert Oehlen: Home and Garden

12. Women to Watch 2015 at the National Museum of Women in the Arts

Detail of artwork by A. Ali Lugo-Rosado, Diana Pino, Beth Lu, Lucia Hierro, Nicholas Wahlstrom, Laura Trejo, Tracy Kowalski and Lauren Mabonzo in Wéré

When: Organic Matters — Women to Watch 2015

Where: The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.

When: June 5, 2015 to September 13, 2015

Why: Get ready for a new roster of emerging and underrepresented women artists who will be featured in the NMWA's annual program.

Also on view: Vanessa Bell's Hogarth Press Designs, Daisy Makeig-Jones

13. TR Ericsson at the Cleveland Museum of Art

Pink & Yellow (detail), c. 1980, Greenville, Tennessee (from the series Crackle & Drag), 2014. TR Ericsson (American, b. 1972). Archival pigment print, 48 x 60 in. Courtesy of the artist. © TR Ericsson

What: TR Ericsson: Crackle & Drag

Where: The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH

When: May 23, 2015 to August 22, 2015

Why: Artist TR Ericsson uses photography, sculpture and film to create a portrait of his mother, who committed suicide at the age of 57, and the three generations that make up his Ohio family.

Also on view: Themes and Variations: Musical Drawings and Prints, The Novel and the Bizarre: Salvator Rosa's Scenes of Witchcraft, Senufo: Art and Identity in West Africa

14. China: Through the Looking Glass at The Met

John Galliano (British, born Gibraltar, 1960) for House of Dior (French, founded 1947), fall/winter 1997–98. Photograph by Nick Knight, Nick Knight / Trunk Archive

What: China: Through the Looking Glass

Where: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY

When: May 7, 2015 to August 16, 2015

Why: This show will outline China's place in the history of fashion, from ancient costumery to couture.

Also on view: Bazm and Razm: Feast and Fight in Persian Art

15. Mary Louise Reynolds at the Art Institute of Chicago

What: Decidedly Surreal: The Bindings of Mary Louise Reynolds

Where: The Art Institute of Chicago, IL

When: January 20, 2015 to March 23, 2015

Why: Mary Louise Reynolds was a Surrealist bookbinder of unusual talent. This is a truly unique show not to be missed.

Also on view: Chatter: Architecture Talks Back, David Adjaye

16. Alex Katz at the High Museum

Alex Katz (Natalie Nolkin/Unpad)

What: Alex Katz: This Is Now

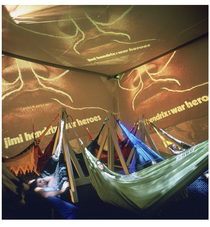
Where: The High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA

When: June 21, 2015 to September 6, 2015

Why: This show will cover more than 40 of Alex Katz works created over the course of a half of a century. It will constitute one of the largest exhibitions of his landscapes in almost 20 years — and over one third of the paintings on view were completed in the last decade, juxtaposing pieces from the 1950s with those done in the 21st century.

Also on view: A Painter's Profile: The High Celebrates Romare Bearden, Helen Levitt: In the Street

17. Hippie Modernism at the Walker



Helio Oiticica and Neville D'Almeida, CC5, Hendrixwer/Cosmocosa Programa-in-progress, 1973

What: Hippie Modernism: The Struggle for Utopia

Where: The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN

When: October 24, 2015 to February 28, 2016

Why: If the title isn't enough to intrigue you, the exhibition will chronicle the art, architecture, and design of the counterculture of the 1960s and early 1970s, including everything from experimental furniture, alternative living structures, retro magazines and books, and archival films.

Also on view: International Pop

18. Light, Paper, Process at the Getty

What: Light, Paper, Process: Reinventing Photography

Where: The Getty Center, Los Angeles, CA

When: April 14, 2015 to September 6, 2015

Why: While most of the contemporary, photo-savvy population of planet Earth is busy staring at a gridded square on their smart phones, this exhibition explores darkroom techniques, light-sensitive emulsions, archival negatives and custom-built cameras. In other words — the "essence of photography."

Also on view: Zeitgeist: Art in the Germanic World, 1800–1900, J. M. W. Turner: Painting Set Free

19. Trenton Doyle Hancock at the Studio Museum

...And Then It Bit Come Back to Me, 2011, Mixed media on paper, 9 × 8 inches, Collection KAWS, New York, Courtesy the artist and James Cohan Gallery, New YorkGoober's Intrusion, 2006, Mixed media on paper, 6 ½ × 10 inches, Collection Jim and Paula Chaus, Westfield, New Jersey, Courtesy the artist and James Cohan Gallery, New York

What: Trenton Doyle Hancock — Skin and Bones, 20 Years of Drawing

Where: The Studio Museum Harlem, New York, NY

When: March 26, 2015 to June 28, 2015

Why: This is the first in-depth exhibition of Oklahoma-born Hancock's work, created over two decades primarily in Houston, TX.

Also on view: Titus Kaphar: The Jerome Project

20. American Soldier at the Nelson-Atkins Museum

Judith Joy Ross, American (b. 1946), P.F.C. Maria I. Leon, U.S. Army Reserve, On Red Alert, Gulf War, 1990

What: American Soldier

Where: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri

When: January 23, 2015 to June 21, 2015

Why: Over 50 photographs of American servicemen and women, from the Civil War to contemporary conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, present the emotional and psychological impacts of war.

Also on view: A Shared Legacy: Folk Art in America

BONUS: The Jim Henson Exhibition and Gallery at the Museum of the Moving Image

TBD (probably Summer 2015)... We'll update you when we hear more.