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S.F. CULTURAL HISTORY POP-UP

Even in this honeyed land of innumerable, overvalued startups, it ain't easy to create a new cultural institution from scratch. But **Kevin Hunsanger** and **Adam Bergeron** are determined to attract folks into the big tent they've just pitched: the San Francisco Museum of Cultural History.

As they source a physical space, their effort is currently a museum without walls. But curatori of all stripes recently alighted on Kerouac Alley for Streets of San Francisco, a pop-up that activated decades of EssEff creativity via live music, memorabilia, museum merch (starring Playland's Laughing Sal) and discussions with scene-makers.

Among that tribe: poet **Jack Hirschman**; stand-up stalwarts **Debi** and **Will Durst**; author **Ianthe Brautigan**; storyteller **Abdul-Kenyatta**; photographer **Dennis Hearne**; Litquake co-founder **Jack Boulware**; S.F. Poet Laureate **Kim Shuck**; former Chronicle pop music critic-turned-DJ **Joel Selvin**; punk art surrealist **Winston Smith**; punk rock musician **Joseph Pope**; and the bar-owning queens of North Beach **Jeannette Etheredge** (formerly of Tosca), Specs' **Elly Simmons** and Vesuvio's **Janet Clyde**, who engaged in a rollicking discussion with author **Alia Volz**.

Similar to the '60s, this event was not only free but commenced with a "piano parade" through North Beach as supporters gleefully wheeled that instrument from Live Worms Gallery to this colorful pedestrian alley between City Lights Bookstore and Vesuvio Cafe.

Amid hand-wringing over the state of San Francisco's soul, this alfresco event felt as if beatniks once again ruled the world. Well, at least, North Beach.

"No city should be preserved in amber. But it needs to cherish and celebrate its history," said Hunsanger, a former Green Apple Books co-owner who recently retired from his 28-year career at that beloved institution.

"Tourists aren't coming to San Francisco to see the internet," he said, with a laugh.

"They're here for San Francisco Bay Area-bred culture: gay rights, Summer of Love, the Black Panthers. And yes, technology," continued Hunsanger. "Everyone slams tech for the strife it's created here. But tech has been a boon to the arts, democratizing information for all people to share and discover."

Bergeron is in perfect agreement. And he's also a man skilled at reinvention: as owner of the Balboa Theater, he's breathed new life and programming into that venerable cinema along with the Vogue Theater, which he operates for the San Francisco Neighborhood Theater Foundation.

The duo are also collectors of S.F. memorabilia, including Playland at the Beach artifacts, a Nob Hill Theater stripper pole, Fillmore rock posters or Gaman art created by Japanese-San Francisco citizens during their World War II internment at Manzanar in Inyo County.

"Historically, the city was skilled at honoring its rich, diverse heritage," noted Bergeron (who, BTW, is not related to storied tiki master, the late Victor "Trader Vic" Bergeron). "But now every time we turn around, another thing we loved is gone. Tech has transformed our



Catherine Bigelow / Special to The Chronicle
S.F. Museum of Cultural History co-founders Kevin Hunsanger (left) and Adam Bergeron flank Hunsanger's wife, Alia Volz, at the party.



Writers-comedians Debi and Will Durst at the S.F. Cultural History Museum pop-up on Kerouac Alley.



Elly Simmons (left), Jeannette Etheredge and Janet Clyde at the museum pop-up.



Artists-musicians Winston Smith (left) and Joseph Pope at the pop-up party.



Charlotte and George Shultz were honored at the Circles of Light gala.



The Rev. Heng Sure (left), S.F. Interfaith Council founder Rita Semel and the Rev. William Swing at the United Religions Initiative gala.



Gala chair Bilques Smith at United Religions Initiative's Circles of Light gala at the Hoover Institution on the Stanford campus.



Joel Selvin spun discs at the S.F. Cultural History Museum pop-up party.



Playland at the Beach icon Laughing Sal on decor at the party.

world in positive ways. Yet culturally, so much feels at risk."

Until the museum lands the right space, the pair plan more popups in city 'hoods highlighting history, such as the Western Addition, which encapsulates the city's high-low: from jazz clubs, Japantown and internment to Peoples Temple, the Fillmore and shameful 1960s-era civic redevelopment that decimated the area.

"More than finding a space, our biggest obstacle is representing all San Francisco voices. Not just a museum run by two middle-aged white guys," Hunsanger said. "Our goal is a community center with films, speakers, kids' education, a rotating gallery. We'll also incorporate technology so visitors can use their phones to listen to a rare Richard Brautigan album. Armed with that knowledge and GPS tags, they'll go outside to experience S.F. history in the wild."

Prayer circle: Reaching for the heavens on its 20th anniversary, United Religions Initiative hosted a sold-out, two-day Accelerate Peace conference and Circles of Light gala on the Stanford University campus at the Hoover Institution.

Among the crowd was a rainbow of faiths, ranging from Muslims, Hindus, Zoroastrians, Jews, Buddhists and Wiccans, peacefully sharing ideas and breaking bread.

The organization was founded in 2000 by the Rev. **William Swing**, a retired Episcopal Bishop of California, who looked to the United Nations as a model for this international NGO promoting interfaith cooperation and eradication of religious-motivated violence and war. Today, the Presidio-based organization boasts a global network of 1,014 "cooperation circles" encompassing 62 faiths in 109 countries.

The dinner, led by gala chair **Bilques Smith**, featured prayers, banjo playing and a heartfelt tribute to gala honorees Protocol Chief **Charlotte Shultz** and her husband, former Secretary of State **George Shultz**, a distinguished Hoover Fellow who just penned his latest book, "Thinking About the Future," at 98.

At the organization's inaugural meeting, Charlotte Shultz supplied her signature hospitality. And George sang the organization's praises to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, citing the religions initiative as essential in addressing how people of different faiths can solve problems.

Swing announced that the organization is launching a \$4 million Charlotte and George Shultz fund for Hospitality and Diplomacy to host global initiative participants. On Aug. 8, the tributes will continue in the Japanese Tea Garden with a planting of saplings from a tree in Hiroshima, Japan, that survived the 1945 atomic bomb that will give rise to the Shultz Peace Forest.

"We're honored to be a part of URI and the great work you've been doing around the world," said Charlotte Shultz. "I thought the pinnacle of Rev. Swing's career was marrying us. But he's clearly gone on to greater heights."

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ON THE COVER

Skating's golden age: A skater jumps a pole in Golden Gate Park on July 28, 1979, during roller skating's heyday in San Francisco. **Pages 4-5**

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