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Best Of Visual Art 2023

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I'm a culture maven and arts enthusiast.
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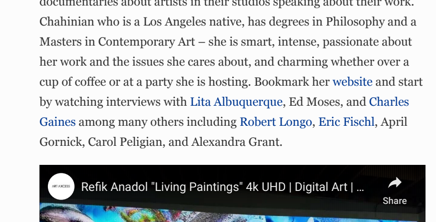
In 2023, I saw a lot of great Art in brilliantly curated art exhibitions at both galleries and in museums. As is my custom, let me begin by highlighting artists, artworks, and works about art that I didn't get a chance to write about last year but which stayed with me.

Sophie Chahinian COURTESY OF SOPHIE CHAHINIAN AND THE ARTIST PROFILE ARCHIVE

First, a shout out to Sophie Chahinian, who I got to know this year, at The Artist Profile Archive, which she founded, and for which she produces (and has produced) a large number of short-form documentaries about artists in their studios speaking about their work. Chahinian who is a Los Angeles native, has degrees in Philosophy and a Masters in Contemporary Art – she is smart, intense, passionate about her work and the issues she cares about, and charming whether over a cup of coffee or at a party she is hosting. Bookmark her website and start by watching interviews with Lita Albuquerque, Ed Moses, and Charles Gaines among many others including Robert Longo, Eric Fischl, April Gornick, Carol Peligian, and Alexandra Grant.



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This was a year in which AI made its presence felt in the art world. We are clearly at the beginning of a new frontier in artistic creation, in which new works, good, bad, underappreciated or not understood, will flourish — some more commercial than artistic, others more intellectually interesting than artistically successful. But it is a wave that is coming. There was an evening in Downtown LA where generative artworks were displayed on building walls, much of it mind-blowing – including mesmerizing work by Refik Anadol, David Van Eyssen, and others who we will be hearing about in the years to come.

Another visually experimental artist whose work blew me away was Hank Willis Thomas, whose lenticular artworks were exhibited at PACE LA. I saw the show just before it closed but the works, in which one shines a flashlight to expose images hidden there – was no gimmick but something revelatory.

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Also, while in Dallas, I made a visit to The Museum of Biblical Art, which was an unexpected pleasure on so many fronts. It is an eccentric collection that includes a wide range of religious art, both Christian and Jewish-themed, including galleries devoted to Jewish art, art about the Holocaust, and a collection (on loan) of early maps of the Holy Land. Dr. Scott Peck, the executive director and curator does a great job there. Definitely worth a visit.

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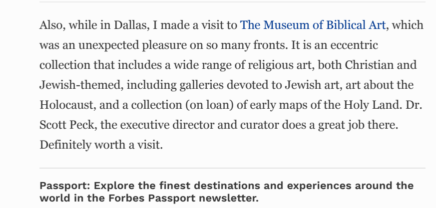

Installation view Louise Nevelson PACE LA COURTESY OF PACE LA

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Among the shows I enjoyed this year was the Louise Nevelson show at PACE LA which reminded me of the importance of her work and her relevance to today; the awe-inspiring Anselm Kiefer show of works inspired by the book of Exodus that Gagosian put on at the Marciano Art Foundation in Los Angeles; Hauser & Wirth NY's Mark Bradford show *You Don't Have to Tell Me Twice* with new works as epic as they are personal, Thomas J Price's contemporary meets classical sculptures at Hauser & Wirth DTLA; and a trio of amazing shows at Hauser & Wirth West Hollywood: George Condo, Jenny Holzer and Allison Katz. There was also a Bonnard show at Aquavella in New York, that reminded me of how powerful beauty can be.

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In terms of curation, several shows stand out: Groundswell: Women of Land Art in Dallas showed how conceptual and ephemeral work could be displayed and contextualized as well as the importance and current relevance of the work of women in the land art movement; Made In LA at the Hammer may be, to my mind, its best iteration yet with an emphasis on figurative and made art, with each room building one upon another. It is worth noting that Annie Philbin who over the last 25 years built the Hammer into a mecca for contemporary Art is stepping away, and Connie Butler, the Hammer's longtime curator has gone to PS 1 in New York. Their intelligence and taste is a loss for LA but I am excited for what follows.

Installation view of HERSTORY, the Judy Chicago retrospective at the New Museum COURTESY THE NEW MUSEUM AND THE ARTIST

Other memorable and well-curated shows in 2023 included *HERSTORY*, the Judy Chicago retrospective at the New Museum – again making the case for the importance of women artists whose work began in the 1970s and for whom recognition has been slow in coming; The Flower Show curated by Elizabeth East at LA Louver (their summer show); and a fantastic summer show at The Church in Sag Harbor called *Strike Fast, Dance Lightly: Artists on Boxing*, which the curator framed as being about the existential and competitive struggle of artists who with each work must ask: Can I still get in the ring? Am I still the Champ? That is a struggle even cultural journalists understand.

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Artist Gary Tyler in his studio PHOTO BY DORIAN HILL. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND LIBRARY STREET COLLECTIVE

Finally, this year I also enjoyed studio visits to Gary Tyler, who spent more than forty years in Angola prison for a murder he did not commit, and whose remarkable spirit is as joyous as his hand-sewn quilts are striking; sculptor and conceptual artist Kathryn Andrews, whose work evidences her intelligence, humor, and cutting societal critiques in equal measure; Tobi Kahn who has expanded and remade his studio in a way that showcases the beauty and range of his work; and Lita Albuquerque who I will be profiling in 2024.

Seeing these works was neither a salve nor a Band-Aid to the world's problems, or even one's own personal problems. Yet seeing these artworks provides a counterpoint and, in no small part, helps balance the scales regarding the human capacity for violence, destruction, and evil. Art may not change anything, but it can mean a great deal to one's spirit. In 2024, we will be in need of more Art not less.

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Move Fast But Don't Break Things—why CX Leaders Need A Smart Approach To GenAI In 2024

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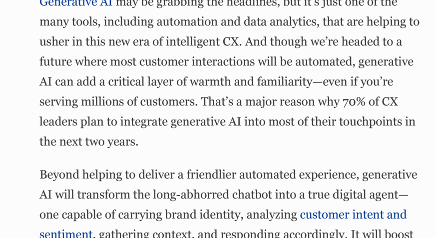
We're only beginning to see what's possible with generative AI in CX. This year, 70% of the 4,500 global CX leaders we surveyed for our annual CX Trends report say they're reimagining their entire CX operation because of it. That means everything about the modern customer experience may soon feel antiquated or outdated. It may be a wild prospect, but it's a view that customers also share. Among those who have already used generative AI, three out of four believe it will completely upend the customer experience.



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Welcome to a more intelligent CX era

Generative AI may be grabbing the headlines, but it's just one of the many tools, including automation and data analytics, that are helping to usher in this new era of intelligent CX. And though we're headed to a future where most customer interactions will be automated, generative AI can add a critical layer of warmth and familiarity—even if you're serving millions of customers. That's a major reason why 70% of CX leaders plan to integrate generative AI into most of their touchpoints in the next two years.

Beyond helping to deliver a friendlier automated experience, generative AI will transform the long-abhorred chatbot into a true digital agent—one capable of carrying brand identity, analyzing customer intent and sentiment, gathering context, and responding accordingly. It will boost the efficiency and efficacy of teams by making it possible to leverage vast amounts of data. And ultimately, it will help to scale a level of hyper-personalization that we've only yet dreamed about: tailor-made experiences for every customer.

> **According to Zendesk research, 70% of CX leaders plan to integrate generative AI into most of their touchpoints in the next two years.**

Just as the internet revolutionized how customers engage with and experience brands over and over again, we can expect AI to do the same. Though we may not know what will be possible with the technology in ten years time, it's critical to keep one eye on the future while ensuring there's a solid foundation in place.

Leadership must create buy-in

When it comes to AI integration, the desire to move quickly might be undermining future success. As CX leaders push ahead in testing and adopting these technologies, they're leaving their frontline agents behind. Only a quarter of agents see AI as a strategic necessity, compared to 65% of leadership. And only a third of agents say they understand their department's AI strategy. That's a major issue for any team looking to enact widespread change.

> **Only a third of agents understand their department's AI strategy, according to Zendesk research.**

It seems that the disconnect stems from a host of causes: inadequate training, unclear guidelines, and expectations from leadership that perhaps aren't in line with the current capabilities of the tech or the department. While 72% of CX leaders believe they have provided adequate training and guidance on generative AI, more than half of agents say they've received no training at all. Among those that have received some instruction, only 21% are actually satisfied with it.

A smarter approach to AI integration — 5 tips for CX leaders

Generative AI can be immensely helpful, but it's not a one-size-fits all technology. Without careful consideration of what tools you select, where you integrate them, and how you deploy these changes, you risk creating additional friction with your customers—and your team. Here are five tips for CX leaders:

1- Build trust in tools and process

Most people believe in the power of AI, but few feel ready to let it answer customer questions with no supervision, controls, or quality assurance. By initially limiting AI deployment to select use cases or teams, leaders can help to build trust and ensure that human agents remain in the loop and ready to step in where needed.

2- Invest in comprehensive training

Leaders should invest in thorough training programs for all AI tools, but especially those that handle vast amounts of data or are tied to intricate processes or workflows. Additionally, there must be clear guidelines on which generative AI tools agents can use and for what purpose.

3- Equip agents with advanced AI

Leaders should prioritize AI tools that make agents more efficient and effective at serving customers. This could include automated suggestions to help agents adopt a more on-brand tone or smart triaging to help them prioritize incoming tickets based on things like urgency, customer value, or complexity.

4- Communicate clearly about role evolution

It's critical that leaders are clear and transparent about how AI tools will reshape agents' roles. Things will change, but AI is ultimately a tool that will make it easier for agents to do their jobs and deliver superior CX. Make sure that you are collecting agent feedback and input to ensure buy-in for the process.

5- Don't be afraid to experiment

Since these tools are advancing and evolving so quickly, it's important to figure out what works best for your specific needs. An AI use case that works well for one team might not make sense for another. Gather key stakeholders and dive deeply into your customer journey—what's working well? What could be improved? And where could generative AI really help? Experimentation often leads to true innovation.

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Cristina Fonseca

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