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## Bay Area's First 2021 Multi-City Art and Social Justice Event

### ***Night Watch* by Shimon Attie Honors Refugees and Asylees**

September 17 – 19, 2021



Shimon Attie, *Night Watch (Norris with Liberty)*, 2018. Originally produced by Moreart.org in New York City.

**“For the millions who have been forced to flee their homelands to escape violence and discrimination.  
For the fortunate few who have been granted political asylum in the United States.”**

**– Shimon Attie**

**UPDATED August 24, 2021, San Francisco, CA** – On June 20, 2021, in celebration of the United Nations' (UN) World Refugee Day, BOXBLUR and Immersive Arts Alliance announced the west coast debut of Shimon Attie's *Night Watch*, a floating media art installation in honor of refugees and asylees. The floating art installation combines contemporary LED-technology with an historic mode of water transport – a barge – to create a sophisticated and layered artistic and sculptural work of art. The free

public event will take place **September 17 – 19, 2021 in San Francisco and Oakland, California** and will be visible along the shorelines of the San Francisco Bay and Oakland Estuary.

*Night Watch* features twelve, close-up video portraits of refugees who were granted political asylum in the United States. Displayed on a 20 ft-wide, high-resolution LED-screen, the portraits will travel aboard a slow-moving barge to allow for on-shore public viewing. The silently displayed images largely feature members of international LGBTQI communities, as well as unaccompanied minors, who fled tremendous violence and discrimination in their homelands of Colombia, Honduras, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Peru, and Russia.

“Our capacity to ignore the suffering of the 80 million forcibly displaced people in the world depends on their invisibility. Shimon Attie’s *Night Watch* demands that we see their faces, and by seeing, acknowledge both their pain and our responsibility. It is a work that does more than humanize the crisis, it transforms the viewer,” comments **Ayelet Waldman**, Novelist and Screenwriter.

The creation of the *Night Watch* portraits was made possible through the artist’s relationship with the New York-based Moreart.org, who made introductions to refugees and asylees with whom Attie’s project aligned. During the process of shooting the portraits, Attie was privileged to hear personal stories, conversations of home and the uncertainty of futures, fear of political reprisals, sensitivities to trauma, homesickness, and individual hopes and dreams. “*Night Watch*,” **Shimon Attie** states, “is for the millions who have been forced to flee their homelands to escape violence and discrimination. For the fortunate few who have been granted political asylum in the United States.”

“Many of our families originally arrived in this country seeking refuge from a homeland. Today, in a world dealing with an unprecedented flux of uprooted lives, the Bay Area presentation of *Night Watch* provokes thoughtful discussion through an exceptionally engaging work of art that compels conversation, and hopefully action, for more compassionate humanitarian treatment at our borders,” Clark Suprynowicz, Immersive Arts Alliance.

The 2018 New York City debut of *Night Watch* during the UN General Assembly Week was received with widespread acclaim, prompting BOXBLUR founder, Catharine Clark to consider the possibility of a California presentation. “Shimon’s artwork engages one of the most urgent issues of our time – that of welcoming or closing our doors to asylum seekers,” notes Clark. “During its 2021 west coast debut,” Clark continues, “*Night Watch* will activate and animate the San Francisco Bay as both a literal and metaphoric site and landscape for escape, rescue, safe-passage, and the offering of safe-harbor for those most vulnerable.”

“No other state has taken in more refugees than California,” states **Eleni Kounalakis, Lieutenant Governor of California**. “As a former Ambassador and the daughter of an immigrant who started out in California as a farmworker, I deeply understand the value of immigrant and asylee communities. The compelling nature of Shimon Attie’s *Night Watch* accentuates a social issue of great importance – that of seeing ourselves in the other. Through a dignified artistic portrayal of refugees and asylees to the United States, *Night Watch* is a civic art experience that invites us to celebrate our strength in diversity.”

“The San Francisco Bay Area, like New York City, has a long history of welcoming new arrivals, immigrants and refugees,” states Attie. “In addition, it is particularly meaningful to me to present *Night Watch* in the San Francisco Bay, as I consider the Bay Area to be my hometown, having been educated and formed as a young adult here.”

“San Francisco is a city of immigrants that continues to be defined today by our diverse communities,” said **Mayor London N. Breed**. “That diversity not only shapes the values that we hold as a city, it’s also reflected in the art and culture we produce. We’re excited to welcome *Night Watch* to San Francisco as a continuation of that expression of our values.”

Beginning on the eve of September 17, 2021 and on September 18 and September 19, *Night Watch* will travel on a barge captained by Matt Butler and slowly navigate the cities’ shorelines from 6:15pm to 8:15pm, corresponding with scheduled live nightly performances on the coastal shorefronts. *Night Watch* shoreline performances with artists, musicians, and dancers will take place across the Bay Area in San Francisco at Fort Mason, Waterbar and EPIC Steak restaurants, and Warm Water Cove, as well as along the East Bay Estuary shorelines including Oakland’s Brooklyn Basin.

“Oakland is first and foremost a sanctuary city, offering community and a sense of belonging to immigrants from around the world. It makes profound and poetic sense that Shimon Attie’s art installation, *Night Watch*, will travel by Oakland’s shores,” said **Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf**. “What a beautiful way to celebrate the diversity of Oakland, and the refugees that call our city home.”

###

**Off-site events** in collaboration with *Night Watch* partner organizations, exhibitions and additional screenings at select partner institutions, will also take place at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, California College for the Arts, Catharine Clark Gallery, Congregation Emanu-El, Gray Area, Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture, Oakland’s Brooklyn Basin, Minnesota Street Project, Museum of the African Diaspora, PhotoAlliance, Saint Joseph’s Arts Foundation, San Francisco Art Institute, UC Berkeley Arts + Design, and University of San Francisco. \*Music and dance performances for site activations around the Bay Area are selected by Classical Revolution and Dance Film SF.

Partnerships with non-profit organizations representing the needs of refugees will provide **educational materials and resources** to the public online and at select activation sites; Catholic Charities, Center for Gender & Refugee Studies, Immigration Institute of the Bay Area, International Rescue Committee, The LGBT Asylum Project, Oasis Legal Services, Partnerships for Trauma Recovery, and Roots Community Health Center.

The presentation of *Night Watch* in San Francisco coincides with the opening of Shimon Attie’s solo exhibition [Here, not Here, at Catharine Clark Gallery](#) on September 18, 2021. The exhibition will feature the international premier of Attie’s video installation *Time Laps Dance*, created with dancers and martial artists in Brazil, as well as artworks inspired by *Night Watch*, and Attie’s widely acclaimed film *The Crossing*, made in collaboration with seven Syrian refugees. In addition, the gallery will have on view a wide survey of works from other series, such as Attie’s “Facts on the Ground” created in Israel and Palestine, “The History of Another” created in Rome, and his seminal “The Writing on the Wall”, created in Berlin’s former Jewish quarter, among other works.

### **Night Watch Activation Schedule**

**Friday, Sept. 17:** Angel Island + Fort Mason and Waterbar and EPIC Steak restaurants **(San Francisco)**

**Saturday, Sept 18:** Fort Mason + Warm Water Cove **(San Francisco)**

## **Sunday, Sept. 19: Oakland Estuary + Brooklyn Basin (Oakland)**

On the evenings of September 17 – 19, 2021, *Night Watch* will travel on a barge captained by Matt Butler and slowly navigate the cities' shorelines from 6:15pm to 8:15pm, corresponding with scheduled live nightly performances.

*Night Watch* shoreline performances with artists, musicians, and dancers will take place across the Bay Area over three nights. Music and dance performances for *Night Watch* site activations around the Bay Area are selected by Classical Revolution and Dance Film SF.

Prime viewing along the San Francisco shorelines includes: Fort Mason, Pier 39, Pier 15, Waterbar and EPIC Steak restaurants, and Warm Water Cove. In San Francisco the barge will begin its travels at Angel Island at 5pm on September 17<sup>th</sup>, in acknowledgement of the region's historic port of entry.

Prime viewing for East Bay shorelines will be on the Oakland Estuary and Brooklyn Basin where there will be live music selected by Classical Revolution and educational materials provided by non-profit partners.

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For a Full Program Schedule Visit:

<https://www.immersiveartsalliance.org/nightwatch>

### ***Night Watch* Partners**

*Night Watch* is co-produced by BOXBLUR and Immersive Arts Alliance with support from the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation, Candy Jernigan Foundation, BD+20, Classical Revolution, Large Screen Video, Maybach Family Vineyards, Marketing by Storm, Norris Communications, and Waterbar and EPIC Steak restaurants. *Night Watch* Media Sponsor is KQED. *Night Watch* partners include Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Boston Properties, California College of the Arts, Cal Sailing Club, Catharine Clark Gallery, Catholic Charities, Center for Gender & Refugee Studies, Congregation Emanu-El, Contemporary Jewish Museum, Dance Film SF, Exploratorium, Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture, Gray Area, International Rescue Committee, Immigration Institute of the Bay Area, The Institute of Contemporary Art San José, McEvoy Foundation for the Arts, Minnesota Street Project, Mullowney Printing, Museum of the African Diaspora, Oasis Legal Services, Partnerships for Trauma Recovery, PhotoAlliance, Roots Community Health Center, Saint Joseph's Arts Foundation, San Francisco Art Dealers Association, San Francisco Arts Education Project, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, San José Museum of Art, Swig Program in Jewish Studies & Social Justice at USF, The LGBT Asylum Project, Theology & Religious Studies Program at USF, UC Berkeley Arts + Design, University of San Francisco, and Value Culture.

**Shimon Attie** is a multimedia artist, whose work comprises photography, video, installation, new media, and work on paper. Concerned with questions and themes surrounding memory, place, and identity, Attie's early work reanimates the lost history of public spaces through site-specific projects, while his recent work continues to investigate the past alongside the important socio-political issues of our time.

<http://shimonattie.net/>

**BOXBLUR** emerged from a history of performances at Catharine Clark Gallery. In 2016, this effort was formalized as BOXBLUR, a fiscally sponsored program of Dance Film SF. BOXBLUR collaborates with other organizations that amplify communal values. A central piece of BOXBLUR's program is its partnership with the San Francisco Dance Film Festival. BOXBLUR produces socially engaged projects that are performative, often experimental, and are realized in conversation with a visual artist's work. BOXBLUR's projects expand the presentation and definition of performance in non-proscenium settings. <https://cclarkgallery.com/exhibitions/boxblur-attie-night-watch-2021>

**Immersive Arts Alliance** was founded to encourage, develop, and to present large-scale, multidisciplinary exhibits and performances in the Bay Area and beyond. With a deep commitment to diversity and to social justice, Immersive Arts Alliance engages the public in vital discussions about innovation, creativity, and culture at large. <https://www.immersiveartsalliance.org/artists>

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**\*Media Kit, Interviews, and High-res Images available upon request**

#NightWatch2021      #ShimonAttie    #BOXBLUR      #ImmersiveArtsAlliance  
#HumanitarianArts    #FloatingArt    #ArtBargeNightWatch    #BayAreaArt2021  
#WithRefugees      #RefugeesWelcome    #welcomewithdignity    #ArtistsStandWithRefugees  
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