



2023 HOLIDAYS IN SF

“Let’s Glow SF” gives San Francisco its favorite holiday distraction: dazzling lights



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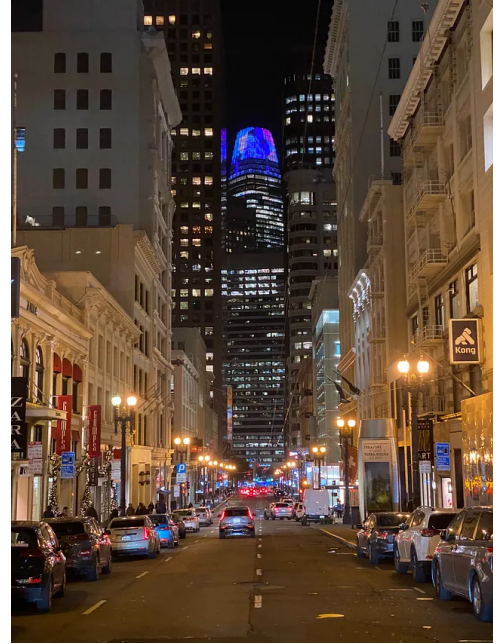
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By M. T. Eley

As the paper maché head bursts from the Hobart Building, an older woman nearby stifles a gasp.

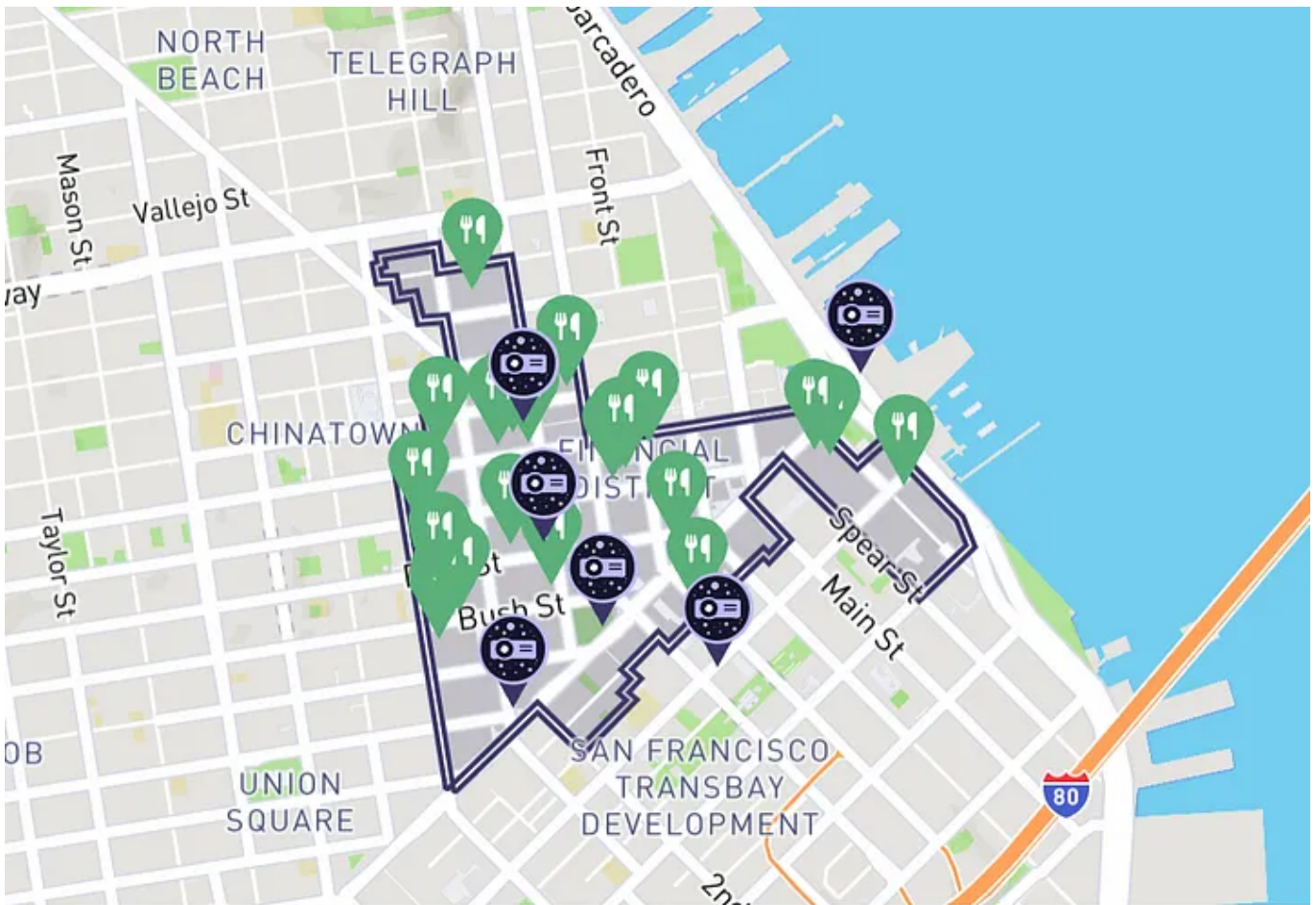


Photos here and below by M. T. Eley for The Bold Italic.

“Boy, that’s trippy.”

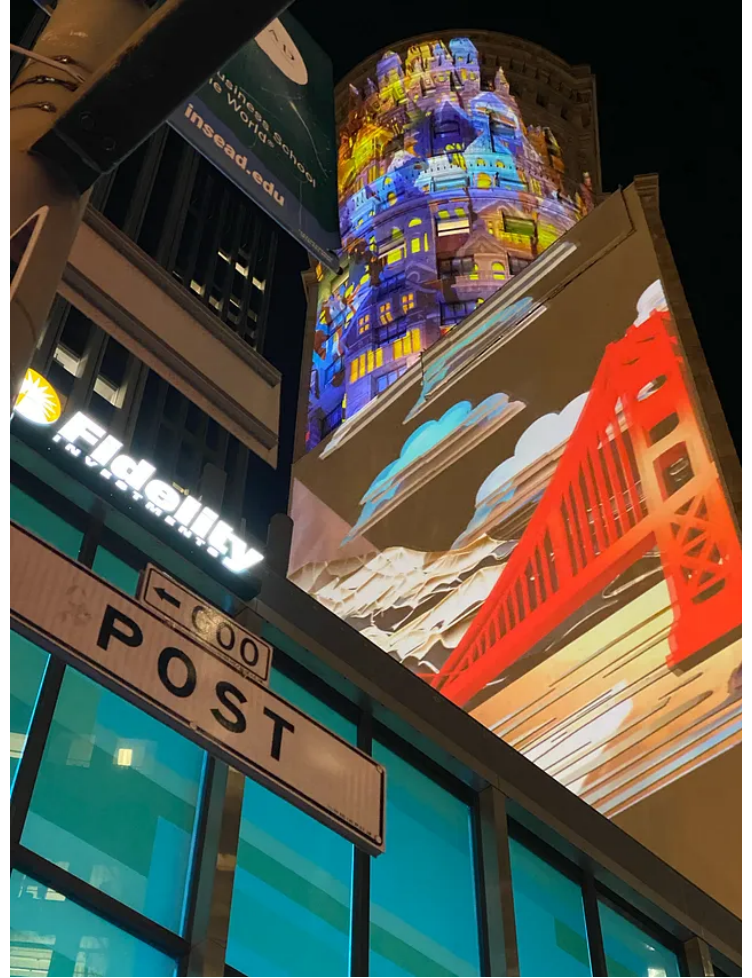
Trippy, magical, psychedelic — San Francisco alludes to a colorful past this week with the “Let’s Glow SF” light show glimmering on the broad walls, columns, windows and doorways of FiDi each evening until December 10th.

Ranging from animations to glyphs, techno tromp-l’œils to full-on short films, the six sites are arranged so you can take them all in on foot. Give yourself two hours if you’re aiming to catch them all, and grab the Let’s Glow SF badge [here](#) to get discounts at any of 30 bars and restaurants to fortify you on the journey.

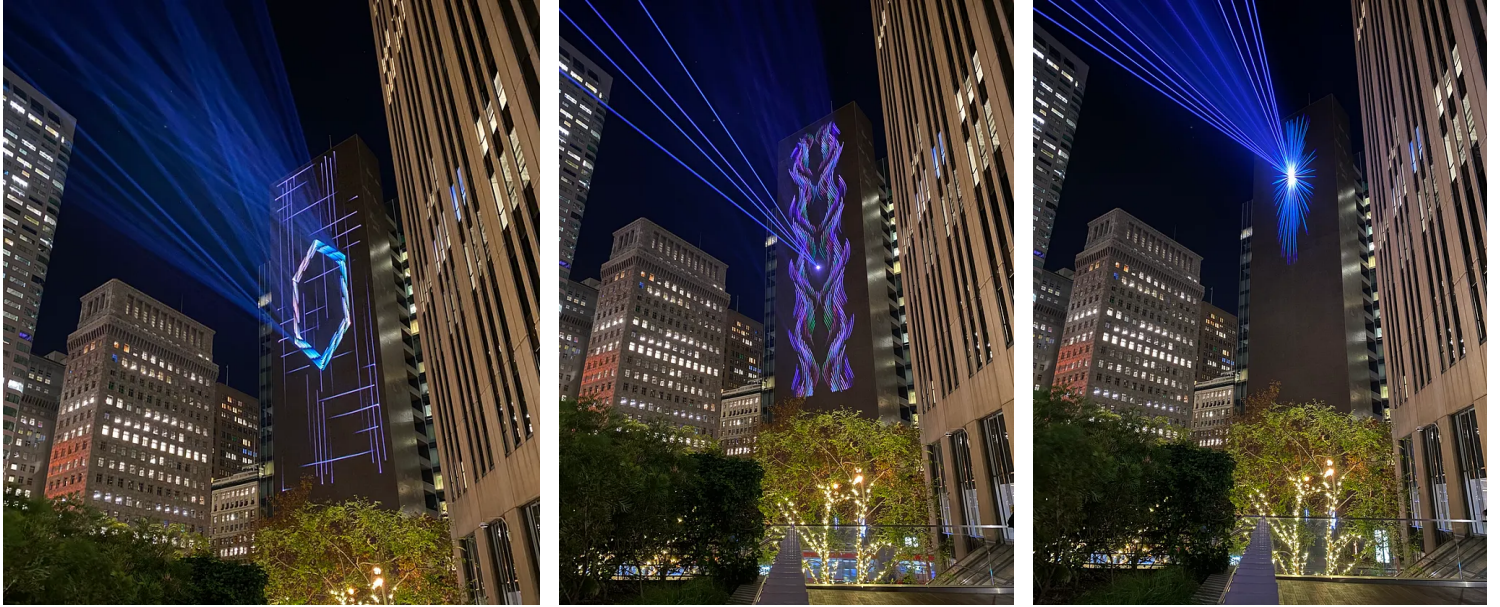


Glow SF viewing spots for 2023.

Start your walk from Union Square, down Post Street, and look up for the first participant, Salesforce Tower. Even if it is a pleasantly priapic structure at best, you can at least enjoy its digital centerpiece. I mention it because it *is* technically part of the show, although the swirl of snowflakes and flowers wouldn't be out of place any other time of the year.



Far more startling: the almost three-dimensional displays on the Hobart Building, which you'll see as you continue down Post. The integration of the building's two vastly different faces — one a brick wall, the other full of windows and Baroque-Renaissance details, is ingenious across all three shows which seem to pour right out of the brick and terra cotta. "Paper Tale" (with the paper maché head) is especially stirring, with sound effects to delight any bibliophile.



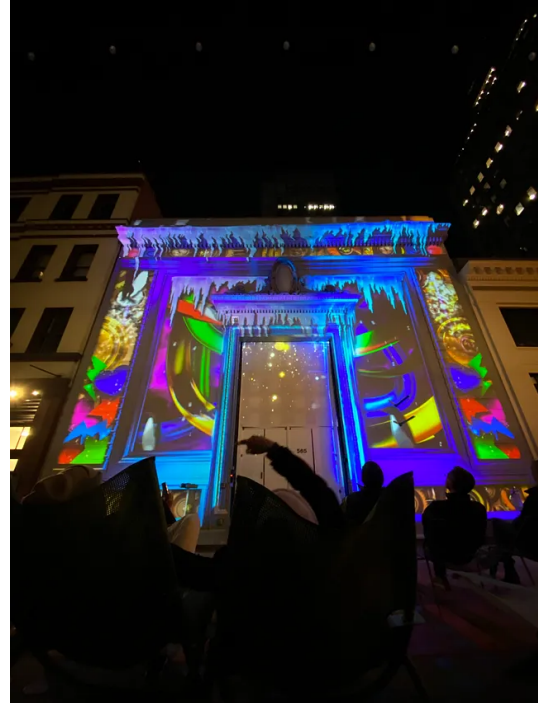
Just down Market Street is “Hyperion Monolith,” which features abstract, dizzying geometric angles and patterns on the broad side of One Bush Plaza, a building you will be forgiven for never noticing before. The jagged, sharp display of whirling lasers from across Market Street leaves a particular impression during the finale, as the beams coalesce in a brilliant star that ascends the two-hundred foot wall.



Continuing down Market: the Ferry Building's clock tower, which of course gave us another lightshow during APEC. This week, it's the subject of "The Shadow Lighthouse," which starts with the tower tiled prettily with intricate yellow and blue patterns, before rotating to reveal a Spanish galleon within its walls. Then, a stern-wheeler steams across — just sit down in the free lawn chairs and take this one in, man.



Slide on up Pine Street to the Pacific Stock Exchange. There are five shows in total here and I only caught “Crystallofolia”’s vision of winter turning to spring: an immense, warm, feminine presence dancing across the stone. The stock exchange seems like a difficult building to work with and this piece engaged it and its sculptures masterfully.

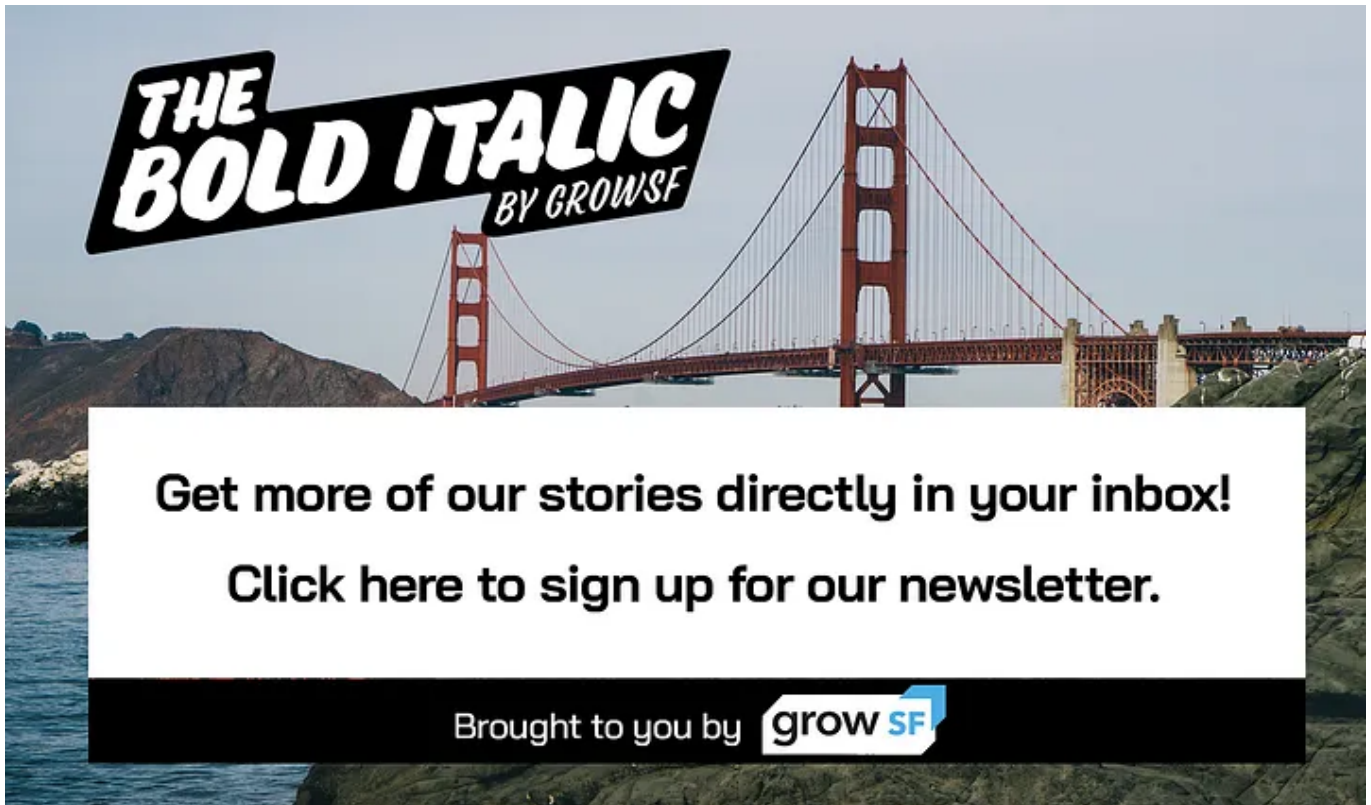


One more to go: the Pacific Gas and Electric Company building, a few blocks away on 565 Commercial. Saving it for last means you get to lie back in a fabric chaise-lounge and take in this most cinematic of the light shows.

Four artists take the alleyway on journeys built around the large doorway of the PG&E structure; some whimsical, some fantastic, all going somewhere. A bit like San Francisco.

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M. T. Eley is a San Francisco-based writer.



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