

Guild Hall

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Guild Hall's Summer Gala Raises over \$1 Million for the Institution's Museum, Theater, and Learning Programs

The event honored Executive Director, Andrea Grover and celebrated the Museum openings of *Ross Bleckner: NEVER THE LESS* and *Eric Freeman: The Volume of Color*



Andrea Grover & Ross Bleckner Photo by Patrick McMullan

East Hampton, NY (August 17, 2026) — (158 Main Street, East Hampton, NY) Guild Hall's annual Summer Gala was held on the institution's campus on Friday, August 7, 2026. Over 500 guests attended to celebrate a preview of the exhibitions ***Ross Bleckner: NEVER THE LESS*** and ***Eric Freeman: The Volume of Color***, and honor

Andrea Grover, who is a curator, writer, and nonprofit arts leader in her 10th year as Executive Director of Guild Hall.

The landmark event was attended by notable members of the East End creative community, including guests of honor Ross Bleckner and Andrea Grover, Board Chair Marty Cohen and Michele Cohen, Gala Co-Chairs Barbara Lane and Galia Meiri-Stawski, *NY Times* Food & Wine writer Florence Fabricant, Guild Hall Academy President Susan Stroman, Broadway producer Jeffrey Seller, opera and theater director, Yuval Sharon, Carlos Lama and The Cherry Bomb's, choreographer Gina Gibney, actress Katie Holmes, designer Donna Karan, journalists Katie Couric and Carl Bernstein, and visual artists Laurie Anderson, Peter Dayton, Eric Fischl, Ralph Gibson, April Gornik, Michael Halsband, Alice Hope, Judith Hudson, Barbara Kruger, Robert Longo, Shantell Martin, Joel Mesler, Steve Miller, Arcmanoro Niles, Alexis Rockman, Ugo Rondinone, Toni Ross, David Salle, Bastienne Schmidt, Julian Schnabel, Cindy Sherman, Jason Bard Yarmosky, and Almond Zigmund.

Guests enjoyed cocktails from 6 to 7 PM, including a preview of two solo exhibitions, *Ross Bleckner: NEVER THE LESS*, highlighting a lesser-known part of Bleckner's process, offering new insight into one of the most prolific painters of our time and, *Eric Freeman: The Volume of Color*, revealing Freeman's radiant abstract paintings that transform color into planes of light. Both exhibits are on view now through October 25, 2026. Simultaneously, specialty libations from Amante 1530 and passed hors d'oeuvres by Marcia Selden Catering were enjoyed in the Minikes Garden with live music performed by local jazz musicians, the Jazz Cats.

At 7 PM, attendees made their way to the dinner tent, which Anthony Taccetta Design had radiantly decorated, taking inspiration from bright pastels and larger than life fuchsia paper florals. The dinner tables were set with globe lights provided by West Out East and Bocci Lighting. Marcia Selden Catering served a seasonal summer menu with fresh, Mediterranean-inspired flavors and a mix of regional ingredients.

Prior to the main course, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Marty Cohen opened the event with a welcome, followed by Ross Bleckner, who gave a moving tribute to the late artist and his partner Eric Freeman and provided context to their solo shows now on view. An experimental video on Andrea Grover's curatorial work, produced by Aurora Picture Show and narrated by Robert Downey Jr., was screened. Grover received a standing ovation for her career-spanning achievements and then encouraged attendees to join her in a collective shot of Patron to celebrate 10 years. She concluded her remarks with "I've often said that **artists see the future**. They're the first people to imagine a reality that doesn't yet exist—and then they convince the rest of us to join them." Grover was presented with a custom award of metal and enamel inspired by Guild Hall's exterior by artist Laura Fortune, followed by a surprise presentation of two hand-sewn quilts crafted by over 81 artists and 14 Guild Hall staff members, masterfully sewn by Michele Cohen. A new book commemorating the *2026 Artist Quilt Project* is now available for purchase [here](#). Proceeds will benefit Guild Hall in honor of Andrea Grover.

Between courses, Jeffrey Seller, Tony Award-winning Broadway producer of *Rent*, *In the Heights*, *Avenue Q*, and *Hamilton*, led a live auction, making the total contributions for the evening **over \$1 million dollars** in support of Guild Hall's programming.

Following dessert, live tunes were provided by The Cherry Bombs— the East End's own multigenerational, female-centric powerhouse band— enticing guests to hit the dance floor, which was packed for the after party, with attendees gleefully dancing to tunes spun by DJ Mick, celebrating another successful Summer Gala at Guild Hall.

ABOUT GUILD HALL

Guild Hall is the cultural heart of the East End: a museum, performing arts, and education center, founded in 1931. We invite everyone to experience the endless possibilities of the arts: to open minds to what art can be; inspire creativity and conversation; and have fun.

Guild Hall has served four generations and introduced audiences to the most storied artists and performers of our time. As we approach our centennial, we have completed a state-of-the-art renovation to match the caliber of our artistry for twenty-first-century audiences. The facility-wide Capital Improvements Project & Campaign includes top-of-the-line physical and technological enhancements to better deliver on our mission as an artist-driven, interdisciplinary institution. For more information about Guild Hall, please visit [GuildHall.org](https://www.guildhall.org). Follow [@GUILD_HALL](https://www.instagram.com/guild_hall) on Instagram.