



For Immediate Release
September 15, 2015

SFMOMA Announces Innovative SFUSD Collaboration Offering Architecture and Design Program at the Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts



SAN FRANCISCO—The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) announces a collaboration with two San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) high schools that will connect students and teachers with contemporary art, design, architecture and museum resources as never before. Beginning this academic year, SFMOMA and the Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts (SOTA) will launch Architecture+Design, a new arts discipline for the school. This new collaboration complements the success of an existing relationship model between SFMOMA and Balboa High School, which offers students a curriculum focused on contemporary art curation. Collaborating directly with SFUSD faculty and administrators, SFMOMA brings distinctive resources, artists and art professionals to the participating high schools to deepen students' knowledge of contemporary art and introduce them to professional careers in the arts.

“We are thrilled to collaborate with SFUSD schools to bring modern and contemporary art to life in the classroom. We aim to foster students' creativity, while also building critical thinking skills crucial to academic achievement and career readiness,” said Julie Charles, SFMOMA Deborah and Kenneth Novack Associate Curator, School Initiatives, Education and Public Practice.

New Architecture+Design Program at SOTA

Working with SOTA, SFMOMA has co-founded and guided the school's first architecture and design program, Architecture+Design. Starting with an inaugural class of 15 freshman, the program will span the four-year academic career of the students, who will be admitted by application only, and will incorporate the history and theory of architecture and design in multiple fields, including landscape, interior, industrial, product and graphic design. With students working in the studio for 15 hours each week, the first year of the program focuses on teaching students fundamental design techniques, and exploring the design process from initial observations and analysis to prototyping.

"Our exciting relationship with SFMOMA will give students the opportunity to gain an experience well beyond the classroom and develop a more than basic understanding and passion for all the arts through their involvement with SFMOMA," said Monica Tiulescu, art director of Architecture+Design at SOTA. Tiulescu holds degrees in architecture and has previously taught undergraduate and graduate design and theory courses.

In addition to gaining unique access to museum resources, students will meet and work with artists, architects, designers and curators in the field through this collaboration. "SFMOMA was open and enthusiastic about this project from the beginning and as a result Asawa SOTA and SFMOMA have put together an educational experience unlike anything I have seen in public education," said Brian Kohn, principal, SOTA.

"The launch of the Architecture+Design Program at the Ruth Asawa School of the Arts represents a great new opportunity for San Francisco students who want to study art and design," said SFUSD board member Rachel Norton. "It's also a great example of the school district's Arts Education Master Plan in action—expanding our productive partnership with SFMOMA and connecting artists and other arts professionals directly with San Francisco public school students."

Contemporary Art Curation Program at Balboa High School

Currently in its third academic year, SFMOMA's relationship with Balboa High School enhances the Creative Arts for Social Transformation (CAST) pathway for juniors and seniors. This year, the collaboration between SFMOMA and the CAST pathway is launching a new interdisciplinary focus on contemporary art curation, which encourages students to think critically about art, media and cultural institutions. Through this unique pairing, students gain access to contemporary artists who engage with students through talks and projects at the school; artists such as Nicole Miller and Amy Franceschini are previous participants. Students who select this pathway at Balboa High School develop their own curatorial project which is presented at the culmination of the two-year program at a student-curated media festival. This program serves between 130 and 150 students each year.

"Access to incredible, thought provoking artwork gives life to the analytical frameworks that unify all the CAST classes," said Conrad Benedicto, Balboa High School social studies teacher for CAST pathway seniors. "The collaborative nature of our partnership with SFMOMA has resulted in a very rich conversation about how to use art as a unifying theme, and powerful learning experiences for our students."

SFMOMA's school engagements offer students intimate access to SFMOMA's collections on view in On the Go exhibitions throughout Bay Area during the museum's closure for expansion,

as well as off-site at the museum's Collections Center—a 75,000-square-foot research facility in South San Francisco. To further deepen SFMOMA's commitment to arts education and its relationship with the SFUSD, a third high school collaboration will be launched by fall 2018.

Art Express for Elementary School Classes

In addition to its intensive work with select SFUSD high schools, SFMOMA engages elementary school students through the Art Express outreach program. Specially-trained museum guides travel to schools across the greater Bay Area and provide in-classroom art lessons about modern and contemporary art, introducing students to works of art from SFMOMA's collection. Free for students and schools, Art Express encourages students to look, discover, question and explore modern and contemporary art through lively discussion, careful observation and hands-on art activities. The program also utilizes the museum's wealth of digital assets, such as animations from SFMOMA's interactive online learning [feature](#), *The Country Dog Gentlemen Travel to Extraordinary Worlds*.

Through these immersive collaborations, SFMOMA significantly enhances the ways in which it serves students and teachers throughout the Bay Area. The museum aims to expand on these offerings when the new SFMOMA opens in spring 2016 by increasing the number of K-12 schoolchildren that visit the museum from 18,000 up to 55,000 annually. Additionally, the museum will cultivate the next generation of art lovers by offering free admission to all visitors 18 and younger.

About the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

Founded in 1935 as the first West Coast museum devoted to modern and contemporary art, SFMOMA is currently undergoing a major, Snøhetta-designed [expansion project](#) to open in 2016 that will significantly enhance gallery, education, and public spaces, enabling the museum to better showcase more of its expanded permanent collection. While the museum is temporarily closed, SFMOMA is [On the Go](#) with an extensive array of off-site programming across the Bay Area and beyond.

Visit sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

Media Contacts

Emma LeHocky, elehocky@sfmoma.org

Jill Lynch, jilynch@sfmoma.org

Image credit:
Photo by Stephen Lam

###