

SFMOMA RELAUNCHES *OPEN SPACE* PLATFORM, APPOINTS CLAUDIA LA ROCCO NEW EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (January 21, 2016)—Claudia La Rocco, poet, writer, critic and performer, will succeed Suzanne Stein as editor-in-chief of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA)’s digital publication and community platform, *Open Space*. La Rocco’s appointment comes on the heels of a major relaunch of the platform led by Stein, who now is stepping down in order to return to her own creative pursuits. La Rocco comes to SFMOMA after writing about performance for *ARTFORUM*, the *New York Times* and other national publications.

“I’m excited to be joining *Open Space*, which is so rich and vibrant, and leading the next phase of its evolution,” said La Rocco. “Art writing and journalism are undergoing dramatic shifts right now; it’s a dynamic time to think about the most compelling intersections between regional and national voices and local and global conversations.”

Founded by Stein in 2008 and averaging over 30,000 visits per month, *Open Space* has been commissioning and supporting experimental and critical responses to art, institutions and culture—aiming to expand the discourse about art in general and cast a spotlight on the Bay Area cultural scene in particular. It has published the work and thinking of [hundreds](#) of writers and artists, poets and editors, musicians, filmmakers, curators and critics in a variety of capacities. The publication has often served as a platform for critical conversations that have found no other public venue. By archiving them, *Open Space* and SFMOMA preserve the historical context of concerns facing the arts communities of Northern California.

Open Space’s unique columnists-in-residence program, in which regular contributors can publish without editorial oversight from *Open Space* or SFMOMA, continues to be a singular publishing venture within the field of museum institutions. SFMOMA considers the platform to be held in common with this ever-growing collective of columnists, who retain the ability to publish at any time after their formal tenure has ended. “From the very beginning we envisioned *Open Space* as a venue for Bay Area artists and writers to pursue their own interests and think out loud,” said Stein, “and the community has taken advantage of that opportunity in more ways than we could ever imagine.”

More than 600 artists, writers and creative practitioners from around the world have appeared on *Open Space* or served as contributors, including:

- Artists Robert Bechtle, Timothy Buckwalter, Squeak Carnwath, Doug Hall, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Miranda July, Chip Lord, Tucker Nichols, Rex Ray, Kiki Smith, Catherine Wagner
- Photographer Jim Goldberg, who recently created a free downloadable work for the platform
- Poet and critic Bill Berkson
- Alison Arieff, content strategist for SPUR, the SF urban planning think tank
- Industrial designer and entrepreneur Yves Béhar
- Poets and writers Dodie Bellamy, Brandon Brown, Norma Cole, Kevin Killian, Wayne Koestenbaum, Joanne Kyger, Cedar Sigo
- Gallerists Jeffrey Fraenkel and Jessica Silverman
- Pastry chef Caitlin Freeman

- Art historians Julian Myers and Terry Smith
- David Gockley, general director of the San Francisco Opera
- Writer, editor, performer and MacArthur Fellow Guillermo Gomez-Pena
- Architect Mark Jensen
- Founding director of Kadist Art Foundation San Francisco Joseph del Pesco
- Archbishop Franzo King, the founder of the St. John Coltrane African Orthodox Church in San Francisco
- Filmmaker George Kuchar
- Poet, writer and performer Beth Lisick
- Carey Perloff, artistic director of the American Conservatory Theater
- Sister Tuna Noodle, a member of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a leading-edge order of queer nuns
- Writer, historian, activist and author Rebecca Solnit
- The staff of SFMOMA including curators, conservators, marketers, board members, educators and its director, Neal Benezra

Relaunch of *Open Space*

Under Stein's direction, SFMOMA relaunched *Open Space* in October 2015 with a new design and an expanded publishing program. The revised platform preserves popular *Open Space* features while providing opportunities for multiple publishing tempos and new feature formats.

Open Space now publishes three themed issues per year (fall, winter, spring), in which multiple contributors respond to a particular idea, question or problem over the course of a few weeks. The columnists-in-residence program continues to be the heart of *Open Space* program, accompanied by a new series of regular columns that address the nexus of art and technology and questions of labor, ethics and money in the arts. In addition, the new *Open Space* expands its community-focus, with a rotating spotlight on the individuals, collectives and organizations that make up the fabric of the Bay Area cultural scene as well as a layered, filterable map of hundreds of arts organizations all over the Bay Area. The intent is to provide a comprehensive picture of the scale and diversity of arts programming in this region.

With this comprehensive redesign, *Open Space* also launched its new *Project Space*, dedicated to commissioning new works by artists and writers, intended to be downloaded and distributed for free. Photographer Jim Goldberg created the inaugural piece, available now for download on *Open Space*. *Blade at the Beach* (2015) is a 26-page PDF that when printed on letter-sized paper on a home printer, cut out and assembled, forms a single 40 x 50-inch poster that is dated and signed by the artist. Blade was one of the main characters in Goldberg's work, *Raised by Wolves* (1995), a multi-media project that documented the lives of street kids in Hollywood and San Francisco over a 10-year period. *Open Space* will offer one work per season through *Project Space*.

About Claudia La Rocco

Claudia La Rocco is a poet, critic, essayist and editor whose work frequently revolves around interdisciplinary projects and performances. She is the author of *The Best Most Useless Dress* (Badlands Unlimited, 2014), selected poetry, performance texts, images and criticism and the novel *petit cadeau*, which was recently published by The Chocolate Factory Theater as a print edition of one and a four-day live edition. She edited *I Don't Poem: An Anthology of Painters* (Off the Park

Press, 2015) and *Dancers, Buildings and People in the Streets*, the catalogue for Danspace Project's PLATFORM 2015, which she curated. She has been presented by The Walker Art Center, The Kitchen and The Whitney Museum of American Art, and had residencies at such institutions as Headlands Center for the Arts, Stanford University and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. La Rocco writes for *ARTFORUM* and the *New York Times* and is a contributing editor to *Emergency Index* (Ugly Duckling Presse). She is currently the first writer-in-residence at On the Boards theater in Seattle.

About Suzanne Stein, founding Editor-in-Chief, *Open Space*

Poet, writer and performer Suzanne Stein joined SFMOMA in 2006, initially working in the Education and Publications departments. In 2008, she was appointed SFMOMA's community producer, the first role of its kind at an American art museum, where she defined and shaped *Open Space*. Over time Stein built the platform into a highly respected publication that attracts over a quarter of a million readers visits each year. In her tenure as *Open Space* editor-in-chief she has presented the work of hundreds of writers, artists, musicians, filmmakers, critics, curators and others. Her public programs for SFMOMA include *75 Reasons to Live*, organized for the museum's 75th anniversary, and *Living Room*, in conjunction with the exhibition *The Steins Collect*. In 2012, she was promoted to head of community engagement for the museum. Stein is the co-editor, with Judy Bloch, of *San Francisco Museum of Modern Art 360: Views on the Collection* (2016). Her recent poetry publications include *The Kim Game*, *TOUT VA BIEN* and *Passenger Ship*.

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Founded in 1935 as the first West Coast museum devoted to modern and contemporary art, SFMOMA is reaching the final stages of a transformative [expansion](#) project that will significantly enhance gallery, education and public spaces, enabling the museum to better showcase more of its expanded permanent collection. The museum will open to the public on May 14, 2016.

Visit sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

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