

THE NEW SFMOMA ANNOUNCES TRANSFORMED DIGITAL STRATEGY

Supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies, SFMOMA Puts Mobile at the Forefront



SAN FRANCISCO, CA (May 2, 2016)—The newly expanded San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) features an equally transformed digital program, with mobile technology moving to the forefront of its engagement strategy. The museum now connects with audiences through accessible, interactive experiences that break down the boundaries between art, entertainment and learning.

“Our aim all along has been to create a range of digital experiences that reflect not only the Bay Area’s vital role in digital culture, but also the eclectic mix of artistic, social and political viewpoints that make this region so distinctive,” said Chad Coerver, chief content officer at SFMOMA. “To achieve that goal, we felt we needed to push beyond the usual stories told about modern and contemporary art, and engage a new set of voices and perspectives.”

Bloomberg Philanthropies has provided a generous grant for SFMOMA’s expanded and reinvented digital strategy. Their tremendous support has helped fund the museum’s digital program across the board, including the implementation of a groundbreaking new mobile app to help visitors engage and learn. SFMOMA is part of Bloomberg Connects, a global initiative that develops digital programs at cultural institutions around the world to expand access to arts and culture through technology.

“Digital technology is an exciting new way to increase access to the arts,” said Michael R. Bloomberg, philanthropist, founder of Bloomberg LP and three-term Mayor of New York. “SFMOMA’s new digital strategy will help it reach new audiences and create a cutting-edge experience for all of its visitors.”

Mobile at SFMOMA

In 2015 SFMOMA partnered with local startup Detour to create a new breed of museum app experience, one that would combine immersive audio storytelling with the latest in location-aware

technology. The goal was to encourage visitors to look more intently at the art, and less at their screens, as they enjoyed audio while moving through the museum. The new SFMOMA app includes:

- Immersive, head-up, phone-in-pocket audio journeys through the museum featuring perspectives from unexpected guides such as comedians Martin Starr and Kumail Nanjiani, high-wire walker Philippe Petit, roller-derby player Suzy Hotrod and members of the San Francisco Giants organization.
- *Creative Responses to Creativity*, hundreds of 60- to 90-second audio reflections and responses to artworks in the galleries, by composers, comedians, artists and playwrights, among others.
- A new series of audio walks through San Francisco's urban fabric, co-produced with the museum's Architecture and Design department. The first of these begins inside SFMOMA's new building with the exhibition, *Model Behavior: Snøhetta's First Concepts for SFMOMA*, and moves out into the South of Market (SoMA) neighborhood, with stops at nearby SPUR, the California Historical Society, alleyways, public art installations and other sites of historical and design interest.

Technical features of the app include:

- Indoor and outdoor immersive touring with location-aware audio navigation (key to phone-in-pocket experience)
- Synced audio for social listening, with instant group creation
- On-demand audio, video and activities, triggered by user location
- Map-based navigation and point-to-point directions to locations in the building
- Calendar of exhibitions, events and other activities
- Digital ticketing and membership card (linked to the SFMOMA CRM)
- Shareable visual log of the user's visit, including audio tracks heard and photos taken
- iOS only at launch; Android in phase 2 (the app is free; iOS devices will be available for rent at the museum \$3 for members and visitors 18 and younger/\$6 non-members)

Story Screens

Visitors entering SFMOMA's free public spaces encounter two new large-scale Story Screens. These displays represent the museum as a living organism and offer glimpses of activity typically hidden behind the scenes: the creation and installation of the artworks that hang in the museum; the role of the museum in the community and the community's role within the museum; and rehearsals and performances taking place in the museum's new live art spaces. Over time SFMOMA will present video, animation and other image-based work commissioned specifically for these displays.

Interpretive Galleries

SFMOMA is also incorporating digital tools into participatory learning environments within the museum. The museum's new Pritzker Center for Photography houses the Photography Interpretive Gallery, which offers greater insight into the history of photography through three interactive digital experiences. Given how pervasive photography is in our daily lives, the intent of the Photography Interpretive Gallery is to encourage visitors to look closely at the kinds of images they take and post every day. The three exhibits invite visitors to consider the role pictures have played in shaping the history and mythology of California; to hear from photographers firsthand why/how they do what they do; and to take on the challenge of representing themselves using only the contents of their pockets. Exhibits in the interpretive gallery are activity-based and self-directed, and can be enjoyed

with a coffee from the adjacent Sightglass coffee bar. Photography Interpretive Gallery exhibits are supported by Bank of the West. Additional support is provided by Nion McEvoy; a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the Human Endeavor; and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Two interactive spaces in the painting and sculpture galleries are designed to help visitors recharge and make meaningful, personal connections to the art they can see in these spaces. A mixture of touch screens and digital tables connected to SFMOMA's recently launched Collection API encourage visitors to explore the friendships and rivalries between well-known artists; demonstrate the experimental materials and techniques used to create entirely new forms of art; and reveal the lives the objects led after leaving the artists' studios. An in-gallery pocket theater screens mini-documentaries about artists' practices. The museum will regularly rotate the content of these exhibits in the photography and painting and sculpture spaces in response to visitor feedback and the changing artwork in the galleries.

SFMOMA's Digital Experience Partners:

- 32K Productions, video production
- Adobe, contributed *Self Composed* exhibition design to Photography Interpretive Gallery
- Antenna International, content production for SFMOMA App
- Belle & Wissell, interactive design for Painting and Sculpture Interpretive Gallery
- Detour, platform development and content production for SFMOMA App
- Second Story, interactive and environmental design for Photography Interpretive Gallery

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

151 Third Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

Founded in 1935 as the first West Coast museum devoted to modern and contemporary art, a thoroughly transformed SFMOMA, with significantly enhanced gallery, education and public spaces, opens to the public on May 14, 2016. With six art-filled terraces, a new sculptural staircase and Roman steps where the public can gather, access to 45,000 square feet of free art-filled public space and free admission for visitors age 18 and younger, SFMOMA is more welcoming and more connected to San Francisco than ever before.

Visit sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

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Image Credit

The new SFMOMA, view from Yerba Buena Gardens; photo: Jon McNeal, © Snøhetta