

## San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Timeline

### 1935

On January 18, the San Francisco Museum of Art, under the leadership of founding director Grace McCann Morley, opens on the fourth floor of the War Memorial Veterans Building on Van Ness Avenue.

A gift of several hundred artworks from Albert M. Bender, including works by Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, establishes the nucleus of the permanent collection. In a remarkable display of generosity, Bender goes on to donate more than 1,100 objects to the museum, including photographs, and endow its first purchase fund before his death in 1941.

### 1936

The museum's second year begins with an exhibition of works by Henri Matisse—the first on the West Coast—primarily drawn from two local private collections. Many of the featured paintings and sculptures are later donated to the museum, forming the core of an exceptional collection of Fauvism.

The San Francisco Museum of Art becomes one of the first museums to recognize photography as a fine art by establishing, under the guidance of Curator John Humphrey, a collection of photographic works.

### 1940

The museum organizes its first architecture exhibition, *Telesis: Space for Living*, a landmark effort that prompts the city of San Francisco to establish an office of planning.

### 1945

50 member countries convene in the War Memorial Veterans Building to establish the United Nations Charter. With its galleries commandeered for delegates and press, the museum relocates to a temporary facility on Post Street from March through July.

The museum presents Jackson Pollock's first solo museum exhibition. Pollock's early masterpiece *Guardians of the Secret* (1943) is added to the collection.

### 1946

The Women's Board establishes the Rental Gallery (now known as the Artists Gallery). The first program of its kind in the country, it expands the collecting base in the Bay Area and creates a vibrant sales venue for local artists.

### 1951

The San Francisco Museum of Art initiates a biweekly television program entitled *Art in Your Life* (later renamed *Discovery*). Embracing the new medium, Morley asserts, "We mean to try to make television serve for art and artists, for that seems the business of our kind of museum." The series of half-hour shows runs for three years.

**1952**

68 photographic works spanning the career of Alfred Stieglitz are acquired by purchase and through the gift of Georgia O'Keeffe.

**1963**

The photography collection gains great depth with the addition of the Henry Swift Collection, a group of 85 prints assembled by one of the original members of f/64, the group of seven San Francisco photographers. His collection includes work by fellow f/64 photographers Ansel Adams, Imogen Cunningham and Edward Weston.

**1975**

"Modern" is added to the museum's name to reflect its purview more accurately.

Artist Clyfford Still gives 28 paintings to the museum.

**1980–87**

During a span of several years, SFMOMA formally divides its curatorial team into the four departments still in place today: Architecture and Design, Media Arts, Painting and Sculpture and Photography.

**1988**

The Third Street site for the museum's new facility is announced. Swiss architect Mario Botta is selected to design the new building.

**1990**

The Elise S. Haas Collection is bequeathed to the museum. It includes Matisse's seminal work *Femme au chapeau* (Woman with a Hat) (1905).

**1992**

The Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson Collection—comprising seven works related to American Pop art—becomes the first major gift of art in honor of the new building.

**1994**

SFMOMA's facility at 401 Van Ness Avenue closes to the public on September 5.

**1995**

SFMOMA's new building on Third Street opens to the public on January 18, the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the museum.

SFMOMA becomes one of the earliest museums to launch an institutional website.

In an unprecedented year of collecting, SFMOMA acquires 14 important Robert Rauschenberg works directly from the artist with the help of funds from trustee Phyllis Wattis. Wattis's support extends to the museum's purchase of René Magritte's signature painting *Les Valeurs personnelles* (Personal Values) (1952). Other acquisitions include works by Louise Bourgeois, Anselm Kiefer, Brice Marden, Piet Mondrian (the museum's first), Pablo Picasso and Andy Warhol, among others.

**1999**

The Photography Department receives more than 1,000 images spanning the full history of the medium from the Prentice and Paul Sack Photographic Trust, as well as 11 rare works by American Precisionist photographer Charles Sheeler.

Continuing its collections-growth strategy, SFMOMA acquires 22 Ellsworth Kelly works from the artist's personal collection.

In honor of Phyllis Wattis, Robert Rauschenberg donates his monumental work *Hiccups* (1978), which consists of 97 linked transfer drawings on sheets of handmade paper. Wattis also enables the museum to acquire key pieces by Eva Hesse and Brice Marden.

**2000**

In December, SFMOMA becomes one of the leading repositories of the work of Sol LeWitt with a major acquisition of nine important wall drawings and structures and 26 working drawings, many of which are donated from the artist's personal collection. The group of acquired works represents all the significant periods of LeWitt's oeuvre.

**2001–02**

In late 2001 and early 2002, the museum receives seven major works by Frank Stella from the collection of Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson—including the seminal Black Painting *Zambezi* (1959)—establishing SFMOMA as a major repository of this important postwar artist's work. The artist responds by gifting a new work from his series *The Duel* (2001) to SFMOMA in honor of the Andersons.

**2002**

Neal Benezra is appointed director of SFMOMA.

The museum unveils the Koret Visitor Education Center, which offers both scheduled programming and drop-in access.

**2005**

The museum announces the promised gift of nearly 800 photographs to the Prentice and Paul Sack Photographic Trust at SFMOMA from the Sacks' private collection. These important pictures augment the couple's 1998 gift of nearly 1,000 works spanning the history of the medium.

**2008**

The museum launches Live Art at SFMOMA, a series of public programs designed to embrace the event-driven, performance-based nature of contemporary art.

*Frida Kahlo* becomes the most highly attended exhibition in the museum's history.

**2009**

In April, SFMOMA announces plans for a major expansion that will provide additional gallery, public and support space, including larger and more advanced conservation facilities and an expanded library.

In May, SFMOMA unveils a new Rooftop Garden designed by Jensen Architects in collaboration with Conger Moss Guillard Landscape Architecture. The project, which includes a glass pavilion and two

open-air spaces, features a rotating selection of indoor and outdoor sculpture from the museum's permanent collection.

In September, Neal Benezra and Charles Schwab, Chairman of the Board, announce a groundbreaking partnership with Doris and Donald Fisher to provide the Fisher Collection—one of the world's leading collections of modern and contemporary art—with a home at SFMOMA. The Fisher Collection includes 1,100 works by leading postwar and contemporary artists including Alexander Calder, Chuck Close, Willem de Kooning, Richard Diebenkorn, Sam Francis, Ellsworth Kelly, Anselm Kiefer, Roy Lichtenstein, Brice Marden, Agnes Martin, Gerhard Richter, Richard Serra, Cy Twombly and Andy Warhol, among many others.

SFMOMA announces the Campaign for Art with 195 promised gifts from nine members of the campaign committee. Some of the artists represented include Diane Arbus, Joseph Beuys, Robert Gober, Eva Hesse, Ellsworth Kelly, Bruce Nauman, Jackson Pollock, Ed Ruscha and David Smith.

## **2010**

SFMOMA marks its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a year of special exhibitions and programs.

SFMOMA announces more than \$250 million in support from museum leadership to expand its facilities and increase its endowment.

In September, SFMOMA selects the architecture firm Snøhetta to design the expansion.

## **2011**

SFMOMA unveils expansion designs that reveal innovative and audience-friendly design features, including free street-level galleries and public spaces and dedicated educational spaces throughout the museum.

## **2012**

SFMOMA announces new promised gifts to the ongoing Campaign for Art with more than 470 photographs from three separate collectors, adding significant new depth to the museum's holdings in 20<sup>th</sup> century American and Japanese photography.

## **2013**

In June, SFMOMA begins offering SFMOMA On the Go, a range of off-site programming and exhibitions in the community as the museum closes for expansion.

## **2014**

In February, SFMOMA launches the Artist Initiative—supported by a \$1.75 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation—which involves deep collaborations with living artists resulting in a more integrated, evolving approach to conservation and collections research.

In April, SFMOMA announces the creation of the Pritzker Center for Photography as part of the museum's expansion. The center will be the largest gallery, research and interpretive space for photography of any art museum in the United States.

In September, Bloomberg Philanthropies pledges grant support for SFMOMA's expanded and reinvented digital experience, including the implementation of new mobile and on-site technologies to

help visitors engage and learn when the museum opens in 2016.

## **2015**

*American Icons: Masterpieces from SFMOMA and the Fisher Collection* debuts at the Grand Palais in Paris and travels to the Musée Granet in Aix-en-Provence. This exhibition presents for the first time works from both collections showcased in one exhibition.

## **2016**

The newly expanded museum opens to the public May 14, 2016.

## **Media Contacts**

Jill Lynch, [jilynch@sfmoma.org](mailto:jilynch@sfmoma.org), 415.357.4172

Lillian Goldenthal, [lillian.goldenthal@finnpartners.com](mailto:lillian.goldenthal@finnpartners.com), 212.593.6355