

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Institutional Fact Sheet

Background

Founded in 1935 under the direction of Grace McCann Morley, SFMOMA was the first museum on the West Coast dedicated to modern and contemporary art. Originally named the San Francisco Museum of Art, it began operations on the fourth floor of the War Memorial Veterans Building. The museum expanded in 1970–72 when the third floor of the Veterans Building became available, and in 1975 added the word “Modern” to its name to reflect its mission more accurately. In 1995, on the occasion of its 60th anniversary and led by director Jack Lane, SFMOMA moved into its first purpose-built home, designed by Mario Botta, in the South of Market (SoMa) neighborhood. Neal Benezra was appointed director in 2002. In 2009, SFMOMA announced plans for a major expansion and announced a landmark partnership to become the home of the renowned Doris and Donald Fisher Collection of postwar and contemporary art.

Museum Leadership

Staff

Neal Benezra, Helen and Charles Schwab Director
Janet Alberti, Deputy Director, Administration & Finance
Ruth Berson, Deputy Director, Curatorial Affairs
Nan Keeton, Deputy Director, External Relations

Board of Trustees

Charles R. Schwab, Chair, Board of Trustees
Robert J. Fisher, President, Board of Trustees

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Expansion

Funded by a \$610 million capital campaign, which supports the museum’s construction costs, endowment and interim programming, SFMOMA will open a new Snøhetta-designed expansion on May 14, 2016. New entrances and public spaces will connect SFMOMA to the city as never before, while the art-filled ground floor will be open to all, free of charge. The transformed museum, which incorporates the renovated Botta building, will nearly triple the current exhibition space from 70,000 to 170,000 square feet. This additional gallery space will enable the museum to display much more of its outstanding and rapidly growing collection. Highlights of the project include:

- **The Doris and Donald Fisher Collection** – with an inaugural presentation of nearly 260 postwar and contemporary artworks by the most well-known artists of our time in dedicated galleries.
- **The Campaign for Art** – exhibitions throughout the museum will feature selections from more than 3,000 works of painting, sculpture, works on paper, photography, media arts and architecture and design promised to SFMOMA by over 200 donors since 2009.
- **The Pritzker Center for Photography** – the largest gallery, research and interpretive space dedicated to this medium of any art museum in the United States, allows SFMOMA to present exhibitions from its collection of more than 17,800 works of photography and special exhibitions.

- **Commissioned works** – SFMOMA will continue an ambitious program of commissioned works in the new building with art by Claudy Jongstra and Julie Mehretu. Performance works will also be commissioned.

Community Impact

San Francisco’s SoMa district has flourished since the museum opened on Third Street in 1995. New hotels, retail spaces, restaurants, offices and residential properties continue to spring up in the revitalized neighborhood. SFMOMA’s outward-looking and engaging expansion project will create new pathways, public spaces and entrances that more deeply integrate the museum into the neighborhood. An art-filled and free-to-visit ground floor with three exhibition areas will enhance SFMOMA’s reputation as a cultural hub in the center of San Francisco. Roman steps overlooking Richard Serra’s sculpture, *Sequence* (2006), in the new, street-level Roberts Family Gallery offer one of San Francisco’s liveliest new public gathering places.

Cultivating the next generation of art lovers, the museum will offer free admission for visitors 18 and younger in perpetuity. SFMOMA will also expand its work with K–12 students by tripling the number of school groups it hosts annually, as well as build upon successful collaborations with the San Francisco Unified School District. Curriculum-based programs in architecture, design and curation are already underway at San Francisco high schools including the Ruth Asawa School for the Arts (SOTA) and Balboa High School.

Curatorial Departments

Architecture and Design

Comprising more than 6,100 works of modern and contemporary architecture, furniture, product and graphic design, SFMOMA’s architecture and design collection is widely considered one of the most significant in the United States. The collecting and programming strategy focuses on identifying and contextualizing transformative—or game-changing—design, especially software-integrated design; works that have changed the course of a discipline or introduced new social, economic or environmental relationships.

Highlights of the architecture and design collection include:

- Iconic chairs from the past 100 years, such as Josef Hoffman’s Sitzmaschine, Eero Aarnio’s Pastille chair and Fresh’s Sketch chair.
- Unique works by important West Coast architects and designers:
 - Yves Behar
 - Neil Denari
 - Johanna Grawunder
 - Jonathan Ive
 - MLTW
 - Morphosis
 - IwamotoScott
 - Barbara Stauffacher Solomon
 - The Eames Office conference room from 901 Washington Boulevard

- Original models and plans of experimental architecture by Lebbeus Woods, Steven Holl, Greg Lynn and Zaha Hadid

Media Arts

SFMOMA has been a leader in collecting, presenting and preserving works of media art. In 1988, the museum formally established a department dedicated to time-based media, performance, sound- and computer-based works. With nearly 300 significant works, the collection represents one of the largest holdings of media art. Dedicated galleries for media arts, located on the 7th floor of the new building, will accommodate collection-based presentations and new special exhibitions.

Highlights of the collection include:

- Works by pioneers of video art and performance such as Dan Graham, Joan Jonas, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Nam June Paik and Bill Viola
- Major installations by Doug Aitken, Jim Campbell, Tacita Dean, Bill Fontana, Douglas Gordon, Christian Marclay, Steve McQueen and Julia Scher
- Interactive, performative, participatory works by Candice Breitz, Harrell Fletcher/Miranda July, Hans Haacke and Tino Sehgal

Painting and Sculpture

As a cornerstone of SFMOMA's identity since it opened its doors in 1935, the Department of Painting and Sculpture consistently engages with the art and artists of our time. Whether by supporting artists at early stages of their careers or by organizing major retrospectives and thematic exhibitions, the department is committed to fostering new ideas and approaches to modern and contemporary art. The collection currently numbers more than 8,000 paintings, sculptures, and works on paper created from 1900 to the present day.

Particular strengths of the collection include:

- Important examples of U.S. and Latin American modernism, Fauvism, Surrealism, American Abstract Expressionism, Minimalism and post-Minimalism, Pop art, postwar German art, the art of California and contemporary art from around the globe
- Iconic works by Ruth Asawa, Romare Bearden, Marcel Duchamp, Eva Hesse, Edward Hopper, Frida Kahlo, Rene Magritte, Henri Matisse, Georgia O'Keeffe, David Park, Jackson Pollock, Gerhard Richter, Diego Rivera, Mark Rothko, Wayne Thiebaud and Andy Warhol
- In-depth holdings of works by Matthew Barney, Joan Brown, Vija Celmins, Bruce Conner, Jay DeFeo, Richard Diebenkorn, Robert Gober, Philip Guston, Ellsworth Kelly, Paul Klee, Sol LeWitt, Robert Rauschenberg, Doris Salcedo, Frank Stella, Clyfford Still and Kara Walker

Photography

One of the first institutions to recognize photography as an art form, SFMOMA holds more than 17,800 works of photography dating from the advent of the medium in 1839 to today's digital images. The new Pritzker Center for Photography offers 15,000 square feet of gallery, study and interpretive space—the largest space in any U.S. art museum permanently dedicated to photography. The Pritzker Center for Photography will enable SFMOMA to triple the number of photographs it displays annually

from the museum's collection.

Highlights of the photography collection include:

- Major holdings of the Western landscape and California photographers, with works from 19th-century artists including Carleton Watkins and his contemporaries, significant groups of works by Ansel Adams and Edward Weston and works by contemporary practitioners including Larry Sultan, Henry Wessel and many others
- Important works of land use and landscape in the American West, from the 19th century to the present, with the largest collection of works by Robert Adams in any major museum
- The finest collection of Japanese photography outside of Japan
- Modernist work, with special strength in work by American photographers Alfred Stieglitz and Charles Sheeler, as well as a collection of Modernist work in Europe from between the wars by Man Ray, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, and examples of Surrealism
- A major representation of Documentary work and Documentary-style photography, with very strong and deep collections of work by Diane Arbus, Helen Levitt, Wright Morris, Garry Winogrand, and international figures Rineke Dijkstra, David Goldblatt and Shomei Tomatsu

Education and Public Practice

SFMOMA's Department of Education and Public Practice comprises three program portfolios—School Initiatives, Public Dialogue, and Performance and Film—that center on public encounters, events and collaborations, with the aim of making a lasting contribution to the artistic and educational ecology of California and beyond.

- School Initiatives supports students and teachers in the Bay Area's K–12 schools through facilitated school group visits, curriculum building, teacher professional development and artist-driven high-school collaborations. Programs are integrated with classroom practice and prioritize public schools through close collaboration with San Francisco Unified School District.
- Public Dialogue fosters public discourse around the role of contemporary art in public life through programs and projects that encourage exploration, experimentation and in-depth critical engagement by both artists and audiences. These include adult education courses, symposia, lectures, gallery tours, artist talks and collaborations with other arts organizations in the Bay Area.
- Performance and Film creates a space for live and event-based art practices, recognizing their importance in the history of modern art. The museum will partner with the San Francisco Film Society to curate film series in the newly renovated Phyllis Wattis Theater and commission artists to create new performances and workshops for audiences of all ages.

Visit sfmoma.org to learn more about the [museum's expansion](#) through [images](#) and [video](#).

Media contacts

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