



For Immediate Release

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SFMOMA ANNOUNCES PLANNING PHASE FOR NEW WING TO DOUBLE GALLERY SPACE AND EXPAND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) today announced that it is moving into the next phase of planning for an expansion of its facility in downtown San Francisco. The future expansion will enable the museum to double its gallery space to 100,000 square feet; enhance and grow its curatorial, conservation, and library programs; and consolidate its offices, 60 percent of which are currently housed off-site.

Expansion planning was initiated in 2007 in response to the continued growth of the museum's collections, educational programming, and critically acclaimed exhibitions program. In the summer of 2008, SFMOMA Trustees endorsed an initial phase of planning, but put both internal efforts and fundraising preparations on hold as the economy declined last fall.

With the launch of this phase, SFMOMA will now develop its vision and program plans for the expansion. In this process, SFMOMA will define how the added space will be allocated and the specialized facilities and features required, enabling the museum to develop a budget for its construction and endowment. Once this analysis and planning is complete, the museum will assess the economic environment to determine when to launch a capital campaign to fund the project.

"We are taking this important next step in securing our future in response to the increasing public demand for our programming, to be able to properly present our collections and exhibitions, and, equally important, to accommodate future growth," stated SFMOMA director Neal Benezra. "Continuing this planning is critical since it will enable us to move forward quickly and confidently with a fundraising campaign once the nation regains its economic footing."

SFMOMA welcomes more than 650,000 visitors annually, and more than 46,000 students visit each year through a partnership with the San Francisco Unified School District. Since opening its South of Market building in 1995, SFMOMA's family programs have increased five-fold, teacher training programs have increased six-fold, and gallery tours have expanded to 1,800 a year, a thousand more than in the museum's previous facility.

At the same time, the museum has added more than 13,000 works to its collections, 95 percent of which were donated, thus doubling its holdings to 26,000 works. SFMOMA has built outstanding collections of painting and sculpture, and the museum has been a leader nationwide in both acquiring and exhibiting photography, media arts, architecture, and design, amassing groundbreaking collections in each of these areas. SFMOMA has also mounted a series of exhibitions that have drawn both record attendance and praise from the media and public in San Francisco and across the US, including the current show of work by William Kentridge and recent exhibitions by Diane Arbus, Olafur Eliasson, Eva Hesse, Frida Kahlo, Sol LeWitt, Richard Tuttle, and Jeff Wall.

"Museums are a crucial part of a healthy and vibrant community," said Charles Schwab, chairman of the Board of Trustees of SFMOMA. "They connect us to the past while illuminating the future and are centers of creativity and

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incubators of innovation—among the most valuable commodities we have as a nation. SFMOMA has been an important contributor to San Francisco—a place for lifelong learning, open and accessible to all. The planned expansion will help it become an even stronger institution making greater contributions to the cultural, educational, and economic vitality of the region.”

The new wing will primarily be located on a site to the southwest of the museum that runs along its southern facade and that extends to Howard Street. In effect, the building will be inserted into a series of lots that back onto Natoma Street and will bridge over a parking area on Hunt Street, which is a dead end, and therefore will not be visible from Third Street. It is envisioned that the portion of the new building that runs along Howard Street will house the museum’s curatorial, programming, and administrative offices, and allow for greatly expanded conservation and library facilities.

Relocating offices currently located in the museum to the new wing will enable SFMOMA to transform those spaces into galleries. In addition, the museum will create gallery space in the new wing that will merge seamlessly with the existing building. The expansion planning will also encompass the creation of a new entry on Minna Street (which runs along the museum’s northern facade) to improve access for school groups and to the museum’s Phyllis Wattis Theater for public programming.

SFMOMA’s facility was designed to allow for expansion along its northern, southern, and eastern facades, where the museum has acquired parcels of adjacent land. Since opening its South of Market facility, SFMOMA has already developed a parking garage along its eastern facade. On May 10 the museum will open its new Rooftop Garden, a \$24 million project that is fully funded and endowed.

“Cultural infrastructure is a vital component of stimulating and sustaining the economic health of San Francisco, California, and the nation. At the same time, it also provides equally important educational benefits to students, families, and businesses,” stated San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom. “I applaud the leadership of SFMOMA for taking this civic-spirited and necessary step for the benefit of the people who live, work in, and visit the Bay Area.”

The planning for the new building will be implemented by Gensler, one of the nation’s leading architecture, design, and planning firms, which is noted for its work in interior architecture. Arthur Gensler, the firm’s founder and chairman, is vice chairman of the SFMOMA Board of Trustees.

“In addition to enhancing the presentation of our permanent collection, exhibitions, and educational programming, the expansion will provide operational and financial efficiencies and create new jobs,” noted Mr. Benezra. “Also, in looking to the future, it is important to note that the Bay Area is home to one of the most important groups of private collections of contemporary art in the U.S. As the leading museum dedicated to modern and contemporary art on the West Coast, we must have the resources needed to stimulate and accommodate gifts that are made for the benefit of the public.”

SFMOMA will celebrate its 75th anniversary on January 18, 2010. The museum will roll out a year-long schedule of programs, exhibitions, and special events to celebrate this important milestone, including two special exhibitions tracing the extraordinary growth and evolution of the collection and offering an in-depth look at SFMOMA’s past, present, and future.

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Visit our website at www.sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

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