



Defining Silicon Valley Through Public Art Past, Present, Progressive – Art Walk on Menlo College Campus

For Immediate Release –

Menlo Park Public Art (MPPA) has teamed up with Art Ventures Gallery and Menlo College to bring a stable of art and sculptures to Silicon Valley in the Silicon Valley Sculpture (SVS) fine art fair. SVS is the primary fundraiser for the MPPA, a nonprofit organization with the mission to define Silicon Valley through public art. The Opening Night: Enchanted Soirée will feature: Burning Man CEO, Marian Goodell; Chief Curator, Catherine Carlton; Art Ventures Gallery Director, Dr. Katharina Powers; and Menlo College President, Steven Weiner. The special highlight being the opening remarks by Rotraut Klein Morquay, a German-French visual artist & widow of famed French artist Yves Klein. The Burning Man festival has taken the torch forward regarding creative and inspired sculptures that associate love, idea and community.

It will take place at Menlo College in Atherton, California, from September 25th -28th, 2020. Unlike most suburbs in the Bay Area, Menlo Park does not have an arts commission, and is primarily dependent on raising money to support public art to benefit the community.

The fair will be an important touchstone for the communities of Atherton and Menlo Park. The goal is to have twenty to thirty five (20-35) sculptures from all over the nation that promote artists from the West, which consequentially fits the objective and focus of the MPPA. The creative objective of the SVS fair is to bring artists in direct contact with the Arts Commission from all towns in the Silicon Valley, and to define the Silicon Valley with thoughtful sculptures to be appreciated by the community and start active dialogue.

How do the Arts Commission work? Arts Commission publish open calls for public art online, and then wait for submissions. The MPPA are bringing the artists and some of their recent work directly to the Arts Commission. This creates a unique opportunity for the arts commission to inspect the quality and talk one-on-one about the messages they want to convey to their specific community and commissions. By exhibiting large scale sculptures in the heart of Silicon Valley, the objective is to increase access to art in an area where the importance of technology has often surpassed the recognition of other forms of culture. Art expands what it is to be human.

In addition to large-scale fine art sculptures with a narrative exhibited in a natural environment, the event will include performance art pieces that draw attention to pressing issues facing the Silicon Valley community, such as privacy, equality, displacement, and race. Interdisciplinary artist Carmina Eliason will perform "Cafe con leche", which is a creative art project that invites the community to mix coffee and milk together as a way to initiate a reflection and conversation on skin color as a social issue and construct. The project began as part of a residency program at the Museum of Art and History in Santa Cruz. It has expanded to other locations including classrooms, galleries, and homes. This project continues to grow as a model that others can use to instigate conversations on color in their own communities.

Also performing will be Trevor Mansfield, an artist living in Spain, who photographed a fabric sculptures series. Mansfield will present the sculptures in life posing formations throughout the exhibition. Art Fairs all over the country have collector's lounges. SVS will have an artist-student lounge, connecting artist with students to learn and inspire each other. Menlo College offers degrees in Business Administration and Psychology. The creative aspects of artists will open the students up to a new world of appreciation and understanding.

This year's SVS Fair theme is "Past, Present, Progressive." An art walk will guide visitors through sculptures that represent all three ideas, ending at Florence Moore Hall on the Menlo College Campus, where the art performances will take place.

A large amount of gratitude goes to the Menlo College community for providing a stunning, minimalist environment to showcase the art works in grand style. As many as sixteen artists will take place in the fair. The sculptures they create will be displayed all throughout the Menlo College Campus creating angles and focal points that complement the backdrop beauty of the campus and the art.

Katharina Powers, CEO of MPPA, states: "There's no better place than the almost idyllic but minimalistic Menlo College campus to showcase contemporary fine art sculptures here in Silicon Valley. President Steven Weiner is an open-minded visionary thinker, who leads his students into the next centuries with passion and progression. Bringing fine art sculptures to Silicon Valley does not mean we are disrupting the tech industry, we are complementing it, but having this fair here on the West Coast creates a tectonic shift."

She continued: "It is the ambition of Menlo Park Public Art to develop, support and maintain public art

that serves the community. The mission includes to educate the public about the importance of public art at its highest level, and to create artwork that deepens the human experience by inspiring the imagination and evoking emotion, as well as providing enjoyment to public spaces".

Public art can be expressed through a wide variety of means. It can be thought-provoking with meaningful and relevant themes. It can be whimsical, bold or fragile. Art addresses societal challenges, connecting our shared present, past and future. Art may be a single element or multiple objects; it is unlimited in its forms. Art can transform a city infrastructure in a multitude of inventive ways: artist-designed play equipment, street furniture, planter boxes, lighting, water features, landscape treatment, and bike stands, to name a few.

Integral to our goal is a desire to educate members of our community about the inspirational value of public art and to physically represent a clear reflection of Menlo Park as an active, international community that is at the crucible of technology, finance, and invention in the heart of Silicon Valley".

The fair will be held annually in September, and the 2021 theme is "Challenging Silicon Valley" which will include a nod to the 200th anniversary of the founding of the modern state of Mexico. This will have a focus on Mexican artists, whom are invited to show us what humanity was meant to be through the eyes of different cultures that compliment one outstanding vision – communication and appreciation through art for the community.

About Menlo College

Historically Menlo College has roots that fall back to Faxon Dean Atherton and his wife Dominga. The Oak studded campus was once the elegant home and ranch of this early California family. The Atherton's large family home became the center of a growing community. Together Faxon and Dominga exhibited all the stubbornness, optimism, and can do spirit that is the root of all the Silicon Valley entrepreneurs who came later.

When discussing the event, Steven A. Weiner, President of Menlo College, said "The Menlo College community of scholars, alumni, trustees, and students join me in looking forward to the opportunity to host the first Silicon Valley Sculpture fair. The beauty of our campus makes for an ideal setting of a celebration and showcase of art, and we are proud to provide people from throughout the Bay Area and beyond an opportunity to celebrate the talents of participating artists."

About Menlo Park Public Art

Menlo Park Public Art

A nonprofit organization

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