

about works:

updated June 12, 2023

Works/San José is your community art and performance center—a non-profit creative laboratory dedicated to providing an environment where artists, audience, and ideas interact to expand the scope of cultural and artistic experience. Founded in 1977 by local artists, Works' philosophy and unique range of opportunities allow artists, curators, and the community to challenge the boundaries of contemporary art. Exhibitions at Works are unique professional development opportunities in which artists and curators are mentored by Works volunteers through the production of their exhibitions. The intellectual content of an exhibition is solely the work of the artists and curator; and in this way, Works presents diverse and often underrepresented viewpoints and creative statements while showcasing emerging and experimental visual, new media, installation, performance, and interdisciplinary art.

Works has provided a 'first opportunity' to be seen for many area artists, and a place for new experiments and directions for artists at all levels of experience.

Works thrives on community involvement and mounts exhibitions that cross boundaries to bring about dialogs between diverse populations. Works provides programs for artists at every level of career development through workshops, lectures, and free art experiences.

At Works/San José, volunteers and members maintain operational and programming capacity, keeping the organization responsive to the needs of its membership and community. Works is operated by a working volunteer Board of Directors, an Advisory Board, and volunteers at large.

Works/San José is supported by members and individual donors, and seeks funding from a variety of partners and grantors including Cultural Affairs grants from the City of San José, grants from Silicon Valley Creates, in partnership with the County of Santa Clara, California Arts Council, National Endowment for the Arts, Applied Materials Foundation, and other grantors including corporate matching funds from employee donations.

mission statement

Works/San José believes that thriving communities support artistic experimentation. Therefore, Works serves as the South Bay community's creative laboratory where people can experiment, exhibit, and engage with art and with each other. Works achieves this mission by providing an accessible, supportive, and welcoming art center.

works/san José

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join our e-list at workssanjose.org
find us on facebook, instagram, twitter [@workssanjose](https://twitter.com/workssanjose)

exhibition programs

guest curator/major exhibitions

This program is responsible for Works' major exhibitions, and allows Works to present broad and diverse viewpoints and expressions. Conceptual group exhibitions are presented in that address aspects of our world to pushing the boundaries of art making itself. Applications to this program must have a minimum of three artists, and participants are required to provide an outreach activity relating to their exhibitions. These exhibitions run from 3 to 6 weeks, and modest stipends are provided to curators. As well as working with individuals from the community to present exhibitions, Works is also partners with other organizations to present a greater range of viewpoints and voices. Exhibitions are chosen to be diverse and divergent—representative of our communities and topics of our time and place in as high a quality as practical.

While physically restrictive, Works also programs the new Studio Hall Gallery adjacent to our main gallery. Talk with us about the developing guidelines for this space.

See our exhibit guidelines documents, visit Works, and talk with us about your ideas.

member, open call, and auction exhibitions

Works offers member artists an annual opportunity to show their art in a non-juried exhibition. Works also presents at least one open call exhibition each year with a theme relevant to our time, but with no membership or other requirement to participate. Works also asks regional artists for their support by donating a work of art to the Community Art Auction, a significant means of support for Works' mission of fostering community art and performance. Works also presents exhibits with Mosaic America and the School of Arts & Culture at Mexican Heritage Plaza. Together, these exhibitions present the most eclectic and comprehensive view of South Bay art, with some of the most established area artists showing along side the region's newest emerging talents.

performance events and workshops

performance art and new music events

Since its inception, Works has been the South Bay's premier performance art venue, presenting an eclectic array of artists. Music events focus on non-traditional and experimental sound performances and interactive environments. Works also collaborates with performance, spoken word, and poetry groups and organizations to present new work by emerging writers, directors, and performers of all kinds. Well-RED is a monthly poetry event curated by Poetry Center San José and includes open mic readings after features. Flash Fiction Forum is a curated bi-monthly series with about a dozen readers at each event.

artist development

Professional development and educational opportunities, include workshops on curating exhibitions, writing artist's statements, intellectual property, art and business practices, as well as interactive talks with artists, arts administrators, public art coordinators and others. Workshops are also presented on art techniques to concepts and processes relating to guest curator exhibitions.