

**For Immediate Release**

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## **SFMOMA'S TOPPING OUT CEREMONY MARKS HALFWAY POINT IN CONSTRUCTION OF NEW MUSEUM OPENING IN 2016**

At a Topping Out ceremony on Wednesday, September 10, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) drew a crowd of some 1,000 supporters to celebrate the raising of the steel beam that brought the structure of the museum's 235,000-square-foot Snøhetta-designed [building expansion](#) to its highest point.



Held in Jessie Square—an outdoor plaza in the heart of the museum's South of Market surroundings—the free, public event gathered museum and community leaders, friends, and neighbors to view the beam as it was hoisted into place on the 10-story addition that's been rising up behind SFMOMA's current building since the museum broke ground on the project more than a year ago.

Topping Out officially marks the halfway point in SFMOMA's coming transformation, and is also a milestone for the realization of its expanded role in the Bay Area. When the museum reopens in 2016, it will provide better art experiences in a new home that features nearly triple the amount of gallery space; an expanded ground floor of art-filled, admission-free areas; more flexible spaces for live performance; and dramatically expanded education programs for students and teachers.

SFMOMA Director **Neal Benezra**; Deputy Director, Curatorial Affairs **Ruth Berson**; Board President **Robert J. Fisher**; and Board Chair **Charles R. Schwab** and his wife **Helen Schwab** were joined by San Francisco Mayor **Edwin M. Lee**; Snøhetta principals **Craig Dykers** and **Kjetil Thorsen**; Webcor CEO **Jes Pedersen**; SFMOMA Board Vice-Chair **Diana Nelson**; and EHDD President **Duncan Ballash** in marking this historic moment for the institution.

“When we moved to this neighborhood in 1995 we were pioneers,” stated SFMOMA Director Neal Benezra. “As our collections, programs, and audiences have grown exponentially over the past 19 years, the neighborhood has grown around us to become the cultural heartbeat of San Francisco. With this next chapter in our history, we invite you—the forward-thinking community that has made this possible—to join us in making the city an even stronger center for creativity and civic dialogue.”

Other art enthusiasts who turned out to celebrate included SFMOMA trustees **Dolly Chammas**, **Carla Emil**, **Doris Fisher**, **Mimi Haas**, **Christopher Meany**, **Charlotte Shultz**, **Norah** and **Norman Stone**, **Susan Swig**, and **Robin Wright**; along with cultural and civic leaders such as San Francisco Arts Commission

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## *SFMOMA Hosts Topping Out Celebration*

Board President **JD Beltran**; Fine Arts Museums Deputy Director **Richard Benefield**; YBCA Executive Director **Deborah Cullinan**; CEO of the San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau **Joe D'Alessandro**; San Francisco Arts Commission Director of Cultural Affairs **Tom DeCaigny**; MoAD Executive Director **Linda Harrison**; Contemporary Jewish Museum Executive Director **Lori Starr**; and SF Jazz Executive Artistic Director **Randall Kline**.

Topping Out festivities included:

- Live musical performances by the **Balboa High School Band**, representing SFMOMA's strengthened ties with the San Francisco's Unified School District to develop new arts-based programs in the city's classrooms
- Fanfare by the fifteen-drum Brazilian drumming group **Batalá San Francisco** and by members of the **SFJAZZ High School All-Stars**
- Free savory and sweet bites provided by local food trucks **Bacon Bacon**, **Curry Up Now**, **Garden Creamery**, and **Sugar & Spun**
- A special Topping Out **photo booth** where participants could take snapshots amid images of the rising steel beams
- **Interactive building blocks** that guests used to create their own version of the museum's future building
- **Free commemorative "SFMOMA On the Go" binoculars** to view the topmost beam being raised onto the museum's steel structure.
- And, timed to the ceremony that day, **the launch of [future.sfmoma.org](http://future.sfmoma.org)**, a new cinematic microsite featuring immersive imagery, renderings, and video dedicated to the museum's expansion.

### **About SFMOMA's Expansion**

More than just an extension of the building's physical footprint, SFMOMA's expansion represents a transformation of the museum as a whole. By showcasing more of its expanded permanent collection and increasing opportunities for learning and access to modern and contemporary art for all people, the new SFMOMA is expanding its role as a place for inspiration in the Bay Area and as an international art destination.

Developed in collaboration with the architecture firm Snøhetta, SFMOMA's new building will include seven levels dedicated to diverse art experiences and programming spaces, and three levels that will house enhanced support space for the museum's operations. It will also offer approximately 130,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor gallery space, as well as nearly 15,000 square feet of free-access public space, nearly tripling SFMOMA's current capacity for the presentation of art while maintaining a sense of intimacy and connection to the museum's urban surroundings.

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Since SFMOMA's founding in 1935, the museum has drawn nearly 23 million visitors, 50 percent of them since moving to its current location on Third Street in 1995. Over the past 17 years, San Francisco's South of Market neighborhood has grown up around the museum: new hotels, retail, restaurants, and residential properties were built and

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continue to thrive, all contributing to the tax base and economic vitality of the city. Upon reopening in 2016, SFMOMA's new home will again transform the neighborhood as a major tourist attraction and as an employer: upon completion of the expansion, SFMOMA anticipates an over 20 percent increase in employee numbers as well as a 20 percent growth in its audiences, which averaged 650,000 annually in the years leading up to the museum's temporary building closure for construction. The expansion will create more than 1,400 new jobs in construction and related areas, and SFMOMA will be an even greater economic stimulant when it expands its operations and purchases of goods and services from Bay Area businesses.

**Visit our website at [www.sfmoma.org](http://www.sfmoma.org) or call 415.357.4000 for more information.**

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