



Inside Out / Outside In

OMCA GOES BEYOND ITS WALLS
TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY



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— LORI FOGARTY,
DIRECTOR AND CEO

When OMCA opened its doors in 1969, it was hailed as a “Museum for the people”—and this is as true today as it was nearly fifty years ago. OMCA continues to build on its founding premise: finding innovative ways to connect with and enrich the community.

This year, with support from the James Irvine Foundation, OMCA is inventing a new model for engaging with its surrounding community called OMCA Connect.

For years, OMCA has worked with a wide range of local organizations—from Oakland’s Youth Radio to Friends of Sausal Creek—to incorporate diverse community voices into its exhibitions, programs, and celebrations. But for the most part, these outreach efforts have been tied to the Museum’s physical location on Oak Street.

“The focus for community engagement has historically been on attracting visitors to the Museum,” says Director and CEO Lori Fogarty. “But now, through OMCA Connect, the Museum is extending beyond its walls to respond directly to the needs of communities. We are currently exploring a variety of exciting ways in which we can have a dynamic off-site presence.” >

Families, friends, and neighbors created unique works on paper that will be assembled into the new *We Dream in Art* mural banner.



SHARING THE ALL OF US OR NONE POSTER COLLECTION WITH THE COMMUNITY

Activist Michael Rossman assembled a vast collection of posters—24,000 in all—that documented the modern progressive movement in the United States. His family donated this remarkable archive, called *All Of Us Or None*, to OMCA with the goal of keeping it accessible to the public in perpetuity. To date, 3,000 posters have been digitized and are now searchable on OMCA's website; the entire collection will be online within the next few years.



Come Together for Peace, 1970. Collection of OMCA. Fractional and promised gift of the Rossman Family.

We Dream in Art

What is your big dream for your community? This is the question at the heart of OMCA Connect's latest collaborative art project. Over the past few months, people have been invited to express their hopes and aspirations by creating unique works on paper, which will be assembled into a large-scale public artwork. The result, a mural banner called *We Dream in Art*, will be displayed along OMCA's Oak Street exterior wall as well as on facades of nearby buildings.

The vision for this project evolved with support from 100 Families, a program of the Alameda County Arts Commission (ACAC), which shares the common goal of celebrating local creativity. "Our partnership with OMCA is a perfect match because we both try to create bridges within our communities," says ACAC Executive Director Rachel Osajima, "and the mural is an exciting opportunity for us to enliven and transform our neighborhood."

Created with the help of artists and collaborating partners, the mural has developed into a colorful and deeply moving expression of shared dreams. OMCA is proud to support these dreams inside, outside, and—yes—right on its walls.

Public Opening of *We Dream in Art*: Friday, Feb. 28, 5–9 pm

Join us at Friday Nights @ OMCA for the unveiling of the *We Dream in Art* mural banner on Oak and 12th streets! Visit museumca.org/connect for more information. Follow @OMCAconnect on Twitter.

Key Partnerships

OMCA Connect is focused on supporting several Oakland neighborhoods that are currently underserved by the Museum, including Chinatown, San Antonio/Fruitvale, Downtown/Uptown, and West Oakland. "To most effectively support these communities, we are collaborating with three terrific organizations that reflect the social fabric and cultural diversity of the people they serve," explains Lisa Sasaki, OMCA's director of audience and civic engagement.

These partners—the YMCA of the East Bay, the Eastside Arts Alliance, and the Oakland Asian Cultural Center—are collaborating with OMCA on a variety of projects. The Museum is also sending its Oakland Rover to many of these partners' events to engage community members in interactive art experiences. Learn more about OMCA's partners on the following pages. ➤



OACC partners, from left: Terry Bautista, Tamiko Wong, and Roy Chan.

{ PARTNER PROFILE }

Oakland Asian Cultural Center

OMCA AND OACC SHARE EXPERTISE TO THEIR MUTUAL BENEFIT

The way leaders of the Oakland Asian Cultural Center (OACC) see things, OMCA's latest consultations and activities—including Oakland Rover visits for art making—build capacity, and help to reframe both organizations' approaches to multicultural collaboration.

Roy Chan, who heads OACC's Oakland Chinatown Oral History Project, puts it this way: "The beautiful thing about this project is that OMCA will be offering us insights into how we can grow as an institution, and in return we'll offer the Museum insights into how to more effectively serve our diverse, multicultural, multigenerational community."

Collaborative capacity building can take many forms, says Terry Bautista, OACC's programs manager, from advising OMCA about ways to boost its bilingual services to OMCA offering recommendations to OACC about ways to upgrade its spaces for art exhibits. "The Museum will show us ways to do things more professionally," adds OACC Executive Director Tamiko Wong, from consultations on installation techniques to sharing expertise on exhibition labeling.

An example of this sharing of expertise took place early in the summer when OACC and OMCA staff worked together to create a Cantonese language tour of OMCA's special exhibition *Summoning Ghosts: The Art of Hung Liu*, for seniors at Family Bridges, a senior care organization in Chinatown and OACC partner organization. Says Wong, "I'm hopeful about the direction we're taking. There are many things we can do to benefit each other." >

{ PARTNER PROFILE }

The YMCA of the East Bay

OMCA AND THE YMCA OF THE EAST BAY EXPAND THEIR VISIONS AND THEIR REACH

Synergy has long been the hallmark of OMCA's partnership with the YMCA, says Kathleen Gushoney, vice president/regional executive director of the Metropolitan Oakland YMCA. Thanks to OMCA Connect, the two institutions are finding new ways to achieve common goals—and the whole community stands to benefit.

"Like OMCA, what we do is strengthen the foundations of the community for all families," Gushoney emphasizes. "We also know that the arts heal. We're excited about adding new experiences to what we do to create health and wellness."

To that end, the Y has invited the Oakland Rover to come to community events at multiple branches of the Y across Oakland. Already in 2013, the Rover has visited the Downtown Oakland Y's annual family barbecue along with Halloween celebrations at the Y's Eastlake branch. The events' combined crowds of more than a thousand enjoyed the opportunity to create quilt squares for the *We Dream in Art* mural project. Undoubtedly, the success of these activities builds on the organizations' tradition of cooperation.

"Every Y should be partnered with its local museum; it should be a best practice," Gushoney says. "My hope is that we'll create a template for other Ys to follow. That would be a huge gift from this project." >



Kathleen Gushoney, vice president/
regional executive director of the
Metropolitan Oakland YMCA.

