

EXHIBITIONS AT THE MAH

Exhibitions are planned with longer lead-time than events (often 12-24 months in advance). For this reason, we set visions for the types of exhibitions to be planned in specific galleries. At the MAH, great exhibitions make our community grow stronger and more connected.

The MAH's Vision is to ignite shared experiences and unexpected connections that enrich our community. The MAH aims to bring people together through art and local history to explore our diverse cultures.

Exhibitions must activate our Theory of Change:

- Welcome and be accessible to local diverse visitors.
- Find, spark, and share stories and ideas related to universal human themes.
- Be relevant to or representative of the people in Santa Cruz County.
- Incorporate local diverse community members and groups as partners and contributors.
- Activate different layers of learning through programming.
- Invite visitors to be active contributors in the gallery.
- Feature local history or contemporary art.

EXHIBITION SPACES

LOCATION	SCHEDULE	CONTENT
Lezin Gallery 1 st Floor	Once a year.	This is your museum. An invitation for visitors to be an active part of their museum. Family friendly. Hands on.
Solari Gallery 2 nd Floor	2 six to nine month shows per year. (Issue-Driven, Community-Sourced, Borrowed and Broadened)	Connecting to who we are and who we could be. Highly collaborative, community-driven inquires into one universal human theme through multiple perspectives. Adult-focused, family-friendly.
History Gallery 2nd Floor	Permanent Structure, two changing pod areas that share new stories every 18-24 months.	History is humans taking actions. This gallery shares stories of people who made or are making history in Santa Cruz County.
Art Forum Gallery 3 rd Floor	3 four to six month shows per year. (Borrowed and Deepened, Immersive)	Emotive Experiences. Sharing powerful stories that ignite emotional connections. Can be more experimental/adult than Solari.

Sculpture Garden 3rd Floor	Permanent Exhibition	Art outside. Features outdoor sculptures from our permanent collection
Stairwell	Changes once a year	Larger than life Inspiration. Igniting, large-scale artworks.

FIRST FLOOR: LEZIN GALLERY

This is your museum.

Your art, ideas, history and culture matter. At the MAH, we invite you to share your stories, creativity and learn from others. This gallery helps introduce visitors to the MAH and how to interact with our exhibitions.

These exhibitions are:

- Family friendly.
- Inviting observation, participation, exploration, and curiosity.
- Content is at least 30-50% visitor produced.

Ex: [Memory Jars](#) (2012) and [Chamber of Heart and Mystery](#) (2016-2019)

SECOND FLOOR – SOLARI GALLERY

Connecting to who we are and who we could be.

We use art and artifacts to share stories and ideas across our differences. When we share our diverse perspectives on issues that matter, we explore together what it means to be human.

Solari Exhibitions have 3 formats:

1. Issue-Driven

Visitors explore an issue with high relevance to Santa Cruz County, learning about diverse perspectives and opportunities for involvement.

These exhibitions:

- Are 100% co-created with community members, advocates and artists in our C3 group. (theme, content, art and experience).
- Connect and empower collaborators throughout the process, including in the co-production of programming and actions once the exhibition is open.
- Encourage visitors to share their civic voices and take action on the topic.
- May be political or controversial.

Ex: [Lost Childhoods](#) (2017), [We're Still Here: Stories of Seniors and Social Isolation](#) (2019)

2. Community-Sourced

Community members contribute art, objects, and stories to an exhibition that celebrates and investigates a topic of local relevance or a universal human theme.

These exhibitions:

- Feature community-sourced content. Sometimes 100% community sourced, sometimes partly pre-selected and partly community sourced.
- Involve at least 50% local community members with an emphasis on including those who are traditionally underrepresented. These participants provide content and are partners in programming.

Ex: [Everybody's Ocean](#) (2014-2015), [Santa Cruz Collects](#) (2012. 2016), [See, Be Seen: Community Portraits](#) (2018)

3. Borrowed and Broadened

Visitors explore powerful art and stories from Santa Cruz County and beyond.

These exhibitions:

- Feature content sourced from a single artist, a group of artists, collaborators, institution, or exhibition rental company. Typically from Santa Cruz County and beyond.
- Supplement borrowed content with community contributions relevant to the central theme.
- Feature at least 10% community content.
- May be co-sponsored by major educational institutions in Santa Cruz County for maximum learning opportunities.

Ex: [The Kinsey African American Art and History Collection / Events](#) (2016), [We Who Work: Prints and Tapestries by Hung Liu / Events](#) (2017), [California's Wild Edge: Prints by Tom Killion](#) (2018), [Making It](#) (2015)

SECOND FLOOR –HISTORY GALLERY

History is humans taking action.

We share personal, empowering stories of the diverse people who took action to make history in Santa Cruz County.

The History Gallery is a permanent exhibition space with two changing pods:

1. Individual and Community Pod

Highlights stories from individuals, groups, or organizations that are making history.

These exhibitions:

- Feature Santa Cruz County people, artifacts, and stories.
- Emphasis on including those who are traditionally underrepresented.
- Focus on the people with 1st person stories.
- Focus on the actions they took to make history in Santa Cruz County.

Ex: [Mirando al Futuro: The Beach Flats Community Garden](#) (2018-2019)

2. Past and Future Pod

Highlights stories from past events in Santa Cruz County and connects them to current issues.

These exhibitions:

- Share an event that shaped Santa Cruz County History and the stories behind it.
- Relates to current issues and topics in Santa Cruz County.
- Includes at least 25% visitor-produced content.

Ex: [30 years after Loma Prieta](#) (2019)

THIRD FLOOR – ART FORUM GALLERY

Emotive Experiences

Sharing powerful stories that ignite emotional connections.

Art Forum Exhibitions have 2 formats:**1. Borrowed and Deepened**

Visitors explore powerful art, artifacts and stories from beyond Santa Cruz County in an immersive environment.

These exhibitions:

- Feature innovative art or unique historical artifacts sourced from a single artist, a group of artists, institution, or exhibition rental company from beyond Santa Cruz County.
- Focused on evoking emotion.
- Enhance borrowed content with sensory design or community contributions to root it in Santa Cruz.

Ex: [Princes of Surf](#) (2015), [Screaming Hand](#) (2016), [Regeneración](#) (2019), [Guided By Ghosts](#) (2019)

2. Immersive

Visitors dive into a multisensory experience that alters perceptions.

These exhibitions:

- Showcase magical, awe-inspiring, experimental, disturbing, surprising or contemplative experiences.
- Ignite emotional transformations, altering visitors' moods or perceptions.
- Feature immersive installations that are sometimes created entirely by artists and sometimes in collaboration with MAH design staff.
- Offer experiences you want to share with others and explore again.

Ex: [The Cradle Project / Events](#) (2014), [Rose Sellery- Passages](#) (2012), [Ballooniverse \(2017\)](#)

THIRD FLOOR – SCULPTURE GARDEN

Art Outside

Connecting visitors to the MAH's permanent outdoor sculpture collection.

- Temporary pieces or work connected to Art Forum exhibitions may be added.

STAIRWELL

Larger than Life Inspiration

Large-scale artwork that spans three floors of the museum.

These artworks:

- Must be highly igniting, inspiring wonder and awe.
- Be colorful and visually engaging from all directions.

Ex: [Semi-Set Vertical Blue](#) 2018

BIENNIAL FESTIVALS

HOW EXHIBITIONS ACTIVATE OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

BONDING:

Exhibitions create a shared experience that encourages us to understand one another more fully through sharing stories, ideas, moments, and emotions. The majority of visitors visit exhibitions in bonded groups (friends, family) and want the opportunity to share the experience and discuss it as they go.

Exhibitions support bonding when they:

- Make it easy for multiple people to read a label, do an activity, and move through the gallery together.
- Provide content for different ages, so families can explore together.

BRIDGING:

Exhibitions investigate a constellation of connections across a range of content and people. We gain a better understanding and respect for our differences and similarities. Exhibitions are a platform for exchanging stories in service of probing together who we are and who we could be.

Exhibitions support bridging when they:

- Juxtapose diverse perspectives, artworks, art forms, stories, and modalities for engagement in close proximity to each other.
- Invite visitors to share their diverse perspectives.
- Provide activities that explicitly invite strangers to engage together.

EMPOWERMENT:

Exhibitions invite visitors to activate the conversation with their own contributions, expanding and deepening the story. We ask visitors for their ideas in hopes of inspiring others to ask and share theirs.

Exhibitions support empowerment when they:

- Welcome and orient visitors to the content clearly regardless of prior knowledge or experience. (6th grade reading level)
- Invite visitors to share their own voices.
- Present content from diverse artists, historians, and storytellers, helping diverse visitors see themselves in the exhibition.