

Our Name

The San Francisco Museum of Freedom

Our Mission

Through telling the story of people's experience in resistance and the fight for freedoms, the Museum endeavors to support and inspire positive change.

Our Vision

The Museum of Freedom strives to achieve a world in which justice is no longer imaginary.

SFMF is defined by its outstanding collections, inspiring and enriching programs, and commitment to uphold and defend the rights of marginalized groups. We seek to raise awareness about the importance of resistance and catalyze positive change in society. Also, we are an integral platform for encouraging change within communities and the world.

Our Core Values and Objectives

Justice

We believe in just treatment for all people. The Museum supports justice by sharing stories of those treated unjustly, recognizing that diversity and equality cannot happen without justice.

Resistance

Believing that resistance is an exercise in power that enables social change to be instigated by the marginalized.

Education

Providing a location to acquire knowledge about global cultures and resistance and gain an awareness of the world around them..

Accessibility

We work to make our facility, art and concepts accessible to everyone. Understanding our community is diverse with various levels of economic and physical barriers, and work to lower these barriers so our museum is enjoyable to everyone.

Creativity

SFMF connects individuals to art and guides the understanding of how it enhances daily life. Creativity inspires innovative thinking, which is important for understanding and solving world problems.

Diversity

The Museum acknowledges and encourages a variety of art, opinions and ideas from the diverse beliefs and backgrounds of the population. We sustain a strong, diverse staff and board through supporting creative ideas and recruiting.

Freedom

The Museum believes freedom is an ideal for which we all strive.

Description of The Museum of Freedom

The structure of the museum strongly adheres to our core values, especially those pertaining to resistance and freedom. Before we describe the organization, we feel it important to further elaborate on our understanding for both these values. The Museum is rooted in the idea that resistance is power, instigated by the marginalized towards social change. We stand behind groups truly marginalized based on a lack of social, economic, and political status. We uphold the basic freedoms of speech, assembly, thought, and expression. Additionally, we strongly believe in protecting and preserving the freedoms of political expression, from persecution, of religion, of movement across borders, of economic equity, from racism, sexism, homophobia, and the freedom to resist.

The San Francisco Museum of Freedom (SFMF) is an affiliate of the San Francisco Freedom Archives, and will be located in the Mission District of the city. We are a group of five people who have worked with, volunteered at, and been affiliated with The Freedom Archives over the last few years. The idea for the Museum of Freedom is based on our work at The Freedom Archives, and a need to represent and support people's struggles for a better world. The SFMF is planned to open in Fall 2017. The Museum is housed in a two story building, inspired by the ideas of organic architecture as designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. The building has five mid-sized rooms that will be used as galleries for the exhibits, one large room that will be used as a studio and meeting hall, and a large hall with an attached balcony that will be used for community events and performances.

A primary goal of the SFMF is to inform the general public about the power of resistance, to support people's resistance efforts, and to change the way resistance is understood. In doing this, the museum plans to focus on resistance movements internationally, highlighting connections given our globalized world. The primary focus in the first three to five years of our existence will be resistance movements in California and their connections with domestic and global discourse. We will then broaden our scope to work with resistance movements in other countries to represent their issues, struggles, and art; to inform the American public and to make connections and build bridges between domestic and international resistance.

The Museum of Freedom is dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of resistance in questioning oppressive structures and in promoting change. We see resistance as productive in enabling people to better the condition of their lives. The museum plans to function as a place that displays artifacts important to current and historic resistance movements and artwork created and inspired by people in resistance movements. Importantly, the museum aims to provide a voice for marginalized groups; supporting them in organizing, educating the broader community, and advocating for broader rights and freedoms.

The SFMF is a reflection of the voices and struggles of marginalized peoples; their histories, lives and cultures. And so, we are for people who belong to marginalized groups, advocates, activists, and allies. We are also for the general public, working to empower resistance by trying to inform and educate people about its value. In the museum, we will have exhibits that display artifacts important to resistance groups in California, we will also showcase artwork that speaks to resistance as stated in our values. In order to acquire these artifacts we will reach out to artists and resistance groups both locally and globally.

We plan to approach resistance movements within the black and latinx communities, labor movements, women's rights groups, LGBT activist groups, and artist activists. The SFMF will also organize seminars for community groups and the general public, workshops for grassroots organizing, and provide a dedicated space for community meetings. Additionally, we will also work with our affiliate The Freedom Archives to create community oriented programs where people can engage with archival material.

An important part of our programming is to keep the rich heritage of resistance in San Francisco alive. To do this, we will organize docent-led 'memory walks', and self-led audio walks. Here the idea is to walk through a specific neighborhood in San Francisco and narrate its history, significance in a particular protest, or as a site for activist art, and the general connection of that area to forms of resistance. The SFMF sees these walks as educational, and possibly transformative ways to look at city spaces. We hope that it will create a better understanding in how space constructs social relations, enables discrimination or provides the opportunity towards change. Here, all of our activities are oriented towards promoting the voice of resistance groups and providing a space for marginalized peoples to gather and find the inspiration, support, and resources to aid them in their fight for freedom. Through these means, the SFMF hopes to fulfil our mission and work toward our vision.

Need for the Museum of Freedom

Central to the purpose of the SFMF is the commitment to resistance movements. San Francisco was chosen due to the founding members' affiliation with The Freedom Archives, as well as their connection to San Francisco's rich history of resistance movements. Moreover, San Francisco was a logical location for the SFMF due to its inspiring social protest history contrasted with a lack of institutions reflecting these ideals. The SFMF fills this absence, as our aim is to give a voice to the marginalized, in their fight against oppressive structures and in their work towards creating a just world. Very few museums in the world focus on exhibiting and supporting resistance movements, so this endeavor is one that has a lot of social value, to both San Francisco and the world.

Because of the stigma around resistance, there is a need to exhibit and represent it in order to reframe and reimagine it. Resistance is often superficially understood as a detriment to social relations. This perception promotes the status quo and invalidates the rights and abilities of people to fight for rights. The SFMF aims to change the way resistance is understood and align it with the pursuit of justice and specific freedoms; normalizing the process of resistance. Raising awareness of these struggles and movements helps to familiarize and create awareness to other organizations supporting these efforts. Education has the power to increase interest, engagement, and involvement in these movements, and further facilitate social change.

There is also a need to collect and preserve objects related to our museum's mission. Many of these objects are not yet in museum collections, where they have the opportunity to be preserved indefinitely, to be interpreted in public education programs and to enable action. SFMF aims to preserve and conserve these collections in relation to their historic context. Additionally, it is important to house these objects together so they may be understood holistically. Moreover, exhibits at the SFMF will aim to bring together multiple forms of representation including artifacts, art, sound, video, and text.

A primary goal of the SFMF is to exhibit, support, and empower resistance movements. For these reasons, the SFMF will be an important resource for grassroots struggles across the world. Through inclusive exhibits and programs that expand people's perspectives, we strive to be a powerful resource and ally for oppressed groups.

Stakeholders and Partners

Primary stakeholders for the SFMF include the board of directors, community organizations, and our partnering organizations.

Partners:

The Freedom Archives

The Freedom Archives houses over 10,000 hours of audio and video recordings documenting social justice movements locally, nationally, and internationally, from 1960s to the present. The archives feature speeches from movement leaders and community activists, protests and demonstrations, cultural currents of rebellion and resistance. They are a multicultural and intergenerational community-based institution that seeks to bring people together to draw inspiration for our continued struggles. This extraordinary collection is a living testament to the long history of struggles for freedom and resistance to oppression. It brings to life the stirring sounds of tumultuous times that we cannot afford to forget — the struggles for Black Liberation and Native American sovereignty, the Chicano movement, women's liberation movement, student and anti-war struggles, as well as major international events and powerful cultural performances. (Freedom Archives, 2012)

Human Rights Commission in San Francisco

The Mayor of San Francisco is authorized to appoint up to eleven Commissioners to help develop policy at the HRC and serve as the liaison between HRC and the community, the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors. HRC's Commission members represent diverse interests in the community and are able to leverage both their professional and personal backgrounds to better address a wide range of issues affecting human rights. (Human Rights Commission, n.d.)

Museum of the African Diaspora

The Museum of the African Diaspora, or MoAD, "focus' spans the African Diaspora across history, from the diaspora at the origin of human existence through the contemporary African Diaspora that has affected communities and cultures around the world." Their mission is to "[invite] everyone to engage in the cultural expression of the African Diaspora through contemporary art." (Museum of African Diaspora, n.d.)

The Beat Museum

The Beat Museum is dedicated to spreading the spirit of The Beat Generation, which we define as tolerance, compassion and having the courage to live your

individual truth. The Beats, as in beaten down and beatific, were a collective of writers, artists and thinkers that congregated in 1950s San Francisco. The Beat Museum is home to an extensive collection of Beat memorabilia, including original manuscripts and first editions, letters, personal effects and cultural ephemera. Located in San Francisco's North Beach neighborhood, we occupy the same ground that was once the epicenter for Beat activity during the 1950s. (The Beat Museum, n.d.)

The Contemporary Jewish Museum

The CJM makes the diversity of the Jewish experience relevant for a twenty-first century audience. [They] accomplish this through innovative exhibitions and programs that educate, challenge, and inspire. The Museum's Daniel Libeskind-designed facility enables and inspires its mission. Dynamic and welcoming, it's a place to experience art, music, film, literature, debate, and—most importantly—people.

Their core purpose is to be an engaging forum for diverse audiences where new perspectives on Jewish culture, history, art, and ideas thrive. (Contemporary Jewish Museum, n.d.)

These partners all have a similar mission and vested interest in the success of this museum. A collaborative partnership with all five partners will help catalyze the shift in thinking about resistance and marginalized groups. By working together, we can inspire the change we wish to see in our community and in the world.

Board Members and Methods of Recruitment

When seeking board members, we hope to find those would have a passion for our mission and offer skills in helping to establish the Museum. We also would like our board members to be a resource in guiding the Museum's identity to then help create roots within the community. Prospective board members have been selected due to their varied experiences and leadership in advocating and supporting the oppressed and marginalized. Many of these people are based in the San Francisco area.

Prospective board members:

- 1) Mia Tu Mutch Satya (LGBTQ Artist, Advocate, Educator)
- 2) Walidah Imarisha (Stanford educator, Writer, Artist, Organizer)
- 3) Alicia Garza (Founder, Black Lives Matter)
- 4) Sam Dodge (Director of Public Policy at the Mayor's Office of Housing Opportunity, Partnership & Engagement, San Francisco)
- 5) Joseph Henry (Chief Organizer, Oakland Nurses Union)
- 6) Favianna Rodriguez (Artist, Cultural Organizer)
- 7) Theresa Sparks (Executive Director, San Francisco Human Rights Commission)
- 8) Lori Starr (Ex Officio executive director of Contemporary Jewish Museum)
- 9) Jeff Ubben (Founder/CEO, ValueAct Capital Management)

These prospective board members have been selected because of their values and goals that match the Museum's. As a startup non-profit organization, each of the five founding members have worked together in cultivating these names so the board represents a diverse and motivated group of individuals. Some of these names are from our partnering organizations, and others from the community and activist groups. Each founding member has made it their mission to recruit a supportive and responsible board, and each have met one on one with these prospective members, and have articulated the expected responsibilities of being on the board.

References

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