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de Young Museum Acquires 42 New Works by Bay Area Artists

The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco announced on Monday an exciting expansion of its contemporary Bay Area art collection with the acquisition of 42 works by 30 emerging and mid-career artists and collectives.

Funded by a \$1 million donation from the Svane Family Foundation, the additions will be featured in a 2023 exhibition at the de Young. The list of artists is a who's who of local (and sometimes formerly local) talent: Wesaam Al-Badry, Miguel Arzabe, Saif Azzuz, Sadie Barnette, Demetri Broxton, Sydney Cain, Maria A. Guzmán Capron, Woody De Othello, Kota Ezawa, Ana Teresa Fernández, Guillermo Galindo, Katy Grannan, Angela Hennessy, Liz Hernández, David Huffman, Chris Johanson, Sahar Khoury, Koak, Christiane Lyons, Ruby Neri, Rashaad Newsome, Ramekon O'Arwisters, Postcommodity, Clare Rojas, Muzae Sesay, Daisy May Sheff, Allison Smith, Stephanie Syjuco, Rupy C. Tut, and Chelsea Wong.

According to today's announcement, more than half the artists are women and the majority are people of color. The acquisition builds on the de Young's recent efforts to highlight the work of local artists, like the immensely popular 2020 show *The de Young Open*, a pandemic-prompted juried exhibition featuring work made in the nine Bay Area counties.

This isn't the first time the Svane Family Foundation, created in 2019 by Zendesk Founder and CEO Mikkel Svane, has directed its money towards the Bay Area arts community in an effort to keep art (and artists) in the region. In late 2020, the foundation commissioned \$1 million-worth of new work from 100 local artists, later exhibiting and auctioning the output as a fundraiser.

In a world where artists are routinely asked to donate works to auctions that support nonprofits (with varying percentages of return on the sales), the Svane model was a novel one, raising \$330,100 for ArtSpan while paying the included artists for their work. (Full disclosure, this reporter was a recipient of a 2020 Svane commission.)

The de Young donation finds the Svane Family Foundation following a more time-honored and institutional route—one that also benefits the galleries coordinating the sales. Selected by Claudia Schmuckli, curator in charge of contemporary art and programming, the 42 pieces came from 13 San Francisco galleries, five out-of-state spaces and three artists without representation.

"Over time," Schmuckli says in the announcement, "the acquisition developed organically into thematic sections that reflect the issues artists here are grappling with at this very moment,

including San Francisco's own legacy of radical social consciousness and the threat that widespread gentrification poses to such independent thought."

Perhaps most importantly, the acquisitions mean these artists can now identify themselves as "collected by" the Fine Arts Museums: no small thing in the development of a long-term artistic career.