



Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History Celebrates 25 Years

Website: santacruzmah.org/anniversary

At a Glance: Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History (MAH) celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2021 with new exhibitions and events happening throughout Santa Cruz County.

SANTA CRUZ, CA (March 3rd, 2021) — This June marks 25 years since the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History (MAH) officially came into existence – the result of the 1996 merging of the Santa Cruz Historical Society (founded in 1954) and the Art Museum of Santa Cruz County (founded in 1981). Today, the MAH is recognized as one of the most creative and forward-thinking community museums in the country, distinguished by its trailblazing programs and interdisciplinary approach to community building.

“Our anniversary is a celebration to honor the past and anticipate the future. The institution was founded on the idea of using art and local history to bring people together—a belief that is still core to our mission,” said Robb Woulfe, executive director of the MAH. “We see this milestone year as a turning point, ushering in a new era for the museum and the community we serve.”

The MAH’s story actually dates back even further than 1996 to the mid-1980s, when its parent organizations joined forces to build a center for art, history, and community in downtown Santa Cruz. With support from the McPherson family, local donations, and a federal grant following the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, the ribbon was cut on the new McPherson Center, the core structure of the museum’s campus, just prior to the two cultural entities merging into one.

Since its founding, the MAH has been a beloved community institution known for its exhibitions, programs, collections, and publications, housed within a civic landmark in the heart of the city’s downtown. The museum is distinctive for its eclecticism and ability to unite a wide spectrum of partners around the “participatory museum” concept, while also continuing to model itself as a museum without walls. A major step toward its founding vision to connect with the community outside of its building was the revitalization of Abbott Square in 2017. In addition, the MAH continues to be without walls in another sense too, as it works to ensure that all of its spaces—indoor, outdoor, and online—are welcoming and inclusive for all people.

At the MAH, collaboration and community participation have remained central to its programs as people throughout Santa Cruz County share their stories, passions, and traditions. The museum's exhibitions often feature creative interpretations alongside historic artifacts and ephemera, in a way that deepens understanding of both and serves as a springboard for further reflection.

The 25th-anniversary celebration will be no different as the MAH introduces new exhibitions and events throughout 2021. [See descriptions and dates below.] After nearly a year of being closed due to COVID-19 restrictions, the museum is now planning for a phased reopening to welcome guests back inside their doors once Santa Cruz County reaches the state's Red Tier.

Related Exhibitions

- **Twenty-Five:** May 21–July 25, 2021 – An exhibition highlighting artworks and objects from the MAH's permanent collection, along with stories and memorabilia, to commemorate the museum's silver anniversary.
- **RedBall Santa Cruz:** June 8–13, 2021 – A 15-foot inflatable sculpture by artist Kurt Perschke exploring the area's unique architectural landscape and history through a series of daily installations throughout Santa Cruz County.

Related Events

- **Silver Where?:** June 8–11, 2021 – A series of pop-up al fresco dining experiences hosted near select outdoor locations for RedBall Santa Cruz, featuring the best local chefs, food artisans, and beverage producers.
- **Anniversary Brunch:** June 12, 2021– An invitation-only celebratory brunch at the MAH honoring the museum's founders, visionaries, and benefactors.

The MAH is a thriving community gathering place that serves more than 130,000 people annually through rotating art and history exhibitions, visual and performing artworks, public festivals, education and outreach programs, and cultural celebrations in collaboration with its many partners. It maintains a permanent collection of regionally significant art and artifacts, a research library, a historical archive, and historic sites including the Evergreen Cemetery, Octagon Building, and Davenport Jail. It is also home to Abbott Square, a vibrant public plaza on the museum's doorstep that offers food, social events, and year-round creative happenings.

Stay tuned for more event details regarding the events and exhibition as we follow the guidelines and protocol of Santa Cruz County COVID safety regulations. This includes our plans with reopening the MAH which will go accordingly with Santa Cruz County being in the state's Red Tier. ([More Info Here](#))

Contact

Ashley Holmes
Marketing & PR Manager
ashley@santacruzmah.org