

SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART

SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART TO HOST ANNUAL GALA
HONORING ARTIST ENRIQUE CHAGOYA AND PATRONS EVELYN + RICK NEELY
ON SEPTEMBER 23



For Immediate Release

San José, California (August 9, 2023) — The San José Museum of Art (SJMA) will host its 2023 Gala + Auction on September 23 at 5:30pm. The annual celebration will be held at the Museum, in the Circle of Palms Plaza, with an evening of art, cocktails, fine dining, live auction, entertainment, and dancing. The festivities will continue with an After-Party featuring sounds by Chuy Gomez and dancing, special cocktails, and late-night bites, beginning at 9:30pm.

Enrique Chagoya is celebrated as the artist honoree. SJMA has been a champion of Chagoya's work for almost three decades through exhibitions, acquisitions, and public programs. SJMA first exhibited Chagoya's work in the 1997 Eureka Fellow Awards Exhibition. His large-scale charcoal and pastel drawing *Their Freedom of Expression...The Recovery of Their Economy* (1984) has been featured in three exhibitions at SJMA since entering the collection in 2003 and is currently on view as a stand-alone presentation. His work is also featured in *50X50: Stories of Visionary Artists from the Permanent Collection*, a free digital catalog published in honor of the Museum's 50th Anniversary in 2020.

This year's patron honorees, Evelyn and Rick Neely, are recognized for their philanthropy as well as Evelyn's outstanding leadership as long-time Docent and Trustee. Evelyn and Rick Neely's support and vision has enabled the Museum to serve its community, achieve financial security, and continue presenting programs and exhibitions that foster visual thinking and creative expression. SJMA Board President Tammy Kiely and Trustee Nadia Ahmad return this year as co-chairs, and Trustee Mr. Cole Harrell of New York will chair the Auction. Robbie Gordy returns as the live

auctioneer. The Auction will feature ten important contemporary works by Bay Area and internationally acclaimed artists including Diana Al Hadid, Sadie Barnette, Enrique Chagoya, Roy De Forest, Hung Liu, Matthew Pillsbury, Yulia Pinkusevich, Masami Teraoka, Lien Truong, and Pae White.

A limited number of sponsorships are still available, at the \$5,000 to \$50,000 level, and single tickets are available at \$1,000 each. SJMA will offer early-bird discount of 20% from August 14–17 for After-Party tickets. Beginning August 18 tickets for the popular After-Party will be \$100 and the price will go up to \$125 at the door on the night of the event.

“The 2023 honorees, Enrique Chagoya and Evelyn and Rick Neely, understand the powerful impact of museums and arts education. We thank them for their dedication to our Museum and for helping us achieve our vision to be a borderless museum,” said S. Sayre Batton, Oshman Executive Director, San José Museum of Art. “The funds raised at the Gala will provide critical support toward our mission to make world-class art and inclusive arts education accessible to visitors from throughout the Bay Area and beyond.”

The Gala will continue to feature local Bay Area artists, entertainment, and hospitality, in line with its commitment to spotlight community partners and contribute to the ongoing economic recovery and revitalization of downtown San José. The live auction will accept bids by absentee forms, in-person paddle raises, and phone. A Fund-a-Need appeal, both online and live, will raise additional funds to support the Museum’s education, exhibition, and equity initiatives and essential operations.

For information on how to sponsor, contact Jennifer Sime, chief philanthropy officer, at jsime@sjmusart.org.

GALA COMMITTEE

Tammy Kiely and Nadia Ahmad co-chairs; Mr. Cole Harrell, Auction chair; Glenda Dorchak, Toby Fernald, Lys House, Robert S. Lindo, Suzette Mahr, Yvonne Nevens, and Cornelia Pendleton.

ABOUT ENRIQUE CHAGOYA

Enrique Chagoya is an internationally acclaimed artist, born in Mexico City in 1953 and based in the Bay Area since 1979. Chagoya skillfully juxtaposes and combines images sourced from secular and religious iconographies and popular culture to address colonialism, inequality, and international conflicts with biting humor. San José Museum of Art has been a champion of Chagoya’s work for three decades through exhibitions, acquisitions, public programs, and more. SJMA first exhibited Chagoya’s work in the 1997 Eureka Fellow Awards Exhibition.

Chagoya earned a BFA in printmaking from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1984, followed by an MA and MFA from UC Berkeley in 1986 and 1987, respectively. He has exhibited throughout the United States and at international art venues and has won many awards including a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Southern Graphics Council International (2021), a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship (2021), induction to the National Academy of Design (2020), the

Biennial Award from the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation (1997), and an artist fellowship and residency in Giverny, France supported by the Lila Wallace Foundation and Fondation Claude Monet (1995), among many others. Chagoya's *Love Letters*, a mural commissioned by San Francisco's Public Art Program for the San Francisco International Airport, was unveiled in 1999.

Chagoya is a Professor of Art Practice in the Department of Art and Art History at Stanford University, where he has taught since 1995. He began teaching art in the Bay Area at the San Francisco County jail and curated an exhibition of his students' work in 1987 at the Galería de la Raza. Chagoya served as artistic director of Galería de la Raza for three years after his curatorial debut and organized many exhibitions, including solo exhibitions of Graciela Iturbide, Ester Hernandez, and Yolanda López, as well as many group exhibitions. Chagoya has also taught at the University of California, Berkeley (1990–91) and at California State University, Hayward (1991–95).

ABOUT EVELYN AND RICK NEELY

Evelyn and Rick Neely joined the San José Museum of Art as members in 1994 after seeing *American Art, 1900–1940*, the initial exhibition in SJMA's landmark collaboration with the Whitney Museum of American Art. The show sparked their interest in contemporary art and soon after, Evelyn became involved as a Docent and gallery teacher, remaining active for over 26 years. She was Chair of the Docent Council and led the SJMA docents' participation in the National Docent Symposium in St. Louis, Missouri in 2011. Evelyn developed an expertise in the SJMA docent style of interactive tour guiding (Visual Thinking Strategies, or VTS) that often made her the "go to" docent for VIP tours.

After serving on SJMA's Board of Trustees as the Docent Council Delegate starting in 2008, Evelyn joined the Board as a regular member in 2010 through 2020. Evelyn worked on the SJMA's first Gala in 2009, during one of the Museum's most challenging financial times, and was an active member of the Development Committee from 2013 to 2021. While Evelyn was on the Board, the Neelys made a major investment in the Museum's strategic initiatives campaign with a significant five-year pledge that was divided evenly between general operating support and specific education projects and programs.

Evelyn and Rick also have provided support for multiple exhibitions, the first of which was *Border Cantos* by Richard Misrach and Guillermo Galindo in 2015–16. This was followed by their lead support for *Your Mind, This Moment: art and the practice of attention* (2017), for which they also hosted a private fundraising salon at an artist's studio in September 2016. The Neelys also helped sponsor *Dinh Q. Lê: True Journey Is Return* (2018–19) and *Almost Human: Digital Art from the Permanent Collection* (2019–2020).

Beyond SJMA, Evelyn and Rick support the arts and education through their contributions to the Asian Art Museum, the Institute of Contemporary Art of San Jose, the Monterey Jazz Festival Next-Generation High School All-star Jazz band, University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Chicago.

SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART

The San José Museum of Art (SJMA) is a contemporary art museum dedicated to inclusivity, new thinking, and visionary ideas. Founded in 1969 by artists and community leaders, its dynamic exhibitions, collection, and programs resonate with defining characteristics of San José and the Silicon Valley—from its rich diversity to its hallmark innovative ethos. The Museum offers lifelong learning for school children and their educators, multigenerational families, creative adults, university students and faculty, and community groups. SJMA is committed to being a borderless museum, essential to creative life throughout the diverse communities of San José and beyond.

SJMA is located at 110 South Market Street in downtown San José, California. The Museum is open Thursday 4–9pm; Friday 11am–9pm; and Saturday–Sunday 11am–6pm. Admission is \$15 for adults, \$12 for seniors, and free to members, college students, youth and children ages 17 and under, and school teachers (with valid ID). Admission is free from 6–9pm on the first Friday of every month. For up-to-date information, call 408.271.6840 or visit SanJoseMuseumofArt.org.

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Enrique Chagoya. Courtesy of the McEvoy Foundation.

Evelyn Neely and Rick Neely at the 50th Anniversary Celebration Gala and Auction. Photo by Natalie Schrik for Drew Altizer Photography.