



Palo Alto Art Center: Annual Report—Fiscal Year 2023



The Palo Alto Art Center engaged approximately **65,000** people in Fiscal Year 2023!

Thank you to all of our supporters, funders, donors, members, and community partners for making all of this work possible!

Visitors shared:

“Critical for all to experience. The artist introduces and stimulates all our senses to new ways of observation and thought. It is a beautiful experience and I am grateful to have such a marvelous exhibit so close to home.”

“Amazing. Fantastic vehicle for addressing social, political, and environmental issues.”

“Inspirational, enlightening, beautiful and transformative.”



Connecting Climate and Art

How can art help to communicate about climate change, promote conversation and action? With *Climate Connections*, the Palo Alto Art Center embarked upon an initiative to explore this question. Featuring a series of exhibitions, collaborations, and a carbon assessment project, *Climate Connections* was intended to leverage the power of art and artists in promoting climate action.

Studies indicate that artists can help to communicate about climate change and that artwork can help to encourage contemplation around climate change, raise awareness, change opinions, and promote a sense of connection to the topic. This was the impetus for a series of exhibitions at the Palo Alto Art Center: *Fire Transforms*, *Under Water*, and *EARTH*, all presented this past year. **A majority of those surveyed indicated that the exhibitions had increased their awareness of climate change.**

In conjunction with the *Climate Connections* initiative, the Art Center partnered with Kat Kid Adventures, Engage On, and Canopy, three local organizations working to promote conversations and climate action, as well as Art + Climate Action, a San Francisco Bay Area nonprofit initiative dedicated to building a sustainable art world.

Above: Concurrent with the *Under Water* exhibition, on January 21st artist Jeffrey Downing installed a temporary ceramic artwork in the Baylands near the Eco Center. Downing installed his sculptures during King Tides, to facilitate conversations about the impact of climate change on sea level rise. While King Tides are not related to climate change, they provide a sense of what might happen during periods of sea level rise, and Downing uses those opportunities to engage community members in his art and climate message.



From exhibiting artists:

“Under Water might be an under statement. We were so buoyed by the enthusiastic crowd and the many positive comments about the show and our work. What a wonderful evening. Thank you!”



“Though I was on an eight state photography road trip during the opening, I came in to see the show when I briefly returned. I was blown away! The exhibit looks great and I was honored to have my work among such beautiful and diverse creations.”

“Thanks again for including me in the show. It was a lovely celebration in a beautiful space, with such important work, and with lovely people.”

Exhibitions

Exhibitions at the Art Center engaged more than **23,400** people this past year. 2023 saw the return of the beloved *Youth Art* and *Cultural Kaleidoscope* exhibitions to the Center after a pandemic hiatus, along with the *Climate Connections* series.

This year the Art Center presented our 2022 *Creative Attention* program at professional museum conferences, including the California Association of Museums and the Western Museums Association annual meeting.

FY23 exhibitions:

- *RESTART*—June 25-August 20, 2022
- *Fire Transforms*—September 17-December 10, 2022
- *Under Water*—January 21-March 31, 2023
- *Youth Art and Cultural Kaleidoscope*—April 29-May 20, 2023
- *EARTH*—June 24-August 19, 2023

Visitors shared:

“Thank you for being a home for people to enjoy and experience the arts. You are an invaluable gift to our community and for all people.”



“The Art Center is one of our favorite things about Palo Alto.”

Family Days

Family Days in the Fall and Winter engaged **523** participants in activities and performances connected to *Fire Transforms* and *Under Water*.



From participating teachers:

“Wonderful combination of art appreciation, inspiration, relevant topics and joy of art making.”



“I’m consistently impressed with the exhibits, connected art projects, and expertise the Palo Alto Art Center provides in these field trips.”



Project Look

2,803 students, teachers, and chaperones participated in **104** tours this school year.

Classrooms spent time viewing art in the Art Center’s galleries with a trained docent and participated in a hands-on artmaking activity that emphasized the theme of the exhibition.

From program participants:

“One of the reasons I became a teacher was to make a difference in the lives of my students; to help them succeed, and to open their eyes to possibilities. I think the challenge is to somehow do this in a way that is inclusive, stimulating, and relevant. Through my participation in the program, I now see art-based education and experiences as a way of supporting the evolution of my teaching practices.”

“It has been VERY exciting to be involved in the Cultural Kaleidoscope Program this year! The planning and organization from our first meeting to scheduling classroom lessons and field trips have made the experience so positive. Every person involved in the program has been upbeat and excited about the experience.”



Cultural Kaleidoscope

CK was offered in **21** Palo Alto and East Palo Alto classrooms to **525** students. From the life cycle of plants and animals to California history and geography, Cultural Kaleidoscope’s integrated arts curriculum connects to the science, social studies, and language arts standards. Teaching artists meet ten times with each participating classroom.

From program participants:

“From the director of the program to the teacher and their aides, everyone at the PAAC is an absolute gem. We are so grateful when we think about this magical place. It is among the first thing we think of when we reflect on what Palo Alto is a wonderful place to live.”



Kids and Teen Studios

We experienced record breaking enrollment and revenue for the Kids and Teens Studio program, engaging **2,407** students in a variety of art materials including drawing, painting, comics, ceramics, fashion design, jewelry, fiber arts, and more. Students range in age from 3-18 years old.

Art Center Teen Leadership

30 teens participated in the Art Center’s Teen Leadership group. These teens meet virtually and in person twice a month to participate in hands-on workshops with practicing artists, exhibit their artwork at the Art Center, develop leadership skills, and plan a teen-only event. The teens came from 10 different schools including: Palo Alto High, Gunn, Castilleja, Lynbrook High, Fusion Academy, Eastside College Prep, Mountain View High School, Sequoia High School, Woodside High, and Woodside Priory. During the ACTL 2022-23 school year, teens worked with professional artists in printmaking, collaging, and ceramics. In the first public teen event since Covid, **40** teens engaged in student-led activities including repurposed patches, crocheted pins, and a collaborative art piece.

From studio participants:

“We are very lucky to have such great resources at the Art Center! I appreciate the large variety of classes and the many times available. The quality of instruction is also outstanding. I highly recommend Art Center classes!”

“This community of creatives is a great place to grow, both skills and friendships.”



Adult Studios

In FY23 our adult classes welcomed **1,248** students in classes and workshops exploring ceramics, jewelry, painting, drawing, printmaking, fiber arts and floral design. The drop-in programs engaged our community in **8,646** unique studio experiences that include figure drawing and painting, collage, ceramics, jewelry, and printmaking.

This year the Studio staff saw an expansion in hours for one key staff position. Aaron Grulich was promoted into a .75 FTE benefitted Educator position, working 30 hours weekly. With our expanded staff hours, we have been able to offer more classes to our community and open our studios seven days a week.

In FY23 the Foundation and Studios hosted three Visiting Artists Workshops:

- Renowned painter Melinda Cootsona taught a sell-out painting workshop: *Accidents and Intentions, Creating Expressive Figurative Work*.
- Master printmaker Katherine Levin-Lau shared her unique *Viscosity Techniques for Monotype* with our printmakers.
- Ceramic artist Kala Stein taught her popular and innovative *Ceramic Decal* workshop.

The Studios in collaboration with the Foundation held another successful Holiday Sale, with a lovely members event on Friday night, December 2, followed by a steady stream of happy shoppers on Saturday. We earned **\$26,720** in sales!



Participants shared:

“Activities and staff are great, calm environment.”

“Entertaining and a great stress relief.”

Outreach

360 seniors from two low-income housing communities participated in **18** art workshops offered free-of-charge thanks to the Art Center Foundation. Projects included oil pastels, watercolor, card making, and more. The workshops culminated in an exhibition in the community gallery at the Art Center.



From our volunteers:

“First time working with youth and I gained new leadership skills.”

Volunteers & Interns

Volunteers contributed **5,431** hours over the past year, a value of **\$172,714**. We included a teen volunteer activity in Enjoy! and the number of teen volunteers doubled between Winter and Spring sessions.

In the summer of 2023, the Art Center hired five interns and four fellows from a variety of schools including San Francisco State University, San Jose State University, Cal State East Bay, Middlebury College, and Santa Clara University. One student qualified for the REAL program at Santa Clara University and was paid by SCU.

We placed four Eastside Prep students, including one who just graduated with a bachelor’s degree. One intern was a former volunteer and one had taken art classes at the Art Center in the past. *(See names and titles below.)*



Interns participated in several professional development activities including tours of local galleries and museums, an artist talk with Linda Gass, a professional tool-kit workshop with recruiter Dana Hundley, and several staff meetings.

Summer 2023 cohort:

Leana Lee (Education Fellow); Annika Emery, Corey Walker, Indira Villeda, and Victoria Zaragoza (Studio Interns); Alana Zucca (Exhibitions Fellow); Angelica Anguiano (Community Outreach Fellow); Giselle Orozco (Foundation Fellow); Kidus Solomon (Marketing and Social Media Intern)



Thank you donors and members for your generosity in fiscal year 2022-2023

\$20,000+

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Emily Benatar Foundation
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\$10,000+

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\$5,000+

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The Palo Alto Art Center and Foundation mourn the loss of beloved champions for the arts and education last year: Lois Anderson and Melissa Caswell

\$2,500+

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\$1,250+

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"I feel truly lucky to be a Palo Alto resident and to have access to such a wonderful space that offers such awesome programs for all ages!"

\$500+

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