



FORT MASON CENTER
FOR ARTS & CULTURE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Massive New Murals Celebrating Farm Workers Coming to Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture



An image from Your Food, My Work, Our Land painting series, Oscar Lopez

Artist Oscar Lopez scales up his food justice series that pays homage to agricultural laborers with a new mural debuting at campus art walk

(San Francisco, Calif.) - The often-invisible faces of the agricultural workers who feed America are center stage in *Your Food, My Work, Our Land*, a new outdoor mural series by artist Oscar Lopez to be unveiled during a campuswide art walk on May 30, 2024, Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture (FMCAC) announced today. In addition to the mural debut, the event features new artworks, artist talks, and art-making activities from FMCAC residents FOR-SITE, SF Camerawork, Haines Gallery, American Indian Cultural District, Museo Italo Americano, and the San Francisco Children's Art Center.

Inspired by his grandfather's experience in the World War II-era Bracero Program that recruited Mexican farm workers to work on U.S. farms and the temporary focus on "essential workers" during the pandemic shutdowns, *Your Food, My Work, Our Land* asks us to see these essential individuals whose necessary work renders them invisible, like the infrastructure we use but take for granted every day.

"During the pandemic, I saw this debate and discourse about whether or not farmworkers were essential," says Lopez. "We didn't have vaccines. The entire world was paralyzed due to the health crisis. If we want to define the essentials of humanity and human needs, food is number one. The people who are producing food should have some value as well."

Located in the corridor between Landmark Buildings B and C, the mural project expands on Lopez's original *Your Food, My Work, Our Land* piece, a screen-printed poster of laborers toiling under the hot sun. In conjunction with the Haight Street Art Center, Lopez conducted pop-up



FORT MASON CENTER
FOR ARTS & CULTURE

printmaking workshops to create and distribute the image at farmer's markets from Pacifica to the Ferry Building in San Francisco.

In this new commission at FMCAC, Lopez expands the frame of this work, depicting a historical sequence of agricultural labor in the Bay Area alongside portraits of individuals working the land today. He conducted extensive interviews with laborers at small farms and markets across the region, picturing them in a visual grammar drawn from the great Mexican muralists of the twentieth century and the reimagination of those artists in San Francisco's Mission Muralismo movement of the 1970s.

"We're thrilled to host Oscar's powerful new murals, which give a voice to the often-invisible workers who feed the Bay Area," said Frank Smigiel, FMCAC's Director of Arts Programming & Partnerships. "Our hope in hosting this larger expression of Oscar's work sparks crucial conversations around land, labor, and food justice while creating a stunning new public art visual on this special arts and cultural campus."

As part of the exhibition - on view through January 2025 - Lopez and the Haight Street Art Center will offer pop-up printmaking workshops on Sundays at the Fort Mason Center Farmers' Market on June 9, July 14, and August 11. Additional campus activations with FMCAC resident SF Children's Art Center and an artist-designed coloring book are planned for this fall.



Exhibition Launch and Art Walk

"*Your Food, My Work, Our Land*" will be officially unveiled at FMCAC's Spring Art Walk, scheduled for Thursday, May 30, 2024, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. The art walk, free and open to the public with registration, features a variety of exhibitions, performances, and artmaking activities presented by FMCAC and its resident organizations, including:

- Fort Mason Art presents *Shiny Things for My Quartermaster: Seven Swallowtail Flags*, a public art commission by Los Angeles-based artist and filmmaker Cauleen Smith. The suite of artist flags, installed above the main entrances to Landmark Building B, the Gateway Pavilion at Pier 2, and the Festival Pavilion at Pier 3 are on view through Spring 2024. More information about the commission is on display in the Landmark Building B Lobby.
- Haines Gallery presents a solo exhibition by Patsy Krebs in Landmark Building C, first floor
- SF Camerawork presents EBTI: *Ma-kan* مكان, on view in Landmark Building A, next to Radhaus Alpine Beerhall & Restaurant



FORT MASON CENTER
FOR ARTS & CULTURE

- San Francisco Children's Art Center hosts a Family Art-Making Workshop for all ages, Landmark Building C, first floor
- The American Indian Cultural District will debut two new murals in Landmark Building D, complementing a collection of historical posters commemorating decades of Indigenous arts and cultural events held at FMCAC
- FOR-SITE's The Guardhouse Program presents Yunfei Ren At The Guardhouse: "Prevailing Winds," and a talk between curator Lisa Ellsworth and Hidetaka Hirota, a legal and social historian specializing in immigration
- Museo Italo Americano presents "Earth & Soul: Paintings By Elena Civoli Brittain & Sculptures By Tricia Grame, Landmark Building C, first floor

Other campus art installations on view include artist Matt Passmore's Tide/Untied sculpture at the campus entrance and original paintings from the International Decorative Painters Salon 2023 in the lobby of Landmark Building C.

FMCAC resident Goody Café will offer free popcorn to attendees, along with other food and beverage options, in Landmark Building C, while resident establishments Radhaus, Greens Restaurant, and The Interval at Long Now will offer dining and drinking options in Landmark Buildings A. The Fort Mason Art Walk is free and open to the public with registration. Space is limited. Schedule and registration at fortmason.org.

About the Artist

Oscar Lopez is a visual artist born and raised in Mexico City, where he first encountered art through the world of urban graffiti. After immigrating to the USA and settling in San Francisco, he has sought "to understand our complex society through a Mexican immigrant's lens." He notes, "I use a critical eye to engage with the globalization, imperialism, and capitalism that affect every corner of the two nations that share my soul. To survive in these societies built on the foundations of white supremacy and colonialism, our ancestors have been forced for generations to either hide, directly confront, or sympathize with our oppressors, resulting in a mass forgetting of cultural and social practices. As an artist, I want to create tangible images that reflect our psychological symptoms and demand us to confront our submission to the powers that hold us."

Lopez received an AA degree in studio art from Foothill College, a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute (with an emphasis on painting), and an MFA in pictorial arts from San Jose State University/ San Francisco Art Institute. He studies privately in an atelier system to understand new and old graphic techniques for his own visual language. Lopez combines his murals and paintings with social practices in both public art and his studio work, using bilingualism in language, media, and substrates, as well as in his pedagogy. Lopez is a 2024 SECA nominee and a 2019 AXA Art Prize recipient. He received a 2022 Creative Work Fund Grant for *Your Food, My Work, Our Land*. He currently teaches at Ohlone College.

About Haight Street Art Center

The Haight Street Art Center serves San Francisco's thriving poster art and artist communities with education, cultural development programs, and exhibitions. Drawing upon music, art, and social and political counterculture history, we provide a space that bridges communities through social activism and artistic expression.



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About the Art Walk

Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture (FMCAC): A decommissioned military installation converted into a nonprofit cultural center, FMCAC hosts a lively mix of arts, educational, and cultural programming. Each year FMCAC provides more than \$2 million in support to local arts organizations, enabling groups to produce diverse and innovative artworks at the historic waterfront campus. With a four-decade history as an arts and culture destination, FMCAC is now focused on reinvigorating its programming and amenities to better engage the evolving Bay Area creative community. Central to this new vision is the commissioning and presentation of adventurous and unconventional artworks best realized in nontraditional or historical settings.

Haines Gallery: Haines Gallery provides a platform for emerging and internationally established artists from Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, North and South America, and the global community. Founded by Cheryl Haines in 1987, Haines Gallery is a vital West Coast platform for celebrated and ambitious artists from around the globe. The gallery's program aims to engage and inspire collectors, curators, and diverse audiences with artistic statements that are visually compelling and conceptually rigorous. Significant exhibitions presented include the first West Coast solo shows of artists such as Andy Goldsworthy, Ai Weiwei, Kota Ezawa, and Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, among many others.

FOR-SITE Foundation: FOR-SITE Foundation, the organization behind projects such as @Large: Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz and Goldsworthy in the Presidio, focuses on art about place through creation, understanding, and presentation. FOR-SITE, established in 2003, achieves this mission through exhibitions, commissions, artist residencies, and education programs that inspire new ways of thinking and dialogue about the natural and cultural environment.

SF Camerawork: For nearly 50 years, SF Camerawork has provided a launching pad for many artists' careers, supplying invaluable financial support, exhibition space, curation, and patronage. In its early years, SF Camerawork was the first organization in the Bay Area to host exhibitions and lectures by controversial but ultimately highly influential artists such as Sally Mann, Robert Mapplethorpe, Susan Meiselas, and Joel-Peter Witkin. More recently, the organization has presented the first West Coast exhibitions for artists including John Chiara, Binh Danh, Erica Deeman, Jennifer Karady, Jason Lazurus, Chris McCaw, Wang Ning De, and Meghann Riepenhoff—artists who have emerged as leaders of a new generation gaining international prominence.

San Francisco Children's Arts Center: The SF Children's Art Center has nurtured a love for art in children since 1978. With a mission to empower children and foster their sense of self through artistic expression, SFCAC enables students to view the world as a place filled with possibilities where they can express their own vision. Classes are offered in collage, drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, clay, and photography. SFCAC provides visual arts residencies at several San Francisco preschools, schools, and community programs.

Museo Italo Americano: The Museo Italo Americano was the first museum in the United States devoted exclusively to Italian and Italian-American art and culture. In addition to researching, collecting, and displaying the works of Italian and Italian American artists, the Museo promotes educational programs and classes for the appreciation of Italian art, culture, and language. An FMCAC resident since 1985, Museo hosts two galleries, a library, offices, and a gift shop.



FORT MASON CENTER
FOR ARTS & CULTURE

American Indian Cultural District: Founded on March 31, 2020, the American Indian Cultural District (AICD) is the first established Cultural District of its size in the U.S. dedicated to recognizing, honoring, and celebrating the American Indian legacy, culture, people, and contributions. AICD serves the greater American Indian community by preserving and celebrating our unique cultures, strengthening our voices, and increasing our visibility to obtain equitable resources, funding, and opportunities for American Indian people.

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