

SITES UNS_EN

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SITES UNSEEN TO ACTIVATE SAN FRANCISCO ALLEYS WITH DYNAMIC PUBLIC ART

FIRST PERMANENT LARGE-SCALE INSTALLATION BY ARTIST BARRY MCGEE TO BE
CELEBRATED ON OCTOBER 9 AT FREE PUBLIC ART EVENT

September 16, 2016 — San Francisco, CA — Sites Unseen, a nonprofit public art organization, will present its first large scale public art installation on **Sunday, October 9, 2016 from 3PM–6PM** at a free all-ages event adjacent to the Moscone Center Garage at 255 Third Street in downtown San Francisco’s Yerba Buena neighborhood. At **3:30PM**, project and community leaders will gather at the northwest corner of the garage to present opening remarks.

The event, open to all, will celebrate the installation of *Moscone Contemporary Art Centre & Garage*, artist **Barry McGee**’s multi-colored painted artwork installed in several locations on the exterior of the Moscone Center Garage. The event will also feature temporary, participatory programming by local artists **Ramekon O’Arwisters** and **Leah Rosenberg**, and by Los Angeles-based artist collective **Fallen Fruit**.

“Sites Unseen will enhance the Yerba Buena neighborhood’s existing reputation as an arts hub by activating underutilized areas to foster social interaction, community pride, and economic opportunities,” said Jonathan Moscone, Chief of Civic Engagement at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and a member of the Sites Unseen Advisory Committee.

Through 2018, the organization will partner with public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors to program seven alleys in the Yerba Buena neighborhood—Annie, Clementina, Jessie East, Lapu Lapu, Minna, Natoma, and Shipley Streets—with public art that celebrates San Francisco and responds both to the specific conditions of the sites as well as artistic and cultural values that engage local, national, and international communities.

“The alleys provide a platform for both local and national artists at all career stages to showcase work within the curatorial framework. We want to help shape these public spaces as destinations for sustained collaborative discourse, innovation, and discovery for everyone, and offer opportunities for exciting performances and happenings that will bring people to the alleys again and again,” said Sites Unseen co-founder and San Francisco Arts Commissioner Dorka Keehn.

Sites Unseen’s curatorial framework reconsiders the role of the neighborhood’s alleys, positioning them as places of respite and reprieve where one can elect to take a moment to simply exist in place. The project will bring together a variety of artists to explore what this kind of ‘living space’ can mean in the contemporary urban environment, inviting them to create site-specific works that in some way respond to the needs of each place.

“Public art is a reflection of our neighborhood’s creative canvas and an important way to enliven, inspire and intrigue everyone who sees it. We’re excited about how Sites Unseen will energize our alleys and provide art to the public,” said Cathy Maupin, executive director of the Yerba Buena Community Benefit District, a nonprofit that works to improve the quality of life in Yerba Buena.

“The SFMTA supports public art and is honored to help place Barry’s artwork at our facility, which will further our efforts to bring public art to more locations throughout the city,” said Ted Graff, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency’s Director of Parking.

Project director Jessica Shaefer said, “Sites Unseen encourages the exploration of ways in which various forms of artistic practice can transform urban public spaces. We’re looking forward to helping Bay Area cultural producers gain more support and visibility both locally and globally.”

ABOUT SITES UNSEEN

Sites Unseen believes that art and artists have the power to shape society and that public art does more than beautify; it stimulates dialogue and participation across cultures. Through a series of creative place making initiatives, Sites Unseen is bringing arts programming to under-used alleys in the Yerba Buena neighborhood of San Francisco in the form of permanent and temporary art installations and activations. The project — supported by private funders including the Bently Foundation, the Kenneth Rainin Foundation, the VIA Art Fund, and the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation, among others — aims to transform these areas into thriving cultural destinations for diverse audiences. Learn more at sitesunseen.org.

ABOUT BARRY MCGEE

Barry McGee was born in 1966 in San Francisco, where he continues to live and work. In 1991, McGee received a BFA in Painting and Printmaking from the San Francisco Art Institute. He was part of the graffiti boom in the Bay Area during the early 1980s, and later a primary figure in the Mission School art movement. His drawings, paintings, and mixed-media installations take their inspiration from contemporary urban culture. His work has been shown internationally in venues such the 2001 Venice Biennale; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, and the UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. In 2012, the Berkeley Art Museum presented a major mid-career survey of his work. His most recent solo exhibition titled China Boo took place in 2015 at Ratio 3 in San Francisco.

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