

For Immediate Release

PRESS CONTACT:

Katie Conry, Executive Director, Tenderloin Museum
kconry@tenderloinmuseum.org
415-351-1912

Tenderloin Museum and Root Division present:
More Than a Roof and Walls: Community Art Show



**More Than a Roof and Walls: Alice Combs &
Susa Cortez exhibit with their Tenderloin Art Students**

Opening: Thursday March 16, 2017 6pm - 8pm

Exhibition Dates: 3/16 - 4/29/17

Tenderloin Museum

398 Eddy St.

San Francisco, CA 94102

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (March 2017) --

Root Division is proud to present the work of our Studio Artists and students at the Tenderloin Museum this spring. ***More Than a Roof and Walls*** features the work of Alice Combs and Susa Cortez alongside the work of their intergenerational students at several of our Tenderloin community partnerships including Kelly Cullen Community, Community Housing Partnership & Larkin Street Youth.

Root Division teaching artists volunteer to teach residents and clients weekly creating meaningful art projects and experiences for populations that are settling into new homes and communities. The classes serve as a creative outlet for the imaginations of students while introducing them to a wide range of materials, projects, and ideas.

On view is a collaborative installation which reflects the work of students from all three programs. Creating an imagined interior space looking out onto a "window" collaged image of the Tenderloin neighborhood are textile pillows and curtains with the student's designs. Made from styrofoam block prints from Kelly Cullen, Community Housing Partnership and Larkin Street Youth, the fabrics are a collaborative effort reflecting the diverse style and personalities of the students who participated.

Informed by their own art practices the teaching artists are exhibiting work alongside this student installation.

Alice Combs presents a series of sculptural object, "Metal, Mettle, Meddle (excerpts)" in which the artist impulsively cleans rust off of old weights, spikes, and chains--objects which do not need to look any certain way in order to perform their function. The tedious process of polishing is an act of erasing a surface and imposing one's will for the sake of appearances. There is weight behind polish, and it may not be benign. A graduate of the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI) MFA program in Painting, Combs uses everyday materials like human hair, blueprints, and rusty metal, manipulated through repetitive and laborious processes, to create assemblage drawings and sculpture to address the aspirational bases of individual and collective action.

In her installation *Ma Tiera*, **Susa Cortez** transports viewers to her hometown of La Loma, a small town in rural Morleon, Guanajuato, Mexico. Inspired by childhood memories, Cortez has constructed an interactive installation reminiscent of her grandmother's living room, where she spent Saturday afternoons watching her grandmother knotting the fringe of rebozos (shawls) to earn her living. Through the elevation of personally significant, but humble objects—a rebozo, flowers, a wooden box—Cortez creates an immersive shrine to her own childhood nostalgia that allows viewers to reflect upon their own formative memories.

Susa Cortez was born in La Loma, a rural town of Moroleon, Guanajuato, Mexico, which is a major influence behind her artistic practice. She works in diverse range of mediums often consisting of installations and performance. Cortez received a B.F.A. from the University of Delaware and an M.F.A. in Sculpture from Herron School of Art and Design, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. Her work has been exhibited in venues such as the Queens Museum, Syracuse University, SOMArts, Galeria de la Raza, Normal University Taipei, and Townson University.

About Root Division's Education Program:

Root Division is a visual arts non-profit that connects creativity and community through a dynamic ecosystem of arts education, exhibitions, and studios.

In our Education Program, Root Division recruits, trains, and places Studio Artists, volunteers and interns to teach free art classes in one of our eight partner sites, creating a link between practicing artists and the community. Root Division currently provides art classes and workshops at language-immersion schools -- -- Cesar Chavez Elementary, Buena Vista Elementary, Horace Mann Middle School, Filipino Education Center/Bessie Carmichael Elementary, Bessie Carmichael Middle School; Newcomer School, Mission Education Center; and homeless family service centers, Kelly Cullen Community, Larkin Street Youth and Community Housing Partnership. All of our programs serve a diverse group of students, most of which attend San Francisco Unified School District schools.

Artists volunteer one hour per week and choose the types of projects and media they are interested in teaching, acting as "artists-in-residence" for a semester at the partner site. Root Division assists the artists in formulating effective, age-appropriate lesson plans, project-based learning curricula and offers them guidance in working with youth. As a result, artists gain valuable experience teaching within the community, and young students are able to interact with adult mentors in the art-making process. Root Division provides free art classes to over 800 students annually.

Root Division Studio Artists in the Tenderloin:

When Root Division relocated to the mid-market neighborhood in 2014, the visual arts non-profit was excited to add new neighborhood partnerships to the many Mission-District educational outreach programs they had worked with since 2002. Tenderloin neighborhood partnerships began with Kelly Cullen Community, and Larkin Street Youth in 2014, expanded to include working with Community Housing Partnership in 2015.

The **Tenderloin Museum** celebrates the rich history of one of San Francisco's most overlooked neighborhoods. Through history exhibitions, resident-led walking tours, community programs, and the presentation of original artwork, the Tenderloin Museum invites all comers to learn about the roots of our dynamic neighborhood, and reclaim our city's past and future. The 31 blocks of the Tenderloin District are a microcosm of San Francisco, peopled by immigrants and iconoclasts, artists and activists, sinners and saints. All are welcome to join us in telling its story. www.tenderloinmuseum.org

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