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College of Humanities and the Arts

Summer 2017

Expressions, Summer 2017

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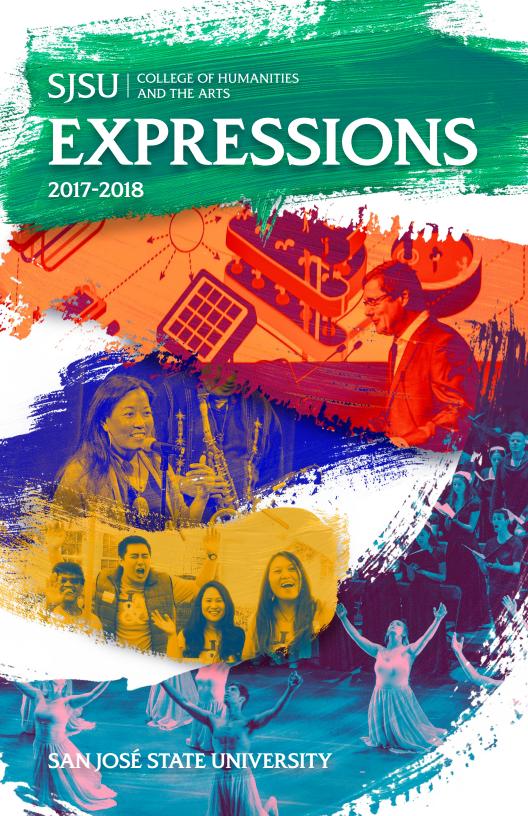


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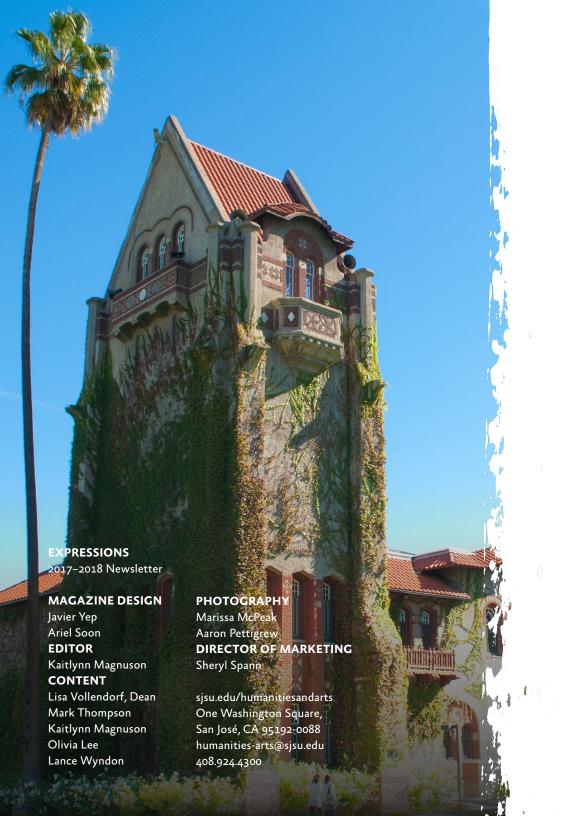


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As you can see in this edition of Expressions, the College of Humanities and the Arts is a leader in creativity, innovation, and interdisciplinarity at the university and beyond. Every day, we are reminded both on campus and off of the power we have as a college to impact our students and our communities. In this edition, you can read about the incredible faculty who have been honored as Silicon Valley Artist Laureate. Through music, writing, and sculpture, they challenge us to see the world—and each other—in new ways. You will read about the incredible city-university partnership that is the Hammer Theatre Center. Now in the second year of operations, the SJSUoperated Hammer Theatre has served more than 27,000 patrons through

events as diverse as opera performances, film festivals, dance concerts, literary readings, musicals, and plays.

In humanities and the arts, we are proud that our reach extends far beyond the boundaries of our campus. Our 2017 Paseo Public Prototyping Festival exemplified the possibilities that exist for bringing our students' energy and ideas to bear on building a better future for the entire region. Our interdisciplinary student teams worked over an entire academic year to answer the question, "What will you create to make San José a better place to live, work, and play?" Their prototypes proposed solutions to difficult challenges, including chronic homelessness, sustainable agriculture, and urban safety.

The major sponsor of this event was the Knight Foundation, which we are proud to have as an ongoing partner in our effort to leverage the tremendous human capital at SJSU for the greater good of our community. We are grateful to our industry partners (including Intel, AutoDesk, and Microsoft) as well as to Mayor Sam Liccardo and his civic innovation team in the city of San José for making the event impactful and successful.

These accomplishments express the core values of Humanities and the Arts at SJSU: we pride ourselves on educating students to be compassionate, creative, and innovative citizens of the world.

As our former dean, Lisa Vollendorf, exits for a new position as Vice President of Academic Affairs at Sonoma State University this July, we are thrilled to welcome a new dean, Dr. Shannon Miller, into the role. Never has humanities and the arts had higher visibility than we do today: we have every confidence that the College of Humanities and the Arts is positioned to lead the way toward a future filled with artistic innovation and committed to creative, inclusive problem solving.

In gratitude,

Lisa Volleydon

Lisa Vollendorf, Dean (2012-2017) Shannon Miller, Interim Dean (2017-18)



The College of Humanities and the Arts warmly welcomes Shannon Miller, who will serve as the Interim Dean for the College of Humanities and the Arts as Dean Lisa Vollendorf departs SJSU. Serving as the department chair of the Department of English and Comparative Literature since 2014, Shannon Miller joined the SJSU community from Temple University, Philadelphia, where she taught since 1993. Professor Miller brings a unique perspective as both an educator and an administrator to help lead the college in this transition.

"One of the things that we've done in the English department in regards to a curriculum revision this past year is to think through some project-based learning approaches," Professor Miller explains. "I've become interested in trying to figure out how to intersect the skills that our students gain with what they can do when they make it into the job market."

While she will miss being in the classroom, Professor Miller looks forward to addressing the challenges that face

the college. She is especially interested in exploring the intersections between the humanities disciplines and the fine and performing arts in terms of curriculum, and the ways that the college can continue to expand on those points of interconnection. "I'm looking forward to seeing and interacting with both the students and the faculty in terms of all of the more public ways that they present to the campus and to the community," Professor Miller says. This includes working with the city of San José to continue to expand the programming of the Hammer Theatre and continuing to support the reconfigurations of curriculum in the college, headed by Associate Dean Kathleen McSharry.

"It's a very exciting opportunity. I am confident that I can do a good job, largely in part because Dean Vollendorf has done such a good job putting the college on an excellent footing. We're in great shape going forward, and I feel like I can effectively steward us in terms of continuing to promote the kinds of curricular changes that people are working on."

H&A Professors Named

Artists Laureate of Silicon Valley for Three Years Running



We're proud to announce that a number of faculty from the College of Humanities and the Arts have received SVLaureate awards: Professor Cathleen Miller, Shannon Wright, and Aaron Lington. Selected from the region's finest artists through a competitive process, honorees are recognized for the quality of their work and their commitment to enriching our community with exhibitions, performances, presentations, and service at the annual SVLaureate Celebration. This is the third year in a row that faculty from the college has received an award, speaking to the level of passion our professors have for their fields.

CATHLEEN MILLER

Miller's SVLaureate: Off Stage award comes in recognition of her important literary works, as well as her contributions to the artistic community of the Silicon Valley.

"This award is a particular honor," Miller says, "because there are more creative people working in Silicon Valley than in any other place in the world."

Professor Miller has written a number of books, including Champion of Choice: The Life and Legacy of Women's Advocate Nafis Sadik; Desert Flower: The Extraordinary Journey of a Desert Nomad; and The Birdhouse Chronicles: Surviving the Joys of Country Life. Champion of Choice, an inspiring exploration of UN leader Nafis Sadik, was named by Booklist as one of the top ten biographies of 2013. The critically acclaimed Desert Flower, written with Somali human rights activist Waris Dirie, has been made into a film of the same name.

In addition to her literary works, Miller directs two of SJSU's most prestigious literary institutions, the Center for Literary Arts and Reed Magazine, the oldest literary journal west of the Mississippi. As a professor in the MFA writing program, she has taught hundreds of students who are now themselves writers, editors, and educators—writing, working, and teaching across the Bay Area.



SHANNON WRIGHT

Shannon Wright, a sculptor and installation artist, was awarded the Artist Laureate Award: Off the Wall in 2016. Wright works frequently with modules and grids that conjure images of mass-production and economic utility, creating her own "ruins" and monuments which are inspired by "the hubris of grand Modernist schemes that have sought to standardize and codify human activity."

"My formative years as an artist were spent among the iron trestle bridges and abandoned turn-of-the-last-century hydroelectric plants and foundries of Richmond, Virginia," Wright elaborates. "This was the biggest single influence on all the artwork I've made since college. I'm particularly fascinated with materials juxtapositions and the associations of industrial materials. This work is my reaction to a culture whose purely mercantile motivations never cease to disorient me."

Proud of all of her projects, Wright has recently completed a piece entitled *Holding Pattern*, an infinity-symbol-shaped corral with a found turnstile as its central hub. Funded by a CSU RSCA grant, the structure is 22 feet long with an uncertain purpose; it suggests, Wright explains, "the passage of humans into the system, then endlessly cycling from one loop to the other" with the presence of the turnstile. "As with many of my pieces, I aim to create the sense of a structure whose original, poorly conceived intent is now a historical anomaly."

Currently, Wright is working on a series of sculptures inspired by her "ever-shifting" relationship to Silicon Valley. Drawing inspiration from local corporate architecture, Wright strives to convey the "mood of limitless ambition" that she associates with Silicon Valley through experimentation with different structural systems in small-scale sculptures. "I

intend for these sculptural pieces to serve as subjective, abstract distillations of my interpretations of the Silicon Valley zeitgeist, even as that zeitgeist has the potential to be destabilized by current events in the nation," Wright says. The first two of these sculptures were exhibited in the Spatial Art faculty exhibition in February of 2017; Wright's East Coast gallery has proposed the full body of work for exhibition at the Untitled Art Fair, Miami Beach.





geon

AARON LINGTON

Winning the Artist Laureate Award: Off Stage (Composing) in 2015, Aaron Lington is no stranger to being both on and off the stage. A Grammy Award-winning baritone saxophonist and composer, Lington has travelled all over the world, performing and creating unforget-table experiences wherever he goes. His credits include collaborations with the San Francisco Symphony, Maynard Ferguson, the BBC Radio Orchestra, the Count Basie Orchestra, Doc Severinsen, Bo Diddley, Randy Brecker, Joe Lovano, Jamie Davis, Tommy Igoe, Pacific Mambo Orchestra, and many others.

His collaborations with trumpeter Paul Tynan have earned critical acclaim and are the projects that Lington is most proud of. "These projects have been a labor of love," he explains. "We have a group together called the Bicoastal Collective, which has featured only our original music played by a variety of ensemble types."

Currently, Lington and Tynan are about to release their 5th collaboration: Bicoastal Collective—Chapter Five, a big band record featuring five saxophones, four trombones, and four trumpets alongside guitar, piano, bass, and drums. The album features all original music composed by Lington and Tynan for big band performance. "Inspiration can be drawn from anywhere, but I primarily get inspired by listening to great music," Lington remarks. "I have been playing saxophone for almost 30 years and have loved every minute of it."

Spotlight:

Notable Student Achievements



The College of Humanities and the Arts is proud to showcase the hard work and accomplishments of our amazing students. From publishing essays to working on a musical album to taking part in prestigious programs, our students are establishing their names prominently in the fields of the arts and humanities.

IRMA GARCIA

Irma Garcia, a graduate student from the English Department, has won the "Now That's What I Call Writing" contest hosted by the San Lorenzo Library. Her winning piece, "Sunshine Garden Cannery Hand Book," is scheduled to publish on the library's website by the end of the year.

Irma's essay criticizes the working conditions of canneries in the 1990s. While reading Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, she was inspired to explore her mother's work experiences in a nearby San José cannery. Combining her literary and personal influences with her knack for humor, Irma says she has "take[n] a satirical approach a la Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal.*" Her piece is framed "as the introductory chapter to an employee hand-book that takes a positive spin on the deplorable conditions."

Her success with the essay has made her eager to continue on the same track. While Irma has only been in the graduate program for a year, she is already preparing to publish more of her writing. Irma continually pushes herself to put her work out there despite being new to the writing industry. "The worst anyone can do is to say 'No," Irma explains. Her positive attitude and talent has clearly paid off.

KENNY BISCHOFF

Kenny Bischoff is a senior graduating with a BM in Jazz Studies. His success in school has been greatly influenced by his experiences playing in public. "Music is something that you learn through 'Tribal Knowledge'—you have to be there to learn it," Kenny says. And indeed he has gained plenty of tribal knowledge working as a professional musician performing gigs around the Bay Area.

During past summers, Kenny also toured Europe with the Stanford Jazz Orchestra under the direction of Fredrick Berry. The tours allowed him to play alongside industry experts, such as Jon Faddis. Jon taught Kenny assortments of "tips and tricks including how to play in the Thad Jones Mel Lewis style of Big Band." These tours are invaluable to Kenny, as he explains, "Everything I learn, I try to bring back and apply to the bands here at SJSU."

Currently, Kenny plays the lead trumpet in the 7th Street Big Band, an East San José group composed primarily of SJSU students. Currently, Kenny is working with the band to release its debut album, Off Cinderella Lane, which is set to come out next year. "The album will contain all original music written and performed by members of the band," Kenny says.

In the coming fall, Kenny will attend University of North Texas, pursuing a Master's Degree in Jazz Trumpet Pedagogy.

MELODIE SUN

Melodie Sun, also a graduating senior, is on call for playing in the Young Artist Program, part of Chamber Music Silicon Valley for the incoming year. The Young Artist Program aims to prepare new classical artists for professional careers. The program especially appeals to Melodie as it will give her "a chance to perform chamber music and be coached by top-notch professional players." The program also helps young artists launch their careers in the professional world of music. "I hope to get a taste of what the life of a professional musician is like and to test the waters of the real world after graduation," says Melodie.

As for the coming season, Melodie plans to "take a semester off to recuperate" after graduating with three degrees—a BM in Music Education, a BM in Violin Performance, and a BA in Mathematics with a focus on Secondary Teaching. Melodie has spent years of "prioritizing and looking for the most efficient way" to accommodate all her responsibilities and is looking forward to a break. Melodie hopes to eventually continue her education by getting a Master's Degree in Music Therapy to fulfill her goal of "work[ing] with kids with special needs through music."

Irma, Kenny, and Melodie are up-and-coming talents within their fields. We congratulate them for their diligence and achievements. We can't wait to hear more from them in the future





In April, the Hammer Theatre Center proudly launched the Paseo Public Prototyping Festival and Challenge. Celebrating the culmination of three years of work and preparation, SJSU student teams showcased innovative solutions to social and environmental problems of Silicon Valley. A partnership with the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Intel, Microsoft, Autodesk, the Tech Museum of Innovation, and the city of San José, the two-day arts, culture, and technology festival consisted of live performances, guest speakers, interactive activities, and exhibits. The challenge is designed to

encourage students to use their imaginations to create prosocial civic innovations and to encourage students to take a more active role in the future of the city.

Spearheading the event, Professor Gary Craig Hobbs worked under the guidance of Dean Lisa Vollendorf to develop campus-wide interdisciplinary work focused on civic engagement. "After seeing a tech awards show at the Tech Museum of Innovation, I was inspired to direct energy into this prototyping towards the city under the rubric of civic engagement," says Professor Hobbs. Working alongside all eight

colleges at SJSU, he toiled diligently to find funding, develop relationships with partners, and direct the project. "Prior to the project," he says, "I served as the co-PI for several grants and established a strong relationship with the private sector, specifically Intel. I realized that if we directed our innovation work at the city of San José, we could not only increase the relationship between the university and the city, but provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge, creativity, and skills towards the city of San José."

After creating partnerships with the city and private industry, the Paseo Public Prototype Challenge conducted a survey aimed at identifying 16 social and environmental problems in San José. The issues ranged from education to public health to social justice. Each student team then chose a topic and worked across disciplines to find a methodology for one of the problems. The students were instructed to create a human-centered design and build something using Intel technologies to provide possible solutions to the problems.

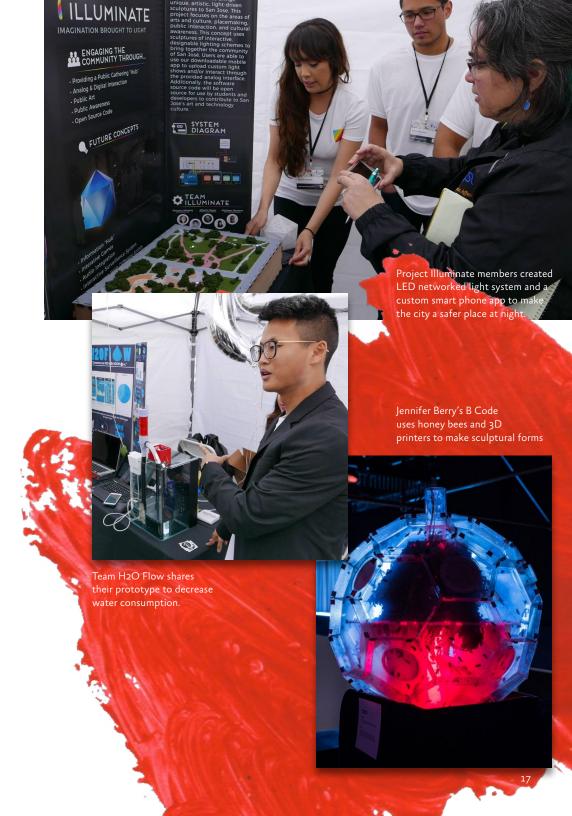
Out of the original 50 submissions, a panel of judges headed by expert SJSU faculty and industry professionals narrowed them to just 16. The selected teams were then mentored and provided a seed fund of \$1,000 to develop their prototype.

The student team with the best prototype would get \$5,000, and the 2nd and 3rd place teams would each receive \$2,000.

"Work Together," the winning team, created an app to help homeless people find work. Collaborating with homeless organizations, students created a platform that brings together potential employers and homeless individuals. After a job is completed, the app allows the employer and the worker to rate each other, much like an Uber for part-time labor.

Regardless of which team won, it was a great afternoon of students from across the disciplines coming together to solve problems. Professor Hobbs explains, "It's about the students and how they can impact the world in a real and meaningful way. Students learn from building, creating, networking, and encountering problems in the world they didn't know existed. These experiences are transformative and, who knows, maybe 10 to 20 years from now it can potentially lead to significant transformation."

The Paseo Public Prototyping Festival and Challenge is yet another example of how SJSU, the city of San José, and private industry can all come together to innovate, find solutions to problems, and highlight our students' hard work and talent.





seminar: Penned by Pulitzer Prize nominee Theresa Rebeck, Seminar had a successful run on Broadway in 2011, and came to the Hammer Theatre Center as a collaboration between New York City actor, director, and writer David Prete and students from the Department of Film and Theatre. The joint effort between Prete and the students resulted not only in an amazing show, but also an unforgettable experience for the students.





LEGACY OF POETRY DAY: The SISU Poets and Writers Coalition celebrated Asian American poetry by holding Legacy of Poetry Day at the Hammer Theatre. The Poetry Day Festival featured award-winning poet Maxine Hong Kingston as well as Al Young, Genny Lim, Barbara Jane Reyes, Gary Singh, and Arlene Biala along with San José State faculty, staff, student, and alumni poets. Other performers include spoken word artists ASHA, Lorenz Dumuk, and Quiyhn-Mai Nguyen, as well as musicians Jon Jang, Francis Wong, Jimmy Biala, and P. J. and Roy Hirabayashi. The event was co-sponsored by Associated Students, in association with Contemporary Asian Theater Scene (CATS), Poetry Center San José, and the 2016-17 Santa Clara County Poet Laureate, and brought together poetry lovers for a day of appreciation of words.

ELIJAH: The SISU School of Music and Dance, in collaboration with the Department of Digital Media Art, presented a landmark production of Mendelssohn's Elijah. A unique, fully staged production of Mendelssohn's melodrama, the performance featured the SJSU Choral Ensembles, Orchestra, and members of the University Dance Theater, with baritone Eugene Brancoveanu as Elijah. Digital media projections from the department of Digital Media Art added a contemporary flair to this undertaking, which showcased the talents of SJSU students to their fullest.





CSU FOLKLÓRICO FESTIVAL: Grupo Folklórico Luna y Sol de San José State hosted the sixth annual CSU Folklórico Showcase at the Hammer Theatre Center. The CSU Folklórico Showcase aims to promote higher education by exposing students with a passion for folklórico to the various folklórico groups from California State Universities. The event featured folklórico groups from across California, including Ballet Folklórico Aztlán de CSU Northridge, Ballet Folklórico de Channel Islands, Ballet Folklórico de CSU Fullerton, Ballet Folklórico de CSU San Marcos, Ballet Folklórico de Sonoma, Grupo Folklórico Luna y Sol de San José State, Grupo Folklórico Mexica de CSU Long Beach, and Los Danzantes de Aztlán de Fresno State.

Sundance Institute

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE MASTER-

cLASS: An all-day seminar was offered by the world-renowned Sundance Institute at the Hammer Theatre in April. Focused on short films, the workshop was attended by enthusiasts and professionals alike, bringing San Jose's short film community together for a unique opportunity to hear real-world stories and discuss ideas with industry experts.



Other programming included An Hour with Bryan Stevenson, which brought the author of Just Mercy, the chosen book for the SJSU campus reading program, to the Hammer Theatre to tell a powerful true story about the potential for mercy to redeem us; The Cruelty of Fate, a Vietnamese Culture Show presented by SJSU's Vietnamese Student Association, which celebrated Vietnamese-American culture with dance and musical performances; Brian Copeland's Not a Genuine Black Man, the longest-running solo show in San Francisco, which explored race, sociology, and how surroundings shape an individual; and the continued hosting of National Theatre Live! screenings.

Coming Up @ the Hammer 2017-2018

The upcoming 2017-2018 season is shaping up to be even better than the last, with the introduction of six different performance series which are set to bring even higher-quality programing to the stage reflecting San José's culture of creativity, diversity, and technology.

- HAMMER PRESENTS: featuring National Theatre Live, An Irish Christmas, and Menopause the Musical, as well as the Asian Youth Orchestra and Cuarteto Latinoamericano
- SJSU@HAMMER: showcasing performances by San José State University premiere music, theatre, and dance groups such as TRFT presenting Picasso at the Lapin Agile and the CLA hosting Viet Nguyen, author of The Sympathizer
- ART TECH: featuring performances by creative, technology-oriented groups such as ElevenPlay, and Bella Gaia
- JAZZ BEATS: bringing SJ Jazz Summerfest and notable jazz guest artists to the Hammer
- **HAMMER4:** presenting great plays in an intimate black box theatre such as *Shakespeare*, *His Wife* & the *Dog*
- ALSO @ THE HAMMER: showcasing special events booked at the Hammer Theatre such as the Black Legend Awards

Since early 2016, the Hammer Theatre has impacted the lives of students, faculty, and performers, as well as the larger San José community. The collaboration between the College of Humanities and the Arts and Hammer Theatre is shaping up to be a strong partnership. San José State University, in collaboration with the Hammer, is committed to enrich our community. Together, we will bring world-class musical, theatrical, educational, and technological programming to our city. Will you join us, as a Friend of the Hammer, to support our partnership and multicultural programming that captures the spirit of San José?

Friends of the

Friends of the Hammer are individual or corporate donors who support the vision and mission of the Hammer Theatre. Our friends ensure that the Hammer's doors remain open and that the stage lights stay on for the theatre's broad, multicultural programs of music, theatre, dance, film, cultural events, and educational talks.

To become a Friend of the Hammer, contact Matthew Taylor Siegel, Director of Development, College of Humanities and the Arts at matthew.siegel@sjsu.edu or 408-924-1475.

To receive the Hammer seasonal brochure and/or monthly online newsletter *Applause*, go to: rebrand.ly/HTMailing.



Membership Levels/Benefits

FRIEND \$25-\$249

- Free ticket exchange
- This year's Hammer Theatre gift item

NEIGHBOR \$250

Friend benefits plus:

- Discount (5%) on subscriptions and single tickets
- 1 pair comp tickets to a special Friends of Hammer event

SUPPORTER \$500

Neighbor benefits plus:

- 2 coupons for drinks at Hammer bar
- Invitation to annual Friends of Hammer "Applause" party

DIRECTOR \$1,500

Supporter benefits plus:

 Validated parking for up to 3 Hammer events

BENEFACTOR \$5,000

Director benefits plus:

- Discount (15%) on subscriptions;
 10% discount on single tickets
- Comp tickets to special Friends of the Hammer seats with wine and cheese plate
- Validated parking for up to 5 Hammer events

INNOVATOR \$7,500

Benefactor benefits plus:

- 20% discounted rate (rental rate only) to book the theatre for a private party
- 4 coupons for drinks at Hammer bar
- Invitation to special backstage tour

VISIONARY \$10,000+

Innovator benefits plus:

 Free booking of the Hammer Theatre Rooftop Terrace (rental rate only) for private party



San José State University

College of Humanities and the Arts

SUPPORTING THE H&A ARTISTIC AND EDUCATIONAL MISSION

To learn more about how you can support the artistic and educational mission of the College of Humanities and the Arts, please contact:

SHANNON MILLER

Interim Dean, College of Humanities and the Arts San José State University, One Washington Square San José, CA 95192-008

MAKING A GIFT

To make a gift in support of the College of Humanities and the Arts, you can give securely online:

www.sjsu.edu/giving/support/colleges/coha

You also can make checks payable to the "Tower Foundation of SJSU" and mail to **MATTHEW TAYLOR SIEGEL**, Senior Director of Development, San José State University, One Washington Square, San José, CA 95192-0257.

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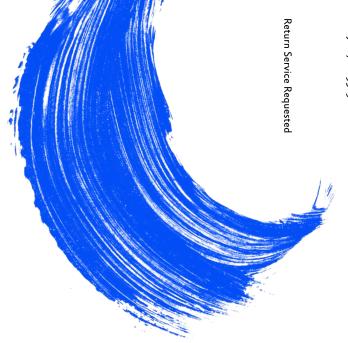
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