

SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART

For Immediate Release

SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART EXPLORES WOMEN'S
VITAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY IN
MOTHERBOARDS OPENING APRIL 10, 2026



San José, CA (December 2, 2025)— From April 10, 2026 through January 10, 2027, the San José Museum of Art (SJMA) announces the opening of *Motherboards*, an exhibition that explores the foundational yet overlooked contributions of underrecognized women to the technology industry. Featuring artists from California and beyond, *Motherboards* creatively maps an extensive network of women's work in technology, connecting Silicon Valley's laboratories and mythic garages to vital work performed at looms, desks, kitchens, and assembly lines across the globe.

"While the technology industry is popularly perceived as a 'boy's club,' the underlying history of technical innovation and production, from the Industrial Revolution to the current AI Boom, weaves a different narrative tapestry. Whether through programmable Jacquard looms in early nineteenth Century France to contemporary technologies driving the global economy, women's labor and leadership have shaped the world." said Jeremiah Matthew Davis, Oshman Director and Chief Executive Officer. "Through a contemporary art lens, *Motherboards* examines under-explored examples of women creating and building technology."

Though their stories are often omitted from official histories of technology, women—and particularly women of color—have long played critical roles building and sustaining the global technological industry now associated with Silicon Valley. The artists in *Motherboards* reclaim the agency of these otherwise anonymized laborers to give greater visibility to overlooked stories: of the women who served as the first human computers and programmers; of those who work in electronics factories in Silicon Valley

and beyond; or of those who contribute to today's global network of ghost workers, tagging data sets for AI technologies or moderating content on social media platforms. In doing so, the exhibition continues a conversation that began in 1997, at a symposium held at SJMA, called Chik Tek 97. Organized by then San José State University (SJSU) graduate students Lisa Milosevich and Monica Vasilescu and co-sponsored by the CADRE Institute at SJSU, the symposium addressed the impacts of emerging technologies on art and society, and brought together conflicting perspectives on the state of gender equity in the fields of art and technology in the 1990s. Thirty years later—at a time when women continue to struggle for equal representation in leadership and technical roles at major tech companies—*Motherboards* revisits the symposium's inquiry about the intersections of women, technology, and art to tell a more expansive history about the technologies we interact with daily.

"We are long overdue for an examination of the contributions women have made to the technology industry. SJMA is committed to connecting to the community through socially relevant art and telling under-represented stories, such as those of the thousands of women, named or anonymized, who have been foundational to the development of Silicon Valley," said Juan Omar Rodriguez, assistant curator. "Motherboards brings together a cohort of artists who emphatically affirm that technology is women's work."

Presented in the heart of Silicon Valley, and advancing SJMA's commitment to exploring the influence of digital technologies on traditional representational strategies, *Motherboards* addresses the timely topic of gender and technology through the eyes of contemporary artists from California and beyond. The exhibition features works by Hương Ngô, whose delicate sculptural forms are inspired by components she saw her parents assemble at home, like many other migrant workers who did piecemeal assembly work in their kitchens and living rooms throughout the 1980s. Also included is a work by Navajo artist Marilou Schultz, whose weaving of a microchip design speaks to the history of Navajo women applying their expert skill in textile weaving toward the manufacture of integrated circuits, diodes, and other computer components in the Fairchild Industries factory in Shiprock, New Mexico from 1965-75. Mimi Onuoha's installation *The Cloth In The Cable* (2022) evokes the work of content moderators in Nigeria and Uganda who review graphic and harmful content for Silicon Valley tech companies such as Meta and OpenAI, foregrounding the importance of imbuing care into the networks that connect us across the globe. Sarah Rosalena's "Standard Candle" series attends to the labor of women "computers" at the Mount Wilson Observatory who analyzed data from silver nitrate-coated photographic plates attached to telescopes to capture starlight. By reproducing the images from these plates in beaded textiles, Rosalena commemorates the only surviving traces of the women computers' labor she found in the observatory's archives. The exhibition will also include archival objects from the Computer History Museum that trace a long arc of women's work in the technology industry—from computation with punched cards to the designing and assembly of silicon microchips.

Motherboards is organized by Juan Omar Rodriguez, assistant curator.

PROGRAMMING

Opening Celebration

Friday, April 10, 2026 | Free for members; \$5 after 5 pm for non-members
Opening Celebration: 6–9pm; Member Reception: 6–7pm

SUPPORT

Motherboards is made possible by the SJMA Exhibitions Fund.

Operations and programs at the San José Museum of Art are made possible by principal support from SJMA's Board of Trustees, and a Cultural Affairs Grant from the City of San José and the Skyline Foundation; by lead support from the Lipman Family Foundation, the Adobe Foundation, the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, Toby and Barry Fernald, Tad Freese and Brook Hartzell, the Richard A. Karp Charitable Foundation, Tammy and Tom Kiely, Yvonne and Mike Nevens, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Teiger Foundation, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and the SJMA Director's Council and Council of 100; and with significant endowment support from the William Randolph Hearst Foundation and the San José Museum of Art Endowment Fund established by the Knight Foundation at the Silicon Valley Community Foundation.

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The San José Museum of Art (SJMA) is a modern and contemporary art museum dedicated to inclusivity, new thinking, and visionary ideas. Founded in 1969 by artists and community leaders, its dynamic exhibitions, collection, and programs resonate with defining characteristics of San José and the Silicon Valley—from its rich diversity to its hallmark innovative ethos. The Museum offers lifelong learning for school children and their educators, multigenerational families, creative adults, university students and faculty, and community groups. SJMA is committed to being a museum without borders, essential to creative life throughout the diverse communities of San José and beyond.

SJMA is located at 110 South Market Street in downtown San José, California. The Museum is open Thursday 4–9pm; Friday 11am–9pm; Saturday–Sunday 11am–6pm. Admission is \$20 for adults, \$15 for seniors, and free to members, college students, youth and children ages 17 and under, and school teachers (with valid ID). Admission is free from 6–9pm on the first Friday of every month. For up-to-date information, call 408.271.6840 or visit SanJoseMuseumofArt.org.

PRESS CONTACTS

Melanie Samay, director of marketing and communications, msamay@sjmusart.org

415.722.0555

Frederick Liang, marketing and communications coordinator, fliang@sjmusart.org

PRESS IMAGES

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IMAGE CREDIT

Sarah Rosalena, *Expanding Axis*, 2022. Glass beads and nylon thread, nine pieces: 4 x 6 inches, each. © Sarah Rosalena, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA. Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Ian Byers-Gamber