



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
January 16, 2020

### **Renowned Artist Jane Golden to Lead Events on Public Art and Murals in Santa Monica**

Acclaimed artist/muralist Jane Golden and members of Mural Arts, will visit Santa Monica January 30<sup>th</sup>-February 1<sup>st</sup> to lead a public series of activities on public art and murals, and the future of the Muir Woods mural at the Obama Center, commissioned by Golden in 1978.

The three-day process will include the following events:

- Thursday, January 30, 2020: Discussion on public art, Mural Arts, and art in Santa Monica. 7 p.m. Speakers to include Jane Golden and members of her team, Mike Myers, chair of the Santa Monica Art Commission, and other guests. After presentations by Myers and Golden there will have a lively round table discussion about public art in Santa Monica and beyond as well as a brief question and answer session. *Location: Santa Monica College, Orientation Hall, Student Services Center, 1900 Pico Blvd. Santa Monica. Parking structure 2 serves this building. SMC parking fees may apply.*
- Friday, January 31, 2020: From 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. there will be small group meetings with Golden and her team. This will be an opportunity for members of the community to meet with the Mural Arts team to discuss their feelings about the future of the walls on the Obama Center and potential murals. Please visit <http://bit.ly/2NsNljin> to request a time. Space may be limited but best efforts will be made to accommodate all requests. *Location: Obama Center, 721 Ocean Park Blvd. multipurpose room*
- Saturday, February 1, 2020: 10 a.m.-noon. Discussion of the southwest walls at Obama Center and the future of a mural(s) on that location. *Location: Obama Center, 721 Ocean Park Blvd in the multipurpose room.*

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District has engaged Golden, founder of Mural Arts Philadelphia, to lead the process to discuss public art and the next mural to be painted on two street-facing walls at the southwest corner of Lincoln and Ocean Park Boulevards, now part of the Michelle and Barack Obama Center for Inquiry and Exploration. Golden has generously donated her time to collaborate with SMMUSD and the City of Santa Monica.

The Board of Education has initiated this process on behalf of the school community interested in reimagining the space to better reflect the current facility, and Santa Monica community members interested in mural restoration. Community members have expressed support for the inclusion of Golden in the process that includes broader discussion of art and murals in Santa Monica. The Santa Monica Arts Commission is involved, along with the Santa Monica College Public Policy Institute.

“We are pleased that Ms. Golden has agreed to guide this community process on reimagining the mural space at the Obama Center,” Superintendent Dr. Ben Drati said. “We are confident

that her passion and expertise for mural art along with her personal connection to this space will ensure that our final design choice will take all factors and interests into consideration. The new mural will be a source of community pride and enjoyment for decades to come.”

Golden originally painted a depiction of the Muir Woods for the namesake John Muir Elementary School in 1978. Since then Muir Elementary moved locations and the site became Olympic High School. In August 2019 the facility was renamed the Michelle and Barack Obama Center for Inquiry and Exploration, housing Olympic High School, the personalized project-based learning pathway, along with other programs. After more than 40 years of gracing the city, the sun and salt air have left the mural in an irreparable state. The mural paint also contained lead that had leached into the planter beds, prior to encapsulation work done by the district to protect health and the environment.

The local community has been divided on whether to repaint the existing mural or create a new mural on this highly visible canvas. This process, led by Golden, will play a crucial role in guiding the community and SMMUSD toward identifying clear next steps that will be both collaborative and transparent.

The following members of Mural Arts will be participating in the three day process:

**Jane Golden** has been the driving force of Mural Arts Philadelphia since 1984, overseeing its growth from a small city agency into the nation’s largest public art program, a global model for transforming public spaces and individual lives through art. Under Golden’s direction, Mural Arts has created over 4,000 works of public art through innovative collaborations with community-based organizations, city agencies, nonprofit organizations, schools, the private sector, and philanthropies.

In partnership with a range of city agencies, she has developed groundbreaking and rigorous programs that work through art to make strides in youth education, restorative justice, and behavioral health.

Sought after nationally and internationally as an expert on urban transformation through art, Golden has received numerous awards for her work.

**David McShane** is one of the preeminent muralists in the United States and has worked with Mural Arts for over 20 years. His work is an artistic staple of the Philadelphia community and his widely acclaimed portfolio includes the Jackie Robinson mural, the Phillies mural, and Spike’s Trophies, all fixtures of the artistic landscape of the city.

**Netanel Portier** is the director of the Mural Arts Institute, identifying and overseeing new projects while working with Jane Golden to uphold the vision and mission of the organization implementing the use of art as a means of igniting change while supporting the healthy growth of communities.

For more information about Golden and Mural Arts Philadelphia, please visit [www.muralarts.org](http://www.muralarts.org). For other questions about the three-day event, please contact School Board President Jon Kean at [jkean@smmusd.org](mailto:jkean@smmusd.org).

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