



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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NEWS RELEASE**

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

Acclaimed artist/muralist Jane Golden, will visit Santa Monica next month 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 Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District has engaged Golden, founder of Mural Arts Philadelphia, as an active part of 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.



*Jane Golden*

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 and other collaborators will be named soon.

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.

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The three-day process will include the following events:

- January 30, 2020: Discussion on public art, Mural Arts, and art in Santa Monica. 7:30 p.m., Santa Monica College, Orientation Hall, Student Services Center, 1900 Pico Blvd. Santa Monica.
- January 31, 2020: Small group meetings with Golden and her team. Location: Obama Center, 721 Ocean Park Blvd. MPR.
- February 1, 2020: 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 MPR.

The sign-up procedure will be announced shortly and every effort will be made to accommodate all interested parties.

“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.”

For more information about Golden and Mural Arts Philadelphia, please visit [www.muralarts.org](http://www.muralarts.org).

For more information about the upcoming process, please contact school board member Jon Kean at [jkean@smmusd.org](mailto:jkean@smmusd.org).

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