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****PRESS RELEASE****

THE SFMTA AND SAN FRANCISCO BEAUTIFUL KICK-OFF MUNI ART 2023
San Francisco art and poetry students chosen for eighth year

SAN FRANCISCO - The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) and San Francisco Beautiful (SFB) will kick-off the eighth year of Muni Art in January 2023, with the theme, **"Sights of San Francisco."** For the first time, the project collaborated with the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) for the artist competition and 826 Valencia for the poetry competition. The five winning local artists and poets will have their original work displayed on 100 Muni buses beginning January and running through April 2023.

The 2023 Muni artists are:

Alice Wu	10 th Grade
Annie Aguilar	11 th Grade
Isabel Lombardi-Coronel	11 th Grade
Natalie Deiner	12 th Grade
Vilma Ramirez	11 th Grade

All of the student artists are enrolled in San Francisco public schools.

The five local poets and poems are:

Abner Valencia, "What You Get at Bernal Heights" - Age 16
Jake Dominguez, "I Like Chinatown" - Age 8
Jennifer Lopez, "The Wondrous San Francisco Zoo" - Age 10
Maya Van Artsdalen, "The Botanical Gardens" - Age 13
Vanessa Rodriguez, "The Rhythm of Baker Beach" - Age 9

All student poets are enrolled in free programming at 826 Valencia's Mission Center.

"We thank San Francisco Beautiful and the talented student artists for this wonderful opportunity in enhancing inside and outside our vehicles. The Muni Art program is like an aesthetic-art-show-on-wheels and assists our agency in working towards full ridership during the city's economic recovery," said Jeff Tumlin, Director of Transportation.



"Since I created Muni Art in 2015, I always wanted to work with art and poetry students in our local schools," said Darcy Brown, Executive Director of San Francisco Beautiful. "This is our eighth year of Muni Art, and San Francisco Beautiful proudly presents these talented students to the Muni riders of San Francisco".

"We are blown away daily by the ideas, writing and visual imagery created by SFUSD students, and we are excited to share their talent with the city," said SFUSD Supervisor of Visual and Media Arts, Emily Aldama. "We want San Francisco youth to know that their creativity is seen and celebrated beyond their school walls, plus SFUSD teens are some of the most frequent users of public transportation, so it just felt right to work together on this. We really appreciate SFMTA, San Francisco Beautiful and 826 Valencia, as well as all the art teachers who supported the students. This has been such an inspirational collaboration among so many in service of elevating student voice and artistry."

"Sharing student writing with the local community is an integral part of our work at 826 Valencia," said 826 Valencia Executive Director Bitá Nazarian. "We are thrilled to be partnering with San Francisco Beautiful, SFMTA, and SFUSD to amplify the voices of San Francisco youth poets and artists."

"Arts education is critical in preparing students for the 21st century and we are thrilled for our students whose work will be displayed prominently on Muni buses," Superintendent Dr. Matt Wayne said. "We're thankful for our SFUSD Arts staff and educators for their guidance and to the City and our community partners for uplifting our students' creativity."

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About the SFMTA

Established by voter proposition in 1999, the SFMTA, a department of the City and County of San Francisco, oversees the Municipal Railway (Muni), parking and traffic, bicycling, walking and taxis. With five modes of transit, Muni has approximately 700,000 passenger boardings each day. Over 1 million people get around this city each day and rely on the SFMTA to ensure safe and reliable travel by transit, walking, bicycling, taxi and driving.

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San Francisco Beautiful

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**About San Francisco Beautiful**

Founded in 1947 to save the iconic cable cars, San Francisco Beautiful is the only organization that continues to protect the unique neighborhood character, civic beauty and liveability of San Francisco. sfbeautiful.org

About San Francisco Unified School District

The San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) is the seventh largest school district in California, educating over 57,000 students every year. www.sfusd.edu

About 826 Valencia

Established in 2002, 826 Valencia is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting students who live in under-resourced communities in San Francisco with their writing skills. Get involved at 826valencia.org.