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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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****PRESS RELEASE****

SFMTA and San Francisco Beautiful Announce Winners for Muni Art 2019

Final five have until Nov. 9th to submit work themed "Connecting Our Community"

San Francisco—The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), San Francisco Beautiful (SFB) and the Poetry Society of America today announced the five winners of the 2019 Muni Art Project. This year's theme is "Connecting Our Community". The five winning artists will have their newly created work presented along with five poems selected by the Poetry Society of America, all by local poets, displayed on 100 Muni buses that will be transformed into rolling art galleries throughout San Francisco beginning in January 2019.

"The Muni Art Program is a unique program that brings together San Francisco's love of art and love of transit," said Ed Reiskin, SFMTA Director of Transportation. "It allows us to pair exceptional artwork with our newly designed bus fleet, and provides aesthetics to our riders both inside and outside the vehicle."

Ten local artists were chosen to compete for the final five slots by a jury comprised of individuals of the arts community and decisions were based upon quality of concept, expression of theme, diversity and the likelihood of the artist to be able to deliver the completed work by the November 9th deadline. The 10 finalists were then voted on by the public via a link from the San Francisco Beautiful web site to neighborland.com that tabulated the winning votes and the five fortunate winners.

The 2019 Muni artists are:

Nick Cook- High School Student, Marin

Arthur Koch- San Francisco

Bhavna Misra- Alameda

Crystal Vielula- San Francisco

Christine Weibel- San Francisco

The theme this year, "Connecting Our Community" is a collaboration with The Poetry Society of America (sponsors of Poetry in Motion ®) who selected the five poems that each Muni artist will creatively interpret.



The five poets and poems are:

Francisco X. Alarcon- "One Big Family", "Una Gran Familia"

Brenda Hillman- from "Time Problem"

Jane Hirshfield- "Optimism"

Cedar Sigo- from "Our Lives"

C. Dale Young- from "The Bridge"

"One of the most interesting elements of this unique project is how the artists visually interpret the five poems," said Darcy Brown, executive director of San Francisco Beautiful. "This project breaks down the barriers to art like museums and galleries and brings art to everyone, throughout San Francisco who rides a bus."

Each artist also has three panels to freely use reflecting the 2019 theme for a total of eight original works that will line both interior display sides of the buses. Readings by the poets at local libraries are scheduled for Spring 2019.

"The idea of pairing vibrant art by local artists, art brought into being in response to five marvelous poems by local Bay area poets has generated a unique experience for bus riders in San Francisco," said Alice Quinn, executive director of the Poetry Society of America. "All the thinking behind this project and all the effort to bring it to fruition has resulted in a great triumph for collaborative artistic initiatives, and the Poetry Society of America is proud to be part of it."

In addition to each artist having 20 Muni buses to use as a canvas, each artist will be awarded \$1,250 at a press conference held on the steps of City Hall in January. The winners now have until November 9th to create and submit completed work that will be printed to conform to the specifications of Muni display space.

This year, the Muni Art Project is funded by members of San Francisco Beautiful and the Union Square BID. For details on sponsorship opportunities, please contact Darcy Brown at darcy@sfbeautiful.org, 415-307-7707.

For more details on the final five winners of the Muni Art Project, please visit www.sfbeautiful.org/muniart. Examples of each artists' work can be found at the SFMTA Muni Art webpage sfmta.com/muniart.

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SFMTA

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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. www.sfbeautiful.org.

About Poetry Society of America

*The Poetry Society of America, the nation's oldest poetry organization, aims to build a larger and more diverse audience for poetry, and to place poetry at the crossroads of American life. Poetry in Motion®, the Poetry Society of America's signature program, places poetry in the transit systems of cities throughout the country, helping to create a national readership for both emerging and established poets. Over the past 20 years the program has appeared in over twenty cities and has generated several publications, including the recent anthology, *The Best of Poetry in Motion: Celebrating Twenty-Five Years on Subways and Buses*, published by W. W. Norton (2017). Learn more at poetrysociety.org.*