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Stuart Collection Emerging Artists Program at UC San Diego Receives \$1M in Support

Gifts from Irwin Jacobs and Jill and Peter Kraus will support new works by up-and-coming international artists on the university campus

The acclaimed Stuart Collection at the University of California San Diego has received donations totaling \$1 million from Irwin Jacobs and Jill and Peter Kraus to support the Emerging Artists Program.

Established in 1981, [the Stuart Collection](#) comprises 22 permanent artworks by world-renowned artists on the UC San Diego campus. It is unique among university art collections in the U.S., given its scope and approach to commissioning artists to create new, permanent artworks for the campus. The Stuart Collection's Emerging Artists Program was established in 2022 to commission works by up-and-coming artists, with the goal of bringing new, international voices to campus.



The Stuart Collection selected artist collective RojoNegro (composed of Noé Martínez and María Sosa); sculptor Max Hooper Schneider; and poet, artist and chef Precious Okoyomon to create new, site-specific works that will join the established collection.

“The Stuart Collection has been instrumental in establishing UC San Diego as a globally recognized arts destination, and we are excited to see its continued growth, particularly through the Emerging Artists Program,” said Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. “We extend our deepest gratitude to Irwin Jacobs and Jill and Peter Kraus for their visionary support and generosity in championing this innovative program. With the Stuart Collection at its forefront, UC San Diego is proud to offer a rich and diverse cultural landscape that inspires creativity, fosters innovation and brings people together.”

Irwin Jacobs is a former faculty member at UC San Diego and longtime friend of the university, who, together with his late wife Joan, supported the Stuart Collection from its fledgling days.

“Joan and I have been friends of the Stuart Collection since its very early days and have always appreciated the profound beauty those pieces have added to the lives of everyone on campus,” said Jacobs. “Now, as the campus has started a new chapter with Jess Berlanga Taylor, I am pleased to support her vision of bringing exciting new artists into this enterprise. I know Joan would feel the same.”

Jill and Peter Kraus have collected contemporary art for 40 years, and they are well-known for commissioning 20 site-specific artworks on their property in New York's Hudson River Valley. Jill Kraus is a member of the Stuart Collection International Advisory Board, as well as the Board of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City, where she sits on the Executive Committee. She also served as chair of the Board of the Public Art Fund for nine years. Peter Kraus is chair of the Board of Directors at the Rauschenberg Foundation, which builds on the legacy of artist Robert Rauschenberg.

“I have enjoyed my association with the Stuart Collection advisory board, as it is composed of outstanding people who continue to introduce me to new artists,” said Jill Kraus. “Peter and I believe that the Emerging Artists Program will serve to broaden the reach and depth of this collection at UC San Diego even further.”

The Krauses and Jacobs each gave \$500,000, totaling \$1 million in philanthropic support for the Emerging Artists Program.

“The generosity of the Kraus and Jacobs families is not just a gift — it’s a catalyst,” UC San Diego Executive Director and Chief Campus Curator Jess Berlanga Taylor said. “Their support allows the Stuart Collection to amplify groundbreaking artists whose work challenges, inspires and transforms. Together, we’re shaping the future of art at UC San Diego and beyond.”



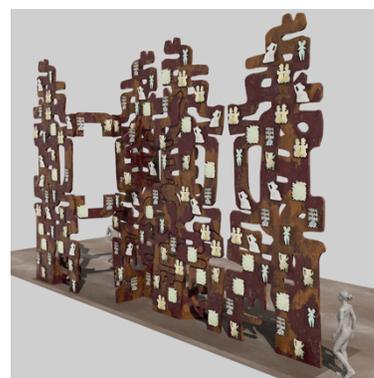
Max Hooper Schneider’s polymathic practice combines biology, philosophy and landscape architecture to create objects and environments that speculate on entropic forces and posthuman forms. The installation, with a projected completion date in the spring of 2026, will be sited in the breezeway of the administration buildings of Eleanor Roosevelt College, toward the west side of campus.

The project by RojoNegro (composed of Noé Martínez and María Sosa), *La Asamblea del Barro* brings together 260 ceramic symbols — collected from archaeological, ethnographic and oral history — that evoke the continuity and transformation of the knowledge of the Native peoples of Mexico.

RojoNegro’s artistic practice is linked to the sensitive understanding of materials and thoughts, which awaken knowledge that has survived the process of coloniality in the Americas since the 16th century. The installation will be sited in the lobby of Building A of the new Triton Center, with completion expected in fall 2026. It will be accompanied by a limited-edition companion book containing research for *La Asamblea del Barro* and images of the ceramic figures.

RojoNegro has been selected to represent Mexico at the [61st Venice Biennale](#) — the world’s longest-running and most prestigious art exhibition in Venice, Italy. Their proposal, *Actos invisibles para sostener el universo* (Invisible Acts to Sustain the Universe), engages ancestral memory, epistemic justice, decolonization, and relational ecology through a practice rooted in Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and agrarian cosmologies.

UC San Diego’s inaugural executive director and chief campus curator, Berlanga Taylor, was invited by Mexico to curate the pavilion. An internationally recognized curator, she has, since joining the university in 2022, launched robust public programs, commissioned new works by renowned artists and raised the profile of the Stuart Collection.



Okoyomon is a Nigerian-American poet, artist and chef. Their work considers the natural world, histories of migration and racialization and the pure pleasures of everyday life. Okoyomon, who recently represented Nigeria in the [2024 Venice Biennale](#), stages sculptural topographies composed of living, growing, decaying and dying materials. Through installation, Okoyomon articulates the inseparability of the natural world from the historical force of colonization and enslavement.

[The Stuart Collection at UC San Diego](#) serves a vital role in the Chancellor’s Arts Initiative, known as [ArtsConnect](#), which showcases the university’s vibrant arts ecosystem and distinguishes the creative works of our students, arts faculty and staff, and community members.

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Photo captions/credits

Image 1: At the front, from left, Peter and Jill Kraus with Irwin Jacobs, and at the back, from left, Jess Berlanga Taylor and Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. Photo by Zachary K. Smith, MBA '18, 2025

Image 2: Max Hooper Schneider and Jess Berlanga Taylor. Photo by Joseph Herring, 2025

Image 3: Rendering of LA ASAMBLEA DEL BARRO, RojoNegro, 2025

About UC San Diego

At the University of California San Diego, a culture of risk-taking, collaboration and innovation emerged early on. Established in 1960, UC San Diego has been shaped by exceptional scholars who aren’t afraid to push boundaries, challenge expectations and redefine conventional wisdom in order to make our world better. The only criterion our founders had for

their campus was that it must be distinctive – and being experimental has been the norm since day one. Learn more at www.ucsd.edu.