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THE MUSEUM OF CRAFT AND DESIGN
OPENS NEW SPACE IN DOGPATCH

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COVER STORY

Museum of Craft and Design: New Dogpatch location a good fit for creative energy, big exhibitions

By Stephanie Wright
Hession

The Dogpatch neighborhood continues to evolve from an industrial waterfront, where blue-collar workers once labored in shipyards and factories and lived in 19th century Pelton cottages, to a place for artists, designers, architects and other imaginative individuals. Its warehouses, historic structures and contemporary buildings now contain studios, galleries, upscale condos, restaurants and cafes.

With the impending debut of its modernized, permanent location, the Museum of Craft and Design joins this burgeoning community.

"It became obvious quickly. Dogpatch is teeming with high-quality, creative energy and entrepreneurship," says JoAnn Edwards, executive director for the museum. "The industrial space was exactly what we had envisioned: big, cavernous open space, concrete floors, 24-foot ceilings and roll-up doors so we could produce exhibitions with big work."

Housed in a portion of the American Industrial Center, built in 1915 by the American Can Co., the contemporary museum contains a glass entry that leads visitors into the lobby and reveals the open, minimalist design of the 8,500-square-foot space.

Past the museum shop offering works by local and international artists and designers, the 3,500-square-foot gallery features a movable wall system, allowing it to be

If you go

Opening and community celebration: 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday. Appearances by artists Michael Cooper and Arline Fisch: 1-4 p.m. Free. Museum of Craft and Design, 2569 Third St., S.F. (415) 773-0303. www.sfmcd.org.

changed to a single or multiple exhibition area. Beyond that is a space devoted to workshops and programs including MakeArt, lectures and special events.

"The Museum of Craft and Design presents unique, engaging exhibitions and educational programs that creatively explore the active role of craft and design in everyday life," Edwards says.

Utilizing their 35 years of gallery experience, she and her brother Seb Hamamjian established the former San Francisco Museum of Craft and Design with the goal of creating a meaningful institution that recognized and appreciated artists and craftspeople.

In Dogpatch, the museum opens with "Michael Cooper: A Sculptural Odyssey, 1968-2011"; "Rebecca Hutchinson: Affinity," an on-site artist installation; and "Arline Fisch: Creatures From the Deep," a traveling exhibition from the Racine Art Museum in Wisconsin.

"Besides the talent and accomplished skills each of these artists have, this exhibit arrangement was partially chosen because of the vast differences between them. ... Rebecca Hutchinson will be



Photos by Carlos Avila Gonzalez / The Chronicle

Store manager Nathaniel Anderson takes a stroll through the Museum of Craft and Design's cavernous new digs.



The Museum of Craft and Design finds its new home in San Francisco's industrial yet artsy Dogpatch neighborhood.

creating work on site that uses an involved process of coating paper and fiber with porcelain slurry. The overall effect will be stunning, much like discovering new plant forms in a forest," says museum curator Marc D'Estout.

"Arline Fisch is a legend in the jewelry community, but, for this exhibit, she has taken many of the techniques that she uses in her wearable art and has created a series of jellyfish forms by manipulating various thin metal wires so delicately that they defy the material itself. Her work will seem to float in an underwater-like environment.

"Then we have Michael Cooper. He's an artist that is difficult to categorize, which is one of the reasons I find him so intriguing. His ability to manipulate wood, metal and other materials into extremely complex, surreal sculptures is simply mind-boggling."

For her exhibition, Fisch, who grew up on Long Island and lives in San Diego, created deeply saturated jellyfish, including a Black Sea nettle rendered in purple and pink, by employing intricate copper wire and coating it with a polyester resin or nylon material that allows the colors to appear transparent.

"They're not static, and they change their form," Fisch says of jellyfish, which she discovered a penchant for as a Fulbright scholar in Copenhagen in the 1960s through research conducted by her marine biologist roommate. "Not only when they move through the water, but their shape changes, and most of them are transparent."

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