

Oakland Museum of California



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OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA TO PARTNER WITH CHEF TANYA HOLLAND TO CREATE NEW “CALIFORNIA SOUL FOOD” CAFÉ ON CAMPUS

The Museum also announced new details and timelines for its campus renovation project

Oakland, CA—February 19, 2020—The Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) announced today that it will partner with celebrated Bay Area chef and restaurateur Tanya Holland, founder of Oakland’s Brown Sugar Kitchen and former *Top Chef* contestant, to create a new café concept for the Museum: Town Fare by Tanya Holland. The new café is expected to open in August 2020. Part of a significant campus enhancement, which began in September 2019 and is now expected to be completed in early 2021, the renovations are focused on providing an increased number of amenities for visitors and the wider public, including updates to its gardens, improved public access to the campus achieved by creating an entrance along 12th Street, and the new café, which will now feature its own entrance and an ADA accessible ramp along 10th Street.

In anticipation of the building of the Museum’s garden entrance—which will be redesigned as part of the creation of the new campus entrance facing Oakland’s Lake Merritt—construction fencing will be installed along 10th Street near Fallon and along the 12th Street corridor. Demolition is expected to begin during the first week of March 2020. At the same time, construction will also begin on the new café. The Museum’s galleries remain open during these renovations.

Since work began on the campus in September, landscape architect Walter Hood (Hood Design Studio) and project architect Mark Cavagnero (Mark Cavagnero Associates) have conducted additional assessments of the Museum’s gardens and terraces, in preparation for creating new walkways and public spaces and installing new plantings. In this process, the teams recognized that the irrigation system that runs throughout the terraces—and which dates to the initial construction of the building in 1967-69—was more extensively decayed than expected and must be substantially replaced. As a result, additional time will be needed for completion of the garden plantings on each of the three terrace levels. The lawn area of the Museum’s garden is now scheduled to reopen in August 2020, while the 12th Street entrance is now scheduled to be completed by January 2021. The Museum continues to raise funds for the campus remodel, as well as to support expanded programming and its operating endowment. To date, *All In! The Campaign for OMCA* has secured gifts and pledges to date totaling more than 89% of its \$85 million goal.

“Town Fare truly embraces my relationship with this city and my work as a chef. Oakland, aka ‘The Town,’ has played a significant role in my career. The community is so welcoming and proud, and this speaks to my own values of diversity, inclusion, equity, health, and wellness,” said Executive Chef Tanya Holland. “The word ‘Fare’ to me means being accessible, unpretentious, and delicious, which will guide the vision for this new project. I’m so thrilled to be partnering with the Oakland Museum of California to bring this community-driven concept to fruition.”

“We are so excited to be partnering with Tanya Holland to bring this new dining destination to the Museum. Town Fare will be an important addition to our campus and a gathering place for our community,” said OMCA Director and CEO Lori Fogarty. “At the heart of our *All In!* campaign for the Museum is a commitment to increasing our position as a town square in Oakland and our role as the museum of the people—and great food definitely brings people together. Tanya’s vision and commitment to community are also closely aligned with the Museum’s mission. From the café to our newly-renovated gardens, our campus renovations and enhancements are important investments to make in maintaining our landmark building for future generations.”

About Town Fare by Tanya Holland

OMCA’s newly established restaurant, Town Fare by Tanya Holland, will be owned and operated by Brown Sugar Kitchen Hospitality Group (BSKHG), an Oakland-based company headed by Executive Chef Tanya Holland. More than a restaurant, Town Fare at OMCA will be a community institution and destination: a gathering place with values that reflect Holland’s and OMCA’s commitment to community, creating experiences where diners feel a sense of belonging.

OMCA’s partnership with Holland and BSKHG will focus on California soul food, featuring high-quality yet approachable menu items for breakfast, lunch, and select dinners, including late-night dining during Friday Nights at OMCA. Visitors can expect a subset of Brown Sugar Kitchen’s famous bestsellers as well as a fresh, California-inspired menu in a fast-casual, communal dining environment. Outdoor seating on OMCA’s three adjacent patios will also be available to visitors. Town Fare by Tanya Holland will be integrated into the second level of the Museum’s newly renovated campus, which is accessible via the upcoming newly constructed ADA accessible ramp along 10th Street as well as the Level 2 parking garage connected to the Museum. The expected hours of service are Wednesday–Sunday, 11 am–5 pm, with dinner service offered until 10 pm each Friday during Friday Nights at OMCA. In addition to restaurant operations, it will include alcohol beverage service and catering for events.

Campus Improvements

OMCA’s terraced gardens—on each of the Museum’s three stories, and originally conceived by landscape architect Dan Kiley in collaboration with architect Kevin Roche—are both an iconic part of the Museum’s campus and essential to the visitor experience. With the Museum in its 50th year at this site, an update to the gardens and other public aspects of its campus were determined to be essential parts of the *All In!* capital campaign. To support these improvements, OMCA has earmarked \$15 million of its \$85 campaign funds toward the renovation of the gardens and other parts of the campus.

New, environmentally sensitive plantings native to California, which will be integrated around the garden’s landmark redwood, oak, and olive trees, will be supported by the updated irrigation system. Equally important are a series of changes that will improve access to OMCA’s campus, for all visitors. An exterior border wall along the Museum’s northern side, facing Oakland’s Lake Merritt, will be penetrated with three 20-foot openings—creating a new entrance and physically opening the campus onto a major pedestrian corner. Along the Museum’s 10th Street side, to the south, alterations will enable direct entry into OMCA’s new café and its public event space, create better pedestrian access, and generally improve the Museum’s outdoor gathering spaces. The project will add two new ADA-accessible ramps onto the campus. These exterior changes, along with new wayfinding signs and banners, will also improve visitors’ ease of access to the Museum’s galleries, creating a more unified experience of OMCA’s campus.

Other new elements include the creation of a permanent stage to support the Museum’s expanded outdoor performance, music, and film programs, with integrated lighting and audio/visual elements that will improve experiences for both audiences and those on stage. There will also be new installations of public sculpture, with 24 sculptures by internationally renowned California artists such as Ruth Asawa, Bruce

Beasley, Beniamino Bufano, Mark di Suvero, Viola Frey, George Rickey, and Peter Voukos. These improvements will provide visitors with a more welcoming and comfortable environment that serves a wide range of leisure and community needs.

Securing the Future of OMCA

Of the Museum's *All In!* \$85 million goal, \$15 million is being put towards the Museum's renovation of the gardens and campus, with \$30 million put towards OMCA's curatorial, educational, and public programming initiatives over a five-year period. The remainder of the campaign funds, approximately \$40 million, will go toward growing OMCA's endowment, in order to better secure the Museum's long-term financial stability. The public launch of the campaign in fall 2019, which coincided with the Museum's 50th anniversary celebrations, follows a several-year strategic planning and financial modeling process that recognized necessary changes to OMCA's operations when it shifted from being a city entity to an independent nonprofit in 2011, as well as the broader shifts within the community that it serves. OMCA's plans embrace the opportunity for the Museum to continue to serve as a civic center in a greater capacity, with artistic, educational, and social components geared to engaging a diverse audience.

About Tanya Holland

Known for her inventive take on modern soul food, as well as comfort classics, Tanya Holland is the executive chef/owner of Brown Sugar Kitchen. She is also the author of the *Brown Sugar Kitchen Cookbook* and *New Soul Cooking*; was the host and soul food expert on the television series *Melting Pot*; and competed on the fifteenth season of *Top Chef*. Holland appeared as a special guest on countless national television shows including the *The Talk*, *Today Show*, *Vh1's Soul Cities*, *Sarah Moulton's Cooking Live, Ready, Set, Cook!* and *The Wayne Brady Show*, in addition to local San Francisco shows such as *Check, Please!*, *View from the Bay* and *Eye on the Bay*. Holland was also a featured judge on *My Momma Throws Down*, airing on the cable network TV One as well as *The Great American Chef's Tour* on PBS.

About BSKHG and Salt Partners

Town Fare will be led by Brown Sugar Kitchen Hospitality Group (BSKHG), an Oakland-based company headed by Executive Chef Tanya Holland in partnership with Salt Partners. Salt Partners is a food and beverage focused hospitality group based in San Francisco responsible for many nationally-acclaimed Bay Area restaurants, including *Atelier Crenn* and *Petit Crenn* with Dominique Crenn, and Bay Area favorites such as *Humphry Slocombe Ice Cream*.

About Hood Design Studio

Hood Design Studio, Inc. (HDS), founded in 1992 in Oakland, CA, is a social art and design practice. The studio's practice is tripartite: art + fabrication, design + landscape, and research + urbanism. This breadth allows Hood Design Studio to understand each place in its scale and context, and to respond, not with a standard design, but with an approach adaptive to the particulars and specifics of a space. The studio strengthens endemic patterns and practices both ecological and cultural, contemporary and historic, particularly those that remain unseen or unrecognized. Urban spaces and their objects act as public sculpture, creating new apertures through which to see the emergent beauty, strangeness, and idiosyncrasies around us.

Hood Design Studio frequently roots their design work in collaboration, seeing projects thrive under the joint efforts of design teams and through engagement with constituents and local communities. The studio has received numerous awards and accolades including the AIA Award for Collaborative Achievement, the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Award in Landscape Design, and the Academy of Arts and Letters Architecture Award. In 2019, Walter Hood was also the recipient of both a MacArthur Foundation "Genius" award and the winner of the Dorothy and Lilian Gish Prize.

About Mark Cavagnero Associates

Mark Cavagnero Associates was founded in 1988, oriented around a strong focus on public and institutional work and a firm belief in the power of collaboration and community building. The firm's wide-ranging portfolio of built work includes large- and small-scale institutional, non-profit, commercial, residential, and office architecture— contemporary facilities that are contextual, timeless, and offer a dignified presence to the communities they serve. The organization's vision is sensitive to the ever-evolving needs of the built environment. The firm pursues design solutions that will ensure long-term benefits for the communities they work in, resulting in legacies that will last for generations. Founder Mark Cavagnero is especially sensitive to the cultural heritage and historic significance of place, deliberately honing throughout his career his talent for preserving it. Adhering to this philosophy, the firm carefully investigates the cultural roots and social patterns of each place to arrive at a response appropriate for a site's larger context. Their extensive portfolio features notable projects such as the SFJAZZ Center, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and upgrades and enhancements to the California Palace of the Legion of Honor. Mark Cavagnero Associates produced OMCA's original master plan in 1999 and designed the major renovation and expansion to the landmark building from 2008 to 2012.

About the Oakland Museum of California

The Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) tells the many stories that comprise California, creating the space and context for greater connection, trust, and understanding between people. Through its inclusive exhibitions, public programs, educational initiatives, and cultural events, OMCA brings Californians together and inspires greater understanding about what our state's art, history, and natural surroundings teach us about ourselves and each other. With more than 1.9 million objects, OMCA brings together its multi-disciplinary collections of art, history, and natural science with the first-person accounts and often untold narratives of California, all within its 110,000 square feet of gallery space and seven-acre campus. OMCA is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year as a leading cultural institution of the Bay Area and a resource for the research and understanding of California's dynamic cultural and environmental heritage for visitors from the region, the state, and around the world.

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