The Moscone Center houses a diverse collection of San Francisco's public art. These pieces were commissioned or placed as part of the City’s Percent for Art ordinance which sets aside funding for the inclusion of art in the construction of public buildings.

The San Francisco Arts Commission's public art program, begun in 1969, is one of the first in the country. The Commission has produced a rich diversity of city-owned works for everyone's viewing pleasure.

Sites range from The Moscone Center and the San Francisco International Airport to neighborhood recreation centers, police and fire stations, parking garages, hospitals parks and other facilities throughout the city.

**Moscone South**

Moscone South houses six works of interior art, as well as one large exterior sculpture installed just outside the Esplanade Ballroom building on the corner of Third and Howard streets. These pieces include:

**Moscone South Exterior**

**Moscone South Interior: Esplanade Ballroom Lobby**
**“George Moscone,”** a cast bronze sculpture by Spero Anargyros. The bust depicts the former San Francisco Mayor and California State Senator after whom the city's convention center is also named. The piece is displayed just inside the entrance to the Esplanade Lobby. The artist is American born. The piece includes a famous quote by Mayor Moscone about his beloved city:

“San Francisco is an extraordinary city because its people have learned to live together with one another, to respect each other, and to work with each other for the future of their community. That’s the strength and the beauty of this city - and it’s the reason why the citizens who live here are the luckiest people in the world.”

-Mayor George Moscone

**“Map No. 33”,** a bold multimedia artwork in the Esplanade Ballroom foyer of The Moscone Center is Bay Area artist Hung Liu's recreation of the first survey map of San Francisco, drawn in 1839 by Jean Jacques Vioget. The work's 41 canvases, shaped to conform to the historic map's city blocks, chart the young port town when it was still a village, newly renamed from the original “Yerba Buena”. Initially the tiny settlement clustered around a busy waterfront center called Portsmouth Square, which is now the hub of Chinatown and separated from today's port by acres of landfill.

Liu came upon the historic map during her research and was immediately intrigued by its oddly skewed geometry, eccentric drawing style and quill-penned script. She has painted property lines, the original shoreline, legends, trees and other images on the white wall background.
People From the Past
The painting is complemented by a selection of artifacts in display cases below. These archaeological finds belonged to the Moscone site’s 19th-century inhabitants – mostly newcomers who, in the wake of the Gold Rush, flocked to San Francisco from throughout the world. The idea to include artifacts occurred to Liu when she happened to spot, on a city engineer’s desk, a number of small, dirt-encrusted items that had been excavated in 1978 from the Moscone Center construction site.

“I wanted,” said the artist, “to combine a big-scale reference to the civic history of San Francisco with a more intimate experience of the particular historical artifacts that came from beneath the actual Moscone site – from beneath one’s feet, so to speak.”

With the help of archaeologist Alan Pastron, she identified objects dating from 1855 to 1906, the year of the San Francisco earthquake and fire. A Chinese bowl, corroded pocket watch, soda bottles, pipes, wood dominoes, marbles, and other household objects recall the everyday activities of the families and laborers who once lived and worked on that block.

The Earliest Inhabitants
To include references to the Moscone Area’s earliest inhabitants, the Ohlone Indians, Liu made drawings of their possessions on glazed ceramic tiles set into the display cases. These objects, which date from 0 to 940 AD, were resurrected from a nearby burial ground—now the site of Moscone North and Yerba Buena Gardens – and have since been returned to the tribe for reburial.

A Message of Shared Identity
Of special poignancy for artist Hung Liu was the recognition that she, like many of the immigrants to whom she pays tribute in her artwork, also came to the United States through the city of San Francisco, so many years later.

She says that the message of “Map No. 33” is that history, no matter how removed in time, is made by people who lived where we stand today. The work’s various objects, excavated from one place yet representing a diversity of cultures, testify to our shared identity.

About the Artist
Hung Liu was born in Changchun, China in 1948. When the Cultural Revolution began in 1966, she was sent to the countryside, where she worked in the wheat and rice fields for four years of proletarian re-education. Able to return to college in the early 1970s, she subsequently studied at the Beijing Central Academy of Fine Art, becoming a professor there and traveling throughout China to study ancient artifacts and murals. Liu came to California in 1984 to study at the University of California, San Diego, and received her MFA in 1986. She is now an associate professor of art at Mills College in Oakland, California.

A two-time recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts Painting Fellowships, a Society for the Encouragement of Contemporary Art Award from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Capp Street Project Stipend, California College of Arts & Crafts, San Francisco, a Eureka
Fellowship from the Fleishacker Foundation, The Joan Mitchell Foundation, Painters Sculptors Grant, New York; Russell Foundation Grant, University of California, San Diego. She has won the San Francisco Women’s Center Humanities Award, California; Contemporary Art by Women of Color Artists’ Award, Guadalupe Cultural Center, San Antonio, Texas; Hung Liu has exhibited widely throughout the United States and abroad.

**Moscone South Interior: Mezzanine Level Bridge**

Located on Moscone South’s Mezzanine Meeting Room Bridge are four works of interior art:

A work by Viola Frey, “Exterior/Interior Garden”, 1987, oil on canvas. It is hung on the east end of the bridge. The artist was born in the U.S., 1933.

A work by Tom Holland, “Marengo”, 1981, epoxy paint on aluminum and fiberglass. The artist was born in the U.S., 1936.


A work by Paul Wonner, “Souvenir of San Francisco”, 1981, acrylic on canvas. It is hung on the west end of the bridge. The artist was born in the U.S., 1920.

**Moscone North**

**Moscone North Interior: Upper Lobby**

Moscone North exhibits an untitled acrylic and mixed media on canvas by Gustavo Rivera, commissioned in 1981. It is hung in the north upper lobby. The artist was born in Ciudad Acuna, Coahuila, Mexico, 1940.

**Moscone West**

Moscone West features two pieces of art that encompass a dramatic contrast in media. The interior piece is highly organic in material and function, and the exterior piece is a technologically sophisticated work of mobile electronic art.

**Moscone West Interior: First Floor Lobby**

“Tree,” by Hilda Shum, Po Shu Wang, and David S. Gordon, is a 101-foot tall California Red wood tree that stands as a sculptural element in the center’s grand staircase. Completed between 1998 and 2003, this work was created from a single redwood tree that had died of natural causes and was harvested in accordance with California Department of Forestry guidelines.
Moscone West Exterior: Building Facade
The exterior art piece, “Facsimile” by artists Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio, consists of a 15’ by 25’ LED video screen upon which video images from a variety of sources are featured. Artist Elizabeth Diller was born in Lodz, Poland and Ricardo Scofidio was born in New York City, New York.

Gliding slowly across the glass and steel façade of Moscone West is a uniquely mobile work of art. Facsimile was commissioned by the San Francisco Arts Commission and funded through the City’s Percent for Art ordinance. It is one of two works of public art installed at the city’s newest convention facility.

A marriage of art and technology, Facsimile consists of a 15’ by 25’ LED video screen attached to a 100’ tall steel armature that moves along the building’s exterior. A video camera is mounted at the back of the screen with the lens positioned to look directly into the second floor lobby, allowing for broadcast of live images from within the lobby directly onto the exterior-mounted screen. Fictional pre-recorded video programs created by the artists – programs that give the appearance of live activity -- are randomly alternated with the live images. Live images from an additional camera mounted at the building’s rooftop also appear in the video sequences, displaying shots of the city’s skyline.

While the live images naturally correspond with the speed and direction of the scanning motion, the pre-recorded programs are constructed to simulate the same speed. In this way scenes of real activity inside the space are purposefully “confused” with pre-recorded simulations of interior scenes that could occur in a hotel or office building, or even in the otherwise real space of Moscone West. In this way the artists’ concept is realized as a playful deception as to what happens in real time and what is created from the artists’ imagination. The result is a blurring of the boundaries between reality and invention and a suggestion as to the virtual transparency of the structure. The conventions and tradeshows that take place inside a seemingly “public” structure are in reality private events that are open to a defined and cre dented audience. Thus the concept executed by “Facsimile” suggests a small public glimpse into what remains a protected and private interior.

In addition to the images appearing on the screen and facing onto the public streetscape, the back side of the screen facing into the lobby space features four LED text displays spaced evenly up the height of the screen. They are designed to send text messages across at the exact speed of the screen’s movement, creating the illusion of “floating in mid-air” as they are seen through the glass from the inside of the second floor lobby. They contain words or phrases taken from news reports from around the world as delivered from the Internet via a Google news data port and selected through a special software program. The intention is to channel into the building’s interior a series of filtered dispatches from the world outside the structure.
Facts at a Glance
Owner: City and County of San Francisco
Project Cost: $2 million
Funding: Moscone West construction funds mandated by the City’s Percent for Art ordinance.
Artists: Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio.
Date of Commission: February, 1997
Date of Installation: December, 2003
LED Screen Motion: The screen moves at a speed of 10 feet per minute, completing a round trip along both Fourth and Howard Street frontages in 45 minutes.

About the Artists
The artist team of Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio was selected in 1997 through a public competition conducted by the San Francisco Arts Commission. Diller and Scofidio have achieved worldwide fame as celebrated multi-disciplinary designers and are based in New York. They have been singularly recognized as the first architects ever to receive the prestigious MacArthur Foundation Genius Grant. Their work has been exhibited in major museums throughout the world. They have been commissioned to design the new Institute of Contemporary Arts in Boston, Massachusetts, and they are the lead designers of a new master plan for Lincoln Center in New York City. Their design for the Blur Building at the 2001 International Swiss Expo became the signature icon for that event.

The text displays visible from the interior of Moscone West’s second floor lobby were designed by Ben Rubin and Mark Hansen under the supervision of Diller and Scofidio.

Public Art Program Information
For further information about any of these works of public art, please contact Jill Manton, Public Art Program Director for the San Francisco Arts Commission at (415) 252-2585.

*The Moscone Center is owned by the City and County of San Francisco and privately managed by SMG. For more information please contact info@moscone.com.*