

Southern Exposure Education Programming Overview



Southern Exposure's nationally recognized Artists in Education (AIE) program brings together diverse youth, artists, schools and organizations in a dynamic series of interactions. AIE offers Bay Area youth opportunities for critical, artistic, vocational and cultural experiences beyond the traditional school environment. AIE also presents professional teaching opportunities for local emerging artists, enabling them to become arts educators and extend their practice into the community.

With the grand opening of SoEx's new space in the Spring 2009, AIE program will have a dedicated space, in addition to the use of the entire facility to house year-round, after-school visual arts programs for underserved youth working with local emerging arts educators. At the core of SoEx's youth program is the Youth Advisory Board (YAB), which will be housed in the new AIE dedicated space. YAB members work with artists in groups and in one-to-one mentorship relationships, and with the opening of SoEx's new space will have daily access to the organization's visual arts space to make new work, collaborate with artists, and plan events and exhibitions that will be realized year-round. SoEx's opening will also mark continued partnership with Bay Area youth organizations for their annual Mission Voices Summer (MVS) program, further expanding their youth network and creating an extraordinary space for youth creativity.

In the age of decreased art-centered curricula in public schools and a lack of positive, creative outlets for youth, SoEx's AIE fills a crucial need in the community, working with more than 150 youth between the ages of 14 and 21 and employing nearly 20 teaching artists annually. Ultimately, by stimulating dialogues on contemporary artistic practice and sociopolitical issues, SoEx's AIE program illustrates the role of artists in society and uses the conceptual underpinnings of the organization's exhibition programs to provide new means of expression for youth.

SoEx AIE Programs for 2008 included:

Youth Advisory Board (YAB)

YAB is a group of high school students, college students, and artists from diverse communities throughout the Bay Area that serves as a task force to empower youth through arts advocacy, events, and workshops. SoEx teaches YAB members to use art as a community-building tool and provides them with a space in which to make their collective voices heard. All YAB projects are youth-initiated and -produced. In the past, YAB has successfully produced its launch party; a screening of youth-produced film and video; and an all-day youth event featuring performers, artwork, and activities by other exemplary arts programs. Furthermore, it has curated youth art exhibitions, and it hosts a youth arts and culture website.

Mission Voices Summer (MVS)

Mission Voices is an intensive summer arts program that teaches youth to use the visual arts as a tool for expressing their creative voices and making statements about their ideas, interests and ambitions. The 13-year-old program focuses on arts-based community development by pairing local artists with teens. It comprises a series of workshops and culminates with a final project presented to the community in SoEx's galleries.

Columbia Park Boys and Girls Club After-School Program

This AIE partnership presents a series of after-school arts programs that explore the Boys and Girls Club as a site for creating art that responds to the club's community and the surrounding Mission District neighborhood.

SoEx at Downtown High School

SoEx partners with Downtown High School in Potrero Hill to build a screen-printing studio and administer a yearlong workshop that fosters community artists, promotes creative skills, and makes a positive impact on youth and their communities. The workshop integrates elements of photography, graphic design, and drawing to engage students in dialogues about commercialism and advertising and how these messages impact youth today.

Select Past SoEx AIE Programs:



SoEx at Downtown High School, 2008



Youth Advisory Board (YAB), 2008

India Basin S.E.A.L.S. (Saving the Environment Through Art, Love and Safety): A Public Art Project At India Basin Shoreline Park:

A collaboration between SoEx and the Trust for Public Land (TPL), a nonprofit land conservation organization dedicated to preserving open space for people, this project brought together two professional artists and 10 middle and high school youth for after-school workshops focusing on the social, natural, and political history of Bayview-Hunters Point and India Basin Shoreline Park. In 2001 and 2002 students met at Bayview Opera House to conceptualize and design a permanent public art installation. The project played an instrumental role in transforming the India Basin into a significant waterfront recreational facility for San Francisco's underserved Hunters Point community. The group selected historical images and wrote its own text, which would later constitute the content of the signage. In April 2002 the group unveiled its design for the proposed piece—three “periscopes,” with each offering a specific view and addressing a specific issue in the surrounding environment—which was installed in the park.

The Young Photographers Program at McClymonds High School in West Oakland (1993–2005):

This program paired a professional photographer with a small group of students through McClymonds's Art Department to teach principles of visual literacy. Through photography, students explored their lives at home and in the world, documenting their families, friends, role models, and environment. During a daily in-school class period, students learned darkroom techniques, camera operation, and photographic composition, as well as the creative and critical means behind image construction. Students developed personal essays to correspond with their photographs and documented their artistic process; this information was compiled in an annual catalogue.

The On-Site Education Program (OSEP):

OSEP utilized SoEx's gallery to house workshops and projects created out of a unique collaboration between arts educators, gallery artists and local youth. Artists developed projects that would engage youth aged 14 to 21 and culminate in exhibitions in SoEx's gallery. The program allowed youth from a range of backgrounds to come together with professional artists to investigate current issues while learning contemporary art practices.

Race, Representation and Youth:

Working with students in Thurgood Marshall High School's Ethnic Studies Department, SoEx artists explored the influence of race, identity, and technology on popular culture. Artists and teachers collaborated to assist in the development of students' critical thinking skills, aiding them in analyzing mass media while learning media production skills.

PSA Mix – Visitacion Valley Beacon Center:

In 2002 SoEx collaborated with the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI) to produce PSA Mix. Partnering undergraduate art students from SFAI with middle school youth from Visitacion Valley Beacon Center, this project explored radio as public art. Students engaged in both theory and studio practice, examining the history of electronic music, pirate radio, public radio and the Internet. Using interviews, found sound, and mixed sound, the students created public service announcements to be broadcast on local public radio stations, pirate radio, and the Internet.

Bridging Youth Voices – Cole Middle School and McClymonds High School:

Partnering high school students from McClymonds's photography program with middle school students from Cole's Project Yield, Bridging Youth Voices aimed to create positive visual images of the West Oakland community through two public art pieces. Cole and McClymonds students worked together to design a digitally printed photographic collage to be permanently displayed on the facades of both schools. The theme of both public art pieces, "Remembering Our Ancestors," celebrates individuals and leaders from the area whose histories are integrally woven into the rich tapestry of West Oakland.

The G.I.R.L (Giving and Inspiring Responsibility in Life) Project:

A collaboration between Westside Community Mental Health Center, Horizons Unlimited, Samoan Community Development Center, SoEx, and Youth Guidance Center, this project provided rehabilitative services, counseling, vocational skills and arts workshops to young women who have had contact or who are at-risk of having contact with the juvenile justice system. Through AIE workshops for the GIRL Project, AIE artists taught mixed media arts. SoEx artists and community-based site staff developed projects that promoted positive self-expression, and explored identity, culture and community responsibility.

Week Without Walls: One-Week Intensive Workshops with Leadership High School Adventures in Video Art with Leadership High School:

Partnering a professional video artist with students from Leadership High School, this weeklong intensive workshop taught students how to conceive and produce a narrative, experimental or documentary video. Students learned how to create story boards, use video and sound equipment, write scripts, and use editing software. Each video was produced and screened at the end of the week, incorporating participants' written reflections and requiring effective collaboration.

Slam! Poetry Workshops at Leadership High School:

Professional literary artist Dennis Kim worked with students from Leadership and lead teacher Anna Kashner to explore how poetry can help students express their feelings and speak their minds. Students learned about poetry's role as an essential part of social justice movements, as well as its ability to give youth a positive arena for making a difference. Students examined the history of poetry as a written and spoken genre, read and analyzed various types of poetry, developed their own writing skills, wrote their own poetry, learned different writing techniques, sought out sources of inspiration, attended poetry slams, and performed in a youth arts event at SoEx.

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For more information or images contact:

–Wendy Norris, Norris Communications
(415) 307-3853, wendy@norriscommunications.biz

–Courtney Fink, Southern Exposure
(415) 863-2141, director@soex.org