

MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS, ENROLLMENT

Sub-Committee of the Committee to Reimagine SFAI

Our Team

Orit Ben Shitrit

Jose de los Reyes

Kavena Hambira

Jennifer Locke

Shara Mays

Jeremy Morgan

Jane Rades

Annie Reiniger

Emily Reynolds

Ana Sofia Suck

Christopher Williams

Artists

Curators

Professors

Marketers

HR

Education Specialists

Admissions Admin

Recruiters



CORE IDENTITY

A Manifesto for SFAI

SFAI has been the only exclusively fine arts school on the west coast for 150 years. At its inception, SFAI was a gathering place—not a school—for practicing artists looking to share experience and learn from one another. Similar to a traditional European Academy, experienced artists shared their knowledge with each other and initiates who wanted to participate in such discourse. It was a unique environment of exchange rather than pedagogic transmission. This model remains the foundation and very essence of SFAI.

SFAI is a fine arts institution, not a business. In this age of corporate culture, self-branding, and the commodification of most every aspect of everyday life, this resistance to commercialism is notable— and possibly radical. **"Identity" should take the place of the word "branding", as corporate models and language do not reflect SFAI 's core values and should be eradicated from the discussion.** Resisting corporate language is paramount to our mission and will actually make us stand out.

SFAI emphasizes development of work based on individuals' authentic inner drive, not the marketplace. Rather than telling students what to do or what their work should look like, SFAI's philosophical approach is to facilitate individual artistic investigations and to catalyze internal interrogations of self examination and discovery. This approach—along with a program that contextualizes aesthetic research and studio practice within art academia and the humanities—reveals the power artistic processes have to expand the paradigms of individuals and society... and to allow consciousness itself to become tangibly communicable. SFAI informs and empowers students so that they become sentient, thoughtful, discerning citizens of the world! We cannot guarantee a result other than affecting consciousness in order to elevate the intentions and possibilities of individuals.

Faculty and staff are all practicing artists and/or specialists in their fields. Faculty are conduits who teach from their own individual perspective rather than from a prescribed pedagogy. Student artists are expected to be self-motivated and to fully engage with their individual vision. SFAI's faculty are uniquely equipped to guide and support each student's quest to identify, articulate, and better actuate their individual artistic drives via tools (including problem-solving, creative/associative connection, and critical thinking) they have acquired through their own studio and research practices.

We teach a malleable skill set that can be grafted onto any profession...we do not teach craft or specific job training. This development of meaning-making muscles creates great critical thinkers with outstanding visual literacy who bring these skills to all their endeavors, artistic and otherwise. These tools help students to not only develop their work, but also to eventually become their own best teachers.

SFAI's Chestnut campus is a landmark. Throughout its remarkable history, countless influential artists have been drawn to this magnetic place, often as teachers or guest lecturers. Its beautiful, labyrinthian architecture (and myriad alleged haunting incidents!) create an atmosphere of mystery and its location on Russian Hill provides spectacular views of San Francisco. Such a physical space has a powerful effect on the body and experience.

The community of SFAI is small, intimate, eccentric... and for life. SFAI draws deeply idiosyncratic individuals who have often felt they do not fit in elsewhere. The emphasis on individually distinct artistic interrogation, consciousness expansion, and perceptual discovery makes SFAI a haven for such individuals in which they can fully actuate themselves and thrive. Small classes provide an intimate learning environment that fosters a feeling of community that is often reported as feeling like "home" and carried forward for a lifetime.



PROCESS

Our Process

Over six+ months we met weekly, we reviewed what SFAI was doing well, and what could be done better.

Student Interviews

Recruitment Research

Data Dives



RECOMMENDATIONS

Mission & Vision

Create a working group to review and rewrite SFAI's public-facing mission, vision, and values to reflect SFAI's reimagined future.

Mission Statement: A slogan-like sentence that anyone can remember.

Vision: What SFAI will look like in 5, 10, 50 years. The importance of SFAI's contribution as an institute and cultural center.

Values: Identify our core beliefs. (A great deal of work defining values has taken place as part of the Committee to Reimagine SFAI, including the North Stars and the manifesto.)

Audience

Who is SFAI talking to? Who should SFAI be talking to? How can SFAI represent the diversity that we aspire to build?

Prospective Students

SFAI should market enrollment to a diverse pool of students who can fit well and excel at SFAI.

Community at Large

Art lovers, the international art world, artists, alumni.

Bay Area Arts Community

SFAI cannot exist without the support of the people who live in the Bay Area, including the arts community, and local donors who believe SFAI is important to our city and region.

Restructure Communications

SFAI's communications strategy should be **radically transparent** at its core and proactively communicate especially around governance and decision making.

Transparency: SFAI should share as many documents and financial statements as legally possible. Board meetings and cabinet meetings should be open and available to the community.

Communication Hub: Marketing should be an independent department that works to coordinate between all departments of the school.

Digital Communications: All strategies for digital communications including the website, social media, email, etc should be integrated with SFAI's vision—guided by the students, faculty, and stories of the humans who make up SFAI and the community.

Student Lifecycle

SFAI should treat their relationship with students as a lifelong commitment, maintaining a connection through consistent communication.

Prospective Students: Create maps of student pathways through their education and post-graduation.

Students: Support and share current students' work. Make sure their needs are well met while they are enrolled.

Alumni: Track and promote the careers of alumni. Foster reciprocal relationships that inspire alumni to give back to the school.

The Future

Marketing strategies at SFAI should incorporate in their standard practices a constant process of evaluation of marketing policies.

Looking at data and analytics, internal and external assessment, conducting interviews for new and exiting students, and consulting with the community at large.

How do we continue to be relevant and important to the community?

Marketing informed by data, interviews, and analytics.

Plans and strategies built by a diverse group of community members.

Constant evaluation of what is working and what is not.

At SFAI we view the
world in different
ways.

Photo taken by Bill Orcutt of Robert Kinmont:
8 Natural Handstands, 1969/2009

