

Youth in Arts®

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CONTACT: Cathy Bowman
cathy@youthinarts.org
(415) 457-4878 ext. 150

ARCHITECTURE SHOW OPENS AT YIA GALLERY

SAN RAFAEL, CA – What makes a healthy community thrive? Laurel Dell students' search for the answer is the subject of a fascinating exhibition opening this month at the YIA Gallery.

Architects in Schools: Designing Community runs from May 31 to July 26 at the San Rafael gallery. The show caps an extraordinary partnership between Youth in Arts and UC Berkeley's Y-PLAN/the Center for Cities + Schools to teach fourth and fifth graders "design thinking" and inspire them to consider new possibilities in their built environment. Along with learning presentation and collaboration skills, they investigated real-world challenges like climate change and affordable housing.

The pilot program began at the San Rafael school in 2016. This year, the students worked with architects Shirl Buss and Janine Lovejoy Wilford, along with Youth in Arts' mentor artists Suzanne Joyal and Cathy Bowman. Projects included making Towers of Power out of wood scraps and building miniature bridges.

"Young people are sharing their voices for how they want to see the world," said Youth in Arts' Executive Director Miko Lee. "They're showing the power of young people to reimagine the future."

Recently, fifth graders wrote an article for the [Marin IJ](#) addressing sea-level rise. The students offered their input to San Rafael leaders as part of the development of the city's 2040 plan.

"When we think about the next 20 years we are worried about sea-level rise and floods in our neighborhoods," the students wrote. "We also worry about safety and being bullied. We care about people without homes and jobs. And we think about 80 percent of our community is plain, gray and boring, with not much to do."

Several students are expected to present their ideas to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority on May 30. Young artists will also paint one of San Rafael's electrical boxes at Second Street and Lincoln Avenue showcasing their vision for the future of the city. The mural will be unveiled as part of the 2nd Fridays Art Walk on June 14. **The event will coincide with the opening reception for *Towers of Power: Architects in Schools*, which will be held the same day at the YIA Gallery from 5 to 8 p.m.**

The gallery is at 917 C St. in San Rafael. Regular hours are Monday to Friday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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