

In San Francisco, a "Residence" / "Home" for French Artists

By Corine Lesnes

Now/Finally, San Francisco (now) has its Villa Medici: an artist/artists' residence/house/home that is being added to the network/collection/group of French "villas" abroad, a strong asset/driving factor/representation of French international cultural influence. Inaugurated on August 25th/the 25th of August, this is the 4th "villa" open to the public, just after Rome/Rome's/Rome's residence which opened in 1803 to house "l'Académie de France", the Casa de Velazquez, created in Madrid in 1920, and Villa Kujoyama in Kyoto in 1992.

Curiously/Surprisingly, France had not invested in a residence in the United States until now. Villa San Francisco addresses this omission/fixes this problem. The idea started/began/surfaced in 2017, after the arrival of the French consul Emmanuel Lebrun-Damiens. The diplomat stated that Silicon Valley, which is proud of/which is represented by/which prides itself on (tech) innovation, is far from being a cultural hub/is far away from cultural prestige/abundance. Certainly, San Francisco can reference/boast about/point to its museum of modern art, which was improved on with/which was expanded on with/which was added to through a "Beat" generation museum and an ice cream museum. These exceptional/impressive collections were given by/were donated by Donald and Doris Fisher, the founders of Gap. But the region has neither a science centre (center) nor a digital arts institute.

In 2017, its ambassador/consul and cultural attaché, Juliette Donadieu (the former production manager for Gaîté-Lyrique, the Parisian centre (center) that speciali(s)zes in/speciali(s)zing in digi-tech culture/digital technology culture/the digital humanities, launched/started/instated/began a scholarship for writers. This took advantage/utlis(z)ed the specific layout/location of the French residence in the hills/on one of many hills of San Francisco. This relates/This is especially/in particular due to/because of its annex, which is reserved for/given to/bestowed on the winners.

In 2019, the cultural department/service adapted the "Nuit des idées" (Night of Ideas) to San Francisco Library's geometric space/area/room (around/about/some 10,000 attendees were at the inauguration/the first event), and afterwards launched a series of events on the "After-tomorrow", how the world might be in the future, with the objective of juxtaposing/contrasting/confronting artistic imagination with scientific research. Juliette Donadieu has also set up an exchange between Saint-Denis and Oakland, California (CA), two cities with a working (class)/blue collar tradition of (special) rebellion and creation /(in regards to space).