



# Keepers of the Fire

## FIRE

**October 5, 2023 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.**

Welcome to an evening of art, poetry, song, and storytelling centered around the element of fire. Actual fire will give us warmth and light as we gather at Fort Point to discover the spiritual and poetic importance of the element in Ohlone mythology and history through the voices of ‘Coyote Woman’ Kanyon Sayers-Roods and Poet Laureate Stephen Meadows. Their work pays homage to and perpetuates the memory of their Ohlone ancestors by keeping their stories alive for future generations. Poet Laureate Kim Shuck will present new work written for this occasion inspired by Fort Point and its siting at the foot of the Golden Gate Bridge that places us in the crossfire of natural and social forces. Also “burning” the colonial gaze and its fallacies are Saif Azzuz’s paintings. Incorporating native and invasive plants and color palettes drawn from drought and fire maps in California, they reflect the resilience of Indigenous cultures and the importance of interconnection with the land, while simultaneously confronting the history of colonialism. The evening will also include an introduction to films by Julien Charrière, Clément Cogitore, and Arthur Jafa, who place humanity at the center of social and planetary eruptions.

*Keepers of the Fire* is a series of evenings by five Bay Area curators responding to the five elements: earth, fire, water, air, and ether. These intimate, twilight gatherings bring together artists and public audiences to commune around fire pits for curated films, conversations, and live performances inside the bastions of Fort Point National Historic Site. *FIRE* is curated by Claudia Schmuckli, the curator in charge of contemporary art and programming at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.



**Saif Azzuz** (b. 1987) is a Libyan-Yurok artist who resides in Pacifica, CA. He received a Bachelor's Degree in Painting and Drawing from the California College of the Arts in 2013. Azzuz has exhibited widely in the Bay Area and internationally including exhibitions at Anthony Meier Fine Arts, San Francisco, Pt.2 Gallery, Oakland, Galerie Julien Cadet, Paris, and Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, New York. His work is in public collections including the Rennie Museum, de Young Museum - Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Facebook, North Carolina Museum of Art, University of St. Thomas, Stanford Health Care Art Collection and UBS Art Collection.

**Kanyon Sayers-Roods**, Mutsun-Ohlone California Native Two-Spirit Woman, embraces her roles as Culture-Bearer, artist, catalyst for decolonizing, and dedicated advocate of Truth in History. As Kanyon Consulting LLC's CEO, Indian Canyon Nation's Tribal Chairwoman, and 501(C)(3) Costanoan Indian Research Inc's President, she bridges the Indigenous and contemporary value gap. Kanyon's art reflects the timeless presence of Indigenous perspectives and cultural continuity, making her a true activist, artist, educator, and Indigenous Generalized Specialist.

**Stephen Meadows** is the El Dorado County Poet Laureate 2023-2025. He is a Californian poet with roots in both the Ohlone and the pioneer soil of his home state. Stephen has published poems in anthologies and collections nationwide. In addition to writing poetry, Stephen has dedicated over 30 years to public radio as a programmer of folk music from America, Canada, Ireland and the British Isles. His voice has been heard over the airwaves from radio stations in the Monterey Bay Area to the Sierra Nevada Foothills and beyond through the worldwide web.

**Kim Shuck** is the 7th Poet Laureate of San Francisco Emerita. As laureate Shuck featured 4 to 7 local poets every month at her Poem Jam reading series, which she has continued to host. During the covid lockdown she curated a poem a day for a year through the San Francisco Public Library, again, featuring local poets both famous and published for the first time. Shuck was part of the inaugural cohort of the National Laureate Fellowship Program, which she used to further celebrate local poets. Shuck has won many literary awards nationally and internationally, has written ten solo books and has been involved in editing ten anthologies.

*Keepers of the Fire* is presented by FOR-SITE in collaboration with the National Park Service and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. *Keepers of the Fire* is made possible thanks to generous support from Joanna Drake & Christopher Smith, Tad J. Freese & Brook Hartzell, Peter & Beverly Lipman, Robert Joseph Louie Memorial Fund, and Claire & Holden Spaht.

*Credits for video excerpts shown in order of appearance: Julien Charriere, Controlled Burn, 2022, Digital 4K video, color, sound, 32 minutes; Julien Charriere, And Beneath It All Flows Liquid Fire, 2019, UHD color video, color, sound, continuous video loop; Clément Cogitore, Les Indes Galantes, 2017, HD Video, color, sound, 5.26 min; Arthur Jafa, AGHDRA, 2021, Digital 8K video, color sound, 85 minutes*