

Editors Column

Contemporary Art Through Contemporary Eyes



Reanna Lee
Grade 12
North Hollywood High School

Sixteen pairs of eyes scanned over the antique Greek columns and pediments in the picture projected on the conference room screen. Gears turned behind multi-colored irises, questions formulating about the artwork in front of them. What is the message? Why is the style reminiscent of ancient Greco-Roman art traditions if it is a contemporary piece? What was the goal of the artist as they built these sculptures?

Every Thursday afternoon at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in downtown Los Angeles, these sixteen pairs of eyes — each belonging to a high school junior or senior — gather to look at art of the Contemporary Era and discuss its impact on the current human eye. These young artists are paid interns at the museum in the MOCA Teen program, which is in session for the whole academic year.

I am a first-year MOCA Teen in the 2026-2027 program, and the experience is nothing short of its creative promises. During our first meeting on Sept. 24, students engaged in an introductory process that included a recap of the onboarding session, discus-



MOCA Teens engaged in a conversation about Guadalupe Rosales' "12211996" in the museum. [Source: Author, Reanna Lee]

sion of an unnamed art piece, opportunities to mingle with fellow interns, and a micro-tour of the building. The rest of the program is already planned out, with artist workshops and weekend cohorts scheduled throughout fall and spring. By the end, in May, participants will have organized and put together a large youth event called Teen Night inside the museum for teens to enjoy with live music, activities, and more.

MOCA Teens come from all over Los Angeles County and beyond. Most are artists, but involvement in the craft is not a requirement to apply. The program's goal is to bring together young people who are passionate about the arts and its surrounding community. Its wide location range is what I believe will allow for diverse perspectives in the learning environment. Because the directors of the program, Jorge

Espinosa and Michelle Antonisse, also have seasoned experience as both MOCA employees and artists themselves, they are able to help teens familiarize themselves with the dynamic movement that is Contemporary art.

The discussions that we have about different artworks are the highlight of my time at every meeting. Some of the interns have more extensive knowledge of the history of art, including me, while others have a greater, first-hand insight into the creation of it. With all those experiences and knowledge blending together in these conversations about individual artworks, we are able to obtain a collective understanding of the field. It is not so much about preparing us for a future career or college major, but more so about building intellect in an artistic context. I appreciate that this internship also brings in a narrow focus on Contemporary art in particular — it is a movement not many are familiar with, yet has such a significant, underlying impact on society today. The Museum of Contemporary Art knows how to engage the youth in the right and important fields.

Student Reporter

Maker Faire Orange County



Elizabeth Kim
Grade 10
Beckman High School

Maker Faire is an annual regional gathering where makers of all ages and backgrounds meet in one fun, interactive space. Being based in Orange County, California, I had the opportunity to attend the Maker Faire OC event earlier in September. Held at the OC Fair and Event Center, it was an inspiring display of creativity. I was able to visit both days of the weekend, giving plenty of time to explore all of the different booths and people.

Attention to detail was seen even before I officially stepped into the event center. I was handed a badge designed like a circuit-shaped Interstate 5 highway sign, adorned with "MFOC 2026" on the top. It was a great keepsake to commemorate the event. Later, I learned that a badge soldering kit was also sold, so it could become a fully functional circuit. Preparation and the people running this event were all incredibly thoughtful, blending local culture and technology together to make even a simple badge a memorable souvenir.

The booths at the event were very diverse, highlighting creativity in many different areas. There



Hosted at the OC Fair and Event Center, Maker Faire OC was an amazing event with such a wide variety of Makers: anyone who attends is sure to find something they will love. [Source: Author, Elizabeth Kim]

were many technical Makers with displays of robotics, engineering advertisements, and manufacturing services. The Star Wars droids that rolled around the entire area were especially memorable. Seeing the people behind these creations and engaging live demonstrations made these technical fields seem much more approachable and interesting. A lot of Makers were also at the event as businesses, selling handmade

gadgets, art, keychains, and even very particular parts for specialized engineering projects. Ranging from unique 3D-printing filament colors and crocheted goods to trending keyboard fidgets, there was something for everyone.

Many Makers were also there as showcase booths. I observed demonstrations of software and projects made by people

of all ages. Huge city dioramas and artisan bicycles were also awe-inspiring. Aside from just looking at the booths, there were plenty of activities to participate in throughout the day, such as pinhole photography, rocketry lessons, and even a live ukulele performance. The most interesting booths for me were the competitive robotics showcase ones. There were multiple of these, each covering different competitions and age levels. By far the largest one was the VEX Robotics booth, which actually hosted a competition for middle and high schoolers throughout the entire weekend.

As I walked out of the event, I realized that the best part was leaving with a community as well as an inspiration to create. The concentration of so many smart, thoughtful, and creative individuals and their creations in one place was beautiful to see. I loved talking to these people about what they made, and picking up tips and resources to use. I truly recommend Maker Faire to everyone; it is a place for everyone, no matter their age, interests, or experience, to enjoy their time.

Student Reporter

Experiencing 2026 Youth KOSTA



Kaylyn Wee
Grade 11
Ayala High School

On September 20, I attended the last day of 2026 Youth KOSTA in Irvine. Located in Irvine Onnuri Church, the conference lasted three days, from Friday through Sunday. Throughout the conference, multiple speakers discussed a variety of topics that targeted younger students of all ages. Particularly on the last day, there was a closing worship session led by Common Gathering, a contemporary Christian worship ministry and musical collective. Before the session, I had fellowship with some friends and my high school youth pastor. It was a blessing and an exciting experience, as well as a great way to spend a Sunday evening.

Before the opening time at 7 p.m., my pastor decided to take our group out to dinner together, take a stroll through a park, and get dessert. As we drove from Pomona to Irvine, music played in the car while my friends and I played online games. We also had many conversations about how we have been doing and what we expected from KOSTA. Safe to say, we were all very excited about the conference night. For dinner, we decided to have some delicious, warm pho, and after a walk in the



My friends and I met the group Common Gathering during 2026 Youth KOSTA, took pictures, and bought some merchandise. [Source: Author, Kaylyn Wee]

nearby park, our group had frozen yogurt for dessert. Although it was not an extravagant outing, this fellowship was definitely one of the best I have been to, and one I will remember.

One of the most exciting parts of the last night of KOSTA was meeting Common Gathering. Again, Common Gathering is a

Christian music group based in Los Angeles, and they led the worship session that evening. They focus on producing passionate Christian music with many popular singles and albums. As they led the worship session, it was evident that their purpose was not centered on the performance itself, but on leading everyone into genuine worship. Their mu-

sic created an atmosphere where everyone could freely praise together. Additionally, my group and I were able to meet them afterward and buy some merchandise, which was very exciting!

Another memorable part of the night was listening to speaker Stephen Oh. He utilized his professional background in film and television camera and electrical departments to engage the young audience. His message encouraged us to think deeply about our faith and how it should influence the way we live and the decisions we make. He reminded us that even after KOSTA is over, we should refer to the lessons we learned over the weekend.

Overall, the last night of KOSTA was a meaningful experience because it brought together students, worship, and fellowship. Meeting Common Gathering and listening to our speaker Stephen Oh reminded both me and my friends why our faith is important to us. KOSTA was more than one night of activities; instead, it gave me an opportunity to meet new people and learn more about faith. I definitely know I will be returning next year!

Student Reporter



Jisu Wi
Grade 10
New Covenant Academy

As a month has passed since New Covenant Academy began the 2026-2027 year, Back to School Night was held. New Covenant Academy is divided into two campuses: the upper and the lower ones. The upper campus is for students in 8th through 12th grade, and for Back to School Night, it was held at 6:30 PM. The lower campus is for Kindergarten through 7th grade, and Back to School Night happened later, at 7:15 PM. The times are purposefully not overlapped to make sure that parents with children in both the upper and the lower can visit both.

Located in the gym, where all the families gather as soon as they arrive, the Back to School Night starts with a general welcome from the principal. Then, he gave a little message about the school year and academic goals. During this time, the principal highlighted the brilliant work of the graduates of this year, especially those who had earned the IB Diploma. Following this, the principal introduced the teachers for each subject. As many new teachers have joined the school to replace last year's staff, this provided time to informally learn the new faces. After the introductions, everyone



The classroom shows the students' learning environment and is decorated with students' work to show it to parents during the Back to School Night.
[Source: Author, Jisu Wi]

was dismissed to visit the classes and talk with the teachers.

The purpose of the Back to School Night is to give parents time to interact with teachers and other parents. During the classroom visits, many parents spoke with teachers to find out their child's progress, behavior, and accomplishments. Since many

teachers had decorated their classrooms with students' assignments or projects, as well as the books used in the course, parents had a chance to take a look at the course materials and previously completed work of their children. Most teachers also offered a slideshow for the family to get to know the teacher, such as providing academic information about them-

selves. Not only did the teachers introduce the curriculum to the parents, but the students also got to explain what they had learned and show their work that was displayed proudly.

For a few classes, especially the younger grades, the class provided some activities that the family could do together during the visit. For example, my younger sister is in 2nd grade, and the teacher provided interactive activity stations, including a scavenger hunt, answering questions about their child, and writing encouraging letters to their child. When this was finished, a small prize of a snack was given to show gratitude for stopping by and completing the activity that was planned. That snack gave a sense of achievement to the students and allowed them to enjoy staying at Back to School Night more.

Back to School Night was a perfect time for the family to gather together and visit the environment where their child is learning. It was also a special moment where families get to meet the school staff and other families, strengthening the connection to the school.

Student Reporter



Jenny (Sion) Kim
Grade 10
Orange County School of the Arts

Hundreds of excited voices filled the small church as students from different Korean churches sang the same, familiar song together in one voice. Students who had arrived with their own groups at first were now sitting beside people they had never met before, laughing, talking, and getting to know one another.

This was Youth Costa World, an annual Christian conference that brings together Korean churches in Irvine, California, for worship and fellowship as well as a day of activities for high school students. Held specifically at Irvine Onnuri Church, the event gives students the special opportunity to meet student leaders from different churches and build special connections outside of their usual communities.

When I first entered the main hall of the church, hundreds of chairs were laid out, and I was soon surrounded by many peers around my age. Some I recognized, and some were completely new to me. Then came the part of the day when I had to leave my own church friends behind. The pastor called everyone together and divided us into random



The author's church group, visiting for the event, poses together in front of the main hall on the second day of Youth Coastal World.
[Source: Author, Jenny (Sion) Kim]

groups, putting me with students I had never spoken to before. We started with ice-breaking games and group activities that required us to communicate and work together. At first, there was some awkwardness as we intro-

duced ourselves, but it quickly faded as we started building group projects, cheering for each other, and working toward the same goal.

I had arrived at Youth Coast-

al World with people I already knew, but being placed into a new group gave me a reason to step outside of that familiar circle. For the next few hours, I found myself spending more time with students I had just met than with the friends I had come with. By the end of the activities, the people who had been strangers that morning felt much more familiar. "I think that was the best part for me," Leah said. "We came with our own friends, but by the end, we were all talking and engaging with people we had never met before."

The feeling continued into the final celebration. Neon bracelets and light sticks filled the room as the music grew louder and students jumped, danced, and sang along to the worship songs. My friends and I put our arms around each other as we joined the crowd, and later, we formed a circle and prayed together. Looking around the circle, I realized how different the room felt from when we had first arrived. What started as a day of meeting people from other churches had turned into something that felt much more like one shared community.

Student Reporter



Ashley Kim
Grade 7
Little Ferry Memorial Middle School

The cool morning air surrounded me as I stood at the side of the road, waiting for the bus to arrive. Cars passed by as I watched, imagining how the day would turn out in New York City. My parents and I waited for about five minutes before the bus came. We stepped inside and found a seat. As I settled in, I looked out the window, observing the sky and wondering about the trip. The farther we traveled, the more the view changed. It took about an hour to get to NYC. I listened to some music while looking outside at the large buildings as we got closer and closer to our destination. Soon after the ride, we finally made our way to one of the busiest places I've ever been. I was thrilled to see what I could discover throughout the day.

After we got off the bus, we kept walking out of the terminal to begin our journey. The moment I stepped into New York City, I knew that it would be a day full of exciting surprises. Everywhere I looked k, there were busy streets, crowded stores, cars honking, tall buildings, and countless people walking on the streets. It was so fascinating to see, mostly because where I live, it is never this



The busy street view of Times Square in New York City was filled with all kinds of stores and buildings. [Source: Author, Ashley Kim]

packed. I took a few seconds to look around and thought about how every person had their own experiences and lives that I would

simply pass by. Either way, I continued walking around until I went to my first stop at Uniqlo to look for some clothing. The

store was huge, and everything seemed so interesting. I roamed around, looking at T-shirts, jackets, sweaters, and pants before getting two pairs of jeans that I really liked. After leaving Uniqlo, we continued exploring the city. Our next stop was at Kinokuniya, a famous Japanese bookstore known for selling large selections of books, manga, gifts, stationery, and more. I was so excited to finally enter the famous store I've seen on social media. As soon as I entered, I went upstairs to check out manga, figures, blind boxes, and unique anime merchandise toys. I spent some time looking around, but unfortunately I could not buy anything due to the time I had left before I had to go home. Still, it was exciting to visit such a famous place in real life.

It was soon time to go back home, and we walked back into the bus terminal to catch our bus. We waited for a while before taking a seat. As we traveled back, I thought of how much joy I had while doing these activities. Even though I hadn't done much except visit places, I really enjoyed what I experienced and hope one day I can return and create more memories.