

First Sustainable & Recycled Materials Library in the Country to Launch at San Francisco State University

SFSU's School of Design unveils the nation's first library dedicated to sustainable materials, inspiring the future of climate-conscious design.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, UNITED STATES, May 19, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- This month marks the grand opening of the award-winning [San Francisco State University Sustainable Materials Library](#) — an invaluable creative resource over four years in the making, brought to life by the students, faculty, and staff of SFSU's School of Design. Joining this collaboration with cutting-edge sustainable materials contributions are Graduate Design Students at the California College of the Arts.



Sustainable Materials Library Co-Founders Emily Grandcolas, JD Beltran and Jacksaline Perez in the library with the materials tiles

A globally-sourced collection of innovative, environmentally responsible materials, the library represents the work of climate-forward companies shaping the future of design, architecture, and creative production. This Friday, SFSU will mark the occasion with a ribbon-cutting celebration joined by Tyrone Jue, Director of the San Francisco Environment Department, along with leadership from Climate HQ — SFSU's groundbreaking agency developing equity-minded initiatives that extend across the CSU system to address climate change. The University of California, San Francisco's Director of Sustainability, Gail Lee, has also been instrumental in this collaboration.

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JD Beltran

Permanently housed on the SFSU campus, the library serves as both a resource and an

inspiration for architects, designers, engineers, artists, and other creative professionals — as well as anyone seeking to explore and source materials that prioritize sustainability without compromising functionality. In consultation with Mark Jensen of Jensen Architects, library staff have been in active discussions with the City of San Francisco's Planning Department to include information on the library in the instructional video required to obtain new city building permits — a forward-thinking step toward fostering widespread adoption of sustainable materials in San Francisco's future construction projects.

Each material in the collection tells a story of renewal, regeneration, and reimagination — from hemp concrete and inventive plastic alternatives, to wood crafted from recycled newspapers, leather derived from mushrooms, and even glitter made from eucalyptus. Showcasing materials sourced from innovative manufacturers worldwide, the library celebrates biodegradable alternatives and upcycled innovations that minimize environmental impact while maximizing creative potential. Visitors are invited to interact, learn, and rethink their relationship with the materials that shape our world. A virtual library featuring all materials and their sources is available at green-library.org.

Whether seeking practical solutions or visionary concepts, the SFSU Sustainable Materials Library offers a compelling glimpse into a future where sustainability and design go hand in hand.

Initiated in 2022, students from the SFSU School of Design — in collaboration with Professor JD Beltran, SFSU Design Director Mari Hulick, and staff members Richard Ortiz and Justin Wong — established the first physical materials library in the country dedicated exclusively to sustainable and recycled materials. Located in Humanities Building 130 on the SFSU campus, it is complemented by a constantly evolving online database. It offers architects, designers, engineers, artists, and other creative professionals access to a curated collection of cutting-edge



Student Co-Founders of the SFSU Sustainable Materials Library



Richard Ortiz and JD Beltran with the hempcrete block sustainable mobile display wall they designed

materials supporting sustainable practices. Meticulously sourced by SFSU students from around the globe — including manufacturers in New Zealand, Holland, and Australia — each physical sample measures approximately 5" x 5" and features a QR code linking to the master online database.

Open to both the SFSU community and the general public, the library also serves as an educational platform advancing progress toward a circular economy and meaningful climate action.

Throughout this endeavor, students not only developed the permanent library but also produced captivating exhibitions each semester, spotlighting newly sourced materials. Last spring's "Lost in the Fog" exhibition was a standout — featuring trees crafted from sustainable recycled wood, interactive lighting that illuminated materials tiles as visitors approached, and a live virtual pond that responded to people walking through it, the water rippling around their ankles as fish darted beneath the surface.

SFSU staff members Richard Ortiz and Justin Wong served as critical co-founders, securing the library's permanent home in Humanities Building 130 and supporting students in designing, building, and installing the library's elements and exhibitions. Co-founders Jacksaline Perez and Emily Grandcolas collaborated in realizing all aspects of the library's infrastructure, while a generous grant from Climate HQ ensured the vision could become reality.

Contributing Student Co-Founders this year include Nicole Alulema, Karen Camacho, Julia Grafutko, Nandani Rana, Veronica Rivera, Isabelle Sanchez, Kailen Swisher, Zachary Nightingale, and Michael Villanueva II, along with CCA students Ari Feldman, Bo Field, Zixu Guo, Hayley Lin, Liyun Xue, Yulan Zhang, and Risato Ohara.

In recognition of their achievements in sustainable design, the SFSU School of Design has been honored four consecutive years with an invitation to showcase their work at the International Biodesign Challenge Summits in New York, presenting at both the Museum of Modern Art and The New School's Parsons School of Design Biodesign Summit Showcase.

School of Design Director Mari Hulick commented, "Our ingenious students, alongside their innovative professor JD Beltran, have delivered a valuable resource — they designed a system that is informative, flexible, and beautiful. We know this sets a standard for other materials libraries throughout the field."

Professor JD Beltran shared, "I'm thrilled by our designers' ingenuity and dedication. Born in San Francisco and accessible worldwide, this extraordinary new sustainable materials library will prompt creators to rethink the materials shaping our world."

Professor Beltran brings a distinguished record of sustainability initiatives confronting the causes and consequences of climate change. She is the founder of Do1Act.org, an educational platform promoting sustainable consumer behavior and collective climate action; the [Center for Creative Sustainability](#), a consultancy advancing sustainability through community-driven partnerships;

and Art + Water, an artist residency and arts hub nurturing creative careers throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. With this library, Professor Beltran and her co-founders carry this vision forward — inspiring innovative thinking, championing sustainable design, and fostering a circular economy to safeguard the planet for generations to come.

Please note that photographs and video footage will be taken at this event and may be used in future publications, promotional materials, and media coverage. By attending, you consent to the use of your image.

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