

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Coma Te, San Francisco Arts Commission
coma.te@sfgov.org

PRESS RELEASE

**Statement from the San Francisco Arts Commission Regarding
the Removal of an Unsanctioned Sculpture in Golden Gate Park**

“Memorial to the Extinct Xerces Blue Butterfly” removed from Golden Gate Park



(Photo Courtesy of SFAC Staff)

SAN FRANCISCO, April 28, 2023 – Earlier this week, San Francisco Arts Commission’s Civic Art Collection staff was made aware of “*Memorial to the Extinct Xerces Blue Butterfly*”, an unauthorized sculpture intervention* of unknown provenance by an unidentified artist or group of artists that was installed on the vacant plinth that was previously the base of the *Padre Junipero Serra* (1906) statue in Golden Gate Park at some point over Earth Day weekend at intersection of Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive, Music Concourse Drive, and Bowl Drive.

The sculpture was taken down and removed off-site the morning of Friday, April 28, 2023.

The Arts Commission must approve the temporary or permanent installation of any work of art on City and County of San Francisco (CCSF) property, or any proposal funded in whole or in part by City funds

(regardless of its proposed location). This includes proposals initiated or funded by outside sponsors, such as individual artists, organizations, or commercial enterprises.

The manner in which this unsanctioned and unpermitted work that was surreptitiously installed without going through the proper process and procedure as outlined in the Art Commission's **Guidelines for Temporary Public Art** installations poses numerous safety concerns. These include potential hazards and liability issues due to the unknown nature of the composition of the piece and unconfirmed installation methods used. The plinth will also be assessed for any damage resulting from the rogue installation where materials were affixed or glued to the pedestal.

The Arts Commission recognizes the importance of raising awareness for the protection of endangered species that face the threat of extinction and for the advocacy and conservation of wildlife and natural habitat protection.

The bronze Padre Junipero Serra (1906) statue, along with bronze statues of General Ulysses Simpson Grant (1908) and Francis Scott Key (1887) were toppled and defaced by a group of demonstrators on the evening of June 19, 2020. These sculptures were placed into and currently remain in secure fine arts storage pending the outcome and recommendations of the Monuments and Memorials Advisory Committee (MMAC) who have recently completed their work to review and recommend updates to the **Policies & Guidelines** related to the care, assessment, and evaluation of monuments and memorials in the Civic Art Collection. A final report is being compiled and expected to be released in late May/early June 2023. [View additional MMAC FAQs here.](#)

As part of the outcomes and recommendations of MMAC's work, the Arts Commission is in the process of exploring opportunities for future activations and use of these sites in partnership with local community groups and artists to provide space for and to help amplify the voices, stories and art of communities that have not been historically prioritized or represented. Details are still being formalized, and the Arts Commission encourages those interested to [sign up for its newsletter](#) to be notified of future opportunities, calls for artists and requests for proposals (RFP). The Arts Commission does not condone the unauthorized use, intervention or installation of artworks on CCSF property that have not gone through the proper evaluation and approval process.

For any additional questions, contact the Arts Commission at art-info@sfgov.org or by calling 415-252-2266.

*[*Note: The term "art intervention" applies to art designed specifically to interact with an existing structure or situation, be it another artwork, the audience, an institution or in the public domain.]*

###

About The San Francisco Arts Commission

The San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC) is the City agency that champions the arts as essential to daily life by investing in a vibrant arts community, enlivening the urban environment and shaping innovative cultural policy. Our programs include: Civic Art Collection, Civic Design Review, Community Investments, Public Art, SFAC Galleries, and Art Vendor Licensing. To learn more, visit sfartscommission.org.