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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

Mayor London Breed Announces The San Francisco Arts Commission Is One of Nine Municipalities Nationwide That Has Received A Portion of a \$25 Million Mellon Foundation Grant to Support Its Work on Monuments and Memorials Initiative

The \$3 million Monuments Project grant will fund and support “Pulse Check: Accountability and Activation of Future SF Monuments” a San Francisco Arts Commission project that will evaluate the City’s Civic Art Collection and build on the work and recommendations of the City’s Monuments and Memorials Advisory Committee over the next three years.



"Visual Artists - The Continuous Thread: Celebrating Our Interwoven Histories, Identities and Contributions," 2019. Photo: Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie, Courtesy of San Francisco Arts Commission.

SAN FRANCISCO, June 20, 2023 — Mayor **London N. Breed** and **Ralph Remington**, Director of Cultural Affairs, are thrilled to announce that the San Francisco Arts Commission has been awarded a **\$3 million Mellon Foundation grant**. The grant is part of "[The Monuments Project](#)", an initiative of the foundation’s President, Elizabeth Alexander, which commits to give **\$250 million by 2025** to transform the nation’s commemorative landscape through public projects that more completely and accurately represent the multiplicity and complexity of American stories.

The Mellon Foundation made the [announcement naming the nine municipalities](#) chosen to receive funding in this year's grant cycle on Monday, June 19 in a nationwide statement.

At its core, [The Monuments Project](#) aims to create spaces that will be accessible to everyone and promote stories that are not already represented in commemorative spaces. Grants approved under the direction of the Monuments Project aim to ensure that future generations inherit a commemorative landscape that venerates and reflects the vast, rich complexity of the American story.

Nine grants totaling **\$25 million** will be awarded directly to municipalities this summer to fund publicly oriented initiatives. These grants will support projects in Asheville, North Carolina; Boston, Massachusetts; Chicago, Illinois; Columbus, Ohio; Denver, Colorado; Los Angeles, California; Portland, Oregon; Providence, Rhode Island; and San Francisco, California.

The Monuments Project grant awarded to the Arts Commission, totaling **\$3 million**, will be used over the next three years to fund and support ***Pulse Check: Accountability and Activation of Future SF Monuments***, an initiative encompassing a racial equity audit of publicly accessible works in the Civic Art Collection, community engagement, and several community-led artist activations in public spaces.

"Three years ago, I called on the Arts Commission, Human Rights Commission and Recreation and Parks Department to work with the community to evaluate our public art and its intersection with our country's racist history so that we can move forward together to make real changes in what is represented in our public art," said Mayor **London N. Breed**. "With the support of this grant, we can continue this important work to ensure our City's monuments and memorials are reflective of our values and showcase the art and stories of all the people and moments that make our City so special."

Since the toppling and removal of public statues in 2020 in protest of their racist and colonial histories, the SFAC began an intentional assessment of commemorative works in its Civic Art Collection by establishing the Monuments and Memorials Advisory Committee (MMAC). The formation of the MMAC reflects the SFAC's commitment to evaluate and re-imagine the process and considerations involved in the development of commemorative public art projects, and how their form and content resonate with, or respond to our diverse population.

"Funding of "Pulse Check" will allow us to continue the work of evaluating the monuments and memorials found in our Civic Art Collection and officially kick-off phase II of this community-led effort while implementing the recommendations and next steps outlined in our Monuments and Memorials Advisory Committee's final report," said **Ralph Remington**, Director of Cultural Affairs. "Mayor Breed, through her leadership on this, has shown what is possible when bold decisive action is taken to rectify past injustices, thereby ensuring that everyone is seen. We'd like to thank the Mellon Foundation for their support of this important project that will allow us to shift the narrative of public art and directly address racial inequality, white supremacy, colonization, and issues of representation in our City's Public Art."

The San Francisco Monuments and Memorials Advisory Committee (MMAC) officially [released its final report](#) in early June 2023, which summarizes and highlights the work and recommendations of this community-led effort that involved the Arts Commission, Human Rights Commission, Recreation and Parks Department and a thirteen-person committee of community and arts and cultural leaders who through a community engagement process, established the criteria and guidelines by which the Arts Commission will use to determine the future of historic monuments in the City's art collection.

About Pulse Check: Accountability and Activation of Future SF Monuments

Pulse Check: Accountability and Activation of Future SF Monuments is a community-centered and equity-focused project aimed at rectifying San Francisco's long history of maintaining public commemorative works that are exclusionary and cause negative impacts on communities. This project will engage communities that have historically been excluded from discussions regarding the evaluation of works art and the process of commissioning new works. It will conscientiously facilitate the creation of contemporary, dynamic, and healing art in the San Francisco landscape. A team of multidisciplinary artist leaders and local facilitators will conduct broad reaching community conversations that will guide two project components: (1) a racial equity audit of publicly accessible commemorative works in San Francisco's Civic Art Collection and (2) a vigorous community engagement and multidisciplinary opportunities for artistic activations in public spaces.

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 about the agency and other public art opportunities, visit sfartscommission.org.

About The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through our grants, we seek to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive. Learn more at mellon.org.

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