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Newly Unveiled Commissioned Artworks by Three San Francisco Artists for Southeast Family Health Center Celebrates African American Culture and History in Bayview-Hunters Point

Artists Ramekon O'Arwisters, William Rhodes and Ron Moultrie Saunders, create artworks for new 22,000-square foot neighborhood health clinic.

SAN FRANCISCO - July 15, 2022: Artwork by three San Francisco-based artists with deep ties to the Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood was [unveiled yesterday at a ribbon cutting ceremony](#) for the new Southeast Family Health Center ([SEFHC](#)). The artworks incorporated into the project celebrate the African American community's historic role in establishing the original Southeast Health Center.

Mayor London N. Breed, Supervisor Shamann Walton, and representatives from the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH), and San Francisco Public Works (SFPW) were on hand to officially open the new \$39.5 million health care facility that will serve residents of the Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood and San Francisco Health Network patients starting in late July.

SEFHC features artwork funded through the Art Enrichment Ordinance, which allocates 2% of construction costs of public projects for public art. The San Francisco Arts Commission convened a series of panels to review over 200 Bayview Artist Registry applications before selecting and commissioning three finalists to create installations celebrating African American culture and the community's historic role in establishing the original Southeast Health Center.

"Art is essential and can help us heal in many ways," said Ralph Remington, Director of Cultural Affairs. "It is through art that we not only nurture our bodies and minds, but we help tell our community's stories, and keep our cultural traditions alive. The artists and artwork featured in the Southeast Family Health Center help create a space where the Bayview community is welcome, represented and surrounded by art that creates a sense of calm and belonging and reflects the community that established the original health center."

Artwork includes [Woven Calm](#), a sculptural tapestry displayed on the first-floor entry lobby wall by Ramekon O'Arwisters; four [Community History Quilts](#), that line the first-floor corridor by William Rhodes; and [African Origins: Green Acacia](#) and [African Origins: Amaryllis Belladonna](#), a pair of acid-etched glass windows with printed interlayers based on photogram images of medicinal and decorative plants by Ron Moultrie Saunders, located across from the second-floor waiting areas.

“The physical spaces where we deliver healthcare matter. The quality of the building, the design, the layout, and the artwork all contribute to a healing and patient-center experience. I thank the artists Ramekon O’Arwisters, Ron Moultrie Saunders, and William Rhodes for helping ensure our patients enter our new Southeast Family Health Center feeling welcome, connected, and ready for care,” said Dr. Grant Colfax, Director of Health. “The new Southeast Family Health Center has three remarkable pieces of art that celebrate the Bayview’s African American community and their historic role in establishing both the original Southeast Health Center, and the new building.”

O’Arwisters’ sculptural tapestry was created with handmade redwood crochet hooks and various hand weaving techniques based on the African American tradition of using improvisation and contrast as the primary structure for inspiration and design.

“I incorporate different handweaving techniques - braiding quilting, sewing, and crocheting strips of fabric - to create a three-dimensional woven tapestry,” shared O’Arwisters in a written artist statement. “Each tapestry represents the important role of folk-art weaving and fabric traditions within the African American community and their imbued powers to heal, support, and unite in times of adversity.”

Rhodes’ four handmade quilts highlight the powerful legacy of community organizing and activism in the Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood. Working in close partnership with members of the Southeast Health Center’s Community Advisory Board, Rhodes features images of community members, organizations, sites, and events that represent the neighborhood’s ongoing fight for safe and decent housing, environmental justice, health equity, and social justice.

“I remember hearing my grandmother talk about how quilt making was one of the few practices that would allow them the ability to be artistically free and expressive. Quilts held the stories of my family together even during a time when Black communities were often broken up,” shared Rhodes. “The history and stories of the residents that helped shape the Bayview need to be recorded.”

The quilts’ distinct background colors and West African Adinkra symbols further underscore their respective themes. The blue Housing Activism Quilt signifies trust, confidence, stability, and unity. The green Environmental Activism Quilt signifies growth, renewal, Mother Earth, and divinity. The yellow Healthcare Activism Quilt signifies healing, optimism, patience, and care. The red Social and Political Justice Quilt signifies activism, power, strength, and service to the community.

Saunders’ photograms (camera-less photographic images) of medicinal and ornamental plants that originated in Africa seek to provide a comfortable, welcoming, and inspirational environment for visitors and staff. The leaves, bark and sap of the Acacia, a tree native to tropical and subtropical regions of Africa, have been used in traditional medicines that treat circulation, upper respiratory, and other ailments. The Amaryllis Belladonna is an ornamental plant native to South Africa that has naturalized along much of the California coast, including San Francisco. Traditionally viewed as a symbol of love, beauty,

determination, and strength, Saunders enlarges the flower's image to encourage a closer look at the flower's aesthetic beauty, as well as a scientific examination of its component parts.

"Nature is healing with its beautiful and pragmatic qualities." wrote Saunders in his artist statement. "The once predominately Black community of Bayview-Hunters Point provided the inspiration for selecting plant material that originated in Africa."

Hi-Res images of the Southeast Family Health Center artworks are [available on Flickr](#).

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About The San Francisco Arts Commission

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