

**For Immediate Release**

## **San Francisco Arts Commission Unveils Expansive New Art Collection at New Southeast Community Center**



**Saturday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

**San Francisco, CA. October 14, 2022** – San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC) and San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) are thrilled to announce the grand opening celebration of the SFPUC's new Southeast Community Center and the unveiling of its expansive new art collection on Saturday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. at 1550 Evans Avenue in the Bayview.

The new Southeast Community Center features an expanded low-cost childcare center, nonprofit workspaces, community meeting rooms, large multi-purpose rooms, an on-site café, and a stand-alone Alex Pitcher Pavilion for community events. The open spaces include an amphitheater, gardens, outdoor dining areas, greenspaces for gathering and exercise, and play spaces for children. The new center also provides a wide range of social services supporting workforce development and education for Southeast residents of all ages. Accessible by MUNI bus and the

T-line, and less than a mile from the existing Southeast Community Facility at 1800 Oakdale, the new building is a hub for local community to gather, learn, play, and grow. This partnership between San Francisco's southeast communities and San Francisco Public Utilities Commission is designed to promote the health, well-being, cultural, educational, and financial empowerment of southeast residents.

“We heard the community’s call to reinvest in the people of our southeast neighborhoods,” SFPUC General Manager Dennis Herrera said. “We hope this new center demonstrates the SFPUC’s commitment to being a good neighbor and doing the right thing. It’s the direct result of years of extensive outreach and community partnership. At its core, this project is about a place to gather, learn, play, and grow. An integral part of what makes this campus so special is the stunning array of works from local artists, which have the power to carry, heal, and inspire us all.”

Through a San Francisco Arts Commission selection process, the Southeast Community Center is home to works by Bay Area-based artists, Mildred Howard, Phillip Hua, and Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle. Featured inside and outside of the Center, these works include *Promissory Notes* by Howard, *Building a Better Bayview* by Hua, and *Navigating The Historical Present: Bayview-Hunters Point* by Hinkle.

“In partnership with the SFPUC and Southeast community, the Arts Commission developed the Bayview Arts Masterplan, which established the Bayview Artist Registry and helped guide the artistic vision for the future of the neighborhood,” said Ralph Remington, Director Cultural Affairs. “We are thrilled and honored to present a robust collection of three new site-specific commissioned works and a collection of two-dimensional art purchased from local artists with deep ties to the community. These artists celebrate the African diaspora while honoring the ancestral legacy of the people who built this neighborhood.”

The Public Art for this project was made possible through the City’s Art Enrichment Ordinance, which allocates 2 percent of eligible construction costs from capital improvement projects for the commissioning of the new public art.

In addition to the three commissioned works by artists Howard, Hua, and Hinkle, the Southeast Community Center features a 2D Artwork Program that illuminates and celebrates the people, values, history, and diverse culture of Bayview–Hunters Point, as well as provides a local benefit through the direct purchase of artworks by artists who have lived, currently reside, and/or have a meaningful connection to the Bayview–Hunters Point community. The Southeast Community Center’s 2D Artwork Program features 37 individual works by 27 artists, located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors. All 2D Program artists were selected from the Bayview Artist Registry, a pool of prequalified artists who have meaningful connection to the Bayview–Hunters Point that was created as part of SFAC’s [Bayview Arts Masterplan](#).

Three permanent public works of art for the Center, facilitated and presented by the SFAC, include the thoughtful site-specific work, *Promissory Notes*, by internationally renowned artist,

**Mildred Howard.** The notion of home is an ongoing investigation and interest of San Francisco native, Howard. Known for taking common objects of daily life and infusing them with a spark that illuminates the underlying significance and historical weight of cultural forms, Howard has developed a visual language for inspiring critical conversations around race, injustice, need, and compassion.



Mildred Howard, *Promissory Notes*, 2022. Photo Credit Ethan Kaplan Photography

Situated at the Center’s entrance plaza, *Promissory Notes*, consists of three monumental bronze sculptures measuring 18 feet, 16 feet, and 14 feet that take their inspiration from West African currency to memorialize the unsung contributions of the African-American community in the Bayview–Hunters Point neighborhood. Traditionally worn as jewelry, such currency represents symbolic and economic wealth in a variety of cultures around the world, signifying the wearers success, and embodying their power. Finished with a rich gold patina, the bronze currency forms are dramatically enlarged and oriented vertically, subtly suggesting the outline of a ship’s hull, calling to mind the historical significance of the Hunters Point shipyards, as well as the movement of immigrants and the hard-fought wealth — both economic and intangible — needed to build their communities. For Howard, this work stands as an homage to the travels, trials, and perseverance of all who call Bayview-Hunters Point home. “My family,” says Howard, “was part of the African American migration from the American South in the days when cattle were herded down 3rd Street; they worked in shipyards and local restaurants, saving their money to buy a house in one of the only places in the country where African Americans were allowed to buy property. *Promissory Notes*, serves as a proud and dignified reminder that we all ultimately arrived in this country from somewhere else.”

In alignment with the Bayview Arts Masterplan, Howard’s project included the development of a community engagement program in parallel with the creation of her artwork that would provide local youth with learning and professional development opportunities. Howard worked with national recognized youth photography and mentoring program First Exposures to develop a 6-

week photography residency program that was offered to young aspiring photographers from Bayview–Hunters Point, Mission, SOMA, Tenderloin, and other San Francisco neighborhoods. With the mentorship of Howard, the eight participating youth residents learned firsthand the realities of having a career in the arts, while developing a portfolio of photographic works that documents and expresses their neighborhoods and communities through the lens of their unique life experiences. One photo from each resident is included the Southeast Community Center’s 2D Artwork Program, and is on view on the building’s 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.



Phillip Hua, *Building a Better Bayview*, 2022. Photo Credit Ethan Kaplan Photography

**Phillip Hua** is a San Francisco-based artist known for his work that explores the relationship between nature and commerce by combining traditional Chinese icons, such as birds and trees, with the technique of Chinese brush painting, digital painting, and images of nature and newsprint. For the Center’s main lobby, Hua created *Building a Better Bayview*, a three-dimensional photo-collage mural that commemorates the six founders of the Southeast Community Center: Alex Pitcher, Elouise Westbrook, Espanola Jackson, Harold Madison, Ethel Garlington, and Shirley Jones. Hua notes, “*Building a Better Bayview* celebrates community activism and in particular, The Big 6, each of whom should be revered and looked up to for their dedication and hard work.”

Since the inception of the project, Hua worked closely with the founders’ families to select the photographs featured in the mural, secure the necessary permissions, and provide opportunities for their engagement and feedback throughout all phases of design development. Hua’s *Building a Better Bayview* shows the six founders in the foreground with their names, relevant newspaper and publication quotes, and images of the Bayview surrounding them, including drawings for the original Southeast Community Facility at 1800 Oakdale, an image of the Bayview Community Center, a map of the Bayview, and an image of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard.



Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle, *Navigating The Historical Present: Bayview-Hunters Point*, 2022.  
Photo Credit Ethan Kaplan Photography

**Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle's** artwork, *Navigating The Historical Present: Bayview-Hunters Point*, for the Alex Pitcher Pavilion was born out of a year-long collaboration with multiple generations of Bayview–Hunters Point residents and intensive research in the *Shades of Bayview* archive housed at the San Francisco Public Library. Seeing this project as a means of challenging representation, and fighting against erasure and rampant gentrification, for Hinkle this undertaking summons communal visual storytelling as a means of depicting the community in the way that it wants to be represented.

Layered over vibrant blue hand-painted canvases that evoke the feeling of water, migration, cleansing, images sourced from the community and *Shades of Bayview* archive, as well as various cultural symbols that relate to the community, neighborhood, culture, and environment of Bayview–Hunters Point, have been positioned intuitively by the artist throughout the artwork. Using a visual vernacular reminiscent of the family photo walls one is likely to find in neighborhood homes and businesses, this mural is both a reflection on and of the life milestones and relationships that connect community members of various generations to one another throughout time. Hinkle considers this artwork to be visual restorative justice, stating, "Each wave and collision of paint represents the resistance struggle within the community to combat the effects of rampant environmental injustice, persistent erasure, and the community's ability to rise despite all odds."

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### **History of the Southeast Community Center**

In 1979, San Francisco's southeast communities won a community center located at 1800 Oakdale Avenue as part of an agreement to offset the effects of the Southeast Wastewater Treatment Plant on surrounding communities. This agreement was the result of strong activism in Bayview–Hunter's Point communities and serves as an inspiring example of civic leadership

and advocacy. The new center at 1550 Evans Avenue honors the legacy of “The Big 6” community activists who led the movement for the original center; Alex Pitcher, Harold Madison, Ethel Garlington, Dr. Espanola Jackson, Shirley Jones, and Elouise Westbrook.

When it became clear in 2015 that extensive repairs would be needed to the original center, SFPUC engaged in a large-scale campaign to solicit community feedback on whether the old center should be repaired or a new state-of-the-art center should be built. The results were overwhelmingly in favor of building a new center that would fully live up to the promises of the original agreement. In 2020, with the help of several local non-profits, SFPUC engaged in another extensive outreach campaign to learn about the programming and amenities community members would like to see at the new center. That information has been used to develop new programs and partnerships to meet the community's needs.

Construction of the new center included local hire goals, which are designed to ensure that the new community center benefits southeast communities both during construction and after completion. Over 58 construction workers on the new center are from zip code 94124, and SFPUC further exceeded their goals for subcontracting with Bayview/Hunter’s Point-based businesses by 10%.

#### **About San Francisco Public Utilities Commission**

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) provides top quality drinking water and wastewater services to the city of San Francisco, wholesale water to three Bay Area counties, and green hydroelectric and solar power to our municipal departments. Our team of 2,300 people strives to work in harmony with environmental and community interest, and we are dedicated to protecting and sustaining the resources entrusted to our care. To learn more, visit [sfpub.org](http://sfpub.org).

#### **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](http://sfartscommission.org).

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\* High-resolution images, interviews, and additional materials are available by request.

## Southeast Community Center Public Art Collection

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**Mildred Howard**

**b. 1945**

*Promissory Notes, 2022*

**Bronze**

**Location: SECC Entrance Plaza**

Mildred Howard's *Promissory Notes* takes its inspiration from West African currency that was traditionally worn as jewelry to signify the wearers' success and embody their power. The currency forms are dramatically enlarged and oriented vertically, suggesting the outline of a ship's hull. This sculpture calls to mind the historical significance of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, the perpetual movement of immigrants, and their hard-fought wealth—both economic and intangible—needed to build their communities. Howard's sculpture not only memorializes the unsung contributions of the African American community, but is also a tribute to the travels, trials, and perseverance of all who call Bayview–Hunters Point their home.

**Phillip Hua**

**b. 1979**

*Building a Better Bayview, 2022*

**Acrylic print, paint, gold leaf, and wood**

**Location: SECC Main Lobby**

Phillip Hua's three-dimensional photcollage mural, *Building a Better Bayview*, honors the six founders of the Southeast Community Center: Elouise Westbrook, Alex Pitcher, Espanola Jackson, Shirley Jones, Ethel Garlington, and Harold Madison. Accented by hand-applied 22k gold-leaf, the founders' portraits are surrounded by newspaper clippings, maps, and images from the surrounding Bayview–Hunters Point neighborhood, including a drawing of the original Southeast Community Facility at 1800 Oakdale, and photos of the Bayview Community Center and Hunters Point Shipyard. With its undulating sculptural quality suggesting growth and progress, Hua's mural commemorates the legacy and activism of these important civic leaders for generations to come.

**Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle**

**b. 1987**

*Navigating The Historical Present: Bayview-Hunters Point, 2022*

**Dye-Sublimated Aluminum**

**Location: Alex Pitcher Pavilion**

Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle's multidisciplinary practice examines what she describes as "The Historical Present," the residue of history and its effects upon our contemporary world

perspectives. *Navigating The Historical Present: Bayview-Hunters Point*, is the result of Hinkle's year-long collaboration with multiple generations of Bayview–Hunters Point residents and intensive research in the *Shades of Bayview* archive at the San Francisco Public Library.

Images and cultural symbols of the Bayview–Hunters Point neighborhood and its communities are positioned intuitively throughout the composition and layered over vibrant blue background to evoke the feeling of water, migration, and cleansing. Reminiscent of family picture walls found in local homes and businesses, Hinkle's mural reflects the life milestones and relationships that connect community members across various generations. She considers this artwork to be visual restorative justice, stating, "Each wave and collision of paint represents the resistance struggle within the community to combat the effects of rampant environmental injustice, persistent erasure, and the community's ability to rise despite all odds."

### **Southeast Community Center's 2D Artwork Program**

The Southeast Community Center's 2D Artwork Program features 37 individual works by 27 artists, located on the building's 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors. These pieces highlight the diversity of this incredible community. Artworks were purchased from the following 27 artists:

- Louisiana Bendolph
- Suhas Bhujbal
- Sabrina Denman
- Emilio Perez Duarte
- Rodney Ewing
- Nina Fabunmi
- Juan R. Fuentes
- Kunta Gary
- Miracle Hampton
- Frederick Hayes
- Frida Calvo Huerta
- Boon Heng Pan
- Iván Lopez
- Derek Macario
- Juliana Martinez
- Ata'ataoletaeano McNealy
- David Pushia, Jr.
- William Rhodes
- Blanca Estela Rodriguez Mandujano
- Rhonel Roberts
- Ron Moultrie Saunders
- Malik Seneferu
- Claudio Talavera-Ballón
- Fely Tchaco
- Nga Trinh
- Ira Watkins
- Michelle Zhao