



Artists transform the Shipyard Crane

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The Giant Crane at Hunters Point Shipyard Becomes a Monument of Light, Sound and Voice This October

CRANE: A Temporary Monument in Five Movements honors the generations who worked at the Shipyard and closes San Francisco's Shaping Legacy season of temporary monuments on October 9, 10, 16 and 17, 2026

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (September 15, 2026). On four nights this October, the nearly 500-foot gantry crane at Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, once the largest cranes in the world, will be transformed into a monument of projected light, original music and the voices of the Bayview Hunters Point community. *CRANE: A Temporary Monument in Five Movements* is the final event of the San Francisco Arts Commission's Shaping Legacy program, the Mellon Foundation funded series of temporary monuments that has been giving form to overlooked San Francisco histories throughout 2026.

Presented by Shipyard Trust for the Arts (STAR), CRANE is created by a team of internationally recognized artists: video artist Ian Winters and light artist Elaine Buckholtz of Nighthouse Studio, painter and Shipyard historian Stacey Carter, composer Evelyn Ficarra, and sculptor and oral historian William Rhodes. Performances take place on Friday and Saturday, October 9 and 10, and Friday and Saturday, October 16 and 17, 2026. The performance is streamed free at **crane.video** and can be experienced at ticketed watch parties in the Bayview and at the Shipyard.

A monument to the people who worked here

Built in 1947 to lift the 16-inch guns and 400-ton turrets of battleships, the Hunters Point gantry crane was an engineering marvel: 730 feet wide, 8,400 tons of steel, and rated to hoist 450 tons.

On the day it was first tested it lifted a 630-ton load, then set it down so gently that it cracked an eggshell without breaking the yolk. When it was built, its runway stood only about 12 feet lower above the water than the roadway of the Golden Gate Bridge; Cold War modifications later raised the crane to nearly 500 feet. Today it stands silent over a closed base that is being cleaned up and readied for its eventual transfer to the City and redevelopment.

At its peak, 18,000 people worked at the Shipyard, among them the African American families who came west during and after World War II and built the neighborhood that surrounds the base. Their children and grandchildren still live in Bayview Hunters Point today. Among the workers the project honors are the men of Shop 71, the all-Black painting crew that maintained the giant crane hundreds of feet above the ground and whose safety suggestions were adopted across the yard.

“The crane is the one thing everyone in this city can see from far away, and almost nobody knows what it is or who kept it running,” said Barbara Ockel, President and CEO of Shipyard Trust for the Arts. “CRANE puts it on the map as a monument to all the people who worked at the Shipyard, and especially to the African American community whose parents and grandparents worked here and who are still our neighbors. We want people all over San Francisco to look toward Hunters Point that night and appreciate what they are seeing.”

Five movements for crane, voice, light, sound and projection

CRANE unfolds in five movements composed for the crane itself, for voice, light, sound and projection. Ian Winters’ video and Elaine Buckholtz’s lighting turn the crane’s towers and 730-foot runway into a screen and a sculpture of moving light, using archival photographs researched by Stacey Carter over three decades of documenting the Shipyard. Evelyn Ficarra’s score weaves the recorded sounds of the yard, the words of former workers and their families, and a live band with the singing of the Dr. George W. Davis Senior Center Choir, directed by Kenneth Little of Littletune Productions. The result is a work of monumental scale that is also intimate: the history of the Shipyard told by the people who lived it, projected onto the structure they built and maintained.

“This is a structure that was built for war and industry, and for thirty years it has just been standing there,” said lead artist Ian Winters. “We are not decorating it. We are asking it to hold the stories of the people who worked underneath it, at a scale that matches the structure and the history.”

A world-class team of artists

Lead artist Ian Winters is recognized as a master of video projection for both site-specific work and the stage. His projects range from year-long community-rooted works such as Summer, Winter, Spring at San Francisco’s UN Plaza and A Telling Light with Elaine Buckholtz, to site-specific collaborations with NAKA Dance Theater and East Side Arts Alliance, Joanna Haigood’s Bayview Stories and Robert Moses’ Kin, to international productions for the Opéra de Paris, English National Opera and the Lumiere Festival. He oversees all artistic and technical aspects

of CRANE. With Buckholtz he founded Nighthouse Studio in 2006; their collaborations transform buildings, landscapes and public sites into quiet spectacles of moving light and sound.

Stacey Carter, CRANE's lead historian, combines printmaking and painting to transform photographs into monumental reflections on place and history. Since moving her studio to the Shipyard in 1998 she has built a rich archive of the site's photographs, articles and artifacts, and her work brings visibility to people and stories often excluded from civic memory. Her art has been exhibited at the Oakland Museum of California and is held in collections including the San Francisco Civic Art Collection, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and San Francisco International Airport. Her collaboration with Bayview seniors surfaced the history behind William Rhodes' Shipyard History Quilt, which was exhibited in Routed West at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive and opens this month at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC. Carter received the 2025 Michael Hamman Memorial Award for Maritime History.

Elaine Buckholtz is a light installation artist who transforms environments into quiet spectacles of light, sculptural elements and sound. With more than 25 years in lighting design, including collaborations with Meredith Monk and Merce Cunningham, she holds MFAs from California College of the Arts and Stanford University and is a professor at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design; she leads all lighting design for CRANE. Evelyn Ficarra is a composer and sound artist with an international track record in interdisciplinary media and performance. A native Californian, her music has been heard across the U.S., U.K., Europe, Australia, South America and Asia, and often grows from words, images and environmental sounds; her Submarine Revisited wove interviews with former submarine captains into an original score. For CRANE she works with Navy archive and Shipyard oral history recordings. William Rhodes is a mixed media artist with more than 30 years of experience whose work is held by the Crocker Art Museum and the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. An arts educator in Bayview Hunters Point for 15 years, he leads community outreach for CRANE with Carter, and his African American Shipyard History Quilt Project with local seniors continues as part of the project.

The live band features David Boyce (saxophone and electronics), Scott Foster (electric guitar) and Cairo McCorkran (drums and percussion), with Chris Evans (cello, recorded). The livestream and cinema production are by Ian Winters' company, 37 North Inc.

Made with the community, for the community

CRANE grew out of years of relationships in Bayview Hunters Point. Stacey Carter and William Rhodes have worked for years with Bayview seniors, many of them the children of Shipyard workers, surfacing the history behind Rhodes' Shipyard History Quilt and recording the oral histories that now form part of the score. The Dr. George W. Davis Senior Center Choir sings live at the opening and closing performances. The first weekend's watch parties are hosted in the neighborhood at Zaccho Dance Theatre, and residents of the 94124 ZIP code can attend the Shipyard watch parties for a \$10 community ticket.

“I’ve spent thirty years documenting the Shipyard’s history and sharing it with the Bayview-Hunters Point senior community,” said Stacey Carter. “CRANE brings their photographs, stories, and voices together in a monument that recognizes their contributions and gives them a visible place in the history they helped shape. For me, it reflects the spirit of the long-underrecognized Bayview-Hunters Point community—now expressed at a scale that no one can touch.”

How to experience CRANE

The Shipyard remains a closed federal site, so the artists’ original hope of welcoming the public onto the crane pier itself could not be realized this year. Instead, the performance comes to the audience: a live broadcast carries the projection and the music from the crane to watch parties in the neighborhood and to screens anywhere.

Free livestream. All four performances stream live and free at crane.video. At nearly 500 feet, the illuminated crane is visible from many points in San Francisco and around the Bay, and viewers are invited to host their own watch parties on land, sea or air with the music and imagery on their own screens. Anyone with a view of the crane can also watch and listen on their phone from wherever they stand. Bring headphones for some mighty sounds.

Weekend 1, Bayview watch parties: Friday, October 9 (with live choir) at Zaccho Dance Theatre, 1777 Yosemite Avenue, San Francisco. Doors 7:15 PM, performance 7:45 PM.

Weekend 2, Shipyard watch parties: Friday, October 16 and Saturday, October 17 (with live choir), at the Hunters Point Shipyard Artists Building 101, GPS 451 Galvez Avenue, San Francisco, following Shipyard Open Studios. Doors 5:30 PM, reception 6:00 PM, performance 7:45 PM. Guests watch the illuminated crane across the Shipyard while the full performance is projected at large scale on the wall of a neighboring building, with the choir performing live on Saturday.

Tickets: shipyardartists.com/crane. Shipyard watch party tickets range from \$10 community tickets for Bayview Hunters Point residents to \$75 reserved seats.

Support CRANE

CRANE is funded by the Kenneth Rainin Foundation Open Spaces Program, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the San Francisco Arts Commission’s Shaping Legacy: Temporary Monuments grant supported by the Mellon Foundation, with special thanks to the U.S. Navy Hunters Point Naval Shipyard Base Realignment and Closure team, the Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure and developer Five Point. STAR is still raising funds to cover the cost of a broadcast-quality livestream, so that viewers everywhere see and hear the performance as it deserves, and a first-rate experience for the audiences at the watch parties. Donations of any size can be made at shipyardartists.com/crane. All supporters are recognized on the CRANE web pages, and significant donations are honored with a company logo projected on the crane.

About Shipyard Trust for the Arts

Shipyard Trust for the Arts (STAR) is a nonprofit organization that supports the community of working artists at Hunters Point Shipyard, one of the largest artist communities in the United States, and connects the Shipyard's art and history with the Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood through exhibitions, Open Studios, public events and youth programs. STAR is led by President and CEO Barbara Ockel, who has been part of the Shipyard community since 1984 and previously served for 13 years as Executive Director of the Bayview Opera House. shipyardartists.com

About Shaping Legacy

Shaping Legacy is the San Francisco Arts Commission's multi-year initiative, launched in 2023 with support from the Mellon Foundation, to examine the city's public monuments and to expand recognition of histories that have been left out of them. In 2026 the program is presenting a season of temporary monuments across the city in light, textiles, performance and augmented reality, honoring histories of labor, migration and displacement. CRANE is the culminating event of the season.

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