

PRESS RELEASE

San Francisco Reimagines the Monument: Shaping Legacy Project Unveils Five Temporary Public Art Commissions

Mellon-funded initiative challenges the "bronze and stone" tradition with installations centering the working class, migration, and community memory.



SAN FRANCISCO, April 7, 2026 – The San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC) announced today five visionary artists and their temporary public installations for the Shaping Legacy Project, a multi-year initiative funded by the Mellon Foundation to critically examine and reimagine the city's commemorative landscape.

Departing from traditional notions of permanent bronze and stone monuments, these projects - set to launch across San Francisco between May and October 2026 - utilize light, textiles, augmented reality (AR), performance and community ritual to honor histories of labor, migration, and displacement often left out of the civic narrative.

"Shaping Legacy represents an important evolution in how we tell the story of San Francisco through public art," said **Ralph Remington**, Director of Cultural Affairs. "By centering communities that have been historically underrepresented or erased, these artists and their temporary installations will help us build a more inclusive, honest, and democratic public realm. These aren't just art installations; they are living sites of memory."

The 2026 Shaping Legacy Commissions:

- **Kaleb Duarte, *Embassy of the Refugee (Civic Center)***: A dramatic architectural intervention at the Pioneer Monument using scaffolding, plywood, and netting

suggestive of refugee tents to center the histories of undocumented migrants and displaced peoples.

- **Adrián Arias, *A Sweet Route: Tribute to Paleteros (Mission/Potrero Hill)*:** A vibrant tribute to immigrant ice cream vendors, featuring a 15-foot sculpture, public performances and a massive mobile paleta celebrating everyday workers who bring joy, flavor, cultural memory, and care to the city's streets.
- **Ariana Martinez-Cruz, *Threaded Histories (Mission/Chinatown)*:** A textile-based memorial using embroidery and wearable art to honor the hands and stories of San Francisco's garment workers, cultural organizers and immigrant families.
- **Afatasi the Artist, *Memory Portal: 1945 (Bayview-Hunters Point)*:** A site-specific, scrap steel sculpture with AR technology that honors the labor, migration, and cultural formation of the Great Migration families who built San Francisco's Harlem of the West.
- **Stacey Carter & Team, *CRANE (Hunters Point)*:** A monumental illumination of the historic Shipyard Gantry Crane, transforming an implement of war into a monumental and inspirational work of public art, created through light, sound, and community voices.

The 2026 Shaping Legacy Artist Bios:

- **Kaleb Duarte:** Kaleb's work explores the interaction between objects, the body, and public space as carriers of memory through improvised ritual and community engagement, often within sites of political and social tension. He has exhibited and lectured at leading institutions, cultural centers and universities internationally. Kaleb collaborates with undocumented youth in the Bay Area through the Embassy of the Refugee and Arte Urgente.
- **Adrián Arias:** Adrián Arias is a Peruvian-born visual artist, curator, and cultural producer in the San Francisco Bay Area. His work blends painting, murals, installations, and public art to explore memory, dreams, Indigenous identity, social justice, and sexual equality. Adrián curates projects uniting Indigenous and immigrant communities, fostering engagement and honoring ancestral knowledge. For *A Sweet Route*, Adrian is in collaboration with Baldocchi Projects, CANA and Nomadic Press.
- **Ariana Martinez-Cruz:** Ariana is a fiber and embroidery artist whose work reflects cultural identity and community stories. Born and raised in San Francisco, her work celebrates the people, places, and memories that shape our city. Through *Sew Frisco*, Ariana creates wearable thread art honoring San Francisco life. Ariana collaborates with Bay Area communities to create accessible, meaningful art—aligning her passion for storytelling through textiles.
- **Afatasi the Artist:** Afatasi is a generational San Franciscan, a master welder, and a cultural architect whose practice honors ancestors and preserves the living culture of San Francisco's Harlem of the West. Working in steel, genealogy research, and social practice, she transforms industrial material into monuments and relics of cultural memory. She is the founder of *Where're Yo' People's From?!?*, a community genealogy program centered on ancestral reunification.
- **Stacey Carter:** The CRANE team includes five experienced artists behind the 2024 Shipyard Crane illumination. Stacey Carter has explored Shipyard history for 24 years; William Rhodes leads intergenerational art with local seniors and youth; Ian Winters and Elaine Buckholtz animate stories through light and

projection; and Evelyn Ficarra creates immersive soundscapes. Together, they reimagine the crane from a forgotten landmark to a living monument through collaborative, place-based public art.

Upcoming Public Engagements:

The Shaping Legacy public art activations continues this spring with a series of dialogues and free public programs:

- **April 11:** *Shaping Legacy Panel* at the Night of Ideas
- **April 18:** *Public Art Panel* at the SF Art Fair
- **April 23:** Community Programming in Union Square with SOMA Pilipinas
- **April 25:** Community Programming at Coit Tower with California Migration Museum

For more information on the artists, project locations, and the full Shaping Legacy timeline, visit: sfartscommission.org/content/shaping-legacy

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About the Shaping Legacy Project

Shaping Legacy is a multi-year commitment to critically examine the monuments and memorials in San Francisco's Civic Art Collection. The project will engage communities that have historically been excluded from discussions, produce an Audit report, create opportunities for artist-led activations in public space and support temporary installations that reimagine future monuments and memorials in our city.

About the San Francisco Arts Commission

The San Francisco Arts Commission 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.

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