

## ARTS

# SFO's Harvey Milk Terminal 1 to Open With New Public Art

By [Sarah Hotchkiss](#)

Jun 26



Installation view of 'Harvey Milk: Messenger of Hope' in SFO's Harvey Milk Terminal 1, opening July 23. [#Courtesy of SFO Museum#](#)

When you're listing off the Bay Area's great art collections, chances are you're forgetting one very important stockpile of visual art—the airport.

Outside of local museums, the San Francisco International Airport is, in fact, home to the largest and most valuable public collection of art in the region.

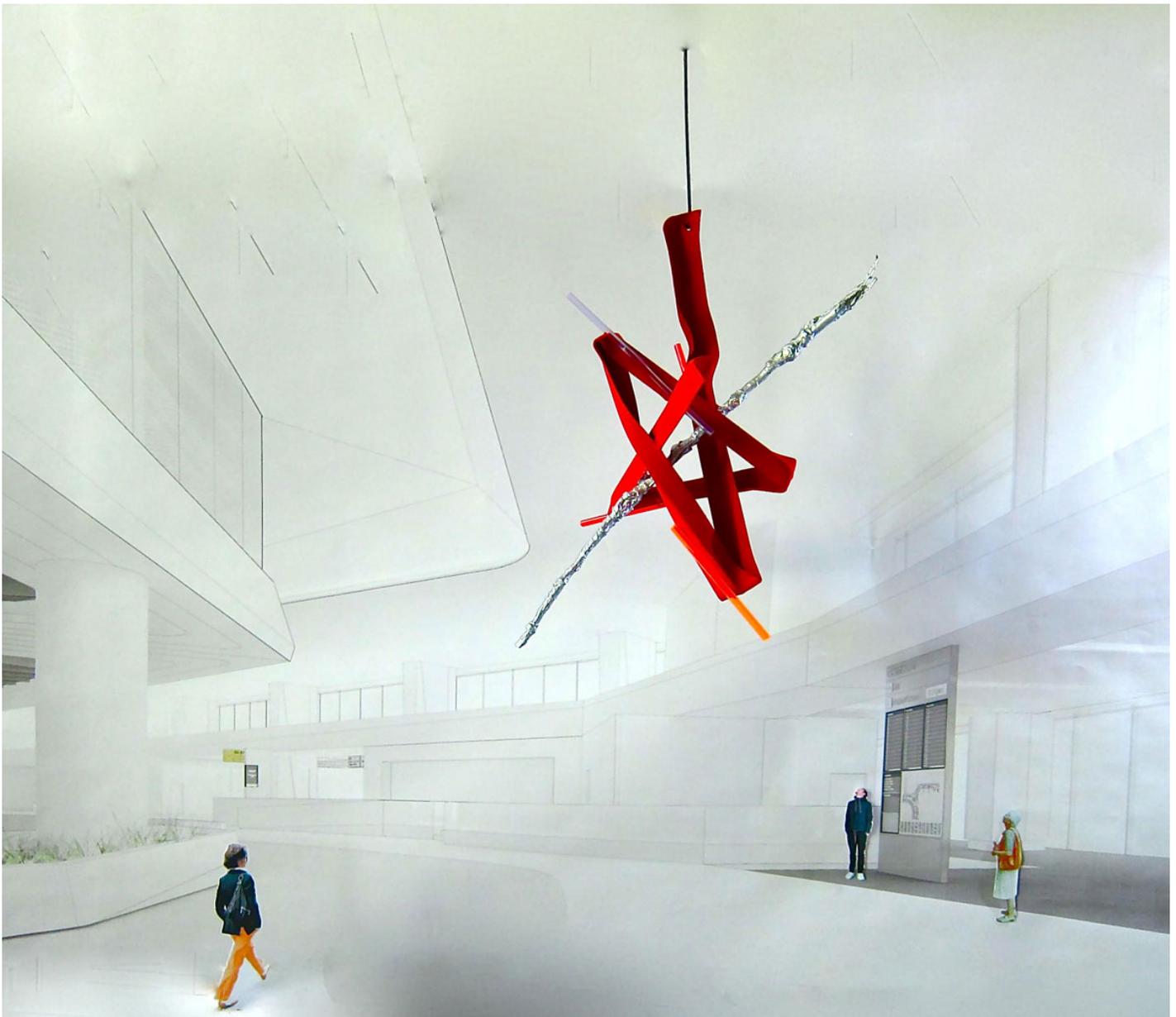
And it's getting bigger.



When the Harvey Milk Terminal 1 opens with nine of its planned 25 gates on July 23, it will contain five new public art commissions and 25 two-dimensional works, many of which are by Bay Area artists. Ultimately, the terminal will be home to a total of 14 new public artworks.

The terminal's redesign and expansion will continue until 2023, but it's the steady whine of construction that funds the airport's art—SFO is subject to the Art Enrichment Ordinance, which requires two percent of the gross construction costs of publicly funded capital projects be allocated for public art.

As the first airport terminal in the world named for an LGBTQ+ leader, it's fitting that a huge amount of temporary wall space is given over to the text and images of Harvey Milk: Messenger of Hope, an SFO museum exhibit that will remain in place for at least two years.

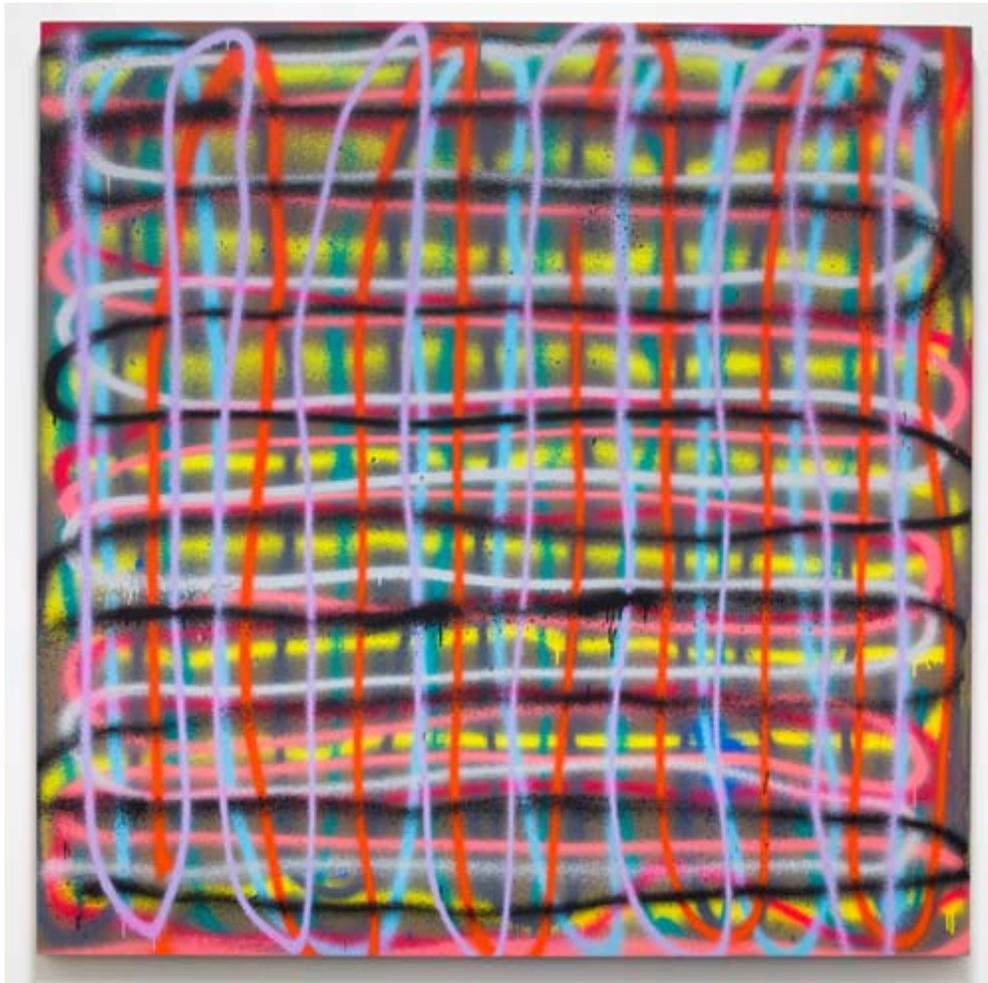


Rendering of Mark Handforth's 'Cadmium Red Giant' in Harvey Milk Terminal 1, SFO. ~~©Cöürtesy of the San Francisco Arts Cömmiission#~~

“I have high hopes for the future of San Francisco,” reads a quote from Milk, in a block of introductory wall text just after the terminal’s security checkpoint. Stretching 380 feet, the exhibit includes dramatically blown-up images of Milk meeting with constituents; ephemera from his runs for city supervisor; newspaper articles documenting his assassination, along with that of Mayor George Moscone, by former Supervisor Dan White; and one particularly heartfelt handwritten note of condolence.

The nearly 100 images were gathered from the San Francisco Public Library and the GLBT Historical Society—and a November 2018 public call for images, which yielded

some results that will actually enter the aforementioned collections, SFO Museum representatives say.



Artwork by Alicia McCarthy inside Harvey Milk Terminal 1 at the San Francisco International Airport. ©Cōūrtešy ōf tħe Sañ Fřañcišcō Ařtš Cōmīššìōñ #

Until Terminal 1 construction is completed, this impressive display is only available to ticketed passengers, but a permanent (and much smaller) exhibition on the life and legacy of Harvey Milk will be installed outside the security checkpoint for the general public in 2021.

What isn't going away is the first batch of the terminal's permanent public artworks: two mosaic murals (**Robert Minervini** and **Jason Jägel**), two hanging sculptures (**Liz Glynn** and **Mark Hanforth**) and a wall installation (**Leonardo Drew**).

Such artworks fulfill many functions at the airport, says Susan Pontious, the SFAC's civic art collection and public art program director. One is wayfinding. Such as:

“Meet me under that witchy red metal star with the silver tree branch and neon bits” (Hanforth’s Cadmium Red Giant).

Another is as an introduction to the particular aesthetics of San Francisco. See the terminal’s “Mission Wall,” an alcove hung with two-dimensional work by artists associated with the Mission School—Barry McGee, Chris Johanson and Alicia McCarthy.

And then there’s the bald reality of how most people will spend quality time with SFO’s art: waiting for flights. Here we have Minervini’s delightfully intricate mosaic piece, Hyper-Natural Bay Area, designed like a window looking across the Bay to a blue-hued San Francisco skyline (with the Salesforce tower still under construction). On the window’s “ledge,” an assortment of potted plants, cats, classical and Brancusi-looking sculpture, and a friendly wooden bear take shape courtesy of what Minervini estimates are millions of tile pieces.



Rendering of Jason Jagel's 'The Author & Her Story,' in Harvey Milk Terminal 1, SFO. **#COURTESY OF THE SAN FRANCISCO ARTS COMMISSION#**

A few gates down, Jägel’s *The Author & Her Story*—despite being made from glazed tile and stretched to 13-by-33 feet—retains the rich, moody hues of the original oil painting that served as its model. Its fantastical scene of multicolored characters

sitting around sphere (a globe? a fortune teller's crystal ball?) spreads to the mural's very margins, suggesting imaginative possibilities beyond the tiles' edges. Suffice to say: Both mosaics are full of details to keep the impatient traveler engaged and amused.

Unfortunately, the most unconventional pieces of the five new public artworks are the ones that might be hardest to observe for any substantial period of time. Drew's Number 69S, assembled from recycled materials and past artworks, spans three walls of a boarding area's bulkheads and is best viewed from the center of the terminal walkway, likely to be too busy for looky-lookers.

And Liz Glynn's incredible Terra-Techne hangs above the terminal's new security check-in area—six separate representations of the world's continents. Seen from below, cast stainless steel plants native to California seem to grow upside-down from each land mass. From above, Glynn covers the continents in circuit-board patterns made up of three-dimensional terracotta tiles.

Which is all to say: Next time you fly Jet Blue or Southwest, you might end up hoping for some slow lines.



Harvey Milk Terminal 1 opens to the public on July 23, 2019, with a free community day scheduled for Saturday, July 20. [Details here.](#)

Sponsored