

To: Visual Arts Committee
San Francisco Arts Commission

From: Lynne Baer and Lisa Lindenbaum
Public Art Advisor

RE: 1939 Market Street Public Art Project
Artwork location: Northeast lot line exterior wall

Background

Mercy Housing California (MHC) invited qualified artists residing in the United States, particularly in California and the Bay Area, to submit their qualifications for the commissioning of multiple artworks for a 15-story, high-rise Type 1 building comprising a maximum of 187 affordable residential units for seniors (unit mix to be 55% studios and 45% 1BRs, with one 2 BR on-site staff unit), community spaces for resident use, ground floor retail and property management and services offices. Construction is slated to begin November, 2024 and the project is scheduled to be completed August, 2026.

Openhouse, a housing and services provider specializing in creating LGBTQ welcoming senior services, will be the social services provider on site and is a consultant to Mercy to ensure the entire development process will be conducted in a way to achieve the goal of creating a community welcoming to specific needs of LGBTQ and other vulnerable, underserved elders.

Due to the location of the development (within the San Francisco Planning Code District C-3), MHC is required to provide art equal to 1% of that portion of the development's construction cost to be paid for with public funding from the City of San Francisco, and to provide the art to be installed and maintained in areas on the site of the building and clearly visible from the public sidewalk or open space feature.

This iconic building will be the entry point to the Castro LGBTQ Cultural District and adjacent to the Native American Cultural District in San Francisco.



1939 Market Street

The building is located at the intersection of Market and Duboce Avenue

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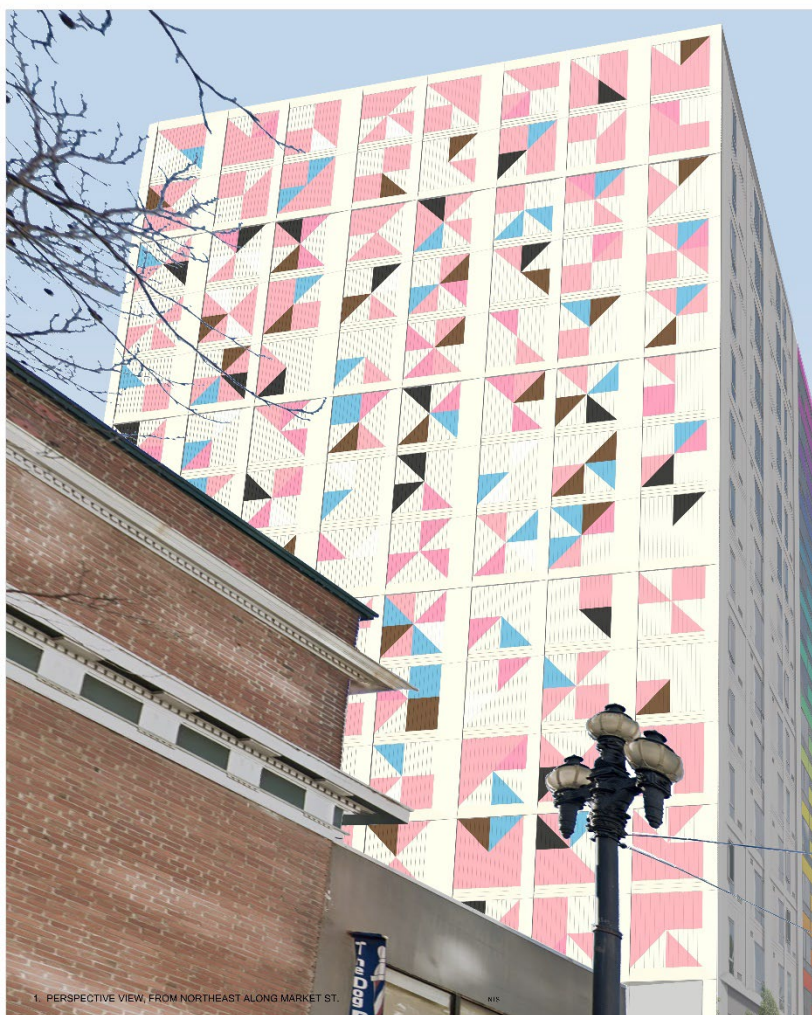
Artist Selection Process and Community Involvement

Lynne Baer and Lisa Lindenbaum were selected as the Public Art Advisors and an Art Selection Committee was formed consisting of representatives from MHC, the architects, Openhousesf, Castro LGBTQ Cultural Center, Haight Street Art Center, and Frank Smigiel, Director of Arts Programing at Fort Mason Arts and Culture Center. The RFQ was distributed to artists, arts organizations, as well as cultural entities in the Bay Area, with an emphasis on reaching diverse artists. Fifteen artists responded and 5 finalists were selected. The proposals were all different but interesting interpretations of the challenge. It was a difficult decision for the Selection Committee but after a thoughtful discussion, the Committee decided to allocate the entire budget to the proposal submitted by Catherine Wagner for the northeast exterior wall visible from both Market and Duboce. Members of the participating organizations shared the proposal with their members who are supportive of the proposal.

Proposal: *Pride Flag*

Artist: Catherine Wagner

The triangles will be painted GFRC (Glass fibre Reinforced Concrete) panels



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Artist Statement

The new Pride Progress flag, which incorporates black, brown, light blue, pink, and white stripes to highlight the contributions of people of color, the trans community, and individuals living with HIV/AIDS, was a major touchstone in my approach to this public work. Referencing these colors, along with the history of the pink triangle and the AIDS memorial quilt, felt like a cohesive and thoughtful summation of where we have been and where we are going as a community. The pink triangle, in spite of its tragic origins, has long been embraced as a symbol of joyful pride, defiance, and visibility. Whenever I see representations of the pink triangle, I am moved by the icon's ability to reaffirm that "We are here, I am."

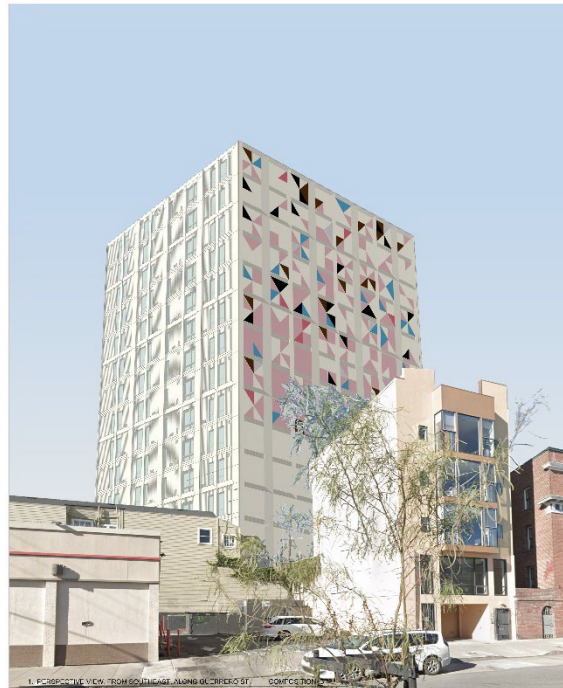
For my proposed installation on the northeast lot line exterior wall, I have distilled the classic pink triangle into a system of triangles that is punctuated by the inclusion of the black, brown, blue, and white planes derived from the Pride Progress flag. The resulting effect is an abstraction that not only seamlessly integrates into the warp and weft of 1939 Market's textile-like architecture, but also recalls the AIDS memorial quilt — often cited as the "largest community art project in history."

It is important to me that this work pays homage to identities that have been historically underrepresented in the LGBTQ community and that it is a welcoming moment of pride for the building's residents and the people of San Francisco.

Perspective Views:



Northeast at Market and Laguna Streets



Southeast along Guerro Street

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Catherine Wagner (b. 1953, San Francisco) is a member of the LGBTQ community, a second generation Filipina-American, as well as a lifelong San Franciscan. For over forty years she has been observing the built environment as a metaphor for how we construct our cultural identities. She has examined institutions as various as art museums and science labs, the home and Disneyland. While Ms. Wagner has spent her life in California, she has also been an active international artist, working photographically, as well as site-specific public art, and lecturing extensively at museums and universities. She has received many major awards, including the Rome Prize (2013-2014), a Guggenheim Fellowship, NEA Fellowships, and the Ferguson Award. In 2001 Ms. Wagner was named one of Time Magazine's Fine Arts Innovators of the Year. Her work is represented in major collections nationally and around the world, such as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, SFMOMA, The Whitney Museum of American Art, MOMA, MFA Houston. She has also published several monographs, including *American Classroom*, *Art & Science: Investigating Matter*, and *Cross Sections*.

In addition to her studio work, Wagner has also created large-scale, site-specific public art pieces for the city of San Francisco, the UCSF Medical School, and the city of Los Angeles. Her public artwork combines the theoretical rigor of her studio practice with an awareness of the specifics and history of each site.

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