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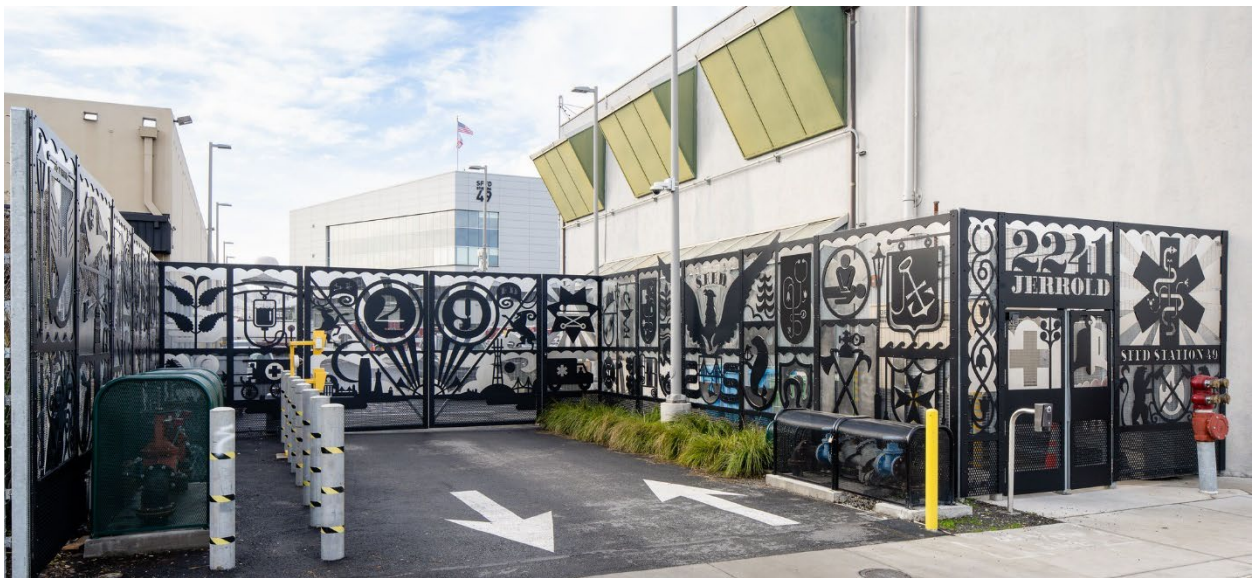
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**\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\***

## **On The Fence: New Artwork Featuring Emergency Services Iconography and City Landmarks Unveiled in District 10 at San Francisco Fire Station 49**

*“Serving the City”, by artist Michael Bartalos, showcases the historical legacy and symbolism of emergency medical services and firefighting, as well as specific landmarks, neighborhoods, flora and fauna of San Francisco.*



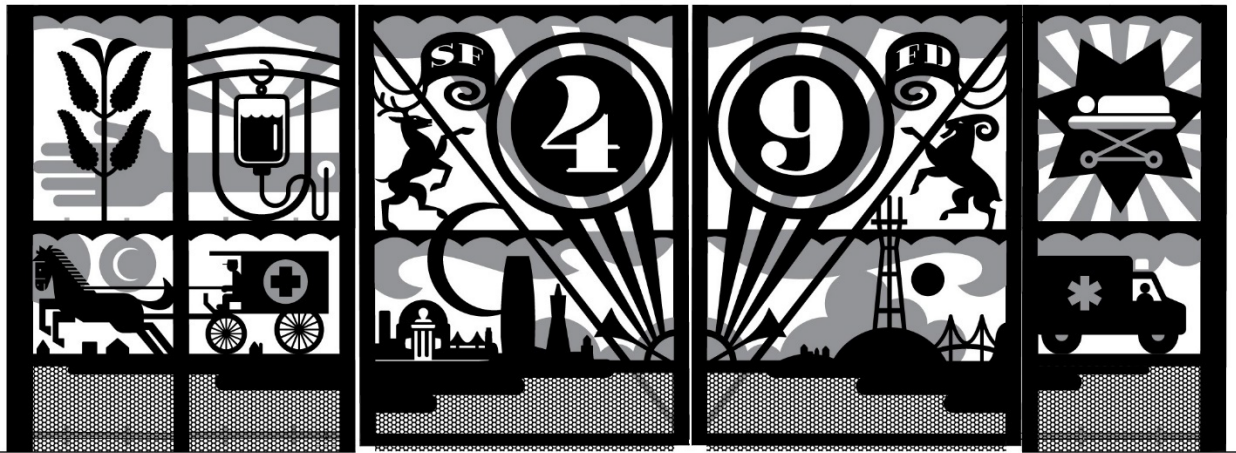
*Image: “Serving the City” by Michael Bartalos, 2022, Jerrold Avenue Gate. Photo by Ethan Kaplan Photography; Courtesy of the San Francisco Arts Commission*

**SAN FRANCISCO, May 25, 2023** – Mayor London Breed joined District 10 Supervisor Shamann Walton, Fire Chief Jeanine Nicholson, Director of Cultural Affairs Ralph Remington and other City officials on Wednesday, May 24 to officially unveil a new public art installation at San Francisco Fire Station 49 as part of National Emergency Medical Services (EMS) week.

**“Serving the City”**, by artist Michael Bartalos, embellishes the vehicle and pedestrian entrance and exit gates on both Jerrold Avenue and McKinnon Avenue at San Francisco's Fire Station No. 49 in the Bayview, located at 2241 Jerrold Avenue.

The artwork's references to emblems, insignia, and badges of the EMS profession express the strength, courage and commitment of the personnel working within the facility and speak to the history and visual vernacular of the San Francisco Fire Department and the communities it serves.

"Art is the heart of San Francisco. What I love most about this piece is the story it tells, reminding us of the dedication our emergency service providers bring every day in service to others," said **Mayor London Breed**. "On National EMS week, we celebrate the tireless work of our emergency services community, and pay tribute to those who are no longer with us, leaving a legacy of service for which we are all grateful."



Rendering: "Serving the City" by Michael Bartalos, 2022, Jerrold Avenue Gate. Courtesy of the Artist.

"Serving the City" is comprised of layered cut stainless and painted steel panels installed on the facility's street-facing entry and exit gates.

"I'm thrilled that we were able to bring this symbolic artwork to District 10 in an area and space where it is much needed," said **Supervisor, Shamann Walton**. "Combining art and saving lives is something we need to celebrate, and I'm thankful this piece is accessible to everyone in our community."

"I can't think of a more fitting time than during National EMS week to officially unveil such a magnificent and symbolic installation" said Director of Cultural Affairs, **Ralph Remington**. "Art is powerful and healing. This work is our 'thank you' to the City's first responders who do so much for the people of the City and County of San Francisco."

These surfaces act as Station 49's public face for what is an otherwise restricted-access building. As such, the artwork functions as identifying markers for this essential civic facility and serves to enhance the ambulance drivers' experience of entering and exiting the facility several times a day.

The 58,451-square-foot facility stands four stories tall and replaces the previous Emergency Medical Services headquarters, which was located in San Francisco Fire Department's logistics warehouse at 1415 Evans Avenue. The new headquarters has state-of-the-art technologies designed to meet the specialized needs of Emergency Medical Services staff and will allow first responders to better prepare their ambulances for deployment when responding to calls for emergencies and health crises.

The San Francisco Fire Department Emergency Medical Services Station No. 49 replacement project was funded by the 2016 Public Health and Safety Bond, which allocated \$350 million toward capital improvements for City facilities to meet the critical health and safety needs of San Francisco.

San Francisco Public Works managed the \$50.1 million project and hired MEI/MarJang Joint-Venture Architects for the design of the building. S.J. Amoroso Construction served as the general contractor for the project.

Construction on the facility began in October 2018 and was completed on May 7, 2021.

"These gates are beautifully designed by the artist who truly took the time to research the history and meaning behind each of the EMS symbols featured in this piece," said **Fire Chief Jeanine Nicholson**. "This work allows us to meaningfully honor the people that work here. I'm honored to have been part of the public art selection panel for this project that has brought such a beautiful piece to this community."

The artist was chosen from a group of five finalists in July 2018 by the Fire Station No. 49 public art selection panel. The chosen work draws upon historical symbolism of the emergency medical services and firefighting legacy of the City and is composed of easily readable iconography of great significance to both realms of public service.

San Francisco Arts Commission managed the artist selection and installation process.

Funding for this public art 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.

The artwork project budget was approx. \$418,000, and covered artists fees and design, engineering, fabrication, transportation and installation costs.

"At the end of the day, if this work brings joy or even a brief moment of comfort to the hard-working EMS personnel that work here at Station 49, then my work is done," said artist, **Michael Bartalos**. "It was an honor to work on this project and with the Fire Department and Arts Commission."

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**Artwork Images Available on Flickr:**

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/sfac/albums/72177720307574225>

**About National EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Week:**

May 21-27, 2023, is the 49th annual National EMS Week. In 1974, President Gerald Ford authorized EMS Week to celebrate EMS practitioners and the important work they do in our nation's communities. This year's theme is EMS: Where Emergency Care Begins.

**About the 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](http://sfartscommission.org).

**About the San Francisco Fire Department**

The mission of the San Francisco Fire Department is to protect the lives and property of the people of San Francisco and its visitors from fires, natural disasters, accidents, hazardous materials incidents, and other causes requiring a rapid and skilled response by land or water; serve the needs of its most vulnerable residents through community paramedicine, and save lives and reduce suffering by providing emergency medical services; prevent harm through prevention services and education programs. To learn more, visit [sf-fire.org](http://sf-fire.org).

**About the Artist**

Michael Bartalos was born in Heidelberg, Germany and was raised in New York City. He attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Pratt Institute where he received his BFA, and finally Stanford University where he earned his MFA. During his career, Bartalos has worked in graphic arts, printmaking, video, and sculpture, among other mediums. Bartalos' work spans across the US, Europe, and Asia in addition to appearing in several notable publications and institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art, Getty Research Institute, The New York Times, Harvard Business Review, and many others. Michael Bartalos currently lives and works in San Francisco.

Michael Bartalos is a visual artist working in print, video, and sculpture. He has produced artist's multiples in collaboration with Xerox PARC, the San Francisco Center for the Book, the Maryland Institute College of Art, and the National Science Foundation's Antarctic Artists and Writers Program. His works have been exhibited internationally and are found in numerous artists' books collections including those of the Getty Research Institute, MoMA, and the Walker Art Center.