

## Afatasi the Artist

### Southeast Treatment Plant Construction Fence Temporary Artwork Program 2023 – 2024 Program Year | Artwork Design Narrative

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Afatasi The Artist is a member of San Francisco’s only shrinking demographic. Her work is informed by her deep concern of the continued population decline of her community; affirming them through mixed-media textile, metalwork, and research, used as vehicles of disruption, exploration, and future-dreaming.

**Modality:** Modal quality; a particular mode in which something is experienced or expressed.

**Motif:** A decorative pattern, or design. A distinctive feature or dominant idea in an artistic work.

In **Modalities & Motifs**, Afatasi explores the creation of several motifs as elements of visual storytelling, highlighting portions of her community’s experience, history, and cultural identity. These motifs will appear in repeating patterns throughout the banners, aiming to honor:

- Our unique lineage and history in this country, particularly in San Francisco.
- Our deep appreciation and respect for our ancestors, elders, and our architects of freedom.
- Our continued fight for human rights in the United States.
- “Black-American” culture; beauty created under extreme duress.
- The understanding that everything in the past, present and future is connected.

Symbols, motifs and patterns function as a form of visual storytelling; giving context and social cues, while having deep meaning, and cultural implications. Symbols and motifs are significant outward representations of a culture. Identifying cultural symbols and investigating their origins can often provide insight into that culture's history and values in which patterns are important; offering visual clues to an underlying order. Recognizing patterns allows us to predict and expect what is coming. The process of pattern recognition involves matching the information received with the information already stored in the brain. Making the connection between memories and information perceived is a step of pattern recognition called identification.

Five different motifs were created by the artist for this project, they are:

1. **Buffalo Soldier Motif:** In 1866, the United States Congress effectively segregated the United States Army with the establishment of six regiments which consisted entirely of newly emancipated Freedmen (formerly enslaved men), who were eventually known as The Buffalo Soldiers. They were fierce soldiers who fought bravely in many significant military events; when outnumbered and outgunned, THEY STILL WON, and were amongst the most decorated soldiers of their time. They also were amongst the first National Park Rangers. Afatasi honors the military history of San Francisco’s only shrinking demographic, as our contribution to the military of America is SIGNIFICANT.
2. **North Star Motif:** Where would we be without our star guides? In this motif, The North Star (Polaris, Alpha Ursae Minoris) is centered for its role as a navigational tool used by our architects of freedom—from Harriet Tubman to the millions of unknown souls who were guided by The North Star to their fates.
3. **HELA Motif:** This is a symbol for “HeLa” as in HeLa Cells, or the immortal cells of Henrietta Lacks, a Baltimore woman and descendent of persons enslaved in The United States, whose cells were harvested from her body without her consent during her medical examinations for cervical cancer, which she later succumbed to. This motif gives honor and remembrance to all victims of cruel medical experimentation, malpractice, and negligence, due to race.
4. **Fade in the Water (Montgomery Riverfront Brawl) Motif:** On August 5, 2023, a series of highly-disturbing videos went viral, and The Folding Chair of Resistance, was born. Kindly Google the details of this

incident, to draw your own conclusions. Fade in the Water was seen by many descendants as an act of resistance and solidarity; for centuries, the public brutalization of enslaved people and their descendants raged with impunity. Unjustified White mob violence particularly during the American apartheid era, was a major contributing factor in The Great Migration, and for many people, San Francisco was the last stop on that journey.

5. **Freedom Day Transfer Motif:** On June 19, 1865, The United States Union Army arrived in Galveston, Texas and announced the emancipation of enslaved persons by executive order. This motif honors the thousands of Texans who made San Francisco their home, and implemented Juneteenth celebrations in the city for decades. The SF Muni Transfer is a symbol of ridership, or being a passenger, as many people of The Great Migration used public/railway transportation systems along their journeys.

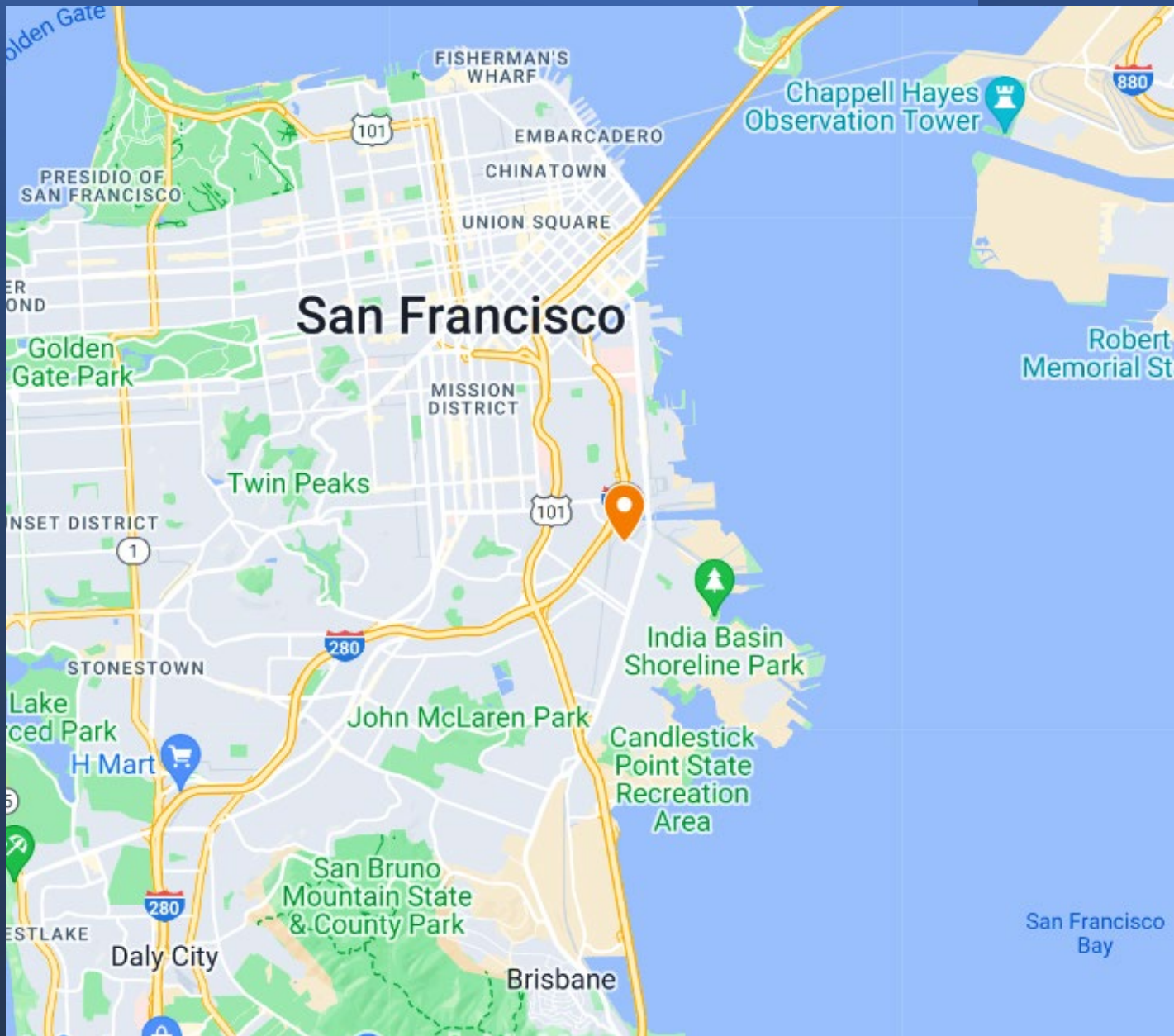
Afatasi is also the creator of, **“The Afro Block Party”**, a cartoon series with cute characters with different Afro Hairstyles. *Modalities & Motifs*, includes various themes, they are:

1. The Birth of Afro-Dite (Aphrodite) — This is the artist’s interpretation of “The Birth of Venus” by Sandro Botticelli.
2. Rainbows ‘R’ Sky Afros — Rainbows are a naturally occurring phenomena, like Afro Hair.
3. The Golden Afro-Noon — In Disney’s Alice and Wonderland, Alice is invited to sing amongst the flowers, in a song entitled, “The Golden Afternoon”. This is the artist’s take on that scene.
4. Frida Kahl-Fro — Frida Kahlo is a beloved iconic Mexican painter, and this is the artist’s interpretation of her self-portraiture style.
5. E.T. ‘Fro Home — In the movie E.T. (Extra Terrestrial), there is a scene where E.T. makes the children’s bikes fly into the night; this is the artist’s take on that scene in the movie.
6. San ‘Fro-cisco — In this city scape, three members of the Afro-Block Party catch a ride on a cable car uphill.
7. Thee Girl With Pearls In Her Curls — This is the artist’s interpretation of Johannes Vermeer’s, “Girl With the Pearl Earring”.
8. Fog City — Welcome to San ‘Fro-cisco where Ain’t Sh\*t Sunny.
9. Afro-A-Go-Go — There is always a party going on at the Afro-A-Go-Go.
10. ‘Fro-Na Lisa — This is the artist’s interpretation of Leonardo DaVinci’s, “Mona Lisa”



**SOUTHEAST TREATMENT PLANT  
CONSTRUCTION FENCE  
TEMPORARY ARTWORK PROGRAM**

FALL 2023 – FALL 2024





Southeast Wastewater Treatment Plant





Sirron Norris  
*The Illustrated History of  
Bayview-Hunters Point (2020)*



Malik Seneferu  
*Clear the Air* (2021)





Nancy Cato  
*Jamari's Journey* (2022)





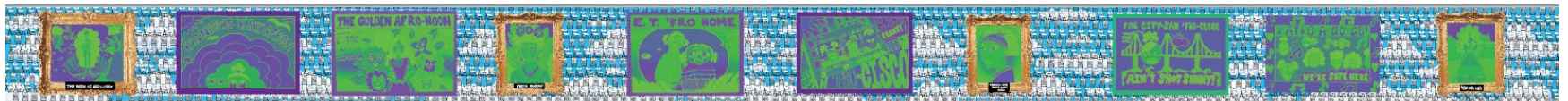
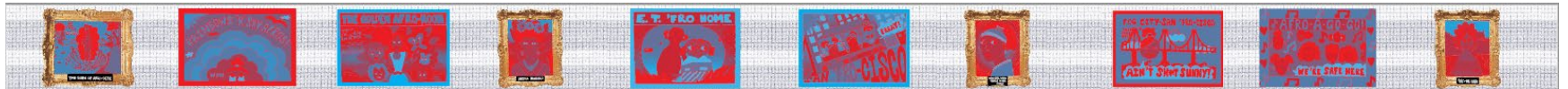
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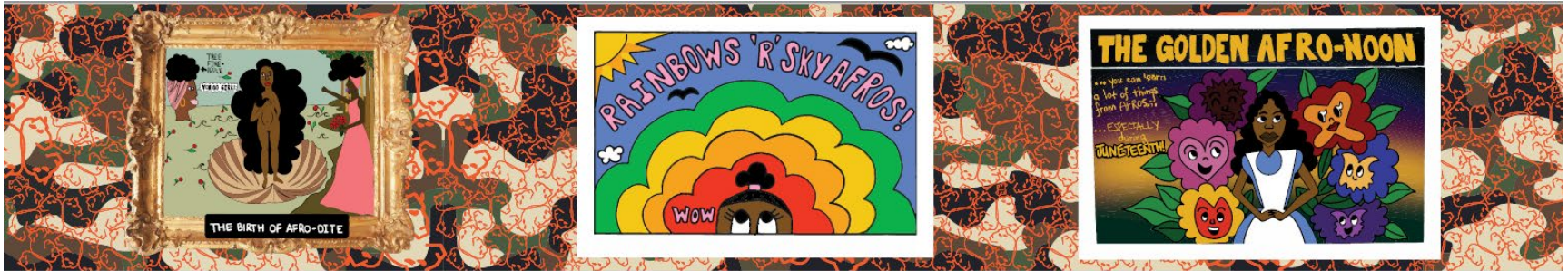
SEP FENCE 2023 - 2024

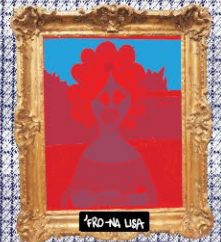
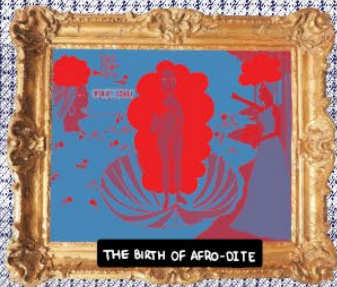


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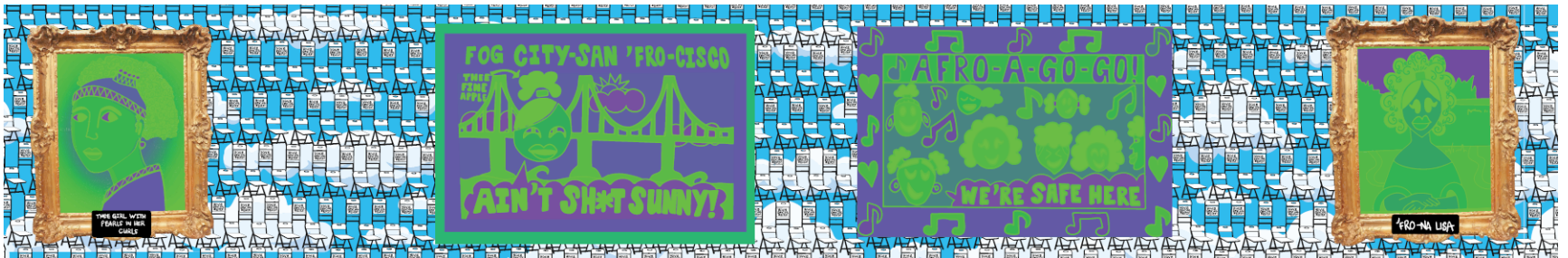
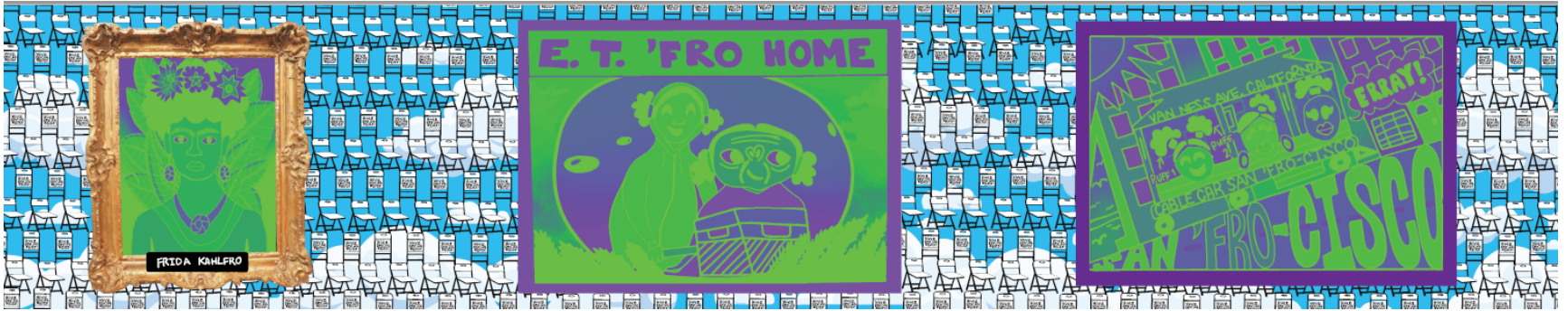
## *MODALITIES & MOTIFS*











FADE IN THE WATER (MONTGOMERY RIVERFRONT BRAWL)



FREEDOM DAY TRANSFER



