




MEMORANDUM

December 6, 2024

TO: MEMBERS, PORT COMMISSION
Hon. Kimberly Brandon, President
Hon. Gail Gilman, Vice President
Hon. Willie Adams
Hon. Stephen Engblom
Hon. Steven Lee

FROM: Elaine Forbes
Executive Director 

SUBJECT: Request approval for members of the San Francisco Port Staff and Port Commission to travel to Paris in 2025 for the following goals: (1) to deliver abandoned property (historical artworks) to a cultural institution for preservation, study, and public display, (2) engage with representatives at the Port of Le Havre, France, and (3) research activation/placemaking concepts in Paris, France.

DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION: Approve the Attached Resolution No. 24-59

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Port staff recovered abandoned property at Crane Cove Park in May of 2022. Port staff identified and confirmed the historical significance of the property as artwork by Ary Arcadie Lochakov. Port staff, with San Francisco Arts Commission staff, approached numerous institutions and identified a museum in France, the Museum of Art and History of Judaism ("mahJ"), to receive the works. The mahJ agreed to preserve, study, and display the art.

Port staff requests that the Port Commission approve Vice President Gail Gilman, and Port staffers Arianna Cunha and Jermaine Joseph's travel to Paris, France to deliver the art. All three Port representatives would present the artworks and participate in an official ceremony and discussion organized by the mahJ in early 2025.

Staffers Cunha and Joseph are knowledgeable about the Port's discovery of the pieces and were instrumental in their research and public display in San Francisco in August 2024. Vice President Gilman's appearance, along with her interest in art and familiarity with the city, will add prestige to the Port of San Francisco's presentation and act as the Port's official representative.

Beyond the art transfer, the trip provides Port staff with an opportunity to expand their understanding of port and placemaking practices in France. In particular, the city of Paris' efforts to make the Seine River more accessible and recreational over the past decades is a worldwide model for reclaiming waterfronts.

Port staff seek to engage with port officials in Le Havre, France to research shared initiatives around business and environmental strategies. Port staff also plan to tour areas in Paris that highlight activation, revitalization, or placemaking efforts, which can contribute to the Port's strategies in these areas.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

This project supports the goals of the Port's Strategic Plan as follows:

Engagement:

By donating the recovered art of Ary Lochakov to the Museum of Art and History of Judaism (mahJ), the Port of San Francisco will be participating in the preservation of the important history of a marginalized community.

Equity:

By transferring the art of an individual who died due to antisemitic persecution, the Port has the opportunity to promote the preservation and education of Jewish art history.

Economic Recovery:

By engaging a sister port and Parisian officials, Port staff can expand their understanding of successful strategies to advance the Port's ongoing efforts to stabilize our financial position.

BACKGROUND

On May 13, 2022, Port Maintenance staff discovered 48 pieces of assorted artwork at Crane Cove Park. The artwork appeared to be intentionally abandoned: the works were arranged on cement benches with no identification of ownership and no owner nearby.

PROJECT

Port staff attempted to identify any owner(s) of the pieces when they were discovered and verified with the San Francisco Police Department that the artwork was not reported stolen or missing. Port staff could not successfully identify any owner or claimant. Port staff researched the artwork and found that 38 of the 48 pieces appear to have been created by a renowned Jewish artist named Ary Arcadie Lochakov between 1920 and 1941. Staff

research found that Ary Arcadie Lochakov was a WWI veteran in the Russian army who moved to Paris, France to pursue his art career. He was a journeyman artist with his works entered in many prestigious shows and exhibitions throughout France. During WWII, he was forced into hiding in a Jewish ghetto in Paris under Nazi occupation, where he died from malnutrition on October 5, 1941.

Lochakov's artwork has great cultural and historical significance to the Jewish community and his works are considered a portion of a collection known as "Our Martyr Artists." Port staff further verified the significance of his artwork by contacting Jewish art experts at institutions in Israel and France. Port staff conferred with staff of the San Francisco Arts Commission, which is responsible for City approval of the acquisition, transfer, or sale of all works of art by the City. Arts Commission staff determined that the works were not appropriate for local institutions and that transfer to another institution for preservation, study, and display may be appropriate and would relieve the City of the responsibility and expense of storing and preserving the works.

Port staff, and the Executive Director, in consultation with Arts Commission staff and the City Attorney's Office, vetted potential institutions for receiving the collection. Staff contacted various institutions, including local cultural institutions, such as The Contemporary Jewish Museum, to confirm any interest in taking possession of the works for preservation, study, and public display. Staff agreed that the Museum of Art and History of Judaism (mahJ) in Paris, France is the most appropriate institution interested in accepting and displaying the works in an exhibit dedicated to the artist.

FUNDING

Subject to Port Commission approval, the Port will incur the cost of airfare and lodging for Vice President Gilman and Port staffers Cunha and Joseph for 6 days.

RECOMMENDATION

Port staff recommends the Port Commission approve the attached resolution authorizing the travel to Paris.

Prepared by: Arianna Cunha
Administrative Analyst, Special Projects
Maintenance Division

For: Tim Felton
Director
Maintenance Division

**PORT COMMISSION
CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO**

RESOLUTION NO. 24-59

WHEREAS, Port staff recovered abandoned property at Crane Cove Park in May of 2022. Port staff identified and confirmed the historical significance of the property as artwork by Ary Arcadie Lochakov; and

WHEREAS, Port staff, with San Francisco Arts Commission staff, approached numerous institutions and identified a museum in France, the Museum of Art and History of Judaism (mahJ), to receive the works. The mahJ agreed to preserve, study, and display the art; and

WHEREAS, Port staff plan to deliver the artworks to the mahJ in 2025; and

WHEREAS, The mahJ invited Port staff to participate in a panel about the art; and

WHEREAS, Engaging with representatives of sister port Le Havre, France and Paris would provide Port staff with an opportunity to expand their understanding of successful business development and placemaking practices; and

WHEREAS, Port staff requests that the Port Commission approve travel and lodging for Vice President Gail Gilman, and Port staffers Arianna Cunha and Jermaine Joseph to Paris for 6 days; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Port Commission hereby approves this travel request.

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the Port Commission at its meeting of December 10, 2024.

Secretary