

July 15, 2020

**Civic Art Collection Staff Report**

**Item 4C. Removal of *Christopher Columbus* by Vittorio Di Colbertaldo**

Presentation of the public safety concerns necessitating the immediate removal of *Christopher Columbus* by Vittorio Di Colbertaldo, located in the rotunda of the parking lot of Coit Tower/Pioneer Park at 1 Telegraph Hill Blvd.

Accession #: 1957.27  
Artist: Vittorio Di Colbertaldo  
Title: *Christopher Columbus*  
Date: 1957  
Medium: Bronze  
Dimensions: 12' tall  
Credit Line: Gift to the City of San Francisco by the Italian community of San Francisco

The City removed the statue early Thursday, June 18, under direction of the Mayor.

The statue had been extensively vandalized on Indigenous People's Day, 2019 and then vandalized on multiple occasions the week of June 8. Staff had already commenced with an evaluation process, assessing options how to best engage the community regarding concerns about the monument. However, over the weekend of June 11-12, protest flyers were circulated online with a call to action for protestors to remove the statue themselves on Friday, June 19. Similar statues across the country had been toppled by demonstrators during protests. We removed the statue quickly in the interest of public safety.

*(On June 10 in Portsmouth, Virginia a person was gravely injured when a monument was pulled down and he was crushed. Then, on Monday, June 15 violence erupted in Albuquerque, New Mexico between vigilante groups and protestors over the removal of a public monument, which resulted in gunfire.)*

<https://www.sfartscommission.org/our-role-impact/about-commission/policies-guidelines/Public-ArtCivic-Art-Collection>

**7.2.1. Provisions for Emergency Removal:** In the event that the structural integrity or condition of an artwork is such that, in the opinion of the Art Commission's Director of Cultural Affairs, the artwork presents an imminent threat to public safety, the Director may authorize its immediate removal, without Commission action or the artist's consent, by declaring a State of Emergency, and have the work placed in temporary storage. The artist and the Arts Commissioners must be notified of this action within 30 days. The Commission will then consider options for disposition: repair, reinstallation, maintenance provisions or deaccessioning. In the event that the artwork cannot be removed without being altered, modified, or destroyed, and if the Artist's Agreement with the City and County has not waived his/her rights under the California Art Preservation Act and the 1990 Visual Artists' Protection Act, the Director must attempt to gain such written permission before proceeding. In the event that this cannot be accomplished before action is required in order to protect the public health and safety, the Director shall proceed according to the advice of the City Attorney.