[Initiating Landmark Designation - Zakheim's History of Medicine in California Frescoes]

Resolution initiating a landmark designation under Article 10 of the Planning Code for the History of Medicine in California frescoes at the University of California San Francisco, Parnassus Campus, painted by Jewish artist Bernard Zakheim.

WHEREAS, Under Planning Code, Section 1004.1, the Board of Supervisors (Board) may by Resolution initiate landmark designation; and

WHEREAS, Started in 1935 and completed in 1938, the "History of Medicine in California" frescoes at the University of California, San Francisco's (UCSF) Toland Hall are significant pieces of public art painted by renowned 20th Century Jewish artist Bernard Zakheim; and

WHEREAS, The ten panel series was commissioned by UCSF and funded through the Works Project Administration's Federal Art Project, a New Deal program designed to employ artists and fund visual art in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The frescoes depict vivid images of doctors, lab scientists, suffering and recovered patients throughout California's medical history, and include several UCSF faculty members; and

WHEREAS, Zakheim was a major artist of his era who had immigrated to San Francisco from Poland via New York in 1920 and studied fresco painting technique with Mexican artist Diego Rivera; and

WHEREAS, In addition to artistic skill, Zakheim was regarded for his left-wing political convictions, and the History of Medicine in California murals were at one point deemed controversial and papered over for a period of 20 years that coincided with a period of American history tainted by right wing anticommunist hysteria; and

WHEREAS, The History of Medicine in California frescoes were referred to by UCSF archivist Polina Ilieva in 2015 as the “jewel of the University’s Art Collection” and, in a 1996 presentation by Dr. Robert Schindler, as “the product of an extraordinary individual;” and

WHEREAS, Zakheim is also well known for founding the San Francisco Artists and Writers Union, a group of activist artists who lobbied for a federally funded arts program that became the Public Works of Art Project, which funded Zakheim’s famed work on Coit Tower; and

WHEREAS, Among all of Zakheim’s work, the History of Medicine in California frescoes are Zakheim’s largest single work; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Board hereby initiates landmark designation of Zakheim’s History of Medicine in California frescoes, located at the University of California, San Francisco, Parnassus Campus, in Toland Hall; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board requests that the Planning Department prepare a Landmark Designation Report to submit to the Historic Preservation Commission for its consideration of the special historical, architectural, and aesthetic interest and value of Zakheim’s History of Medicine in California frescoes; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board requests that the Historic Preservation Commission consider whether Zakheim’s History of Medicine in California frescoes warrant landmark designation, and submit its recommendation to the Board according to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

City and County of San Francisco
Tails
Resolution

City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

File Number: 200677 **Date Passed:** July 28, 2020

Resolution initiating a landmark designation under Article 10 of the Planning Code for the History of Medicine in California frescoes at the University of California San Francisco, Parnassus Campus, painted by Jewish artist Bernard Zakheim.

July 20, 2020 Land Use and Transportation Committee - RECOMMENDED

July 28, 2020 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED

Ayes: 11 - Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton and Yee

File No. 200677

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 7/28/2020 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

London N. Breed
Mayor

7/31/20

Date Approved