SAN FRANCISCO
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Article 10 Landmark Designation
Fact Sheet

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"History of Medicine in California"

Two panels of the Bernard Zakheim's fresco in Toland Hall, UCSF Parnassus Heights

Photos from Architectural Resources Group, Inc. report to UCSF, 2020

Historic Name:	*"History of Medicine in California" frescoes*
Address:	533 Parnassus Avenue, UCSF Parnassus Heights
Block/Lot:	2634A/011
Zoning:	P (Public) / 130-D
Year Built:	1936-1938
Artist:	Bernard Baruch (Boruch) Zakheim
Prior Historic Studies/Other Designations:	Carey & Co., 2003. *University of San Francisco Parnassus Heights Campus, Historic Resource Evaluation Report*. September. Carey & Co., 2011. *UCSF Historic Resources Survey*. February.

	Page & Turnbull, 2005. *UC Hospital, 533 Parnassus Avenue, University of California, San Francisco Parnassus Heights Campus San Francisco, California, Historic American Building Survey Documentation*, November. University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), 2005. *Environmental Impact Report for LRDP Amendment No. 2 – Hospital Replacement Program.* January 14.
Prior HPC Actions:	None

Significance Criteria	*Events:* Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. *Architecture/Design:* Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, and/or represents the work of a master.
Period of Significance	The period of significance for the "History of Medicine in California" frescoes is 1936-1938. These dates encompass the painting of the 10-panel (plus two descriptive panels) series of frescoes in Toland Hall.
Statement of Significance	The "History of Medicine in California" frescoes, created by artist Bernard Zakheim and his assistant Phyllis Wrightson onsite at the University of California, San Francisco's Parnassus campus from 1936-1938, are significant for their association with the history of the Works Project Administration's Federal Art Project; and as an excellent example of the work of master artist and muralist, Bernard Zakheim, that displays distinctive characteristics of New Deal-era progressive mural artwork. The "History of Medicine in California" frescoes consist of 12 panels (10 pictorial and 2 descriptive) depicting California medical history with vivid, diverse images of doctors, lab scientists, and other medical professionals, and of suffering and recovered patients.

Assessment of Integrity	The seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Park Service (NPS) and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) are location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association.[1] *"History of Medicine in California,"* painted between 1936 and 1938 by Bernard Zakheim and assistant Phyllis Wrightson, retains a high degree of integrity to convey its artistic and cultural significance. The 12 panels (10 pictorial and 2 descriptive) retain high degree of integrity of location, design, association, workmanship, setting, and feeling. Although the murals have been restored and several currently exhibit water damage, they also retain a high degree of integrity of materials. Overall, the Department has determined that the "History of Medicine in California" frescoes in Toland Hall retain integrity to convey their historical and cultural significance.

[1] "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," *National Register Bulletin*, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995, p. 44.

Character-Defining Features	The character-defining features of the "History of Medicine in California" frescoes are those physical features associated with structural support, construction, and visual depiction of the 12 mural panels (10 pictorial and 2 descriptive panels), including: • All metal (or other) furring channels that support the mural panels; • All metal lathe and plaster, including the scratch, brown, and other plaster coats that underlie the *fresco buono* artwork of each panel; • The combination of pigment and plaster that forms each *fresco buono* panel; • The size, shape, form, and materials of each mural panel; • The arrangement, or sequence, of the mural panels as they currently exist and as per the artist's written description, as follows: Curved wall, from east to west Fresco 1: Dedication scroll Fresco 2: Doctors of Gold Rush Period/Early San Francisco Doctors Fresco 3: "Invasion of California" - Anza Expedition, 1775/Spanish Surgeon General Soler, 1798/Trapper Peg-Leg Smith Fresco 4: English Explorers of the 16th Century/Native California Herbs Fresco 5: Native Indians and their healing methods Fresco 6: Mission Indians/Portola Expedition, San Diego, 1789/Trapper J.O. Pattie, 1828 Fresco 7: Pioneer Doctors of Southern California/Doctors of Old Los Angeles Fresco 8: Description Scroll Flat wall, from west to east Fresco 9: University of California Medical School Fresco 10: Tribute to Hooper Foundation for Medical Research Fresco 11: Science – Past, Present, Future Fresco 12: San Francisco Medical History Note: Numbers for each panel are on a Key Plan prepared by Architectural Resources Group, Inc. for UCSF and included in images at end of this document.

Statement of Significance Summary

The "History of Medicine in California" frescoes, created by artist Bernard Zakheim and his assistant Phyllis Wrightson onsite at the University of California, San Francisco's Parnassus campus from 1936-1938, are significant for their association with the history of the Works Project Administration's Federal Art Project; and as an excellent example of the work of master artist and muralist, Bernard Zakheim, that displays distinctive characteristics of New Deal-era progressive mural artwork. The "History of Medicine in California" frescoes consist of 12 panels (10 pictorial

and 2 descriptive) depicting California medical history with vivid, diverse images of doctors, lab scientists, and other medical professionals, and of suffering and recovered patients.

Description and History

The mural cycle, "History of Medicine in California," consists of 10 decorated panels and 2 descriptive panels created in *fresco buono* style by artist, Bernard Zakheim, on the curved and flat walls of Toland Hall. Toland Hall is an auditorium that is located on the first floor of UC Hall at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) Parnassus Heights campus.

The UCSF Parnassus Heights campus site is the oldest and largest of the UCSF campus sites in the city. This campus site, which comprises approximately 107 acres of land, is in the Inner Sunset mixed-use neighborhood. UCSF's facilities are concentrated at the north end of the campus site with the physical core located along Parnassus Avenue, which extends east-west through this densely developed area. These include Moffitt and Long Hospitals, the Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute (LPPI), and Medical Building 1 as well as other institutional buildings housing clinics, research facilities, housing, parking, and other support services. The 61-acre Mount Sutro Open Space Reserve occupies the central and southern portion of the campus site. The streets adjacent to the developed portion of the campus are occupied by two- to three-story single-family and multi-family residences constructed in the early decades of the 1900s.

UC Hall

The Beaux-Arts style UC Hall (formerly UC Hospital or UCH) is a monumental seven-story building that stands at the south side of Parnassus Avenue between 3rd and 4th Avenues. UC Hall is located at west end of the UCSF Parnassus campus site, adjacent to the courtyard in from of the Dental Clinics building (707 Parnassus Avenue) on west side and Clinical Sciences building (521 Parnassus Avenue) on east side. Opposite UC Hall, on block bounded by 3rd and 4th Avenues, is a small plaza with large Beniamino Bufano sculpture, the low-slung UCSF Marilyn Reed Lucia Childcare Center, and several two-story multi-family residential buildings.

Completed in 1917 by architect Lewis P. Hobart, UC Hall was the first new hospital building and first major addition to the hospital complex and remains the oldest extant building at the University of California, San Francisco's Parnassus Heights site. UC Hall was:

> constructed as a seven-story brick and steel building, which was "fireproof and sound-proof" with natural ventilation in every room. The building featured a machine shop and laundry in the basement; a grand lobby, kitchen, cafeteria and amphitheater [auditorium] (named for Hugh Toland) on the first floor; the surgery department on the second floor; and wards, nursing stations, laboratories, and patient rooms (capable of holding 220 patients) on the third through fifth floors. The building's plan featured a long, double-loaded corridor with four wings [containing the four wards (medical, surgical, women's, and children's)] that extended southward toward the rear of the steeply sloping site.[2]

[2] Page & Turnbull, Inc., *UC Hospital, 533 Parnassus Avenue, University of California, San Francisco Parnassus Heights Campus San Francisco, California, Historic American Building Survey Documentation*, November 22, 2005, 3.

Adjacent to the east end of the larger structure was a small one-story Classical Revival style pavilion with hipped roof and Ionic columns that was used as the hospital's waiting room and admissions desk.[3] This small building was removed/remodeled in 1930s during construction of the adjacent Clinical Sciences building.

The UC Hall building features a tripartite composition with large arched windows, a rusticated base, lavishly ornamented bay windows, and a well-defined classical cornice. The following description is excerpted from the 2003 Carey & Co. historic resource evaluation of the building:[4]

> The primary façade is highlighted by four primary bays that are separated by three narrow bays with lower, modest cornices. The upper bays' painted plaster walls are each symmetrically subdivided by vertically aligned windows framed by profiled trim and a central projecting volume. The historic surviving fenestration primarily features rectangular wood three-lite hoppers over double-hung three-over-three windows. The top story windows all terminate into arches. The five, ornately detailed, prominent terra-cotta framed window boxes at the third and fourth floors were originally designed to illuminate surgical suites with indirect, northern sunlight through the fourteen-lite steel fixed window with two small casements. Terra-cotta detailing accents the north elevation with horizontal banding, festoons, medallions, figure sculptures, engaged pilasters, and cartouches.
>
> The ornate upper story detailing wraps around to encompass the northernmost bay on both the east and west elevations. The remainder of the side and rear elevations are more simply detailed than the north. The painted plaster walls feature a few architectural details. … Numerous windows on the secondary elevations have been replaced with aluminum double-hung units. Other alterations include the addition of ductwork and pipes, air conditioning units, and seismic reinforcing ties.

The south (rear) façade is characterized by several unique architectural features, including the semi-circular massing of Toland Hall in the westernmost courtyard formed by two of the four projecting wings.

<u>Toland Hall</u>

This auditorium (or lecture hall) was named for Hugh H. Toland, founder of Toland Medical College, precursor of University of California (UC) Medical School. Located at the west end of the first floor of UC Hall, the semi-circular Toland Hall appears on the south façade as a "…two-story drum-shaped mass with raised skylights and roof equipment."[5] The room, which has three sections of tiered seating that descends downwards from the outer walls, is accessed via doors at either end of the flat north wall. A semi-circular raised platform extends from the center of the north wall, at the lowest point in the room, out into the curved seating area. This platform is accessed by stair ramps from either side that extend down along the north wall of the room to the platform. Walls are constructed of reinforced concrete with plaster cladding and the only fenestration consists of

[3] Page & Turnbull (2005), 8.

[4] Carey & Co., Inc., *UCSF Parnassus Heights Campus Historic Resources Evaluation*, September 2003, 15-16.

[5] Page & Turnbull (2005), 21.

metal-and-glass skylights arranged in a starburst pattern on the ceiling. The skylight monitors project above a nearly flat roof with simple parapet.

On the interior, the north wall is flat while the other walls gently curve to form a semi-circle. Wall sections are delimitated by simple plaster pilasters. Due to the configuration and height of the room, the north wall is tallest. The center, lower portion of the north wall, at the platform or speaker's podium, contains whiteboards and a door. Above these features, an elaborately carved wood surround frames a roll-down screen. On either side of the wood surround are large rectangular murals and then murals that are irregular in shape as they follow the slope of the stair ramps. At either end of the north walls are contemporary wood doors. Adjacent to these doors, at either end of the room, are plaster walls with a descriptive mural panel – at east wall is dedication panel and at west end is description panel. The remaining curved plaster walls are occupied by murals. All murals rest on a slightly projecting sill (or chair rail) and are divided by simple plaster pilasters. The ceiling is divided by plaster coffering and the floor coverings are carpet in the seating area and parque in the lecture area.

The carved wood surround and murals were added to Toland Hall in the 1930s as noted in the Page & Turnbull (2005).[6]

> The WPA, through the Federal Art Project, commissioned Bernard Zakheim to paint a series of frescoes in UC Hospital's Toland Hall and in the Medical School Building's Cole Hall. From 1935 to 1938, Zakheim worked on these murals, which depicted the history of medicine in California and included scenes of traditional Native American medicine, the founders of the UC Medical School, and the Berkeley Cyclotron. The Federal Art Project also provided funds for an elaborately carved wood chalkboard surround and podium, which were completed in 1937 by Russian woodcarver and New Deal artist Michael von Meyer.[7]

"History of Medicine in California"

The "History of Medicine in California" mural cycle consists of a series of ten pictorial panels and two descriptive panels on the walls of Toland Hall, a large auditorium or lecture room within UC Hall. Bernard Zakheim completed the Toland Hall frescoes with his assistant Phyllis Wrightson, who compiled much of the historical research, and plasterer Kai Andersen, between 1936 and 1938.[8] In addition to conducting much of medical research for the murals, Wrightson also transferred the

[6] Nancy Rockafellar, *A History of the University of California San Francisco,* http://history.library.ucsf.edu/ accessed August 9, 2020, paraphrased in Page & Turnbull (2005), 11.

[7] Michael von Meyer (1894-1984) was born in Odessa, Russia and died in Laguna Honda Hospital in San Francisco. He was an artist that carved elaborate wood sculptures for interior installations. In addition to his piece in Toland Hall, his work includes carved stair railings at Beach Chalet, SF; and, garden decoration in Fleishacker Playground, SF. He studied at California School of Fine Arts and taught at the CCAC [California College of the Arts] in the 1940s. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco website at https://art.famsf.org/michael-von-meyer accessed August 6, 2020.

[8] Page & Turnbull (2005), 17.

cartoon drawings for Zakheim in preparation for painting the final images and added parts of the paintings.[9]

The large frescoes range in size with two of irregular shape due to the stair ramps at the north wall of the auditorium. The murals along the curved wall are approximately 14-feet by 4-feet. Recent investigations of the murals to assess condition and feasibility of removal indicates that "plaster was likely applied to the expanded metal lath in several layers, including a scratch coat, brown coat (arriccio layer), and the finish coat (intonaco layer) that Zakheim painted on."[10] The curved frescos are "installed on a furred wall that has minimal attachment to the existing concrete wall" while the "flat frescos are installed on a furred wall in front of a hollow clay tile wall with areas of brick masonry infill."[11] At curved walls, the furred wall consists of

> vertical black iron furring channels, at least two horizontal black iron furring channels, expanded metal lath, and plaster. The channels and metal lath are tied together with wire. The narrow void between the furred wall and concrete wall is filled with plaster debris from the application of the scratch coat of plaster.[12]

Like many other WPA-era murals, including those at Coit Tower (1 Telegraph Hill Boulevard - listed on the National Register of Historic Places and as San Francisco Landmark No. 165) and the Alemany Health Center (35-45 Onondaga Avenue, San Francisco Landmark No. 272), the "History of Medicine in California" was painted in *fresco buono.* In utilizing the *fresco buono* technique, Zakheim followed

> …the ancient Italian tradition as the Mexican artists [such as Diego Rivera and Jose Orazco] interpreted it. In this process, fine marble dust is mixed with slaked lime to create the painting surface. In *fresco buono*, the plasterer prepares the painting surface with layers of cement and rough lime plaster, a day's worth of work; the artist applies the color as long as the surface remains moist. As the plaster dries, the painting becomes part of the wall.[13]

The fresco process is elaborated further by Nathan and Matthew Zakheim, the sons of artists Bernard Zakheim and Phyllis Wrightson,[14] in their description of the UCSF murals restoration in 1960s, which was originally published in the UCSF student newspaper, "Synapse," and reprinted

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[9] Robert S. Sherins, MD, ed. and comp., "History of Medicine in California Articulated in Frescoes: The Story behind the Murals of Toland Hall, UCSF" (2014), 29. Accessed via http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.675.6932&rep=rep1&type=pdf

[10] Architectural Resources Group, Inc. (ARG), *Feasibility Study – UCSF Toland Hall Frescoes* (March 16, 2020), 2. Similar information is also included in Page & Turnbull, Inc., *UCSF UC Hall Mural Relocation Validation Study* (March 13, 2020).

[11] ARG (2020), 2-3.

[12] ARG (2020), 2.

[13] National Register of Historic Places, Coit Memorial Tower (Amendment), City and County of San Francisco, California, National Register #07001468, 2018, Section 8, page 29.

[14] Wrightson was Zakheim's assistant during creation of "History of Medicine in California." The two later married and had two sons, Nathan and Matthew.

in a research manuscript on the "History of Medicine in California" frescoes prepared by Robert S. Sherins, MD, in honor of the sesquicentennial of UCSF, School of Medicine (Sherins (2014)):

> For thousands of years frescoes have been a method through which artists paint directly on the wet plaster of walls. Pigments are brushed directly into fresh plaster using only water as a vehicle, the plaster itself being the medium. Once hardened [the] plaster and pigment becomes one. Seen under a microscope, one particle of pigment would be surrounded by ten particles of plaster. The pigments are exclusively earth colors - Indian red, yellow ochre, burnt sienna, terra verte, to name a few. With time the plaster can harden to limestone, remaining as vivid for centuries as when first painted. This durability explained the present-day survival of ancient Byzantine and Italian frescoes.[15]

Zakheim's assistant, and later, his second wife, Phyllis Wrightson notes that Zakheim's affiliation with UCSF followed on his work at Coit Tower as well as at Alemany Health Center (35-45 Onondaga Avenue, 1935).

> during the period following the completion of the Public Works of Art Program, Zakheim was commissioned under the sponsorship of the SERA [State Emergency Relief Administration] to execute two frescoes in the Alemany Health Center, for the San Francisco Department of Public Health. Called, 'Community Spirit' and 'Growth' the excellence of these murals was instrumental in an award to him of subsequent decorations in the University of California Hospital.[16]

Sherin's study also provides first-person accounts of the development of the "History of Medicine in California" murals by Dr. Chauncey Leake, who was one of the primary UCSF staff that spearheaded the Cole Hall and Toland Hall mural projects. At the time these murals were installed, Dr. Chauncey Leake (1896-1978) was a UCSF Professor of Pharmacology and of the History of Medicine and served as Librarian.[17] The following biographical information is from his obituary in the *New York Times:*

> Leake was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey and graduated from Princeton in 1917 and then the University of Wisconsin where he earned a Ph.D. and taught pharmacology and physiology. In 1928, Dr. Leave moved to the University of California, San Francisco, where he established the department of pharmacology. He discovered the anesthetic divinyl ether … and also did research on a wide variety of subjects including leprosy, the action of narcotic drugs, the regulation of the production red blood cells, and the biochemistry of the brain and the central nervous system. In 1942, Dr. Leake gave up his research…to become a full-time administrator. He became executive vice president of the University of Texas Medical School in Galveston, and in 1956, he moved again, to Ohio State University in

[15] UCSF student newspaper, "Synapse," [Synapse: Vol.12 No.6, 8 April 1968], quoted in Robert S. Sherins, MD, Research Manuscript in Celebration of the Sesquicentennial of University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine, *"History of Medicine in California": Articulated in Frescoes* (2014), 77.

[16] Sherins (2014), 40, quoting Phyllis Wrightson. No citation is provided for Wrightson's description.

[17] "Zakheim Frescoes by Dr. Chauncey Leake," UCSF Student Newspaper, Synapse, Vol 7, No. 7, 19 April 1968. Reprinted in Sherins (2014), 14.

> Columbus, where he stayed until 1962. At that time, he returned to the University of California, San Francisco, and took responsibility there for coordinating the growing programs of research and training for medical students. … Dr. Leake wrote books on the amphetamine drug, the history of yellow fever, ancient Egyptian medicine, Harvey's discovery of the circulatory system, medical ethics and the pioneers of physiology and pharmacology. … He was a popularizer of science, an advocate of strong public health measures … and urged a stronger role for music and the humanities at a time when the world was placing growing emphasis on science.[18]

From a Letter to the Editor by Dr. Leake, originally published in "Synapse," and reprinted in Sherins manuscript:[19]

> It was Dr. Isabella Perry, in 1935, who suggested that we might obtain funds from the Public Works Administration for some artworks around our campus. At the time, during the midst of the [Great] Depression, there was little artistic activity around our campus. We were developing the humanities, particularly through an effort in the History and Philosophy of the Health Professions.
>
> We were able to secure the interest of the WPA and arranged with Bernard Zakheim, the brilliant and then young pupil of Diego Rivera, to attempt fresco decoration on the blank walls of the large auditorium [Cole Hall] on the top floor of the old yellow brick Medical School building [demolished]…

Zakheim's first mural project at UCSF, as noted in the excerpt above, was two mural panels flanking the podium in Cole Hall auditorium (these two murals were removed from Cole Hall prior to its demolition in the 1960s and relocated to the current Health Sciences West building on UCSF, Parnassus Heights site). These two panels, completed in 1935 and titled "Rational Medicine" and "Superstitious Medicine," were meant to contrast the "irrational superstitious and highly emotional approach to sickness and health, which had been characteristic of medicine for so many centuries with the more direct, cool, and clear-cut straight-line scientific approach characteristic of our times…" wrote Dr. Chauncey Leake in 1968.[20]

While Dr. Perry may have made the initial recommendation, Zakheim undertood the murals with the support of UCSF doctors George Lyman and Chauncey D. Leake.[21] Dr. Leake appears to have been particularly important in ensuring funding, facilitating access to UCSF staff and medical history, and promoting and defending the artworks and artist. In addition to interviews with medical staff, Zakheim was provided unrestricted access to the Crummer Room containing

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[18] "Dr. Chauncey D. Leake Dies at 81; Pharmacologist and Administrator," *New York Times*, January 13, 1978. Accessed via https://www.nytimes.com/1978/01/13/archives/dr-chauncey-d-leake-dies-at-81-pharmacologist-and-administrator.html on August 7, 2020.

[19] "Zakheim Frescoes by Dr. Chauncey Leake," UCSF Student Newspaper, Synapse, Vol 7, No. 7, 19 April 1968. Reprinted in Sherins (2014), 12-13.

[20] "Dr. Chauncey Leake, Letter to the Editor," UCSF Student Newspaper, "Synapse" published April 1968. Reprinted in Sherins, 13.

[21] Page & Turnbull (2005), 17.

numerous books and on the history of medicine, including recently published *California's Medical Story* by Dr. Henry Harris.[22] Dr. Leake remained a champion of the murals throughout his affiliation with UCSF. After returning to UCSF in 1962 as an administrator, Dr. Leake was an active proponent of having the covered murals restored and returned to public view.

Although the mechanics of the transition from the original two panel commission to the second, larger "History of Medicine in California" commission are unclear, it appears that Zakheim's mural cycle in Toland Hall built-upon his previous work. Given overlaps in timing, funding sources, and the consistent involvement of a small group of UCSF administrative staff, it appears that Zakheim's Toland Hall was intended to be an extension, or expansion, on the original themes outlined for "Rational Medicine" and "Superstitious Medicine." Zakheim wrote to fellow muralist, Jose Clement Orozco, that the "…Toland Hall series followed a specific program 'to use as subject the history of medicine in the state of California…As to the subject, I did not pick only the beautiful or heroic parts of history, because the contrast of good and bad constitutes the dramatic quality of narrative."[23] Besides these lofty goals, there were practical reasons for adding these images to the walls of Toland Hall. Contemporary accounts indicate that the frescoes were added to the space because it was a "dark, ugly cave, very depressing" and the artist's purpose was to "try to lift it, lighten it, give it color, to make it interesting and attractive."[24] Zakheim took advantage of Toland Hall's architectural features, which included curved walls and an articulated ceiling.[25]

In addition to the administrative and medical staff at UCSF, Zakheim worked closely with his assistant, Phyliss Wrightson, on developing the imagery and historical references in the "History of Medicine in California" murals. Sherin's describes Wrightson's role in the "History of Medicine in California" as follows:

> Phyllis Wrightson, a young San Francisco artist in her own right, took the offer to assist Bernard Zakheim on the WPA project in painting frescoes in Toland Hall at the University of California School of Medicine. She researched information about the history of medicine in California by visiting and researching at the institutions, archives and newspaper offices regarding each of the events and specific individuals portrayed in the murals.

In addition to the murals, Zakheim painted a legend (Descriptive Scroll, Fresco 8) [for the purposes of this document, the 12 panels of "History of Medicine in California" have each been assigned a number] that reads:[26]

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[22] Polina Ilieva, "Recent Acquisitions: Bernard Zakheim Collection," posted on Brought to Light, Blog for UCSF Archives and Special Collections, February 24, 2015. Accessed at https://blogs.library.ucsf.edu/broughttolight/tag/Phyllis-wrightson/, August 9, 2020.

[23] Anthony W. Lee, "Painting on the Left, Diego Rivera, Radical Politics, and San Francisco's Public Murals," University of California Press, Berkeley, California, 1999. Excerpts in Sherins (2014), 45.

[24] Toland Hall Mural Tour by D. Chauncey Leake, 1976. Available via https://archive.org/details/cum_000015.

[25] Page & Turnbull (2005), 17.

[26] Page & Turnbull (2005), 17. Individual panels of "History of Medicine in California" fresco are described in various texts but they are not titled or numbered in any of the contemporaneous documentation. The numbers

History of Medicine in California
Curved Wall
Native Indians and their healing methods [Fresco 5]
Left: English Explorers of 16th Century [Fresco 4]
Native California Herbs [Fresco 4]
Anza Expedition, 1775 [Fresco 3]
Spanish Surgeon General Soler, 1798 [Fresco 3]
Trapper Peg-Leg Smith [Fresco 3]
Doctors of the Gold Rush Period [Fresco 2]
Early San Francisco Doctors [Fresco 2]
Right: Mission Indians [Fresco 6]
Portola Expedition, San Diego, 1789 [Fresco 6]
Trapper J.O. Pattie, 1828 [Fresco 6]
Pioneer Doctors of Southern California [Fresco 7]
Doctors of Old Los Angeles [Fresco 7]
Front Wall
University of California Medical School [Fresco 9]
San Francisco Medical History [Fresco 12]
Hooper Panel [Fresco 10], Science Panel [Fresco 11]

In addition to the legend, he also painted a dedication scroll [Fresco 1] that reads:[27]

> These interpretations of the History of Medicine in California are the handiwork of Bernard Zakheim and his assistant, Phyllis Wrightson. They are dedicated to California's developing artistic tradition, and were made possible through the Federal Art Project and the progressive scientists of the University of California Medical School. The plastering was done by Kai Andersen. These frescoes were begun April 4, 1936 and completed May 3, 1938.

During the UCSF projects, Wrightson kept a research manuscript that includes the following description of the murals and Toland Hall:

> The space now being decorated by frescoes is a large lecture amphitheater with a curved wall something over one hundred feet in circumference, a straight wall across the front to accommodate a screen and blackboard, and a low ceiling broken by skylights, and supported by large beams radiating from the center of the front wall in sunburst fashion.
>
> …Each of the six panels thus formed is fourteen and one - half by four and one - half feet high, the small height being due to the sharp rise of the tiers of seats from the floor level.

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assigned in this document are in the order in which they are placed in Toland Hall for ease in identification throughout this document. The numbers are not intended to demonstrate artistic intentions or significance.

[27] Ibid.

> Repeating the principle of radiation upon which the room is built, the movement of the composition travels to left and right of the center of the curved wall [in back of the room], where a design of the rising sun reflects the sunburst pattern of floor and ceiling, and symbolizes an eastward direction. To the left of this is shown the development of medicine in northern California, and to the right, that of southern California. The six panels are treated somewhat in the manner of a frieze, with a strong wave - like rhythm acting as a connecting force. [28]

This description is expanded on by author Anthony W. Lee who describes the center panel(s) at curved wall – a description that borrows from the extensive documentation of the murals prepared by Dr. Chauncey Leake and included in Sherins (2014) – thusly:

> "The series begins with an Indian figure [that] reaches out to greet the morning sun, his back to the viewer. His gesture – arms flung open – is like a directional cue, and the rest of the panels spread out laterally, curving from the back of the amphitheater and continuing across the flat front wall…" "…The central Indian, from whose open arms the historical parade unfolds, is a figure of pathos. The medical achievements, the notable physicians, the life - saving vaccines and famous surgeries pictured in the amphitheater are set against the brutality of exploration, settlement, and expansion. A narrative of medical progress coexists with a more troubling counter - narrative of corrupt regress. The tension crops up between the scenes, undermining the glorification of events and personalities…"[29]

As presented in Sherins (2014), Lee's analysis indicates that the mural series begins with what we are calling Fresco 4. In his detailed description of the series, however, Dr. Leake appears to consider the center – or beginning – of the mural series to be Fresco 4 and Fresco 5 together, the medical influence of the English explorers juxtaposed – or sharing focus – with Native American healing. To the left of Frescoes 4 and 5, the panels focus on medical history of northern California (Frescoes 2 and 3). To the right of the center frescoes, the panels focus on medical history of southern California (Frescoes 6 and 7). The panels on the north wall detail history of UCSF (Fresco 9), pay tribute to the Hooper Foundation for Medical Research and applications of biological science (Fresco 10), describe science past, present and future (Fresco 11), and outline the history of medicine in San Francisco (Fresco 12).

The "History of Medicine in California" depicts practices and knowledge of native people and acknowledges their skill and recognized medical expertise. In Fresco 4, three Native Americans offer medicinal herbs, and another panel depicts a child-birth ceremony. The frescoes also depict founders, scientists, and educators pivotal to the important and revolutionary breakthroughs in medicine; the individuals noted herein are only a small selection of the medical professionals and practitioners, scientists, researchers, patients, politicians, and founders depicted in the fresco. Many

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[28] Phyllis Wrightson's research manuscript of the allegory portrayed in the frescoes was made available to Dr. Robert Sherins (December 2013) - with permission to publish the material - by Nathan Zakheim, son of the Bernard and Phyllis (Wrightson) Zakheim. "Wrightson, Phyllis, Toland Hall Frescoes of the University of California Medical School, self - published, San Francisco, circa 1936. Sherins (2014), 45.

[29] Anthony W. Lee, "Painting on the Left, Diego Rivera, Radical Politics, and San Francisco's Public Murals," University of California Press, Berkeley, California, 1999. Excerpt in Sherins (2014), 52.

friends and family members of Zakheim and his associates are also included in the panels. Among the medical professionals associated with UCSF that are depicted: in different scenes in Fresco 9 are Dr. Lucy M. F. Wanzer, the first woman admitted to the University of California Medical Department in 1873, and Dr. Herbert C. Moffitt with Dr. Robert Langley Porter (namesakes for Moffit Hospital and Langley Psychiatric Hospital, respectively); Dr. Chauncey Leake, Dean of Pharmacology at UCSF and Zakheim's benefactor One figure included in the murals is that of Bridgett "Biddy" Mason (1818-1891) in Fresco 7. A former slave that secured her freedom when she petitioned a Los Angeles Court in 1856, Biddy Mason was skilled healer, midwife, and nurse in addition to being one of the first African-American women to own land in Los Angeles.[30] She was an astute business woman and philanthropist, founding a school and orphanage, and organizing the First AME Church of Los Angeles, the city's first black church. As a nurse, Mason worked with physician John Strother Griffin; Mason and Griffin are shown side-by-side caring for a malaria patient (Fresco 7).

The frescos along curved wall contain imagery of medical practices and procedures in scenes from the history of California. Some selections include of this imagery include: Sir Francis Drake attending over an early autopsy with a ship in the background (Fresco 4); the 1775 Anza Expedition, a crude surgery by Spanish Dr. Don Pablo Soler, and self-amputation of an injured leg (Fresco 3); the first hospital in California, established in 1789 to treat members of the Portola Expedition suffering from scurvy (Fresco 6); covered wagons of settlers and a doctor saving the life of a young miner during Gold Rush along with Dr. Hugh Huber Toland, founder of Toland Medical School, predecessor of UCSF, on horseback, Dr. Victor J. Foureaud, holding title page of his monograph on diptheria, and Dr. John Townsend hanging sign announcing the first medical office in San Francisco in 1846 (Fresco 2).[31] On the flat wall, the panels contain imagery of medical research, education, and conflicts in 19th century San Francisco. The influences of bubonic plague epidemic in San Francisco in 1900 are depicted with images of rats, the source of spread of the disease, and suffering patients juxtaposed with imagery of the politicians and medical professionals fighting the disease and establishing UCSF (Fresco 12). A panel on science with imagery of a science wheel or generator with wheels and belts running on ball bearings inscribed with names of scientists that "…spins out of control, serving military, not humane needs, its products bombs and poisonous gases, its victims the defenseless."[32] The medical achievements, notable physicians, life-saving vaccines and famous surgeries are

> set against the brutality of exploration, settlement, and expansion. A narrative of medical progress coexists with a more troubling counter-narrative of corrupt regress. The tension crops up between the scenes, undermining the glorification of events and personalities.[33]

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[30] The Biddy Mason Charitable Foundation at http://thebiddymasoncharitablefoundation.org/bm/ accessed August 9, 2020.

[31] These descriptions are paraphrased from excerpts from Dr. Chauncy Leake and from UCSF Student Newspaper, "Synapse," reprinted in Sherins (2014).

[32] Antony W. Lee, "Painting on the Left, Diego Rivera, Radical Politics, and San Francisco's Public Murals. University of California Press, 2009. Excerpt quoted in Sherins (2014), 67.

[33] Antony W. Lee (2009). Excerpt quoted in Sherins (2014), 52.

The following is excerpted from Page & Turnbull (2005):

> When the frescoes were completed in 1938, the staff of the University of California hailed them as an excellent addition to their lecture hall and the murals brought thousands of visitors to the UCSF Medical School.[34]
>
> Although the frescoes were initially lauded, their style and politics came under increased scrutiny by the late 1940s. In 1948, the University of California wallpapered Zakheim's murals due to "complaints" that the murals were a distraction for students attending lectures.[35] However, other accounts suggest that the mural's political ideas, socialist overtones, and "subversive" messages were too radical for the University of California, which was recovering from the Depression-era economy and political climate rife with McCarthyism.[36] Zakheim was outraged "History of Medicine in California" frescoes were covered with wallpaper and indicated that he felt this action cost him future commissions.[37]
>
> The Toland Hall murals remained covered for thirteen years until University staff and alumni uncovered them in 1961. From 1961 to 1977, the University alumni association undertook and completed a massive campaign to raise $15,000 for their restoration.[38] The murals were respectfully restored by Nathan B. Zakheim and Jennifer Waechter in August 1978.

Currently, the "History of Medicine in California" murals reside in their original location on the walls of Toland Hall and are in good condition except for some water damage on several panels.

Events

Works Project Administration's Federal Art Project

The "History of Medicine in California" was partially funded through the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project, the visual arts component of the Federal Project Number One, a work relief program for thousands of unemployed actors, musicians, writers, historians, and other creative professionals and white-collar workers. Federal One was established in 1935 and operated until 1943. It was the longest and most productive of the New Deal arts programs. Federal One programs included the Federal Theater Project, Federal Writer's Project, Federal Music Project and the Historical Records Survey. The FAP's work focused on three main areas: production of artwork, art education through classes and community centers, and art research through the Index of

[34] "U.C. Medical School Mural is Covered," *San Francisco Chronicle* (January 5, 1948). Quoted in Page & Turnbull (2005), 17.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Anne M. Schmid, "Suggestions for Brochure for Solicitation of Funds for Mural Repair," in UCSF Special Collections, file "Bernard Zakheim." Quoted in Page & Turnbull (2005), 18.

[37] "Obituaries: Artist Bernard Baruch Zakheim," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 30, 1985.

[38] Anne M. Schmid, in Page & Turnbull (2005), 18.

American Design. The Federal Art Project employed numerous artists who were or would become famous, including Jacob Lawrence, Alice Neel, Henry Louise Freund, Mark Rothko, Lee Krasner, among many others. [39]

Prior to the establishment of the FAP, unemployed performing and visual artists found work through projects and programs funded through the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) and the Civil Works Administration (CWA), two of the first New Deal agencies established after FDR took office in 1933. The two administrations employed thousands of San Francisco residents on infrastructure improvement and construction projects, including building, repairing, or upgrading roads, schools, housing complexes, parks, and playgrounds.

The first New Deal program to solely aid unemployed artists was the short-lived Public Works Art Project (PWAP). Also established in 1933 and funded through CWA, the PWAP operated from December 1933 to June 1934 and during that time more than 3,000 artists across the country decorated public buildings with murals and other works depicting everyday American life. The Coit Tower murals are the first known and the largest PWAP/CWA-funded project. Other New Deal-era art programs included the Department of the Treasury's Section of Painting and Sculpture, later known as the Section of Fine Arts (1934-1942), and the Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP, 1935-1938).[40] The breadth of artworks produced collectively from 1934 to 1942 is truly amazing: with approximately 100,000 paintings, 18,000 sculptures, 13,000 prints, and 4,000 murals.[41]

Through the FAP, artists created works in a variety of mediums, including photography, graphic arts, sculpture, and painting. The FAP operated over 100 community art centers nationwide and commissioned 2,566 murals during the course of the program. The sculpture division employed 500 sculptors and produced 17,744 works and the FAP funded 108,099 easel paintings and produced more than 2 million posters. The output of murals was small in comparison to the other visual arts divisions, but they were the most plentiful public art form and they could be incorporated into the planning of new buildings funded by New Deal agencies or to update existing buildings. The scenes of American life decorating the walls of post offices and other public buildings throughout the country became one of the most recognizable artistic products of the New Deal era, and for many, the "mural division will forever be remembered in the public mind as the primary achievement of the entire project." [42]

Hundreds of murals, sculpture, and other art works were commissioned for public buildings in San Francisco. They included works at several San Francisco public schools: Victor Arnautoff's "Life of George Washington" murals at George Washington High School; murals by Nelson Pool and George Wilson Walker at Roosevelt Junior High School; and Edith Hamlin's murals at Mission High

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[39] *Draft San Francisco New Deal Historic Context Statement*, 28-29, 51, 117; *Projects by Artist*, https://livingnewdeal.org/artists/; *Alice Neel*, http://edan,.si.edu/saam/id/person-institution/3504; *Jacob Lawrence* https://www.nga.gov/collection/artist-info.1468.html;

[40] *Ibid*, 24-32, 43-46; Coit Tower National Register Nomination, 2018, Section 8.25-8.26.

[41] Megan Hogan, "1934: A Stimulus Package for the Soul," in *Common Ground*, Summer 2009, 25.

[42] *Draft San Francisco New Deal Historic Context Statement*, 117; Martin R. Kalfatovic, *The New Deal Fine Arts Projects: A Bibliography, 1933-1992*, (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1994) xxxvi – xxxvii; Masha Zakheim, *Coit Tower, San Francisco: Its History and Art* (Volcano, CA: Volcano Press, 2009), 12.

School. Public works also included Diego Rivera's Pan-American Unity mural at City College; the San Francisco Zoo's Mother's House murals and mosaics by Helen Forbes and Esther Bruton, Margaret Bruton and Helen Bruton; Lucien Labaudt's frescoes at the Beach Chalet; Beniamino Bufano's outdoor granite animal sculptures; and interior and exterior art works at the Aquatic Park Bathhouse, among other locations. [43]

The "History of Medicine in California" murals, which were artist Bernard Zakheim's largest FAP commission, are significant for their association with the WPA's Federal Art Project, a work relief program the provided employment for hundreds of out of work visual artists. The FAP was the longest running New Deal-era arts program and supported artists who were, or would become, leading figures in the twentieth century art world. The murals commissioned by the FAP are some of the most recognizable public art works of the WPA-era.

Architecture/Design

The mural cycle "The History of Medicine in California" is significant as an excellent example of New Deal-era mural artwork displaying the distinctive characteristics of New Deal-era frescos with a consistent earth-toned palette, intense saturated colors, figurative content, rounded forms, and overall stylistic influence of the Mexican mural movement of the 1920s. Zakheim's murals are in an expressionist style that bears considerable similarity to the style of Mexican muralist, Jose Clement Orozco. Although their theme - medicine and medical history - is somewhat unusual, it was typical for fresco or mural installations of the period to reflect a unifying concept that often related to the building or institution that housed or commissioned the artwork.[44]

"History of Medicine in California" is also significant as the work of by master artist and muralist, Bernard Zakheim. In this artwork, Zakheim sought to depict the "…evolution of medicine from medieval concepts to scientifically based principals" with "works [that] were an allegory about the history of California Medicine displayed in art."[45] The "History of Medicine in California" is largest, most immersive *fresco buono* work of Zakheim's career and the last fresco commission that he completed in San Francisco.

Bernard Zakheim

Bernard Baruch (or Boruch) Zakheim (1898-1985) was born in Warsaw, Poland and died at the Jewish Home for the Aged in San Francisco.[46] The youngest son of a wealthy family of Hasidic Jews, his family intended him for the synagogue to be a rabbi. After becoming politically active, and against the wishes of his family, Zakheim began studying art as well as upholstery and furniture

[43] *Draft San Francisco New Deal Historic Context Statement,* 117-130, 167.

[44] Similar New Deal-era frescoes depicting medical history and practices were installed at Harlem Hospital in New York City (Oil on canvas mural, "Modern Medicine" and "Magic in Medicine," Charles Alston, 1940; Fresco buono, "Modern Surgery and Anesthesia," Alfred Crimi, 1936). Zakheim's fellow San Francisco fresco artist, Victor Arnautoff, also did several frescoes in Palo Alto, California depicting scenes of a medical clinic (Stanford Medical Clinic (Roth Building, Palo Alto, California: Frescoes of Medical Clinic, 1932).

[45] Sherins (2014), 101.

[46] "Obituary Artist Bernard Baruch Zakheim," *San Francisco Chronicle,* November 30, 1985.

design. Zakheim met and married Eda Spiegleman in Poland. The couple had two daughters before divorcing in 1937.[47] In 1941, Zakheim married Phyllis Wrightson (1907-1998), [48] who had worked as his assistant on the Alemany Health Center and UCSF mural projects. The couple had two sons. An article in 1941 notes that Wrightson "exhibited watercolors and oil paintings at many bay region shows, the World's Fair on Treasure Island and San Francisco Museum of Art and been a teacher of art in both public and private schools."[49] In historic documentation about the Alemany Health Center and UCSF murals, Wrightson is noted as an artist – painter – in her own right, but little information has been located about her work or life.

Unless otherwise noted, the following biographical information about Zakheim is from the landmark designation application for the Alemany Health Center:[50]

> During World War I, he joined the Polish Army in 1918, and was later captured and held for nine months in a German prisoner of war camp.[51] After his release, he studied art at the Danzig Polytechnicum where he met and then married Eda Spiegleman, "a young dramatist," with whom he eventually had two daughters.[52] They arrived in New York City in the fall of 1920, staying briefly before traveling to San Francisco. A job in a furniture factory took them to Los Angeles where their first daughter was born in 1921. After three years, they returned to San Francisco where Zakheim studied at the School of Fine Arts, but he became disillusioned by the instruction there which ended his formal art education.
>
> In 1925, at age twenty-seven, he opened a custom furniture business and based it on the European Guild model. His company was the first in San Francisco to offer a 44-hour work week which included paid vacation time. Additionally, he "was the moving spirit in organizing the Yiddish Folkschule at 1057 Steiner Street" and became a "leader in the Yiddish movement in San Francisco." He "rented a small studio at the California School of Fine Arts (the San Francisco Art Institute) for a short period" before sending sketches to Diego Rivera.[53] After [being] invited, he traveled to Mexico to study with Rivera. Zakheim

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[47] *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 1, 1937, 13. Quoted in David Hooper and Lisa Dunseth, *Application for Historic Landmark Designation - Alemany Emergency Hospital & Health Center & Bernard Zakheim murals,* 2015, 44-45.

[48] Biographical information about Phyllis Wrightson from askART website at https://www.askart.com/artist_bio/Phyllis_Wrightson/10059864/Phyllis_Wrightson.aspx. Accessed August 6, 2020.

[49] "Three San Francisco Artists Start Farm-Arts Workshop," *Sonoma West Times and News*, September 26, 1941. Accessed via https://newspapers.com on August 9, 2020.

[50] David Hooper and Lisa Dunseth, *Application for Historic Landmark Designation - Alemany Emergency Hospital & Health Center & Bernard Zakheim murals,* 2015, 45-56.

[51] Elizabeth M. Boone, "'Something of his Own Soil': Jewish History, Mural Painting, and Bernard Zakheim in San Francisco," in *American Jewish History* 90.2, 2002, 123. Quoted in Hooper and Dunseth (2015), 44.

[52] "Bernard Zakheim," abstract from *California Art Research: Maxine Albro, Chin Chee, Bernhard Zakheim, Andree Rexroth, Chiura Obata,* ed. Gene Hailey, (San Francisco: California Art Research Project, 1937), 63. Quoted in Hooper and Dunseth (2015), 44.

[53] "Bernard Zakheim," abstract from *California Art Research (1937),* 50-54. Quoted in Hooper and Dunseth (2015), 45.

> returned to San Francisco by June of 1930 with Rivera's encouragement to put "something of his own soil, of his own people" into his art.
>
> In 1931, he left his wife in San Francisco…while he went to Europe -- first Paris, then Florence -- to study art. He visited a small Hungarian town where he met an artist named Professor Gebauer who painted frescoes…with Gebauer's encouragement, Zakheim painted his first fresco titled *Jews in Poland*. … By October 1932 he had returned to San Francisco, but not before begging his European family to leave Poland.[54] Zakheim paid tribute to his 300 relatives lost in the Holocaust in a later work, a sculpture titled *Monument to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*.[55]

In the 1930s, Zakheim's art focused on several mural projects, including Coit Tower, San Francisco Jewish Community Center, Alemany Health Center, UCSF, and two post offices in Texas. Except for the Jewish Community Center commission, his other mural projects were all partially or fully funded by PWAP or FAP. His first mural commission, for the Jewish Community Center (discussed below) received positive critiques and appears to have established him in the San Francisco art community. Unfortunately, his entry into this community coincided with the harsh effects of the Great Depression with many artists joining the sizeable ranks of the unemployed and impoverished across the country.

During this period, Zakheim, who long held an interest in worker's rights, became involved with the San Francisco Artists and Writers Union.[56] Along with his leftist politics and interest in workers' rights, Zakheim also brought the Union his experience organizing the Conference of Yiddish-Speaking Organizations and Yiddish Folkschule and the Yiddish Literary and Dramatic Club. Shortly after the formation of the artists union, the group received notice of the formation of the Public Works of Art Program (PWAP – described previously) and authorization of the first PWAP-funded project, the Coit Tower murals. The artist's union picketed and wrote letters in support of artistic freedom of expression during the controversy over several images in the Coit Tower panels, but shortly after the Tower opened to the public, the San Francisco Artists and Writers Union was dissolved. Zakheim remained involved in the artists' labor movement by becoming one of the sponsors of the San Francisco section of the American Artists Congress, a national protective organization of artists that formed in the mid-1930s.[57]

Shortly after completing his fresco in Coit Tower, Zakheim also had a one-man exhibition of watercolors, designs for fresco and drawings at a San Francisco gallery.[58] Press commentary on the

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[54] "Bernard Zakheim," abstract from *California Art Research (1937)*, 56-57. Quoted in Hooper and Dunseth (2015), 46.

[55] Walter Blum, "Remind the World," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 8, 1968. "Memorial to the Six Million-Zakheim Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Monument," Mount Sinai Memorial Park pamphlet, VF-Biography, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library. Quoted in Hooper and Dunseth (2015), 46.

[56] "Bernard Zakheim," abstract from *California Art Research: Maxine Albro, Chin Chee, Bernhard Zakheim, Andree Rexroth, Chiura Obata, ed. Gene Hailey, (San Francisco: California Art Research Project, 1937)*, 63.

[57] "Bernard Zakheim," abstract from *California Art Research (1937)*, 78-79.

[58] "Bernard Zakheim," abstract from *California Art Research (1937)*, 64.

one-man gallery show was mixed, perhaps due to the show coinciding with the controversy over some of the imagery, including Zakheim's, in several Coit Tower murals. One critic wrote that Zakheim was "…neither a cubist nor a sur-realist…he is more what one would call a self-expressionist…and has more interest in recording an ordinary experience as in responding to a psychological power."[59]

In the 1940's Zakheim moved to an apple farm in Sebastopol, California where he continued painting and began sculpting in wood and granite. In later life, he turned increasingly to sculpture and produced a series of six wood sculptures commemorating the Holocaust.[60] His final mural project was done in 1961 where he was invited by the *Jewish Social and Cultural Society* to paint a mural that would be his last. He titled it "Songs of the Polish Jews," saying at the time that "fresco is my main interest...wall painting in the fresh wet cement is really the idiom of drama … For the artist to have a wall to paint fresco is a rare thing."[61]

Zakheim continued to participate in exhibitions with his paintings and sculptures and was recognized for this work.

> He was awarded a Certificate of Honor "in appreciative public recognition of distinction and merit" by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in July 1972. He had a retrospective exhibition of his paintings at the Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum in Berkeley in 1973 to celebrate his 75th [sic] birthday and continued to make art until the end of his life.[62] …The Sonoma County Museum had a memorial exhibition of his work in 1986.[63] His work is in the collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Brandeis University, and the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, Poland.[64]190 In 2001, during the conservation and move of Zakheim's mural at the Jewish Community Center, *San Francisco Chronicle*'s art critic Allan Temko said of him: "he wasn't a Michelangelo...but his work is good, for what it is, and worth saving."[65]

Assessing a one-man exhibition of Zakheim's watercolors, drawings, and studies for frescoes, Ada Hanifin, art reviewer for the *Examiner*, wrote in an article published on July

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[59] Jehanne Bietry Salinger, "Emanu-El and Jewish Journal," July 7, 1934. Quoted in "Bernard Zakheim," abstract from *California Art Research (1937),* 66.

[60] Elizabeth M. Boone, "'Something of his Own Soil': Jewish History, Mural Painting, and Bernard Zakheim in San Francisco," in *American Jewish History* 90.2, 2002, 123-140.

[61] "Artist Finds Room for a Fresco on an Empty Wall in Poland," *Examiner*, August 5, 1962, Examiner Newspaper Clippings, Zakheim, Bernard Baruch. Artist. San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library. Quoted in Hooper and Dunseth (2015), 55.

[62] "In The Galleries," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 4, 1973. VF-Artist's File, Art, Music, & Recreation Dept. San Francisco Public Library. Quoted in Hooper and Dunseth (2015), 55.

[63] "Zakheim Exhibit to Open at Sonoma County Museum," *California Historical Courier,* Feb/March 1986. Quoted in Hooper and Dunseth (2015), 55.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Steve Rubenstein, "Race to Beat Wrecking Ball," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 2, 2001, A21. Quoted in Hooper and Dunseth (2015), 55.

17, 1934, "he belongs to no school…His work has vigor, sensitivity, vitality and power. He paints sincerely and spontaneously."[66] In 1937, Ray Boynton, a fresco artist and instructor of Art at the California School of Fine Arts, assessed Zakheim and his work thusly:

> His work has always been concerned with human values and human drama and his point of view has always been sympathetic to human struggle and effort. … I think this work has real social value in that it is charged with positive qualities of believe and protest rather than negative qualities of indifference. …his ideas are alive to his time and environment.[67]

Zakheim's Mural Projects[68]

Jewish Community Center (JCC) Mural

Zakheim's first solo mural commission in San Francisco drew upon his Jewish heritage when, in 1933, he won a commission to paint a mural (extant – relocated) and design a mosaic fountain (demolished) at the new Jewish Community Center. As noted in David Hooper's and Lisa Dunseth's Landmark Designation Application for Alemany Health Center, Zakheim's proposal, which depicts a traditional Jewish wedding and features "folkloric aspects of Jewish culture," was selected by JCC's leaders who were "…interested in reaching out to a 'broader segment of society' with their programming."[69] At the time of the JCC's opening, "newspapers reported that Zakheim's 'vivid colored fresco...attracted much attention from the thousands of visitors who flocked through the building during the dedication week program'."…It was reported that he painted in "the primitive...two-dimensional style of the modern Mexican school," a direct reference to Rivera's influence. [70]

The art critic for the *Argonaut*, a San Francisco newspaper from 1878 to 1956, Joseph A. Danysh, wrote of the mural on August 4, 1933:

> San Francisco has its latest heroic fresco. Bernard Zakheim, [one-time] business man, now turned to art … as a significant way of life, is the painter. … Given a space one hundred feet square in area … No muralist anywhere ever started with a more unsympathetic space to paint … Few artists could have improved upon Zakheim's design. …he has combined the

[66] "Bernard Zakheim," abstract from *California Art Research (1937),* 68.

[67] "Bernard Zakheim," abstract from *California Art Research (1937),* 103.

[68] The following descriptions are for mural projects that were completed and are extant. There is documentation, including sketches, that indicates Zakheim planned to do a four-panel mural, in 1937, at the Union Recreation Center at 32 Clay Street, titled "History of the San Francisco Waterfront." While the historical record is a bit unclear, it is unlikely that this mural was ever completed.

[69] Elizabeth M. Boone, "'Something of his Own Soil': Jewish History, Mural Painting, and Bernard Zakheim in San Francisco," in *American Jewish History* 90.2, 2002, 123-140. Quoted in Hooper and Dunseth (2015), 55.

[70] "Vivid Fresco By Zakheim Attracts," *Examiner*, November 12, 1938. Examiner Newspaper Clippings-Zakheim, Bernard Baruch. Artist. San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library. Quoted in Hooper and Dunseth (2015), 55.

> technique of true fresco painting with the subject material of the Heroic cult of Hasidim. His composition is conceived primarily in terms of movement. … In this mural, the design has reached outside itself to become an integral part of the architecture, counteracting a large mass here, a rushing line of the building there, moving beautifully in terms of its own irregular frame. …he has also made his wall come alive in the spirited reproduction of his legend. Jugglers…drummer, fiddler and piper playing…chants of the Hasidim; singing maidens; hasty weddings; archers and judges; prayers and dancers; all contribute life and conviction to a finely executed picture.[71]

Glen Wessels, in the *Argonaut* of June 22, 1934, commented on the JCC fresco, saying "Bernard Zakheim has a achieved a style of his own, most evident in the strong rhythms characterizing his drawing and his design…"[72]

This fresco was removed from the original location when the former Jewish Community Center building was demolished. The fresco was moved to the third-floor stairwell when the Jewish Community Center was rebuilt: it was reinstalled and rededicated in 2004 where it is currently open to the public.

Coit Tower Mural

In 1933-1934, Zakheim, along with 24 other master artists, was hired to contribute to the Coit Tower murals that were meant to depict variations on the theme of "the contemporary American Scene in all its various aspects."[73] Of the artist's hired, Zakheim, who had studied with Diego Rivera in Mexico and painted a fresco in Europe, was one of the few with experience creating murals although several of the artists, including Zakheim, had studied fresco with Ray Boynton at the California School of Fine Arts. Zakheim, who was active in workers' and artists' unions of the period, may also have been a proponent of using Coit Tower as the location for the first federally-funding New Deal-era art program, known as PWAP. He was certainly involved in encouraging local officials to put San Francisco artists to work with the newly created PWAP.

The Coit Tower murals, titled "Aspects of Life in California, 1934," depict social, political, and economic concerns of the 1930s as well as San Francisco bay landscapes.[74] Zakheim's contribution to the Coit Tower murals, which is evocative of his social and political views, is described in the amendment to the Coit Memorial Tower National Register Nomination (2018):

> *Library* by Bernard Baruch Zakheim (1896-1985)[75]
> Technique: *fresco buono*
> On a wall opposite the law library fresco, and measuring 10' by 10', this mural speaks to the concepts of freedom of expression based on a scene in a public library reading room. The

[71] "Bernard Zakheim," abstract from *California Art Research (1937),* 60-61.

[72] "Bernard Zakheim," abstract from *California Art Research (1937),* 61.

[73] National Register of Historic Places, Coit Memorial Tower (Amendment), City and County of San Francisco, California, National Register ##07001468, 2018, Section 7, Page 7.

[74] Coit Memorial Tower (Amendment), 2018, Section 7, Page 8.

[75] Coit Memorial Tower (Amendment), 2018, Section 7, Page 11.

> scenevis crowded with well-known figures, book spines, and bold newspaper headlines about such timely topics as the destruction of Rivera's fresco at Rockefeller Center, a commission for sculptor Benjamin Bufano, mortgage foreclosures, and other issues of the day. The muralist included likenesses of artist Fred Olmsted and William Gerstle, a local arts patron and civic leader. The mural abounds with likenesses of Zakheim's colleagues, friends, and family, specifically the artist's young daughter, Ruth, and his assistants for this mural, Julia Rogers and Shirley Staschen. A figure, artist John Langley Howard, removes a copy of Karl Mate's *Das Kapital* from the library shelves. Col. Harold Mack of the PWAP supervisory committee stands in front, carefully monitoring the entire scene. Overall, the library scene pays homage to literature, education, and political awareness.

The inclusion of *Das Kapital* in this mural is one of the elements that contributed to their controversy and delayed the public tower's opening. The following information about this controversy and Zakheim's response is taken from Hooper and Dunseth:

> Zakheim, Victor Arnautoff, Clifford Wight (all of whom had worked with Rivera) and John Langley Howard "scandalized the City by including left-wing political commentary" in their murals.[76] This was happening, of course, at a time of great economic hardship during the Great Depression and just before the violence and upheaval of the Longshoremen's strike, protest, and riots which were to come later that summer. Originally meant to open in April, the building and murals were finally opened to the public in October 1934.
>
> A newspaper article from the period featured a "doctored" photo of Zakheim's mural, adding a hammer and sickle encircled by the slogan "Workers of the World Unite" over which a caption read "Here is the painting in the Coit Memorial Tower that has caused a bitter dispute."[77] Zakheim's response was "I have painted no hammer and sickle over my fresco or anywhere else...and the directors of the Public Works of Art Project have never asked me to change any part of my mural."[78] This was true. However, during the Coit Tower controversy, Fleishhacker had, indeed, asked him to edit his mural. And Zakheim's angry refusal, according to an interview with Lewis Ferbache in 1964, was "I am a hammer and sickle painter."[79]

Zakheim's interest in Communism can be found in his early years in Los Angeles. In the late 1920s he was deeply influenced by his friendship with Kenneth Rexroth who was engaging in Communist debates and organizing the Montgomery Block artists and writers. Together Zakheim and Rexroth assembled "the most coherent leftist group of artists and writers the city had ever seen."[80]

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[76] *New Deal Art, California*, De Saisset Art Gallery and Museum, University of Santa Clara, c1976, p. 75. Quoted in Hooper and Dunseth (2015), 49.

[77] Fred Rosenbaum, *Cosmopolitans*, U. of California Press, 2009, p. 277. Quoted in Hooper and Dunseth (2015), 49.

[78] "Bernard Zakheim," abstract from *California Art Research (1937),* 69. Quoted in Hooper and Dunseth (2015), 49.

[79] Anthony W. Lee (1999), 154. Quoted in Hooper and Dunseth (2015), 49.

[80] Anthony W. Lee (1999), 97. Quoted in Hooper and Dunseth (2015), 49.

Alemany Health Center Murals
Following the completion of the Public Works of Art Program (PWAP) and his work at Coit Tower, Zakheim was commissioned, in 1934, under the sponsorship of the SERA (State Emergency Relief Administration) to execute two frescoes in the Alemany Health Center, for the San Francisco Department of Public Health. Called "Community Spirit" and "Growth," the murals must have been completed while the center was in operation since it officially opened in August 1933. These murals, painted as decorations in the waiting room on the wide chimney of the room's fireplace with one mural above, and one below, the balcony that divided the chimney, is partially described by Phyllis Wrightson, who called them "…a very beautiful piece of work,":

> The portion below the balcony is adapted in color and literary content to the room and its uses. It is entitled [Growth] and is an arrangement of symbolic figures
> in an elliptical pattern against a background of the slender silvery trunks of young fig trees, an ancient symbol of fertility.

Hooper and Dunseth describe the Alemany Health Center murals as follows:

> The mural on the upper floor is titled *Community Spirit.* This mural is damaged but in relatively good condition. The mural on the first floor, *Growth*, as described by Wrightson, symbolically depicts birth, growth, and parenthood: [no] photographs or drawings depicting the entire mural [have been located]. It was painted over in the mid 1970s -- perhaps because either the theme or the imagery was considered offensive.
>
> In a letter dated 17 February 1976, Zakheim wrote to Herb Caen about the Alemany mural: "Again they amputeded [sic] a part of my soul. This time at the Alemany Baby Health Center...they painted over a half of my frescoe [sic], and this is the third time in a row." On 29 March 1976, Caen mentions Zakheim "frothing with anger" over the Alemany mural. He quotes Zakheim: "An insult! ... Besides, they've covered over the most important part of all -- the fertility rites!"[81]

The buildings and murals have not been open to the public since 2011. The Alemany Health Center Landmark No. 272 in 2016 and the "Community Spirit" and "Growth" murals by Bernard Zakheim are identified as character-defining features of the building.

UCSF Murals – Cole Hall
Unless otherwise noted the following description is from Hooper and Dunseth:

> In 1935-36 Zakheim, again with SERA [and FAP] funding, began two murals in UCSF's Cole Hall (the University of California, Medical School.) It has been suggested that his work at the Alemany Health Center helped him win this job at UCSF. Titled *Superstitious Medicine* and *Rational Medicine*, they were moved, in 1966, to their present location in the Health Sciences Building West at UCSF.

[81] News clipping, Bernard Zakheim collection, 1902-2010 (bulk 1935-1990), MSS, 2014-15, UCSF Library. Quoted in Hooper and Dunseth (2015), 52.

> The Toland Hall amphitheater murals, completed in 1938, became a four-year, ten panel project commissioned by Dr. Isabella Perry, after seeing the Alemany murals, and then spearheaded by Dr. Chauncey Leake. They were partially funded by the WPA. This series of murals is titled the *History of Medicine in California* and they fill the walls of the lecture hall.

Dr. Chauncey Leake, Dean of Pharmacology at UCSF, who spearheaded the institution's support for both of Zakheim's mural projects at UCSF, prepared a comprehensive brochure on the pair of murals painted for Cole Hall, "Rational Medicine" and "Superstitious Medicine." Dr. Leake was motivated to expand the relationship between science and the humanities, desiring that the frescoes might provoke medical students to consider the philosophical and social ideas of their profession.

The Cole Hall frescoes were displayed for the public, along with an exhibition of the watercolor studies Zakheim produced in preparation for the murals, for a week in February 1936. Art critic for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Alfred Frankenstein, called it "…one of the most extraordinary art exhibitions ever held in this or any other city…" for it was "…unique in subject matter, unique in locale…" and displays "…co-operation, if not the inter-penetration, of science and fine art."[82] Another critic took exception to the murals, stating that "…Zakheim tried to do too much…You can't put in the whole history of medicine in two frescoes. The frescoes are as complicated as a set of viscera to the lay mind."[83] In this comment, perhaps, is the impetus for the second commission at UCSF, which expanded on the theme of medical history in California across 10 pictorial panels.

As noted above, "Rational Medicine" and "Superstitious Medicine" were removed from Cole Hall prior to the building's demolition and moved to their current location(s) on the UCSF Parnassus campus. They are believed to be in good condition.

Texas Post Office Murals

Zakheims last mural projects in the United States were for two post offices in Texas. The first, an oil-on-canvas mural called, "New and Old Methods of Transportation, 1938," in Mineola, Texas. The original Mineola mural was damaged by neglect after it was removed from the post office building and stored. In 2005, the mural was reinstalled in the Mineola Historical Museum after being restored (or recreated) by Nathan Zakheim, and other Zakheim family members.[84] The second, in Rusk, Texas, was titled "Agriculture and Industry, 1939." The "…mural illustrates Rusk's rough agrarian and industrial history from multiple perspectives" capturing how "Native

[82] "Bernard Zakheim," abstract from *California Art Research (1937)*, 90.

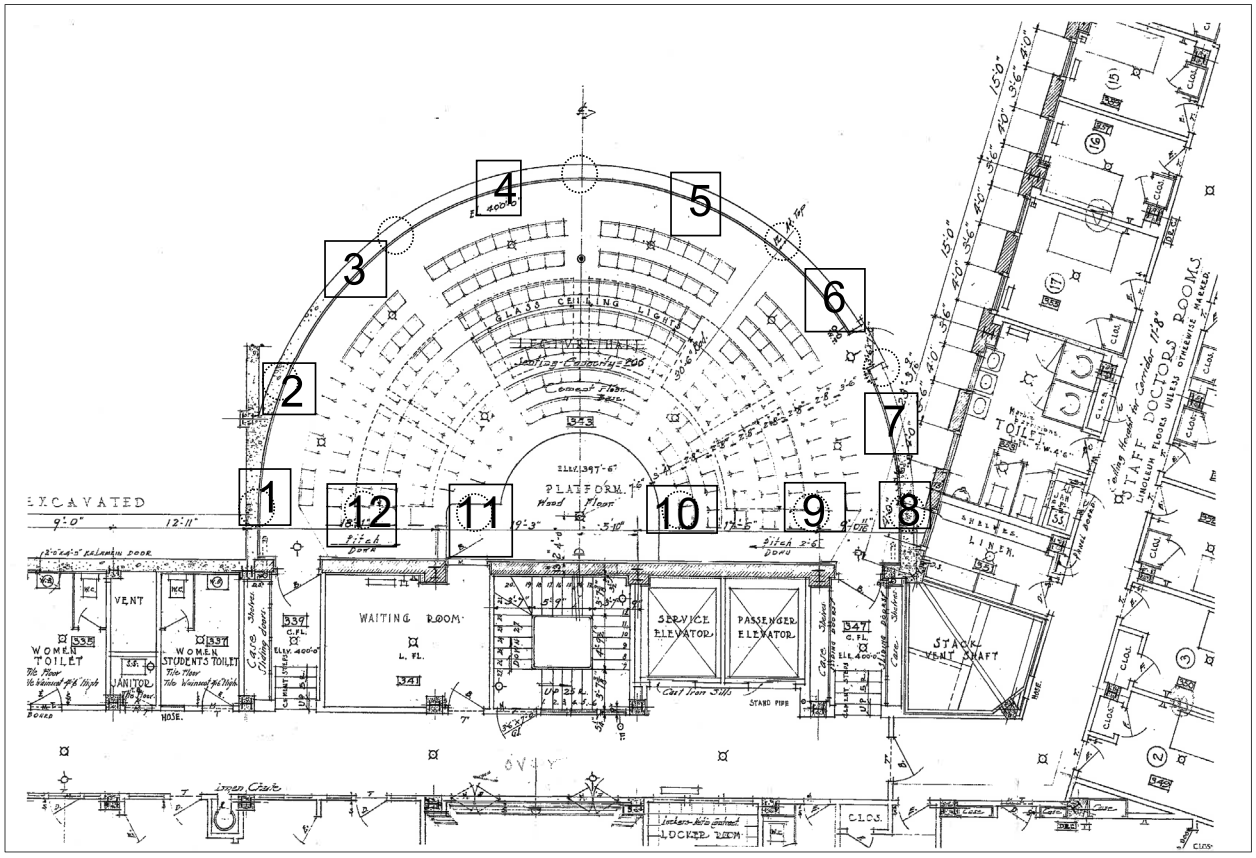
[83] H.L. Dungan, *Oakland Tribune*, February 23, 1936; quoted in "Bernard Zakheim," abstract from *California Art Research (1937)*, 93.

[84] "Texas buildings' murals show community identity," January 14, 2011. Accessed on August 11, 2020 via https://www.deseret.com › texas-buildings-murals-show-community-identity

American, Hispanic, and Anglo American residents of the area viewed development and change over time."[85] This oil-on-canvas painting was also cleaned and restored by Nathan Zakheim in 2011.

[85] Matt Carmichael, "Rusk Post Office and Its New Deal Mural." Accessed on August 11, 2020 via East Texas History website via https://easttexashistory.org/items/show/116.

Photos



Fresco Key Plan – 1917 floor plan of 1st floor UC Hall. Number on plan is included with the photographs of each panel that follows. Key Plan and photographs by Architectural Resources Group, 2020. Photographs of each fresco panel and this key plan are from exhibits for an Architectural Resources Group prepared for UCSF and used with permission of UCSF.

Fresco 2

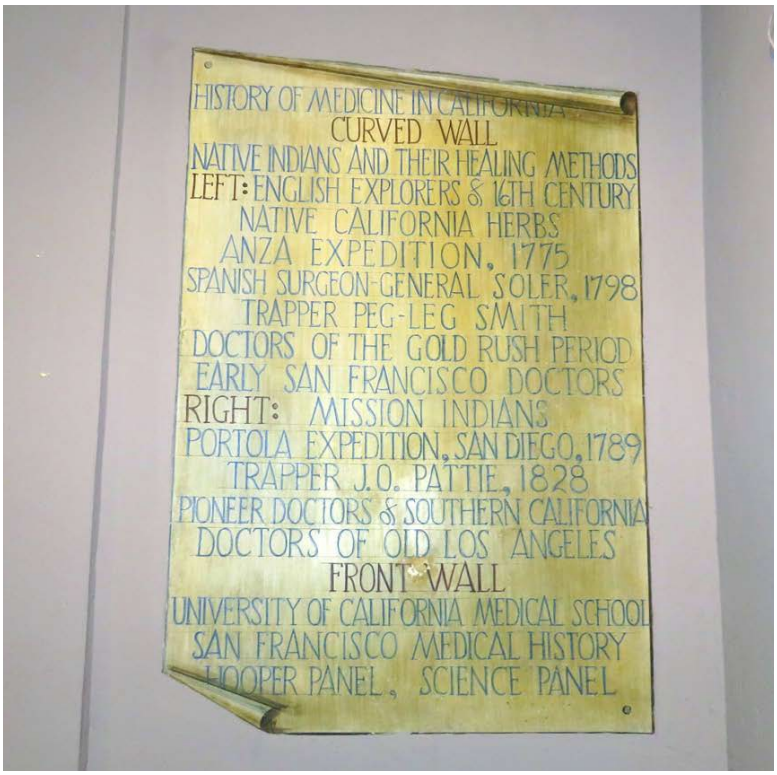
Fresco 3

Fresco 4

Fresco 5

Fresco 6

Fresco 7

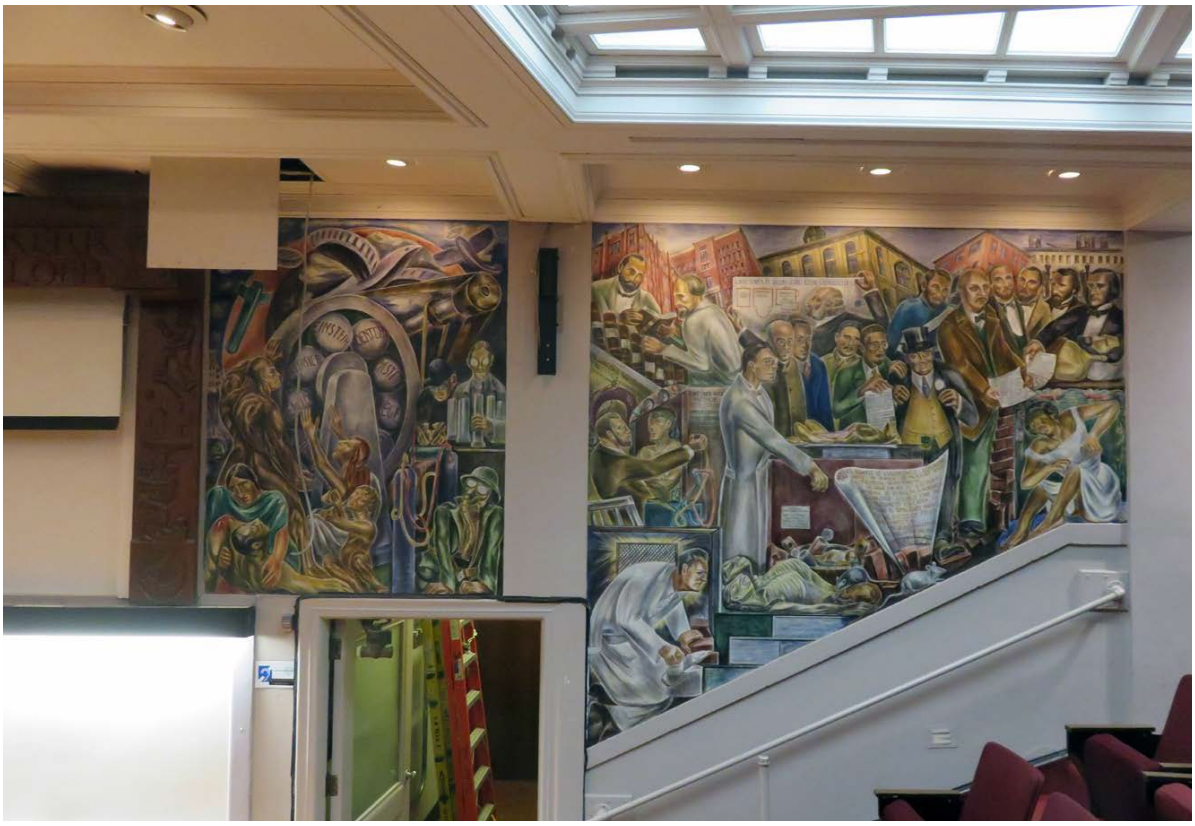


Fresco 8 (Description Scroll)

Fresco 1 (Dedication scroll)

Fresco 9 Fresco 10

Note: To right of Fresco 10 is a portion of the carved wood frame done by Michael von Meyer, 1937.



Fresco 11 Fresco 12

Note: To the left of Fresco 11 is a portion of the carved wood frame by Michael von Meyer, 1937.

Toland Hall, view northwest, 2015. Photo from *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Toland Hall, view of curved south wall with frescoes covered, 1953. Image from UCSF Archives and Special Collections, Photograph Collection, Toland Hall.

1948 Photograph of Bernard Zakheim's "History of Medicine in California," Toland Hall, UC Hospital (Source: San Francisco Public Library, History Center) From Page & Turnbull, 2005. *UC Hospital, 533 Parnassus Avenue, University of California, San Francisco Parnassus Heights Campus San Francisco, California, Historic American Building Survey Documentation*, November, 56.

Toland Hall in use as a lecture hall, showing the Zakheim murals in place, 1941. Image from UCSF Archives and Special Collections, Photograph Collection, Toland Hall

1939 Photographs of Toland Hall (Source: San Francisco Public Library, History Center) From Page & Turnbull, 2005. *UC Hospital, 533 Parnassus Avenue, University of California, San Francisco Parnassus Heights Campus San Francisco, California, Historic American Building Survey Documentation*, November, 49-50.

Viewing murals at Toland Hall, F. Stanley Durie, Dr. William E. Carter, Phyllis Wrightson, Joseph Allen (State Director of WPA Federal Art Project), Bernard Zakheim, circa 1939
Recent Acquisition: Bernard Zakheim Collection, Brought To Light, UCSF blog, Posted on February 24, 2015 by Polina Ilieva.

Bernard Zakheim and helpers work on designs for fresco for Toland Hall, 1937, [AAK-0588]
San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library

Bernard Zakheim at work on a mural for Toland Hall, 1937
San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library
[MOR-0557]

Bernard Zakheim painting "History of Medicine in California" fresco, 1937. Image from UCSF Archives and Special Collections, Photograph Collection, Toland Hall