



LANDMARK DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: NOVEMBER 3, 2021

Record No.: 2021-005992DES
Project Address: 155 Sansome Street (*Allegory of California*)
Zoning: C-3-O (Downtown – Office)
150-S Height and Bulk District
Article 11 Category I (Significant)
Pine-Sansome Conservation District
Block/Lot: 0049/001
Project Sponsor: SF Planning Department
49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 1400
San Francisco, CA 94103
Property Owner: Stock Exchange Tower Associates
155 Sansome Street, Suite 850
San Francisco, CA 94104
Staff Contact: Pilar LaValley (628-652-7372)
pilar.lavalley@sfgov.org

Recommendation: Recommend Landmark Designation to the Board of Supervisors

Property Description

Allegory of California is a *buon fresco* (true fresco) produced in-situ by Diego Rivera with his assistants John Viscount Hastings (Lord Hastings), William Musick, Clifford Wight, and plasterer Matthew Barnes between mid-December, 1930 and March, 1931 at The City Club of San Francisco (City Club), then known as the Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon Club. The fresco occupies the two-story wall and ceiling of an interior staircase that connects the 10th and 11th floors of 155 Sansome Street, formerly known as Stock Exchange Tower. 155 Sansome Street was constructed in 1929 to house the executive and business offices of the Pacific Stock Exchange (also known as San Francisco Stock Exchange or Pacific Coast Stock Exchange) that had its trading floor in the adjacent building at 301 Pine Street. Historically the two buildings were interconnected so that traders and brokers at the exchange could directly access offices and amenities, including the members-only Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon Club lounge and dining rooms on the 10th and 11th floors of 155 Sansome Street.

In November 1928, the Pacific Stock Exchange purchased an existing building at 301 Pine Street. This imposing Neo-Classical building was designed by J. Milton Dyer in 1915 as the United States Sub-treasury Building and vacated as part of the establishment of the Federal Reserve in San Francisco.¹ The architectural firm of Miller & Pflueger (James R. Miller & Timothy L. Pflueger) developed a new design for the San Francisco Stock Exchange, including converting the existing building at 301 Pine Street into a trading hall, and constructing a new, eleven-story office tower at 155 Sansome Street, directly adjacent to the trading hall.

Interior architect Michael Goodman worked with Rivera to select the site for mural, settling together on the two-story wall of the stairwell of the club room, wrapping up and on to the ceiling.² Goodman directed the removal of existing square panels of beige travertine marble, leaving side borders of two square panels on each side. The resulting approximately 472 square foot exposed area was fitted with scaffolding and prepared for installation of Rivera's buon fresco.³

Allegory of California covers approximately 472 square feet of the two-story wall of the stairwell, extending up and on to the ceiling. The fresco depicts the vibrancy of the state's past, present, and future economy. At the center of the image is a large female figure, whom Rivera described as "California itself [...] a woman of tanned skin and opulent curves modelled after the rolling hills of the landscape," wearing a necklace of golden wheat and offering, in one huge hand, "the subsoil of the miners, and, in the other, the ripe fruits of the earth."⁴ In front of the female figure are an engineer holding mathematical instruments and discussing a blueprint with a mechanic, and a boy with a model airplane, representing an industry in its infancy. As described by Rivera, the figures "typify [California's] workers; the agriculturalist and horticulturist, expressed by the figure of Luther Burbank; the ranchers, the miners and gold prospectors, represented by [James] Marshall, the discoverer who gave the signal for the gold rush; the mechanic, man of the mines and tractors and steamships and oil wells."⁵ Moving up the staircase, viewers follow a progression from the miners under the soil, to a skyline filled with oil rigs, derricks, cranes and ships. These images suggest the industries of the San Francisco Bay Area: the oil refineries of Richmond, shipping companies including the Matson and Dollar lines that plied the Pacific Ocean, and dredging equipment used in search of gold.⁶ On the ceiling, there are several airplanes and two nude female figures flying through the sky. A large sun rounds out the ceiling composition, with a beneficent gaze that appears to follow the viewer as they walk below it.

The 155 Sansome Street building was designated under Article 11 of the Planning Code as a Category I (Significant) building as part of the Downtown Plan and is located with the Pine-Sansome Conservation District. The Diego Rivera fresco, *Allegory of California*, is not addressed in this Article 11 designation. The building was surveyed as part of the Department of City Planning's 1976 survey and the Foundation for San Francisco Architectural Heritage 1978 survey.

¹ San Francisco Property information Map, 155 Sansome Street; Sidney Schwartz, "New Listings Set Figures for All Time," *San Francisco Examiner*, January 4, 1929, 32.

² Zakheim and Rivera, *Diego Rivera and Friends in San Francisco*.

³ Zakheim and Rivera, *Diego Rivera and Friends in San Francisco*.

⁴ Diego Rivera with Bertram Wolfe, *Portrait of America* (New York: Covici, Friede, Inc., 1934) 14.

⁵ Rivera with Wolfe, *Portrait of America*, 14.

⁶ Zakheim and Rivera, *Diego Rivera and Friends in San Francisco*.

Project Description

The item before the HPC is consideration of a Resolution to Recommend Article 10 landmark designation of the Diego Rivera fresco, titled *Allegory of California*, to the Board of Supervisors under Article 10 of the Planning Code, Section 1004.2. The pending Landmark designation was initiated by the Board of Supervisors.

On April 4, 2021, Supervisor Peskin introduced a proposed Resolution under Board of Supervisors (hereinafter “Board”) File No. 210352 to initiate the Landmark designation process for the fresco, titled *Allegory of California*, in The City Club of San Francisco (formerly Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon Club) at 155 Sansome Street. At a hearing of the Land Use and Transportation Committee of the Board on April 19, 2021, the committee voted unanimously to Recommend to the full Board approval of the Resolution to initiate Landmark Designation. On April 27 2021, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Resolution, and on May 7, 2021, with the Mayor’s signature, Resolution No. 187-21 became effective.

Compliance With Planning Code

Article 10 of the Planning Code.

The executive summary and analysis under review was prepared by Department preservation staff, who meet the Secretary of the Interior’s professional qualifications. The Department has determined that the fresco, titled *Allegory of California*, meets the requirements for eligibility as an individual landmark pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code. The justification for its inclusion is explained in detail in the attached Landmark Designation Fact Sheet, and briefly in this Executive Summary.

Significance: *Allegory of California*, which depicts classic themes and motifs found in Rivera compositions, namely harmony between nature and machine, a glorification of the past while looking toward the future, and a panorama of historical figures, is culturally and historically significant for its association with preeminent Mexican artist Diego Rivera. The first fresco painted by Rivera in the United States, it “...represents Rivera’s most successful work from the 1930-31 San Francisco period, and meaningful compositional and iconographic parallels can be drawn to his earlier Mexican murals of the 1920s.”⁷ The fresco is also significant for association with the Latinx and Chicax arts communities, a significant and vibrant part of San Francisco’s cultural heritage. The period of significance is 1931.

Underrepresented Landmark Types: The proposed landmark designation addresses two previously identified underrepresented landmark types: work of art property type and property associated with Latinx and Chicax arts communities.

Integrity: *Allegory of California* maintains a high level of integrity. See Pages 2-3 of attached Landmark Designation Fact Sheet for further analysis.

Character-Defining Features: Character-defining features of *Allegory of California* are identified in the attached Landmark Designation Fact Sheet on Page 3.

⁷ Hurlburt, 108.

Boundaries of the Landmark: The proposed Landmark site encompasses the location of *Allegory of California*, which is on the double-height wall and the ceiling of the grand stairwell between 10th and 11th floors of The City Club of San Francisco (formerly the Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon Club) at 155 Sansome Street (Assessor's Block No. 0268, Lot 001A).

General Plan.

The Urban Design Element of the San Francisco General Plan contains the following relevant objectives and policies:

OBJECTIVE 2

CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES THAT PROVIDE A SENSE OF NATURE, CONTINUITY WITH THE PAST, AND FREEDOM FROM OVERCROWDING.

Policy 4

Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.

Designating significant historic resources as local landmarks will further continuity with the past because the buildings will be preserved for the benefit of future generations.

Planning Code Section 101.1 – establishes the Eight Priority Policies and requires review of permits for consistency with said policies. On balance, the proposed designation is consistent with the Eight Priority Policies, and furthers Policy Number 7, which states that landmarks and historic buildings be preserved.

Landmark Designation Procedures

Action by Historic Preservation Commission.

The Historic Preservation Commission on February 4, 2009, by Resolution No. 001, adopted the National Register Criteria as its methodology for recommending landmark designation of historic resources. Under the National Register Criteria, the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, materials, workmanship, and association, and that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or properties that have yielded, or may likely yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Article 10 of the Planning Code.

Section 1004 of the Planning Code authorizes the landmark designation of an individual structure or other feature or an integrated group of structures and features on a single lot or site, having special character or special

historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value, as a landmark. Section 1004.1 also outlines that landmark designation may be initiated by the Board of Supervisors or the Historic Preservation Commission and the initiation shall include findings in support. Section 1004.2 states that once initiated, the proposed designation is referred to the Historic Preservation Commission for a report and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to approve, disapprove or modify the proposal.

Pursuant to Section 1004.3 of the Planning Code, if the Historic Preservation Commission approves the designation, a copy of the resolution of approval is transmitted to the Board of Supervisors and without referral to the Planning Commission. The Board of Supervisors shall hold a public hearing on the designation and may approve, modify or disapprove the designation.

Section 1004(b) requires that the designating ordinance approved by the Board of Supervisors shall include the location and boundaries of the landmark site, a description of the characteristics of the landmark which justify its designation, and a description of the particular features that should be preserved.

If the Historic Preservation Commission approves the proposed designation recommendation, a copy of the resolution of approval is transmitted to the Board of Supervisors, which holds a public hearing on the designation and may approve, modify or disapprove the designation (Section 1004.4). If the Historic Preservation Commission disapproves the proposed designation, such action shall be final, except upon the filing of a valid appeal to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days (Section 1004.5).

Public / Neighborhood Input

To date, staff has not received any communications from members of the public regarding this landmark designation.

Issues & Other Considerations

- **Property owner input:** On October 7, 2021, the Department sent mailed notice to the property owner regarding the landmark designation recommendation hearing scheduled for November 3, 2021. Staff has been in communication with Andrew Junius, Ruben, Junius & Rose, on behalf of the property owner regarding the pending designation. On October 26, 2021, Andrew Junius, on behalf of the property owner submitted a letter (attached) stating that the property owner does not support designation of the subject property. The letter (attached) enumerates several reasons why the property owner opposes Landmark designation, including the following:
 - Designation may actually hinder its ability to effectively maintain, preserve and insure the Artwork's long-term upkeep;
 - Private property that is not publicly accessible is not eligible for landmark designation;
 - Artwork is not eligible for landmark designation.
- **Period of Significance:** The period of significance for *Allegory of California* fresco is 1931. This date encompasses the painting of the fresco in Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon Club (now The City Club of San

Francisco) and marks the installation of the first such artwork by Diego Rivera in the United States.

- **Publicly Accessible Interiors:** Section 1004 of the Planning Code allows landmarking of features of historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value, not limited to exterior features. Section 1004(c)(2) further clarifies that interior features that historically have been accessible to the public can be landmarked. While *Allegory of California* was originally installed within an interior space – the Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon Club – that served a members-only clientele, it was made accessible to viewing by the public during the grand opening in 1931. The fresco, an internationally known artwork by a world-renowned artist, has been accessible to the public during guided (by SF City Guides) and self-guided (by The City Club) tours since at least the early 2000s and possibly earlier. Further information about public accessibility includes:
 - Through correspondence from its counsel, The City Club states that the Club allows non-members to view the Fresco through small group, curator-led tours; events held in conjunction with organizations such as SF Heritage and the Art Deco Society; and invitations to art experts and academic groups; and
 - Historically, The City Club has from time to time maintained limited hours when members of the public could view the Fresco and other architecture and artwork inside the Club’s facilities, including through self-guided tours, as evidenced by articles in SF Weekly (2014) and USA Today (updated 2018) and on travel websites and blogs such as TripAdvisor.com, AtlasObscura.com, and Far & Wise (The Allegory of California by Diego Rivera in San Francisco (farandwise.com)); and
 - San Francisco City Guides, a non-profit organization offering volunteer-led walking tours of San Francisco, has operated guided tours of Art Deco architectural masterpieces of San Francisco, including 155 Sansome Street (Stock Exchange Tower) and the Fresco. These tours are generally free of charge; and
 - San Francisco City Guides and other local groups, including the San Francisco Historical Society and the Art Deco Society, have worked with The City Club to offer special tours of the Fresco for their members, usually with a small fee; and
 - The City Club rents out interior facilities, including the space in which the Fresco is located, for non-member events, and promotes the Fresco as a feature of its rental facilities; and
 - The public was invited to view the Fresco during the grand unveiling on March 15, 1931 with said event reported in the San Francisco Chronicle; and
 - The San Francisco Wine & Food Society held a dinner honoring special California vintages at the Stock Exchange Luncheon Club on October 27, 1938.

Environmental Review Status

The Planning Department has determined that actions by regulatory agencies for protection of the environment

(specifically in this case, landmark designation) are exempt from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class Eight - Categorical).

Basis for Recommendation

The Department recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the Board of Supervisors landmark designation of *Allegory of California* as it is individually eligible as the work of preeminent Mexican artist Diego Rivera. The fresco is also significant as the first painted by Rivera in the United States and has been hailed as Rivera's most successful work from the 1930-1931 San Francisco period. The fresco is also significant for association with the Latinx and Chicanx arts communities, a significant and vibrant part of San Francisco's cultural heritage.

ATTACHMENTS

- Draft Resolution Recommending Landmark designation
- Exhibit A – Landmark Designation Fact Sheet
- Exhibit B – Maps and Context Images
- Exhibit C – Draft Landmark Designation Ordinance
- Exhibit D – Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 187-21
- Exhibit E – Board of Supervisors April 27, 2021 initiation hearing packet
- Exhibit F – Letter from Andrew Junius, on behalf of property owner, dated October 26, 2021



LANDMARK RESOLUTION RECOMMENDATION DRAFT RESOLUTION NO. XXXX

HEARING DATE: NOVEMBER 3, 2021

Record No.: 2021-005992DES
Project Address: 155 Sansome Street, Diego Rivera fresco, *Allegory of California* (The City Club of San Francisco, former Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon Club)
Zoning: C-3-O (Downtown Office)
150-S Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0268/001A
Project Sponsor: SF Planning Department
49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 1400
San Francisco, CA 94103
Property Owner: Stock Exchange Tower Associates
155 Sansome Street, Suite 850
San Francisco, CA 94104
Staff Contact: Pilar LaValley (628-652-7372)
pilar.lavalley@sfgov.org

RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF THE FRESCO TITLED “ALLEGORY OF CALIFORNIA,” ASSESSOR’S PARCEL BLOCK NO. 0268, LOT NO. 001A, AS LANDMARK NO. XXX CONSISTENT WITH THE PURPOSES AND STANDARDS OF ARTICLE 10

1. WHEREAS, on April 4, 2021, Supervisor Peskin introduced a proposed Resolution under Board of Supervisors (hereinafter “Board”) File No. 210352 to initiate the Landmark designation process for Diego Rivera’s fresco, titled “Allegory of California,” painted in 1931 in the grand stairwell between the 10th and 11th floors of what is now The City Club of San Francisco (formerly Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon Club), 155 Sansome Street, Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 0268, Lot No. 001A (“the Fresco”); and
2. WHEREAS, on April 19, 2021, the Board of Supervisors at its Land Use and Transportation Committee meeting recommended unanimously to recommend to the full Board approval of the Resolution to initiate Landmark Designation (Board File No. 210352); and
3. WHEREAS, on April 27, 2021, the Board voted unanimously to adopt the Resolution to initiate Landmark Designation, and on May 7, 2021 with the Mayor’s signature, Resolution No. 187-21 became effective (Board

File No. 210352); and

4. WHEREAS, on July 23, 2021, the Board voted unanimously to adopt Resolution No. 344-21 (Board File No. 210778) extending the prescribed time within which the Historic Preservation Commission shall act to approve, disapprove or modify the proposed designation of landmark status of One Montgomery Street for an additional 90 days, or until November 9, 2021; and
5. WHEREAS, Department Staff, who meet the Secretary of Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards, prepared the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet for the Fresco, which was reviewed for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10; and
6. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of November 3, 2021, reviewed Department staff’s analysis of the historical significance of the Fresco pursuant to Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Executive Summary dated October 27, 2021, and recommended Landmark designation through this Resolution; and
7. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the nomination of the Fresco as a Landmark is in the form prescribed by the Historic Preservation Commission and contains supporting historic, architectural, and/or cultural documentation; and
8. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the Fresco, which depicts classic themes and motifs found in Rivera compositions, namely harmony between nature and machine, a glorification of the past while looking toward the future, and a panorama of historical figures, is culturally and historically significant and is eligible for local designation as the first fresco painted by preeminent Mexican artist Diego Rivera in the United States; and
9. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the designation of the Fresco is also proper given its association with the Latinx and Chicanx arts communities, a significant and vibrant part of San Francisco’s cultural heritage; and
10. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the Fresco meets two of the Historic Preservation Commission’s four priority areas for designation: property types that are underrepresented among the City’s designated landmarks and properties associated with an underrepresented racial/social/ethnic group; and
11. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that designation of the Fresco advances the objectives outlined in Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Resolution No. 1127, adopted in 2020, otherwise called *Centering Preservation Planning on Racial and Social Equity*, which states goals for how the Commission and the Planning Department can develop proactive strategies to address structural and institutional racism and center their work and resource allocation on racial and social equity, focused on preservation; and
12. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the Fresco meets the eligibility requirements of Section 1004 of the Planning Code and warrants consideration for Article 10 landmark designation; and

13. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the boundaries and the list of character-defining features, as identified in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet, should be considered for preservation under the proposed landmark designation as they relate to the Fresco’s historical significance and retain historical integrity; and
14. WHEREAS, the proposed designation is consistent with the General Plan priority policies pursuant to Planning Code, Section 101.1 and furthers Priority Policy No. 7, which states that landmarks and historic buildings be preserved, and will serve the public necessity, convenience and welfare pursuant to Planning Code, Section 302; and
15. WHEREAS, the Department has determined that landmark designation is exempt from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class Eight – Categorical Exemption for Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends to the Board of Supervisors approval of landmark designation of Diego Rivera’s fresco, titled “Allegory of California,” painted in the grand stairwell between the 10th and 11th floors of what is now The City Club of San Francisco (formerly Pacific Stock Exchange), 155 Sansome Street, Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 0268, Lot No. 001A, consistent with the purposes and standards of Article 10 of the Planning Code.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on November 3, 2021.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ADOPTED: November 3, 2021



ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION FACT SHEET



*Allegory of California*¹

Historic Name:	<i>Allegory of California</i>
Address:	Located in interior stair of The City Club of San Francisco (former Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon Club) 155 Sansome Street (Stock Exchange tower)

¹ Stanton L. Catlin, "Mural Census." In *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective*, ed. Cynthia Newman Helms, 235-335. (New York: Founders Society Detroit Institute of Arts, in association with W.W. Norton & Company, 1986), 278.

Block/ Lot(s):	0268/001A
Parcel Area:	6, 477 sq. ft.
Zoning:	C-3-O (Downtown Office)
Year Built:	1931
Artist:	Diego Rivera
Prior Historic Studies/Other Designations:	Article 11 Category I (Significant) Building Pine-Sansome Conservation District Foundation For San Francisco Architectural Heritage survey, 1978 DCP 1976 Survey
Prior HPC Actions:	

Significance Criteria:	<u>Events</u> : Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. <u>Architecture/Design</u> : 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 <i>The Making of a Fresco Showing the Building of a City</i> ” fresco is 1931. This date encompasses the painting of the fresco in Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon Club (now The City Club of San Francisco).
Statement of Significance:	<i>Allegory of California</i> , painted by artist Diego Rivera and assistants Viscount John Hastings (Lord Hastings), William Musick, Clifford Wight, and Matthew Barnes between mid-December, 1930 and March, 1931 in the Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon Club (now The City Club of San Francisco). The fresco is on the two-story wall and ceiling of the interior staircase, connecting the lounge and dining rooms of the former luncheon club, between the 10 th and 11 th floors of 155 Sansome Street, formerly known as Stock Exchange Tower. The fresco, which demonstrates classic themes and motifs found in Rivera compositions, namely harmony between nature and machine, a glorification of the past while looking toward the future, and a panorama of historical figures, is culturally and historically significant for its association with preeminent Mexican artist Diego Rivera. The first fresco painted by Rivera in the United States, it “. . .represents Rivera’s most successful work from the 1930-31 San Francisco period...” ² The fresco is also significant for association with the Latinx and Chicanx arts communities, a significant and vibrant part of San Francisco’s cultural heritage.
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,

² Hurlburt, 108-109.

	<p>materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association.³</p> <p><i>Allegory of California</i>, painted in 1931 by Diego Rivera and assistants Viscount John Hastings, William Musick, Clifford Wight, and Matthew Barnes, retains a high degree of integrity to convey its artistic and cultural significance. The fresco retains a high degree of integrity of location, design, association, workmanship, setting, and feeling. Although the fresco has been restored, it retains a high degree of integrity of materials.</p> <p>Overall, the Department has determined that <i>Allegory of California</i> fresco at 155 Sansome Street retains integrity to convey its historical and cultural significance.</p>
<p>Character-Defining Features:</p>	<p>The character-defining features of <i>Allegory of California</i> that should be preserved or replaced in-kind are those physical features associated with structural support, construction, and visual depiction and expression of the Fresco, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All metal and other furring channels that support the underlying wall behind the Fresco; • All metal lathe and plaster, including the scratch, brown, and other plaster coats that underlie the Fresco; • The combination of pigments and plaster that form the Fresco; • The size, shape, form, and materials of the Fresco; • The stairwell configuration, walls, and ceiling where the Fresco is located.

Statement of Significance Summary

Allegory of California, painted by artist Diego Rivera and assistants Viscount John Hastings (Lord Hastings), William Musick, Clifford Wight, and Matthew Barnes between mid-December, 1930 and March, 1931 in the Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon Club (now The City Club of San Francisco). The fresco is on the two-story wall and ceiling of the interior staircase, connecting the lounge and dining rooms of the former luncheon club, between the 10th and 11th floors of 155 Sansome Street, formerly known as Stock Exchange Tower. The fresco, which demonstrates classic themes and motifs found in Rivera compositions, namely harmony between nature and machine, a glorification of the past while looking toward the future, and a panorama of historical figures, is culturally and historically significant for its association with preeminent Mexican artist Diego Rivera. The first fresco painted by Rivera in the United States, it "...represents Rivera's most successful work from the 1930-31 San Francisco period..."⁴ The fresco is also significant for association with the Latinx and Chicanx arts communities, a significant and vibrant part of San Francisco's cultural heritage.

³ "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," *National Register Bulletin*, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995, 44.

⁴ Hurlburt, 108-109.

Property Description and History

Allegory of California, created in *buon fresco* or true fresco style by artist, Diego Rivera, occupies the two-story wall and ceiling of an open stair between tenth and eleventh floors of The City Club of San Francisco (formerly Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon Club) at 155 Sansome Street. Constructed in 1929, 155 Sansome Street (Stock Exchange Tower) is located in Downtown San Francisco.

The low-rise, monumental building directly north of 155 Sansome Street is the former Pacific Stock Exchange (or Pacific Coast Stock Exchange), now Equinox Fitness. The streets adjacent to the subject building are occupied by mid- and high-rise commercial buildings in a variety of architectural styles. Many of the surrounding buildings were constructed in the early decades of the 1900s.

Pacific Stock Exchange (aka San Francisco Stock Exchange or Pacific Coast Stock Exchange)

The following description of history of the stock exchange and the subject property is from “*Allegory of California* Landmark Designation Support Memorandum,” prepared by architectural historian Stacy Farr of Architectural Resources Group, Inc. on behalf of the Planning Department:

The San Francisco Stock and Bond Exchange was established in 1882 when nineteen brokers signed a charter and pledged a \$50 membership fee.⁵ First president John Perry Jr. had been a member of the New York Stock Exchange and the Boston Stock Exchange before coming to California during the Gold Rush to try his hand at mining. Like many prospectors, Perry had greater success when he left the mines and settled in San Francisco to pursue his previous and more familiar occupation.

In contrast to existing exchanges such as the San Francisco Mining Exchange (then operating as the San Francisco Stock and Exchange Board), the San Francisco Stock and Bond Exchange dealt in a wide range of commodities and became known as the “big board” of the west. This range enabled the exchange to weather the extreme market fluctuations that characterized the boomtown economy of early San Francisco. The first location of the stock exchange was at 312 California Street, followed by an expansion into several offices at the Merchants' Exchange Building at 465 California Street. Reflecting its continuously healthy trading volume, the San Francisco Stock and Bond Exchange was second only to the New York Stock Exchange in reopening after a national four-month trading pause at the outbreak of World War I.

In 1918, the stock exchange moved into a one-and-a-half story building at 341 Montgomery Street, where it remained for slightly over ten years. In 1927, during a shake-up in the organization of exchange boards in San Francisco, the San Francisco Stock and Bond Exchange was officially renamed the San Francisco Stock Exchange and took ownership of the building at 350 Bush Street, formerly used by the Mining Exchange, where they established a secondary curb exchange.⁶ That year, the exchange consistently broke business records, averaging nearly \$17 million weekly trading totals by October 1927.⁷

⁵ Lindsay Arthur, “San Francisco's Big Board Grew Out Of A Basement Meeting,” *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*, October 10, 1955.

⁶ “S. F. Stock ‘Change Deal is Approved,” *San Francisco Examiner*, November 18, 1927. 21.

⁷ “Breaks Business Records; San Francisco Exchange Tradings Total \$16,936,019 This Week,” *The New York Times*, September 16, 1927.

Into this optimistic context, the San Francisco Stock Exchange solicited proposals from several architectural firms to design a new trading hall for the exchange. In February 1928 the San Francisco firm of J. R. Miller & T. L. Pflueger was selected by unanimous decision.⁸ The winning design, to be constructed at the site of the exchange's offices at 341 Montgomery Street, called for a traditional Neo-Classical temple form with Art Deco details including bas relief panels and masks. Although construction was planned to begin shortly after the commission was awarded, extremely volatile market conditions through 1928 led the San Francisco Stock Exchange to change course with regard to new construction.

In November 1928, in a move driven largely by economy, the San Francisco Stock Exchange purchased an existing building at 301 Pine Street. This imposing Neo-Classical building was designed by J. Milton Dyer in 1915 as the United States Sub-treasury Building and vacated as part of the establishment of the Federal Reserve in San Francisco.⁹ Miller & Pflueger stayed on board as architects and developed a new design for the San Francisco Stock Exchange, including converting the existing building at 301 Pine Street into a trading hall, and constructing a new, eleven-story office tower at 155 Sansome Street, directly adjacent to the trading hall. Construction permits were issued in May 1929 and the construction cost was \$2.75 million.¹⁰ Miller & Pflueger worked with general contractors Lindgren & Swinerton and a broad team of interiors specialists including A. Quandt & Sons who completed all interior painting, lacquering, and decorative finishes; R. Brandlein & Co. and Pacific Manufacturing Co., who completed extensive cabinet work; and W. J. Sloan who supplied and installed fine carpets, furniture, draperies, and linoleum.¹¹

The design of the trading hall at 301 Pine Street retained the existing Doric colonnade and wide approaching stair from Pine Street while adding massive granite corner piers; installed an attic wall above the existing cornice; altered the fenestration at the east and west façades; and created large pedestals in front of the building for installation of freestanding sculptures. The interior space was left as a single great hall with new floor furnishings and a louvered screen under the skylight. The new office tower at 155 Sansome Street was designed in a restrained Moderne style with narrow footprint and traditional three-part vertical composition, with double-height base and capital. The interior included an ornate black marble elevator lobby and assembly hall at the ground floor, executive offices at the upper floors, and a two-story club room at the top level.

Timothy L. Pflueger and his interior architect Michael Goodman worked with a team of fine artists to create the sculptures, bas reliefs, inscriptions and other carvings that ornament the building's interior and its generally spare Moderne exterior.¹² In the early months of 1929, Pflueger met the artist Ralph Stackpole, an instructor at the California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute) and a former student of Arthur Matthews, with whom Pflueger had worked on former decorative projects.¹³ Stackpole agreed to

⁸ "San Francisco Architects Win," *San Francisco Examiner*, February 6, 1928, 20.

⁹ San Francisco Property information Map, 155 Sansome Street; Sidney Schwartz, "New Listings Set Figures for All Time," *San Francisco Examiner*, January 4, 1929, 32.

¹⁰ "S.F. Building on Increase, Leonard Says," *San Francisco Examiner*, June 10, 1929, 13; Sidney L. Schwartz, "New Building of San Francisco Stock Exchange Will be Dedicated Today," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 4, 1930, 7.

¹¹ Various advertisements, *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 4, 1920, 7.

¹² Masha Zakheim and Diego Rivera, *Diego Rivera and Friends in San Francisco* (Volcano, California: Volcano Press, 2012), section "Allegory of California" published online, accessed October 1, 2021 at https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Allegory_of_California.

¹³ Therese Poletti and Tom Paiva, *Art Deco San Francisco: The Architecture of Timothy Pflueger* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton Architectural Press, 2008) 90.

sculpt the bas relief above the entry to 155 Sansome Street, and the monumental figures alongside the steps to the trading hall at 315 Pine Street. Stackpole also recruited and supervised several additional decorative artists for the project, including Robert Boardman Howard, who carved interior doors and relief panels, and Diego Rivera who, several months after the building was complete, painted the two-story mural in the stairwell of the club room at the top level.¹⁴ Additional artists who contributed work to the building include American landscape painter Edward Bruce, Otis Oldfield, Ruth Cravath, Adaline Kent, and Clifford Wright.¹⁵

Progress on the buildings was unimpeded by the stock market crash that occurred in October 1929, and the new San Francisco Stock Exchange was officially dedicated in a public opening ceremony on January 4, 1930.¹⁶ 155 Sansome Street operated as offices for the San Francisco Stock Exchange through 1953 when the building was sold to Industrial Indemnity Company for more than \$1 million. The San Francisco Stock Exchange continued to operate out of the trading hall at 301 Pine Street after merging with the Los Angeles Oil Exchange in 1956 to create the Pacific Coast Stock Exchange.¹⁷ The Pacific Coast Stock Exchange was the third-largest trading arena in the United States through 1970's and 1980's but ended in-person trading in 2001 during the shift to digital operations, and was absorbed by the New York Stock Exchange in 2015.¹⁸

The Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon Club, or Stock Exchange Luncheon Club, occupied the 10th and 11th floors of 155 Sansome Street (Stock Exchange Tower) from 1930 to 1987. The members-only club was described in the media at the time Rivera was selected to paint the fresco as having

...some 300 members, bankers, brokers, lawyers and others whose activities keep them in the financial district. The committee which chose Rivera...composed of Milton Bremer, William H. Gerstle, Timothy Pflueger, and William Hendrickson [club secretary].¹⁹

The luncheon club provided members and their invited guests amenities such as a lounge, bar, and dining rooms. The club also provided space for private, invitation-only events like a dinner sponsored by the Food and Wine Society of San Francisco, celebrating special California vintages, in 1938.²⁰

The former Stock Exchange Luncheon Club is now occupied by The City Club of San Francisco (The City Club), a members-only business and social club. The City Club, established in 1987, is a business and social club that offers members active calendar of networking and social opportunities, meeting and event spaces, and lounge,

¹⁴ Edward F. O'Day, "The San Francisco Stock Exchange," *Architect and Engineer*, March 1930, 35.

¹⁵ "Painting of 'San Francisco' Hangs in Board Room of Stock Exchange," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 13, 1931, 6.

¹⁶ Sidney L. Schwartz, "New Building of San Francisco Stock Exchange Will be Dedicated Today."

¹⁷ Reuters, "Trading Floor's Final Day At Pacific Stock Exchange," *New York Times*, May 26, 2001, accessed September 22, 2021 at <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/05/26/business/trading-floor-s-final-day-at-pacific-stock-exchange.html>.

¹⁸ Reuters, "Trading Floor's Final Day At Pacific Stock Exchange;" Meredith Bauer, "Pacific Exchange: The Rise, Peak and Disappearance of a West Coast Financial Titan," published June 3, 2015, accessed September 23, 2021 at <https://www.thestreet.com/investing/pacific-exchange-the-rise-peak-and-disappearance-of-a-west-coast-financial-titan-13173072>.

¹⁹ "Artists Fight on Employing Mexican 'Red,'" *San Francisco Chronicle*.

²⁰ At time of this event, officers of the San Francisco chapter of Food and Wine Society were Andre Simon (President), Harold H. Price (Honorary Secretary), and Dr. Raoul H. Blanquie (Chairman, Board of Governors). The Food and Wine Society does not appear to have been affiliated with the Stock Exchange; it is not known at this time whether a member of the Stock Exchange Lunch Club was required to sponsor events such as this dinner. A printed menu on letterhead of the Stock Exchange Lunch Club with the date and title of the event is located at the University of California archives, accessed at: *Stock Exchange Lunch Club (San Francisco, California), Wine and Food Society - A Dinner Featuring Special California Vintages*. [digital.ucdavis.edu, https://digital.ucdavis.edu/collection/amerine-menus/D-060/45/67/d7ck9s/media/images/d7ck9s-0.png](https://digital.ucdavis.edu/collection/amerine-menus/D-060/45/67/d7ck9s/media/images/d7ck9s-0.png). Accessed 27 Oct. 2021.

bar, and dining room(s) to entertain clients and colleagues or socialize with friends and family.²¹ The City Club also operates as a rental event venue, offering “. . . ten unique event rooms on four floors with awe-inspiring architectural details and original artwork. The famous Diego Rivera fresco, *Allegory of California*, graces the stairwell between the tenth and eleventh floors, providing a museum like experience for the most unique events.”²² These rooms can be booked by members as well as by corporate or private individuals for weddings, business conventions, holiday parties, fundraisers, or other functions. Although access to the Diego Rivera fresco is generally limited to The City Club members and their guests, attendees at business and private functions have also been able to view the artwork. In addition, local tour group SF City Guides, has provided guided tours of The City Club with access to the Rivera fresco for many years. SF City Guides and The City Club have also partnered with various historical societies, such as Art Deco Society and San Francisco Heritage, to provide tours of the building for their members.

Allegory of California

The fresco, *Allegory of California*, created in *buon fresco* or true fresco style by artist, Diego Rivera, occupies the two-story wall and ceiling of an open stair between tenth and eleventh floors of The City Club of San Francisco Building (formerly Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon Club) at 155 Sansome Street. 155 Sansome Street, known as Stock Exchange Tower, was constructed in 1929 based on plans by architectural firm Miller & Pflueger.

The following description of fresco and 155 Sansome Street is from “*Allegory of California* Landmark Designation Support Memorandum,” prepared by architectural historian Stacy Farr of Architectural Resources Group, Inc. on behalf of the Planning Department:

In 1930, after construction of 155 Sansome Street (Stock Exchange Tower) was complete, a committee convened to select an artist to paint a mural in the two-story stairwell of the club room at the top level of 155 Sansome Street. Committee members included the building’s architect Timothy Pflueger, president of the San Francisco Art Association William F. Gerstle, and several executives of the stock exchange.²³ Artists submitted proposals reflecting themes that were outlined by the selecting committee, including industrial, commercial, and financial progress in California. In September 1930 Diego Rivera was announced as the winning artist, marking the Mexican muralist’s first commission in the United States.²⁴

The selection of an avowed communist to adorn the walls of a capitalist institution was extensively discussed in the press, and the selection of a Mexican artist to complete an American commission was also divisive among some members of the San Francisco artists community.²⁵ However, Rivera was defended by influential artists including Ralph Stackpole, who had completed much of the existing art at the San Francisco Stock Exchange and been advocating for Rivera to complete a mural at the California School of Fine Arts for several years. Rivera was also publicly supported by some of the city’s prominent cultural

²¹ The City Club of San Francisco website: <https://cityclubsf.com/about/>

²² The City Club of San Francisco website: [Corporate Events & Catering, Business Convention Venues & Meeting Space, Bay Area & San Jose, CA \(cityclubsf.com\)](https://cityclubsf.com/corporate-events-catering-business-convention-venues-meeting-space-bay-area-san-jose-ca)

²³ “Artists Fight on Employing Mexican ‘Red,’” *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 24, 1930, 3.

²⁴ “Artists Fight on Employing Mexican ‘Red,’” *San Francisco Chronicle*.

²⁵ Hillary Ellenshaw, “Diego Rivera at the San Francisco Art Institute,” 2012, 50-55, accessed September 28, 2021 at https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/arth_etds/16.

leaders, including businessman and philanthropist Sigmund Stern and his wife Rosalie Meyers Stern, who hosted Rivera and his wife Frida Kahlo at their home in Atherton as Rivera completed his mural commission.²⁶

Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo arrived in San Francisco in November 1930, after a five-day train ride from Mexico City which Rivera spent sketching the landscape through which they travelled.²⁷ At the time of his arrival, Rivera had not developed the details of the mural but had conceptualized the subject matter to reflect, “the three bases of [California’s] richness – gold, petroleum, and fruits,” with additional nods to the state’s achievements in transportation, rail and marine technology, and illustrations of broader concepts such as energy and speed.²⁸ While in San Francisco, Rivera was also the subject of a solo exhibition at the Palace of the Legion of Honor, and gave several lectures in San Francisco and Oakland on the theme of modern art.²⁹ Rivera’s mural assistant William E. Musick also displayed his art publicly and was feted at several functions.³⁰

Interior architect Michael Goodman worked with Rivera to select the site for mural, settling together on the two-story wall of the stairwell of the club room, wrapping up and on to the ceiling.³¹ Goodman directed the removal of existing square panels of beige travertine marble, leaving side borders of two square panels on each side. The resulting approximately 472 square foot exposed area was fitted with scaffolding and prepared for installation of Rivera’s buon fresco.³²

Working with his assistants William E. Musick and Viscount John Hastings,³³ Rivera installed and painted the *Allegory of California* between December 1930 and March 1931.³⁴ The mural depicts the vibrancy of the state’s past, present, and future economy. At the center of the image is a large female figure, whom Rivera described as “California itself [...] a woman of tanned skin and opulent curves modelled after the rolling hills of the landscape,” wearing a necklace of golden wheat and offering, in one huge hand, “the subsoil of the miners, and, in the other, the ripe fruits of the earth.”³⁵ Although the figure resembles both the Aztec Earth Mothers that Rivera had depicted in his earlier work and Pomona, the Roman goddess so often evoked by California’s fruit industry, she was explicitly modeled on the famous American tennis star Helen Wills Moody, who Rivera sketched extensively while he was in California, and who, in 1929, had married the prominent San Francisco stockbroker Frederick Moody.³⁶

²⁶ Michael Hardy, Michael Corbett, and Denise Bradley, “Stern Hall, University of California, Berkeley, California Historic Structure Report,” 2009, 32.

²⁷ “Rivera Arrives in San Francisco to Paint Stock Exchange Murals,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 11, 1930, 12.

²⁸ “Rivera Arrives in San Francisco to Paint Stock Exchange Murals.”

²⁹ “Reception to Honor Mexican Painter,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 11, 1930,” 13; “Art Students Hear Rivera,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 8, 1931, 57.

³⁰ “Musick Watercolor Paintings on View,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 25, 1931, 39.

³¹ Zakheim and Rivera, *Diego Rivera and Friends in San Francisco*.

³² Zakheim and Rivera, *Diego Rivera and Friends in San Francisco*.

³³ Additional sources indicate that artist Clifford Wight also assisted Rivera. Wight also worked with Rivera on his subsequent fresco, *The Making of a Fresco Showing the Building of a City*, at the San Francisco Art Institute.

³⁴ “Noble Artist to Paint for U. S. Novelist,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 1, 1931, 17. Society Pages, *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 25, 1931: notes that “Dr. and Mrs. Russell Lee were hosts of an informal tea for William Musick, Chicago artist, who is now in town assisting Diego Rivera with his murals for the new Stock Exchange building.”

³⁵ Diego Rivera with Bertram Wolfe, *Portrait of America* (New York: Covici, Friede, Inc., 1934) 14.

³⁶ Kasia Boddy, “American Girl: The Iconography of Helen Wills,” *Historical Social Research*, Vol. 43. No. 2, 123; “Miss Wills Wed in Chapel Near Tennis Courts,” *New York Daily News*, December 24, 1929, 3.

In front of the female figure are an engineer holding mathematical instruments and discussing a blueprint with a mechanic, and a boy with a model airplane, representing an industry in its infancy. As described by Rivera, the figures “typify [California’s] workers; the agriculturalist and horticulturist, expressed by the figure of Luther Burbank; the ranchers, the miners and gold prospectors, represented by [James] Marshall, the discoverer who gave the signal for the gold rush; the mechanic, man of the mines and tractors and steamships and oil wells.”³⁷ Moving up the staircase, viewers follow a progression from the miners under the soil, to a skyline filled with oil rigs, derricks, cranes and ships. These images suggest the industries of the San Francisco Bay Area: the oil refineries of Richmond, shipping companies including the Matson and Dollar lines that plied the Pacific Ocean, and dredging equipment used in search of gold.³⁸

On the ceiling, there are several airplanes and two nude female figures flying through the sky, who also reflect the visage of Helen Wills Moody. A large sun rounds out the ceiling composition, with a beneficent gaze that appears to follow the viewer as they walk below it.

The mural was complete in March 1931 and was unveiled first to members of the Stock Exchange Luncheon Club at a gala attended by Rivera himself, and then to the members of the general public, who streamed consistently up the stairs and past the mural for several hours.³⁹ In explaining his choice of images, which excluded explicitly political themes, Rivera stated, “The painter’s intention, of course, must not lie outside the function of the place in which his painting has its being, else his work will be lacking in both objective and subjective correctness and truth. In this mural in a luncheon club, I painted the fruits of the earth which enrich and nourish because of the productive labors of workers and farmers.”⁴⁰ Within several weeks of completing *Allegory of California*, Rivera began work on *The Making of a Fresco Showing the Building of a City* at California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute) in April 1931.⁴¹

Architect Timothy Pflueger, who worked with Rivera on all three of his large San Francisco projects, is credited as having offered the commission that brought the artist to the Bay Area in 1930. However, Pflueger’s offer of a fresco commission and Rivera’s arrival in San Francisco to commence the Stock Exchange project marked the end of a multi-year campaign by local art patrons and artists affiliated with SFAI to bring Rivera to San Francisco. Although many art collectors, galleries, and institutions in the United States may have supported the idea of having Diego Rivera, then one of the most famous artists in the world, come to San Francisco, it was Pflueger, Ralph Stackpole, William Gerstle, and Albert Bender that were most involved in the effort.⁴²

Beginning as early as 1925, articles about Rivera [and other Mexican artists] began to appear in the United States.⁴³ Around the same time, galleries and museums around the world also sponsored major exhibitions of Mexican art, such that “[d]uring this period... Mexican muralists became world celebrities. ... They became so important that artists came from around the world to be in their presence and study their paintings. Between

³⁷ Rivera with Wolfe, *Portrait of America*, 14.

³⁸ Zakheim and Rivera, *Diego Rivera and Friends in San Francisco*.

³⁹ “Rivera Mural Given Initial Showing,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 15, 1931.

⁴⁰ Rivera with Wolfe, *Portrait of America*, 15.

⁴¹ San Francisco Planning Department, “Article 10 Landmark Designation Fact Sheet, *The Making of a Fresco Showing the Building of a City*,” Record No. 2021 001721DES, 2021, 6.

⁴² San Francisco Art Institute, Diego Rivera Mural webpage at <https://sfai.edu/about-sfai/diego-rivera-mural>.

⁴³ Ernest Goldstein, *The Journey of Diego Rivera* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Lerner Publications, c1996), 31-33.

1920 and 1930, Mexico became a world center for art.”⁴⁴ Much of this attention focused on Diego Rivera and a small but steady stream of artists, intellectuals, and interested lay people came to Mexico to watch him work.⁴⁵ Among the artists that went to Mexico were “two California artists, Ray Boynton, who taught *buon fresco* (true fresco) courses at the California School of Fine Arts, and Ralph Stackpole, a San Francisco-based sculptor who had known Rivera in Paris.”⁴⁶ When they returned to San Francisco from Mexico in 1926 and 1928, respectively, both Boynton and Stackpole brought back examples of Rivera’s work, including two pieces that were hung at SFAI at behest of board members William Gerstle and Albert Bender. Boynton may have been the first to recommend bringing Rivera to San Francisco for a commission.⁴⁷ Such recommendation may have been made to Albert Bender, who made the first offer of a mural commission in San Francisco in 1927, which Rivera declined due to a conflicting invitation to visit Russia.⁴⁸ Bender was one of Rivera’s strongest supporters in the United States, purchasing and loaning or donating Rivera’s art for the first exhibitions and shows by the artist in San Francisco. Following Stackpole’s return from Mexico in 1928 or 1929, Bender once again invited Rivera to San Francisco, but again the artist failed to make the journey due to scheduling conflicts and inability to secure a visa. At around this same time, “William Gerstle, president of the [San Francisco] Art Association, was very excited about the work and commissioned Rivera to do a small wall, 120 feet square, in the school” and donated “\$1,500...for the mural.”⁴⁹ Rivera does not appear to have been enthusiastic about the proposed wall space, which would remain an issue for the SFAI commission even after he arrived in San Francisco in 1930.

During the same period as Boynton’s and Stackpole’s travels to Mexico, newspaper articles began to mention that SFAI was considering offering Rivera a commission to paint a fresco in their building. In the fall of 1927, an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* stated, based on information provided by Albert Bender, that Rivera would be visiting San Francisco that holiday season to “give lectures and a limited course in his theory of the mechanical analysis of painting” and that there was a “rumor that [a] wealthy patron is making tentative arrangements for Rivera to do mural at California Institute of Fine Arts.”⁵⁰ Several articles followed in the final months of 1927 indicating that Rivera’s visit had to be postponed – he was in the Soviet Union at the time – but that he hoped to travel to San Francisco in the coming months.⁵¹ Though Rivera failed to show up in San Francisco for another three years, his popularity only grew during that time through articles and exhibits in San Francisco and across the United States.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Laurance P. Hurlburt, “Diego Rivera (1886-1957): A Chronology of His Art, Life and Times,” in *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective*, ed. Cynthia Newman Helms (New York: Founders Society Detroit Institute of Arts, in association with W. W. Norton, 1986), 59.

⁴⁶ National Historic Landmarks Program, “National Historic Landmark Nomination: The *Detroit Industry* Murals, Detroit Institute of Arts” (February 8, 2013), 16.

⁴⁷ San Francisco Art Institute, Diego Rivera Mural webpage at <https://sfai.edu/about-sfai/diego-rivera-mural>.

⁴⁸ San Francisco Art Institute, Diego Rivera Mural webpage at <https://sfai.edu/about-sfai/diego-rivera-mural>.

⁴⁹ San Francisco Planning Department, “National Register Nomination, Review and Comment Case Report,” 800 Chestnut Street (San Francisco Art Institute), Case No. 2015-011315FED, October 1, 2015, 6-7; Luis-Martín Lozano, “1929-1931 V. Revolutions and Allegories: Mexico and San Francisco,” in *Diego Rivera: The Complete Murals*, Luis-Martín Lozano and Juan Rafael Coronel Rivera, ed. Benedikt Taschen (Los Angeles: Taschen, c2008), 265.

⁵⁰ *San Francisco Chronicle*, “Rivera to Visit S.F. During the Holiday Season.” October 30, 1927. Accessed via <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.ezproxy.sfpl.org/>.

⁵¹ “*San Francisco Chronicle*, “Rivera’s Proposed Visit is Delayed,” December 25, 1927. Accessed via <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.ezproxy.sfpl.org/>.

In 1927, Rivera's artworks were enjoyed at two popular exhibitions in San Francisco at the Gallerie Beaux Arts and the East West Gallery. Local art patrons were further encouraged in their interest in Rivera's work when many of their artworks by the artist were purchased or borrowed in 1928 for a show at the Weyhe Gallery in New York.⁵² Again, in 1928, local media began reporting on a pending Rivera commission at SFAI. In July a headline ran that "Rivera May Win Contract Here" and the accompanying story stated that while correspondence was still under way to work out the details, a fund had been set aside by one of the [school's] board of directors for the sole purpose of commissioning Rivera to do a "decoration at the school."⁵³ In what may have been an effort to encourage support of this proposal, the article went on to explain that Rivera's frescoes in public buildings in Mexico City were regarded as the "outstanding achievements of contemporary art" and that his work had been shown locally at several galleries in addition to being in the collections of patrons, art collectors, the California School of Fine Arts, and the California Palace of the Legion of Honor.⁵⁴ Many of the pieces in the latter collections appear to have been donations to these institutions from Albert Bender. A month later, in August 1928, Albert M. Bender, reported that Rivera had accepted a commission to do a mural fresco in the California School of Fine Arts. Although Rivera's date of arrival had not been set at time of the newspaper report, it was noted that he intended to travel to San Francisco within the next several months "when on his way to Russia to do extensive work there."⁵⁵ It is unclear whether Rivera actually expected to undertake the SFAI project in 1928 given his commitments, both professional and political, in Mexico. At the time of the SFAI announcement, Rivera was just returning to a changing political landscape in Mexico from a challenging visit to the Soviet Union. His political activities were under increased scrutiny – in both Mexico and the United States – and he met and married Frida Kahlo. At the same time, he also began work on his comprehensive history of the Mexican nation at the Palacio Nacional in 1929 and, a short time later, accepted a lucrative commission from the US Ambassador to Mexico for the Palacio de Cortés in Cuernavaca.

Although he was recognized as an artist of international importance prior to travelling to San Francisco, the Stock Exchange commission, along with the long-frustrated promise of the SFAI project, may have come at an opportune moment for Rivera, personally and professionally. His government commissions, especially with the US Ambassador to Mexico, who was closely affiliated with powerful capitalists like J.P. Morgan and the Rockefeller family, raised concerns amongst the Mexican Communist Party and Stalinist Soviet Union about his allegiance. Even as Rivera avowed his leftist principles, he was expelled from the Mexican Communist Party and shunned by party members.⁵⁶ The political intrigues swirling around Rivera during this period threatened to overwhelm or shut down his most significant projects, including his work at the National Palace. In addition to his eagerness to explore the United States, a place that "...brought together factories, scientific genius, and an industrial mechanical age that let [Rivera] produce art that could speak to the people who worked in the new society,"⁵⁷ the commissions on offer in San Francisco may have provided the artist with a strategic opportunity to break away from political and personal entanglements in Mexico.

⁵² *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Rivera's Work to Be Shown in New York," January 1, 1928. Accessed via <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.ezproxy.sfpl.org/>.

⁵³ *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Rivera May Win Mural Contract Here," July 15, 1928. Accessed via <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.ezproxy.sfpl.org/>.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Rivera to Do Fine Arts School Mural," August 26, 1928. Accessed via <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.ezproxy.sfpl.org/>.

⁵⁶ Robert W. Cherny, *Victor Arnautoff and the Politics of Art* (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 2017), 64-66; Hurlburt, *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective*, 71; Lee, *Painting on the Left*, 52-55.

⁵⁷ Goldstein, 50.

It seems equally plausible that the Pacific Stock Exchange commission was a strategic move on the part of Rivera's supporters in San Francisco.

In late September 1930, Pflueger announced that he had commissioned Rivera to paint a mural for the Luncheon Club of the Pacific Stock Exchange in a building he had designed. His decision raised alarm among the media: "Radical To Do Exchange Mural," wrote one newspaper, and another asked, "Will Art Be Touched in Pink?" Originally, Rivera's patrons had planned his first commission at the California School of Fine Arts, "the heart of mural training." Criticism over Pflueger's decision may have led Rivera's patrons to paint the Luncheon Club mural first, notes [art historian] Lee, where a private commercial space rather than an academic public space ruled out "arguing in the public sphere." What the club chose to put on its walls was its own business, but radical political content was out. "I hold a contract with Rivera. And I hold the pursestrings for the job," Pflueger stated. "Should he attempt any of the caricaturing for which he is famous...well, there is power in pursestrings."⁵⁸

Even while concerns over Rivera's politics were raised with this announcement, choosing to bring Rivera to San Francisco with the Stock Exchange project, described at the time as a "temple of capitalism," may have eased apprehensions of the Department of Justice which was hesitant to issue Rivera a travel visa. Even so, Dwight Morrow, who as US Ambassador to Mexico had recently seen the completion of the commission he had given Rivera at Palacio de Cortés, and Albert Bender, wealthy San Francisco art patron and Rivera sponsor, had to intercede on behalf of Rivera – and the pending Stock Exchange and SFAI commissions – to get a travel visa issued.

Visual inspection of the fresco has not been undertaken in preparation of this report, but there is no indication that its physical condition has been compromised in recent years.

Events: *Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.*

Allegory of California, painted in 1931 in the grand stairwell between 10th and 11th floors of 155 Sansome Street, in space occupied by The City Club of San Francisco (formerly the space occupied by Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon Club), by Mexican artist, Diego Rivera, is the first fresco painted by Rivera in the United States. The fresco is significant for its association with Latinx and Chicanx arts communities, a significant and vibrant part of San Francisco's cultural heritage.

Nuestra Historia: San Francisco Latino Historic Context Statement (draft) states that the "essential threads of Latino muralism as it exists today in San Francisco can be traced to the rise of the Mexican Mural Movement

⁵⁸ Laurance P. Hurlburt, *The Mexican Muralists in the United States* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), 100.

during the 1920s”⁵⁹ and that Rivera’s “impact on the California School of Fine Arts/SFAI was vital and long lasting” providing a “cadre of local artists trained in fresco and mural painting.”⁶⁰ Timothy W. Drescher, in his book, *San Francisco Bay Area Murals: Communities Create Their Muses: 1904-1997*, is even more explicit on these connections, stating that “Diego Rivera significantly influenced San Francisco muralists” with technical and stylistic aspects being passed on to later generations as “New Deal artists watched him paint in person, and sometimes worked as his assistants” while “subsequent muralists learned about his murals...by visiting the walls.”⁶¹ The Mission mural or community mural movement also includes many artists and organizers who have been students at SFAI or have worked with other artists trained by Rivera: some examples include Emmy Lou Packard and collaborations with younger generation of Mission artists, including Michael Rios and Chuy Campusano during the painting of their *Homage to Siqueiros*; Luis Cervantes and Precita Eyes Muralists; Galería de la Raza and one of its initial co-directors René Yañez; Los Mujeres Muralistas and its three founders, Patricia Rodriguez, Graciela Carrillo, Irene Perez, and Consuelo Mendez.

The National Historic Landmark nomination for Rivera’s *Detroit Industry* murals summarizes the influence of the 1920s Mexican Mural Movement as:

In the history of mural painting in America, the most commanding and vivid works came from the hands of three Mexican artists: Jose Clemente Orozco (1883-1949), David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896-1974), and Diego Rivera (1886-1957). Known as los tres grandes (“the big three”), these leading artists of the 1920s Mexican Mural Movement, who rejected the elite walls of museums and galleries, painted monumental murals on public buildings as part of Mexico’s post-revolutionary cultural plan to educate the masses. The commissioning of works in the United States by these Mexican artists “coincided with a broader popular fascination with Mexican culture.”⁶² The American 1930s “‘Mexican craze’ or ‘Mexican invasion,’” as contemporary art critics termed it – “created masterworks” and “enjoyed immense political and popular acclaim.”⁶³ Between 1930 and 1933, “these three Mexican artists created murals in the United States that had a lasting impact on the history of its mural art, both immediately and in terms of Rivera’s and Orozco’s impact on the New Deal art projects”⁶⁴ as the program looked to Mexico for inspiration and organization. “Through the Mexican presence,” writes historian Ingrid Fey, “the fresco technique became more well-known and appreciated in the United States.”⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Jonathan Lammers and Carlos Cordova, *Nuestra Historia, San Francisco Latino Historic Context Statement: Part III-g: Visual Arts*, December 2020 (Draft for Review), 10.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 13.

⁶¹ Timothy W. Drescher, *San Francisco Bay Area Murals: Communities Create Their Muses: 1904-1997* (St. Paul: Pogo Press, 1998), 10.

⁶² Anna Indych-López, *Muralism Without Walls: Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros in the United States, 1927-1940* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1. Quoted in “National Historic Landmark Nomination: The *Detroit Industry* Murals,” 13.

⁶³ Hurlburt, *Mexican Muralists* (1989), 4. Quoted in “National Historic Landmark Nomination: The *Detroit Industry* Murals,” 13.

⁶⁴ Francis V. O’Connor, *The Mural in America: Wall Painting in the United States from Pre-History to the Present* (New York: 2010), Part 7, Ch. 28, C, <http://www.muralinamerica.com/>. Quoted in “National Historic Landmark Nomination: The *Detroit Industry* Murals, 13.

⁶⁵ “National Historic Landmark Nomination: The *Detroit Industry* Murals, 13.

Prior to the 1930s, the only exposure to mural painting for many San Franciscans came from the thirty-five murals of monumental size, painted on canvas, that had been displayed at the recently ended Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE). Although mural painting was included in the San Francisco Art Institute curriculum as early as 1916, the early years of this mural painting program focused on teaching technical skills of *buon fresco* painting – an unusual technique to focus on given that even many of the European examples of the period were painted on canvas – under the principle that “murals should not draw too much attention to their context, but only their decorative existence.”⁶⁶ For nascent muralists in the United States during this period, the mural was meant to decorate semi-public spaces in important buildings; it was the buildings themselves and the patronage of community leaders displayed by the installation of such murals that was to be expressive. Though the SFAI mural program of this early period differed greatly from the muralism that would soon develop in Mexico, the existence of this program was responsible for the connections that were initially made between Roy Boynton, Albert Bender, and Diego Rivera and which developed to the point that Rivera’s first commissions in the United States would be in San Francisco.

During the dismal economic period of the Depression, the

... the [San Francisco Art Institute] absorbed a vital new influence when the sculptor Ralph Stackpole returned from Mexico with examples of works by Diego Rivera. ... In 1931—the same year that the mural was completed—Rivera remarked that art movements in the United States were still greatly influenced by Europe, but, that “the moment has come for an outpouring of artistic impulse, and gradually the art centre of the world will be moved from Europe to America.”⁶⁷

Rivera, along with his fellow Mexican muralists, believed that the artworks they were producing were not only an important source of shifting this art center but were also changing the meaning and method of public art. Rivera noted that that his mural work and that of Mexican muralism for the “... first time in the history of monumental painting – ceased to use gods, kings, chiefs of state, heroic generals, etc. as central heroes... For the first time in the history of art, Mexican mural painting made the masses the hero of monumental art.”⁶⁸ Many art historians agree about the significance of this change, at least regarding mural art. Art critic Peter Schjeldahl, as recently as last year, wrote that Rivera “inspired American painters to create tableaux of laboring and protesting workers... and of historical events and themes.”⁶⁹ Francis O’Connor regards the 1930s as a “transition to a new conception of the mural,” crediting the Mexican artist presence in America:

[T]he Mexicans brought to the United States a sense of the mural’s capacity for expressing social concern, a fascination with the country’s rampant technology, and a revival of the fresco technique.

While they initiated the decade to mural painting and their artistic influence is undoubted, they did not in fact, directly address either the history or social reality of this country.... Their influence lay in

⁶⁶ Anthony W. Lee, “Diego Rivera’s ‘The Making of a Fresco’ and Its San Francisco Public,” *The Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1996), 75. Accessed via <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1360730>.

⁶⁷ San Francisco Planning Department, Case Report for SFAI Landmark designation (1975), 3.

⁶⁸ Luís Cardoza y Aragón, “Diego Rivera’s Murals in Mexico and the United States,” in *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective*, ed. Cynthia Newman Helms (New York: Founders Society Detroit Institute of Arts, in association with W. W. Norton & Company, 1986), 187.

⁶⁹ Peter Schjeldahl, “The Lasting Influence of Mexico’s Great Muralists,” *The New Yorker*, February 24, 2020. **March 2, 2020 Issue.**

reinvigorating the mural as an art form capable of addressing public issues at a time American Artists needed means and permissions.⁷⁰

Although Rivera was already an internationally known artist by the late 1920s, coordinating a commission that would bring him to the United States was challenging.

Rivera's commission to paint a mural for the Luncheon Club of the Pacific Stock Exchange was, in effect, part of a package that included the mural in the California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute). Both resulted from Rivera's meeting in Paris, at least a decade earlier, the California sculptor Ralph Stackpole. . . . Although the California School of Fine Arts' proposal was put forward first, it was the much more substantial Stock Exchange commission that became the determining factor financially, and it consequently became the first fresco mural executed by Rivera in the United States. . . . The mural is an allegory depicting the bountiful human and natural resources of California as explored, exploited, and brought to varied fullness by North American inventiveness, industry, and adventurism. California is cast in the image of a mature woman. . . . Surrounding her, as if clustered in her embrace, are the attributes of California's enterprise and resulting material progress—its practical, methodical husbandry of nature, its genius for invention and innovative technology, its individualistic drive for quick riches, its industrious harvesting of forests and minerals, its advanced engineering, and its oil, shipping, and trading businesses—standing before the Pacific horizon. . . . On the ceiling is a diagonally placed figure of a nude woman, a recapitulation of the ceiling design of the *Secretaría de Salubriudad y Asistencia* mural in Mexico City, against the backdrop of a sun-and-sky theme carried over from the first bay at Chapingo.⁷¹

Art historians have criticized Rivera's first fresco commissions in the United States, noting that they ". . . lack the ideological programs of the Mexican work. . . and present instead a pastiche of industrial motifs rather than any intelligibly planned subject matter"⁷² and ". . . fairly conventional in theme—the logical result of the artist's attempt to gain the confidence of a public that disapproved of his political positions."⁷³ Of the frescos painted by Rivera during his first trip to San Francisco, *Allegory of California*, is sometimes cited as the most successful from this visit with

. . . meaningful compositional and iconographic parallels [that] can be drawn to his earlier Mexican murals of the 1920s. In both color and overall design, Rivera recreates the actual topographical features of California. In viewing the mural, one's eye ascends from the subterranean activity of coal mining to aboveground labors. . . to the assorted cranes and derricks silhouetted against the sky, and finally, on the ceiling, to the celestial sphere. Rivera's treatment of color mirrors his composition—it progressively lightens from dark to light. . . . Rivera's ability to synthesize naturalistic and allegorical elements in a flowing, yet rigorously

⁷⁰ Francis V. O'Connor, *The Mural in America: Wall Painting in the United States from Pre-History to the Present* (New York: 2010), Part 7, Ch. 28, C, <http://www.muralinamerica.com/>. Quoted in "National Historic Landmark Nomination: The *Detroit Industry Murals*, 20-21.

⁷¹ Stanton L. Catlin, "Mural Census." In *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective*, ed. Cynthia Newman Helms, 235-335. (New York: Founders Society Detroit Institute of Arts, in association with W. W. Norton & Company, 1986), 279.

⁷² Hurlburt, 98.

⁷³ Alicia Azuela, "Rivera and the Concept of Proletarian Art." In *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective*, ed. Cynthia Newman Helms (New York: Founders Society Detroit Institute of Arts, in association with W. W. Norton & Company, 1986), 126.

controlled, all-over pattern here was first demonstrated in his works on the staircase walls, ascending three floors, of the Secretary of Public Education.⁷⁴

Due to its location in a private club, *Allegory of California*, may have exerted less direct influences on muralism than Rivera's other San Francisco frescos. However, artists such as Clifford Wight, who assisted with painting frescos in San Francisco and Detroit, and Ralph Stackpole, who worked on his own commissions as part of the Stock Exchange project, were influenced or trained by Rivera and spread that knowledge through further development of the mural program at San Francisco Art Institute and in commissions such as Coit Tower.

For the Coit Tower project, a total of 26 artists were hired to complete a series of images supporting a unified theme of "Aspects of Life in California."

Acknowledging the link to Rivera and the other Mexican muralists, nearly all of the Coit Tower murals were executed in fresco, that is, painted directly on wet plaster. Another Coit Tower muralist, Maxine Albro, had traveled to Mexico in the mid-1920s and studied under Rivera's assistant, Pablo O'Higgins.⁷⁵

Among the other artists were Clifford Wight, Bernard Zakheim, Ralph Stackpole, and Victor Arnautoff (last three studied at SFAI) who had all trained or worked with Rivera. Arnautoff, who was designated technical advisor of the Coit Tower project, worked with Rivera for nearly two years beginning in 1929, primarily on the Palacio de Cortés and Palacio Nacional projects.⁷⁶ In 1930, shortly before leaving for San Francisco and SFAI – where Arnautoff had recently studied and taught - Rivera put Arnautoff in "charge at the National Palace and gave him general oversight responsibilities elsewhere."⁷⁷ Wight, who worked as Rivera's assistant in San Francisco on the SFAI and Stock Exchange projects and in Detroit, painted four of the six tall figures along the windows at Coit Tower, which share similarities to the giant worker depicted in Rivera's *The Making of a Fresco* at the San Francisco Art Institute. Further, Rivera's interpretations of the vision of California's wealth coming from natural resources and labor is found in the Coit Tower murals as well as in community murals showing Latino migrant labor.⁷⁸

Historian Stacy Farr also addressed the links between SFAI and Federal Art Project, stating:

During the 1930s, works by Diego Rivera proved greatly influential—particularly for artists employed through the Federal Art Project created by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). . . . These included Victor Arnautoff, Jose Moya del Pino, Lucien Labaudt, Marian Hartwell, Ruth Cravath, Ray Bertand and Ralph Stackpole.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Hurlburt, 108-109.

⁷⁵ Francis V. O'Connor, *The Mural in America: Wall Painting in the United States from Pre-History to the Present* (New York: 2010), Part 7, Ch. 28, C, <http://www.muralinamerica.com/>. Quoted in "National Historic Landmark Nomination: The Detroit Industry Murals, 20-21.

⁷⁶ Robert W. Cherny, "The Controversy at Coit Tower in 1934," *The Argonaut* (Vol. 28, No. 1, Summer 2017), 73.

⁷⁷ Robert W. Cherny, *Victor Arnautoff and the Politics of Art* (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 2017), 68.

⁷⁸ Timothy W. Drescher, *San Francisco Bay Area Murals: Communities Create Their Muses: 1904-1997* (St. Paul: Pogo Press, 1998), 11.

⁷⁹ SFAI NR Nomination (2016), Section 8, page 19.

As the United States economy rebounded and the New Deal art programs expired, many of the San Francisco-based mural artists that had studied at San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI) or worked with Rivera, such as Victor Arnautoff and Emmy Lou Packard, continued to pursue large public murals. Muralism, however, decreased in popularity in the United States and there were few large public commissions following the New Deal-era, especially during the war years of the 1940s. However, the mural art academic program at SFAI advanced with incorporation of updated philosophies on muralism and the role of public art from experiences gained from the New Deal mural program and Rivera's frescos from the early 1930s. With the influence of the GI Bill, which allowed thousands of veterans to pursue higher education – including training in art schools –⁸⁰ enrollment, including that of Latino artists, increased in art schools such as SFAI. Among these students were Mexican American veterans such as Luis Cervantes, José Ramón Lerma, and Ernie Palomino, all of whom emerged as influential artists in San Francisco.⁸¹

In the 1960s and 1970s was a new wave of Latino artists who became immersed in evolving trends such as installation art, video, and muralism.⁸² Many of these students became recognized Mission artists including René Yañez, Graciella Carillo, Consuelo Lopez, Patricia Rodriguez, Juan Alicia, Irene Perez, Luis Cervantes, Michael Rios and later Cristianne Dugan-Cuadra and Manuel Sanchez.⁸³

Following their studies at SFAI, several Latino artists established galleries that nurtured contemporary visual arts in the Mission. Among the most influential as relates to muralism was Galería de la Raza, New Mission Gallery, and Precita Eyes Muralists. New Mission Gallery was established in 1962 by Luis Cervantes, Ernie Palomino, and Joe White (Cervantes and Palomino both studied at SFAI) and is credited as being the first contemporary visual arts gallery in the Mission District.⁸⁴ In 1977, Luis Cervantes and his partner, Susan (Kelk) Cervantes founded Precita Eyes Muralists another influential element in the Mission District's community mural movement. In addition to workshops and tours, Precita Eyes has coordinated the creation of many collaborative works in San Francisco and has become a national leader in promoting community-based models of mural making.⁸⁵ Galería de la Raza,⁸⁶ a cultural center "formed to cultivate Chicano art and share it with a wider audience"⁸⁷ and co-directed by an SFAI alumnus, René Yañez, has been very influential. Its existence and early successes shifted the locus of mural activity in San Francisco to center on the Mission District and it has been important in promoting works associated with the community mural movement.⁸⁸

⁸⁰ SFAI NR Nomination (2016), Section 8, page 22.

⁸¹ *Nuestra Historia, San Francisco Latino Historic Context Statement: Part III-g: Visual Arts*, December 2020 (Draft for Review), 20.

⁸² *Nuestra Historia, San Francisco Latino Historic Context Statement: Part III-g: Visual Arts*, December 2020 (Draft for Review), 20.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 22.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 44.

⁸⁶ On August 17, 2016, the 24th Street site of Galería de la Raza/Studio 24 Building was added to the Landmark Designation Work Program as part of the Planning Department's San Francisco Sites of Civil Rights Project. On April 3, 2019, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended to the Board of Supervisors to landmark this resource. The process remains underway.

⁸⁷ California Office of Historic Preservation, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California: National Register of Historic Places Context Statement* (Sacramento: California State Parks, 2015), 59.

⁸⁸ *Nuestra Historia, San Francisco Latino Historic Context Statement: Part III-g: Visual Arts*, December 2020 (Draft for Review), 28.

While muralism as developed and practiced by Mexican artists during the 1920s Mexican Mural Movement enjoyed a surge in popularity during the 1930s and 1940s through the Federal Works Program, murals as an art form in the United States did not become widespread until during the Chicano movement of the 1960s and 1970s.⁸⁹ In his essay on Latino arts in the American Latino Theme Study, Tomás Ybarra-Frausto notes that American Latino artists in the 1930s were aware of Rivera and the other Mexican artists of the Mexican Mural Movement and that their “passionate defense of mural art and formal explorations with diverse forms of public art directly influenced many Latino artists and seeded the ground for muralism as a major Latino genre during the Civil Rights era.”⁹⁰ Muralism in particular was “one of the most widely known visual art forms that arose out of the Chicano movement.”⁹¹ The section on visual arts in *Nuestra Historia: San Francisco Latino Historic Context Statement (Draft)* provides the following context on mural art in the Chicano Movement:

The Chicano Movement, or *El Movimiento*, first evolved in the U.S. southwest and encompassed a broad set of issues affecting persons of Mexican origin or descent, including the restoration of land grants, worker’s rights, political representation, and improved access to employment and education. Chicano and other Latino artists of the period actively engaged in the movement, committing their artistic skills to social justice and helping the movement flourish.⁹² As related by Josie S. Talamantez, author of the successful National Register of Historic Places Nomination for Chicano Park in San Diego:

Murals became the artistic vehicle of choice for educating a large illiterate populace about ideals of a new society and the virtues and evils of the past. Murals had the advantage of making direct appeals; they provided a near-perfect organizing tool that had specific cultural antecedents and precedence in the cultural and revolutionary tradition of Mexico.⁹³

Nuestra Historia: San Francisco Latino Historic Context Statement (Draft) notes that the earliest community murals were completed around 1970 in various locations around the city. The efforts of Galería de la Raza and the growing importance of the Chicano mural movement focused development of muralism in the Mission. Among the artists that painted the earliest murals (not extant) in the Mission were a number of artists who had studied at SFAI, including Michael Rios, Patricia Rodriguez, and Consuelo Lopez. Formed to focus on expressing the beauty and strength of women in Latino culture and foster empowerment, one of the most significant artist collectives to emerge was Las Mujeres Muralistas, a highly influential cooperative of all-women artists.⁹⁴ The collective was

⁸⁹ California Office of Historic Preservation, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California: National Register of Historic Places Context Statement* (Sacramento: California State Parks, 2015), 59. Quoted in Latino Historic Context Statement (Draft), 58.

⁹⁰ Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, “A Panorama of Latino Arts,” American Latino Theme Study, National Park Service, 2018. Accessed via <https://nps.gov/articles/latinothemearts.htm>.

⁹¹ California Office of Historic Preservation, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California: National Register of Historic Places Context Statement* (Sacramento: California State Parks, 2015), 59. Quoted in Latino Historic Context Statement (Draft), 58.

⁹² Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, “A Panorama of Latino Arts,” American Latino Theme Study, National Park Service, 2018. Quoted in *Nuestra Historia, San Francisco Latino Historic Context Statement: Part III-g: Visual Arts*, December 2020 (Draft for Review), 30.

⁹³ Josie S. Talamantez, “Chicano Park and the Chicano Park Murals: A National Register Nomination,” 6. Quoted in *Nuestra Historia, San Francisco Latino Historic Context Statement: Part III-g: Visual Arts*, December 2020 (Draft for Review), 31.

⁹⁴ *Nuestra Historia, San Francisco Latino Historic Context Statement: Part III-g: Visual Arts*, December 2020 (Draft for Review), 35.

founded by Chicanas Patricia Rodriguez, Graciela Carrillo, Irene Perez, and Venezuelan artist, Consuelo Mendez (all of whom attended the San Francisco Art Institute), but grew over time to include other artists such as Miriam Olivo (Venezuelan), Ruth Rodriguez (Puerto Rican), Xochitl Nevel-Guerrero (Chicana), Ester Hernandez (Chicana), and non-Latina, Susan Cervantes.⁹⁵ Works by the collective include: *Latino America* (not extant), painted in 1974 on building at 2922 Mission Street; *Para el Mercado*, painted in 1974 on exterior of former Paco's Tacos at 24th and South Van Ness Streets; *Fantasy World For Children* (extant), painted in 1975 at 24th Street Mini-Park.

Another influential artwork – and one with direct connections to Rivera and the Mexican Mural Movement – is *Homage to Siqueiros*, painted by Jesús “Chuy” Campusano, Luis Cortázar and Michael Rios (studied at SFAI) in 1973-74, at the Bank of America branch at 2701 Mission Street.⁹⁶ Like Rivera's earlier work in San Francisco, this piece incorporated social and political content for a corporate client. The technical advisor for the group was Emmy Lou Packard, who had studied at SFAI and had also been Diego Rivera's chief assistant on *Pan-American Unity* mural painted as part of the “Art in Action” series at the Golden Gate International Exposition in 1940.

In San Francisco, the

Chicano Mural Movement... was unique in that it was absorbed into a broader cultural vision that encompassed a pan-Latino sense of community. This was the result of a number of factors, including the pioneering influences of Diego Rivera and other Mexican muralists, as well as the creative foment of the Beat Movement during the 1950s. The essential crucible, however, arrived in the 1960s, when various threads including the Chicano Movement, the Student Movement, and Third World ideology began to fuse. With the Mission District as its epicenter, a new visual art, sometimes called Mission Muralismo, continued to evolve during the 1970s and 1980s, when it assumed increasing identification with revolutionary movements in Central and South America.⁹⁷

The use of murals as symbolic representations of social struggles that transcend race and ethnicity has also been described as the Community Mural Movement. Timothy Drescher, author of *San Francisco Bay Area Murals: Communities Create Their Muses: 1904-1994*, offers a helpful definition of community murals:

Community murals may be painted by groups of individuals, but they are always closely related to those who live or work near them. The relationship of community artworks to their communities is dynamic, intimate, extended and reciprocal.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ *Nuestra Historia, San Francisco Latino Historic Context Statement: Part III-g: Visual Arts*, December 2020 (Draft for Review), 38.

⁹⁷ *Nuestra Historia, San Francisco Latino Historic Context Statement: Part III-g: Visual Arts*, December 2020 (Draft for Review), 31.

⁹⁸ Timothy Dresser, *San Francisco Bay Area Murals: Communities Create Their Muses: 1904-1947* (St. Paul: Pogo Press, 1994), 12. Quoted in *Nuestra Historia, San Francisco Latino Historic Context Statement: Part III-g: Visual Arts*, December 2020 (Draft for Review), 32.

In this sense, the Chicano Mural Movement / Community Mural Movement – and the diffuse influence of Rivera’s work, including *Allegory of California*, on this movement, had and continues to have a profound effect on the visual language and texture of the Mission District, as well as San Francisco as a whole.

Architecture/Design: Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values.

Allegory of California at The City Club of California (formerly Pacific Stock Luncheon Club), which demonstrates classic themes and motifs found in Rivera compositions, namely harmony between nature and machine, a glorification of the past while looking toward the future, and a panorama of historical figures, is culturally and historically significant as the work of preeminent Mexican artist, Diego Rivera. Painted in 1931, at the beginning of Rivera’s first visit to San Francisco, it is the first fresco painted by Rivera in the United States. In it, Rivera

...painted a colossal figure of a woman representing California ... around her figure the rich and varied resources of the state: on her left, the lush agriculture, its workers and heroes; on her right, industry, its building and machines, and representative working men and women.⁹⁹
sought to depict”¹⁰⁰

Diego Rivera (1886-1957)

Diego María de la Concepción Juan Nepomuceno Estanislao de la Rivera y Barrientos Acosta y Rodríguez, known as Diego Rivera (1886-1957), was born in Guanajuato, Mexico and died in Mexico City, Mexico at the age of 70. Born a twin, Rivera’s twin brother, José Carlos María, died at the age of two; a sister, María Rivera Barrientos, was born in 1891. After acquiring the nickname “the engineer” because of his interest in mechanical objects, especially trains and mining objects,¹⁰¹ Diego grew up in a family that encouraged his interest and aptitude in art. Rivera, who began drawing at a young age, wrote that the “earliest memory I have of my youth is that I was drawing.”¹⁰² His supportive parents encouraged him by installing canvases and chalkboards on the walls of their home and enrolling him in the oldest art school in Latin American, the San Carlos Academy of Fine Arts (Academia de San Carlos). Following graduation in 1906, Rivera spent the next fourteen years in Europe. He returned to Mexico in 1922 at the behest of José Vasconcelos to begin the monumental frescoes on public buildings that were to ignite the Mexican Mural Movement and define his career.

⁹⁹ Diego Rivera, *My Art, My Life: An Autobiography* (New York: Dover Publications, 1991). Quoted in Lozano, Luis-Martín. “1929-1931 V. Revolutions and Allegories: Mexico and San Francisco.” In *Diego Rivera: The Complete Murals*, Luis-Martín Lozano and Juan Rafael Coronel Rivera, ed. Benedikt Taschen, 263-293. Los Angeles: Taschen, c2008.

¹⁰⁰ Diego Rivera, *My Art, My Life: An Autobiography* (New York: Dover Publications, 1991). Quoted in Lozano, in *Diego Rivera: The Complete Murals*, 290.

¹⁰¹ Hurlburt, *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective*, 25.

¹⁰² Bertram D. Wolfe, “Diego Rivera—People’s Artist,” *The Antioch Review*, Spring, 1947, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Spring, 1947), 101.

After moving to Paris, Rivera met and married his first wife, Angelina Beloff, in 1911, with whom he had a son (Diego) who died as a child. During this marriage, Rivera also fathered a daughter (Marika) with his mistress, Marie Vorobieff-Stebelska. He divorced Beloff in 1922 and married Guadalupe Marín, with whom he had two daughters, Ruth and Guadalupe. While still married to Marín, Rivera met and began an affair with Frida Kahlo, an art student at the time. Kahlo and Rivera were married in 1929, divorced in 1939, and remarried at San Francisco City Hall in 1940. After Kahlo's death, Rivera married his agent, Emma Hurtado.

Unless otherwise noted, the following biographical information about Rivera is taken from the National Historic Landmark nomination for the *Detroit Industry Murals*:

... When he was ten years old, his mother oversaw his admission into evening classes at the oldest art school in Latin American, the San Carlos Academy of Fine Arts (Academia de San Carlos). Two years later, in 1898, he became a full-time student at the academy. After graduating in 1906, he narrowly lost the academy's competition for a fellowship to Europe. Nonetheless, Rivera prevailed in securing a modest four-year traveling scholarship from the governor of the state of Veracruz and he left for Europe in January 1907.¹⁰³ Living in Europe, primarily in Paris, for most of the next 14 years, he eventually became involved in the European avant-garde.¹⁰⁴

From 1907 to 1913, Rivera was supported, in part, in his European studies and travels by grants from the Mexican government. After these grants ended in 1913, Rivera supported himself through the sale of his works at various exhibitions. Rivera's first two years in Europe were spent in Spain where he was initially a student of Eduardo Chicharro y Agüera while forming friendships with leading members of the Spanish avant-garde, including the writers Ramón Gómez de la Serna and Ramón del Valle-Inclán and the painter María Gutiérrez Blanchard.¹⁰⁵ Rivera moved to Paris in early 1909, where with the exception of brief sojourns to other parts of Europe for study and exhibitions, and a brief visit to Mexico on the eve of the Mexican revolution in 1910, he lived until 1920. In Paris he became close friends with artists Ralph Stackpole, Amadeo Modigliani, Angel Zárraga (a Latin American émigré), Robert Delaunay, Fernand Léger, Marc Chagall, and Pablo Picasso.¹⁰⁶ Rivera and Ralph Stackpole corresponded throughout their lives, in French, their common language.¹⁰⁷ He also became friends with Russian writers Maximilian Voloshin and Ilya Ehrenburg, expanding his awareness of leftist principals. In 1917, he befriended the physician and art historian Elie Faure in 1917; this would be a lifelong friendship with Faure acting as Rivera's mentor in the development of his mature style.¹⁰⁸ Rivera spent his extended artistic apprenticeship in Europe against the backdrop of the Mexican revolution (1910-1920), World War I (1914-1917), and the Russian revolution (1917).

At [José] Vasconcelo's [Minister of Education] urging, Rivera continued his training in Italy in February 1920. There, he studied "Renaissance art in the hopes of establishing a philosophy of public art that will

¹⁰³ Hurlburt, *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective*, 25. Quoted in *The Detroit Industry Murals* NHL Nomination, 14.

¹⁰⁴ "National Historic Landmark Nomination: *The Detroit Industry Murals*, 14.

¹⁰⁵ Hurlburt, *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective*, 30.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 37.

¹⁰⁷ Letters between Stackpole and Rivera are part of the collection of Stackpole papers at the University of California, Berkeley Bancroft Library.

¹⁰⁸ Hurlburt, *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective*, 45.

be adequate for post-revolutionary Mexico.”¹⁰⁹ Over the next seventeen months, Rivera immersed himself in Italy’s thirteenth- and fourteenth-century frescoes and murals. Mastering the tools and techniques of traditional fresco painting, he would then use these techniques to create a new and revolutionary public art in Mexico.

Returning to Mexico in 192[1], Rivera adopted a new and more politicized attitude toward art. He viewed himself as a “cultural” rather than an “elitist” artist, and joining with [David] Siqueiros and painter Xavier Guerrero to create *El Sindicato de Pintores y Escultores* (The Syndicate of Technical Workers, Painters and Sculptors). The manifesto of this group stated, “We repudiate the so-called easel painting and all the art of ultra-intellectual circles, because it is aristocratic and we glorify the expression of Monumental Art because it is a public possession.”¹¹⁰

Prior to beginning work on his mural cycle at the Ministry of Public Education Building, Rivera travelled to the Yucatán to view the sites of Chichén Itzá and Uxmal and then to Tehuantepec to learn more about the Zapotec culture. The imagery Rivera encountered on these tours combined with the classical art training he had undertaken in Europe to produce a Mexican artist proud of his country’s pre-Columbian past with “profound understanding of fresco painting that would become his signature in mural painting.”¹¹¹ In making this fusion, Luis Cardoza y Aragón argues that it is this fusion, this “rediscovery of his native land, this rescue of what was his own” that is the “transcendent genius of Rivera’s career” and that Rivera’s role in Mexico’s rediscovery of its past and the roots of its culture cannot be overestimated.”¹¹²

From shortly after his return to Mexico in the early 1920s until he travelled to San Francisco in 1930, Rivera was the center of a burst of artistic activity focused on large public murals. Many of these projects, which were generally commissioned by the Mexican government, overlapped, requiring Rivera to divide his time and attention over multiple projects. This required a certain amount of political savvy – to assuage and prioritize patrons at different levels of government – and a workforce that included multiple assistants. Many of the initial commissions were also begun in collaboration with other artists – like the New Deal-era Work Progress Administration programs of the 1930s, the murals produced in Mexico were sponsored by the government – a group of individuals unified in addressing a public project. In many cases, the collaborations ended acrimoniously with Rivera commandeering the project, including removing and repainting work previously completed by other artists and his assistants.

¹⁰⁹ Hurlburt, *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective*, 47. Quoted in “National Historic Landmark Nomination: The *Detroit Industry Murals*, 14.

¹¹⁰ Alvarez, “The Influence of the Mexican Muralists,” 11. Quoted in “National Historic Landmark Nomination: The *Detroit Industry Murals*, 14.

¹¹¹ Goldstein, 34.

¹¹² Luís Cardoza y Aragón, “Diego Rivera’s Murals in Mexico and the United States,” in *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective*, ed. Cynthia Newman Helms (New York: Founders Society Detroit Institute of Arts, in association with W. W. Norton & Company, 1986), 186.

During this period, Rivera painted murals or mural cycles at Anfiteatro Bolivar (1922), Secretaría de Educación Pública/Ministry of Public Education Building (1923-1928), Universidad Autónoma de Chapingo (1924, 1926-1927), Palacio Nacional/National Palace (1929-1930, 1935), Secretaría de Salubriudad y Asistencia (1929), and Palacio de Cortés (1930). Rivera began to gain attention, including from the United States, with his work at the Secretaría de Educación Pública/Ministry of Public Education Building where

between 1923 and 1924, Rivera covered the walls of a three-story courtyard at the Ministry of Public Education Building with 124 frescoes. According to Bertram Wolfe, Rivera's biographer, the series brought fame to Rivera throughout the Western world, and "initiated a revival of mural painting, decedent since the late Renaissance, a revival felt first in Mexico and then in the United States."¹¹³ Rivera's undisputed masterpiece marked a sudden turning point in the Mexican art movement.¹¹⁴

When Rivera first returned from Europe, political relations between the leftist government in Mexico and the capitalist United States were fraught. Exchanges between the countries, particularly cultural or artistic exchanges, were minimal. Strange then, that

Rivera's introduction to the United States came partially through international diplomacy. In November 1927, the US Ambassador to Mexico, Dwight Morrow, had traveled to Mexico to defuse tense Mexican-American relations and secure threatened US industrial holdings. Morrow formulated a radical solution to which he successfully persuaded Rivera, the MCP's [Mexican Communist Party's] leading figure, "to reverse his position on the American presence and cooperate with the new cultural policy."¹¹⁵

Part of this new cultural policy focused on cultural and artistic exchanges between the two countries. For Morrow this meant, in part, commissioning Rivera for the Palacio de Cortés mural, entitled *The History of Cuernavaca and Morelos*, in 1929. The commission "originated in the ambassador's desire to make a gift to Mexico that would stand in remembrance of his mission, his liking for the people, and the attachment he had formed to his Cuernavaca home."¹¹⁶ In making this commission, Morrow paid Rivera the largest fee he had received on a mural commission to that point in time. It also meant encouraging US galleries and museums to hold exhibitions and to expand their holdings of Mexican art; his association with Morrow caused Rivera to be expelled from the Mexican Communist Party and shunned by many leftists during this period.

Morrow also conceived of the famous "Mexican Arts" exhibition in American that was partially prompted by the "search for common American cultural origins." Including works of Rivera, Orozco, Siqueiros, the exhibit focused on "authentic" Mexican culture featuring early, old, and modern art. Organized by the American Federation of Arts, which had been established in 1909 "to enrich the public's experience and understanding art," and financed by the Carnegie Corporation, the exhibit toured fourteen cities

¹¹³ Bertram D. Wolfe, *Diego Rivera: His Life and Times* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1939), 182. Quoted in "National Historic Landmark Nomination: The *Detroit Industry Murals*, 15.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Catlin, "Mural Census, Palacio de Cortés" in *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective*, 269.

between 1930 and 1932 and proved popular with art patrons newly exposed to artistic developments in Mexico.¹¹⁷

Other galleries and museums around the world also sponsored major exhibitions of Mexican art during this period, such that “[d]uring this period... Mexican muralists became world celebrities. ... They became so important that artists came from around the world to be in their presence and study their paintings. Between 1920 and 1930, Mexico became a world center for art.”¹¹⁸ At that center was Rivera, who, by 1934, had “...virtually single-handedly, forged a strong mural tradition... He was the best, and certainly the most famous, muralist in the Americas...”¹¹⁹

Architect Timothy Pflueger commissioned Rivera in late September 1930 to paint a mural for the Luncheon Club of the Pacific Stock Exchange, a building he had designed. On the heels of the opening of the very popular *Mexican Arts* exhibition in New York, and with local artists and media decrying him in headlines, such as “Artists Fight on Employing a Mexican ‘Red,’”¹²⁰ Rivera and his wife Frida Kahlo arrived in San Francisco.

Between mid-December and February 14, [1930,] Rivera painted the *Allegory of California* on the club’s stairway wall and ceiling. Laurance P. Hurlburt describes the wall portion of the mural as “Rivera’s most successful work from the 1930-31 San Francisco period. ... In both color and overall design, Rivera recreates the actual topographical features of California.”¹²¹

After completing the *Allegory of California*, and before starting his commission at the California School of Fine Arts, Rivera completed a small mural [*Still Life and Blossoming Almond Trees*] at the home of Sigmund and Rosalie Stern in Atherton, California. Mrs. Stern, well known in the Bay Area business and cultural community and a collector of Rivera’s paintings, had invited Diego and his wife Frida to rest at her home. Here Rivera created a mural for Mrs. Stern of an idealized landscape scene that marked his first use of a “portable” mural format.¹²²

Rivera next turned to this commission at the California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute), a location that, unlike the Stock Exchange Luncheon Club mural, would ensure that this mural was aimed at a public audience. Once again, concerns over political content reigned as the San Francisco Art Association made clear their desire for a nonpolitical work: “The character of the mural might have a very wide choice of subject matter—anything but of a political nature—of course suitable

¹¹⁷ “National Historic Landmark Nomination: The *Detroit Industry Murals*, 15.

¹¹⁸ Goldstein, 31-33.

¹¹⁹ Francis O’Connor, “The Influence of Diego Rivera on the Art of the United States during the 1930s and After,” in *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective*, ed. Cynthia Newman Helms (New York: Founders Society Detroit Institute of Arts, in association with W. W. Norton, 1986), 171. Quoted in “National Historic Landmark Nomination: The *Detroit Industry Murals*, 19-20.

¹²⁰ *San Francisco Chronicle*, “Artists Fight on Employing Mexican ‘Red,’” September 24, 1930. Accessed via <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.ezproxy.sfppl.org/>.

¹²¹ Hurlburt, *Mexican Muralists* (1998), 108. Quoted in “National Historic Landmark Nomination: The *Detroit Industry Murals*, 16.

¹²² This artwork is now installed at University of California Berkeley’s Stern Hall.

for an art institution.” Rivera’s mural, *Making of a Fresco, Showing the Building of a City...*, portrays the productive role of artistic and mural laborers. The scene is dominated by a giant hard-hat laborer shown being painted by Rivera and his assistants on scaffolding. On the bottom level of the mural, Rivera paints individuals known to him—Pflueger, Brown, Stackpole, and the patron Gerstle—as architects, artists, and designers involved in building a city. On the top level, laborers install steel girders on a building.¹²³

The first of the three frescos created by Rivera in San Francisco during his visit in 1930-1931, *Allegory of California* was completed over the course of about six weeks. On arrival in San Francisco,

...Rivera explained that his mural would “represent California with the three baskets of her richness—gold, petroleum, and fruits. Transportation, rail and marine, will be motifs stressed, and on the ceiling, energy and speed. Using Ralph Stackpole’s borrowed studio, which was large enough for Rivera to work on full-sized cartoons, he had completed the preliminary studies for the mural by mid-December. ... He would finish his mural, the largest and most important of the various works intended for the extensive decorative scheme commissioned by Pflueger [for Stock Exchange Tower], on February 14, [1931].¹²⁴

Prior to painting *Allegory*, Rivera traveled extensively around Northern California, spending weeks

“...viewing and sketching the northern California landscape, as well as preparing eleven studies for the mural and a full-scale cartoon. In preparing this painting, Rivera made generalized studies for the entire wall and ceiling area, including delicate pencil sketches and life portraits in pastels.”¹²⁵

This travel, as well as his schedule in Mexico leading up to his visit in San Francisco, proved so exhausting that Rivera took a break to rest at the home of Sigmund and Rosalie Stern in Atherton, California, following completion of *Allegory*.

Upon completion of work at San Francisco Art Institute, Rivera left San Francisco to return briefly to Mexico to work on the National Palace project. Several months later, Rivera returned to the United States for a solo retrospective – only the second such show to be held at the museum – at the Museum of Modern Art in New York for which he painted eight “portable” frescos. Following the success of this show, which set attendance records, Rivera travelled to Detroit to begin work on the Detroit Institute of Art project. The Detroit Institute of Art project was officially dedicated a little over a year later in a swirl of controversy over the religious and political content of the murals. Meanwhile, Rivera had already moved on to his next commission, the RCA mural, in New York. The RCA mural engendered such controversy that Rivera was forced to stop work shortly before the fresco was completed. The fresco was then destroyed. This action prompted a protest demonstration by the artists then working on the Coit Tower murals, after which two of the artists added newspaper headlines and accounts of the

¹²³ “National Historic Landmark Nomination: The *Detroit Industry Murals*, 17.

¹²⁴ Hurlburt, 100.

¹²⁵ Page 102

protest in their murals.¹²⁶ The resulting scandal caused other pending commissions in the United States to be cancelled and Rivera's sojourn in the United States abruptly ended in December 1933.

Rivera returned in 1940 to paint his last mural in America. His ten-panel mural for the Golden Gate International Exposition, *Pan-American Unity*, advocated against Fascism. Mounted on portable steel frames, it now resides at City College of San Francisco. Rivera remained a highly influential figure in the development of national art in Mexico throughout his life. In 1957, he died in Mexico City at the age of seventy.¹²⁷

Allegory of California was the first mural Rivera created in San Francisco during his first visit in 1930-1931 and the first fresco he painted in the United States.

¹²⁶ Cherny, Robert W. Cherny, "The Controversy at Coit Tower in 1934," *The Argonaut* (Vol. 28, No. 1, Summer 2017), 73.

¹²⁷ "National Historic Landmark Nomination: The *Detroit Industry Murals*, 20.

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Photos



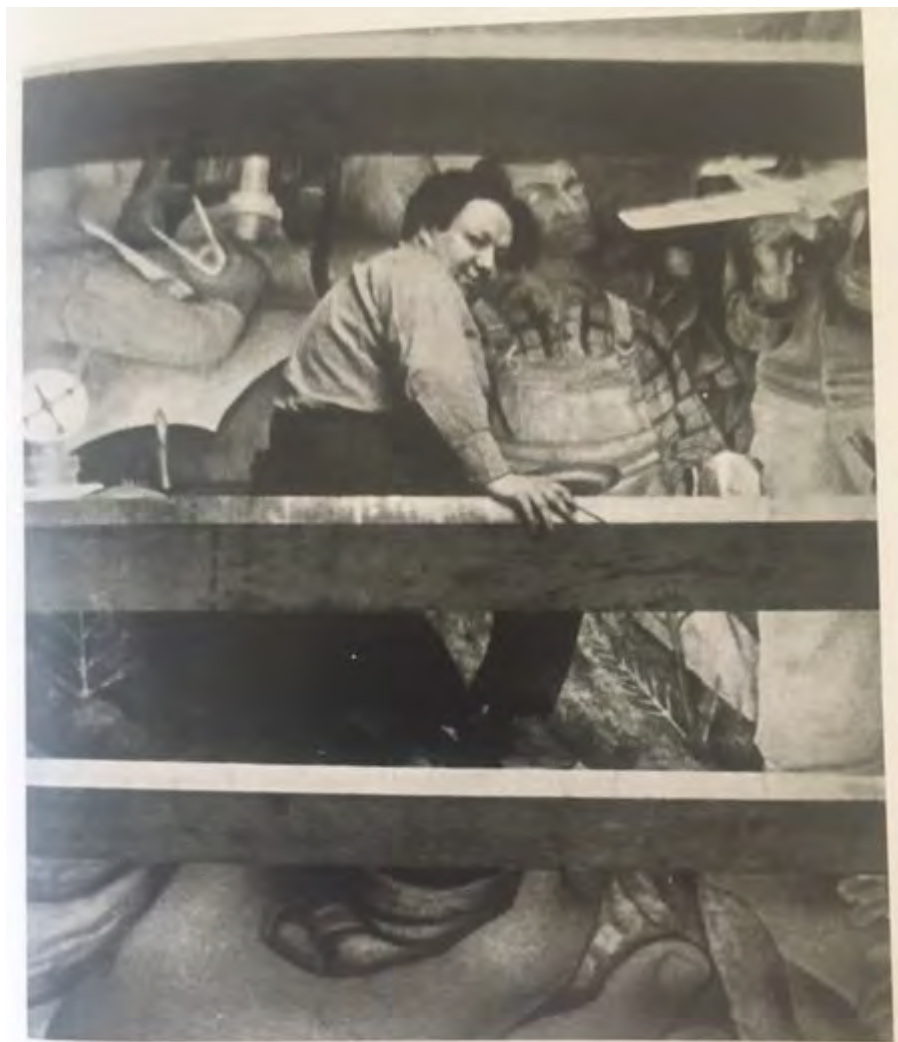
Stock Exchange Building and Stock Exchange Tower, 1936. Source: San Francisco Public Library, Historic Photograph Collection; Photographer: Gabriel Moulin (AAC-5434)



Diego Rivera putting finishing touches fresco decorating wall of Stock Exchange, February 27, 1931. Source: San Francisco Public Library, Historic Photograph Collection (AAF-0947)



Mexican artist Diego Rivera at work on the Allegory of California fresco and Ross Ambler Curran, January 24, 1931. Source: San Francisco Public Library, Historic Photograph Collection (AAK-0313)



Paul Juley
Diego Rivera on the scaffolding, painting
"Allegory of California"
(Alegoría de California)
1931, silver on gelatin, 17.5 x 13 cm
INBA Collection, CENIDIAP Archive, Mexico



93

93. Luncheon Club mural (view from below).
*(Photo by Peter Juley, courtesy of National
Museum of American Art.)*



92

91. *Allegory of California*, Luncheon Club mural
(view from top of stairway), 1931. Fresco.
*(Photo by Peter Juley, courtesy of National
Museum of American Art.)*



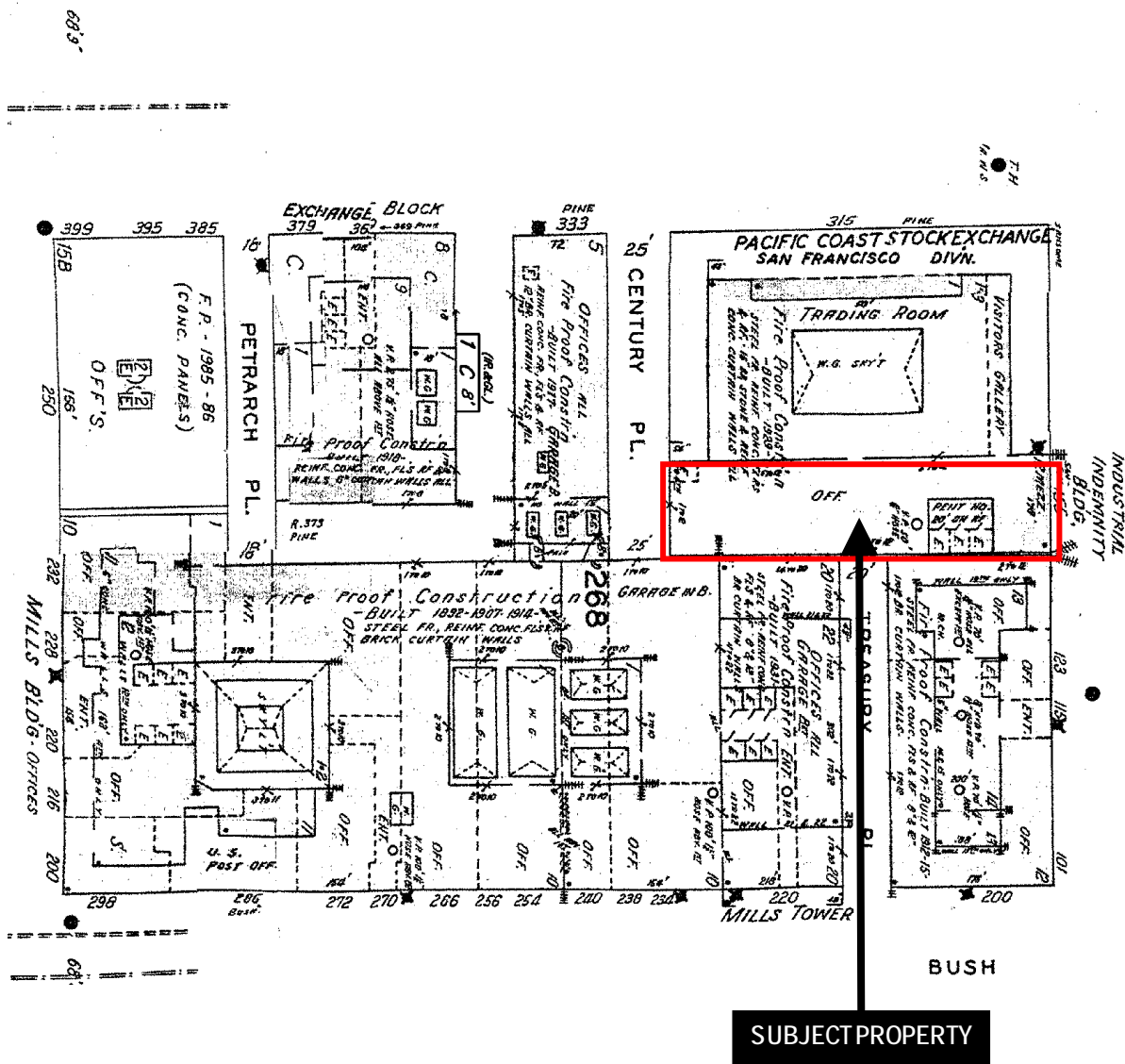
Source: crazy little thing bloc, posted October 21, 2010. Via <http://scientika.blogspot.com/2010/10/city-club-of-san-francisco-and-allegory.html>



Source: crazy little thing bloc, posted October 21, 2010. Via <http://scientika.blogspot.com/2010/10/city-club-of-san-francisco-and-allegory.html>

Sanborn Map*

PINE

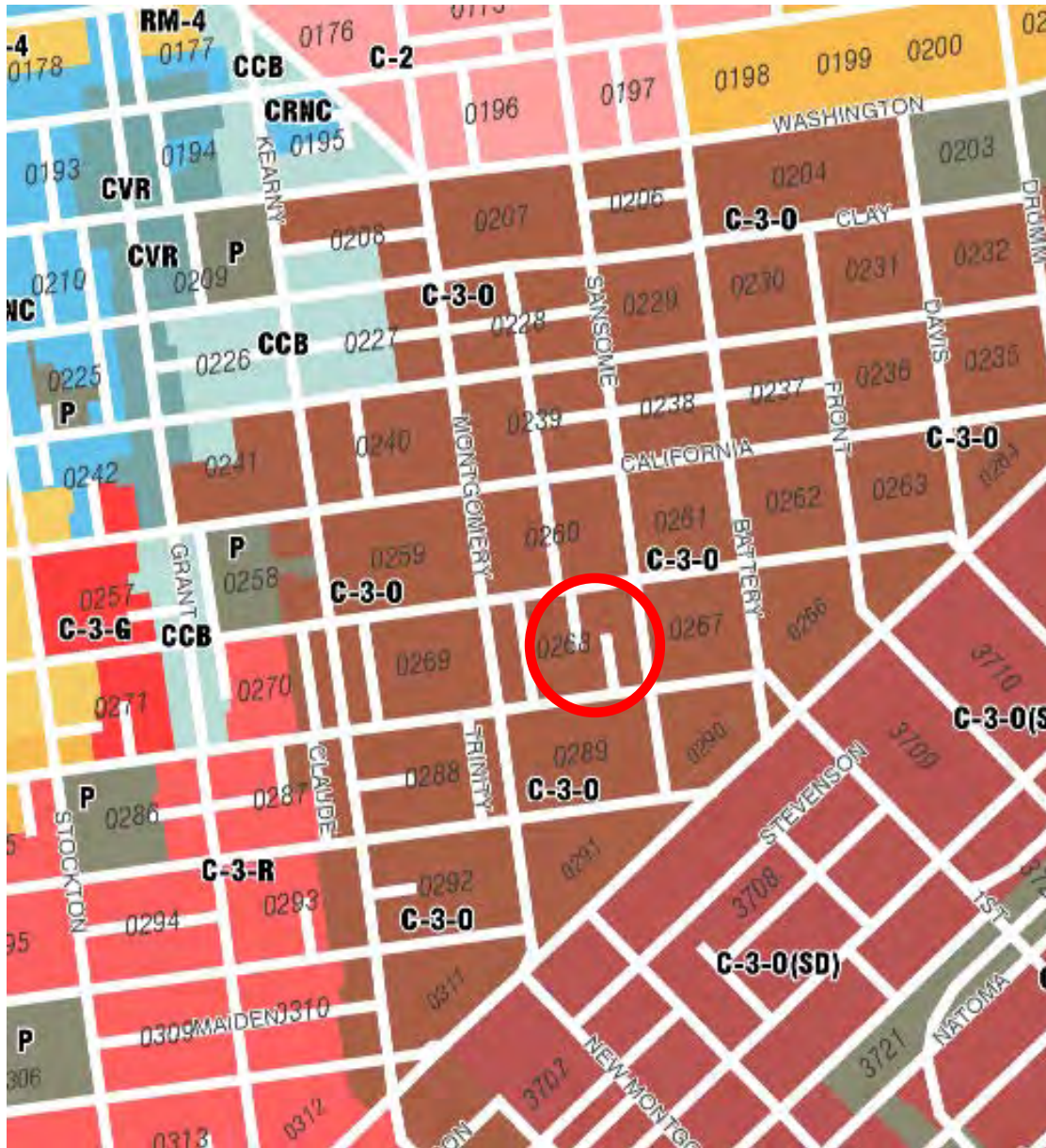


*The Sanborn Maps in San Francisco have not been updated since 1998, and this map may not accurately reflect existing conditions.



Article 10 Landmark Designation
 Case Number 2021-005992DES
 Allegory of California, 155 Sansome Street

Zoning Map



Aerial Photo



SUBJECT BUILDING



Aerial Photo - 1938



1938 Aerial Photograph – Image 30: San Francisco Aerial Views

(Image Source: David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, <https://www.davidrumsey.com/>)

Excerpt showing Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0268. 155 Sansome Street outlined in red.



1 [Planning Code - Landmark Designation - "Allegory of California," The City Club of San
2 Francisco (formerly Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon Club), 155 Sansome Street]

3 **Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate the fresco titled "Allegory of**
4 **California" in the grand stairwell between 10th and 11th floors of The City Club of San**
5 **Francisco (former Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon Club), within 155 Sansome Street,**
6 **Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0268, Lot No. 001A, as a Landmark consistent with the**
7 **standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code; affirming the Planning**
8 **Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and**
9 **making public necessity, convenience, and welfare findings under Planning Code,**
10 **Section 302, and findings of consistency with the General Plan and the eight priority**
11 **policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1.**

12 NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.
13 **Additions to Codes** are in *single-underline italics Times New Roman font*.
14 **Deletions to Codes** are in *strikethrough italics Times New Roman font*.
15 **Board amendment additions** are in double-underlined Arial font.
16 **Board amendment deletions** are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.
17 **Asterisks (* * * *)** indicate the omission of unchanged Code
18 subsections or parts of tables.

17 Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

18 Section 1. Findings.

19 (a) CEQA and Land Use Findings.

20 (1) The Planning Department has determined that the Planning Code
21 amendment proposed in this ordinance is subject to a Categorical Exemption from the
22 California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et
23 seq., "CEQA") pursuant to Section 15308 of California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Sections
24 15000 et seq., the Guidelines for implementation of the statute for actions by regulatory
25 agencies for protection of the environment (in this case, landmark designation). Said

1 determination is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. _____
2 and is incorporated herein by reference. The Board of Supervisors affirms this determination.

3 (2) Pursuant to Planning Code Section 302, the Board of Supervisors finds that
4 the proposed landmark designation of the fresco titled "Allegory of California" in the grand
5 stairwell between the 10th and 11th floors of The City Club of San Francisco (former Pacific
6 Stock Exchange Luncheon Club), within 155 Sansome Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No.
7 0268, Lot No. 001A (the "Fresco"), will serve the public necessity, convenience, and welfare
8 for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. _____,
9 recommending approval of the proposed designation, which is incorporated herein by
10 reference.

11 (3) The Board of Supervisors finds that the proposed landmark designation of
12 the Fresco is consistent with the General Plan and with Planning Code Section 101.1(b) for
13 the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. _____.

14 (b) General Findings.

15 (1) On April 27, 2021, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 187-21,
16 initiating landmark designation of the Fresco as a San Francisco Landmark pursuant to
17 Section 1004.1 of the Planning Code. On May 7, 2021, the Mayor approved the resolution.
18 Said resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. 210352.

19 (2) Pursuant to Charter Section 4.135, the Historic Preservation Commission
20 has authority "to recommend approval, disapproval, or modification of landmark designations
21 and historic district designations under the Planning Code to the Board of Supervisors."

22 (3) The Landmark Designation Fact Sheet was prepared by Planning
23 Department Preservation staff. All preparers meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional
24 Qualification Standards for historic preservation program staff, as set forth in Code of Federal
25 Regulations Title 36, Part 61, Appendix A. The report was reviewed for accuracy and

1 conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10 of the Planning Code.

2 (4) The Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of November
3 3, 2021, reviewed Planning Department staff's analysis of the historical significance of the
4 Fresco set forth in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet dated _____.

5 (5) On November 3, 2021, after holding a public hearing on the proposed
6 designation and having considered the specialized analyses prepared by Planning
7 Department staff and the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet, the Historic Preservation
8 Commission recommended designation of the Fresco as a landmark consistent with the
9 standards set forth in Section 1004 of the Planning Code, by Resolution No. _____. Said
10 resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board in File No. _____.

11 (6) The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that the Fresco has a special
12 character and special historical, architectural, and aesthetic interest and value, and that its
13 designation as a Landmark will further the purposes of and conform to the standards set forth
14 in Article 10 of the Planning Code. In doing so, the Board hereby incorporates by reference
15 the findings of the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet.

16 (7) The Board further finds that the Fresco has been historically accessible to
17 the general public. This access includes the following:

18 (A) Through correspondence from its counsel contained in Board File
19 No. _____, The City Club states that the Club allows non-members to view the Fresco
20 through small group, curator-led tours; events held in conjunction with organizations such as
21 SF Heritage and the Art Deco Society; and invitations to art experts and academic groups;
22 and

23 (B) Historically, The City Club has from time to time maintained limited
24 hours when members of the public could view the Fresco and other architecture and artwork
25 inside the Club's facilities, including through self-guided tours, as evidenced by articles in SF

1 Weekly (2014) and USA Today (updated 2018) and on travel websites and blogs such as
2 TripAdvisor.com, AtlasObscura.com, and Far & Wise (The Allegory of California by Diego
3 Rivera in San Francisco (farandwise.com)); and

4 (C) San Francisco City Guides, a non-profit organization offering
5 volunteer-led walking tours of San Francisco, has operated guided tours of Art Deco
6 architectural masterpieces of San Francisco, including 155 Sansome Street (Stock Exchange
7 Tower) and the Fresco. These tours are generally free of charge; and

8 (D) San Francisco City Guides and other local groups, including the San
9 Francisco Historical Society and the Art Deco Society, have worked with The City Club to offer
10 special tours of the Fresco for their members, usually with a small fee; and

11 (E) The City Club rents out interior facilities, including the space in which
12 the Fresco is located, for non-member events, and promotes the Fresco as a feature of its
13 rental facilities;

14 (F) The public was invited to view the Fresco during the grand unveiling
15 on March 15, 1931 with said event reported in the San Francisco Chronicle; and

16 (G) The San Francisco Wine & Food Society held a dinner honoring
17 special California vintages at the Stock Exchange Luncheon Club on October 27, 1938.

18
19 Section 2. Designation.

20 Pursuant to Section 1004.3 of the Planning Code, the fresco titled “Allegory of
21 California” in the grand stairwell between the 10th and 11th floors of The City Club of San
22 Francisco (former Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon Club), within 155 Sansome Street,
23 Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 0268, Lot No. 001A, is hereby designated as a San Francisco
24 Landmark consistent with the standards set forth in Section 1004. Appendix A to Article 10 of
25 the Planning Code is hereby amended to include this property.

1 Section 3. Required Data.

2 (a) The description, location, and boundary of the Landmark site consists of the fresco
3 titled “Allegory of California” on the walls and ceiling of the grand stairwell between the 10th
4 and 11th floors of The City Club of San Francisco (former Pacific Stock Exchange Luncheon
5 Club), within the building on the City parcel located at 155 Sansome Street, Assessor’s Block
6 No. 0268, Lot No. 001A, in San Francisco’s Financial District.

7 (b) The characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation are described and
8 shown in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet and other supporting materials contained in
9 Planning Department Record Docket No. 2021-005992DES. In brief, the Fresco is eligible for
10 local designation as it is associated with events that have made a culturally and historically
11 significant contribution to the broad patterns of San Francisco history and it embodies the
12 distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction and work of master artist
13 Diego Rivera. Specifically, designation of the Fresco, which depicts classic themes and motifs
14 found in Rivera compositions including harmony between nature and machine, a glorification
15 of the past while looking toward the future, and a panorama of historical figures, is proper
16 given its association with the preeminent Mexican artist, Diego Rivera. The Fresco, designed
17 and painted on the walls and ceiling of an interior stairwell for the former Pacific Stock
18 Exchange, reflects its immediate environment, physically and artistically, and is the first fresco
19 by Rivera painted in the United States. The Fresco is also significant for its association with
20 the Latinx and Chicanx arts communities, a significant and vibrant part of San Francisco’s
21 cultural heritage.

22 (c) The particular features that should be preserved, or replaced in-kind as determined
23 necessary, are those generally shown in photographs and described in the Landmark
24 Designation Fact Sheet, which can be found in Planning Department Record Docket No.
25 2021-005992DES, and which are incorporated in this designation by reference as though fully

1 set forth. Specifically, all those physical and spatial features of the walls and ceiling where the
2 Fresco is located associated with the structural support, construction, and visual depiction and
3 expression of the Fresco should be preserved or replaced in-kind, including:

- 4 (1) All metal and other furring channels that support the underlying wall behind
5 the Fresco;
- 6 (2) All metal lathe and plaster, including the scratch, brown, and other plaster
7 coats that underlie the Fresco;
- 8 (3) The combination of pigments and plaster that form the Fresco ;
- 9 (4) The size, shape, form, and materials of the Fresco; and
- 10 (5) The stairwell configuration, walls, and ceiling where the Fresco is located.

11
12 Section 4. Effective Date.

13 This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after enactment. Enactment occurs
14 when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the ordinance unsigned or does not
15 sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board of Supervisors overrides the
16 Mayor’s veto of the ordinance.

17
18 APPROVED AS TO FORM:
19 DENNIS J. HERRERA, City Attorney

20 By: /s/ Victoria Wong
21 VICTORIA WONG
22 Deputy City Attorney

23 n:\legana\as2021\1800206\01562548.docx

1 [Initiating Landmark Designation - Diego Rivera Mural “The Allegory of California”]

2

3 **Resolution initiating a landmark designation under Article 10 of the Planning Code for**
4 **Diego Rivera’s fresco, titled “The Allegory of California,” painted in 1931 and located at**
5 **155 Sansome Street.**

6

7 WHEREAS, Diego Rivera remains one of the most important and famous Mexican
8 artists of all time, whose fresco work helped to establish the thriving Mexican Mural Art
9 Movement in the 1920s, and who painted his first murals in the United States in San
10 Francisco; and

11 WHEREAS, San Francisco is home to three of Rivera’s masterpieces, including the
12 first fresco Diego Rivera completed in the United States entitled “The Allegory of California,”
13 which was painted in 1931 and is located within the grand stairwell inside of the former Pacific
14 Stock Exchange building at 155 Sansome Street in downtown San Francisco, now home of
15 The City Club; and

16 WHEREAS, The fresco depicts classic themes and motifs found in Rivera
17 compositions, namely harmony between nature and machine, a glorification of the past while
18 looking toward the future, and a panorama of historical figures; and

19 WHEREAS, According to Rivera’s autobiography, the large, looming female figure
20 represents Calafia, the Spirit of California, with her right hand mining the earth for hidden
21 treasures of the State of California, and her left hand holding the treasures that grow on its
22 surface; and

23 WHEREAS, The background of the fresco mural shows industries of the Bay Area: the
24 oil refineries of Richmond, the shipping yards facing the Pacific Ocean, and dredging
25 equipment then used in search of gold; and

1 WHEREAS, The forefront of the fresco depicts specific historical figures important to
2 the development of California as a state: James Marshall, who discovered gold at Sutter's
3 Creek in 1948, famous horticulturist Luther Burbank, sculptor Peter Stackpole, and fellow
4 muralist Victor Arnautoff; and

5 WHEREAS, The Allegory of California fresco attracted immediate criticism and harsh
6 reactions, principally to Rivera's nationality and Marxist political leanings, and quickly became
7 one Rivera's most significant and well-known works; and

8 WHEREAS, The Allegory of California fresco is of particular significance to the Latinx
9 and Chicanx communities, and, along with Rivera's other murals in San Francisco, is part of
10 the direct lineage of the Mission Mural movement which remains a significant and vibrant part
11 of San Francisco's cultural heritage, and it is the responsibility of civic and academic
12 institutions to include these communities in studies and decisions pertaining to the fresco;
13 now, therefore be it

14 RESOLVED, That the Board hereby initiates a separate landmark designation of Diego
15 Rivera's masterpiece fresco "The Allegory of California," created in 1931 at its sole and
16 current location at 155 Sansome Street; and, be it

17 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board requests that the Planning Department
18 prepare a Landmark Designation Report to submit to the Historic Preservation Commission
19 for its consideration of the special historical, architectural, and aesthetic interest and value of
20 the fresco; and, be it

21 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board requests that the Historic Preservation
22 Commission consider whether the Mural warrants landmark designation and submit its
23 recommendation to the Board according to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

24
25



City and County of San Francisco
Tails
Resolution

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

File Number: 210352

Date Passed: April 27, 2021

Resolution initiating a landmark designation under Article 10 of the Planning Code for Diego Rivera's fresco, titled "The Allegory of California," painted in 1931 and located at 155 Sansome Street.

April 19, 2021 Land Use and Transportation Committee - RECOMMENDED

April 27, 2021 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED

Ayes: 11 - Chan, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Melgar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani and Walton

File No. 210352

I hereby certify that the foregoing
Resolution was ADOPTED on 4/27/2021 by
the Board of Supervisors of the City and
County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

London N. Breed
Mayor

5.7.21

Date Approved

File No. 210352 Committee Item No. 1
Board Item No. 27

COMMITTEE/BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA PACKET CONTENTS LIST

Committee: Land Use and Transportation Committee Date April 19, 2021

Board of Supervisors Meeting Date April 27, 2021

Cmte Board

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| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Budget and Legislative Analyst Report |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Commission Report |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Introduction Form |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Department/Agency Cover Letter and/or Report |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | MOU |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Grant Information Form |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Form 126 – Ethics Commission |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Award Letter |
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OTHER (Use back side if additional space is needed)

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Completed by: Erica Major Date April 15, 2021
Completed by: Erica Major Date _____

1 [Initiating Landmark Designation - Diego Rivera Mural “The Allegory of California”]

2

3 **Resolution initiating a landmark designation under Article 10 of the Planning Code for**
4 **Diego Rivera’s fresco, titled “The Allegory of California,” painted in 1931 and located at**
5 **155 Sansome Street.**

6

7 WHEREAS, Diego Rivera remains one of the most important and famous Mexican
8 artists of all time, whose fresco work helped to establish the thriving Mexican Mural Art
9 Movement in the 1920s, and who painted his first murals in the United States in San
10 Francisco; and

11 WHEREAS, San Francisco is home to three of Rivera’s masterpieces, including the
12 first fresco Diego Rivera completed in the United States entitled “The Allegory of California,”
13 which was painted in 1931 and is located within the grand stairwell inside of the former Pacific
14 Stock Exchange building at 155 Sansome Street in downtown San Francisco, now home of
15 The City Club; and

16 WHEREAS, The fresco depicts classic themes and motifs found in Rivera
17 compositions, namely harmony between nature and machine, a glorification of the past while
18 looking toward the future, and a panorama of historical figures; and

19 WHEREAS, According to Rivera’s autobiography, the large, looming female figure
20 represents Calafia, the Spirit of California, with her right hand mining the earth for hidden
21 treasures of the State of California, and her left hand holding the treasures that grow on its
22 surface; and

23 WHEREAS, The background of the fresco mural shows industries of the Bay Area: the
24 oil refineries of Richmond, the shipping yards facing the Pacific Ocean, and dredging
25 equipment then used in search of gold; and

1 WHEREAS, The forefront of the fresco depicts specific historical figures important to
2 the development of California as a state: James Marshall, who discovered gold at Sutter's
3 Creek in 1948, famous horticulturist Luther Burbank, sculptor Peter Stackpole, and fellow
4 muralist Victor Arnautoff; and

5 WHEREAS, The Allegory of California fresco attracted immediate criticism and harsh
6 reactions, principally to Rivera's nationality and Marxist political leanings, and quickly became
7 one Rivera's most significant and well-known works; and

8 WHEREAS, The Allegory of California fresco is of particular significance to the Latinx
9 and Chicanx communities, and, along with Rivera's other murals in San Francisco, is part of
10 the direct lineage of the Mission Mural movement which remains a significant and vibrant part
11 of San Francisco's cultural heritage, and it is the responsibility of civic and academic
12 institutions to include these communities in studies and decisions pertaining to the fresco;
13 now, therefore be it

14 RESOLVED, That the Board hereby initiates a separate landmark designation of Diego
15 Rivera's masterpiece fresco "The Allegory of California," created in 1931 at its sole and
16 current location at 155 Sansome Street; and, be it

17 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board requests that the Planning Department
18 prepare a Landmark Designation Report to submit to the Historic Preservation Commission
19 for its consideration of the special historical, architectural, and aesthetic interest and value of
20 the fresco; and, be it

21 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board requests that the Historic Preservation
22 Commission consider whether the Mural warrants landmark designation and submit its
23 recommendation to the Board according to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

24
25



BOARD of SUPERVISORS



City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244
San Francisco 94102-4689
Tel. No. 554-5184
Fax No. 554-5163
TDD/TTY No. 554-5227

MEMORANDUM

TO: Rich Hillis, Director, Planning Department
Jonas Ionin, Commission Secretary, Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Erica Major, Assistant Clerk, Land Use and Transportation Committee

DATE: April 14, 2021

SUBJECT: LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

The Board of Supervisors' Land Use and Transportation Committee has received the following proposed legislation, introduced by Supervisor Peskin on April 6, 2021:

File No. 210352

Resolution initiating a landmark designation under Article 10 of the Planning Code for Diego Rivera's fresco, titled "The Allegory of California," painted in 1931 and located at 155 Sansome Street.

If you have comments or reports to be included with the file, please forward them to me at the Board of Supervisors, City Hall, Room 244, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94102 or by email at: erica.major@sfgov.org.

cc: Corey Teague, Planning Department
Dan Sider, Planning Department
Laura Lynch, Planning Department
Scott Sanchez, Planning Department
Lisa Gibson, Planning Department
Devyani Jain, Planning Department
Adam Varat, Planning Department
AnMarie Rodgers, Planning Department
Aaron Starr, Planning Department
Andrea Ruiz-Esquide, Deputy City Attorney
Joy Navarrete, Planning Department

Introduction Form

By a Member of the Board of Supervisors or Mayor

Time stamp
or meeting date

I hereby submit the following item for introduction (select only one):

- 1. For reference to Committee. (An Ordinance, Resolution, Motion or Charter Amendment).
- 2. Request for next printed agenda Without Reference to Committee.
- 3. Request for hearing on a subject matter at Committee.
- 4. Request for letter beginning : "Supervisor inquiries"
- 5. City Attorney Request.
- 6. Call File No. from Committee.
- 7. Budget Analyst request (attached written motion).
- 8. Substitute Legislation File No.
- 9. Reactivate File No.
- 10. Topic submitted for Mayoral Appearance before the BOS on

Please check the appropriate boxes. The proposed legislation should be forwarded to the following:

- Small Business Commission
- Youth Commission
- Ethics Commission
- Planning Commission
- Building Inspection Commission

Note: For the Imperative Agenda (a resolution not on the printed agenda), use the Imperative Form.

Sponsor(s):

Subject:

The text is listed:

Signature of Sponsoring Supervisor:

For Clerk's Use Only

REUBEN, JUNIUS & ROSE, LLP

October 26, 2021

Via Email (pilar.lavalley@sfgov.org)

President Diane Matsuda and Commissioners
San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission
49 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 1400
San Francisco, CA 94103

**Re: Opposition to Proposed Landmark Designation of The
Allegory of California Fresco at 155 Sansome Street
Board of Supervisors File No.: 210352
Planning Case No.: 2021-005992DES
Our File No.: 5990.07**

Dear President Matsuda and Commissioners:

This office represents Stock Exchange Tower Associates, the long term local owner (“**Owner**”) of the property at 155 Sansome Street, commonly known as the Stock Exchange Tower (the “**Property**”). The Allegory of California fresco was painted by Diego Rivera (the “**Artwork**”) on the interior stairwell wall and ceiling of the 10th floor within the private Stock Exchange Luncheon Club (now The City Club). We write to respectfully request the Historic Preservation Commission not support this proposed landmark designation. The Artwork is located in a private interior space that is not, and has never been, open to the public. As described in detail below, the Artwork is not eligible for landmark designation pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code. The landmark process should not proceed.

HISTORY OF THE STOCK EXCHANGE TOWER AND THE ARTWORK

The Owner has been a conscientious steward of the Property and the Artwork for over 40 years. Originally the home of the San Francisco Stock and Bond Exchange (later the Pacific Coast Stock Exchange), the Artwork is located on the 10th floor, in the former Stock Exchange Luncheon Club, now The City Club of San Francisco.

The Owner’s aim has always been to not only maintain the Property, but to keep it viable and “living” in the current day. Great respect has been paid over the years to protecting and maintaining the artistic and architectural components, which have been cleaned, detailed and preserved with great care to maintain their integrity and history. This is most especially true for the Rivera fresco.

While the Artwork's 10th floor location in a private club means there is no access to the general public, it has also helped protect it from many inevitable problems that can occur in public settings. That said, the Owner has tried to ensure that certain non-members can have pre-arranged invitation only access to view the mural via hosting of events with Heritage and the Art Deco Society, inviting small groups to join curator-lead tours of the Club, and hosting art experts and academic groups for the purpose of research and study. Though this is a private space, we are aware of the benefit of making sure such great art can be made accessible on a limited basis, while protecting it from any unfortunate malicious or accidental ravages that can come from unrestricted public access.

The Owner was not consulted, or even informed in advance, of this legislative effort, and, as much as being proposed as a landmark is a well appreciated recognition and honor, the Owner is concerned that designation may actually hinder its ability to effectively maintain, preserve and insure the Artwork's long-term upkeep. The Owner has devoted four decades to protecting the Property and Artwork, and assuring it is not in any jeopardy. The Owner respectfully asks that its hands not be tied in its ongoing commitment to continue caring for the Artwork.

PRIVATE PROPERTY NOT HISTORICALLY PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR LANDMARKING

Since 1930, the Stock Exchange Tower has remained a private building and not open to the public. In 1931, Diego Rivera painted the Allegory of California. The Artwork was painted in the interior space of the Stock Exchange Tower on the wall and ceiling of the 10th floor stairwell in the private Stock Exchange Luncheon Club (now the The City Club). At all times since the Artwork's painting, the interior space of the Stock Exchange Tower, including where the Artwork is located, *has never been open to the public*.

This Commission has addressed this issue before. Landmarking an interior is only possible *when the interior space is publicly accessible or has been historically publicly accessible*. That is not the case with the Artwork in the Stock Exchange Tower. Article 10 does not permit the landmarking of interior spaces not publicly accessible or historically publicly accessible.

Examples of past Commission decisions include the following:

- **396-398 12th Street.** On May 19, 2021, this Commission found that the interior space of the public bar, the San Francisco Eagle Bar, was eligible for landmarking because it was a public, gathering space generally open to the public for socializing and watching performances.¹

¹ Planning File No. 2021-001853DES.

- **1830 Sutter Street.** On October 21, 2020, this Commission found that the certain interior spaces of the Issei Women's Building (Japanese YWCA) were eligible for landmarking because they were publicly accessible spaces.

The YWCA landmarking is an excellent contrast to the proposed landmarking of the Artwork. For the YWCA, the City carefully identified which interior spaces were publicly accessible, and only landmarked them. The interior YWCA spaces designated as character-defining *and publicly accessible* features were on the first floor (not on the 10th Floor), including the stair in the lobby, the lobby itself and first floor conference room, and auditorium. In contrast, areas not open to the public (the daycare classroom, kitchen, office space, or upper lobby) were not landmarked.

The facts before the Commission in this instance are clearly distinguished from these other properties: The location of the Artwork here is not at ground level and has never been open to the public.

While the Owner appreciates the City's focus on the importance of Diego Rivera², the other works by Diego Rivera are uniquely different from the Artwork. The three other Diego Rivera murals in the Bay Area are located in publicly accessible spaces. They are located in schools, with the Pan American Unity fresco in City College of San Francisco, The Making of a Fresco Showing the Building of a City in the San Francisco Art Institute, and Still Life and Blossoming Almond Trees located in UC Berkeley's Stern Hall³. Likewise, the History of Medicine in California mural by Bernard Zakheim, which was landmarked by the City, is located in another publicly accessible school, UC San Francisco Parnassus Toland Hall, which was previously a hospital and publicly accessible. Unlike the Artwork, that is located in a private space never publicly accessible, all of these other works are located in publicly accessible spaces.

Article 10 Does Not Cover Art In Private Buildings

Planning Code Article 10 sets forth very specific policies and goals that have almost exclusively been applied to (a) buildings and (b) sites and areas in the public realm. The landmarking of interior spaces is uncommon. The purpose of Article 10 is set forth in Planning Code Section 1004, the full text of which is as follows:

It is hereby found that **structures, sites and areas of special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value** have been and continue to be unnecessarily destroyed or impaired, despite the feasibility of preserving them. It is further found that the prevention of such needless destruction and impairment

² Land Use and Transportation Committee Hearing, September 13, 2021; available here:

http://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/player/clip/39343?view_id=10&meta_id=894088&redirect=true.

³ This piece was originally located in the private residence of Sigmund and Rosalie Stern in Atherton.

is essential to the health, safety and general welfare of the public. The purpose of this legislation is to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the public through:

(a) The protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of **structures, sites and areas** that are reminders of past eras, events and persons important in local, State or national history, or which provide significant examples of architectural styles of the past or are landmarks in the history of architecture, or which are unique and irreplaceable assets to the City and its neighborhoods, or which provide for this and future generations examples of the physical surroundings in which past generations lived;

(b) The development and maintenance of appropriate settings and environment for such **structures, and in such sites and areas**;

(c) The enhancement of property values, the stabilization of neighborhoods and areas of the City, the increase of economic and financial benefits to the City and its inhabitants, and the promotion of tourist trade and interest;

(d) The preservation and encouragement of a City of varied architectural styles, reflecting the distinct phases of its history: cultural, social, economic, political and architectural; and

(e) The enrichment of human life in its educational and cultural dimensions in order to serve spiritual as well as material needs, by fostering knowledge of the living heritage of the past.

While the Owner is honored by the attention to the Artwork, in reviewing the purposes of Article 10, we cannot square this effort to landmark a work of art with the stated policy goals of Article 10. The underlying public benefit of landmarking "structures, sites and areas" is so that people can continue to see and appreciate them. The focus of Article 10 is on preserving architectural styles, stabilization of neighborhoods, promotion of tourism, and educational and cultural enrichment. *All of these preservation goals are achieved in the public realm.* The structures, sites and areas subject to Article 10 jurisdiction are by definition things the public can see and places the public can go. Private interior spaces, including those on the 10th floor of a private office building, in a private club, are not included because they cannot be accessed by the public.

The Artwork is not part of the public realm. It is not a structure, it is not a site, it is not an area. As such, the landmarking of such artwork is not permitted under Article 10.

INTERIOR SPACES ARE SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED IN ARTICLE 10

The Artwork is located on the 10th Floor of a private building. As discussed above, this space has been used continuously as a private club for many decades. Its location 10 stories above the street in a private club means it cannot be viewed even casually by passersby through a window or lobby door. Its location, and the lack of any access by the public, is the key fact here that deprives the Commission of jurisdiction.

The Planning Code allows the Historic Preservation Commission and Board of Supervisors to landmark “an individual structure or feature.”⁴ The code goes on to specifically address the issue of “significant interior architectural features.” Planning Code Section 1004 says in relevant part:

(a) The HPC shall have the authority to recommend approval, disapproval, or modification of landmark designations and historic district designations under this Code to the Board of Supervisors. Pursuant to the procedures set forth hereinafter:

(1) The Board of Supervisors may, by ordinance, designate **an individual structure or other feature** or an integrated group of structures and features on a single lot or site, having a special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value, as a landmark, and shall designate a landmark site for each landmark; and

(b) Each such designating ordinance shall include, or shall incorporate by reference to the pertinent resolution of the HPC then on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, as though fully set forth in such designating ordinance, the location and boundaries of the landmark site or historic district, a description of the characteristics of the landmark or historic district that justify its designation, and a description of the particular features that should be preserved. **Any such designation shall be in furtherance of and in conformance with the purposes of this [Article 10](#) and the standards set forth herein.**

(c) The property included in any such designation shall upon designation be subject to the controls and standards set forth in this [Article 10](#). In addition, the said property shall be subject to the following further controls and standards if imposed by the designating ordinance:

(1) For a publicly-owned landmark, review of proposed changes to significant interior architectural features.

⁴ Planning Code, § 1004(a)(1).

(2) For a privately-owned landmark, **review of proposed changes requiring a permit to significant interior architectural features in those areas of the landmark that are or historically have been accessible to members of the public.** The designating ordinance must clearly describe each significant interior architectural feature subject to this restriction. (emphasis added)

Section 1004(c)(2) expressly provides that the interior feature must be “in those areas of the landmark that are or historically have been accessible to members of the public.” The Artwork here is and always has been in a non-public setting.

The two past examples of landmarking interior spaces are clearly distinguishable: The Eagle Bar was a bar open to the public. Parts of the Japanese YWCA were also open to the public. The Artwork is, and has always been, located at the 10th floor of a private office building and further inside a private club within the building. Article 10 does not apply here.

CONCLUSION

Because the Allegory of California fresco has always been in a private space and never historically open to the public, we respectfully request the Historic Preservation Commission recommend disapproval of this landmark designation. The Artwork is beyond the reach of the City's landmarking authority. There is no support or precedent for landmarking the Artwork which is located in private interior space that has never been open to the public. The express provisions of Article 10 could not be more clear.

Furthermore, it is possible that the City's action here could constitute a taking under the 5th Amendment. The Supreme Court and the 9th Circuit have recently applied takings jurisprudence to personal property (See *Horne v. Dept. of Agriculture* (2015) 576 U.S. 350; *Sierra Medical Services Alliance v. Kent* (9th Cir. 2018) 883 F.3d 1216, 1225).

We look forward to presenting to you on November 3. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

REUBEN, JUNIUS & ROSE, LLP



Andrew J. Junius

President Diane Matsuda
Historic Preservation Commission
Diego Rivera's The Allegory of California
October 26, 2021
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cc: Kate Black, Commissioner
Chris Foley, Commissioner
Richard S.E. Johns, Commissioner
Ruchira Nageswaran, Commissioner
Lydia So, Commissioner
Jason Wright, Commissioner
Jonas Ionin, Commission Secretary
Pilar LaValley, Planning Department
Stock Exchange Tower Associates