# Reframe: City Hall Mural Factsheet

The Acknowledge + Reframe Together (Reframe) Initiative produces public art and civic memory projects that center community voices with the aim of creating a more just and equitable Santa Monica. As part of this initiative, Santa Monica Cultural Affairs has embarked on a public art project to consider the meaning, impact and potential responses to the WPA-era mural by Stanton Macdonald-Wright in the lobby of historic City Hall.

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The Reframe: City Hall Mural project will collect and consider community feedback and contextual information about the depictions and absences conveyed by the artworks and after this process, develop an artistic response that engages with the full complexity of Santa Monica's histories and communities

For the first phase of project planning and community engagement, Santa Monica Cultural Affairs has partnered with Meztli Projects, an Indigenous-based arts & culture collaborative centering Indigeneity into the creative practice of Los Angeles by using arts-based strategies

to support, advocate for, and organize to highlight Native and Indigenous Artists and systemsimpacted peoples. Meztli's Projects' facilitation team for this process is Joel Garcia, Robin Garcia Ph.D., Susannah Laramee Kidd Ph.D., and Rosten Woo.

A final report about findings from the community engagement and recommendations from the process will be created by Meztli Projects and shared with the community and City Council, completing Phase I of the project.

After this update, Council may provide direction to staff on the scope of next steps for Phase II of the project. This second phase is expected to begin in 2024.

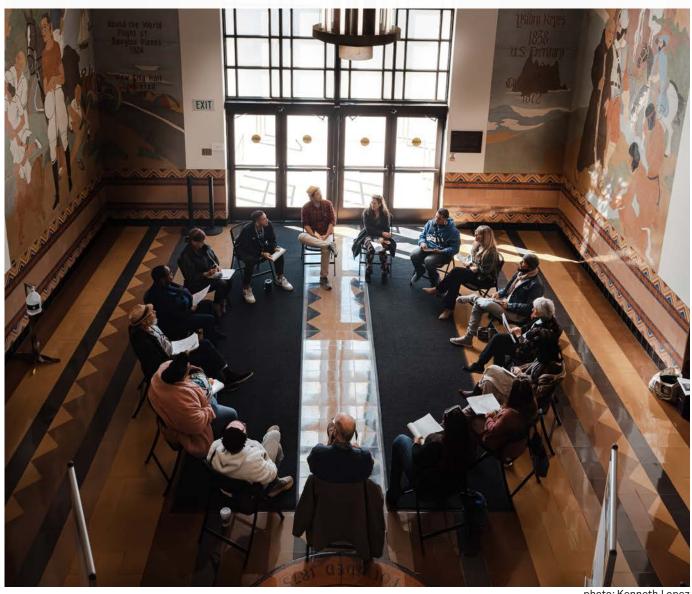


photo: Kenneth Lopez

# City Hall Mural Recent Historical Timeline

### 2015-16:

Protests of City Hall mural led by community activists.

## 2017:

LA Weekly publishes a <u>story</u> about the controversy about the mural, amongst other coverage. Santa Monica Arts Commission discusses the issue.

## 2018:

Arts Commission and its Public Art Committee approves a Percent for Art budget allocation and 5-point plan to do the following:

- Issue call for artworks that respond to Indigenous or other often overlooked histories of Santa Monica for inclusion in the municipal art collection. (This was completed in 2020; <u>Lives</u> <u>that Bind exhibit in City Hall East</u>.)
- 2. Form a Mural Subcommittee of the Arts Commission to inform and guide the planning process. (Now active.)
- Coordinate a discussion series to host open public dialogues with experts from diverse perspectives including Indigenous Peoples, History, and Art. (Launched Reframe: City Hall Mural series Public Programs taking place in spring 2023.)
- 4. Commission a temporary participatory artwork in City Hall to collect community voices. (Launched Lobby Displays September 2022 + Feedback Activity Guide spring 2023.)
- 5. Informed by the community engagement and panels series, commission a permanent educational panel or other artistic interpretation at City Hall to recontextualize the Macdonald-Wright murals. (This will be explored in Phase II after staff receives direction from Council.)

## 2019:

Cultural Affairs convenes the Mural Subcommittee for the first time. Belmar History + Art project is launched in response to a Coastal Commission requirement to acknowledge the history of the Black neighborhood that was displaced from the Civic Center site through eminent domain actions in the 1950s. City Hall Mural project put on hold for this time-sensitive priority.

### 2020:

Pandemic onset. Belmar History + Art project is completed. Mural Project is reactivated.

### 2021:

**May:** Council <u>directs staff</u> to produce temporary mesh screening of murals.

**September:** Council approves a <u>motion</u> to form an ad-hoc committee on the mural issue and to be a liaison with representatives of the Landmarks Commission and the Arts Commission in efforts to contextualize the mural in the lobby of City Hall.

**December:** Public Works Department creates plan to cover mural; Council receives an <u>information</u> <u>item</u> with mock-up of the mesh screening.

#### 2022:

January: Santa Monica Conservancy hosts a panel discussion on City Hall Murals. Santa Monica Cultural Affairs (SMCA) opens search for a consultant to gather community input; the first phase of the mural project. City launches the Acknowledge & Reframe Together initiative, with Reframe: City Hall Mural as the first program under this umbrella.

**February:** After cost estimates exceeded initial estimates and Council received additional community input, Council <u>directs staff</u> to focus efforts on continuing the engagement and research project around the mural and add a temporary lobby display in lieu of the mesh screening.

**March:** SMCA launches preliminary <u>Survey</u> to gather community interest in Reframe topics.

**Summer:** Youth workshops with artist Glenna Avila at Virginia Avenue Park/PAL/CREST summer camps, resulting in a <u>youth poster display</u> in Historic City Hall lobby (on display from September 2022 - January 2023.)

August: SMCA finalizes contract with Meztli team to develop Phase I public programs to gather community perspectives and ideas in order to inform plans for Phase II of the project to address the mural.

# 2023:

January: Phase I Public programs commence.

# What happened:

The Reframe: City Hall Mural team had a multi-pronged approach to producing public conversations, recommendations for future actions and guidance in commissioning new works.

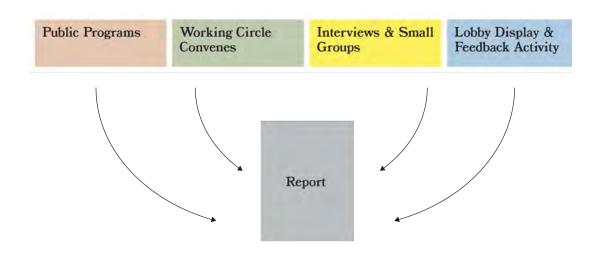
- Creation of a Working/Learning Circle to collectively discuss and learn
- A series of public programs in real life and on-line

- A feedback activity guide and visioning tool to collect perspectives from the community
- Displays in the Historic City Hall lobby to communicate about the project
- Interviews with members of impacted communities
- A report composed from the reflections and recommendations of the Working Circle, feedback gathered, excerpts from interviews and public programs, key contextual documents

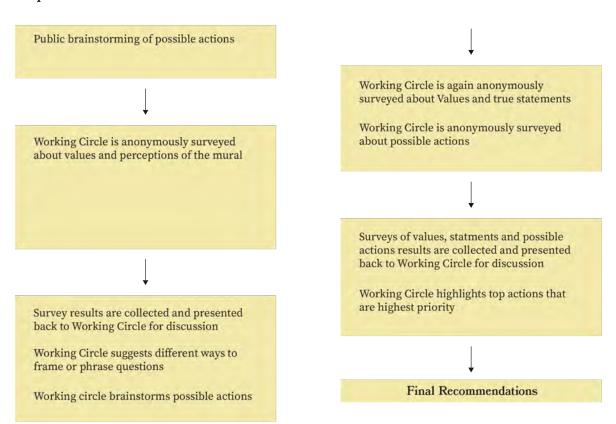
	PUBLIC PROGRAMS	WORKING CIRCLE CONVENES	INTERVIEWS & SMALL GROUPS	LOBBY DISPLAY & FEEDBACK ACTIVITY
JAN		Program Planning	Ongoing	Student Artwork in Lobby
FEB	Sites of Memory Tour Saturday, February 11	Engagement Support		Process Posters; Feedback Activity
	Resources for Educators Wednesday, February 22	Brainstorming		
MAR	Memory Work Today Wednesday, March 8			
APRIL	Community Listening Workshop <i>Saturday, April 1</i>			
MAY	Open House Saturday, May 6	Review Feedback		
JUNE	Other Histories of Santa Monica and the Bay District Saturday, June 3	кечем геепраск		Process Posters
JULY :	Screening of <i>Town</i> Destroyer documentary	Synthesis		
: OCT	Thursday, July 13  SUMMARY REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS RELEASED			
NOV	Open House & Mixer Thursday, November 9		Council and Community Briefings	Process Update Posters
EARLY	FULL REPORT RELEASED			
2024	CITY COUNCIL DIRECTIVES AND NEXT STEPS			

# Reframe: City Hall Mural

# **Report Process**



#### Step



# Reframe: City Hall Mural

## **Process Details**

#### **MEZTLI**

 Hired by City of Santa Monica to run public programs and process in response to City Hall Mural

#### REFRAME PROCESS PHASE I

- Collected individual reflections and observations about mural
- Working circle discussions
- Lobby displays
- Limited interviews with individuals with relevant knowledge or perspectives
- Public Programs to resource Working Circle and public at large

#### REFRAME: CITY HALL MURAL

# REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Working circle will:

- help analyze and reflect on collected material
- help generate, discuss, and highlight recommendations

#### Report will include:

- Analysis and discussion of collected material
- Recommendations of potential tactions that the City and other actors could take in response to mural, which could include:
  - Commissioning new artworks, public programs, interpretive works responding to mural depictions and its absences
  - Actions having to do with mural itself adding interpretation, over-projection, covering, moving, changes to lobby design etc.
  - Actions in a different sphere but responding to issues raised by mural—land acknowledgement, new programs carried out by City to address inclusion, equity, public art, and civic participation, etc.
- Recommendations of actions to be carried out by non-governmental bodies (such as Santa Monica College, Santa Monica Conservancy, Pico Youth and Family Center, Gabrielino Tongva Springs Conservancy, SMMUSD, etc.)

## City of Santa Monica Cultural Affairs

- Will deliver Reframe report and staff report based on Reframe Report to City Council
- Commissions and promotes cultural projects in Santa Monica (including a Phase II of Reframe)

## Santa Monica City Council

- · Allocates budgets
- Provides policy direction
- Appoints commissioners, reviews appeals

# Santa Monica Arts Commission

 Approves public art and selects artists

> Santa Monica Landmarks Commission

 Decision-making body on any proposed changes to designated City Landmarks.

# PUBLIC AT LARGE

COMMUNITY
ORGANIZATIONS
AND
NON-PROFITS

 Invited to create programs in alignment with ideas and recommendations generated by Reframe Process



