

# 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 systems-impacted peoples. Meztli's Projects' facilitation team for this process is Joel Garcia, Robin Garcia Ph.D., Susannah Laramée 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.

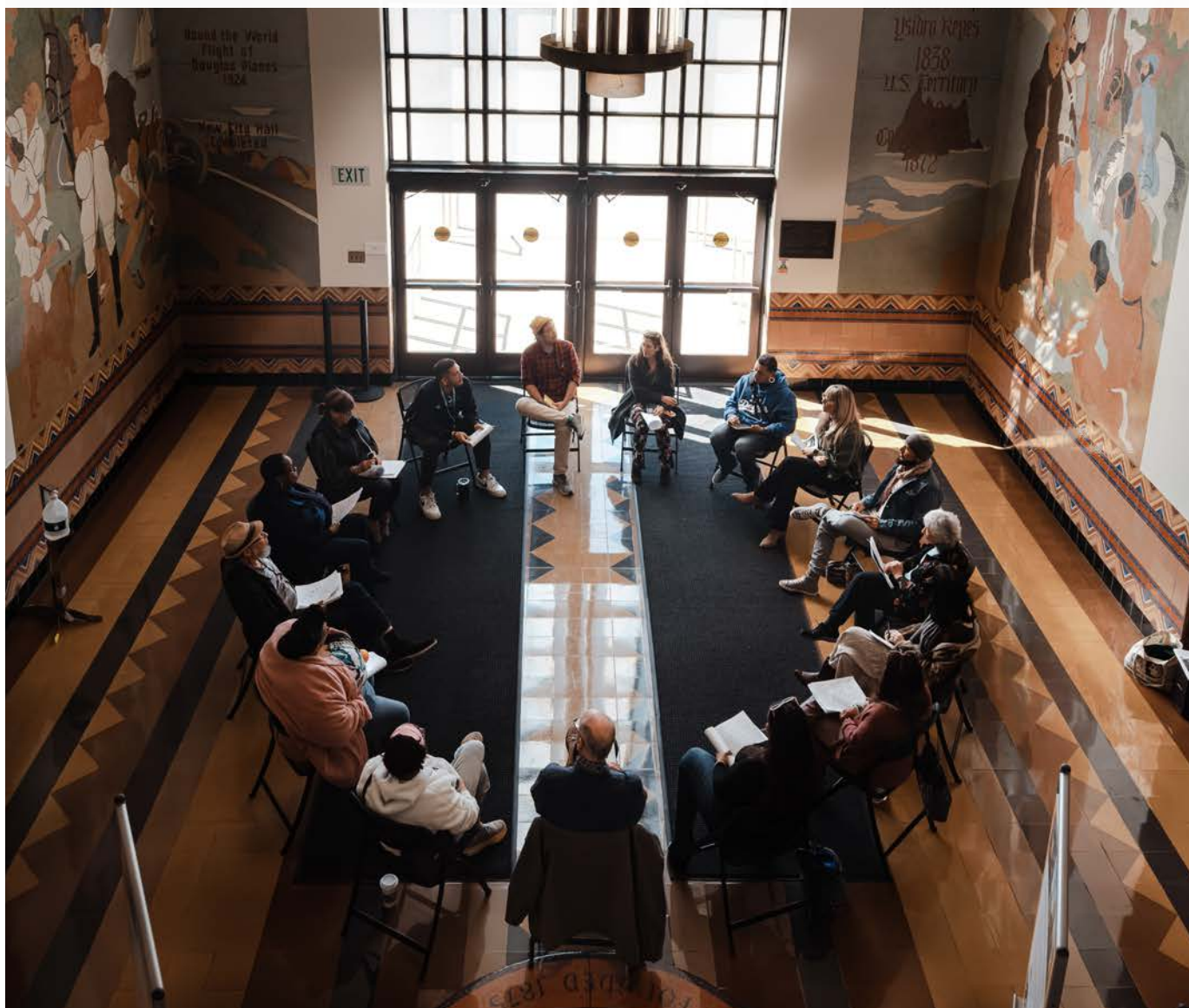


photo: Kenneth Lopez

# City Hall Mural Recent Historical Timeline

## 2015-16:

Protests of City Hall mural led by community activists.

## 2017:

LA Weekly publishes a [story](#) 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:

1. 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; [Lives that Bind exhibit in City Hall East.](#))
2. Form a Mural Subcommittee of the Arts Commission to inform and guide the planning process. (Now active.)
3. 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 [directs staff](#) to produce temporary mesh screening of murals.

**September:** Council approves a [motion](#) 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 [information item](#) 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 [directs staff](#) 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 [Survey](#) 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 [youth poster display](#) 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

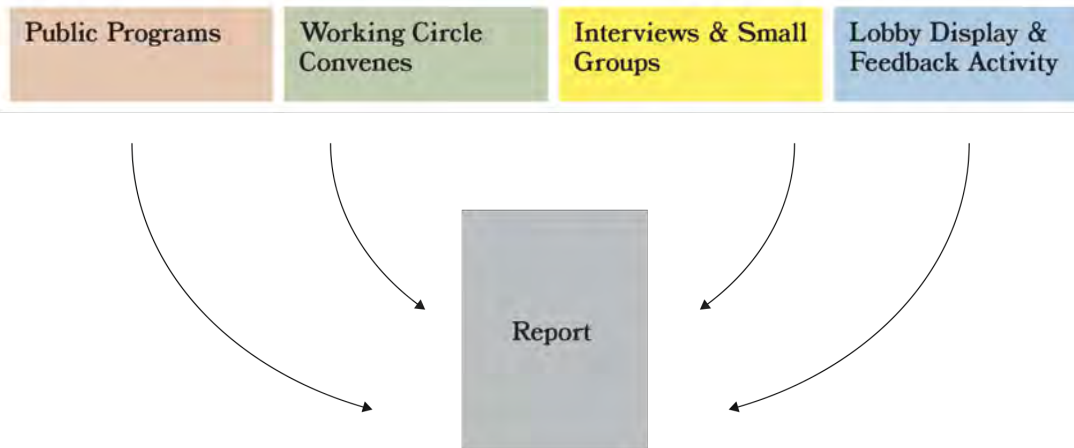
- A feedback activity guide and visioning tool to collect perspectives from the community
- Displays in the Historic City Hall lobby to communicate about the project
- Interviews with members of impacted communities
- A report composed from the reflections and recommendations of the Working Circle, feedback 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 <i>Saturday, February 11</i>	Engagement Support	Ongoing	Process Posters; Feedback Activity
	Resources for Educators <i>Wednesday, February 22</i>	Brainstorming		
MAR	Memory Work Today <i>Wednesday, March 8</i>			
APRIL	Community Listening Workshop <i>Saturday, April 1</i>			
MAY	Open House <i>Saturday, May 6</i>	Review Feedback		
JUNE	Other Histories of Santa Monica and the Bay District <i>Saturday, June 3</i>	Synthesis	Process Posters	
JULY : : :	Screening of <i>Town Destroyer</i> documentary <i>Thursday, July 13</i>			
OCT	SUMMARY REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS RELEASED			
NOV	Open House & Mixer <i>Thursday, November 9</i>		Council and Community Briefings	Process Update Posters
EARLY 2024	FULL REPORT RELEASED			
	CITY COUNCIL DIRECTIVES AND NEXT STEPS			

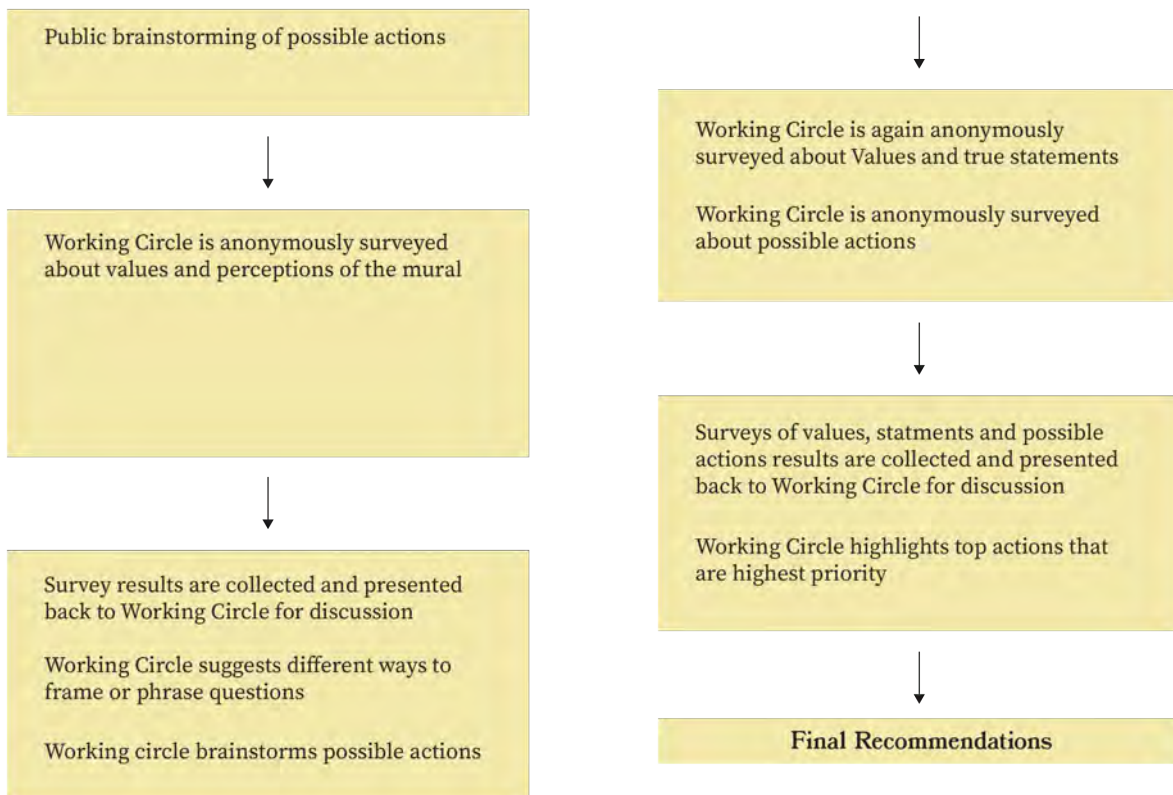


# Reframe: City Hall Mural

# Report Process



## Step



# Reframe: City Hall Mural

# Process Details

