

12-0548

TO CITY CLERK FOR PLACEMENT ON NEXT
REGULAR COUNCIL AGENDA TO BE POSTED

#54

RESOLUTION

For Friday 4/20/12

WHEREAS, David Alfaro Siqueiros, along with Diego Rivera and Jose Clemente Orozco, was one of Mexico's most acclaimed artists of the 20th century. The three artists are commonly known as "Los Tres Grandes."; and

WHEREAS, David Alfaro Siqueiros was a veteran of the Mexican Revolution and the Spanish Civil War. During the 1920s, he declared that art must be monumental, heroic, human, and public; and

WHEREAS, in 1932 he went into exile from Mexico and stayed in Los Angeles for nearly a year. While in Los Angeles, he served as the artist in residence at Chouinard School of Art, served as an international juror for the Olympic Games arts competition, held several exhibitions around the city, and painted three murals, two of which were public; and

WHEREAS, during his time in Los Angeles, two years following the opening of Olvera Street, David Alfaro Siqueiros painted a mural entitled *America Tropical* on the south-facing, second floor exterior wall of the Italian Hall where the Plaza Art Center was located. The 18-by-82 foot mural was unveiled on October 9, 1932 on the roof of the Hammel Building on Olvera Street, before a crowd of spectators and officials; and

WHEREAS, the *America Tropical* mural consists of a Mayan-like pyramid with a central figure, an Indian peon crucified on a double cross, with what the artist called an "American imperialist eagle" stretching out its talons above him. Two revolutionary soldiers, one aiming his rifle at the eagle, are depicted in the mural's upper right hand corner. Blocks of stone and pre-Columbian sculptures are scattered among the primeval growth of a great twisting tree. These images evoke the devastation of ancient Indian civilization. Deep green, ochres, and reds dominated the mural; and

WHEREAS, in 1933, it is alleged that concerned about the image of the new Mexican Marketplace (El Pueblo), Christine Sterling instructed F. K. Ferenz to paint over the segment that was visible from Olvera Street; and

WHEREAS, by 1938 the remainder of the work had been whitewashed in an act of censorship; and

WHEREAS, While the nearly forgotten masterpiece languished, assaulted by neglect and the elements, the whitewash began to erode and like a ghostly apparition appeared during the social turbulence of the 1960s and inspired modern mural movement throughout the United States, indelibly transforming our visual landscape; and

WHEREAS, In 1988, the Getty Conservation Institute began the conservation of the mural, designating it as a cultural artifact. By 2006, the Getty and the City of Los Angeles committed a combined \$8.9 million to build the Siqueiros Mural Center which will include a protective shelter, a viewing platform and an interpretive center in the restored Sepulveda House, once again making this prized artist treasure, which has been meticulously conserved, available for public viewing; and

WHEREAS, In 2008, *Amigos de Siqueiros* was established to collaborate with the City of Los Angeles and the Getty to protect, conserve and promote *América Tropical*, to create a venue to showcase the internationally renowned Mexican artist, David Alfaro Siqueiros, to establish a research and resource facility that will support public educational programming and collaborations that will attract students and academics; and,

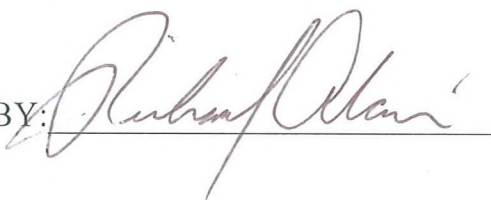
WHEREAS, the mission of *Amigos de Siqueiros* includes seeking public and private partners to provide for the long-term stewardship of the Siqueiros Mural Center and ensure that it becomes a focal point for international cultural tourism.

WHEREAS, El Pueblo Historical Monument has benefited from over 30 million dollars in capital improvements including the Siqueiros Mural Center, which once completed will attract millions of visitors to El Pueblo and Olvera Street; and

WHEREAS, 2012 marks the 80th anniversary of the controversial mural's completion and opening;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that by the adoption of this resolution, the Los Angeles City Council hereby proclaims *America Tropical* a cultural treasure of great artistic value and declares April 20th, 2012 "Dia de Siqueiros" in the City of Los Angeles.

PRESENTED BY: 
JOSE HUIZAR
Councilmember, 14th District

SECONDED BY: 

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