

THE MEXICAN MUSEUM

In Association with the Smithsonian Institution

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (July, 2018) - The Mexican Museum begins preparation to move into its new modern location in San Francisco to join the Museum of Modern Art and other museums in Yerba Buena. The new location of The Mexican Museum at 706 Mission Street, an illustrator's rendering of which is pictured here, is currently under construction and is scheduled for completion in 2020.

The Mexican Museum's current venue has been tucked away in a small obscure location at Fort Mason for many years and its move to the heart of the City's cultural "neighborhood" will rightly extend its reach to a much broader regional and national audience. From its passionate roots as a community museum, founded in 1975 by the late artist, Peter Rodriguez, The Mexican Museum is now evolving under the direction of board Chairman Andrew Kluger toward becoming a national institution with a far-reaching impact for decades to come.

"There is no better time than now," said Kluger, "to make a highly visible statement to our city, state and country about the profound contributions and influence that thousands of years of Mexican art and culture have had in the world as well as on America and her development. And there is no better city than San Francisco and no better vehicle to make such a statement than an elegant and powerful museum as we navigate toward our opening." As all museums face challenges, The Mexican Museum has had its own challenges as well. Nonetheless to reach its culturally necessary goals requires working through these challenges, as it has under its Chairman's leadership. Kluger, who was born in Mexico and has childhood memories of visits to his family home by the likes of Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, David Alfaro Siqueiros and others, has a deep personal commitment to see the proper elevation of Mexican culture and art in our City, working tirelessly - and tenaciously - to see this through with a board that is equally committed.

In an effort to prepare for the move to Yerba Buena, the museum is undergoing a complete review of its collection which contains over 17,000 works that have been donated to the museum by its generous supporters over the years. The review, which is being conducted with great care following well established international museum protocols and practices by the museum's collections committee, has uncovered a number of extraordinary examples of art and artifacts that have been in storage for years. These include fine examples of work by such masters as Diego Rivera, Rufino Tamayo, Francisco Zuniga, Manuel Neri, Vincente Rojo, Gunther Gerzso and others. Further, one of Mexico's renowned pre-Columbian curators, Maestro Eduardo Perez de Heredia

Puente, also identified over 80 pre-Columbian works in the museum's collection that are significant and rare - one piece in the collection being so unique that nothing like it exists in Mexico. Puente was recommended to the museum by Sari Bermudez, Mexico's former Secretary of Culture under Mexican president Vicente Fox.

Many of the fine works in The Mexican Museum's collection have rarely, if ever, seen the light of day and are being marked for exhibition at the museum's new facility after its opening. In addition, two major collections are currently pledged to The Mexican Museum that will be displayed at the new location. One of these is a world-class pre-Columbian art collection comprising almost 100 examples, assembled over decades by a single sophisticated San Francisco Bay Area collector. With the addition of this wonderful collection, The Mexican Museum will have nearly 200 major pre-Columbian works making it one of the finest collections in the United States. The other collection, rare in its comprehensiveness, is composed of fine Mexican folk art, also meticulously assembled over decades by private erudite acquisition.

As part of the process of refining the museum's collection and as part of its preparation to move from Ft Mason, a limited deaccession (the process by which museums sell or otherwise remove items from their permanent collections) is being conducted. In light of The Mexican Museum's plans to be a world-class museum of Mexican and Latino art, the works currently in its permanent collection are undergoing curation to meet the standards of that mission under the direction of the museum's board with the oversight of its collections committee. Consequently, the museum has earmarked a selection of certain pieces for deaccession. The first group of works slated for deaccession was auctioned on behalf of the museum in both May and June by Clars Auctions in Oakland which has also represented the deaccessions of the DeYoung, the SFMOMA, the Metropolitan in New York, the Oakland Museum and the San Jose Museum. Other scrupulously selected board approved deaccessions are planned in the coming months. Among various criteria for this deaccession, most paramount were the condition, quality of work, appropriate content or origin, the place the work holds as an example of the artist's oeuvre and other factors. Works that would, objectively speaking, never be displayed in the context of a world-class museum are, in short, subject to possible deaccession. The Mexican Museum is following the same guidelines as those followed by most other major museums whose boards deaccession works that do not fulfill a respective museum's cultural mission in order to reinvest funds in artworks that will better do so for the sake of the community it serves.

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