

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Xochitl Castaneda, Board Secretary, xochitl.castaneda@mexicanmuseum.org*****PRESS RELEASE*******The Mexican Museum calls for Unwavering Cultural Equity and Fair Representation Within the Yerba Buena Arts District**

San Francisco, CA — The Mexican Museum and Latin American Arts in San Francisco categorically denounces the recent inaccuracies and defamatory claims presented in the San Francisco Chronicle regarding the City of San Francisco's audit results and the museum's operations. As a pivotal institution celebrating Latino heritage, The Mexican Museum represents a crucial component of San Francisco's cultural mosaic, being the nation's first museum dedicated to Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, and Latin American art.

On March 21, 2024, the San Francisco Chronicle published an article full of misrepresentations, erroneous assertions, and slanderous accusations targeting the museum's leadership and management practices. The Mexican Museum's counsel is contacting the Chronicle legal staff demanding an immediate retraction. For clarity - The City Audit Report did not in any way, shape, or form find or conclude that there was any misappropriation of funds. Moreover, no volunteer member of the Board of Trustees has been compensated for their services. In fact, the auditors found that all expenditures made by the museum were approved by and through five distinct agreements with the City through The Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure ("OCII"). The OCII Commission approved a scope of work and a budget for all expenditures for the Museum and OCII staff implemented the review and disbursement of every single dollar provided to the Museum. In sum, the audit did not find misappropriation of funds as stated in the article.

The Museum disputes the audit's findings. Despite the museum's full cooperation with the city-mandated audit, the Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure instructed the museum to halt the release of development and construction funds until the audit concluded. This directive led to significant delays, as the audit's timeline extended over a year, with its scope repeatedly expanding beyond its initial parameters. The museum remained committed and acted in good faith throughout, adapting to the auditor's increasingly complex demands, which diverged significantly from the audit's original goals. Asserting that The Mexican Museum failed to meet its construction and fundraising objectives due to noncompliance is misleading and entirely false. The shifting requirements and the extended duration of the audit were the true impediments. The Museum remains and is fully prepared to work with the City and OCII to commence immediate construction and renovations of the Museum space, with a team of over 10 development and construction contractors and subcontractors at the ready with support from labor.

The Chronicle's irresponsible dissemination of the misleading information in its March 21 article inflicts considerable damage not only on The Mexican Museum, its employees, Board of Trustees, donors, artists, allies and partners, but also on the broader Latino community and the dedicated professionals who have invested countless hours volunteering for the Museum's future. The Mexican Museum is entitled to cultural parity within the Yerba Buena Gardens, aligning with the standards of other premier City art institutions. The people of San Francisco and the State of California deserve a world class institution that accurately reflects and honors Latino narratives, and the City and County of San Francisco must affirm its commitment to realizing The Mexican Museum's future home at 706 Mission Street.

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