

# Timeline

## Acquisition of *Portrait of Mexico Today, 1932*



### Winter 1997 Spring 1998

Latin American art being one of the four areas of concentration in the Santa Barbara Museum of Art's (SBMA) program of modern and contemporary art, the SBMA is contacted by an art representative about *Portrait of Mexico Today, 1932*.

Robert H. Frankel, SBMA Director; and Diana C. du Pont, SBMA Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art visit private home where mural was created.

The Museum sees opportunity to acquire, conserve, preserve and make public this important work of art.

The Museum undertakes scholarly assessment of the mural by Dr. Shifra M. Goldman of UCLA, a leading expert, as well as a conservation assessment.

Initial conservation condition report finds the mural to be, "generally in good condition."

The SBMA receives a generous lead gift in order to conduct a viability study.

### Summer-Fall 1999

Given the importance of the project, the Museum resolves to give due diligence to selection of a world-class conservator.

Perry Huston, principal of Perry Huston & Associates, Center for the Conservation of Art in Dallas, TX emerges as the Museum's first choice.

The mural is donated to Museum.

Two visionary Museum benefactors step forward with anonymous gifts to conserve and move the work.

Perry Huston visits the mural site to begin his analysis.

## **Winter 1999 - Spring 2000**

Perry Huston presents his report outlining options for moving the mural and begins the formation of a team including a contractor and an engineer.

The Museum's Exhibitions and Acquisitions Committee endorses the project.

## **Summer 2000**

Work commences to examine possible site locations in Santa Barbara.

Methodology of moving plans analyzed.

Museum puts together teams of professionals in both Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. The Los Angeles team includes landscape design firm Nancy Powers & Associates to reconstruct garden portico and refurbishing landscape after the structure is removed; and L.A. general contractor Bruce/Orvaldsson to rebuild the garden structure.

The Santa Barbara team includes architect Henry Lenny, general contractor John Sullivan of Armstrong Associates, structural engineer Greg Van Sande of Howard and Van Sande Structural Consultants, Inc. and landscape designers.

Conservator Perry Huston forms his senior team which includes Andrea Rothe of the J. Paul Getty Museum and Scott Haskins of Fine Arts Conservation Laboratory.

The conservation team recommends that the mural be moved intact, but, importantly, with its foundations. This means moving both the garden portico with all of its cement footings.

## **Fall-Winter 2000**

The Museum seeks and obtains approval for the installation of the mural from the City of Santa Barbara, involving numerous committees including the City's Historic Landmarks Commission, the City Arts Advisory Committee and Visual Arts in Public Places Committee.

Together with the city committees, the Museum explores possible sites for the mural. The conservators begin their initial stabilization and conservation work on the mural; engineers and contractors refine plans for moving the structure.

## **Winter 2000-2001**

General contractor John Sullivan of Armstrong Associates recommends hiring a large structure/house mover, a sub-specialty of general contracting, and proceeds to contact Ted Hollinger of Master House Movers in Los Angeles. The Museum decides that the front terrace of the Museum is the preferred position for the new mural.

### **Spring-Summer 2001**

Conservation work continues: the bricks on the floor are removed in sequence and numbered for re-installation in Santa Barbara; the structure's roof is removed; the mural is covered with a protective coating of gauze, cyclododecane, and plywood.

Final preparations for moving completed, including the construction of a massive steel armature which was placed under the building and welded to it, forming another foundation.

A fourth wall is added to the structure, making it a large rectangular box.

A final protective coating of fiberwrap is added to the entire structure.

### **Fall 2001**

The mural is removed from its foundations, placed on a truck and driven up the freeway into Santa Barbara on October 15.

On October 16, State Street, Santa Barbara's main street, is closed down for the morning as a large crane lifts the mural off the truck and lowers it into position outside the Museum.

### **Winter 2001-2002**

The conservators monitor the evaporation of the cyclododecane.

A new fire-retardant roof is put onto the structure.

The bricks are replaced in exact original order.

The plywood fourth wall is replaced by wrought-iron gates.

### **Spring-Summer 2002**

Final conservation work is completed, including final cleaning of mural, inpainting and solidifying and reattaching areas where pockets had formed in the plaster behind the paint.

### **October 20, 2002**

The mural opens to the public!