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Architect's rendering of the canopy protecting the Siqueiros mural *América Tropical*. Credit: Brooks + Scarpa

CANOPY TO PROTECT SIQUEIROS' INFLUENTIAL MURAL *AMÉRICA TROPICAL* TO BE LIFTED INTO PLACE APRIL 24

*The City of Los Angeles and the Getty Are a Step Closer to Unveiling
América Tropical, the U.S.'s Only Surviving Public Mural by David Alfaro Siqueiros*

LOS ANGELES—Construction for the shelter, viewing platform and interpretive center that will surround *América Tropical*, the only surviving public mural by **David Alfaro Siqueiros** in the United States still in its original location, is moving forward. The project will have a visible presence above Main and Olvera Streets on **Tuesday, April 24, from approximately 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.** as the canopy which will protect the mural, boasting a 90-foot span, is lifted by a construction crane and set into place.

Main Street in downtown Los Angeles will close from Arcadia Street to Cesar E. Chavez Avenue for three days—April 23–25—as the crane is built, the canopy is lifted into place and secured, and then the crane is taken down.

Due to the efforts of an ongoing public-private partnership between the City of Los Angeles and the Getty, the conserved mural, *América Tropical*, is **expected to open in Fall 2012**, 80 years after the mural was first unveiled by Siqueiros.

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David Alfaro Siqueiros, one of the great Mexican muralists of the 20th century, painted *América Tropical* in 1932 on the second story exterior wall of the Italian Hall.

The mural depicts a Mexican Indian tied to a double cross with an American eagle above him, and revolutionary soldiers—one aiming at the eagle—closing in. Controversial from the start, within a few months the mural was partially whitewashed, and it was completely covered within a decade. The work was virtually forgotten until the 1960s, when the rise of the Chicano mural movement brought a renewed interest in *América Tropical*.

The construction consists of the new protective shelter spanning the south wall of the Italian Hall – a canopy with sun shades on each side to protect the mural from direct exposure to sun and rain. A rooftop platform also has been constructed to allow public access. An interpretive center, currently under construction, will be located on the ground floor of the historic Sepulveda House and will contain exhibits that explore the history and techniques used to create *América Tropical*, the conservation process, and the artistic legacy of David Alfaro Siqueiros.

The \$9.95 million public-private investment—a \$3.95 million commitment from the Getty Foundation and \$6 million from the City of Los Angeles—is the culmination of years of effort to showcase *América Tropical*. The ongoing advocacy and expertise of the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) has been central to the endeavor to save the work, as well as the generous financial support of Friends of Heritage Preservation.

Due to the early whitewashing and ongoing exposure to the elements, the mural has deteriorated and its colors have become faint. The GCI will conserve and stabilize the mural to honor and protect that which remains from Siqueiros' own hand.

To date, the GCI has carried out extensive research, documentation, and conservation treatment, including plaster stabilization, cleaning, and consolidation. GCI scientists also have conducted scientific studies to identify the materials used by Siqueiros to create the mural. Additional conservation work by the GCI team will take place over the summer.

Following the completion of the project, the GCI has committed to maintaining and conserving the mural for the next decade. The long-term stewardship of the mural rests with the City of Los Angeles.

Architectural firm Brooks + Scarpa is overseeing the design and construction of the shelter, platform, and interpretive center, for the city of Los Angeles' Bureau of Engineering. The design firm IQ Magic is developing the concept for the interpretive center, under the guidance of the city.

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The Getty Conservation Institute works internationally to advance conservation practice in the visual arts—broadly interpreted to include objects, collections, architecture, and sites. The Institute serves the conservation community through scientific research, education and training, model field projects, and the dissemination of the results of both its own work and the work of others in the field. In all its endeavors, the GCI focuses on the creation and delivery of knowledge that will benefit the professional conservation community through scientific research, education and training, model field projects, and the dissemination of the results of both its own work and the work of others in the field. In all its endeavors, the GCI focuses on the creation and delivery of knowledge that will benefit the professionals and organizations responsible for the conservation of the world's cultural heritage. To learn more, visit www.getty.edu, or subscribe to the GCI's E-Bulletin by visiting www.getty.edu/subscribe/gci_bulletin.