



SAN FRANCISCO MAIN LIBRARY

TEMPORARY ATRIUM MURAL PROJECT

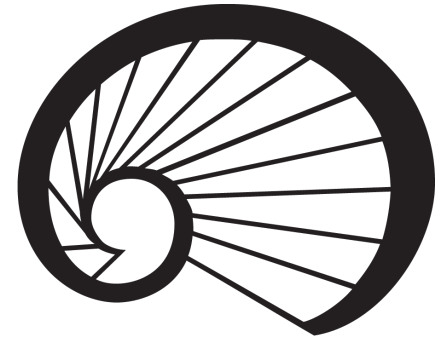
ARTWORK CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

JULY 16, 2025
VISUAL ARTS COMMITTEE MEETING

sfac



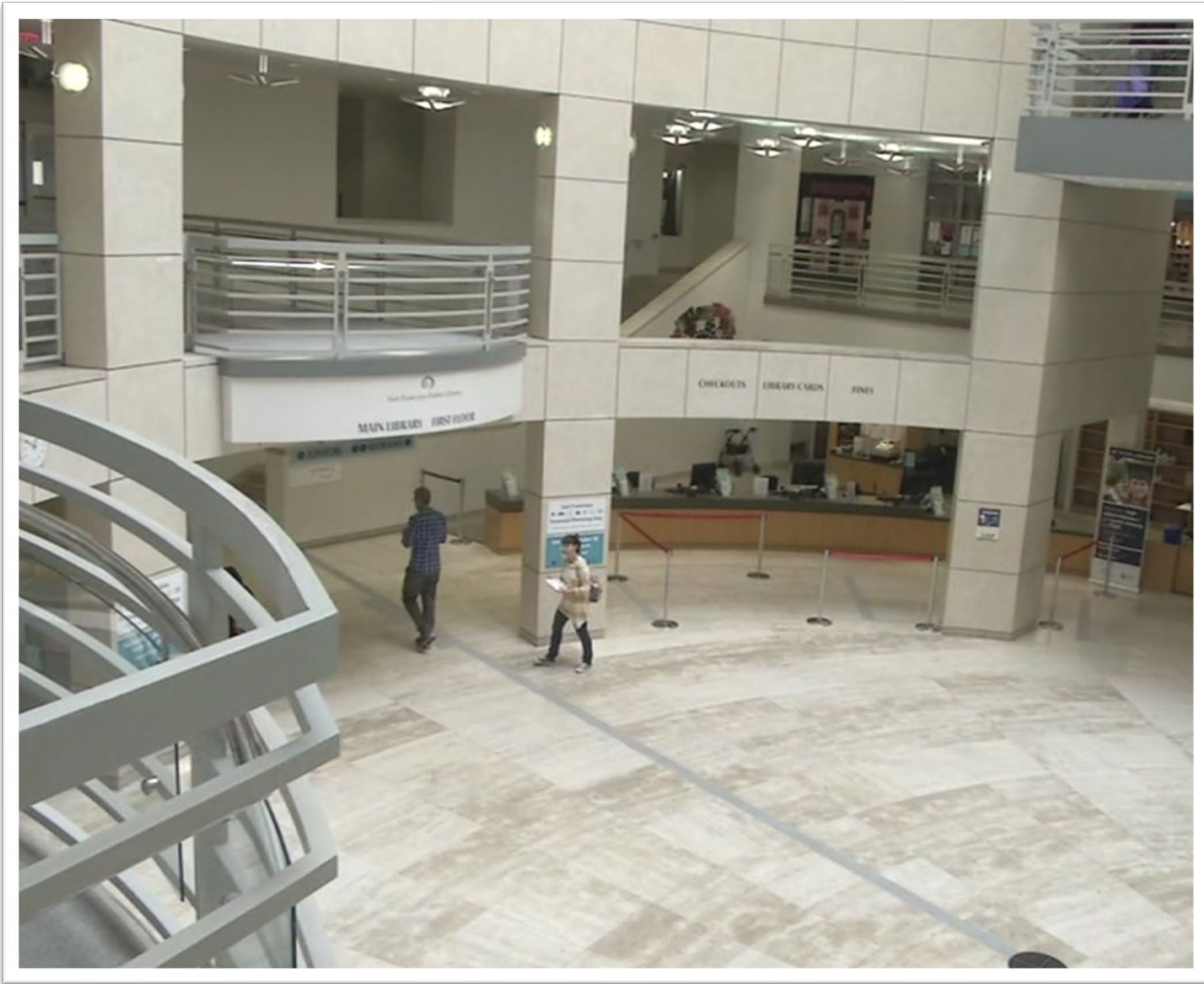
ASSOCIATION OF
RAMAYTUSH OHLONE



*San Francisco
Public Library*



sfac
san francisco
arts commission





sfac

Calixto Robles ©2024
Unity

The Art on Market Street Poster Series is a project of the San Francisco Arts Commission and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency.

The San Francisco Arts Commission acknowledges that we are on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone. We affirm the sovereign rights of their community as First Peoples and are committed to supporting the traditional and contemporary evolution of the American Indian community and uplifting contemporary indigenous voices and culture.

BUDGET

- **Total Artwork Budget: \$52,000**
- **Artist Contract: \$17,000**
Artist Contract will be for design only, and is inclusive of all artist's fees, as well as associated expenses for design and consultation during fabrication and installation.
- **Implementation Allocation: \$35,000**
Vinyl fabrication, installation, maintenance, and deinstallation will be managed by SFAC under separate contract.

PROJECT GOALS

- Artwork will emphasize the importance of the sharing of knowledge and wisdom in all forms across generations from an Indigenous perspective.
- Artist will have a meaningful connection to and/or direct experience collaborating with Indigenous communities in the development and implementation of their previous artwork design(s).
- Artist will partner directly with the Association of the Ramaytush Ohlone on the development and implementation of the artwork concept and final design.

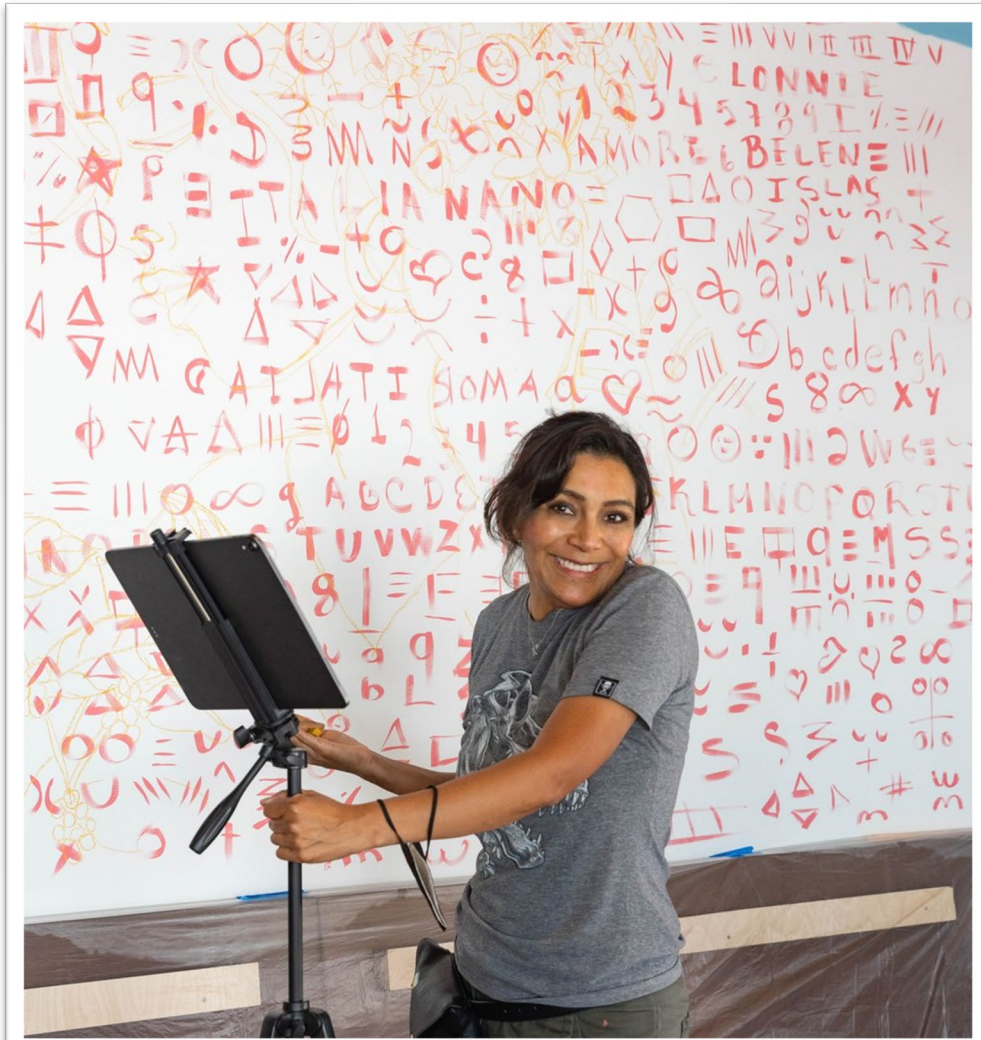


Photo of the Artist. Courtesy of the Artist.



Belen Islas, *Immeasurable Leila* (2023), Acrylic on Wood. Image: Courtesy of the Artist.

Artwork



Concept

This mural honors the Ramaytush Ohlone, the original stewards of the San Francisco Peninsula, by celebrating how knowledge is passed down across generations through storytelling, nature, play, and ceremony. Before books and libraries, knowledge lived in the land, in the spoken word, and in the rhythm of life.

Set within a natural landscape, the composition is anchored by flora and fauna native to the region, including California poppies, coast live oaks, Mission Blue butterflies, deer, and songbirds, evoking the deep interdependence between cultural knowledge and ecological heritage. Stylized visual motifs and natural patterns flow across the mural (wind, stories and songs), symbolizing the transmission of knowledge through time and space.

The mural contains a narrative arc that unfolds with movement and rhythm. At the base, an elder sits in the forest light, speaking to children, her gestures releasing symbolic forms that travel with the viewer as they move upward. Along the way, children are seen exploring, listening, dancing, and connecting, guided by community and the natural world.

At the top, one of the children has become a teacher, carrying forward the tradition of shared wisdom. This circular progression emphasizes that knowledge is alive, growing, evolving, and returning.

Ultimately, this work seeks to uplift Indigenous knowledge systems and celebrate the joy of learning as a collective, intergenerational, and deeply rooted experience. It invites all who pass by to reflect on where knowledge comes from, and how we each play a role in passing it on.

Inspiration



Art Proposal for the San Francisco Main Library Temporary Mural

By Belen Islas



Symbolic Forms



Among the visual motifs that inspired this mural are the sun, stars, rain, water, people, lizards, and many others. These symbols embody the sharing of wisdom across space and time.

Color Palette



The color palette is composed of earth tones, warm golds, and blues, and invites viewers into a welcoming space that echoes the interior calm of the library itself. By transforming the stairwell into a living story, the mural reminds us that libraries are not just places of books, but places where voices, memories, and relationships come alive.







Belen Islas, *Light It Up* (2022), Acrylic on Paper. Image: Courtesy of the Artist

ANTICIPATED PROJECT SCHEDULE

- **Final Design Approval (VAC)**
September 17
- **Digital Files Submitted to Fabricator**
Week of September 22
- **Vinyl Production**
September 29 – October 10
- **Mural Installation**
Week of October 13