

November 29, 2017

Zimmerman Murals Project Planning Group Meeting

9:00-10:30 am, Waters Room Zimmerman Library

Minutes (Draft: composed by Alejandra Salinas)

Attendance: Alex Lubin, Alejandra Salinas, Jennifer Marley, Lawrence Roybal, Mark Emmons, Lloyd Lee, Arif Kahn, Ed Padilla, Kymberly Pinder, Kevin Brown, Samuel Sisneros, Mel Ribas, Moises Gonzales, Chris Wilson, Patrick Healey, Michael Trujillo, Diana Gourlay, Rebecca Schreiber, Felipe Gonzales, Virginia Scharff, Kathy Powers

- I. Previous meeting minutes approved.
- II. The meeting opened with a review of the mission of the planning committee (Alex Lubin):
 - This is a committee to facilitate a campus-wide discussion about how to address historical and present concerns regarding the Zimmerman Murals.
 - This has been talked about for a long time
 - The murals cause a hostile space and this is a problem
 - This group is planning for a spring course to engage our community with the issue and to come up with tangible solutions and logistics.
 - The course will address how we enact social change
 - the logistics for removing mural, change location etc.
 - Next semester we will have a class with an online course section, grad section, and undergrad sections and a web presence for everyone to see course activities.
 - public lecturers for anyone to attend, will also be recorded and posted online
 - We should discuss what type of guest lecturers and public lecturers we want to host
 - Question emerged about whether the purpose of the planning committee is to organize the class, or to also work independent from class. Samuel Sisneros suggested that the mission statement for the committee include a commitment to being sensitive not only to historic preservation, but also to the concerns of those who submitted a protest letter from with the Library, as well as any racial/ethnic group impacted by the mural.
 - Some members would like to see the committee develop a recommendation on the proposals – it was suggested that the committee will not only consider the student proposals, but also proposals more broadly.

- III. Dr. Kymberly Pinder, Dean of Fine Arts, discussed her vision for the course:
- Will be history through practice
 - Students will go through the mural proposal process.
 - Taking the mural down is part of the process and student will have to find out how much it cost to carry out their proposal.
 - The proposals from students will be presented to Provost and President, and maybe this group if wanted to and maybe the Regents.
 - Kym will be more of a facilitator for this class and will take suggestions for it.
 - This will be during lunch time for open lecture series style to assure more availabilities.
 - Provost office has some budget to pay for the speakers
- IV. Committee brainstorming discussion of what topics should be included in course:
- Historic preservation: people tend to think of pretty buildings, but that's not always the case. There are misconceptions about how to preserve or not.
 - Hoping the class will illustrate the historical aspects of mural
 - History has 2 sides: what happened and what we say happened
 - These murals are one set of representation of what happened
 - We need to frame what we say happened about what happened with common values
 - Change the narrative of what is included in a history
 - What parts of what happened do we think are most important to understand?
 - Historians need to speak in this class, people that know how history works in addition to of an understanding of how the representation of history in art works
 - Need to present history of murals
 - NM has the largest WPA murals.
 - Need to know about the history of the making of murals
 - How they ventured into the WPA project
 - Need to understand that the current generation of UNM students bring new understandings of how the University should be represented.
 - Need to situate the Zimmerman Mural in the context of UNM inter-American relations, WPA and Mexico, and relationship to other art on campus such as the Galvan mural in Scholes and the Mural in SUB.
 - We should study how other kind of art on campus has been dealt with (egg. Houser)
 - How did the University respond to protest?
 - What is the University's history of inclusion and discrimination?
 - Need to present a view that removal of the murals and other statues does not erase history
 - People won't forget the NM or UNM's part in that violence

- The mural itself participates in that erasure (of colonialism), its purpose was erasure, to perpetuate this myth with very specific political intent
- This is problematic and this course is trying to fix it
- Hoping that we can have ample conversation within this course and even after the course about a request for an adverse change
- Set the path to continue talking about it because it will take years and it has already been in conversation for the last 40 years.
- Go through a healing process
- How to move past this damage
- The dialogue should continue this after the course
- Leah McChesney from the Ortiz Center could not be present, but would like to create a panel with conjunction to the class to get people involve that protested this throughout time that might be in the area
- The course should ask: what does transitional and restorative justice look like?
 - How you in the one hand call out histories of settler colonial violence while also transforming into something that can help move forward? What does that look like?
 - What models do we have not only in terms of murals and monuments but as frame work?
 - What does transitional and restorative justice look like?
 - Art can be a mechanism for healing or facilitate human rights violation
 - transitional justice today is: how is it used for healing especially for children but also in places where there is still state of operation
 - how is art used as voice?
 - There is a complex relationship between restorative justice and art
- The course should address why some things are representative and while others are not – the politics of representation
- Multiple ways to talk about changing the space and transformation
- We need to know what commitments were made about changing murals?
 - What specific responses did UNM make to earlier protest of the mural?
 - What commitments were made?
 - Has UNM followed through?
- The course should present the history of discrimination and inclusion of UNM, helpful to know the history of Native Americans, what discrimination was based, push through the discrimination
 - Restorative justice needs to have the full picture
- Other marginalized groups such as Kiva Club, MEChA, Raza grad student org, Red nation, etc. should be part of this. (An invitation was extended to them).

- There should be an archival component in the class because we don't know why the mural was created or how Zimmerman approached Adams, we don't know the meaning behind that
 - conceptual design
 - feel like UNM was incorporated in an offensive way
 - Archival research is VERY important for this course
 - this is the type of research students should be doing, because pulling up this history is important
 - field trip research and archival research
 - conversations about how we change the visual and the documentary full narrative on what part of history is represented
- The course could be a way to address other racial components of UNM
- There may be permanent solutions (egg. Removal of murals) and intermediate, shorter term solutions
- We should question the library's narrative about the art and how the history of protest concerning the art is told.
 - Inaccurate to me
 - stories are getting re-written
- Committee needs an agenda for this future course but also future plans to keep going to tackle other issues.
- Need to document how this came about for historical record
- What is public arts responsibility to its audience?
 - Perspectives can change
- The work of the committee should be added to Alex's website page in the Provost Office.
 - Let people know that there is a lecture series.
- Need to bring people from Chaco Canyon, people from the pipeline.
 - In terms of how indigenous people are still struggling with this.
- This group should go look at the murals around here and analyze them.
- The State Historic Preservation office should be brought in.
- Samuel Sisneros suggested that it might be a good idea to cover the murals with paper in the short-term.
- Kim and Alex will continue working on the class and reflect on this panel. When they have a draft they will send it out.