

Our understanding is that the San Francisco Arts Commission did not approve this section of the mural, and that this was inserted without the prior knowledge of the Arts Commission. The sketches and narrative submitted by the artist to the Arts Commission did not contain any reference to this section of the mural. We take note that in the "Description and Time Line" narrative submitted by the artist, one of the primary purposes of the mural is to represent "the current lives of young people in the neighborhood, growing from rebelliousness into organized consciousness, guided by shared ancient roots and traditions." The Israeli-Palestinian conflict segment of the mural depicts a scene some 6,000 miles away from the Mission neighborhood.

Regarding the actual scene depicted, we have the following concerns:

- The Palestinian – Israeli conflict section is the only one that stands out as not being part of the experiences of American minorities in San Francisco.
- The breach in the security barrier is in the shape of the map of Israel, apparently meant to represent "all of Palestine." The implication is a rejection of a peaceful two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. This perspective negates the existence of Israel. Israel represents to the majority of Jews and to our collective identity our people's quest for self-determination and overcoming oppression and powerlessness.
- The depiction of the security barrier as a wall that goes off into the distance is inaccurate. In fact, only 3% of the security barrier is actually a concrete wall, and 97% is fencing.
- The depiction of the security barrier is lifted out of context:
 - It was erected only in the last four years as a response to an unrelenting wave of terrorist attacks, mostly suicide bombings, motivated by religious extremism.
 - In all, over 1,000 people, overwhelmingly civilians, were murdered in these terrorist attacks. Victims included Jewish, Muslim, Druze, and Christian Arab Israelis, as well as visitors from countries around the world including the United States, Asia, Philippines, and African, Asian, and Latin American countries.
 - Since the security barrier was erected, an estimated 2,000 lives have been saved in the last three years.

The image of violently breaking down a security barrier that has saved thousands of lives is exceedingly threatening to our community. This imagery victimizes Jewish members of the Mission neighborhood for whom the security barrier has prevented the loss of lives of family and friends in Israel. Further, this segment of the mural isolates the Jewish community in the Mission by raising barriers to inter-ethnic and inter-religious understanding.

We urge the San Francisco Arts Commission to:

1. Insist that this mural portray non-violent imagery originally intended for this space.
2. Implement whatever protocol exists to ensure that this and all murals paid by the City and County of San Francisco, and erected in its neighborhoods, have been fully vetted and approved by the body.