



Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

Hearing Date: July 22, 2024

GALLERY 444

Application No.: LBR-2023-24-049
Business Name: Gallery 444
Business Address: 444 Post St.
District: District 3
Applicant: Desireé Mitchell, Director
Nomination Date: June 17, 2024
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Gallery 444 was founded by Bettie Mitchell and her daughter Desireé Mitchell on August 1, 1993. Located at 444 Post Street in San Francisco's historic Union Square, Gallery 444 is a women-owned and -operated gallery that sells original fine art by over 20 local and international artists. The gallery provides food for the soul with vibrant, colorful creations by a diverse group of artists not found anywhere else. Gallery 444 offers no giclée or other forms of reproductions, showcasing only original prints, paintings, and sculpture.

Bettie originally worked at Cory Galleries prior to opening her first gallery City Gallery at the St. Francis in 1980. City Gallery at the St. Francis was located on Geary Street, but closed in 1992, the year before Bettie and Desireé opened Gallery 444. Desireé's sister, Heidi Bass, joined Gallery 444 in 1995 and worked as the director and sales manager until she retired in 2014. Heidi is still very active on the board of directors and serves as a trusted advisor, mentor, and part owner. Since Bettie's passing in 2013, Desireé continues to run the gallery, which still exists in its original Union Square location.

Gallery 444 is a necessary stop on any San Francisco gallery tour for all San Franciscans, Bay Area residents, Californians, and international travelers.

CRITERION 1

Has the applicant operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

Yes, Gallery 444 has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

444 Post St. from 1993 to Present (31 years)

CRITERION 2

Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes, Galley 444 has contributed to the history and identity of the Union Square neighborhood and San Francisco.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

Legacy Business Program

Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
legacybusiness@sfgov.org
www.legacybusiness.org





- The business is associated with the curation and enjoyment of art, showcasing only original prints, paintings, and sculptures.
- Gallery 444 features an extensive selection of early and recent works by internationally distinguished and beloved Bolivian painter Graciela Rodo Boulanger, including original oils, collages, watercolors, etchings, and lithographs. In addition, the gallery elegantly displays a unique collection of exciting original works by important contemporary artists such as surrealist master Rafal Olbinski and pop art star Jisbar. Gallery 444 is also the exclusive representative of the brilliant Peruvian artist Rossmar Valverde.
- Well known patrons of Gallery 444 include Cindy Williams, Tom Snyder, Robin Williams, and Shari Belafonte.
- The building that houses Gallery 444, known as the Chamberlain Building, was designed by Authur Brown Jr., who is well-known for his monumental works throughout San Francisco and the greater Bay Area. The site is a contributor to the Article 11 Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District. The building was called out as a “Category I - Significant Building, No Alterations.” The property has been evaluated in several surveys including the Foundation for San Francisco Heritage (1978), in which it was identified to be of major importance, and the Department of City Planning 1976 survey, where it was rated 4 out of 5 (with 5 as the highest rating for architecture). Further, the building appears eligible for the National Register as an individual property through survey evaluation.
- There have been a number of features and articles on Gallery 444, both within and outside the industry, including the following:
 - San Francisco Magazine, “10 Museums And Exhibitions To Explore In The Bay Area This Winter”
 - Artnet, “Artist Helmut Koller’s Vibrant Animal Paintings Can Instantly Cure the Winter Blues—See Them Here”
 - Inside Hook, “9 San Francisco Art Galleries to Visit Right Now”
- With regard to racial and social equity, Gallery 444 has been women-owned and -operated since its establishment in 1993. The business is community oriented and has been a popular location for hosting benefit events that contribute to a variety of local and national nonprofit organizations and has long supported prominent charities such as San Francisco General Hospital Foundation, San Francisco Giants Community Fund, San Francisco Chronicle’s Season of Sharing, and San Francisco SPCA. As the neighborhood’s identity has shifted over the last decades, Gallery has remained a unique artistic pillar of the community.

CRITERION 3

Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

Yes, Galley 444 is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that Gallery 444 qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Historic marble storefront.
- Providing original art for all to enjoy.
- Family-owned business.

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CORE PHYSICAL FEATURE OR TRADITION THAT DEFINES THE BUSINESS

Following is the core physical feature or tradition that defines the business that would be required for maintenance of the business on the Legacy Business Registry.

- Art gallery.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include Gallery 444 currently located at 444 Post St. in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program

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Small Business Commission

Resolution No. _____

July 22, 2024

GALLERY 444

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legacybusiness@sfgov.org

Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for Gallery 444, currently located at 444 Post St.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included on the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on July 22, 2024, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission hereby includes Gallery 444 in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at Gallery 444.

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legacybusiness@sfgov.org
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Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Historic marble storefront.
- Providing original art for all to enjoy.
- Family-owned business.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain Gallery 444 on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Art gallery.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on July 22, 2024.

Katy Tang
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

- Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –

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Legacy Business Registry

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2023-24-049
Business Name: Gallery 444
Business Address: 444 Post St.
District: District 3
Applicant: Desireé Mitchell, Director
Nomination Date: June 17, 2024
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?
 Yes No

444 Post St. from 1993 to Present (31 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?
 Yes No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?
 Yes No

NOTES: NA

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: June 18, 2024

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program

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City and County of
San Francisco



President, Board of
Supervisors

AARON PESKIN
市參事 佩斯金

June 17, 2024

Director Katy Tang *via email*
<Katy.Tang@sfgov.org>
San Francisco Office of Small Business
City Hall, Room 110
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Director Tang,

I write to nominate Gallery 444, a family owned and operated gallery located at 444 Post Street to the San Francisco Legacy Business Registry.

Since its establishment in 1993 by mother-daughter duo Bettie and Desirée Mitchell, Gallery 444 is known to showcase a unique collection of original prints, paintings, and sculptures from over twenty local and international artists, ranging from famed Bolivian painter Graciela and surrealist master Rafael Oblinski to pop artist Jisbar and Peruvian artist Rosemary Valverde, whom the gallery exclusively represents.

Gallery 444's reputation for always providing "food for the soul" has been acclaimed in SF Weekly and Artnews. In December 2023, Gallery 444 was deemed one of the top ten museums and exhibitions to explore in the Bay Area in 2023 by San Francisco Magazine. Its clientele of notable San Francisco figures includes Cindy Williams, Tom Snyder, Robin Williams, and Shari Belafonte.

Situated in its original Union Square location, Gallery 444 has been a prime and popular location for hosting benefit events that contribute to a variety of local and national nonprofit organizations and has long supported prominent charities such as San Francisco General Hospital Foundation, San Francisco Giants Community Fund, San Francisco Chronicle's Season of Sharing, and San Francisco SPCA.

Gallery 444 would benefit greatly from being added to the Legacy Business Registry, and it is my honor to nominate it for inclusion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Aaron Peskin".

Aaron Peskin



Legacy Business Registry Application



Business Information

Business name: Gallery 444

Business owner name(s): Desireé Mitchell

Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business

Current business address: 444 Post Street

Telephone: (415) 434 – 4477

Email: gallery@gallery444.com

Mailing address (if different than above):

Website: gallery444.com

Facebook:

Twitter:

7-digit San Francisco Business Account Number (BAN): 0 3 4 2 7 8 5

Do any of these describe your business? (select all that apply)

Requires at least 51% of the business be owned, operated, and controlled by the business designation below.

Immigrant-Owned Business

Owned by Person with a Disability

LGBTQ+-Owned Business

Veteran-Owned Business

Minority-Owned Business*

Woman-Owned Business

**Minority is defined as one or more of the following racial or ethnic groups: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; Middle Eastern or North African; Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander*

Contact Person Information

Contact person name: Desireé Mitchell

Contact person title: Director

Contact telephone: (415) 434 – 4477

Contact email: gallery@gallery444.com

Business Location(s)

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business.

If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address.

Original San Francisco address: **Zip Code:**

Is this location the founding location of the business? (Y/N):

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Other address (if applicable): **Zip Code:**

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Other address (if applicable): **Zip Code:**

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Other address (if applicable): **Zip Code:**

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Other Address (if applicable): **Zip Code:**

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Other address (if applicable): **Zip Code:**

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Applicant Disclosures

San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified. A business deemed not current with all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for grants through the Legacy Business Program.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Name: Desiree Mitchell

Signature:

Desiree Mitchell

Date: November 9, 2023

GALLERY 444

Written Historical Narrative

INTRODUCTION

a. Describe the business. What does it sell or provide?

Located at 444 Post Street in San Francisco's historic Union Square, Gallery 444 is a family owned and operated gallery that sells original fine art by over 20 local and international artists. They provide vibrant, colorful creations by a diverse group of amazing artists found no place else. Gallery 444 offers no giclée or other forms of reproductions, showcasing only original prints, paintings, and sculpture.

b. Describe whom the business serves.

Gallery 444 is a necessary stop on any San Francisco gallery tour. Gallery 444's customers include San Franciscans, Bay Area residents, Californians, and international travelers from across the globe.

c. In about 2-5 words (15-30 characters), describe what the business is known for.

Providing food for the soul with original fine art.

CRITERION 1: The business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years

a. Provide a short history of the business, including locations and owners.

Gallery 444 was founded by Bettie Mitchell and her daughter Desireé Mitchell at 444 Post Street on August 1, 1993. Bettie originally worked at Cory Galleries prior to opening her first gallery "City Gallery at the St. Francis" in 1980. That gallery was on Geary Street and that business closed in 1992, the year before Bettie and Desireé opened Gallery 444.

Desireé's sister Heidi Bass joined the business in 1995 and worked as the director and sales manager until 2014 when she had to retire due to health issues. She is still on the board of directors and serves as a trusted advisor and mentor.

Bettie passed away in 2013. Desireé continues to run the gallery, which still exists in its original Union Square location. Heidi still owns a small percentage of the company.

b. Provide the ownership history of the business in a consolidated year-to-year format.

1993 to 1995: Bettie Mitchell; Desireé Mitchell
1995 to 2013: Bettie Mitchell; Desireé Mitchell; Heidi Bass
2013 to Present: Desireé Mitchell; Heidi Bass

c. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for any significant length of time.

The only time the gallery shut down was during the COVID-19 pandemic from March 16, 2020, until mid-September 2020. During that time, however, the gallery still provided much needed art remotely during the height of the pandemic, including a couple of “drive by” sales to local clients.

CRITERION 2: The business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community

a. Describe the business' contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community, business sector, or San Francisco as a whole.

Gallery 444 is likely the oldest surviving gallery in Union Square, and one of the oldest in the greater downtown area. The gallery has relationships with many of their neighbors and neighborhood businesses. The gallery makes their block look great. San Francisco is historically an artful city, and Gallery 444 has been a part of San Francisco’s artistic fabric and has been brightening Post Street since 1993. The business is a destination for many repeat visitors.

b. Is the business associated with significant people or events, either now or in the past?

Gallery 444 carries several important artists. They feature an extensive selection of early and recent works by internationally distinguished and beloved Bolivian painter Graciela Rodo Boulanger, including original oils, collages, watercolors, etchings, and lithographs. In addition, the gallery elegantly displays a unique collection of exciting original works by important contemporary artists such as surrealist master Rafal Olbinski and pop art star Jisbar. Gallery 444 is also the exclusive representative of the brilliant Peruvian artist Rossmar Valverde.

Gallery 444 has several famous clients as well. The business generally does not publish names of their well-known clients, and some are also no longer with us. However, the list includes Cindy Williams, Tom Snyder, Robin Williams, and Shari Belafonte. All of the clients at Gallery 444 are significant; some clients are just more well-known than others.

c. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?

Gallery 444 has a long history of hosting special events to benefit local and non-local charities, including San Francisco General Hospital Foundation, San Francisco SPCA, The Chronicle's Season of Sharing, San Francisco Giants Community Fund, WildAid, and the Lorraine Hansberry Theater.

d. Has the business ever been referenced in the media, business trade publication, and/or historical documents?

Gallery 444 has been referenced in San Francisco Magazine, Artnews, and SF Weekly. Following are a few key media references:

- *"10 Museums And Exhibitions To Explore In The Bay Area This Winter"*
San Francisco Magazine
December 5, 2023
<https://sanfran.com/winter-art-guide-musuems-exhibitions-bay-area>
- *"Artist Helmut Koller's Vibrant Animal Paintings Can Instantly Cure the Winter Blues— See Them Here"*
Artnet
December 20, 2019
<https://news.artnet.com/partner-content/helmut-koller-gallery-444>
- *"Terry Helbling's Tenderloin Flat Full of \$200K in Stolen Art"*
SF Weekly
March 9, 2011
https://www.sfweekly.com/archives/terry-helblings-tenderloin-flat-full-of-200k-in-stolen-art/article_9e7a689c-f3c8-577a-8c43-d2424222e859.html

e. Has the business ever received any awards, recognition, or political commendations?

Gallery 444 has yet to receive any official awards or political commendations.

f. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?

If Gallery 444 were to close, San Francisco would lose a unique place in the art world. The city would miss the colorful and uplifting oasis – a place to find food for the soul. In addition, the gallery's employees would have to find other employment, and the space may become another empty Union Square storefront. Gallery 444's loyal and loving clients from around the world would be disappointed if they were not there, as many come to visit whenever they are in town.

CRITERION 3: The business is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business

a. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building, structure, object, signage, mural, architectural detail, neon sign, or any other special physical feature that defines the business?

The gallery is committed to maintaining a clean, graffiti-free marble front on the historic building.

b. In a few words, describe the main business activity you commit to maintaining.

Art for all to enjoy and for collectors to appreciate in their homes or offices every day.

c. What is the plan to keep the business open in the long term beyond the current ownership?

As a family owned and operated business since 1993, the current ownership hopes to pass down the legacy of Gallery 444 to another generation. The gallery will never sell out to any large corporation.

d. What challenges is the business facing today?

The challenges of maintaining a business, especially in the current climate of Union Square are well known. The mentally ill and those under the influence of drugs often scare off many of the visiting customers and travelers. The economy is never certain; however, the increased police presence in the area since the smash-and-grab incidents of 2021 has been welcome.

Legacy Business Program staff will add the following details:

a. Features or traditions that define the business and should be maintained for the business to remain on the Legacy Business Registry.

Art gallery.

b. Other special features of the business location, such as if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.

The Planning Department Historic Resource Status of the building at 442-444 Post Street is "A - Historic Resource Present." The Chamberlain Building, constructed in 1925, is a "significant building" of "major importance" per the Planning Department. It appears eligible for the National Register as an individual property through survey evaluation. It is also a contributor to the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District.



GALLERY 444

FINE ART

VALET
NO PARKING
PASSENGER
ZONE
Tue 4p-
6p-2a
DAILY







<https://www.insidehook.com/san-francisco/san-francisco-art-galleries-visit-right-now>

INSIDEHOOK

[SAN FRANCISCO](#)

9 San Francisco Art Galleries to Visit Right Now

**Want to see what working artists are up to?
Here's where to do it.**

BY [ADRIAN SPINELLI](#)

April 2, 2024

Art galleries are part of a city's vital organs. If parks are the city's lungs, San Francisco's galleries are the right side of its brain, housing the creative juices that lead to new frontiers in artistic expression. As S.F.'s cultural identity continues to shift, so do the works within these spaces: queer, BIPOC and women artists increasingly make up a significant portion of the gallery landscape, yielding a vibrant metamorphosis of the scene. While exhibits are constantly in flux, these are the art galleries in San Francisco to check out right now. And hey, you might even feel compelled to walk away with something to keep.



Gallery 444
Adrian Spinelli

Gallery 444

Real estate in San Francisco's historic Union Square is expensive to say the least, so it's a credit to Gallery 444 that the family-operated space has stood strong at the same Post Street location since 1993. The modest-yet-inviting fine art space features works like Marty Goldstein's endearing bronze canine sculptures, French mixed-media pop art provocateur Jisbar's large-scale canvases and Bolivian painter Graciela Rodo Boulanger's famed depictions of cherubic-faced children. It's a worthy stopover when you need a break from the commercial inundation of Union Square.

Visit: Mon-Sat 10-5 p.m.
[444 Post St](#)



Founder Bettie Mitchell

DESIRÉE MITCHELL

**OWNER/DIRECTOR
GALLERY 444**

*“Trends and fads will come and go,
but art will always feed your soul”*

444 Post Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
gallery444.com
415.434.4477

When you think of the ultimate Dynamic Woman, what do you think of?

I think of my mother Bettie Mitchell, who started her first gallery at the St. Francis Hotel in 1980 and then opened Gallery 444 with me in 1993. Always a woman of strong character and unique personality, she was super smart and had an amazing eye for art.

What initially drew you to your industry or expertise?

Again, my mother was my main inspiration. I began working in her gallery when I was in high school and went to college with other plans. However, after I graduated, I realized that I really loved working with my family and my colleagues and decided that this occupation was my passion. I also enjoy being surrounded by beautiful art and working with interesting artists and the wonderful people that choose to collect art.

What do you consider to be the keys of your success?

I learned early on that the art and artists you represent are the keys to a gallery's success. We also pride ourselves in being easy to work with and not pretentious. We aim to make our patrons comfortable and the art acquisition process enjoyable.

What sets you apart in your industry?

We exhibit only original art from both local and international artists. Our walls are always alive with color. Our location on Post Street in the heart of Union Square has also been an important factor as we will always be a brick and mortar business that tries not to rely on the internet. I find that you cannot replicate the experience of viewing a work of art in person.

Tell us about your philanthropic efforts.

Beyond donating to various good causes over the years, many of our exhibitions have been fund raisers for various charities, including the San Francisco SPCA, San Francisco General Hospital Foundation, VHT's Save the Music, The Chronicle's Season of Sharing, San Francisco Giants Community Fund and the Wildlife Conservation Network's Save the Elephants fund.



LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: JULY 17, 2024

Filing Date: June 18, 2024
Case No.: 2024-005665LBR
Business Name: Gallery 444
Business Address: 444 Post Street
Zoning: C-3-G (Downtown- General)
 80-130-F Height and Bulk District
Cultural District: Not Applicable
Block/Lot: 0296 / 008
Applicant: Desireé Mitchell
 444 Post Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Located In: District 3
Staff Contact: Dakota Spycher – 628.652.7588
dakota.spycher@sfgov.org

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description

Gallery 444 was founded by Bettie Mitchell and her daughter Desireé Mitchell on August 1, 1993. Located at 444 Post Street in San Francisco's historic Union Square, Gallery 444 is a women-owned and operated gallery that sells original fine art by over 20 local and international artists. The gallery provides food for the soul with vibrant, colorful creations by a diverse group of artists not found anywhere else. Gallery 444 offers no giclée or other forms of reproductions, showcasing only original prints, paintings, and sculpture. Gallery 444 is a necessary stop on any San Francisco gallery tour for all San Franciscans, Bay Area residents, Californians, and international travelers.

Bettie originally worked at Cory Galleries prior to opening her first gallery “City Gallery at the St. Francis” in 1980. City Gallery at the St. Francis was located on Geary Street, but closed in 1992, the year before Bettie and Desireé opened Gallery 444. Desireé’s sister, Heidi Bass, joined Gallery 444 in 1995 and worked as the director and sales manager until she retired in 2014. Heidi is still very active on the board of directors and serves as a trusted advisor,

mentor, and part owner. Since Bettie's passing in 2013, Desiree continues to run the gallery, which still exists in its original Union Square location.

Staff Analysis

Review Criteria

1. When was business founded?

The business was founded in 1993.

2. Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?

Yes. Galley 444 qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- a. Galley 444 has operated continuously in San Francisco for 31 years.
- b. Galley 444 has contributed to the history and identity of the Downtown/Civic Center neighborhood and San Francisco.
- c. Galley 444 is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

3. Is the business associated with a culturally significant art / craft / cuisine / tradition?

Yes. The business is associated with the curation and enjoyment of art, showcasing only original prints, paintings, and sculptures.

4. Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and / or architecture?

Yes. Gallery 444 features an extensive selection of early and recent works by internationally distinguished and beloved Bolivian painter Graciela Rodo Boulanger, including original oils, collages, watercolors, etchings, and lithographs. In addition, the gallery elegantly displays a unique collection of exciting original works by important contemporary artists such as surrealist master Rafal Olbinski and pop art star Jisbar. Gallery 444 is also the exclusive representative of the brilliant Peruvian artist Rossmar Valverde. Well known patrons of Gallery 444 include Cindy Williams, Tom Snyder, Robin Williams, and Shari Belafonte.

The building, known as the Chamberlain Building, was designed by Authur Brown Jr., who is well-known for their monumental works throughout San Francisco and the greater Bay Area.

5. Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?

Yes, the site is a contributor to the Article 11 Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District. The building was called out as a "Category I - Significant Building, No Alterations." The property has been evaluated in several surveys including the Foundation for San Francisco Heritage (1978), in which it was identified to be of major importance, and the Department of City Planning 1976 survey, where it was rated 4 out of 5 (with 5 as the highest rating for architecture). Further, the building appears eligible for the National Register as an individual property through survey evaluation.

6. Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?

No, not as of the date of this Executive Summary.

7. Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?

Yes. There have been a number of features and articles on Gallery 444, both within and outside the industry, including articles by: *San Francisco Magazine* “10 Museums And Exhibitions To Explore In The Bay Area This Winter”; *Artnet* “Artist Helmut Koller’s Vibrant Animal Paintings Can Instantly Cure the Winter Blues—See Them Here”; and *Inside Hook* “9 San Francisco Art Galleries to Visit Right Now”.

Racial and Social Equity Analysis

On July 15th, 2020 the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission adopted [Resolution No. 1127](#) centering Preservation Planning on racial and social equity. Understanding the benefits, burdens, and opportunities to advance racial and social equity that proposed Preservation Planning documents provide is part of the Department’s Racial and Social Equity Initiative. This is also consistent with the Mayor’s Citywide Strategic Initiatives for equity and accountability and with the Office of Racial Equity, which required all Departments to conduct this analysis.

The Legacy Business Program is deeply intertwined with these goals. One of the primary purposes of the Legacy Business Program is to maintain San Francisco’s cultural fabric and to foster civic engagement and pride by assisting long-operating businesses remain in the city. The Legacy Business Registry was established to recognize longstanding, community-serving businesses that are valuable cultural assets of the city. These businesses, ranging from restaurants to art galleries to tire shops to community shelters, are key to sustaining the racial and social diversity in San Francisco and adding to the identity and character of our city and the many communities within it.

Gallery 444 has been women-owned and operated since its establishment in 1993. The business is community-oriented and has been a popular location for hosting benefit events that contribute to a variety of local and national nonprofit organizations and has long supported prominent charities such as San Francisco General Hospital Foundation, San Francisco Giants Community Fund, San Francisco Chronicle’s Season of Sharing, and San Francisco SPCA. As the neighborhood’s identity has shifted over the last decades, Gallery has remained a unique artistic pillar of the community.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

Current Locations:

- 444 Post Street (1993 – Present)

Recommended by Applicant

- Historic marble storefront
- Providing original art for all to enjoy
- Family-owned business

Additional Recommended by Staff

- None

Basis for Recommendation

The Department recommends the Historic Preservation Commission adopt a resolution recommending the business listed above be adopted by the Small Business Commission to the Legacy Business Registry.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft Resolution

Legacy Business Registry Application:

- Application Review Sheet
- Section 1 – Business / Applicant Information
- Section 2 – Business Location(s)
- Section 3 – Disclosure Statement
- Section 4 – Written Historical Narrative
 - Criterion 1 – History and Description of Business
 - Criterion 2 – Contribution to Local History
 - Criterion 3 – Business Characteristics
- Contextual Photographs and Background Documentation



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION DRAFT RESOLUTION NO.

HEARING DATE: JULY 17, 2024

Case No.: 2024-005665LBR
Business Name: Gallery 444
Business Address: 444 Post Street
Zoning: C-3-G (Downtown- General)
80-130-F Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0296 / 008
Applicant: Desireé Mitchell
444 Post Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Located In: District 3
Staff Contact: Dakota Spycher – 628.652.7588
dakota.spycher@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR GALLERY 444 CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 444 POST STREET, BLOCK/LOT 0296/008.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the City's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on July 17, 2024, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends that Gallery 444 qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for Gallery 444.

Location(s):

Current Locations:

- 444 Post Street (1993 – Present)

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Historic marble storefront
- Providing original art for all to enjoy
- Family-owned business

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file to the Office of Small Business on July 17, 2024.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

RECUSE:

ADOPTED: July 17, 2024