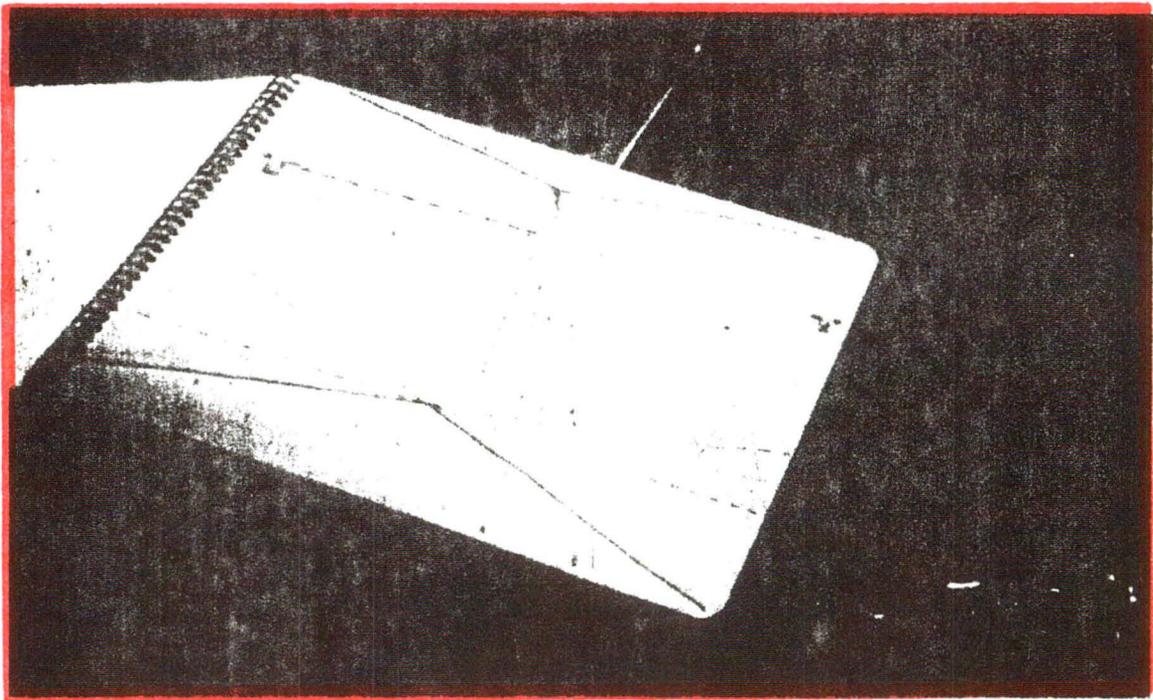


NOTES ON 2ND NATIONAL COMMUNITY MURALISTS' NETWORK CONFERENCE

CHICAGO, ILL. APRIL 20-23, 1978

"SOMEWHERE INSIDE ME I WANTED TO DO
SOMETHING FOR MY COMMUNITY... SOMETHING
PRODUCTIVE, SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL."



THIS REPORT

The goal of this report is to get the information from the conference to muralists who were unable to attend, to communicate to muralists questions which came up at the conference, and to stimulate discussion among us.

Chicago has promised to send us all copies of the formal resolutions passed at the Saturday night plenary session, so they are not included here. These consist of decisions made about the continuation of the National Community Muralists' Network.

The muralists in the Bay Area hope to have a meeting (well, a party-fund raiser actually) sometime in the summer, and perhaps begin planning a regional conference for sometime in the fall. Let us know if you think this is a good idea, and where it should be held, and what it might try to cover. The Bay Area has responsibility for the Network Newsletters for the next period (until the next conference--at present undetermined). We will try to get the first one out in the fall, November, with a submission deadline in late September. All correspondence should be sent to Tim Drescher, P.O. Box 40 383, San Francisco, Ca. 94140.

Also, please let us know how many copies of this report (or parts of it) and/or the fall Newsletter need to be in Spanish so that we can try to get it translated and mailed out.

THE CONFERENCE

The conference was held beginning on Thursday night with a reception with wine and snacks at Columbia College, Chicago. The remainder of the conference was split between Columbia and the nearby Blackstone Hotel, and consisted mainly of meetings in rather formal conference rooms, often with slides. There were literature tables where some books were sold; pamphlets distributed, articles made available, public relations stuff from various agencies and programs, etc. Copies of the things are available in San Francisco.

Notes were taken at each of the meetings, and gathered and integrated during the past weeks following the conference. What this report contains are the smoothed-out notes from the meetings, sometimes with critical comments following the report. The format was left to individual note takers, but has been supplemented by memory and others' notes. Note takers are listed alphabetically at the end of the articles.

For reasons of fatigue or organizational confusion, none of us took notes at the Community Involvement meeting on Saturday afternoon. We will try to report on some of this if we can get copies of notes from other cities.

Cover photo from Maestro Roberto Diaz' notebook...

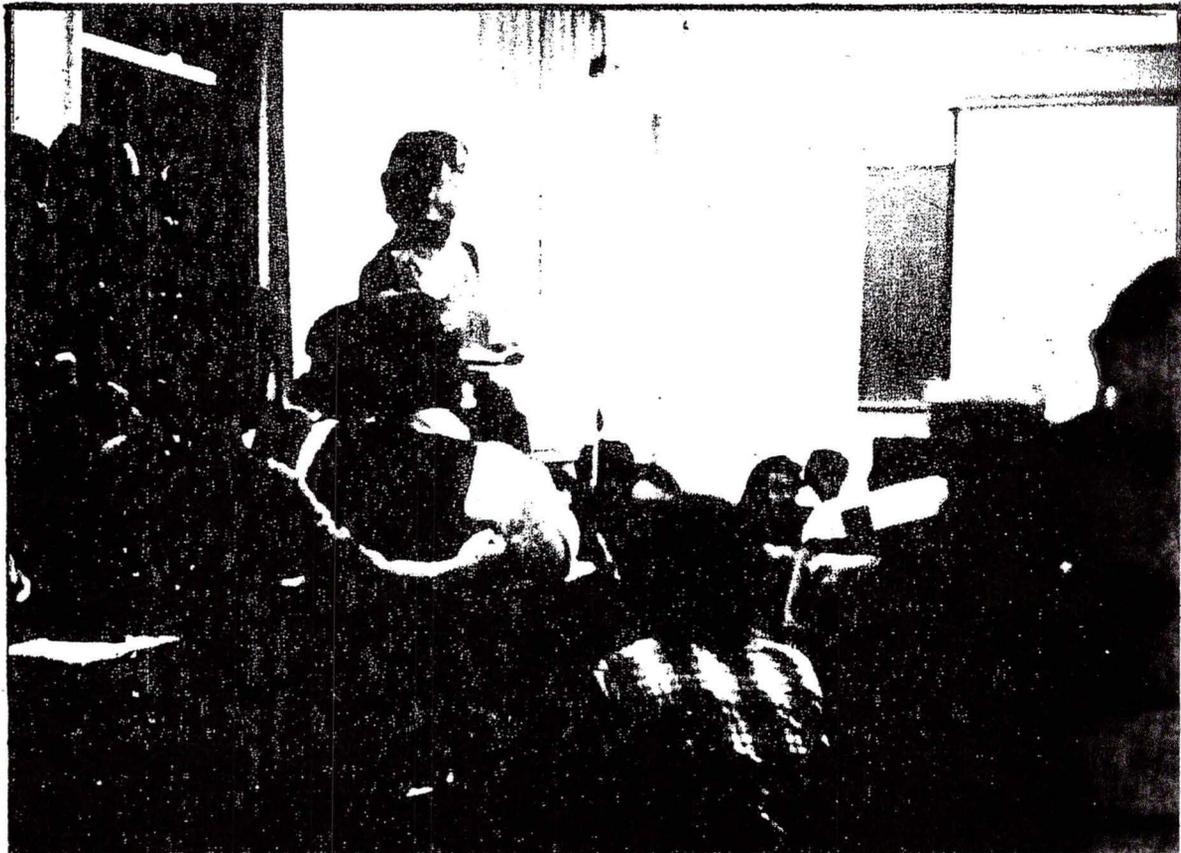
Because this report was becoming too long, no International Reports, which were given Friday night, are included here. We will either print a separate Newsletter with them, or include reports in the fall Newsletter.

In the above two cases and with regard to the Sunday afternoon mural tour of Chicago, we will try to have collected copies of representative slides by the end of the summer, and at the time make brief slide surveys available to anyone interested.

Finally, please respond to this report--we need to know if it is helpful (too long?) if we are going to do its job well. Tim Drescher

Bay Area Conference Delegates

San Francisco- Miranda Bergman, Tim Drescher, Rupert Garcia, Dan Macchirini, Raul Martinez, Jane Norling, Patricia Rodriguez, Miles Stryker, Ron Wheeler, Arch Williams, and Fran Valesco; Berkeley and Oakland-Osha Newman, Ray Patlan, and Brian Thiel; San Jose- Jaime Valadez



One of the many reports was given by Rini Templeton on the various cultural work being done in Mexico.

Thanks to the several people who helped in the production of this report, especially to Jane Norling for the printing. Arch Williams did photos.

TECHNIQUES FOR WORKING IN SCHOOLS (Friday morning)
Marie Burton (Milwaukee), Justine Devan (Philadelphia),
Lucy Mahler (New York), Pedro Silva (New York), Ralph Waldrop
(Lancaster, South Carolina)

Topics of discussion divided into three overlapping areas; funding, process, and techniques.

The funding for a school mural project can come from a variety of sources, including the school's art department for painting supplies, student activities funds, dances, PTA's, art councils or commissions which serve the area. Matching funds from different sources will spread the burden from one source to others, and also, potential contributors will not be scared off by what they might refer to as "excessive" requests. This raises the possibility of being supplied again in the future.

Formal proposals are encouraged by city, county, state or federal programs that serve art and related disciplines. Community agencies and youth organizations should be contacted for sponsorship. This alliance can prove beneficial to both the mural group and the community organization in working towards making the needs of the community known through public art.

It is always easier to raise money for supplies than for salaries. CETA was cited here as a means of paying the artist while the school program supports the mural.

Justine Devan talked about her work with sculptures. Since tools and supplies in many schools are limited, she worked with soap. Pedro Silva works with mosaics: using 2' x 2' clear contact paper, the mosaic was arranged with the tiles attached on the front side with the paper. The whole thing is then pressed into the wet cement and when dry the paper is peeled off. Ralph Waldrop felt that speed was important (because of a short attention span of students? It is not clear why).

Everyone stressed the importance of the process being collective, although the role of the muralist varied from case to case. All agreed that to have a totally integrated wall it was necessary to have a director. While this prevented younger children's murals from being merely indulgent and chaotic, it did not inhibit the children's desires or freedom of expression in any way. On the contrary, it was generally agreed that the children grew and developed their creative abilities more under a guided process than if simply left to their own idea or if only given a specific section of a wall to paint on.

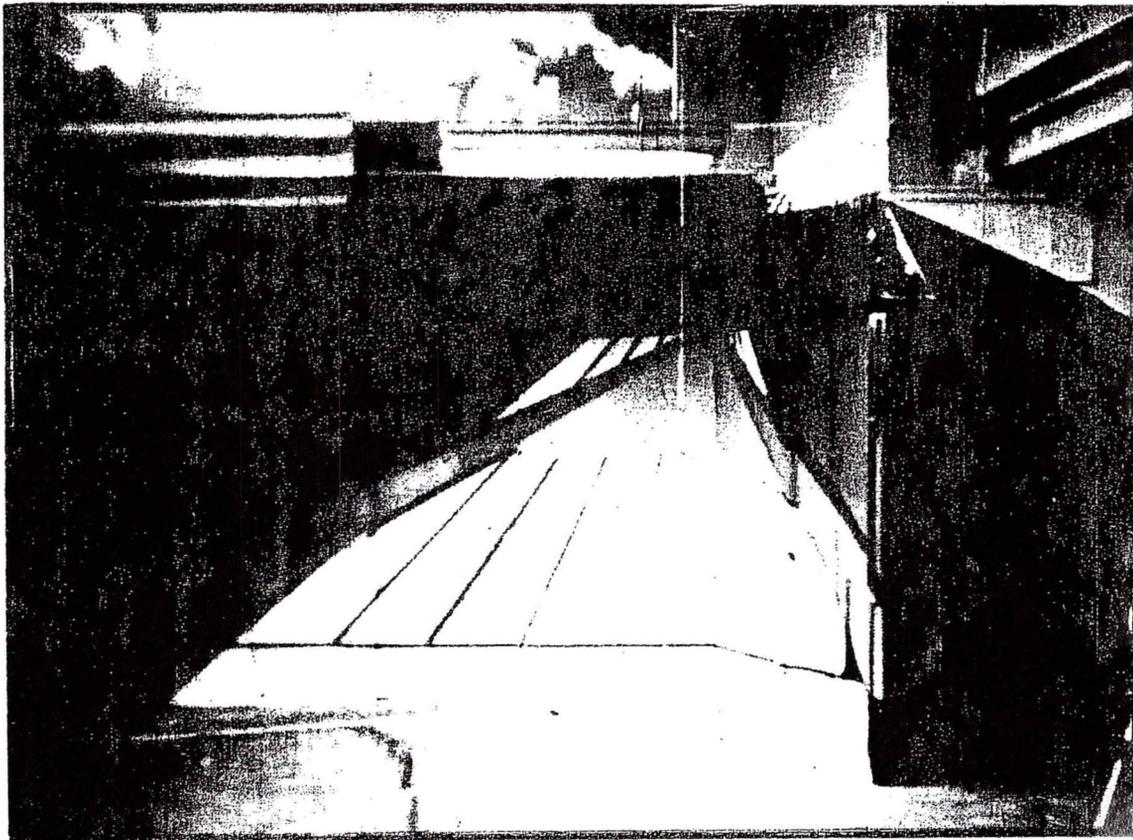
All agreed that it was important to have the kids themselves involved in the decision making about the mural. Art was seen partly as a way to help teach decision making. Roberto Diaz from the Taller Siqueiros in Cuernavaca stressed that mural projects, even with very young children, should direct students positively toward learning the technical aspects of mural painting, such as working with architecture and the optics of the mural. Murals are not merely drawings or paintings. The entire environment must be considered--by the kids, too.

Others spoke about working with administrators and teachers. Pedro Silva noted that principals often have fixed ideas, but that you can usually change them. He starts with drawings. Ralph Waldrop begins with the head bureaucrat and works his way down to principals. Principals and most teachers, he finds, generally don't like children's art and are excessively concerned about neatness.

It was agreed that it is a good idea to have all parties (faculty, administrators, students and others who are interested) brought together to visit the mural project while it is in action so that they can visualize and understand what it takes to do a mural. Hopefully, this will lessen tensions and answer questions they might have about such projects. As with all mural projects, complete documentation is essential to further funding proposals, and for public-relations-building-talks about the project.

Lucy Mahler, working with high school youth, described a censorship problem around the size of a portrait of Martin Luther King, Jr.. The administration felt the head was too big and that it thereby took on "too much importance." She offered to change it if they would allow her to paint it as it was. Once it was up, of course, they didn't dare touch it.

Raul Martinez
Fran Valesco



Mural exercise at the completion of the Taller Siqueiros experimental workshop at the MARCH headquarters after the conference.

WORKING IN NEIGHBORHOODS (Friday Morning)

(Since the format of this session was largely presentations by the members of the panel, it will be presented as a series of presentations).

Eddie Aliseo (Cityarts Workshop, New York City)

A large importance is placed on getting support from the community in which the mural is painted. Over the last three years, new neighborhoods have provided new challenges. There is always a need for flexibility and openness by the muralist when working in neighborhoods other than his/her own. But there is also a need to be increasingly aggressive to get the needed support.

To get support, contact community organizations such as block associations, any political or social groups, churches (especially important in black and some Latin communities). In a regional level, planning boards which have jurisdiction over the area where the mural is to be. "My job as a public artist," Eddie said, "is to get a consensus from the community." Often, you act as feelers to the community. There were given, in one example, several copies of the mock-up design, and they showed them around, and brought them back with suggestions, which were then discussed. These were youth 14-17 years old who had never painted.

The design was developed, in a recent project in Harlem, through use of slides and freehand drawing. Eddie tried to stay out of it. The youth took slides of the neighborhood and used them. About fifteen kids took part.

Cityarts has no-harm insurance covering volunteers over eighteen years old. For those under eighteen, they work at their own risk or under workman's compensation from their own jobs (such as Neighborhood Youth Corps in summer).

The mural is at 132nd St. and 7th Ave, and is 43' x 53'. It was sketched onto the wall using a 1":1' grid, and the drawing was numbered to indicate highlights, shade, etc. Thus the inexperienced artists could simply fill in the numbers after Eddie had mixed the colors. They used Bulletin Colors made by Ronan (sp?). It is an enamel and is expected to last 5-10 years.

They wired and nailed down the scaffolding boards, and put barbed wire on top of the surrounding fence. Six boards were ripped off, but the neighborhood watched over the project after that. Eddie watched especially for safety problems, constantly, and came down fast on anyone not being super careful. Fluorescent tape was used to mark dangerous places on the scaffolding, edges of boards, etc.

Alvin Carter (Inner City Youth, St. Paul, Minn.)

Working with pre-teens and high schoolers with problems. Aware of the problem of there being too much of an individualist attitude among

artists, they devised a method of dividing the work using overlapping images. Each artist gets to put up his/her shape, and at the places where they overlap, the muralist-organizer teaches color theory.

The original drawing is taken into a paint store, and it helps mix the colors. The addition of penetral to enamel delays drying so that you can blend and shade it. The colors are mixed to be colors which would result from two or three colors crossing each other (they are not just put on top of each other on the wall). Fine shading is given to the wall.

If you work with the community, the mural will not be defaced. In doing the Urban League mural, his first, the police came and said they wouldn't protect it, that they couldn't, but there was no need for their protection. In the sixties, the murals had community value, Carter said, and not much attention was paid to design, composition, or color. He puts lots of design attention and color theory in his works now.

Regarding a design solicited by the Equitable Life Insurance Company, showing a lady with a torch, the company objected when the children in the design were multi-racial. A spokesperson for the company said that it is "a shame there is such a fine line between commercial and logo art, but the design is offensive to the logo."! (The logo of the company includes a woman holding a torch, sort of status of liberty-like.)

Wilfred Thomas (Young Muralists' Workshop, Inc. Ft. Green,
Brooklyn, New York)

This is "a unique, not-for-profit corporation which is artist-run." The board of directors is not from the establishment, but is a group of advisors with whom the muralist works. Murals are seen partly as a good way for professional artists to teach young people, to reach out with their art forms to young people who are interested in art, and to help them develop a strong foundation based on design principles.

Wilfred facilitates bringing the artist together with the community. He enables the artist to express through the group directed by Wilfred. For example, the mural painted on the Pratt Electronics Store at DeKalb and Cumberland in Brooklyn. The mural was painted throughout the summer, but in October was defaced severely. It was clear that there had to be much more community input. A questionnaire was handed out through the Ft. Green community organization asking questions like "Why would the space be good for a mural?" "What would your children work on?" The professional artist, to his credit, stuck with the project, and learned that a mural is much larger than a single individual. After the questionnaire was returned, a new design was done, and put onto the wall with greater participation of local youth than before. The new mural is not defaced.

Wilfred says that "Public art is about exposing young people who would not otherwise be in touch with the professional art world. They also learn how the professional art world manipulates their daily lives." He continues, "With youth, when there is no respect, there is no communication."

Gloria Mark (Cleveland)

Worked with a group of mainly 14-17 year old Cleveland youth from the near west side which is ethnically mixed. They leafletted the area, noted the wall, and said "What ideas do you have?" The wall is across from a market, and people said that they thought scenes of marketing and the diversity of people in the neighborhood would be appropriate. The wall was owned by Westside Development Corporation, which buys cheap property, displaces residents, remodels (calls it "upgrading") jacks up the rent, and moves in new folks, thereby contributing to the demise of the neighborhood as a neighborhood. Westside Development, the muralists found, is owned by Cardinal Federal Savings, in which local residents have savings but in spite of this they can't get loans they need to "upgrade" their own property (sound familiar?). Cardinal Savings wanted an advertisement for upgrading property.

The mural team met for months with representatives from Cardinal, and reached a final agreement on a "neutral graphic design." What they put up were a series of sun symbols designed according to the ethnic traditions of five different locally significant cultures. A final, explanatory quotation was also added: "The sun is a symbol of life, action and hope. We have chosen this symbol to represent the people of the near west side.

Local businesses and residences donated money and food for the project, based on handouts to the community.

In another project, a bridge abutment, hands were painted on a twelve foot wide panel clasped across the African continent. Three alterations (unauthorized) followed. Blood was painted dripping from south Africa, which the muralists felt was an appropriate and constructive change. Then, one of the hands was painted, carefully, white, which was also accepted. Then, a Nazi swastika was painted in, and the resulting response of the neighborhood led to several additions to the wall (and removal of the fascist insignia). Each is about twelve feet wide, each representing a different culture. Currently, the mural is 192' long. Now, all ethnic groups in the area are represented.

Aurelio Diaz (MARCH, Chicago)

He does murals in the Mexican community in Chicago, called Pilsen. Works outdoors and in Casa Aztlan, a neighborhood center. He has worked with community youth, gangs, drunks, derelicts, etc.--the people usually considered the dregs of our society. He views murals as cultural weapons, another kind of weapon from what gangs have been using--changing gang wars to painting. He said people in the barrio grow up without a sense of history, but do have plenty of heart to paint with. In mural painting, the people he works with have the opportunity to paint their ideas on politics, religions, etc., in short, for expression about the issues which they are concerned with. It is critically important to put the murals where they can be SEEN, not in some dark corner.

People come to him to have him paint. His respect is such that they also ask him for recommendations on what to read, and where to learn more about their struggles.

His mural showing three KKK-hooded cop figures strangling and beating two brown figures is a response to the Klan patrol of the Mexico-U.S. border. [Several people felt that this image was uniquely powerful at the conference.] Another mural depicts Mayan and Aztec gods and leaders in the Mexican independence struggle linked to the struggles of Puerto Rican people for independence; books exemplifying the need for education, etc.

His technique is full-color modeling, reality abstracted only enough to convey force and power; also the use of a medium tone such as brown, highlighted with white, and shadowed with black, as in the Mayan god head, so that a minimal range of color (if a wide variety is not available) can be used beautifully; and to teach painters fundamentals of painting while they are producing something beautiful.

Comments made during discussion of the forum:

Folks were particularly impressed by the work and process of Aurelio Diaz and Gloria Mark. Aurelio's work shows how murals grow out of community need of self-expression, and also shows the high quality of collective painting that can grow out of people's hearts who are denied any other form of making a mark on society, politically. Also, in terms of who Aurelio is--from Michoacan, Mexico, he spoke only Tarasco until he was fifteen, and then learned Spanish, and then has come to the U. S. to "learn about the U.S. system." He is right in the middle of it, the Chicago barrio. His spirit and outlook might be partially summed up in something he said about mural painting with political content:

"When you go to a community, you've got to go from your heart."

Gloria Mark's work also shows tremendous respect for the ideal and aspirations of her community, and the results of patient but solid building of a base within that group to support the mural work while the mural work in turn serves to express the more progressive thinking in the area.

Tim Drescher
Jane Norling

WORKSHOPS: THE COMMISSIONING PROCESS

Sarah Linquist "On the Wall Productions" independent muralist, St. Louis. Group has done 20 murals up to date, all different.

How a presentation is made to building owner or executive.

1. Show selection of slides from around the country. Can see vast range of styles.
2. Show before and after pictures.
3. Talk about impact of mural.
4. Talk about giving to public, a general feeling of appreciation.

If they are interested find what their expectations are. Talk about designing as a complex process. They can't comprehend sketch or color rendering. Ask what kind of feeling they want to convey (not the same as asking what the image is.)

Stress where you stand on commercial art. Business may want to sneak their product in for advertising. Do you want this?

After talking with architect or business owner, draw up a design contract.

1. Design fee - design is property of artist.
2. Fee for actual painting.

Draw up commission agreement.

Written in legalese (can write to her for copy of their contract form). They get \$800 for design in the example. 1/3 is at beginning, 2/3 at completion.

On the wall-partnership of independent artists

They make 2 revisions for free

Main reason for contract - impress on these people the value of artist.

Designs are instruments of service and are to be retained by artist (protect yourself again)

Architect's view:

Adrian Lozana. Was working in 40's on murals. Now architect in Chicago.

You will constantly fight with the architects for space unless you get in

on the beginning. Mural on wall is part of the building. Fees: architect, get 6% of cost, 20% goes to contractor.

Murals have no publicity in the following 2 groups so it would be good to approach them.

1. American Institute of Architects
2. Society of American Registered Architects.

Also, every state has a state architect and every city has a city architect. Approach private industry and the board of education (very influential body).

Example in Pilsen - Benito Juarez High School. Being of Mexican descent, he asked to do Mexican theme in that Mexican area. He contacted MARCH. Integrate areas for murals into architecture. Can be anything. The school formed a mural committee (deadly bureaucracy) that was afraid of "those ugly murals with chains and blood." Committees will shackle the artist.

There is 1-1 1/2% Legislation in many states for the arts. Our art and culture boards. Makes sure there are working artists on it, not just museum affiliates.

Went through stage of glass and steel. Now are swinging back towards using plastic arts. Most city departments have no cultural policy, some are interested. Contact government bodies.

Chicago Transit Authority Mr. Zapeda Government agency point of view. Is architect working for CTA design development group? City to respond to requests, site preparation for arts. Also works with Urban Mass Transit Association (UMTA) a federal agency for art in CTA stations.

1. Know the language the architect speaks
2. Get away from perishable media
3. Make proposal on scale (blue prints help)
4. Architect is more interested in permanent medium.
5. Pricing
6. Artist must show bureaucracy his know how technically. Most artists lack technical knowhow. Get familiar with Sweets Catalogue.

Person from Norwich, Connecticut used Public Transportation Funds. When they rerouted bus traffic, they presented their design and got in on the plan early (very important). You have better luck in works in progress. Jim Peters and Jon Freedman, Norwich. Their ideas consisted of site preparation, earthworks, concrete retaining walls, community mosaics. PT funds from DOT breakdown: 70% state, 15% city, 15% other.

Question: Why couldn't artist be offered maintenance budget to repair or maintain work?

(Later informal talk with Jim and Jon). Find out what DOT projects are on-going and planned in your area. Each area has a district coordinator or liaison you can contact. Whenever there is highway construction, you can get in on project.

Liz Reid is NEA liaison to Bob Thurber (202) 634-4280
Bob Thurber is with Department of Environment and Safety under DOT in Washington, D. C. (202) 426-4396.

Jack Wilks-Highway Department DOT. Not too sympathetic to art but can give technical knowhow. E.g., sculpture in Nebraska. (202) 436-4853.

"Design Art & Architecture in Transportation" US Department of Transportation. Report to the Secretary of Transportation September 1977.

Fran Valesco

SIQUEIROS WORKSHOP PRESENTATION--LUIS ARENAL (Friday afternoon)

Luis Arenal is the Director of the Taller Siqueiros, the Siqueiros Workshop in Cuernavaca, Mexico. The workshop closed until two years after Siqueiros died, but now has about two dozen students studying lithography, sculpture, painting, and of course, murals. A basic belief of the Workshop is that all art should have a consciously public function.

Arenal worked with Siqueiros on "American Tropical", the now-defaced mural at Olivera Street, in Los Angeles, in the 1930's, and on the Electrical Workers' Union headquarters in 1939. In 1937, Arenal was a founding member of the Taller Grafica Popular in Mexico City. He talked to the conference mostly about that mural, titled "Portrait of the Bourgeoisie," but also made some comments about Siqueiros' views about muralism in Mexico. Siqueiros felt that muralism was the first experience of the reintegration of plastic arts, and that it showed the need for integration and utilization of modern techniques by designers, muralists, and architects, working together.

The real content of a work is always a result of solving a series of functional problems. Neither form nor content takes precedence over the other, nor does it do to say that they are inseparable, because such a notion presupposes a completed product. One must not confuse the content with the theme.

Regarding the "Portrait," Arenal mostly read from a booklet produced by the Taller for the conference, which is a "shortened version of 'My Experience with Siqueiros,' an essay by Jose Renau, with graphic and textual reconstruction of methods used in the Electrician's Union Mural." The booklet was sold at the conference for 25¢, and proceeds were donated to the costs of the conference. There are several copies in San Francisco now, and possibly more available through the Public Art Workshop in Chicago. (5623 W. Madison, Chi. Ill. 60644). Since the pamphlet is available, it is best here simply to note some of the ideas which struck us as we heard the talk.

The "Portrait" was begun in June of 1939, and it was agreed that the muralists would be paid the going rate for electricians at that time for as long as they worked on the mural. A team was organized consisting of three Spanish refugees, including Renau (from the Civil War) and Mexicans including (Arenal and Siqueiros). All decisions were collective about the form, design, and content of the work. The basic visual goal was that "geometrical boundaries were to be optically destroyed." Approximately 1/3 of the space had to be devoted to the electrical industry.

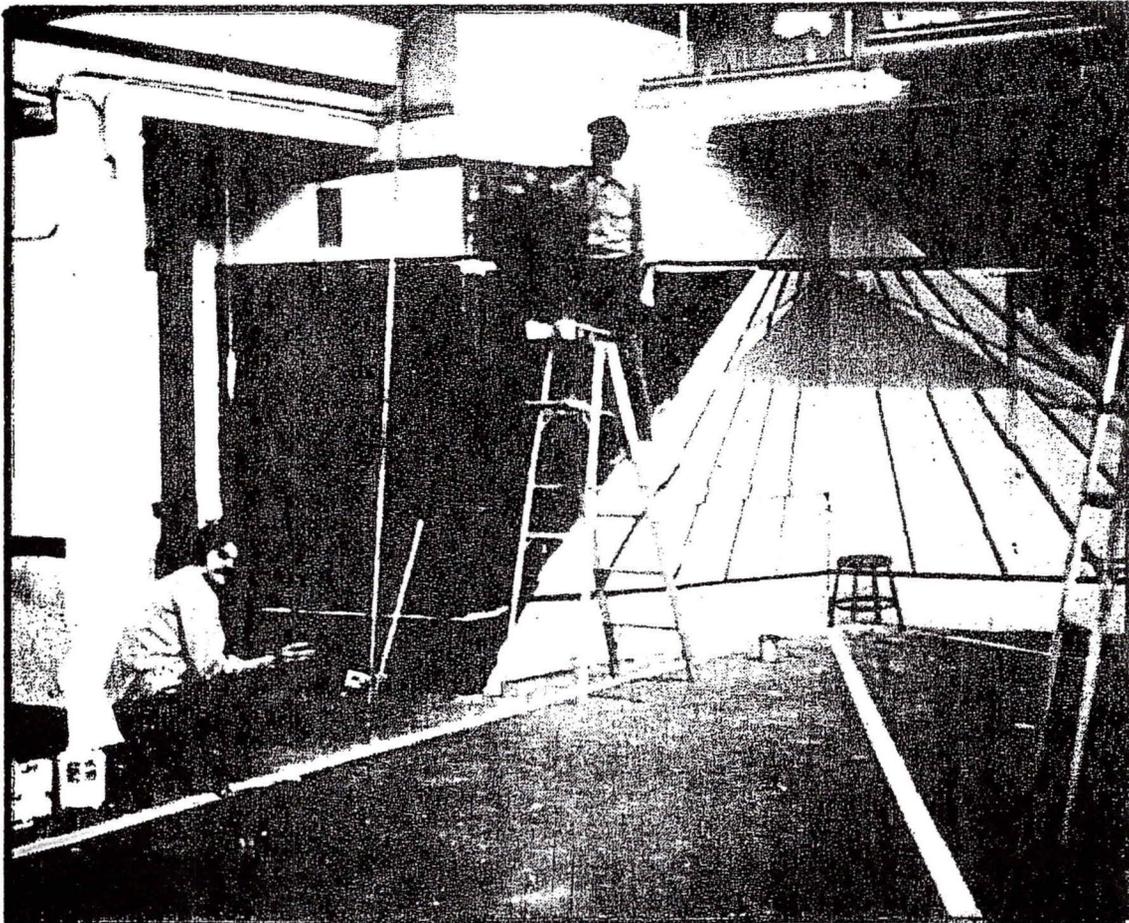
Slides and mock-ups were prepared as they studied the points to which spectators' eyes were most attracted on the walls, the sequence of observers' visual angles, the results of the dominant optical lines, etc. Slides and opaque projectors were used extensively. This, photorealism for (perhaps) the first time. Spray guns, too, another first. Also use of industrial paints. Much influence of Eisenstein's cinema ideas--montage effects, especially.

Comments:

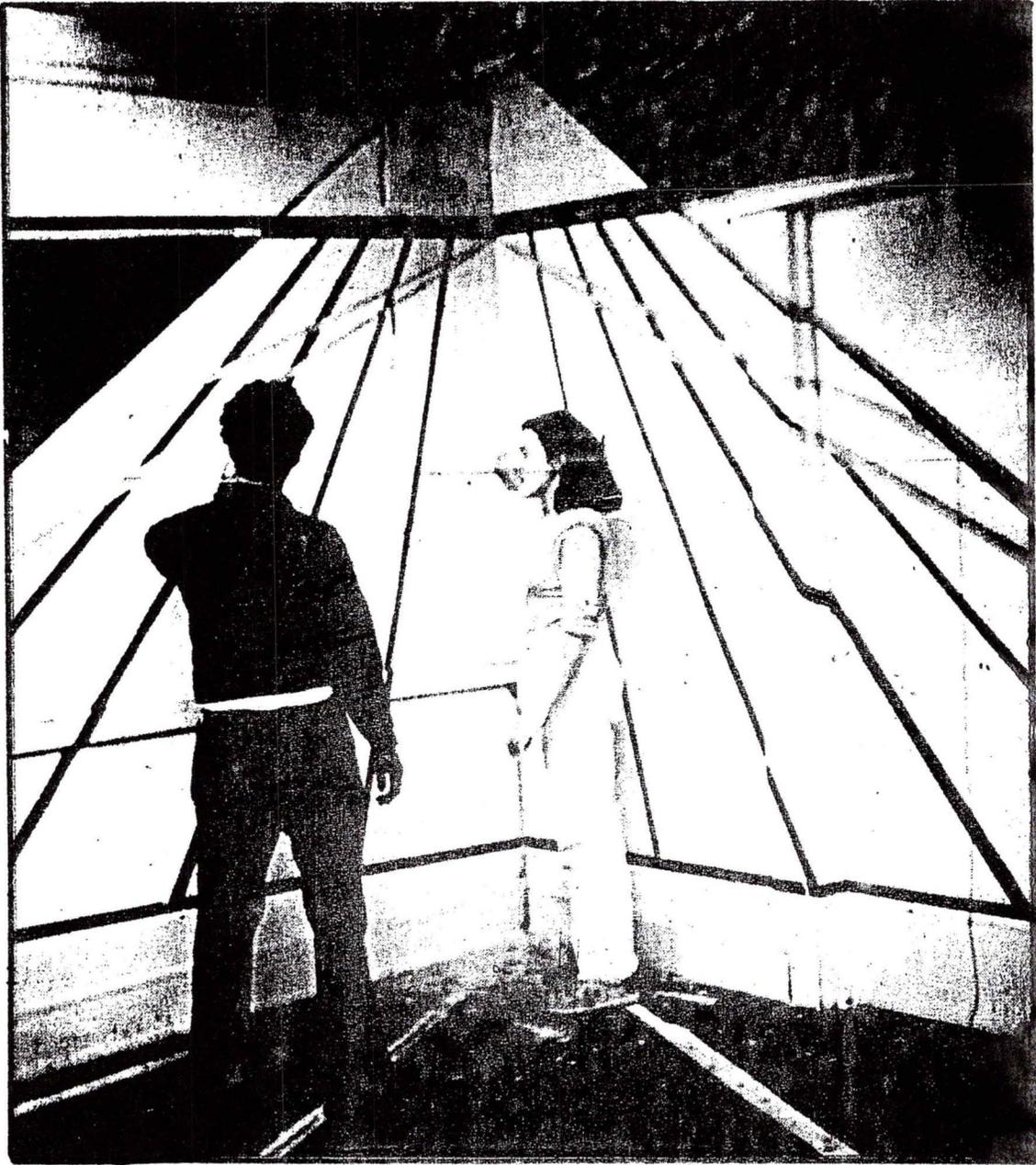
There was some feeling that the talk was a disappointment. Sr. Arenal was difficult to understand, as he laboriously read in English a translation from Spanish. Many felt that more personal questions and answers would have been more helpful and might have provided clearer insights into both Siqueiros and the later work of the Tres Grandes.

At the same time, the fact that Sr. Arenal and several members of the Taller Siqueiros came to the conference indicates the respect they have for community-oriented murals in this country, indeed, for the Network and there was talk among the Mexican muralists in attendance of the need for a similar Network in Mexico. Certainly their presence was an important contribution on the conference.

Tim Drescher
Rupert Garcia
Patricia Rodriguez
Fran Valesco



During the Taller Siqueiros workshop harmonic intercorrelations were determined by stretching a string from the corner out to a point beyond the wall on the floor in front of the exercise.



Team members of the workshop use a snap line to mark a horizon line which has been projected visually on the wall using another string that has been stretched between the two corner surfaces.

PORCELAIN ENAMEL (Friday afternoon)

Harold Hayden and George Stahl (Chicago).

Harold Hayden is an art critic for the Chicago Sun-Times, and has been an early and important supporter of community arts, including murals. George Stahl is an architect, and together they are teaching a course in porcelain enamel techniques at the Art Institute of Chicago. They described techniques for making murals out of panels of porcelain enamel (the material that used to cover the old gas stations, white enamel baked onto large metal plates). These panels, when completed, are practically indestructable. Various processes may be used to paint them. Designs can be silk screened on, a stencil can be used, photo techniques are possible or they may be painted directly. The technique came out of a search made for permanent materials, and an example is the work of Ilya Bolatosky, in Detroit.

The basic steps of the process are:

1. a special steel plate which is cleaned, pickled, and fired.
2. a base coat is applied.
3. it is fired.
4. color coat is put on (this is the design).
5. refiring (a fast process, in a kiln for 3 minutes, at 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit. As it cools, the colors come up.

Usually, the material we use will already have the first three steps completed, so all that is left is the design and final firing. It requires a special kiln (ceramic kiln will not do), available in any large city-- somewhere.

The usual medium is dyed metallic oxide, a glass mixed with metal oxide of differing colors. Water will bleach out the pigment, and the time of firing is based on the thickness of the pigment, which may bubble if put on too thick. Factory firing are usually timed at a mid-range. The colors are available at ceramic supply houses. When applying paint, dust may cause a bubbling. The pigment may be thinned with turpentine for a "water color" effect.

The cost of firing is the major expense--an average of \$4 per square foot. The paint comes in gallons, and is not very expensive.

Plywood backing is useful in transporting the panels, and until they are fired, the panels are very sensitive and cannot be touched at all without it showing. After firing, they are virtually permanent, and graffiti proof, too.

Not just any steel will do; you must use zero carbon steel.

Examples are in East Germany--huge and quite exciting.

Hayden and Stahl would be happy to answer further inquiries.

Osha Neumann
Myles Stryker
Fran Valesco

CAST CONCRETE AS/WITH MURALS (Friday afternoon)

A presentation of Caryl Yasko and John Weber, of Chicago, on the 1976 mural "Roots and Wings", a bicentennial project.

117 feet long at 3546 W. 16th St., Chicago.

The mural consists of a mural painted on a prepared brick wall above a cast concrete base extending the entire length of the mural. The concrete is approximately five feet high (it varies) and ten inches thick. The designs on the mural are related compositionally to the designs in the concrete, which thus serves as an integrated basis for the mural.

The concrete was done as a mold process using styrofoam inlays on 3/8 inch plywood. The general shape of each molded segment was determined by the muralists, but the segments were given out to members of the community (children, retired persons, workers, etc., who live with the mural space) to cut/shape as they wished, with help and encouragement from the muralists as they wished. There is no particular skill needed to cut styrofoam, and no special tools. The actual molding, the pouring of concrete, takes a fair chunk of technical knowledge, and it is necessary to get help from folks (professionals, if possible, who can be convinced to donate their expertise - who know what they're doing.

The moldboards were secured to the wall by reinforcement bars driven through the wall base and secured on the opposite side (inside the building) by real welds to flat plates.

The concrete mix was poured into the forms after the brick wall was tacked. A warm color tone of concrete was selected instead of the basic, flat, harsh grey. A pencil vibrator was used while the pouring was taking place, to work any air pockets out of the concrete. The basic pour of each section took two hours (a total of three for the whole wall). Curved top on the concrete was achieved by hand after the concrete began to set. Expansion joints were placed for changes in temperature (which are severe in the midwest, and the concrete must be able to expand and contract some). Styrofoam or rubber, or any of several materials will work as joints here.

To adhere the styrofoam to the plywood boards and to seal the board joints, a special glue called polystyrene is used, and a mold board masking adhesive is used, too. It is waterproof. It can be purchased at the Columbia Cement Company, Inc., of Chicago, Illinois, Chemical #2046D.

There is no successful release material made, so once the mold boards are removed, the styrofoam has to be dug out by hand, using spoons, forks, knives, whatever. Residents came by daily and spent from a few minutes to hours helping carve the styrofoam out of the cast concrete.

One further thing needs to be emphasized about this project. It involved not only traditional painting, but an unusual (for murals) construction technique, and to successfully complete the project, the mural team had to actively solicit and involve a wide range of community residents from concrete pourers and finishers, to construction contractors to students. This took a great effort, but produced great results.

Dan Macchiarini

MOSAICS (Friday afternoon)

Phil Danzig (New Jersey), Pedro Silva (New York), Sandra Weiss, Susan Green (New York)

The main presentation here was given by Phil Danzig, who is an architect, and who worked with Pedro Silva on the Grant's Tomb mosaic wall-bench, 1600 feet long in the style of Antonio Gaudi in Spain. Danzig also has a ten page booklet on Methods and Techniques for Mosaic Title Murals. There are copies in San Francisco.

Monies for Phil's projects have come from HUD's program of 3/4% for murals called "adornment monies." He has done about thirty murals with this money.

First, it is helpful to understand the difference between direct method and indirect method. The direct method requires that the tile, after being cut, be laid face down on a glued surface, then picked up and pushed into the wet cement on the wall. This means that you never see the layout because it is face down against the board.

The indirect method means that the artist does a large pencil drawing on white paper and then, after the tiles are broken to shape as in the direct method, the tiles are placed on the design face up. The pieces can be rearranged slightly as necessary. When the design is complete, pieces of clear contact paper are laid out on top of the tiles. The paper picks up the design of tiles in small portions and is carried to the wall and the tiles are then pushed into the wet cement. After drying, the surface is scored with a trowel, and the cement in the cracks is grouted (see booklet for more details). Obviously, the indirect method is excellent for beginners.

Materials needed are tile cutters, glass cutters, hammer, and special tile glue for direct method. Also, someone who knows about cement should help with that stage. Colored plexiglass can be used to stimulate the more expensive colored glass. It can be cut by sawing individual pieces or by breaking them to make a mosaic effect. Plexiglass is laminated with an adhering solvent, but fiberglass resin can be used also. The spaces between the plexiglass can be filled with dark opaque cement or dark plexiglass to give a stained glass effect. The most expensive and elegant of mosaics is pure glass of rich colors cut into small cubes corresponding to the design. Spaces between are grouted. Probably more practical (realistic anyway) for most of our programs is using acrylic mosaics, discarded glass, or discarded ceramic tiles.

See Danzig's pamphlet/pp. 145-146 of Toward A People's Art for more information.

Rupert Garcia
Raul Martinez
Patricia Rodriguez

Note: The original program for Saturday morning called for two meetings, one on Grants and Commissioning and the other on the Artist as Employee. Due to a small number of people being present at the beginning time, it was agreed to combine the two. What actually evolved, however, was a third thing. The morning began with a presentation by Helen Haynes, including questions, and then a brief presentation by Michael Nolan, with questions. But there was a move expressing dissatisfaction with a session which raised only the question of how to get official funds and not with the consequences/influence of such funds on the content of the murals, so after Mike spoke, the group voted to consider other questions for the remainder of the session, and it evolved into the first (and only) active discussion period in the entire conference in which many muralists took part. The two parts of the Saturday morning meeting are presented below in two separate parts, for purposes of clarity.

Tim Drescher
Osha Neumann
Jane Norling
Myles Stryker



GRANTS AND FUNDING (Saturday morning)

Helen Haynes (Cleveland and Washington, D. C.), Michael Nolan (San Francisco, NAPNOC).

Helen is from Cleveland and on a three month internship at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), Expansion Arts Program. In outline form, what she said was:

- Obstacles:
- 1) fear of government funding
 - 2) cooptation
 - 3) attitude that it's not worth the effort

But people should realize, she said, that the funding is through our tax dollars, and so we have a right to the money.

- Basics
- 1) Proposals should be simple. A couple of pages to give agencies an idea of what you want. Write simply and briefly.
 - a) It should set up goals, objectives (the established steps to accomplish the goals), justification (why your project is necessary, e.g., lack of similar services in the area)/ budget, staff (broken down into tasks).
 - 2) Attachments, such as resumes, history of your involvement in the community (your track record), photos of events, project participation in community, etc.

- NOTE:
- 1) Many grants have time stipulations, e.g., you must have been in the community for at least a year, etc.
 - 2) Proposals are usually considered about one year ahead.
 - 3) State deadlines may be more frequent.
 - 4) Average grant for Expansion Arts is \$11,000.
 - 5) Expansion Arts deals with "alternate programs," including minority programs.
 - 6) A good method is to ask your local Expansion Arts representative to visit your program/for help.
 - 7) If a project in your area is already funded by Expansion Arts, then your project will meet a different need. It should complement the project already funded.

- 8) Or, make a case that your program can meet the need better. All funding from Expansion Arts is matching--the other funds must be raised locally. CETA funds can be used as matching funds in the NEA.

Follow up: Do it! Telephone. There are regional coordinators from the NEA.

Documentation: An end of project report is due within 90 days. Keep news clippings, reports, photographs, slides, everything!

Other: Remember to keep proposals short and add attachments. The application itself is on a specific form. The proposal is the two-three page explanation described above, with attachments.

It might be useful to contact a specialist at the NEA in Washington before applying.

Literature available

Guide to Programs, % Program Information, 2401 "E" St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20506

Guidelines for Expansion Arts. % Expansion Arts, (same as above).

Grassroots and Pavements: Art in American Neighborhoods,

% Expansion Arts



The room during the International Reports was crowded by delegates anxious to learn about the mural movements outside USA.

Michael Nolan

Mike is currently working with NAPNOC, the neighborhood Arts Program National Organizing Committee, which is funded through the Department of Labor to monitor CETA arts programs. He spoke on the politics of government funding. CETA, he said, now employs about 10,000 artists and so spends more money in the arts than the national endowment.

He mentioned an organization called Center for Community Change, 1000 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20027. It has a project field staff which gives technical assistance on writing CETA proposals, and a monthly publication called Catalyst, which gives info on CETA, and may be obtained by writing them.

NAFNOC, he said, is a new program trying to build a political network on neighborhood arts activities. Mike is Northwest representative. He said we need to lobby for more funding for administrative and supplies money, and he projects an extremely positive attitude about the possibility of more government funding going to artists.

He talked about threatening changes in the NEA. Livingston Biddle, a southern patrician who is the new head of the NEA wants everyone who has been there for five years to split. This includes people who have been very important in expansion arts: Van Teal Whitfield (sp?) and A.B. Spellman. Final decisions on this will be made May 6,7,8 of this year. Expansion arts is threatened, so it would be good to get local congress-people to write letters in support of the program--also, write yourself (ourselves).

Mike talked about Carter's new urban policy proposal which is not yet through congress. A feature of it is that neighborhoods are made part of the policy making process for the first time. It includes 420 million dollars for neighborhood arts. This money would be administered by HUD in the person of a Monseigneur Gino Baroni.

Finally, he mentioned the ACTION/VISTA programs which are run by old 60's radicals, San Brown and John Lewis of (SNCC). They have a philosophy oriented towards community organization to give poor people control over their own lives.

Comments: Helen was realistic about her program, and very helpful, but she demonstrated an unquestioning attitude toward striving to get public funding, a sort of "It's there, go get it" idea, where some muralists felt that we need to consider the amount of work it takes to go for these funds and this takes us out of community involvement. There is a nagging fear that government programs attempt to "buy off" community-oriented artists both by their selection of who gets funded and by the amount of time and effort it takes to get funded by them, time which removes people from their political (and artistic) base.

It was pointed out that we should not taken an unqualified attitude in support of government funding, but should always work to find other sources because the government can cut us off anytime--and if som does the art stop?

ISSUE DISCUSSION (Saturday morning)

Issues listed from the floor

1. Grant proposal writing
2. Bi-lingual problems
3. Block grant funding
 - a. Local responsiveness
4. Administration vs. Program funds
5. Public Art Commissions (1% laws, etc.)
6. Censorship
 - a. What is the effect on being on the dole on the content of art?
7. Politics behind funding
8. Alternate funding processes and sources
9. Museum structure and community arts
10. The "trick bags" of funding setting up competition among community groups.

The first five of the above were given consideration in the first part of the discussion, but there was throughout the conference a feeling by many that underlying issues were not being given enough consideration. Saturday morning these concerns focused on the second part of the discussion, which talked about the second five of the above list. Since the list grew out of the meeting itself, the discussion rambled a bit. What follows is a sketchy recount of some of the issues and concerns that were raised, beginning with the question of censorship, which was framed as a request for accounts of censorship by official agencies experienced by muralists.

One muralist mentioned trouble with local sign/advertising ordinances, which is when a city or some government passes a law, or asserts that murals come under an already existing law, classifying murals as signs/advertising. This means they must be approved by the same people and processed as ads, which means trouble for muralists. There has been one District Court level case (Blue Island, Illinois), and apparently several others where city fathers (sic) tried to stop murals from being painted under this rule.

Another muralist noted that her program was federally funded, and the city arts commission had to review all design before they were put up. This meant that one group from the city, not a representative group at that, reviewed all designs for "aesthetic considerations." They exert considerable pressure to alter designs and to bring in designs muralists who will be acceptable. In one case reported, a muralist was told to alter the size of the head of a third world figure--this "aesthetic suggestion" was made before the design was approved.

Another case: In an application for a state job (one that had to be approved by a state architectural commission), the muralist got a letter or praise for her work, but the job was denied on the grounds that, as the letter said, based on the content of earlier work it was felt that this artist's work would be too disruptive.

The discussion turned a bit at this point, when one muralist said that the job of muralists is to unite the different elements in the community.

The response was given that said simply, "No." It went on to point out that different groups in a city have different concrete interests and will do what they can to protect those interests. This division does not mean, for instance, different ethnic or racial groups, but basic interests of owners/politicians and working people. These groups' interests are opposed, and to bring them together inevitably means to do so on the terms of the bosses, and against the interests of the poorer communities.

A Chicano muralist pointed out at this time that in the southwest muralists survived on their own--they were the last to get CETA funding, for instance. Instead, since they were not officially recognized except as targets of attacks of various sorts, they had to "work their ass off to deceive the Man. Give the Man what he wants to hear and the community what they need."

This was a constant and pervasive assumption throughout this discussion. Although there were only a handful of instances cited of specific censorship by official agencies, everyone, literally every single muralist who spoke, assumed that if they were trying to articulate the aspirations and needs and issues of the communities, they were being censored and had to deal with the problem or, as several others put it, "some things that we wanted to say we left out of the sketch." Sometimes, these omissions are returned to the final work, as in the case of a muralist who was told to take a computer out of the design because the organization using the building where the mural was located (and which supported the mural) used computers and did not like the suggestion that computers are used to harm people's legitimate interests. The computer was put back in when the paint went onto the wall after being removed from the sketch.

All agreed that community backing is the only way to fight against censorship, either direct or indirect. Some muralists collect signatures on petitions with their designs. When the design is submitted for approval, there are 500-600 signatures of local people supporting the idea. Others recommended getting signed approval from the wall owner, or a formal (legal) lease on the surface of the wall.

This discussion seemed best summed up by the following observation about involved public art: "We are always dealing with relationships of social forces. We must understand this. We must understand the divisions--where their interests are, what images mean to them. By the time our project is over, we must see to it that the community is divided in our favor."

"Also, since we represent a democratic element in a non-democratic society, why are they tolerating us at all? They should tolerate our art because they know that our art is close to, is supported by the people in the area, not because we are close to their interests."

The remainder of the discussion was a bit more rushed and less focused, and so that follows is a summary of some of the comments, put into some kind of order.

Several people emphasized that they saw muralism as only one part of the several arts they work with. Several people worked as part of an arts consortium, which helped establish support in their communities for them when they are cut off from official funding (which, it is assumed, will happen). What is more, funding agencies are attracted to consortiums of public arts groups.

Another muralist made the point, however, that, on the whole, the city wants "business done as usual," which, for the arts is inefficient (in business terms). This leads to real tension in arts programs funded by agencies which want 9 to 5 documentation (are time clocks coming?). Doing art and working in communities is, in terms of the business orientation of city and state and federal governments, inefficient.

Alternate funding sources were mentioned, some of which depend on and help build community support (thus killing two birds with one stone). For instance, the idea of co-sponsorship where an agency puts arts funds into its own budget requests; advocacy for murals. Try religious organizations, not only for dollars, but to get members involved.

Groups (and highly organized individuals) can offer services and products for sale, such as posters, post cards, lectures. Another, more elaborate, possibility, would be to set up a dealership for Politec Paints. This would require a reliable businessperson, who would draw a salary, of course. But profits beyond that might help support murals directly.

Reliance on the people of the community is surprisingly (to some) effective. Just a collection box on the street where the mural is being painted can collect donations which individually might be small, but collectively add up. This increases consciousness as well as earns money.

One other tack is to put pressure on art schools. They must support community interests--especially if they get local, state, or federal funding. This may mean offering a course through them--and being paid for it.

Tim Drescher

COMMENTS

The following comments are in no particular order, but represent responses to the conference by several different people.

1. Friday morning--disappointing. High energy, but then too many presentations and not any discussion, as promised. The morning "workshop" were forums, and could have continued twice as long with audience participation--an indication of real interest.

2. Luis Arenal. Difficult to understand, and long, too long. Exciting slides showing the planning for the "Portrait," showing the abstraction of the visual and architectural space. A whole workshop on the planning for this wall would have been more valuable than what happened.

There was no discussion of content, even in the "Portrait." There was a desire to have heard more about Arenal's own participation and involvement in murals and politics over the decades. We need desperately to know more about these experiences.

There is some feeling that, generally speaking, Siqueiros is being emphasized out of proportion to the others of Los Tres Grandes, and in all cases too uncritically.

3. Friday afternoon--some excitement, but fatigue setting in, and the beginning of frustration that nothing is yet planned for the plenary agenda. This was reinforced at a seventeen person planning dinner at the Greek Isles. A "Planning Session" with seventeen people? Still, within the din of the restaurant the food was wonderful from flaming cheese to baklava.

Friday evening, slides, slides, slides. Overwhelmed by images and muralists' successes. A fine eight minute film from SPARC about the Tajunga Wash mural--due to resume in July.

4. Permanent materials use: these workshops and those dealing with new materials in general (at least as far as the recent mural movement in the U.S. is concerned), e.g., porcelain, enamel, reinforced concrete, mosaics, etc. speak to a need for permanence in material and content. It also suggests a concern with form over content might be on the rise.

A pre-occupation with these aspects runs counter to the ongoing struggle all around us. We must ask who is making this investigation into these materials, why and to what end?

- a. Note the suggestion in Saturday morning's meeting that good technique, top-rate technical expression will overcome censorship and adverse responses to content.

5. It was good to be there sharing information with other muralists. I was very pleased to see all the people that came from Mexico and Europe.

The Chicanos in general felt that a Mexican painter-muralist involved in the movement and struggles there could have participated and contributed to the already set program with Rini Templeton and Arnold Belkin. Rini and Arnold gave their opinions and their way of looking at the Mexican mural movement now, but I didn't feel that there was a complete representation of the people involved working in other areas--representation of the people involved working in other areas--or even in the slides they presented of the barrios.

Arnold could have said more about his work and involvement in Mexico, and maybe something about how he became involved in Mexico and what motivated him to stay there.

6. The conference was not well planned. There was not enough money to fly many people to Chicago, and a better place was needed for it to be held. The rooms were too small and crowded, especially with the smoking.

7. The conference lacked focus. It was not a working conference as it was advertised to be. The main activity was presentation by some while many listened. These presentations were interesting, informative, and instructive, but they were not participatory. For example, the group of about forty who were at Friday morning's "Group and Communities" forum could easily have spent three more hours discussing the issues raised by the speakers.

It is completely clear now that there is so much to be done at such a conference that a long weekend is simply not enough time (see slides, trade slides, listen to presentation of successes--and failures--discuss funding, discuss politics, discuss political issues and art, draw up resolutions, argue about them, vote, implement them, and see the murals in the city where the conference is being held--AND have some time off for enjoyment so we do not become ghouls.).

8. It was hard getting around in Chicago. The travel time was huge, and caused people to miss workshops and presentations. The time was also too short. There was not enough time to really talk to people.

9. The conference should have given formal attention to other, allied, media people are using alongside murals in the struggle!

10. Foreign muralists felt especially somewhat excluded. No particular effort was made to make participants of the conference feel at home/ comfortable. The conference was too formal, too exclusive of the opportunities for personal communications.

11. Too much time was spent on "how to deal with the government," e.g., CETA instead of mutual discussion of problems. This focus also severely lessened political discussion instead of promoting it.

12. How does the artist raise consciousness in his/her community? Some murals are just a representation of reality. These do nothing for the community except reiterate its daily experience. Murals should articulate

the most progressive ideas/aspirations of the community.

13. The conference avoided the basic question of why people begin to paint murals, of what was to be accomplished better by murals than it could be done in other media.
 14. Are we seen by funding/administrative agencies as "prettifiers" of ghettos"?
 15. How are community ties maintained after the mural project is completed? Are the community ties abandoned once the mural team moves on to another area?
 - a. How can the mural be maintained?
 16. How else can the community be reached, other than murals? Are murals still viable?
 17. What are the contradictions which consistently arise in our work?
-

TALLER SIQUEIROS DIRECTS EXPERIMENTAL MURAL PROJECT

As an out-growth of the Conference, MARCH was honored by having Maestro Roberto Diaz and Hector Duarte Sanchez from the Taller Siqueiros offer an experimental mural workshop during the week following the conference. Two San Francisco muralists, Miranda Bergman and Arch Williams, were able to participate for part and all of the workshop respectively. Along with muralists from MARCH, the Public Arts Workshop, the Chicago Mural Group and other local artists, a team was organized and directed by Roberto Diaz to paint a mural exercise at the MARCH headquarters on three adjoining walls. Some of the valuable Siqueiros theories and techniques that were explained and painted included his ideas on polyangular perspective and color, harmonic inter-spatial correlations, the use of primary volumes as the main structural base, and pictorial composition conforming to the normal transit of a moving spectator which results in a rhythmic, architectonic machine. Although the workshop had to conclude with many ideas incomplete, this was a real learning experience nurtured by the friendly and dedicated MARCH co-workers. Arch also documented the workshop with color 3-D slides.

Arch Williams