



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

FALL
1979



Editorial: MURAL DESTRUCTION

As you can tell from the cover, this issue of the **Community Muralists' Newsletter** thinks the primary issue to bring before all muralists at this time is **destruction of murals**. Murals in public spaces have been destroyed without consideration for years in every part of the country. It has become an issue for our movement recently for two reasons. First, now that our murals have been up for more than a decade, the property originally supporting them has become attractive to investors and urban "redevelopment" forces. Second, a general move to the right in government and in groups at almost every level manifests itself in some cases as a move against public art, against people's art, and most of all against progressive art, especially when it is big and public, like murals.

Destruction of murals is nothing new. Hundreds of WPA murals have been destroyed, often without documentation, in the course of demolition of buildings from the thirties. More recently, the building on which the original Wall of Respect, frequently cited as the beginnings of the community mural movement in the U.S., was torn down and only a few panels were salvaged and now stand at the entrance to Malcolm X Community College in Chicago. On the other side of the country, the complex and exciting International Hotel mural which witnessed nine years of local struggle to save the Hotel from demolition and its mostly-elderly and Asian tenants from eviction, finally was destroyed in September, 1979.

The list goes on: Cityarts' "Against Federal Budget Cuts," 1973, was covered over when the small building it was on changed hands in late 1976. Brian Barnes' and the Wandsworth Mural Workshop's Battersea Bridge Mural in London was demolished as the very first public step in clearing away an old factory for replacement by plush housing at the expense of the housing needs of immediate working-class neighborhood residents. A small lot, promised as a minipark for San Francisco's Mission District, fell to a series of manipulations by developers and will now be the site of a private apartment house instead of a small park in the crowded area. Fran Valesco's Puerto Rican Social Club mural on an adjacent wall will thus be lost to sight forever, much like the "Venice in the Snow" mural painted by the L.A. Fine Arts Squad some years back.

We need not forget myriad defacements and destructions committed on Raza murals, in Sacramento, Los Angeles, and elsewhere in the name of "routine maintenance." A spectacular piece by Willie Herrón recently met such a fate in Ramona Gardens, in East Los Angeles.

And, of course, the history of Diego Rivera's famous Rockefeller Center mural which was ordered destroyed by Nelson Rockefeller in 1933, is an example of ruling class disrespect for art conveying aspirations of working people. The wholesale destruction of Chilean murals and muralists under the fascist regime of Pinochet follows in this tradition.

What can we do about this destruction of our art, and our communities' art? Some suggestions are offered in this issue of the Newsletter. John Weber suggests that murals made in permanent media, such as mosaics, concrete, etc., are more likely to be taken seriously than painted murals. The contract informa-

tion includes clauses offering legal protection against such destruction or alteration.

But, finally, it all boils down to the kind of active and ongoing support the muralist(s) has organized in the mural's community, whether it is a union, a social club, a school, or a neighborhood. If there is a large, vocal, informed group of people living/working with the mural everyday, that is the best protection for our art. Such a situation where the mural is part of many people's lives because they helped in its design and creation can be defeated by a force that challenges people's rights to live in their own neighborhoods and homes.

Unfortunately, such a force exists. It goes by many names, but the most common name is "redevelopment." If an agency or developer is trying to destroy a single mural, the issue is focused and limited and relatively clear. If an entire city block is going to be destroyed, or an apartment house, or more, then the mural's importance dwindles in the face of such threats on people's homes. Someone suggested that it is the job of murals to help residents seek the connections between the mural, their neighborhood/community lives and the financial-political-economic forces that have so little regard for them. A mural can become a symbol of the relationship of forces in the community. A mural probably cannot stop redevelopment, but it might be able to make some connections in educating people on how they can organize themselves and their neighbors to stop such destruction of their homes, of their lives, and of **their** murals.

OLDER MURALS AND MURALISTS

The deaths of four important muralists noted in this issue remind us that it is tremendously useful to those of us trying to continue the tradition of monumental public art, to have information about the work that previous generations of muralists have done. We can benefit from their examples both in their lives and in their art.

But to do so, we need to know about them. If you know muralists who painted in the thirties or forties or fifties, here or elsewhere, talk to them, find out what they did, when, how, and why. Write it down. Send it in so the rich experience can be shared with others. If you don't do it soon, the opportunity for us all to learn will be gone. One example along these lines in this issue is the brief article on the work and ideas of Pablo O'Higgins, still painting in México.

Send us more such stories, review, etc.

CONFERENCE ?

Many people have inquired recently about the next national (or international) mural conference. At the last conference, held in Chicago, "the plenary discussed ideas for the Third National Conference and the West Coast was proposed as the site. But people felt that a good deal more organizing work would have to be done before an exact date and location could be set." Since the Newsletter has been published in San Francisco, many of us hope the conference could be held in Los Angeles, but there are three major hurdles.

One is travel money. Without adequate travel expense money to fly several representative muralists in from several locations in the country, only those muralists who can afford such a trip could attend. Then we would have a wealthy muralists' conference, which is unacceptable to everyone.

Second is publication money. We would need enough money to take good notes, collect good photographs, and quickly publish a thorough report on the conference within a short time after it is over, say one month. It is essential that muralists who cannot attend receive the information otherwise the conference is a relatively selfish experience.

Third, it will take at least one person's efforts for a year to get things organized adequately, including writing for grant monies and organizing and preparing for the conference itself. Who can/will do this? A general feeling/critique is that a decent conference needs more than just a long weekend to allow time to see each others' work, hear presentations, and discuss new ideas. This latter was badly neglected previously.

We hope you will send in ideas about where we can get some money for a conference. The work deserves it, and the Network needs regular chances to meet in person and talk over ideas.

Next Issue — Coming Attractions

In the next Newsletter there will be articles on mural projects in Massachusetts, New Jersey and other states: a report on the Chicano Visual Arts Conference held this past summer, and a whole section devoted to information about mural contracts. Also: "A Letter from India," news from Greenwich, and of an English Mural book, report on cops vs. muralists in Sweden, and on a source of high-quality mural slides. Plus much, much more. Don't miss it!

DEADLINE

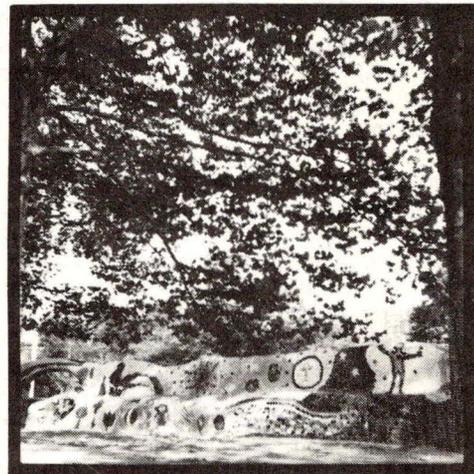
We must receive any material for the next Newsletter by March 15, 1980. If you think your region is short-changed in this issue, or if you know of work which deserves mention, let us know — news articles from local papers, rough drafts of essays, leaflets, especially black and white photographs, anything. It has been suggested that one important issue which we could write about is preservation, conservation, and maintenance of murals. Some murals have been around over ten years now, and these are becoming increasingly important concerns across the country. Send in your ideas about it — along with other information.

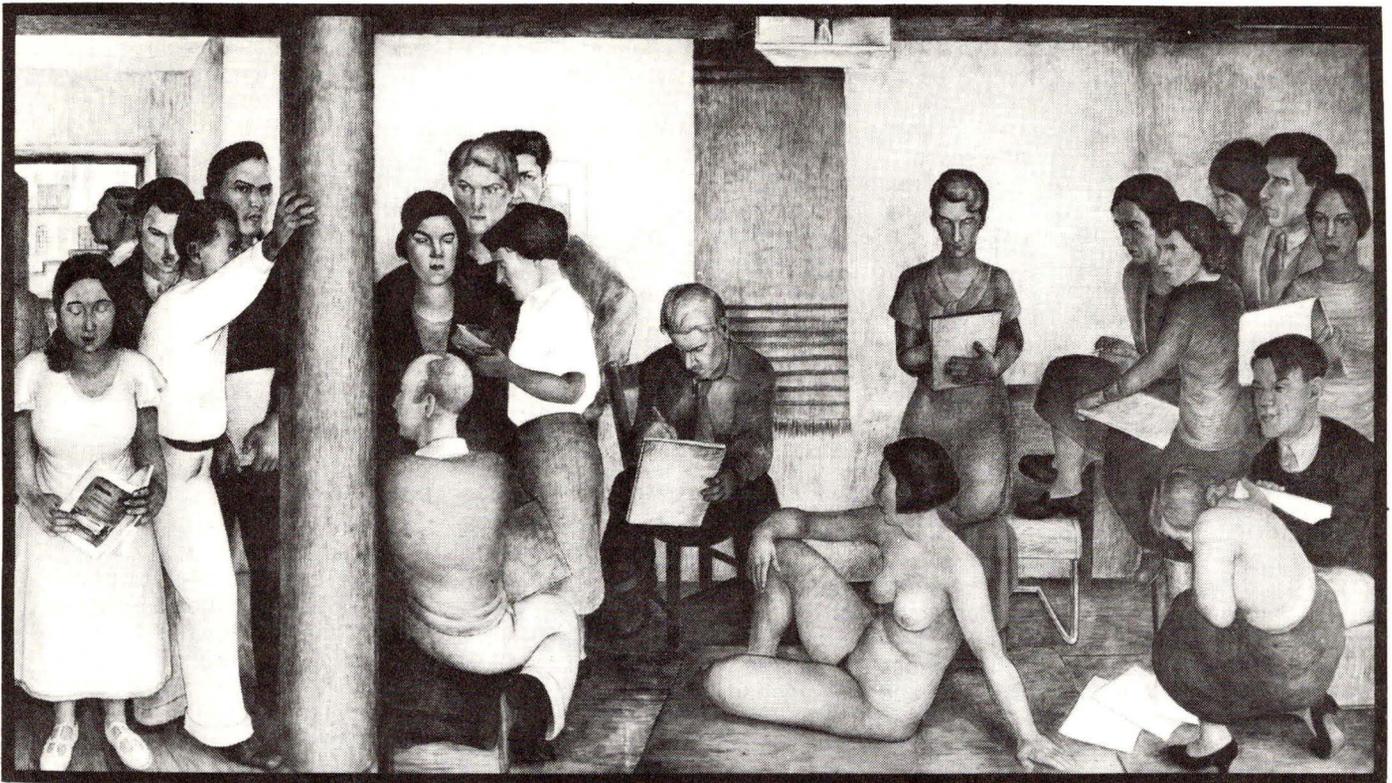
Some of you sent us material that is not included in this issue. We expect to print that information in the next Newsletter, but simply had too much material to be able to include all of it in this issue. Thanks for your understanding.

The Editorial Group

Miranda Bergman
Tim Drescher
Rupert Garcia
Emmanuel Montoya
Jane Norling
Patricia Rodriguez
Fran Valesco
Arch Williams

Labor donated





Fresco mural painted by Victor Arnautoff located in his studio on Montgomery Street in San Francisco. The fresco was executed in 1931 and 2, and was eventually destroyed along with the building. It depicts a life drawing session in Arnautoff's studio involving local artists living in the San Francisco bay area at that time. Arnautoff is seen standing to the left of the column behind the man in white.

RADICAL ARTIST, VICTOR ARNAUTOFF, 1896-1979, DIES IN RUSSIA

We received late word that famed radical artist Victor Arnautoff died in Leningrad March 22 of this year. Eighty-two when he died, he was buried at his birthplace, Mariupol (now renamed Zhdanov). His father was a priest in the Greek Orthodox Church but liberal enough not to insist his son follow the same calling. His future plans to become an architect were interrupted by the war in 1914. He became a cavalry officer in the Czar's army and later, with the overthrow of the Russian Empire, a commanding officer under the Kerensky regime.

Driven to defeat by the Red Army, his regiment disbanded in Mukden, China. Victor became a cavalry instructor under Chen So Lin. He then tried to become an artist, painting icons (images of God) to support himself while studying with the Russian painter Kichiguin. During those years of semi-starvation and struggle, Victor married Lydia, the daughter of a Russian colonel. Two sons, Vassily and Mikhail, were born to them in China.

Long a prominent figure in the California art world, Victor Arnautoff and family arrived in San Francisco in 1929. Pursuing his art studies, he enrolled in the California School of Fine Arts (now San Francisco Art Institute). A third son, Jascha, was born. Having read in one of Mayakovsky's poems about the great Mexican muralist, Diego Rivera, the Arnautoffs went to

México, where he became the maestro's first assistant during the 1920's.

Returning to San Francisco with pictures laden with social criticism — "Laundresses," "Harvesting Hops," "The River," and others — he was greeted with hostility by reactionaries in the Russian colony here. Nevertheless, he became an influential leader in the Russian community and president of the Russian-American Society, pushing for support of the Soviet Union during World War II. The Russian colony in California was split into two groups that quarrelled with each other — the reactionary one hoping, even praying, for victory for Hitler; the progressive one for defense of their homeland against Nazism. Arnautoff, as leader of the second group, organized meetings to explain the role of the Soviet people in the war and to collect medicine and warm clothing for the Red Army. From \$20,000 to \$25,000 was collected from 1941 to 1945 for the war effort.

With the defeat of Hitler, Arnautoff continued his artwork. He lectured on art at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, became president of the San Francisco Art Commission, and a member of the Communist Party, U.S.A.

Victor Arnautoff was one of many artists from across the country employed by the federal government during the W.P.A. era. He painted murals in San Francisco at the Presidio Military base chapel, George Washington High School and Coit Tower, in Richmond and Pacific Grove, Ca., and Linden and College Station, Texas. One of his satirical lithographs in the 1950's "Dick MacSmear," a caricature of the Vice-President Richard Nixon, created such a stir it was

ordered removed from a city auditorium exhibition by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. He was also subpoenaed by the House Committee on Un-American Activities for the 1950's "Dick MacSmear" lithograph.

Recalling the climate of repression in the 40's here in the Bay Area, Arnautoff remembers the case of a fellow painter, Clifford Wight, who created a number of frescoes in San Francisco depicting the hammer and sickle symbol. They were ordered removed and later Mr. Wight was deported from the United States. Arnautoff also remembers John Howard, whose work also had to be changed — the picture of a man reading the "Daily Worker," a radical newspaper, had to be removed from his Coit Tower mural. This happened in a country where newspapers, radio, and television boast every day about freedom of thought and expression.

Tragedy struck the Arnautoffs in the late 50's. An automobile with F.B.I. agents in it had been standing day and night near their home in Colma, a small suburban town south of San Francisco. One night Victor and Lydia went for a walk and a large car drove onto the sidewalk, killing Lydia. Victor was convinced he was the target.

He returned to the Soviet Union about 17 years ago to begin a second life. He remarried and recently had an exhibition of his work — in both the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. — to celebrate his 80th birthday. His major work in recent years had been mosaic murals, sponsored by the Soviet government.

He leaves his wife, Nona, in the Soviet Union, his three sons, Vassily, Jascha and Mikhail, and five grandchildren.

JEAN CHARLOT

Muralists and artists throughout the world mourn the passing of Jean Charlot in March at his home in Hawaii. He was eighty years old. His role in the development of twentieth-century murals is major. He was one of the handful of artists creating murals and frescoes at the National Preparatory School from 1921-1925, the beginnings of the Mexican Mural Renaissance. It was here that Charlot's knowledge of fresco technique provided a crucial bridge from the Italian Renaissance masters to the Mexican muralists. He created over sixty murals, mostly frescoes, in his lifetime in México, Virginia, Hawaii and other locations.

He was a significant printmaker, and is renowned throughout the world for his lithography. He did important studies on color in this medium, and a special issue of **Print Magazine** was devoted to discussion of his techniques. His illustrations fill the pages of over fifty books, in addition to several portfolios and two dozen books written by him. Of these, **The Mexican Mural Renaissance, 1920-1925** remains the standard work on this seminal period in modern murals.

Jean Charlot was interested in the contemporary mural movement in the United States, too. He sent a message of support to the Chicago conference in 1978 in which he encouraged community muralists to retain integrity in the face of those who would turn their work back to galleries. He went on to say that "If the present generation of muralists proves equally stubborn and uncouth (as the Mexican masters), then be sure

that, either when you shall be very old or very dead, guidebooks will extol the merits of your murals, carloads of tourists will gape open mouthed at them, museums will hang on their hallowed walls fresco fragments from these Twentieth-Century old masters.

"A sarcastic footnote to repay one for a lifetime of hard work! Yet there is this consolation to know, that, for those who persevere, the painted walls they mean as a message for the many shall belatedly be looked at by the many and . . . the message they contain will be at last understood."

CHARLES WHITE, Dead at 61

Two great artists died on the same Wednesday, October 10, half a world away from one another: Anton Refregier, 74 in Moscow, (see article about A. Refregier in this issue), and Charles White, 61, in Los Angeles. Charles White, who had been in fragile health for many years, leaves his wife/companion, Frances, a daughter, Jessica, and a son, Ian.

The death of Charles White is a grievous loss. But he leaves behind a vibrant body of work which could be described as a portrait gallery of the Afro-American people in the United States, depicting with dignity and strength their aspirations and struggle for self-determination.

White was a favorite artist not only in the U.S. but in other countries around the world. A number of his paintings, drawings, and prints hang in the museums of the USSR, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary and other socialist nations.

In the United States, representative examples of his work can be found at Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia, Howard University and Dillard University, as well as at major museums across the country. Over a period of years, his art has appeared in **Freedomways** magazine and has been featured on a number of its covers.

He was born in 1918 and grew up in a Chicago slum. His mother was a domestic worker and his father, who died when he was eight, was a steel and railroad worker. He found out early what racism was, recalling that in school he was considered "stupid" by his teachers who were invariably white, although at least half of the students at the school were Black. Charles' mother had given him a set of paints and he turned to art as a reaction against the frustration of the classroom. Of this, he noted years later, "They had me painting stage sets for plays in which Negro students couldn't act."

By 14 years, he had become a professional sign painter and by 20 he had held a number of jobs, including bellhop, porter, dishwasher and valet.

In his last two years of high school, he made the honor roll and won two art scholarships in national competition. However, when he was identified as being a Black artist, various obstacles were placed in the way of his accepting them. He eventually won another scholarship to the Art Institute of Chicago and managed to study there by holding down two jobs, as a cook and a teacher.

Two years on the W.P.A. Fine Arts Project in the late 30's provided White with invaluable experience as an easel painter and muralist, and gave him his first look at the artist in society.

In 1940, Charles White spent a year in México where he worked with the artists' workshop, El Taller de Gráfica Popular, which included such great Mexican graphic artists as Leopoldo Méndez, Alberto Beltrán, Pablo O'Higgins and Arturo G. Bustos. He was greatly influenced by México's famous muralists, Siqueiros and Rivera.

White received a Julius Rosenwald Fellowship in 1942 and went south, where he experienced first hand the indignities and brutality to which Blacks were subjected. Two of his uncles and two cousins had been lynched in Mississippi. White himself was beaten in New Orleans and threatened by a conductor with a gun in Hampton, Virginia. "It was then I began to get a real picture of the Negro in America and their problems," the artist recalled. "I knew what it is to be called vile names and to step into the gutter to let a white person pass." (Some time later, White was also beaten by a racist in New York City's Greenwich Village.)

White's subjects ranged from the models offered out of the daily lives of Black people — the workers, farmers, musicians, mothers and children to the outstanding heroes and heroines of their freedom struggle: Denmark Vesey, Sojourner Truth, Gabriel Prosser, W.E.B. DuBois, and others. Of his work he once said: "Art truly is an ideal medium to glorify the beauty of life and to give substance and reality to lasting peace." But of the racist obstacles of the art world in the U.S., White added: "The American progressive artist still works within the bourgeois framework, focus-

ing his hopes on 57th St., museums, prizes and commissions. There is nothing wrong in this except that it cannot be the sole concentration of the artist's effort." "When one considers the fact that Negro culture is the only true American culture, this wholesale exclusion of Negroes from the cultural life of America is more disgraceful. The white artist must play a role in changing this situation."

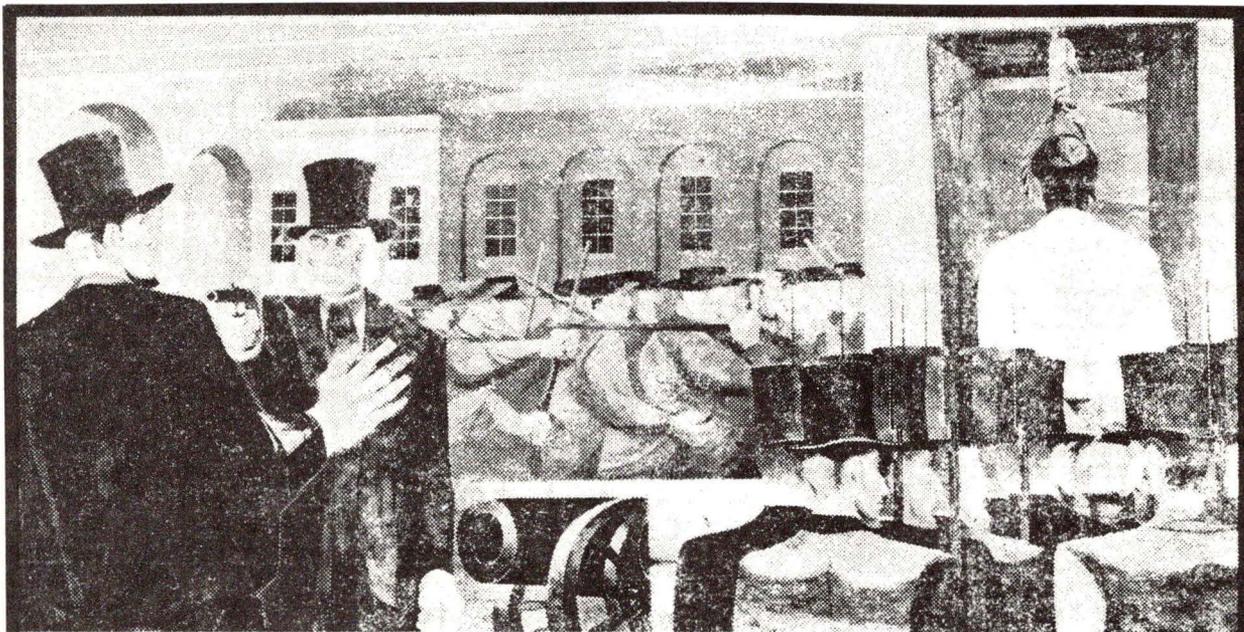
Asked about giving a painting to start a scholarship for Black art students, he responded: "Why am I giving a painting to establish a scholarship fund with the committee for the Negro in the Arts — Can I afford it financially? I can't afford *not* doing it. I work for the complete and unqualified freedom of the Negro people. Everything in painting must express this." The essential character of the relationship of the artist to his people was especially noted by the artist when he visited the Soviet Union. He commented on "the acclaim accorded it (Soviet art, V.M.) by the thousands of people who daily filled the huge art pavilion. For here was art that reflected reality objectively — an art that in this context reproduced the essence of warmth, sensitivity and penetrating human qualities that exist in all peoples: an art that examined and exposed the core of our basic struggles and triumphs over nature, over life, in order to build anew, and make a better way of life for all human kind: an art that meets this great artistic challenge with love and understanding."

Victoria Missick
Emmanuel Montoya

Anton Refregier

San Francisco Chronicle

★ Fri., Oct. 12, 1979



A section of the murals in Rincon Annex, which brought attacks from right-wingers

Rincon Annex Muralist Dies

By Maitland Zane

Anton Refregier, whose controversial historical murals at the Post Office's Rincon Annex building in San Francisco made him a target of the McCarthyite hysteria in the 1950s, died in Moscow on Wednesday, friends here learned yesterday. He was 74.

Mr. Refregier, who had gone to the Soviet Union a year ago to paint a mural at a medical clinic, had been hospitalized with heart trouble for several months. He died after suffering a "massive stroke," said one of his oldest San Francisco friends, artist Emmy Lou Packard.

Born in Moscow of a French father and Russian mother, Mr. Refregier studied art in Germany and France, and at the Rhode Island School of Design. He settled in New York's artist colony of Woodstock in the 1930s.

Mr. Refregier created a stir in New York City when he did the murals in a famed nightspot, Cafe Society Uptown.

He became a big name in the American art world in 1941 when he won a national competition for a \$26,000 commission to paint murals in the then-new Rincon Annex on Mission Street near the Embarcadero.

He came to San Francisco that year to begin transforming the 208-foot-long lobby into a panorama of the past, but Pearl Harbor and America's entry into World War II caused the project to be shelved until 1946.



ANTON REFREGIER
Death at 74 in Moscow

The artist depicted California's gaudy history in 29 panels, each 20 feet high and painted in casein tempera.

Controversies began before the work was completed in 1947.

Some Catholics objected to a mural of early-day monks felling trees because the monks were "fat."

Veterans groups took offense at supposedly "subversive" murals showing a vigilante execution, persecution of Chinese, the Tom Mooney bombing case and the city's traumatic waterfront strike of the 1930s.

Other panels depicted the de-

feat of the Nazis in World War II, with one of the symbols being the hammer and sickle of the Soviet Union.

Mr. Refregier's long association with left-wing causes and periodicals made him a great target of right-wingers such as the late Congressman Hubert B. Scudder of Sebastopol, who tried to have the murals removed, calling them "an insult to the public and anti-American in motif."

"These murals are definitely subversive and are designed to spread communistic propaganda," charged another critic.

His artist friend, Packard, said the successful fight that was made to save the murals from destruction in the 1950s was a "tremendous victory for the First Amendment."

Packard was a leader in the fight, earlier this year, to have the Rincon Annex lobby, including the murals, declared a city landmark to protect it from possible demolition.

On September 20 the Planning Commission declared the "streamline moderne" lobby and the murals to be a San Francisco landmark. If the Board of Supervisors concurs, there would be major legal obstacles to tearing down the building's lobby or removing the murals.

Mr. Refregier is survived by his wife, Lila; a son, Toto, and a daughter, Brigit. Plans are to return his ashes to Woodstock for burial, Packard said.

Rincon Annex and Refregier Murals Win Support

"It is possible that the G.S.A. (General Services Administration) and the Postal Service may eventually agree on a joint use of the building on the Rincon Annex site, preserving the existing lobby with its murals, for postal use." That was a statement in a letter of correspondence sent to a representative of the Postal Service in Washington, D.C. by California Congressperson John Burton.

Letters of support and protest from citizens across the country who want the historic post office open to the public for mail service have been flowing to political representatives in Washington, D.C. and the Landmarks Board in San Francisco, California.

On September 20, 1979 three thousand signatures were presented to the San Francisco Planning Commission urging landmark status for the post office and its historic, irreplaceable murals. Fearing that the building would be vulnerable as a low-rise in the midst of frantic downtown development, a diverse coalition of art, labor, architecture planning and preservation supporters were quickly organized by Emmy Lou Packard, a San Francisco artist who has devoted many years to safeguarding the building and the murals it contains. With artist Ruth Asawa, also of San Francisco, she formed the Rincon Annex Preservation Committee, whose campaign to save at least the lobby of the building with its murals intact is supported by the San Francisco Labor Council, Galería de la Raza/Studio 24, Charles Hall Page and Associates, and twenty-five other labor and community organizations.

Architectural History and Significance

The Rincon Annex to the United States Post Office is one of the finest examples of a large public building designed in the Streamlined Moderne style of architecture in San Francisco. One of the similarly sponsored W.P.A. (Works Progress Administration) buildings built throughout the nation during the 1930's, Rincon Annex shares an approach to building design in which classically derived architectural principles — a large compact mass, regularly treated, symmetrical at least in main façade, with expression of pilasters or piers, and an emphasis on weight rather than volume in the overall building envelope — are merged with the then — modernist design principles that required smooth clean machine-like surfaces and detailing, and use of "modern" materials — aluminum, glass block, special concealed or reflective lighting. Aside from the fine historic murals in the lobby, the building itself is a superb specimen of its type.

Anton Refregier, the Artist

The following is a brief summary of some of the endeavors of Anton Refregier: After early studies in Paris, France, Refregier enrolled in and graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design, (1921-25). In 1927 he studied drawing with artist Hans Hoffman in Munich, Germany.

After ten years of exhibitions and mural painting in New York, Refregier was elected a member of the National Society of Mural Painters (1938), and in 1941, he won the national competition for murals in the Rincon Annex Post Office in San Francisco, California.

The Rincon Annex murals are painted in casein tempera on white gesso over plaster walls. The paint was applied in thin strokes, giving the work a transparent quality similar to fresco. Painting assistants on the mural project were Robert McChesney, well-known for his abstract oils often shown in San Francisco galleries and museums, and Louise Gilbert, best known in the San Francisco Bay Area as a printmaker. They both still live and work in this region.

Petition Drive Continues

Because landmark status is only a holding action for two years, the Rincon Annex Preservation Committee stresses:

**!!!KEEP THE PETITIONS COMING IN!!!
ONLY THE U.S. PUBLIC CAN SAVE
THE POST OFFICE AND THE MURALS!!!
THE PETITIONS WILL CIRCULATE THROUGH 1981!!!**

PABLO O'HIGGINS

The Mexican painter Pablo O'Higgins is beginning work on a monumentally scaled mural in el Obispo, an old palace in Monterrey. The palace was used as a defensive point against French and American invaders in the nineteenth century and was occupied by Pancho Villa during the 1911 Revolution. O'Higgins has designed his mural to tell the stories of those battles and of Mexico's long fight for independence.

The painter, who was born and raised in the United States, went to Mexico in 1924 to work with Diego Rivera. He stayed there to participate in the growing mural movement and has since become a citizen of Mexico.

In the 1920's O'Higgins was a member of the **misiones culturales**, the groups sent into the countryside by the Secretariat of Education to teach art techniques and modern methods in public sanitation and agriculture to the rural people. In the 1930's O'Higgins was active in LEAR (The League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists), an organization that mobilized the energies of artists for the struggle against fascism. With Leopoldo Méndez and other graphic artists, he helped form the Taller de Gráfica Popular in 1938, to provide a cooperative center for the production of political graphics.

In his murals he has always stressed strong draftsmanship and a tight, logical integration of subject matter and surface space. These qualities can be seen in his earlier work on revolutionary themes in the Mercado Abelardo Rodríguez and the Taller Gráfica de Nación in México City and his later mural in the theater of la Universidad de Morelia in Michoacán. Experimenting with new materials, he pioneered the use of opaque ceramic colors for exterior walls in a mural that he painted on the municipal building in Poza Rica, a mural that celebrates the Mexican expropriation of foreign owned oil interests.

O'Higgins is one of the last surviving members of the "second generation" of the Mexican mural movement. Two of the painters with whom he was most closely involved, Jean Charlot and Anton Refregier, died recently.

O'Higgins is still intensively active, however, and is planning the mural and easel painting and the lithography that he will focus on after he completes his work at el Obispado. Recently, commenting on future directions for mural painting in Mexico, he said:

I think that it is important for painters . . . to (help) to achieve some kind of intercultural unity in Latin America. There is a growing feeling of solidarity in Latin America, and I want to help give more strength to that feeling. As a painter I can help to show what is happening . . . to relate the revolutionary struggles that are happening all over this continent. To show the situation and to show the possibilities of the future.

There was a time when Latin Americans felt

separate — Chileans, Uruguayans, Peruvians and so on, instead of Latin Americans. Also, we felt like we were an appendage of the United States. That was a colonial outlook. That feeling is still there, but now there is also a growing realization that we are all Latin Americans and that we have a lot of cultural and political problems in common.

(But) I don't mean that (we) should imitate what happened here in the 1920's and '30's (in the mural movement). Each epoch has its own needs. And its own response. There will be a lot of important work for . . . young artists, the ones who want to work for . . . the people and not just their own fame and money.

Steven Lafer



Detail of mural by Pablo O'Higgins. Photo: Steven Lafer

PAYING TO DESTROY THE MURAL MOVEMENT

A few months ago, while backpacking in the mountains, I had a surprising conversation with an accountant who described how a special program in a large city a few years ago destroyed the community mural movement by paying for murals. As he described it, the pattern was for the city (or state or federal government through the city, I forget which) to set up a program which paid active community muralists to paint what they wanted on city walls. At the beginning, they specifically included the most radical, most politically explicit muralists, and gave them free rein. After a few years, some muralists had dropped out of the program because of incessant bureaucratic hassles, others had begun to tame their images so as not to antagonize the funding sources. When the program was abruptly halted all were left without funds and cut off from their original community contacts. There was no significant mural painting for several years after in that city.

The accountant, fairly conservative politically, thought it was all calculated deliberately by the government to stop the painting of progressive, community-involving murals.

Whether or not his scenario is accurate, it does describe a general pattern that has happened before in the U.S. and is, according to some observers, happening again, most frequently in the form of various CETA arts programs, NEA grants, etc. Please do not misunderstand what this says. The question of a socially committed muralist's role in such instances is extremely complex and deserves a lengthy and careful discussion. This fable is meant as an observation about some funding programs, their motives, their historic function.

Tim Drescher

Excerpts from "Art Wars," by Eva Cockcroft, published in *Seven Days*, Feb. 23, 1979

For the last ten years, neighborhood arts groups have brought dance, art, music, murals, and theater to inner-city neighborhoods and small cities and towns. They have provided an opportunity for talented minority artists to work professionally and train younger talents, in spite of discrimination by establishment art institutions. Because they have worked closely with their communities, often sharing the same heritage and goals, they have been able to create a relevant art. In many cases, they have developed new and vital art forms by integrating ethnic or national heritage with contemporary art styles. But with the financial crunch many programs have been forced to close and others are endangered. Many . . . groups are struggling to survive the dual threats of cutoffs in funding and increased local control and censorship . . . the question is whether or not NEA should concentrate its support among older established cultural institutions, major museums, opera companies, symphony orchestras — the "elitists" — or community arts projects generated at the grassroots level, in small or inner cities, often in-

volving minority artists — the "populists." Although the battle between the "elitists" and the "populists" is often framed as an aesthetic debate about whether art for social purposes is really art, it is also, perhaps primarily, about money: who will get the lion's share of the NEA's \$114,600,000 budget.

When Livingston Biddle, Jr. was confirmed as Chairman of NEA, minority and neighborhood artists were hopeful that they might have more than token access to Endowment funding. As Biddle policy took shape, however, it looked like a compromise determined largely by pressure of "elitist" forces and lobbies. Therefore, his strategy was to get a larger pie if he couldn't get a larger slice of the pie for community arts. The model program, named Liveable Cities, provided for neighborhood revitalization through art and is administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). They felt that Congress was more likely to appropriate its \$20,000,000 budget to HUD than to NEA. On the other hand, Expansion Arts, NEA's contribution that specifically encourages the development of neighborhood arts projects is feared to be phased out. Although they have only \$7,000,000 about 6 percent of the total, the money is essential to the survival of hundreds of smaller neighborhood programs.

Funding for art with a social function through agencies other than NEA is increasingly common. Small programs now exist in the Departments of Interior, Commerce, and the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), which is under the Department of Labor, provides the largest non-NEA funding for the arts at this time. The closest contemporary equivalent to the WPA of the 1930's, CETA is an employment program aimed at youth and the hardcore unemployed. It has been perverted by municipal administrations to keep employees laid-off by budget cuts on the job, and creatively converted by artists for small public service programs . . . Like the other new programs, CETA is closely tied to city hall and therefore public art painted under CETA is more often controversial for its style than its content . . .

Money that is filtered through the mayor's office or a municipal arts council rarely allows for art critical of the status quo. Federally-administered money . . . permits a wider range of political expression, since the art it funds is not tied to local political squabbles of the local power structure. That is why the trend toward clubhouse control of new programs within the NEA as well as the HUD and CETA programs is so dangerous to free expression . . . This tendency (promises to take) bureaucratic form.

A Task Force on Community Program Policy has been set up by James Edgy, deputy director in charge of relations with community arts agencies. Some neighborhood groups have attacked Edgy and the composition of the Task Force as being weighted toward official municipal and local arts councils. As William Watman of the Center for Urban Ethnic Studies points out, "This is a problem for some members of the neighborhood arts movement who suffer lack of many services from local governments. Poor schools, roads, trash collection, protection, etc., doesn't demonstrate a willingness on the part of local governments to provide for our neighborhoods. Why, I ask should we expect anything different from them regarding art?"

MURAL PROCESS VS. MURAL PRODUCT

Why must process vs. product mean sacrificing one for the other? It is the challenge of the public artist to synthesize these two.

The most important element of a mural is the idea. Murals in Cleveland have been painted which are excellent examples of the process of community participation, especially with youth. The results have been beautiful graphic signs, a colorful addition to the neighborhood. However, after people pass by the mural, the mural is not remembered because there is not a powerful idea to continue to think about. The effect here was an excellent example of process, yet the mural failed to affect the people it could have because the idea was not strong.

Murals have been painted that are excellent examples of "finished products," yet the idea is unclear to many except the artist. These beautiful "products" lack the community participation which produces clear ideas to reach the public.

If the idea and source of the idea is strong, then both the process and product can be effective. The amount of success of a mural depends on the public artist's ability to communicate with people and reflect what they feel on a wall. When a muralist or a murals group paints what people understand and not what we as muralists think they understand, new ideas can be inspiring. To paint a mural with very sophisticated political imagery in an area where people are trying to come to grips with their own day to day problems would benefit only the muralist. Of course, people are open to ideas that are new. Some of the most fiery iron-willed people other young muralists or myself have ever met were ones who spoke of their problems and of justice with fresh ideas.

To improve in the "product" of the public art is also to work on our own art to strengthen our images and ideas. By knowing our own ideas better, we can more clearly communicate our ideas to the public. Wanting to paint a good product is not an elitist idea. Our people are not from museums, but are from the community, and they deserve the best possible quality. Our motivation to improve is not elite. It comes from our commitment as public artists to improve for others.

This is written in memorium to Tony Colman, a young man who painted murals for two years in Cleveland. He was killed last August while crossing the Superior viaduct bridge. The murals that Tony worked on are a reminder to us of his spirit.

Gloria Mark

Houston, Téjas

Compañero Fermín Coronado, a working artist, art instructor and counselor for A.A.M.A. (Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans) has been quite busy in Houston working with school students and community people on various mural projects.

Fermín and the students have recently completed seven murals in the A.A.M.A. school that relate to the Chicano/Méjicano cultural and historical experience. Themes range from cultural images that deal with religion, mysticism, and folklore, to brightly colored Pre-Columbian Aztec motifs and symbols that cover an area of the school hallway. Fermín's feelings are, "I use the murals as a way of getting the students to be less inhibited and to be able to strive to work as a group."

Our compañeras and compañeros in Houston seem to be facing a very similar problem many of us are trying to deal with across the country: that is cutbacks of federal and state funds for continuation of vital community and social services. Fermín and friends have begun to work on raising money to continue school next year. They plan to sell Christmas cards from some of the photographs taken of the murals.

We wish Fermín and the other sisters and brothers in Houston good luck in their struggle to continue for what is rightfully theirs, cultural expression and educational development.

Emmanuel Montoya

¡Qué Viva Picasso!

With brooding intensity, the dark eyes stare from the side of a building. "Picasso was the greatest painter of our time," said Mario Torero, leader of the group of four artists who have created an outdoor mural in Pablo's honor. In psychedelic colors, it is on the south side of the Community Arts Building at 3rd Avenue and F Street in downtown San Diego, California. With the help of a California Arts Council grant and assistance from artists Alicia Sabour, Nino Dimondon, and Abd-Allah LeClair the group view the mural tribute to the ever searching, seeing and experimenting Picasso.

"Art should not just be in museums," said Dimondon. "Art should reach the average person, the everyday person on the street as he/she goes about his daily life." When he first began painting murals, Torero thought of this style as Chicano art, he said. Lately he has revised that definition because he has been assisted in his work by Anglos, Blacks and Asians.

"We are not white. We are not black. We are not yellow. We are all colors — we are the cosmic rays," Torero said. Torero recently protested the plans to raze the 70 year old landmark building which houses the Community Arts Program by adding a "¡Viva Picasso!" atop the roof. The city owned building underwent \$100,000 federally subsidized repairs in 1976 and plans are to replace it with a department store and shops.

We hope to hear more from Torero and group regarding their struggle to preserve the mural and the building.



Billboard at Galería de la Raza, Bryant and 24th St., San Francisco. Design and execution by Michael Ríos. Photo: Tim Drescher.

Galería de la Raza

We want to suggest to other muralists throughout the country that they might, as we have done, take advantage of virtually ready-made mural possibilities already located where the eye of passing motorists or pedestrians naturally falls. We speak, of course, about billboards. For those of you who believe that billboards might advertise ideas that benefit a community instead of harm it, we recommend this idea.

For a number of years we had noticed that there were billboards in our neighborhood, but none in the wealthy, Pacific Heights area across town. What's more, we especially resented billboards across from grammar and junior high schools advertising cigarettes and liquor. Almost four years ago someone in our neighborhood went up to the billboard on the outside wall of our gallery and painted out the advertisement and painted in a quickly executed but well-designed and colorful celebration of the community as a place to live instead of simply as a place to sell products. Within a couple of months, another mural had been painted over the first one, this time celebrating "Salsa Ahora."

When Foster and Kleiser, the billboard company, sent a crew to take off the mural and put up another ad, we asked them not to, and the crew agreed and drove off. For the next year we tried to reach a formal agreement with Foster and Kleiser, through negotiations, but we did not come to any agreements. Finally, they removed the billboard, giving it to us to "throw away." Later, because of public pressure, the company returned and put up large masonite panels of the

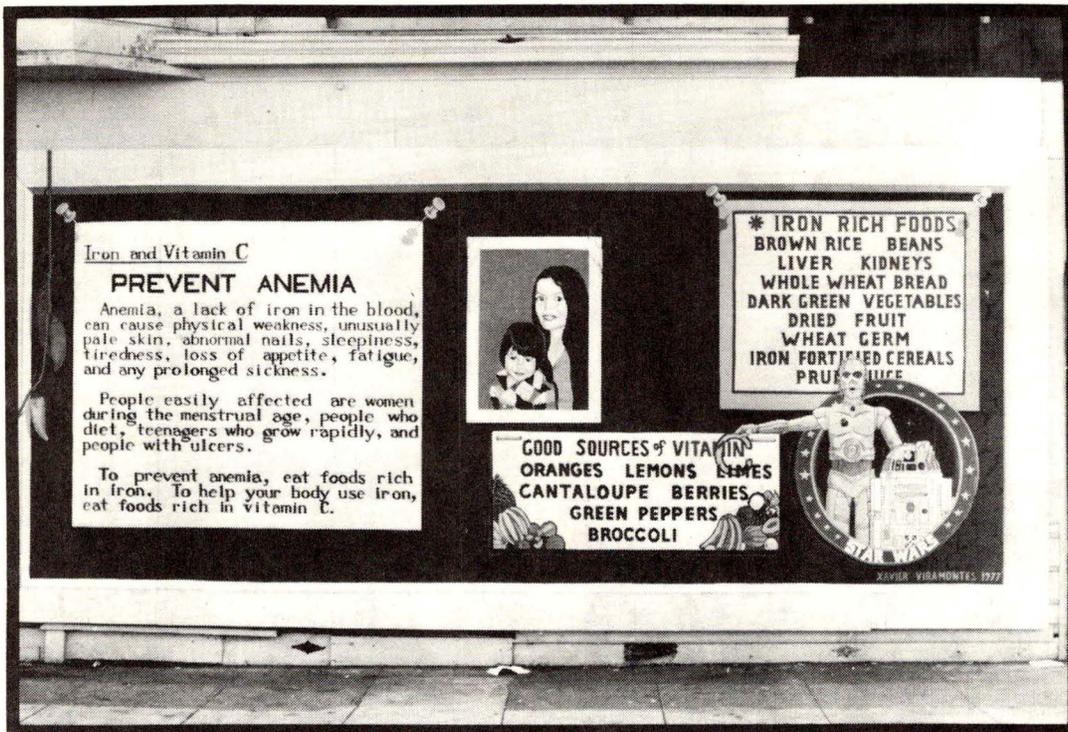
same dimensions as the billboard, and so it continues today to be a source of useful, positive information about the community.

Foster and Kleiser now cooperates with local merchant groups for a cleanup campaign in the area. They seem to be more conscious of the community. Shortly after the Galería appropriated the billboard, the company began work with Eyes and Ears Foundation through grants and cooperation to support fine arts designs on selected billboards in Los Angeles and, later, in another part of San Francisco.

While we were trying to reach agreement with the billboard company we continued to sponsor murals about local cultural magazines, a drug treatment center, nutritious foods, the importance of keeping the streets clean, the struggle for the International Hotel, and so forth. Michael Ríos and Xavier Viramontes have been the principal designers, with several others of these works. The last two or three incarnations have been celebrations of openings of our own shows all of which involve community artists. In particular, the show honoring Frida Kahlo and our current Low Rider Art show have been popular.

If you are going to try this, it is important to recognize that these are not eternal artworks. The size and locations demand a frequent changing of the images and ideas presented so that they become a living and constantly changing part of the community. Times, needs, issues shift. This approach also eliminates the need for maintenance. As one local resident said, "It's a good way of communicating with a community. You can react immediately to political and cultural issues, put up good info." Yes.

René Yañez



Billboard at Galeria de la Raza, Bryant and 24th St., San Francisco. Design and execution by Xavier Viramontes. Photo: Tim Drescher.

“Flor en la Comunidad/ A Flower in the Community”

October 1978 saw the beginning of the CETA funded program designed to both beautify neighborhoods and provide a meaningful work experience for economically disadvantaged young people. “Flor en la Comunidad” has its offices located at Lee Matheson Community School, 2050 Kammerer Avenue, in East San José, also the home base for El Centro Cultural de la Gente de San José, a local cultural center.

El Centro Cultural is both experienced and prepared to take on this task, based on previous mural projects in East San José. One example is the Tierra Nuestra mural project, which involved both professionals and residents in a unified effort. Six murals of both permanent and portable type will be painted. In addition to community mural painting, which is to be performed by 10 youth participants, skills in commercial art techniques will be taught to them. They will also be involved in vocational guidance sessions in an effort to facilitate their acquiring high school equivalency certificates, as well as to develop jobs upon their completion of the 12 month program. This dual work-experience and community improvement project is led by Roberto Navarro, M.S.W. (Masters in Social Work), and Jaime Valadez, a community artist. The former has extensive experience in the organization and administration of community service projects; the latter is a long-time community arts organizer in the San José area. They both reflect a new and unique fusion of human services and socio-cultural expression.

Since “Flor en la Comunidad” mural program came to a close in October 1979, we plan to do a follow-up

article in our next newsletter about its completed mural projects, the young people who were involved, and its benefits to the surrounding community.

Muralism in Michigan

Grand Rapids is ripe with public art. The first mural here was commissioned in 1971 to provide downtown urban beautification. Other murals have sprung from its success. Some of these are graphic reminders of the art movement in this city, with geometric designs painted in bright colors on mural “fences,” in stairwells, and on interior walls. Grand Rapids also has a number of murals depicting Third World cultures. One depicts a Jamaican proverb while three others (one is portable for statewide exhibition) represent the Chicano/Latino cultures in the city, and two others incorporate prominent Black people in their themes.

Other cities in the Western Michigan region involved in various mural projects are the lakeshore city of Holland and the southwestern city of Benton Harbor. There are plans in progress for additional murals in this area.

Public murals are on their second surge in Michigan, with new ones being planned or painted in cities such as Jackson, Ypsilanti, Lansing, Newyago and Detroit.

José L. Narezo, muralist

Police Destroy Anti-Nuclear Mural Denver, Colorado

On Thursday, June 14, 1979, about 4:30 p.m., Brian Puckett, 26, with several other friends affixed a 25 foot by 35 foot brightly colored blue and green anti-nuclear mural along a wall of the Colorado Heritage Center. Traffic was slowed on the 1300 block of Broadway as drivers and pedestrians stopped to gape at the mural as the firemen and police tried to detach the artwork.

The mural depicted a hideous male figure (symbolizing radiation) delivering a skeletal baby from a grotesque female figure. The grotesqueness symbolizes her being impregnated by radiation.

"Colorado is no place to put Rocky Flats or the Fort St. Vrain nuclear power plants. There is only one Colorado, and we shouldn't ruin it," said Puckett. One of his friends said the most important message was that the anti-nuclear mural hung above the words "Colorado Heritage" on the side of the building. Puckett said he had worked on the idea for two months and that it took about three weeks to paint the mural.

Wearing yellow hard hats to disguise themselves as workers, Puckett and several friends emplaned three hooks into the brick building near the roof and suspended the mural from a 35 foot horizontal aluminum pole. Puckett strapped himself to the pole until police and two fire trucks arrived on the scene. When ordered down by police he rappelled down the side of the four story building to the cheers of about 20 supporters. Police handcuffed the artist and led him away. They then proceeded, with assistance from the fire department, to detach the mural, which was torn in the process.

Grant's Tomb Benches Face Destruction

The present situation, according to the Citizen's Committee to Save the Benches, is this: David Dame, the Superintendent of Manhattan Sites under whom the project was proposed in 1972, has left, and since then a new, isolated, conservative, preservationist credo has swept through the National Park Service. This coincides with stricter approaches to preservation elsewhere and with a generally conservative mood around the country and especially in government.

There always have been complaints against the benches, coming usually from traditionalists who are disturbed by anything new; from some strict art historians in love with columns and horse-drawn carriages and from Civil War buffs, such as the Knights of the Civil War Round Table. Under NPS (National Park Service) prodding, these groups have offered occasional complaints, and joined by solicited opinions from descendants of Grant, they are focusing on 1985, the year of the Centennial of Grant's death. They want the Memorial in pristine condition for that celebration. There is no argument for their sentiments, but there are other, equally valid, values and goals which argue for retention of the benches. They include:

1. The benches were a duly sponsored project of high artistic merit, created by the community (more than 4,500 participants) and have created deep positive feeling in the neighborhood (something the tomb has never done).
2. They are a nationally-recognized work and should be respected.
3. They are at the side and rear of the Memorial, and cannot be seen from the classical, axial view of it.
4. The Memorial is a commemorative site, not a historical site with connection to Grant while he was alive. Nothing historically significant ever happened at the site.

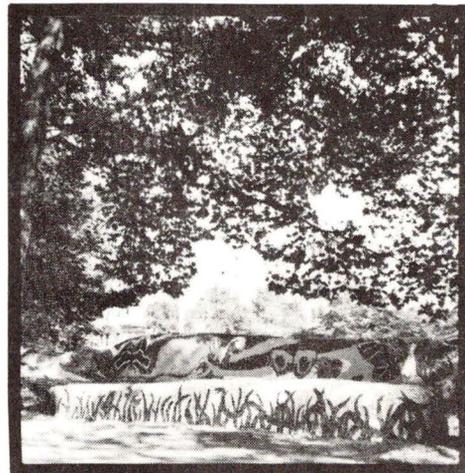
A couple of more things are worth noting. First, the tomb has been for years monumentally attacked by graffiti and general disrespect. Its location used to be one carefully avoided by anyone because of fear of violence. Copious articles sent us demonstrate that the benches have brought the site back into favor and respect — something the tomb could not accomplish.

In a letter to Phil Danzig, National Park Service Director William Whalen said that the problems with the benches "involve . . . the aesthetic compatibility of an imposing example of classical architecture and free-flowing, brightly colored mosaic benches, and the propriety of juxtaposing the rather playful benches with a Presidential tomb."

Phil writes that "we need additional letters. These should stress the compatibility of the benches with the style of the Memorial; should urge that they be considered on their own merits as a work of community art; that the National Park Service take into consideration the feelings of the neighborhood and citizens elsewhere." Copies should be sent to Cityarts Workshop, 525 E. 6th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10009.

Letters should be calm and refrain from suggesting that the Memorial be destroyed rather than the benches. NPS does NOT find this amusing, and we must appear reasonable. Letters suggesting destruction of the Memorial are filed in a special crackpot file, and ignored.

Send letters to: Gilbert W. Calhoun, Acting Regional Director, North Atlantic Region, Nat. Park Service, 15 State St., Boston MA 02109.



WEEKLY SOHO NEWS

Vol. 6, No. 44, Aug. 2-8, 1979



The Bench at Grant's Tomb

Who's Burying Grant's Tomb?

Seven years ago, when community arts projects were considered a boon to urban neighborhoods, the Manhattan office of the National Parks Service commissioned a Chilean artist, Pedro Silva, to design a work for the environs of Grant's Tomb at West 122nd Street and Riverside Drive.

The artwork was meant to commemorate Grant's designation of Yellowstone as the first national park 100 years earlier, and was to draw its manpower from the surrounding neighborhoods (local artists as well as masters of graffiti, who knew the tomb all too well).

The result, one year later, was 350 feet of mosaic bench — a Gaudiesque pew that mixes city life and wildlife, abstract expression and quiet patriotism. Paul Golberger, the *Times* architecture critic, wrote that the bench is "perhaps Manhattan's finest piece of folk art of our time." Norval White and Elliot Willensky, in their *AIA Guide to New York City*, call the benches "sinuous, colorful, amusing" and "wonderful." And the National Parks Service — who cosponsored the project with the downtown Cityarts Workshop, a community arts group — printed literature describing the benches as a "unique public

tribute" through which "the monument plays a more vital role in the community."

Enter David Kahn, now curator of Manhattan's National Parks Service. When Kahn first made the pilgrimage to the tomb four years ago, he found the bench "very surprising." He now finds it a "mistake" — to be rectified by demolition. And, very quietly, as perhaps befits a final resting place, David Kahn has allegedly been prodding local art world officials to see things his way.

A citizen's committee to "Save the Benches" and an article in the *Amsterdam News* both claim that Kahn has pressured several prominent art figures to write to the Parks Service denouncing the benches. Richard Martin of *Arts* magazine, who wrote a harsh letter about the benches, now says the letter was ill-considered and written at Kahn's request. Another detractor, who wrote the service that "the benches were cute once, but now they should be removed," also claims that Kahn prompted her to pen the remark. And Elliot Willensky says that Kahn tried to pressure him into removing his praise of the project from the *AIA Guide*.

Kahn denies he has tried to pressure anyone, labeling such reports "absurd." He quotes a Park Service management policy pamphlet that states "cultural resources should not be modified to suit modern esthetic taste." He points to unwavering opposition to the benches from the Ulysses S. Grant Assn., Grant's granddaughter and *Classical America* magazine. And he notes that Park Service guards at the tomb regularly report complaints from people who don't like the bench.

On a trip to the site last week, J. Anthony, a park ranger of 16 years, disagreed. "A few say they don't like it, but they're mostly oldtimers. The neighborhood most like it. They're spending an awful lot of time out and around it."

Kahn says a decision on the future of the bench should be reached before the year is out. Artist Pedro Silva, now at work on a project in Edinburgh, Scotland, could not be reached for comment. But to listen to Kahn, such a phone call is hardly necessary anyway.

"Art is not a special case," he argues, adding that he who owns such a work has a right to call the tune. "It should be treated the same as you treat a building that is no longer usable

Robert Keating
Gerald Marzorati

Hard Copy

The Soho Weekly News August 2, 1979



'Song to Martí'— collective mural

MEXICO CITY

HOMAGE IS paid to Jose Martí through the "Song to Martí" mural (detail shown at right) a collective work carried out in the cultural institution that bears the name of the hero of Cuban independence. Creation of the Mexican artists Orozco Rivera and Luis Nishizawa and the Cubans Mariano Rodriguez and Fayad Jamis, it symbolizes the traditional friendship between Mexico and Cuba. The mural links the image of the tireless fighter for the unity of the peoples of America to those of Benito Juarez, Simon Bolivar, Emiliano Zapata and Camilo Cienfuegos. The work, which is three meters high and 28 long, resumes the history of this continent's struggle from the last century up to the present, and maintains alive the action of these men and their peoples for freedom and against oppression. The Jose Martí Cultural Center is at the corner of Avenida Hidalgo and the Paseo de la Reforma, opposite the historic Alameda in Mexico City.

From the People's World, June 30, 1979

GIANT RIVERA DRAWINGS DISCOVERED

Earlier this year, in a basement storage room of the Detroit Institute of Arts, sets of large drawings by México's great muralist Diego Rivera were discovered. Spread out, they would occupy nearly a quarter-acre of floor space. They were drawn as full-size guides for Rivera's "Detroit Industry" frescoes executed in the museum's main hall in the 1930's. The drawings recently discovered represent about a third of the final design. The Institute's graphic arts department is studying them for use in a special exhibit commemorating their 50th anniversary in 1983.

from **Chicago Tribune**, Friday, June 22, 1979.

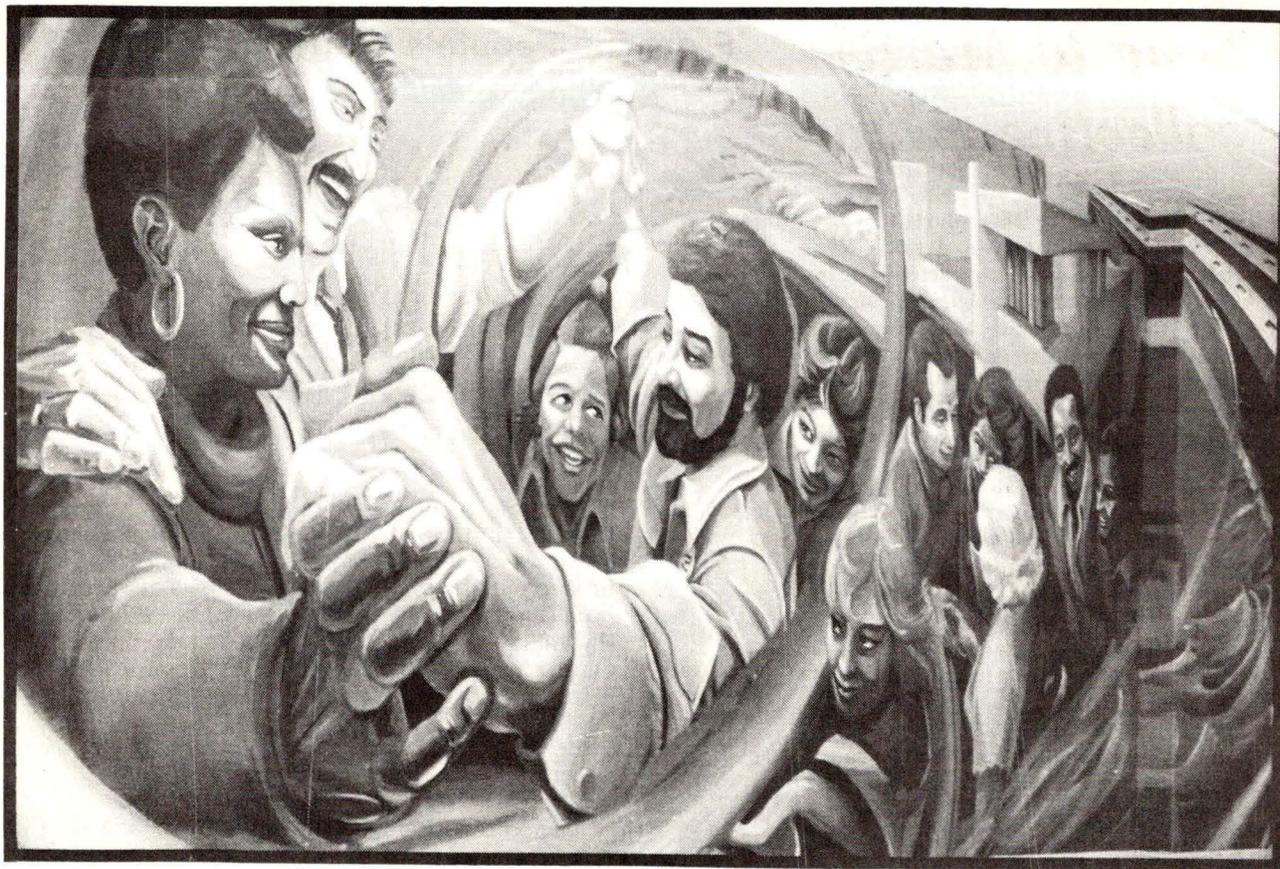
History of New Haven Murals

Since 1976 almost five dozen murals have been painted in New Haven, CT. by teams of people numbering several hundred, from children to seniors. A large portion of these murals were funded by public monies, and of that portion a very large percentage have been funded by CETA.

As part of the Mayor's Committee on the Arts — CETA Summer Youth Employment Program, 23 murals have been painted city wide over the past four years. Murals have also been painted by artists and teams in the City Spirit Program, the community outreach program affiliated with the Arts Council of New Haven. Funds for this program are from CETA, the CT. Commission of the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New Haven Foundation. Artists and muralists have been hired on funds from CDA, Title X (an apprenticeship program for students), and Title VII (visiting artists in schools). The Arts Council and the Board of Education have also sponsored some mural teams.

The current city administration, notably Mayor Frank Logue, has given instrumental and consistent support to mural projects. Logue has stated, "In a city which ignores the arts, a city which is destitute of art, the quality of life suffers. In fostering the arts, a city government may be playing its most meaningful role."

We (Terry Lennox and Ruth Resnick) have been working in New Haven since 1976 as mural planners, directors, teachers, painters, and consultants. In October of 1977 we received a matching grant which was awarded to CETA (then our full time employer) from the CT. Commission on the Arts to paint two or three murals in public places in New Haven. We wrote for the grant because we felt that after three years of directing murals and teaching mural painting we needed to develop further our own skills as mural painters. This, we felt strongly, would aid our future teaching and might open doors for professional murals in the city. Our first mural of this grant project, "We Can Do It All Better Together, In Peace, In Joy, In Love," 6' x 70', was completed in Feb. 1979 and is in the New Haven Department of Welfare. It is our first major mural project in the sense that we had enough time to research and develop the theme in depth with New Haveners, and also in that we had the time to develop our technical and compositional skills during the painting process. Though painted by two people, this mural represents the combined efforts of the city administration, CETA carpenters, the Welfare Dept. staff, local paint and art stores, other artists, as well as about 40 clients, staff, and friends who posed for us. And the mural theme represents the dialogue we had with our audience, the clients and staff of the Welfare Department as well as many others outside the department who offered opinions about welfare and suggestions for the painting. We are very happy that the mural has



Office Panel of city welfare mural, New Haven, Connecticut by Terry Lennox and Ruth Resnick. Full Mural is 6'x70'.



Hallway Panel of mural at city welfare office, New Haven Connecticut titled "We Can Do It All Better Together in Peace, In Joy, In Love," directed by Terry Lennox and Ruth Resnick, 1977-79. Photo: Terry Lennox.

generated interest well beyond the painting. It has been the most publicized and is the best known community art work in the city to date.

We feel the reception of the mural is related directly to its relevance to the people of the city, that it is about New Haveners and that it is a message of hope. The theme is one of outrage and of joy. We wanted to communicate the injustice we feel is taking place against people on welfare, not only in terms of their suffering, but because society tends to blame exactly these people for their suffering. We want our mural to help shift the blame from the victims of poverty to where it really belongs — to the institutions and system which work against assuring the basic necessities of life to all individuals in that society. The mural is about the strengths of people as they meet their problems. It is about the vitality, heritage, and humanity of our community. It is about those who have grasped the confidence to effect positive change in their personal lives and in their community.

We hope that this mural and our next mural which will be in the city jail result in an increased awareness of art as a component of community planning, the beautification of the urban environment with art, and the increased awareness of art as a mouthpiece of and portrait of a community. With this grant, our intention is to paint in public buildings which are visually depressing, and which historically are the last to house art of any kind.

Opportunities for public artists are diminishing in New Haven. Most full time CETA artists have been terminated over the past seven months due to tightening federal guidelines. Plans for future CETA art projects are minimal at this time. The City administration which has actively supported the arts lost the recent primary. Many artists are now unemployed and are questioning the future climate for the community arts in New Haven.

There are a few programs in which community artists can find employment. One of these is the Title VII Emergency School Aid Act program to promote harmonious inter-racial, inter-cultural understanding among youth in the school system. Another program is the City Spirit Program which originated in 1976 in New Haven.

City Spirit, in its fourth year, is moving to incorporate as a non-profit community artists' cooperative. Murals will be only one of several disciplines involved in the program. As muralists, we feel that an artist administered structure will best facilitate more comprehensive mural planning in New Haven. We are involved with City Spirit because its aim is to develop as an ongoing, community-linked organization which will provide employment for community artists, and which will last beyond changes in administrations and public funding, and changes in its membership.

Dartington College of Arts Department of Art and Design in Devon, England

recently set up a new course concerned with art and society. The intention is to explore new forms in art and to question existing assumptions upon which art and art education are based. Students are to work in the community as artists and assist others to participate in the arts. Included on the faculty are David Harding, who has worked for the last ten years as "town artist" at Glenrothes New Town. A newspaper has been produced with pages taken from diaries, sketchbooks, photographs, notebooks, and articles written for the **Dartington Voice** to show some of the results. Students worked at Housing Estates (low income housing projects), community centers, prisons, railways, factories, council offices, schools and farms. Much work remained at doing research and arriving at impressions of social consciousness. But many students worked directly in the community.

Two students, Jennie Bancroft and Vicki Champion, worked with 14-17 yr. olds to form a group named Matt Vinyl and the Under-Coats.

"Once we had overcome their initial justifiable distrust of officialdom, their reaction to the question of what we should do changed from 'Uh..I dunno', to a positive stream of ideas and suggestions. Their ideas were of primary importance to us in most decision-making situations. As we frequently pointed out to them, they would have to live with whatever changes we made in the space." They produced a mural in an arts center shared by two schools.

David Harding writes "I don't think we have this course on the right beam yet, but we are working hard at it and hope we can crack it."

Scotland Project

Elizabeth Kemp writes about working with Craigmillar Festival Society Community Arts Team. "The project of painting the Youth Club Hut was conceived as part of a scheme to upgrade the Niddrie/Bingham Tunnel area in Craigmillar; the workers involved in the designing and implementing of the scheme being . . . 3 "outside" artists, 3 local adults and 8 local teenagers — all . . . employed under a Jobs Creation Programme . . . The children, the team and I decided that the monsters theme would compliment the prehistoric scenes in the tunnel, painted a few weeks earlier. A day's drawing and designing with some 50 children later and we had 4 monsters which would eventually menace, amuse and brighten up the neighborhood . . . Over the 8 months (with time off for winter) of the Hut's painting, the C.A.T. (Community Arts Team) developed a friendly and hard-working relationship with the youngsters in the area . . . No aspect of the Team's work was unaided by the kids whether painting or laying slabs and we all worked together in a happy atmosphere of cheek, adventure, fun and companionship which built up lasting friendships between all involved. (In the final celebration of our work . . . (we) congratulated ourselves on as good bit of work, feeling that we had satisfied two major precepts of public painting in a living environment. Firstly, the inclusion and involvement of as many interested people and children as possible, and secondly, the attainment of technical

quality which makes the finished mural an attractive thing to look at for those who have not, perhaps, been involved in the actual painting. These two aims . . . are personal ones and are obviously affected by the lack of overt social and political beliefs readily translated into pictorial form (where) I have worked in Scotland, in contrast to most mural work in the States."

Children Are Our Future/Nuestros Niños Son Nuestro Futuro

Chicago Mural Group, Humboldt Park Area, California and Bloomingdale Artists: Celia Radek, Catherine Candjig, John Weber

Notes on Community Relations and Hand-Build Cement

The artists' goals were to do a mural incorporating large amounts of text-poetry, statistics, etc. concerning the International Year of the Child (the stats were of local drop-out and youth unemployment rates) together with relief materials handled somewhat abstractly. Two of us were salaried as CETA supervisors by Youth Service Project Inc., an independent agency existing largely on government contracts. YSP wanted a showpiece and in addition wanted to please the two aldermen who had helped obtain funding for the program. YSP asked us to do "matching" murals one each in the two adjacent wards. With this heavy load of technical, aesthetic and "political" requirements, we set out to find a site — assbackwards. We hoped the community would go along.

The site possibilities along the ward boundary were quite limited. Our information about organization in the immediate vicinity was even more so. Our main concern was acceptance by a local gang. Failing to make effective contact with gang leaders at our first site, a large wall on a major corner, we chose an underpass (with one side in each ward) where we knew the local branch of the club. With our team we remade our entire concept to fit this semi-enclosed more pedestrian oriented space. We decided to emphasize the character of the space by shifting to cement relief with hand-set mosaic ornament, materials which could warm up an underpass, but which would be lost to traffic at a major intersection. All these considerations were legitimate but they overlooked the specificity of the audience. On the day we brought our crew over to begin work, two older residents asserted this specificity by threatening to kill us all if we touched the white paint which they, as it turned out, had been maintaining for years. Their block club (another belated discovery!) refused to oppose them. In desperation we turned for advice to the Westtown Concerned Citizen's Coalition. The new site, a half mile further east seemed scruffily industrial but the residents and local businesses welcomed us. Determined not to make the same mistake twice in one summer, we spent many hours introducing ourselves door to door, getting to know block leaders, older residents, teachers, precinct captains, etc. This attention to "detail" continued throughout the project. The "pay-off" was a dedication largely organized by the residents with a surplus of home-made refreshments and a mural untouched by graffiti.

I offer this anecdote in a spirit of self-criticism. Our attitude in taking the neighborhood for granted is one which is built into many of the service programs on which mural work often depends. Our "politics" slips into being that of municipal patronage rather than that of the people's self-organizing. We put the cart before the horse. We were able to rescue our project only because years of mural work in the general area have built up a store of good will with community organizations and created a broad grass-roots audience. The remedy for this problem cannot be superficially political "brigade" painting if that also takes the audience for granted or operates in an organizational vacuum. The artist's work necessarily involved consultation, investigation and explanation **before, during and after** — meetings, door to door, leaflets, posters and dedications.

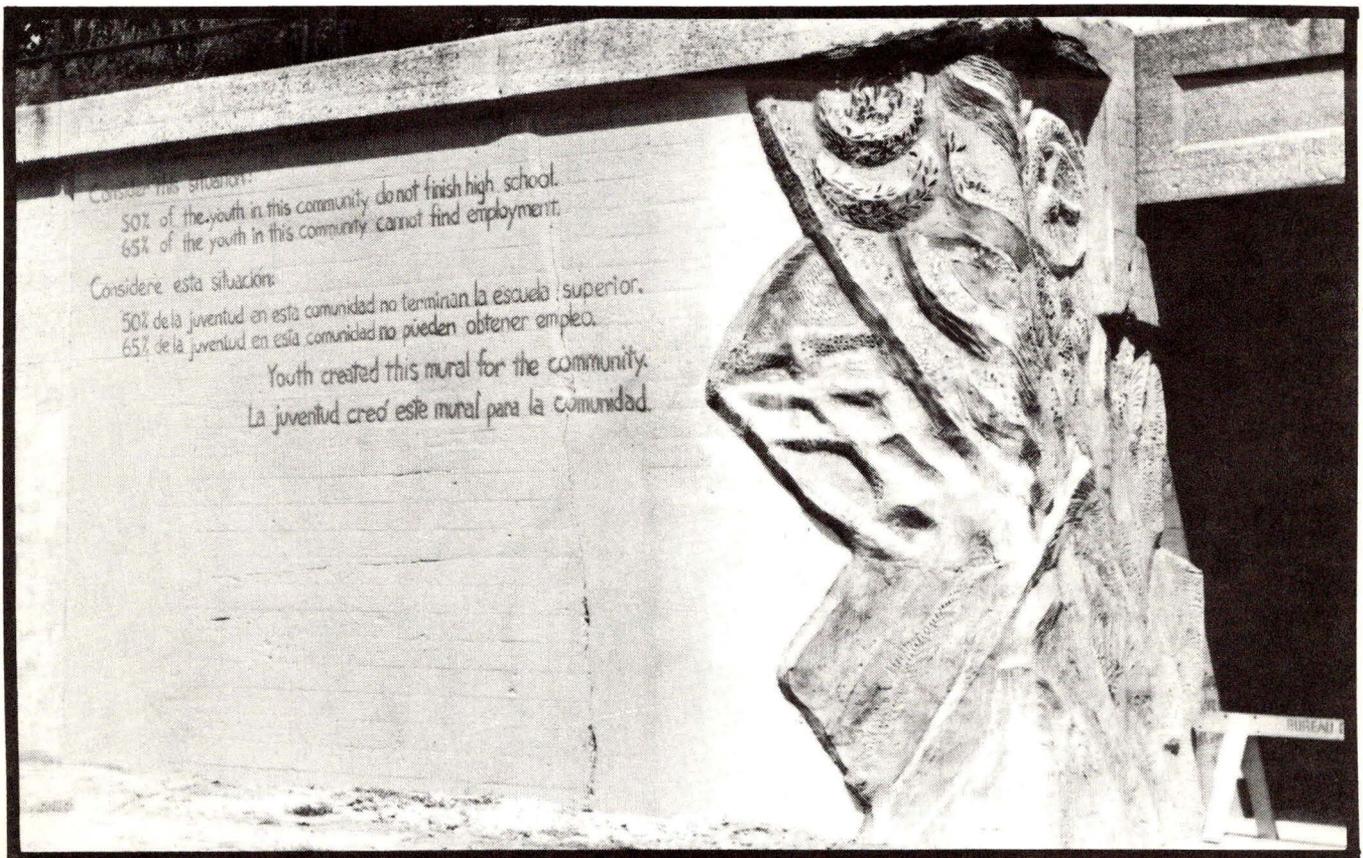
In the work itself, the text (bilingual), especially our collective poem, and the semi-enclosing environmental effect of the multiple surfaces used were interesting, but the cement work was the highlight for us and for the audience. We used a hand-built method rather than casting. Because of the "slump" of the concrete, right angle cuts are impossible — all planes slope. A "corrugated" effect is natural to the method. Lag screws of varying lengths were set in holes spaced 12" max. apart and following the ridges of the design (a rough clay model). A layer of hardware mesh (1/2") was hung on the bolts for each 1" layer of concrete. Maximum depth was a little more than 4". We

used a grout mix with Albitol additive (supplied by Material Service Corp., a major midwest construction firm, — along with technical advice). A final layer was tinted with integral color (dry pigment in the mix) to an ochre tone. This layer was then textured with tools, imprinted with various objects or, in the upper portions, decorated with hand set time or colored glass. Approximately 25 square feet could be done each day. After completion the relief was caulked and sealed with water lox giving it a bronze sheen.

The work was exhausting (especially the drilling) and not all our CETA youth workers shared our enthusiasm for it. We lost for all practical purposes almost half of our team in the process perhaps in part because the change of media and the use of four surfaces made gaining an overview of the day to day progress difficult. Those who stuck it out rightfully shared our pride.

I feel experimentation with permanent materials is vitally important. There is now little opposition to murals per se from the city government, as long as they can be ignored and are disposable. In areas slated for redevelopment, the creation of non-disposable community art can be supportive to the struggle of residents to control the future of the neighborhoods.

John Weber



Detail of "Children Are Our Future/Nuestros Niños Son Nuestro Futuro," 1979, painted by Celia Radek, Catherine Cajandig, John Weber; Chicago.

Other 1979 Murals in Chicago (very incomplete)

CMG's José Guerrero completed panels for the outside of El Rincón, a drug treatment center. With numerous small scale figures, the panels comment caustically on the business of drug addiction and the need for revolutionary action.

CMG's Calvin Jones and Mitchell Caton repainted the side of Donnelly Youth Center with a brilliantly colored montage of African masks and scenes of the Black southside.

CMG helped host the Orlando Letelier Brigade. The brigade artists decorated both sides of the Humboldt Blvd. underpass with designs drawn from Chilean sources relating to international solidarity worker unity and Puerto Rican independence.

Nearby Mona Lessman executed a beautiful circular emblem for her block in conjunction with a community garden.

A mile further west Galamiel Ramirez is directing the completion of a set of panels at the Westtown YM-CA center.

The **Raices Antiguas** show in Chicago is coordinated with mural tours and numerous film and video showings and poster exhibits thanks to José Gonzalez and Victor Sorell. It's great to see so many muralists in a museum show!

We also enjoyed the visit of Mireille Mahous, a student from Montpellier in France, who spent a month studying and participating in murals in Chicago. Mireille also visited New York, Detroit, Joliet, Madison, Ann Arbor, Cleveland and Yellow Springs.

"Ancient Roots / New Visions" (Raices Antiguas / Visiones Nuevas)

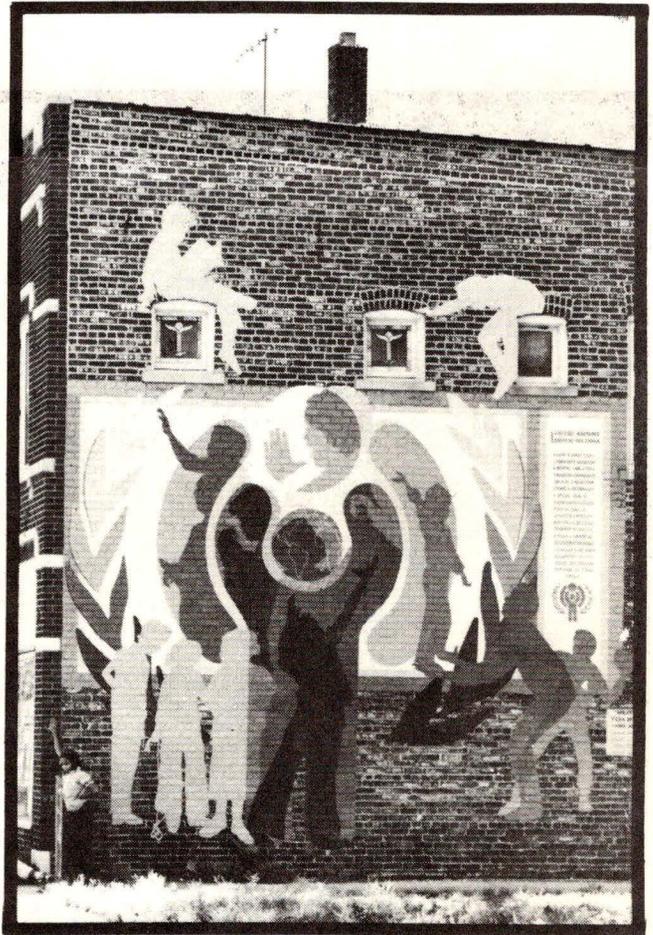
was shown at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art, Aug. 18 — Oct. 28, 1979. It is the first national touring exhibition of Latino art in the United States. Artists represent Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican and South American communities. The exhibition includes painting, drawing, sculpture, graphics, mixed media and photography by 80 artists from across the country and a selection of 12 artists from the Midwest. Events and activities available to schools and community organizations included lectures, fiestas, film and video festivals, bus tours of murals and poetry readings. The mural tours were led by Victor Sorell, Chairperson of the Department of Art, Chicago State University and Chicago area muralists. A bilingual commentary was provided. Muralists involved included Aurelio Díaz, Pilsen muralist Malu Ortega y Alberro, co-designer of the Benito Juarez High School murals, Oscar Martínez, Puerto Rican muralist and member of the Chicago Mural Group and José Guerrero, Mexican muralist and member of the Chicago Mural Group.

Public Art Workshop Celebrates Year of the Child

The International Year of the Child was celebrated on Chicago's West Side with the dedication of a new mural by the Public Art Workshop on July 29, 1979. The mural is titled "West Side's Year of the Child," and was painted by the Workshop's artists and students. Its design is based on the official logo of the Year of the Child and images of West Side children and adults. Muralists were Mark Rogovin and Barbara Browne, and their team: Johnnie Alexander, Yogi Bumpers and Carol Hennings.

The year was proclaimed the International Year of the Child by the General Assembly of the United Nations, and the 20' x 22' mural is dedicated to children — their experiences and dreams for the future. "We're doing this in support of West Side youth," said muralist Rogovin. "The schools, housing, health-care, the neighborhood — all aspects of their lives that need to be improved. Children are our future, and we want the best for them."

Public support for the mural has come in the form of "Shares in the Future" certificates being "sold" to individuals and small businesses contributing to the project.



"West Side's Year of the Child" Photograph: Public Art Workshop.

Gill Park Women's Equality Mural

Notes from Cynthia Weiss, Chicago Mural Group, Sept. 1979

Barry Bruner and Cynthia came to the project with the theme established in their minds. (Carol Yasko joined later) "We wanted to paint a mural promoting women's equality in these times of eroding abortion rights, an E.R.A. standstill, violence against women on the rise and the wage differential between men and women larger now than in 1952 . . . We tried to organize our advisory committee to mirror the neighborhood, including Black, Latin, Anglo members, working class and professional middle class . . . We expected some opposition from organized professionals in the East Lakeview Neighbors block club and tried to win them over by involving them. Four of their members (one who had objected to murals with political messages and wanted just something happy, like clowns and balloons) joined our committee." A CETA team of 3 male and 3 female teenagers was formed with the first assignment to interview their mothers.

"Discrimination in housing, lack of access for single parents with families was the most common response. Also, hopes that their children would finish high school and enter college was mentioned by all . . .

Our final design concentrated on equality in five different areas: equality in child care, economic, political, (passage of the E.R.A.) in sports and in housing. We left out domestic equality, and opposition to sexist personal relationships, as well as violence against women: equally crucial issues, yet even more difficult to depict.

During June we discovered a great coincidence; the National Organization for Women was planning its annual Walk-A-Thon fundraiser on August 26, Women's Equality Day, to begin and end at Gill Park . . . (we) merged forces to combine our dedication with their Walk-A-Thon. The presence of the largest women's organization in America added greater energy to the project, and expanded the audience for the mural . . . (At the dedication) the marriage of community mural and national organization wasn't ideal. Many folks weren't sure what all the speeches were about, others felt the spotlight was on the E.R.A., not on the mural where it belonged . . . But overall, the combination of events was really thrilling . . . Neighborhood kids ran over to hear the Salsa band play . . . (their greatest critic) was visibly moved when she told me she had . . . the opportunity to talk with Ellie Smeal (national president of N.O.W.), a woman she had long admired . . . it was a good day for women, and for murals."



Gill Park Women's Equality Mural, Chicago Mural Group, September 1979. Painted by Barry Bruner, Cynthia Weiss and Caryl Yasko. "We wanted to paint a mural promoting women's equality in these times of eroding abortion rights, and E.R.A. standstill, violence against women on the rise, and the wage differential between men and women larger now than in 1952." A CETA team of three male and three female teenagers was formed with the first assignment to interview their mothers about the proposed topic. "We expected some opposition from organized professionals in the East Lakeview Neighbors block club and tried to win them over by involving them . . . Four of their members joined our committee."

Chicago — Raza Murals

On September 7, 1979, an article appeared in a Chicago newspaper called "Art Facts: Exploring the Great Walls of Chicago," written by John Kennedy. We have only a portion of the article, but thought the description of some of the murals in Chicago's Pilsen barrio, visited with José Gonzalez, would be worth sharing.

"Over the last ten years or so, the drab walls of Pilsen have been the targets of a series of colorful explosions, the latest offensive of Chicago's mural movement. The signatures of some of the neighborhood's better known aesthetic guerrillas, names like Ray Patlán, Aurelio Díaz, Marcos Raya, Salvador Vega, and many others, can be found in small lettering at the bottoms of the murals — sometimes singly, other times in collaboration. A mural artist himself, José Gonzalez is clearly proud of the movement. And in turn, the artists, respect his judgment.

"Soon we're at 21st and Laflin, where one of the neighborhood's largest murals is in progress along the 200 foot east wall of the Benito Juárez High School gymnasium complex. A single painter on a stepladder dabs away at a rust-colored pattern near the top of the ten-foot abstract design. As José and I walk up to him, Marcos Raya lays his brush down near the plastic paint bucket and tilts his painter's visor back over his thick frizzy hair: 'Well, José, what do you think?' They both smile quietly for a minute. 'I like it — the color patterns especially . . . What about these black lines though? . . .' José and Marcos walk down the length of the mural pointing, nodding, shaking their heads. I take the opportunity for a closer, or rather a further look at the Juárez mural. It's a massive, flaming stretch of colors and stylized figure, some depicted as working, others clearly in battle. At first sight we think of Picasso's Guernica gone Technicolor.

"Designed by muralists Jaime Longoria and Malu Ortega y Alberro, it's scheduled for dedication on September 16, Mexican Independence Day. Neither Marcos nor two of his co-painters who walk up and join us, Oscar Maya and Salvador Vega, are quite sure what the so far untitled mural's content is, but all three have been at work for over a month now on what will surely be one of Pilsen's grander pieces of barrio art. When José and I leave at about 6 PM, the three of them are still at work, in a sea of half-empty paint cans.

"Yes, the Juárez mural is in an abstract medium. It's not like many of the more traditional murals, with easily recognized figures from Mexican or Aztec history. But I'd say that it's going to be a landmark mural.' So thinks Victor Sorell, who'll be leading the first of eight weekend tours of Chicago mural art . . . Working with Gonzalez and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sorell has scheduled bus tours of the Chicano murals in the Pilsen neighborhood and the Puerto Rican mural work in the Humboldt Park area. After my tour with José, I gave Sorell a call.

"Chicago's mural movement really dates back to 1967 and a work called Wall of Respect by a black man, William Walker. But it's correct to speak of a mural movement in the Pilsen and Humboldt Park neighborhoods too." Sorell, who's just completed a second edition of his guide to Chicago's murals, and

who's conducted many mural tours over the past few years, talked about the role murals play in these communities.

"Ideally, the murals should speak to very human concerns, the one that often go overlooked in art. Some of the Pilsen murals, for example, document the plight of the worker, some touch on issues like housing or human rights. Most deal with racial heritage and cultural identity, in one way or another. They reflect the life in the community, and that's one reason why you seldom see any of the murals defaced.'

"But in a practical sense, the murals do much more. They add color. Pilsen's buildings, its architecture, are mostly nondescript. If there's anything in Pilsen that's really Latino, more than even the people, more than even the street and shop signs, it's the murals. They survive because they speak to the interests of the community. Most of these artists live in the community and their work comes from interaction and dialogue with the people who live there. It's a community movement, and not in any lukewarm sense either.'

It should be noted that the Benito Juárez School was designed (in the last few years) to include spaces for murals as part of its basic architecture. Other murals mentioned in Kennedy's article include Raya's "Homenaje a Diego Rivera" and Gonzalez' "La Raza de Oro," at Hubbard and Sangamon.

London — Battersea Bridge Mural Destroyed, Muralist Arrested

Wandsworth mural workshop sent an appeal to support the continued existence of the Battersea mural which was threatened by a massive redevelopment of offices and luxury flats. The mural took two years to complete by local people and was coordinated by the Wandsworth Mural Workshop. It depicts many of the conflicts in areas where inner city decay and vacated industrial sites are providing possibilities for highly profitable developments at the expense of local needs. All 45 portraits are of people living and working in Wandsworth and includes many familiar landmarks. There was never any graffiti or vandalism and the enormous 4,000 sq. ft. wall has become one of the most respected murals in the country. The painting shows a huge broom sweeping away the "rubbish" of Battersea, old factories, trendy restaurants, etc. The "Rubbish" is incinerated in a wall of flame which routs the local Tory councillors whose policies are totally opposite to the ideas seen in the mural. The mural's life expectancy was short.

Completed in October 1978, the mural was recently destroyed as the first step in the redevelopment of the large factory it shields. A large crowd spontaneously resisted the destruction of the wall, and its principal muralist, Brian Barnes, was arrested and charged with several serious crimes for trying to defend his work.

Artist and union clash over 'T' mural

Pact reached over aide's pay

By Timothy Dwyer
Globe Staff

For Karen Moss it was a question of artistic integrity.

Today, less than a week after the question was first raised, Karen Moss, an artist, went back to work, artistic integrity intact.

Moss, 34, a Boston artist, was commissioned to paint a large mural on the MBTA Green Line structure at North Station.

After completing one-third of the work, representatives of the Sign, Pictorial and Display Union, Local 391, picketed her work site, demanding that she join the union.

Representatives of the union, Moss said, also said she should pay her assistant, who is an art student, union wages and benefits.

"People from the union had been coming around all last week," Moss said in a telephone interview. "And they picketed on Friday and told me that I would have to discontinue work on the mural."

Moss has a subcontract with the MBTA to paint one of four murals planned for the Green Line. It is part of a \$785,000 contract awarded to Town Hall Construction Corp. of Woodside, N.Y., to sandblast, paint and make structural repairs on the Green Line from North Station to Lechmere station.

The mural, called Leaves N' Links, will be 70 feet long and 9 feet high. To paint the mural, Moss is raised 20 feet by a hydraulic truck.

When the union set up the picket line, some men told Moss that they would finish the mural



The man who drives the hydraulic truck, an employee of Town Hall Construction Corp., honored the picket line. "It wasn't a question of honoring the picket line," a company spokesman said. "If the union told us to stop work, we do."

But Moss said: "Nobody else can finish this painting. I'm the only one that can do it. There's no blueprint for it; it's all up in my head."

"No sign painter can do it. This isn't any paint by numbers."

But the union didn't agree and last Friday the work stopped. The union and Moss remained at an impasse, until a meeting was arranged between the MBTA and union officials.

Donald Burns, MBTA project manager, met with union officials yesterday morning and said the problem was solved by Moss agreeing to pay her assistant in accordance with pay scales for federally sponsored contracts.

The MBTA informed the union that Karen Moss has a subcontract and is in

agreement with it," Burns said. Under the contract, Moss does not have to join the union, according to Burns.

A spokesman for the union could not be reached for comment last night.

Moss said she saw the union's interest in her mural as a test case, a chance to get in on the painting of two other murals still to be painted at Science Park and Canal street.

"They said they were offering me a special privilege to join the union," Moss said. "I know of other women who have tried to join the union and could not. But now they tell me they have a special drive to get women into the union."

"But what is at stake here is for artists like myself to execute art and do works of art for display in public places. It definitely is different than painting signs for Donnelly Advertising."

BOSTON: MURALS VS. UNION

In a letter sent in February, Ms. Moss adds the following comments about the experience. "It was an extremely difficult situation for me, as I was the first artist of the four (who had commissions to paint the murals) to work outside in public view. That made me the brunt of all kinds of abuse, especially from Sign Painters Union, Local 391. They were threatened by the fact that I was a woman and that I didn't want to join their union. I was the guinea pig in this project and some big issues were raised:

- 1) Do artists have the right to design and execute their own murals on union construction sites — or must they hire union workers to execute their design, while they supervise the union workers?
- 2) Can cities afford to pay artists enough so that they can hire union workers to execute their designs?
- 3) In the case of my mural, I had no clear diagram of the finished result, so it would have been impossible for anyone to take over the project. . . If union workers are to execute public art, all designs must be "paint by numbers" in style.
- 4) Regarding women and the union, I felt they were interested in getting me to join for the wrong reasons: a) to meet equal opportunity quotas; b) to set a precedent for artists to be in unions when they are commissioned to do public art projects.

Since your last issue of the Newsletter, one other MBTA project has been completed. The artist was a man and was hassled by the union for one afternoon. He also refused to join. In addition, the mural shown in the photograph was vandalized. Just before Christmas, black paint was thrown on it from the street twenty feet below. It is unclear who was responsible, but some people think it was the union getting back at me."

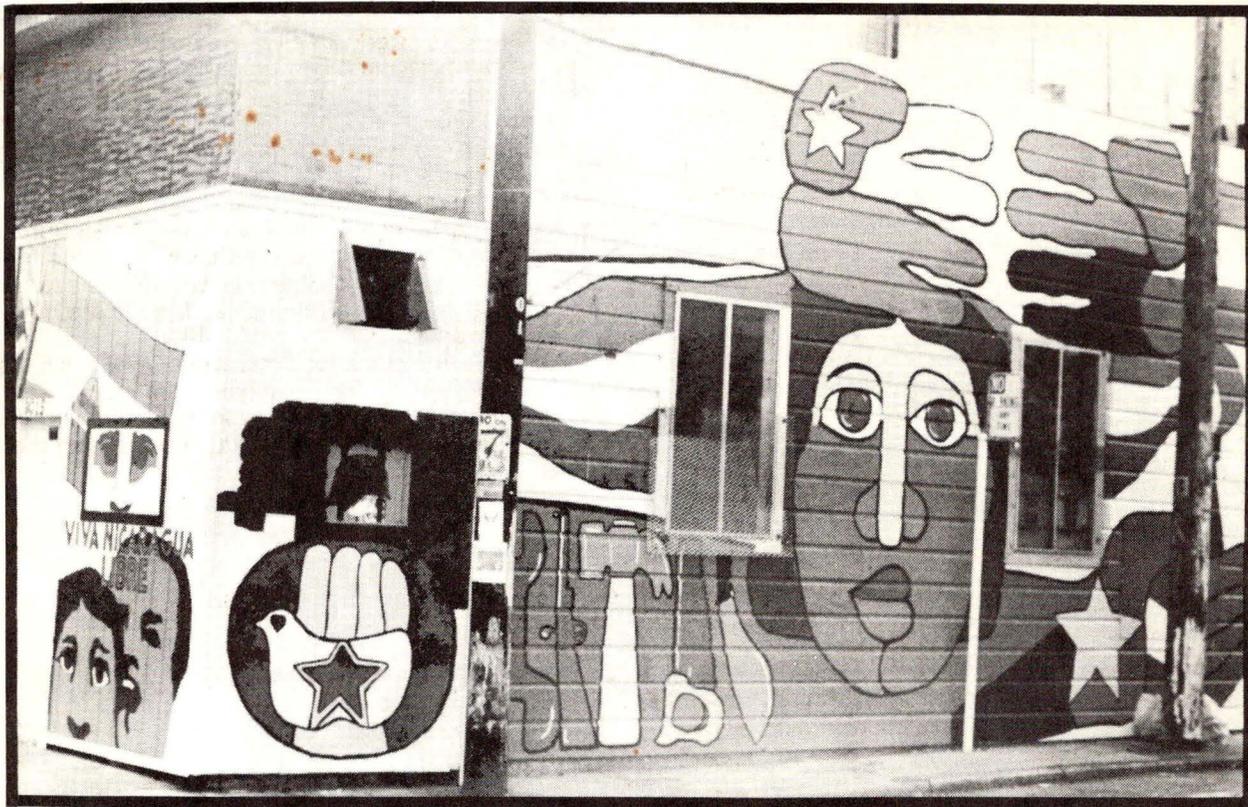
Karen Moss

"Public Works" on the Public Works Building, Norwich, Connecticut, by Eva Cockcroft with Jerry Wadsworth.

This is one of four outdoor murals in the Norwich CETA project. Lots of really fine indoor murals were painted in City Hall, the Legal Services Offices (LEGACY), hospitals, etc., as well as several sculptures in the year-long program. However, in spite of the visible achievements and growing popularity of the project, City Hall terminated the project after one year mainly because of their "distrust" of artists.



"Public Works" on the Public Works Building, Norwich, Connecticut, by Eva Cockcroft with Jerry Wadsworth. Photograph: Eva Cockcroft



Casa Sandino, 24th Street and Balmy Alley, San Francisco, CA, 1979 painted by the Orlando Letelier Brigade.

The Casa Sandino is a local source of information about Nicaragua, particularly important because of the large number of Nicaraguans living in San Francisco. The Letelier Brigade has painted similar murals in several other cities across the U.S., and their style combines current issues with Chilean design characteristics. Photograph: Tim Drescher.

San Francisco Murals

The Sunset Mural Group is completing its huge 223 foot long project on a retaining wall at A.P. Giannini Jr. High School at 39th Ave. and Ortega. Henry Sultan and Julia Marshall are the artists coordinating the mural. The theme is the history of the Sunset District of San Francisco and is one of the few murals in that area. When the mural was opposed briefly by a crank living near the mural, the community turned out in full support, which indicates the legwork, research and public relations done by the group gave them the broad community base they needed. In deference to popular opinion, toned down colors were deemed to be more appropriate to the basically suburban area and were used.

A second women's mural has been completed by Fran Valesco for the Administration Building of the YWCA in downtown San Francisco. The mural has been painted on an 8 foot circle of plywood and will hang in the lobby. It was specifically designed to be portable so that it can be used at various YWCA and Women's Conferences.

The first mural in the outer Richmond District has also been completed at the Balboa Theater. Conceived of

by the Richmond Beautification Project, Playland Research Foundation and with materials donated by local merchants the theme concerns a celebration of Playland at the Beach (a now defunct amusement park area which functioned for many years and then was razed. The land is being sought for a park by area residents and those who have fond memories of the amusement park; developers are also attempting to acquire the land for expensive high rise condominiums). Movie stars as heroic figures are also incorporated in the design. The project was completed by CETA summer youth, local volunteers and Fran Valesco and took well over a year to finish.

Santa Rosa, California

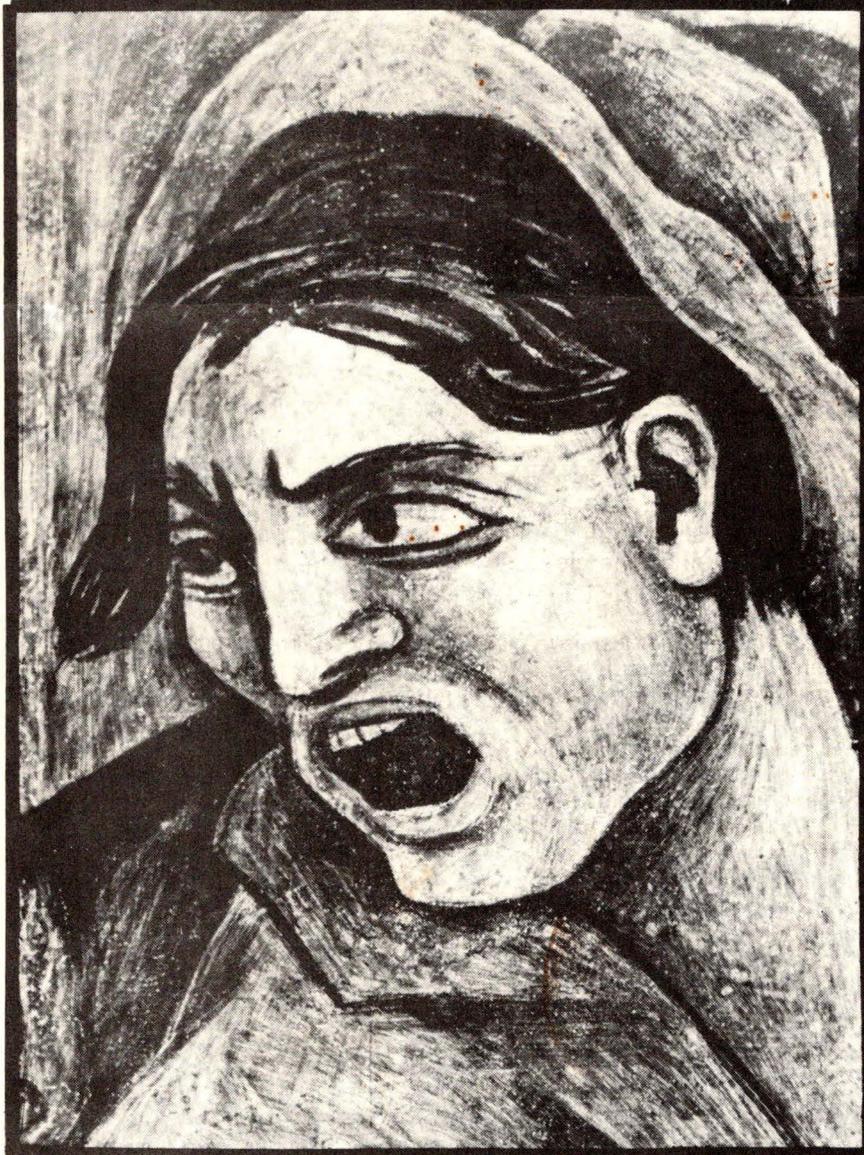
Santa Rosa is a suburb city in Sonoma County which is located not far north of San Francisco. Early this spring saw the completion of the Ninth Street Overpass mural by artists James Curtis and Charles Churchill. Native plants abound in the panorama, which is a tribute to Luther Burbank (1849-1926), the famous horticulturist who lived and worked in the Sonoma County area.

Curtis first thought of the mural project three years ago. He wrote to Cal Trans, the state agency responsible for constructing and maintaining the freeway system in California; they liked the idea. He then got permission from the Santa Rosa City Council. The Sonoma County Arts Council loaned him a room at Lincoln Arts Center to work on his four by thirty foot sketch; he persuaded Malvino's and Boysen paint companies to donate the paint. The city gave him a \$40

materials allowance and sent the street department to wash the wall, after he'd cleaned it with muriatic acid. The wall is now the city's property and maintenance responsibility.

He was presented a merit award for Cultural Enrichment by the city of Santa Rosa for the execution of the Burbank Mural on the Ninth Street Overpass. Curtis also worked on a mural at Omlet Express and on one at Roseland Hardware, which also has Luther Burbank as its theme. He gives a warm thank you to his friend and assistant, Charles Churchill, without whose truck the logistics of scaffolding and supplies "never would've worked."

He has future plans for a mural depicting the history of transportation for a local elementary school auditorium/cafeteria, and for working with children on an outside wall of the Pomo Native American Indian Museum.



Detail of mural by Pablo O'Higgins. Photo: Steven Lafer

typesetting by La Raza Graphic Center, S.F.