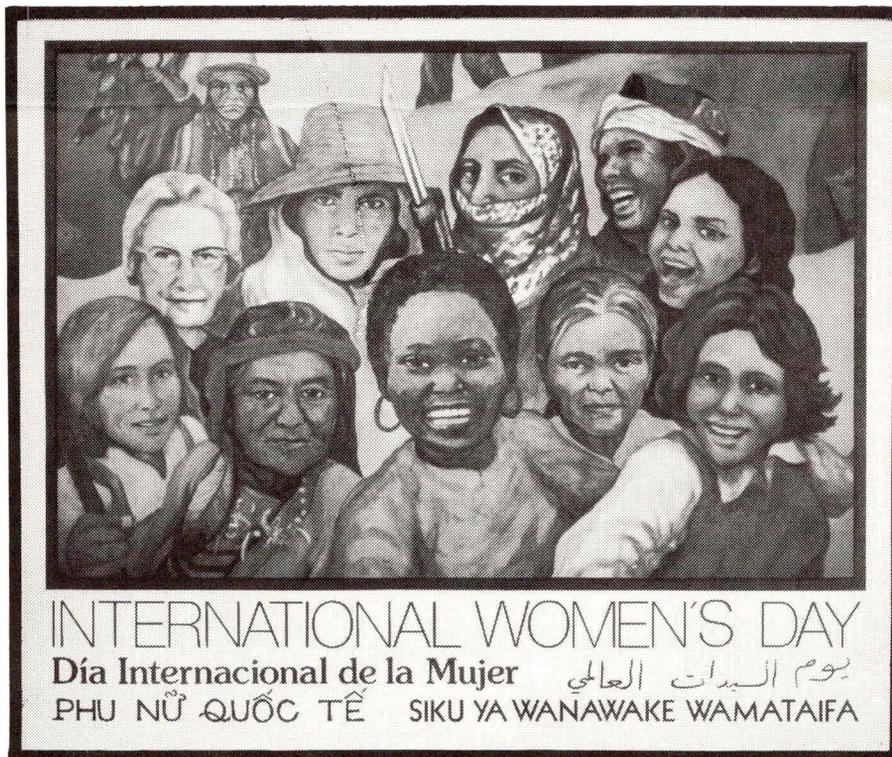




# COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1980



Cover: A poster image from her mural "Sistersongs of Liberation" by Jane Norling, designed by Jane Norling, Gail Dolgin, photograph by Tim Drescher. An example of how the impact of murals can be extended throughout a larger community.

## Editorial: NOT JUST MURALS

A curious thing has been happening: muralists have discovered that painting a mural is not the only way their artistic abilities can be put to use in the service of their communities. In this issue of the **Newsletter** there are several articles about artists whose work has taken them away from murals, but not away from a political-social commitment to work with people in communities of all sorts struggling to find tools which can help them gain some measure of control over their lives.

Muralists, recognizing economic need as well as social involvement, have taken images from their murals and made greeting/note cards with them. Others have found (professional) employment doing design work or illustrating progressive publications.

The possible extensions of mural images are many. David Avalos, who works with the Centro Cultural de la Raza and with the Committee on Chicano Rights in San Diego, California, writes that a mini-poster was produced of the central image in a mural "painted by junior high school students in 1976. It was defaced with racist slogans immediately after it was completed. The students decided to repaint it, and it was once again defaced with slogans like "fuck the Mexicans." It was then whitewashed, but I feel that the mini-poster brings back to life something that had died. The mural has proven indestructible.

"That of course is an interesting characteristic of the reproduced image. You might tear up the copy you received, but hundreds of others exist to be seen. Both the mural and the poster are public art but with vastly different qualities."

In a similar realization, Jane Norling used a detail from mural "Sistersongs of Liberation" and together with a number of supporters, both men and women, made a Women's Day poster which is much more widely visible than the mural. And it also celebrates the spirit of the mural, which is the spirit of women everywhere joining to realize their potential to fight for the liberation of all people.

Muralists have applied mural techniques to painting backdrops for theater productions — and street/park demonstrations. In some cases, these later serve as permanent backdrops for public spaces, coffee houses, etc. Others have painted banners to be carried in marches and rallies. There is a tradition, in England, of unions marching with elaborate and intricately detailed banners depicting the history of their work and union.

Several muralists, of course, teach. Some teach about art history, some about painting, and a few even get to teach about theory and practice of mural painting. But the teaching done in a school is different than the teaching done while working on a wall.

And we should not forget, if we are looking for historical predecessors of our involvement with other media than murals, the Mexican revolutionary muralists' work for **El Machete**, a political newspaper published by the Syndicate of Technical Workers, Painters and Sculptors in the 1920s.

In the following articles note the ways in which Muralists have utilized their abilities in other media than murals, and remember, muralists also produce this **Newsletter**.

## TO ALL MURALISTS & CONCERNED ARTISTS A small proposal for joint action against war preparations.

As things are: the muralists are divided. Where is the "mural movement?" We are "tied up" with our jobs, our individual projects, our pursuit of grants, our personal survival. Survival is a problem for each of us, but is our "movement" surviving? — a movement to serve the people, to create an art of consciousness?

Bill Walker's idea: last summer Bill suggested that all concerned muralists join together to paint on one common theme at one site, in order to make our common purpose visible to all. Each artist (or team of artists) would paint a section in his/her own style and imagery interpreting the common theme.

Our proposal: that this idea be carried out this summer!! in late August-early September, immediately following the end of summer CETA during a period of two weeks only. Many of us will have both time and left-over materials then. The site: a railroad viaduct (or wherever we can). The participating artists will sponsor the project themselves. No grants, no pay, and no censorship. We will collectively choose the time, place and ground rules, unifying elements, etc. Poets, musicians, street theater groups could be invited to coordinate with the mural painting.

We propose a theme: **OPPOSITION TO WAR PREPARATION!** We believe the world situation demands urgent action on the part of all people of good will. Draft registration, big military spending, war hysteria promoted by the press all point toward World War III — coming soon. War preparation is a community issue — we are hiding our heads in the sand, and doing the youth of our communities no service if we fail to recognize that, and fail to spread our awareness. Resurgent militarism is closely linked to attacks on education, health care, to the resurgence of Klan-Nazi activity, to the energy "issue" (which masks the war-related nuclear industry and new seizures of Native American lands for "development") — there's lots and lots to paint about in this theme! We have an opportunity to influence and awaken public opinion in our communities. Let's set an example — that can give new life and direction to the public art movement.

Meanwhile: consider this proposal seriously.

proposal by: Marcos Raya,  
John Weber, Celia Radek

The **Newsletter** encourages all cities to consider this proposal and **TAKE ACTION!**

## HELP US

We have recently applied for foundation grants to help support this **Newsletter**. Some have already returned negative responses, but others remain outstanding. If you have any suggestions about where we may apply to help cover the cost of this beast, please let us know. A coupon is included to help those of you who can contribute to the **Newsletter**. Further donations are accepted. HELP

## NEXT ISSUE: REQUEST FOR SPECIAL ARTICLES

As mentioned below, ("Children's Murals do not have to be "Just Kids' Art") we would like to plan ahead a bit more and solicit specific articles on working with children/working in schools or any other special places, e.g., senior citizens' centers, any place where the community is somehow in a position where its members are cut off from the usual means of participating in art.

## DEADLINE

Deadline for material to be published in the next **Newsletter** is Friday, September 12, 1980. Material must be in our hands no later than that date. As you might have noticed, we are keeping to a publication schedule of at least twice a year, and material not in our hot little paws on deadline date will not be printed until the following **Newsletter**.

## SEND US IMAGES OF RECENT WORK

Send us black and white photos of murals, preferably full shots, but we'll use whatever we can. Images give us a better understanding of your project than words alone can give. Newspaper photos will work. SEND IMAGES!!

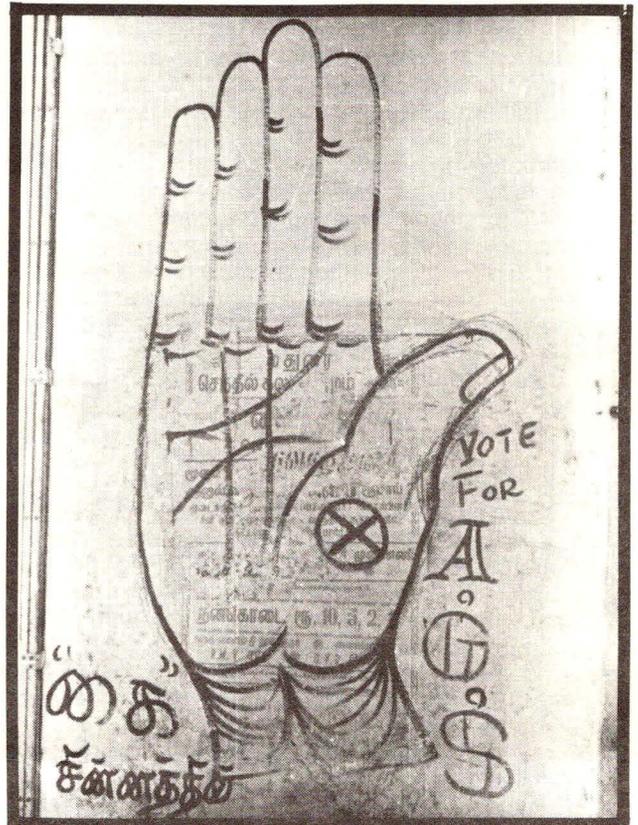
### Editorial Group

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

**Jo Seger**

and special thanks to Arlene Goldbard and Don Adams for their generous help in preparing funding requests.

Labor Donated



A large, four foot high hand symbol of Indira Gandhi from Maduri, India taken just before the recent elections.  
Photo: Michael Greenlaw

## **CHICANO VISUAL ARTS CONFERENCE AUSTIN, TEJAS SEPTEMBER 1979**

The first conference of Chicano visual arts was held at the University of Texas at Austin September 13-16, 1979. Chicano and Mexican artists, critics and art students attended this event. The participants from Wisconsin, Idaho, Illinois, Washington, Washington D.C., California and Texas, México City participated in workshops, presentations, concurrent stations, and round table discussions. Slide shows and movies were presented and the event included an exhibit (Espejo del Pueblo) done by Chicano Artists as well a photo exhibit by Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Mexican renown photographer. These sessions allowed the conference-goers to exchange information and express ideas dealing with problems in painting murals, photography, graphics, sculpture, textiles, performances, arts and crafts, alternative education, music, poetry, movie industry, theatre, history and community art projects.

The major focus of the conference was to evaluate critically the accomplishments past and present of Chicano art and to establish goals for the future. The foundation was also layed for a more dynamic, profound and fruitful relationship between Chicano art groups.

Chicano artists and critics agreed that Chicano art has represented and is representing social, political, and economic facets of the community.

The conference brought consciousness of other Latin American movements both artistic and social, and evoked a spirit of solidarity in both the cultural and human sense among Chicanos and Latin Americans of this continent.

The presence of the Mexican group tightened the bondage between Chicanos and Mexicans in the acknowledgement of mutual influences of a common heritage and in establishing a more diverse collaboration and exchange between both groups.

Two very important points that highlight the intellectual interchange of are that this encounter initiates the second decade or the second stage of Chicano art and the realization that Chicano art is undergoing a crucial moment in which there is an awareness of danger in the influence that the dominant system and the consumer society have over Chicano art and artists.

At the close of the conference the participants gave recognition to the organizers Mujeres Artistas del Suroeste (MAS) y la Liga Unida de Chicanos Artistas (LUCHA) and the committee of these two organizations. The members of this committee include Santa Barraza, Modesta Treviño, Sylvia Orozco Estrada, Juan Pablo Gutierrez, and Pedro Rodríguez.

A summary was made in the closing session of the enormous tasks which to be continued in fostering and providing directions for the future of Chicano Art. Also the approval of both artists and spectators of the content of this document was demonstrated by an unanimous consensus allowing their names to be included.

This conference was the first time in the history of the Chicano Movement that a conference dealt mainly with the history and relevance of Chicano/Latino art.

Chicanos/Mejicanos/Latinos are the inheritors of many years of cultural expression which often had accomplishments and discoveries that antedate the European, such as the Bonampak Figurative Murals and including the advancement in monumental public art in the 20th century by the likes of David Alfaro Siqueiros.

Chicano and Chicana muralistas such as Patricia Rodríguez, José Montoya, and Ray Patlán, from California, had a chance to share their thoughts and ideas about their experiences as muralists with Mexican muralist Mario Orozco Rivera and critic Raquel Tibol, along with all the other people who attended the conference.

A presentation titled "Alternative Schools for the Fine Arts" was given by Fermín Coronado, a Chicano muralist from Houston, Texas.

### **PRIMERA CONFERENCIA DE PLASTICA CHICANA**

Por Raquel Tibol

Del 13 al 16 de septiembre tuvo lugar en la Universidad de Texas, en Austin, la Primera Conferencia de la Plástica Chicana. Difícil fue convocarla, organizarla y celebrarla. Primero iba a ser una conferencia regional de las Mujeres Artistas del Suroeste de los Estados Unidos, donde milita una talentosa dibujante, pintora y diseñadora: Santa Barraza. Los hombres creyeron que la discriminación era anacrónica, como consecuencia de ello la Liga Unida de Chicanos Artistas (LUCHA) presionó para ampliar la participación. El movimiento plástico chicano esta muy extendido ya por muchas ciudades de todos los Estados Unidos, al punto que reunir a representantes de todos los grupos resultaba en si misma una tarea enorme y costosa. Como las agrupaciones chicanas no cuentan con fondo de reserva para reuniones excepcionales, iniciativas como la de una conferencia de artistas deben ir acompañadas de esfuerzos para conseguir el dinero indispensable. En el proceso de conseguir subvenciones, la conferencia pasó de regional a nacional estadounidense, y se decidió invitar a un grupo de mexicanos (la antropóloga Marcia Castro Leal, los pintores Adolfo Mexiac y Jaime Mejía, el fotógrafo Pedro Meyer y la crítica Raquel Tibol), así como colgar una exposición de fotografías de Manuel Alvarez Bravo. Por haber conseguido esta exposición los organizadores tuvieron mejores cartas para negociar la ayuda de la Universidad texana.

Se esperaba una concurrencia masiva que nunca apareció. Los participantes se vieron abultados por la asistencia de un grupo de estudiantes de la Escuela Nacional de Artes Plásticas de la UNAM que acudieron como observadores, y uno de ellos como ponente: Pio Pulido, ceramista de mucha inventiva y bien encaminado en el rescate de elementos

de arte antiguo y del arte popular, quien hizo sus primeras tablas como conferenciante en un salón de la renombrada Universidad de Austin.

La conferencia adquirió un aceptable nivel gracias a la participación de varios artistas chicanos de bien ganado renombre como el pintor, poeta y promotor cultural Jose Montoya, y los artistas Pedro Rodriguez, José Treviño, Juan Pablo Gutiérrez, Jesús Salvador Treviño, Raúl Valdez, Sylvia Orozco Estrada (esta última está estudiando en la Escuela Nacional de Artes Plásticas becada por el Partido La Raza Unida y el Conacyt) y otros más, así como de la historiadora y crítica de arte, experta en arte chicano, Shifra Goldman.

Correspondió a Sylvia Orozco (miembro del comité organizador) pronunciar las palabras de apertura. En ellas expresó la necesidad para los artistas chicanos de llegar a conclusiones más comprometidas, más reales, más estimulantes, menos elitistas y menos mercantilistas que las obtenidas en 1975 por el simposio sobre arte y literatura contemporáneos en América Latina, convocado por el Instituto de Estudios Latinoamericanos de la misma Universidad de Austin, con auxilio de la revista **Plural** y eliminación de los artistas chicanos, cuyo movimiento se había perfilado a fines de la década de los sesenta. "Ya hace muchos años —dijo Sylvia Orozco— que los chicanos hicieron los primeros carteles para protestar por la injusticia, para anunciar las huelgas, ya hace muchos años que se abrió el primer centro chicano con su riqueza de expresión cultural". Ella reclamó potenciar un arte como arma cultural crítica en contra del sistema que censura y condiciona la información cultural. Puso como ejemplo la ausencia del arte mexicano en los planes educativos de colegios y universidades, y recalcó la importancia del intercambio directo entre artistas chicanos y mexicanos para adquirir un mutuo conocimiento que es necesario por problemas de ascendencia, identidad, y porvenir, pues han de ser los artistas mismos y no las instituciones quienes habrán de decidir el futuro del arte, un arte de participación comunitaria y de lucha.

Como la reunión en Austin coincidía con las fiestas de septiembre, José Montoya recordó cómo a fines de los sesenta y principios de los setenta, los estudiantes y profesores chicanos, apoyados por militantes y gente de la comunidad ("un pueblo unido en filas de solidaridad") se enfrentaban a los administradores de universidades y sus guardias policíacas para demandar que en esas instituciones les dejaran celebrar el 16 de septiembre. Montoya señaló que durante mucho tiempo los chicanos han estado ocupados deshaciendo viejos mitos y rompiendo obstáculos impuestos por una sociedad que quiere sostener divididos a los chicanos y al conjunto de éstos de sus hermanos mexicanos. Sin lesionar las peculiaridades de los grupos latinos en los Estados Unidos (chicanos del medio y suroeste, puertorriqueños de Nueva York, cubanos de Miami), hay que ver que los tres padecen el mismo sistema opresivo y deberían unirse para la liberación, haciendo a un lado actitudes burguesas y de arrogancia individual. Montoya se refirió con simpatía y optimismo a los jó-



Plástica chicana

venes cubanos de Miami que han comenzado a comprender el significado de la Revolución Cubana y lo han confrontado con la actitud social degenerativa de sus padres. Vio en esa juventud un aliado valioso para diseñar el futuro de las comunidades "latinas" en los Estados Unidos.

Como lo hiciera Sylvia Orozco, Montoya también ubicó el desarrollo del arte chicano en la lucha de liberación del pueblo. El ve los productos artísticos como instrumentos para educar y organizar. Las propuestas e intenciones del arte no pueden ser distintas a las de quienes se mueven fuera del arte, pero dentro de una cultura para el cambio: sociólogos, historiadores, antropólogos, economistas; aunque hay profesionistas que sólo se preocupan por la superación académica y van abandonando los intereses fundamentales de la comunidad. "Abogaditos de dos reales", les llamó. Reconoció que son cada vez menos los defensores profesionales conscientes del chicano y, de inmediato, se preguntó por qué los artistas han persistido en su chicanidad, y respondió: porque ni la sociedad y ni siquiera los propios intelectuales mexicanoamericanos los habían tomado en serio. "Los profesionales nos ven como un atajo de mariguanos, los políticos nos usan para traerles votos; pero no nos hemos vendido. El futuro del arte chicano depende entonces de qué tan efectivamente podamos los artistas convencer a nuestros colegas académicos, profesionales e intelectuales para que adopten esa actitud de persistencia que mueve al artista chicano, y utilicen, como nosotros lo hacemos, los recursos que existen dentro del sistema".

Montoya puso como ejemplo de utilización del sistema el que la primera Conferencia de la Plástica Chicana se celebrara en la "tumba" de Lyndon B. Johnson, "uno de los hombres más odiados por la raza y que personifica la opresión. "Ha de haber andado maromeando en el sepulcro el señor presidente L. B. J."

Los conferenciantes todos reconocieron con Montoya que el arte chicano ha llegado a la peligrosa etapa en que puede ser manipulado; sus productores se han vuelto más vulnerables y corruptibles. La reunión de Austin podría significar, en consecuencia, una toma de posiciones para estimular los mejores empeños y reforzar, actualizándolos, los compromisos puestos a prueba (con eficacia) a lo largo de una década. **D**

## COMMUNITY MURALS

The murals we see in this community — the mural on La Peña, for example — represent a new form of mural painting: the community mural, the mural of resistance. On the whole the corridors of power have been closed to this form of mural painting. It sneaks onto the stage of history from the ghetto, the barrio, from the crumbling ill-prepared surfaces of housing projects, schools, and street corner grocery stores.

Its goals, like the goals of mural painting always, are more than purely artistic. More is portrayed than the private visions of individual artists. Its ambition is to prepare the world for change, to give images to an opposition, to portray a denied reality, to expose oppression and point the way to overcoming it.

The patronage of mammoth public works of art has traditionally been the prerogative of those in power the work they commission reinforces their position and the world view that underlies it. Community murals of resistance defy the powers that be and the prevailing world view. In Chile they were painted at night with the risk of death always present. In the United States they are "tolerated" while obstacles are heaped in the path of their production. In having goals that are political as well as "purely" artistic, in linking art to a "cause," mural painting flies in the face of not only the political authorities, but also the cultural establishment that decrees the acceptable direction for "modern art" to be toward the purification from extraneous purpose and the pursuit of form that is in opposition to content, especially the literary content, the story-telling, of community murals. Modern art flattens out both the spatial depth and the depth of reference that are still characteristic of mural painting. Modern art and mural painting, insofar as they recognize each other's existence, despise each other.

Being ignored by the "art world" is perhaps a minor irritation compared with other problems the mural painting of resistance encounters. We can list some of them as follows:

- 1) Being caught in the syndrome of biting the hand that feeds you. Most mural projects are supported in one way or another by government funding or the charity of corporations. The walls we paint on are in most cases not **our** walls. We paint a public art on private surfaces.

- 2) The radical transformation of society is not on everyone's agenda; not even necessarily on the agenda of the "poor and Third World" communities that we paint for. There is therefore great difficulty in finding ways of painting "messages" which will not be received as propaganda and resented. This society so closes off the universe of discourse that often the most self-evident truths are perceived as flat and alien while the sexy lies of the media, the flashy dress of commodities, is experienced as familiar and real.

- 3) Lack of internal criticism and discussion inside a fragmented mural movement has meant that we have in many cases not clarified for ourselves problems of the relation of form to content, truth to beauty, meaning to purpose. We have often fallen into trite images, stale repetitions, and sloganeering. We have denied the importance of formal exploration because any talk of form is associated with the enemy camp of avant garde art. We have in many cases allowed our vision to be watered down. We have accepted a rhetoric

of community participation whose assumption is that if a lot of people work on a project that makes it "people's art." We have assumed that the political commitment of the artist to the struggle solves all the problems of the relation of the individual artists' subjectivity to the social ends of the mural. This is not so.

Despite these problems mural painting remains a vital hope and a crucial element in cultural resistance. In the face of the manipulations of the mass media it keeps alive the notion of a genuine "people's art." The raw beauty and power of its forms are an indictment of the sleazoid seductions of billboards. Its struggle to express the dispossessed consciousness of a genuine community and the vitality it gains from this struggle contrast sharply with the increasingly arcane and self-defeating contortions of avant garde art.

Now is a crucial time for mural painting. The potential is vast. The obstacles — economic, political, and artistic — are overwhelming. The dedication of artists, the strength of the political movements of opposition, and the support of institutions like La Peña can prove decisive.

Osha Neumann

## Anti-Drug Abuse Mural Trashed

Jose Guerrero of the Chicago Mural Group sends information about a recent mural painted in a Methadone Clinic in Chicago. The directors wanted an anti-drug mural, but were upset the mural showed that in addition to drugs being the monkey on the junkie's back, capitalism and religion were also present to weigh down the addict. The mural showed not only the drugs are bad, but who profits from them and allows them into the country. The mural "urged unity of people in fighting the roots of these problems."

A particular point of controversy was the inclusion of Mao's **Little Red Book** as a tool in understanding and combatting not only drugs, but the whole illicit drug industry. The day after the dedication of the mural, 4'x80' on masonite panels, it was discarded into a back alley by the directors. It is now in a new location.

## Children's Rights Mural and Reading Center

The mural depicts organized labor's involvement in defending the rights of children. Artist Kathleen Farrell has designed the mural using the symbol of children trying to escape a maze, to show the traps of poverty, disease, and prejudice. The children hold paper birds which get larger and fly toward the upper right corner of the mural, leading the children out of the maze. Books, picket signs, and newspapers announce the successes toward which the children are striving. Improved Child Care, the Peace Conversion Bill, Women's rights, the Rights of Children, Organize the Unorganized, are some of the slogans on these forms. Above the maze on the left side of the mural are papers describing the past victories of the labor movement in their defence of the rights of children. The eight hour day, unemployment insurance, workman's compensation, public education, child labor laws, and the names of important labor leaders are shown. These victories have allowed children of workers a more secure and decent homelife. Ms. Farrell sketched portraits of the children in the Public Aid Office lobby in preparing her design. They show the beauty and varied ethnic backgrounds of the children of Will County.

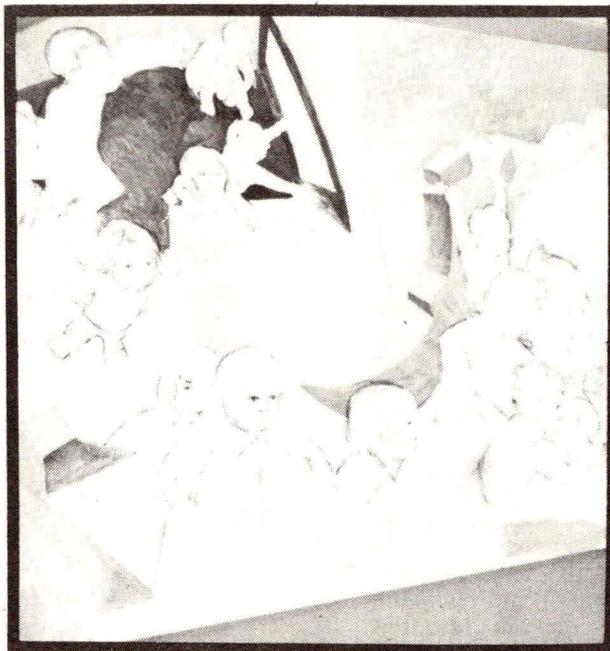
A carpeted and decorated reading center is being installed to the left of the mural providing a visually connected area dedicated to children. Bookshelves, a puppet theater, and small tables and chairs will furnish the area. Large picture books, learn to read books and cloth books will be available to the children and adults using the lobby. The social service employees have agreed to maintain the area and take responsibility to add more books when necessary.

## CHILDREN'S MURALS DO NOT HAVE TO BE "JUST KIDS' ART"

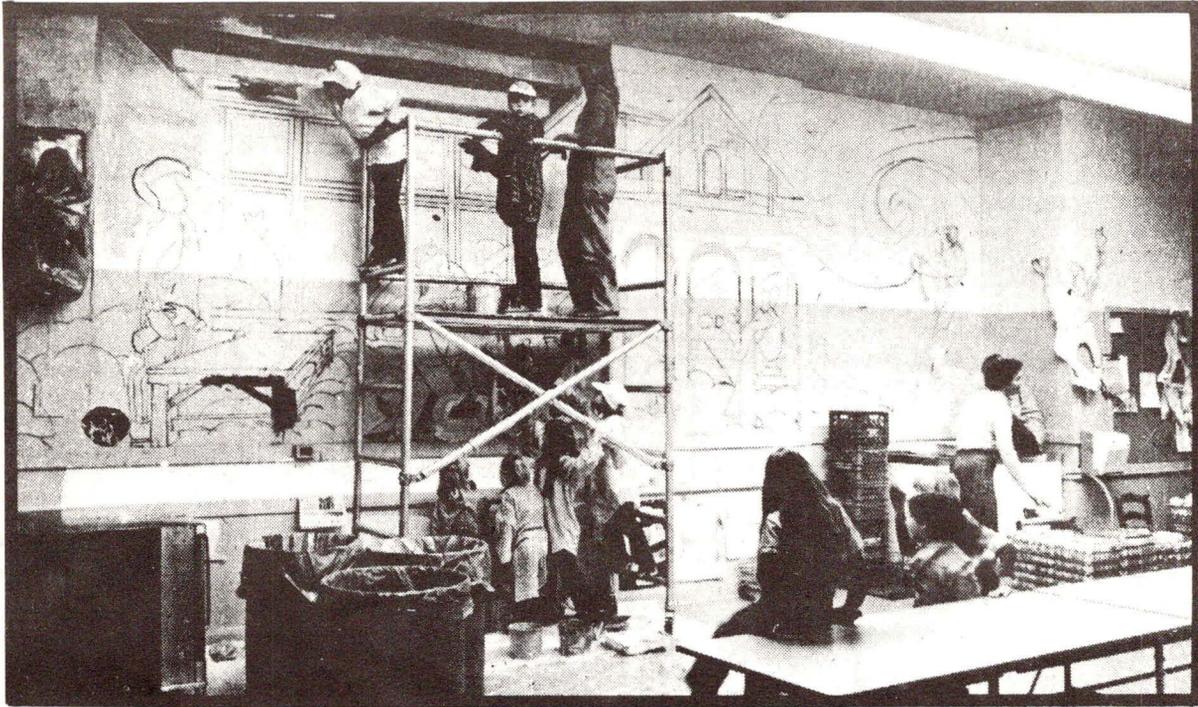
A recent newspaper article in the Madison Wisconsin **Capital Times** begins with the following: "Quick! What comes to mind when you think of a mural created by grade school children? Bright colors and simple stick figures, right? . . . Can you imagine a mural created by children that is breathtakingly beautiful, with a magnificent storyline and astounding detail? Would you believe that children were capable of adult artistic abilities?"

In the article that follows, writer Pat Tobias describes recent work by Caryl Yasko in doing a mural at Randall School in which Caryl refused to accept the preconceptions about young people's artistic abilities contained in Tobias rhetorical questions. Obviously, her mural was a success — as a mural, not merely as an activity for young children.

The point is to note that over the past several years "children's" murals have been painted in virtually every city in the country. Some are impressive, some merely repeat stereotypes. But the artwork of our youth is tremendously important, and a potentially significant (and satisfying) place for community muralists to work. The **Newsletter** hereby solicits articles, descriptions, photographs, discussions of processes and problems and projects involving children, for inclusion in our next issue. If adequate response comes in, that issue will feature Children's Murals and school projects. Please, send us information about successful projects in your area.



Shown here is a detail of the unfinished mural painted by Kathleen Farrell in Joliet, Ill, with the enthusiastic cooperation and sponsorship of the Central Trade Union Council. Photo: Kathleen Farrell



"Seller of Stars," a 960 square-foot mural painted by students at Randall School, Madison Wisconsin, under the directorship of Caryl Yasko. This mural is one example of several that prove children's murals can be artistically sophisticated.

## Nevada County Ca. Ceta Murals Documented

We recently received a copy of "A Final Report on County of Nevada, California CETA Title III Historical Murals Project" compiled by Murals Supervisor Doris A. Barker. It is a systematic and detailed account of some thirty murals painted in rural mountain counties under Ms. Barker's supervision over a year and a half. Most were 32 ft.2, but some were as large as 1,200 ft.2 (20x60'). They dealt with themes of local history, famous local people, restoration projects of old theaters, the women's movement, etc. What is most impressive about the documentation, however, is its thoroughness and accessibility — you can find what you want to know about any of these murals in a matter of moments. Included are newspaper clippings, indicating that the program undertook a considerable public relations effort as part of its support-building work. And that work paid off, as is evident in the earlier newspaper articles expressing hostility for the expenditures and later articles supporting the contribution to the communities and, especially, to the personal development of the CETA people who participated in the programs.

Shouldn't all CETA programs have extensive and accessible documentation of the works they have supported? Why don't they? The suggestion has been made in several cities that, unlike Nevada county, the arts administrators did not (and do not) take this community arts seriously enough to take any care in documenting them. Is this true? We would like to hear of sources interested persons can go to for information about programs in cities throughout the country.

## AFL-CIO Funds Mammoth (Mural?) Culture Project

A TAT (Technical Assistance and Training) Report from the Montana State AFL-CIO informs us of two new murals in Butte and Helena. The Helena mural is a History of Montana Women painted on Helena's Last Chance Gulch Shopping Center. It and the Butte mural, "A Tribute to the People of Butte" were organized and directed by Niki Glen, and were painted with the help of CETA and other community volunteers.

Of particular interest is the fact that the new cultural arm of the AFL-CIO Department of Professional Employees has \$1 million to spend on such projects. The aims of the project "are to bring workers and their families a better understanding of the arts and technology." The TAT Report further reports that the Department of Professional Employees Labor Institute for Human Enrichment, which will administer the funds, plans to spend this much money yearly in providing "research, planning, training and administrative services to unions developing programs to broaden the non-working lives of their members."

## Muralists and Unions

In our last issue, Fall 1979, pp. 23-24 contained information about a conflict in Boston between a local painters' union and a mural project. The **Newsletter's** intent was to raise the issue of community muralists and unions. We have received several responses to the problem described, including those who said that both parties were wrong, that the whole problem could have been avoided if a positive attitude of "collaboration" had been explored prior to painting. Several people suggested that a discussion of the project beforehand would not only have avoided the confrontation, but would have built ties between muralists and the unions.

Kathleen Farrell's thoughtful response, printed in part below, not only sets the issues into a positive perspective, but relates her own extensive experiences in working with unions. We think her experiences might serve as a model for all of us in similar circumstances.

Three further points should be noted. First, look at the following article concerning the one million dollars potentially available through the AFL-CIO. Second, many of us have benefitted from the fine early publication **Cry For Justice**, with its excellent reproductions of Chicago walls. It was published by the Amalgamated Meatcutters and Butcher Workmen of North America. Finally, lest we forget, consider the sponsorship unions have offered to muralists, from the United Electrical Workers in Chicago to the Electrical Workers Union in México which sponsored Siqueiros' extraordinary "Portrait of the Bourgeoisie" in the late 1930's.

## Working With Unions

For public artists to have successful experiences with unions, they need to be sensitive to the needs and hopes of union members. The artists need to spend time developing a rapport with the labor leaders in their town. If your sympathies are those of a public artist, you will find the broadest possible public support through labor unions.

Unions have public buildings, central organization and the membership that often better represents the city or community than any other organization. Its members have strong needs for art that represents their history, struggles, and aspirations. Public artists need to take the time to work with labor unions, producing public art projects with them. I am sure they will find the experience as exciting and rewarding as I have.

I have been a mural painter involved with unions since I painted a mural for the Clothing Workers Union Child Care Center in Chicago in 1976, just two years after I began working with the Public Art Workshop and learned of mural and sculpture projects being sponsored by the Labor History Society and Chicago labor unions.

The whole idea of organized labor supporting public art projects makes sense to me. What group would be better situated to organize, fund, and promote non-elitist art? Artists have always had a hard time convin-

cing anyone that they should be paid more than just materials. "Don't we love our work? Isn't that enough?" Well, all of us who have worked in public art know that we need to be paid just like anyone else. The labor unions understand the plight of the underpaid worker. As employers they offer good working conditions, fair wages, and skilled assistance in publicity, administration, and office work.

I first worked with Joliet labor unions two years ago when I asked the business agent for the Machinists' Union if he would like to get involved in a mural project. I was director of the Mural Program for the City of Joliet at the time, and we had C.E.T.A. and Block Grant funds for three outdoor murals that would help overcome racism and promote community pride. I asked the Machinists because they are the largest industrial union in Joliet and honestly represent a number of working class communities. The business agent became very excited by the idea, and even suggested the mural title, "Justice on the Job." I worked all that summer with members of the Will County Federation of Labor producing that 30' x 30' mural. The union members and leadership were happy to have the opportunity to get involved in this cultural project, and the business agent for the Teamsters Union painted with me two times a week for months. Whole classes of apprentice painters came out and painted. The Meatcutters and the editor of the local labor paper were out there too. Of course, the theme of the mural related to the aspirations and experiences of the union members, but I found no conflict painting what I felt to be a moral and just theme.

I am just completing an exciting Children's Right Mural and Reading Center in the lobby of the Public Aid Office in Joliet. I am working with the same union again, but this time total funding has been through the Central Trades and Labor Council and member unions which have donated over \$1,500 so far. The project is described below in a press release.

Kathleen Farrell

## Baltimore "Beautiful Walls"

The Baltimore CETA-funded mural project, "Beautiful Walls for Baltimore," was, in the words of a news story by Anne McCracken, supposed "to help underemployed artists by giving them work in their own field, and also to make Baltimore neighborhoods more attractive and involve whole communities in thinking about their daily environment."

Monique Goss, the coordinator of the programs says that "The psychological impact of these murals has been terrific." One problem with the program, she continues, is that artists tend to not stay with it. Many "willingly return to their studios which offer steady footing away from the public's inquisitive eyes."

For artists who want to make a living doing murals, Ms. Goss has started a business called Visual Impact where she tries to bring together businesses and artists. To date, her idea has already begun producing supergraphics on shopping centers. Her primary focus, according to the article, is walls in "over-privileged suburbs."

## Hestia Mural Project

We, the eight women artists who make up the Hestia Art Collective, joined together in order to expand our roles as artists, women and citizens. As part of this endeavor, we chose to paint an outdoor mural depicting three centuries of local women's history. We felt this subject was particularly appropriate because it appealed both to our interests as feminists, and to our community's more general interest in its rich heritage.

Ours is really a two-part project. Besides the actual painting of the mural (projected for next summer), we must first extensively research an obscured history. As little of this history is recorded in history books, we are turning to local oral histories, diaries, and letters. As none of this information has been previously collected, we will publish our findings, along with photographs of scenes from the mural, in a booklet for local distribution. We are working with four women historians from the University of Massachusetts and Amherst College on this phase of the project, which is supported by the Massachusetts Foundation for Humanities and Public Policy.

The second part of the project is, of course, the design and painting of the mural. We are still raising funds for this phase (Hestia would welcome any donations from those who feel generous towards our cause).

Our mural will include the local history of women of all classes and ethnic groups, and will celebrate the contributions of both the well known and the unnamed. The mural will be divided into panels, each depicting women's education; and politics. Overall, its dimensions will be 35 X 100 feet, with each panel approximately 35 X 15 feet.

Before the design can become fixed, we expect animated discussion centered around what in women's history should be depicted and how it should be done. As an example, we will have to select from that which is significant, that which is capable of being graphically portrayed.

Happily, the public response to the project has been overwhelmingly positive. While a few business people fear the effects of a mural on the downtown environment, most residents, including the majority of downtown business owners, have expressed their enthusiastic support.

Working together on such an ambitious project has been exhausting and exhilarating. We have had to patiently overcome obstacles and complications along the way, and learn to live with each other's weaknesses, but we have also learned that by combining our strengths, we are able to accomplish together what none of us would have dreamed of alone.

Susan Pontious  
Hestia Art Collective

## News from New Jersey

Phil Danzig's Mosaic Tile Community Mural Project goes well, if slowly. 17 of the 26 panels, each 5'4" x 2'8" were completed by the spring. Each has about 2,000 pieces and takes five people a month of work.

The Newark Housing Authority sought funds for this past summer, but they did not come through. At the last minute, a private charitable foundation provided funds for three murals, beginning in August. "Using what I think is the very creative title of "Wet Paint," we established three sites within Housing Projects, uncovered tenant support, found walls, and were assigned ten to twelve youth summer workers," according to Phil. Eva Cockcroft came in and completed a "text-book" mural, 30' x 20' entitled "Respect Yourself" on an exterior wall. It shows a figure with feet of roots, raising a sphere containing a handclasp in the center and flanked by the evils of street life and the joys of family life.

Mike Donato, a graphic artist experienced in mural work for schools, directed another mural using the same tenant-youth approach. It is entitled "Inspiration" and is dominated by a giant figure of Muhammad Ali, gloves raised in triumph. It is inside Felix Fuld Homes and is 24' x 11'.

The third mural was directed by Phil Danzig at Stella Wright Homes. It is on a wall 15' x 74' and takes the four and a half year rent strike as its theme. A monochromatic series of four images shows the resident strikers in jail, the strike leadership rapping with the community, the three judges who turned over the management of the project to a resident corporation and the signing of the contract, with Mayor Gibson and other dignitaries. A fifth image will show the project today, in full color, with images of a woman and her child, an older man, and a basketball player.

Danzig notes that the major lesson of the success in getting these projects funded was getting one's foot in the door with a large building operating agency, such as the Housing Authority. As he puts it, "Unfortunately, perhaps, for other muralists, my foot in the door was the unusual combination of **renovation** funds (no architect's ego was involved) and the fact that I am a registered architect, so I could get a Professional Contract and avoid a competitive bid for the mural job."

Phil Danzig

## Denver

In August, 1976, Manuel Martinez completed a mural titled "The Staff of Life." It is located in the administration building of C.C.D. in Denver, and depicts a cornstalk as the staff of life, and also United States and Mexican eagles, religions, and cultures. Of painting murals Martinez said "to me it is the most dynamic form of painting in the whole range of art, because you're dealing with monumental demensions and because it's in a public building. It belongs to everybody; no one can own it."

Shortly afterwards, he completed a mural titled "Aprende!" at 665 Grant St. the theme of which is the need for Chicanos to study and learn.

In April of 1977, Martinez dedicated a 7'x12' mural entitled "Universal Labor", representing rural and urban workers and also woman as the mother of all civilization. This mural was commissioned by the Colorado Migrant Council.

At the end of 1977, he dedicated a large 3,500 sq. ft. outdoor wall titled "Urban Dope and Rural Hope" facing the Weir Gulch boat lagoon at W. Ninth Avenue and Bryant Street. This wall is Denver's largest mural, and depicts, according to Martinez, "a symbol of the deteriorating steps of an urban drug addict opposed to the hope of an agricultural family." Carlos Sandoval also worked on this wall.

In 1978, Martinez completed "La Alma" at the La Alma Park Recreation Center, 1325 W. 11th Ave., symbolizing the connection between the soul, the mind, and the body. It is approximately 30'x50'.

Other murals in the Denver area include a 1979 work by the Orlando Letelier Brigade at 1301 Santa Fe Drive depicting the resistance of workers and peasants to fascism in Chile. Roberto Lucero painted "Birth of the Mestizo Race" in 1973. This mural shows the destruction of the indigenous Mexican culture and the birth of the Mestizo, and is located inside the Westside Action Center, 1100 Santa Fe Drive.

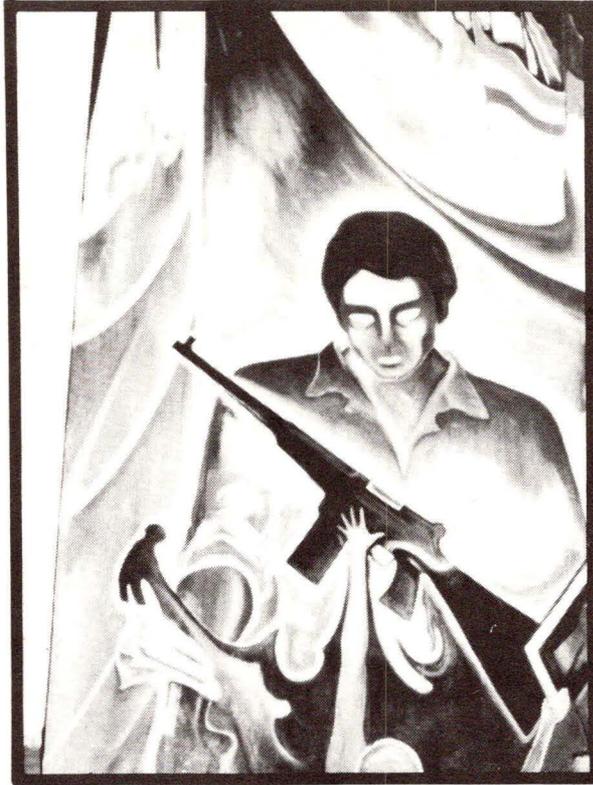
In 1979 Al Sanchez painted "Earthrise" showing children playing on the moon as the earth rises above the lunar horizon. It is located at the North Lincoln Projects, 1450 Navajo St. Finally, just this year, Jerry Jaramillo and other have completed "La Familia Cosmica" at the La Familia Recreation Center, 65 South Elati St.

Although this is certainly not a complete listing of Denver murals, it is good to know that so many murals of such community involvement are being painted in the area. We welcome more information about new projects.

from newsclippings, letters, and Oct. 1979  
**Denver Magazine** article by Doug Vaughn.



Recent mural by Manuel Martinez, Denver, depicting many elements of the Chicano's life today and in the past.



Detail of a mural in progress by Leo Tanguma, Houston.

## Leo Tanguma and Houston Murals

A mural Leo Tanguma is preparing to paint in Southwest Houston on the Holland Morega Company is typical of the work he has done in that city over the past decade. Its content will deal with humanism and harmony with nature. Other subjects he has painted in murals include the idea that the destruction of an unplanned community and its values can destroy the family; destruction of forests and the potential danger of nuclear energy; the waste of our natural resources and how man has upset the harmonious balance with nature.

His concerns are for the working and oppressed peoples, and his effort is to be as clear and honest as he can about the truth of their lives. He and his art are both concerned with making change, but he is not aligned with any political party at this point.

The photograph shown here is a detail from a police brutality mural he has been struggling with for almost four years now. No one will support such a project because of its content, but Tanguma's seriousness and determination to complete the project is unswerving. His plan is to erect it downtown.

In a 1974 article by Elvira Valenzuela Crocker in **Agenda** Tanguma is quoted as saying that he "would like to have a reaction from viewers, whether they like it or hate it. The idea is to challenge the system. That's the responsibility of a socially conscious muralist. Muralism is an art that expresses a message with historical narrative or thematically . . . it must be a philosophical painting with a message."

## St. Paul, Minn.

According to the St. Paul, Minnesota, **Sunday Pioneer Press**, COMPAS, Community Programs in the Arts and Sciences, was designed to "diversify the arts from centralized concrete bunkers of culture to the folks on the front lines. To the neighborhoods, to the people." It has been operating now for six years. A recent project is a mural painted by Mario Torero from San Diego celebrating the International Year of the Child on the Riverview Branch Library. It represents part of COMPAS' program philosophy of blending art and social awareness. In the past six years, 62 local murals have been painted in the area.

A local muralist active in the predominantly Chicano neighborhood of the West Side is Paul Basques, who developed an image of the Virgin de Guadalupe as a symbol of unity in the district.



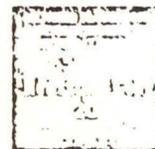
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# Injunction granted; mural completion OK'd

By RUSS GAGER

U.S. District Court Judge Richard B. Austin has granted the Latin American Advisory council its request for an injunction to prevent the City of Blue Island from halting completion of the formerly "forbidden" mural at 13337 S. Western ave.

The City council denied Sept. 9 unanimously and without discussion the Advisory council's request to paint the mural, but painters went ahead and brought it to near-completion before Judge Austin suggested that the painting be stopped and the city take no action against the painters pending his decision.

"I declare that the Blue Island Zoning restrictions on signs do not apply to the plaintiffs' mural and order the defendants (the city) not to use those ordinances to threaten, harass, or in any way frustrate plaintiffs from painting it," Judge Austin said in his decision.

The city had argued the emblem of the United Farm Workers on the mural had constituted an advertisement for the migrant workers' union, thereby classifying the mural as an advertising sign and bringing it under zoning regulations to which it did not conform.

"The Blue Island ordinances regulating signs do not cover this situation," Judge Austin wrote quoting the city's zoning ordinance. "The plaintiff's mural does not 'direct attention to a product, place, activity, person or institution'; it seeks to portray an idea and it is exactly this kind of expression which the first amendment protects from government interference.

"Defendants here are misapplying an ordinance which regulates only commercial communication and are threatening plaintiffs' free exercise of their communicative right," Austin said in his decision.

To the city's argument that it intended to have the mural removed by having it declared in a state court a

violation of zoning ordinance, Austin replied in his decision that "there were no state proceedings of any kind pending at the time the federal complaint was filed."

Austin affirmed it was the duty of federal courts to enforce constitutional rights when there were no proceedings in the state courts.

The city argued that City Prosecutor Raymond Pieper told Building Commissioner Russell Rippe and Acting Police Chief Marvin O'Lena Sept. 13 there were to be no arrests or threats of arrest of persons painting the mural.

This statement came the day before the start of work on the mural in defiance of the City council's ban and five days after Rippe had allegedly posted a notice in the police station saying that anyone painting the mural would be subject to prosecution.

The city also said Rippe had issued a "stop order" Sept. 9, which authorizes the police only to make an oral request that work on the mural be stopped and does not authorize any "physical interference" with the work or arrest.

To the city's argument that it has not and does not intend to arrest or prosecute anyone for working on the mural, Austin referred to the city's own admission that "there may have been some initial threats along these lines."

Austin declared in his decision the injunction would "remove the cloud of illegality under which the plaintiffs (painters) have been forced to work."

In reply to the city's request that Austin abstain from making a decision which would in effect decide whether the sign regulations apply to the mural, Austin said, "There is no fair way a state court could construe this mural to meet the zoning ordinance's definition of a sign. In these circumstances, a federal court may not shirk its responsibility to protect rights secured by the Constitution."

Austin's decision, while dated Nov. 22, was not received by American Civil Liberties Union lawyers, acting on behalf of the Latin American Advisory council, until last Wednesday.

"This is a great victory for the Mexican-American community of Blue Island, Calumet, Park, and all over the country," Latin American

Advisory council president August Sallas said.

"The city fathers ought to try to be more sensitive to the needs and culture of the Spanish-speaking people and recognize that there is a sizeable population of Mexican-Americans living, working and paying taxes in Blue Island," Sallas said.

"We are ready to meet to discuss our needs and problems with the Mayor anytime," Sallas continued. "We do plan on painting murals of other ethnic groups, and any group wanting one should come to us and we will consider it and seek funding for it, which is the real necessity."

Sallas said completion of the mural would have to wait until spring because of the cold winter weather which would freeze wet paint.

Mayor Richard Withers had just returned from a trip to Minnesota when informed of Judge Austin's decision by the Sun-Standard.

"I didn't know a decision had been made," Withers said. "I wouldn't want to comment until I spoke with the city's attorney about it, but I can tell you we'll accept the judgment of the court. We're not going to get rambunctious about it—we just wanted to know where we stood."

Attempts at mediation of the dispute by Efrain Martinez of the federal government were halted by Austin's decision.

"I met with city officials, including the mayor, twice because of the possibility the court decision would be long off," Martinez told the Sun-Standard. "These meetings had been authorized by the Advisory council. The city was supposed to get back to me after the second meeting, but the decision came before they did."

"The object of the mediation was to encourage communication between city officials and the Advisory council and resolve the conflict on a friendly basis. This would remove the possibility of bitterness on either side if a court decision were reached, which would of necessity declare one of the parties a winner and the other a loser. This notion of one party being a victor and the other vanquished might not be good for continuing relations between the parties," Martinez said.

## N.Y. Cityarts Update

Efforts at Cityarts Workshop over the past year have focused on the struggle to preserve the Grants Tomb mosaic benches — an ongoing struggle since the issue of their destruction has still not been determined by the National Parks Service — and our continuing murals program. Five outdoor murals were completed during the summer and fall of 1979, all of them co-sponsored with community organizations. Charles Trott's "That's the Way of the World" was painted with young people in the Ocean Hill Brownsville section of Brooklyn. Susan Ortega and Kinrod Johnson, both CETA artists in residence with Cityarts Workshop, collaborated on a black history mural for the Langston Hughes Library. Both also painted their murals: Johnson "God Bless our Home" for the entrance of a high-rise housing project, and the "Four Seasons" a creative use of a badly broken up warehouse wall; Ortega "the International Year of the Child" for a child center in the lower East Side.

Alfredo Hernandez did two temporary panel murals for the entrance to the Port Authority Bus Terminal during the construction period. (They have now been removed.) Eddie Alicea just completed a tunnel mural for Bellevue Hospital which uses Japanese foliage patterns to brighten up the long narrow tunnel. Pieces from the mosaic workshop by Carmen Texidor, done as preliminaries to the MTA mural, are being placed in hospitals and other locations. The MTA mural, after two years of negotiation, three design changes and interminable delays and red tape, has been axed and will not take place.

Changes at Cityarts workshop are mainly embodied in the movement toward smaller, co-sponsored murals and more artist projects rather than such a strong emphasis on youth murals. There have also been some staff changes. Kathy Gupta has been director since last spring, and Susan Green, although active on the Board of Directors, now works at Citibank's Community Relations department. Tomie Arai has also left and Eva Cockcroft has replaced her as Resource Center coordinator. Eddie Alicea is still running the mural program. Four new indoor mural projects are starting this month and the summer project sites are being chosen.

The resource center has been holding meetings for area artists. On Feb. 12, the first of these, a slide exchange get-together brought many of the Network artists together for the first time in a year.

Eva Cockcroft

## 1980 Fresco In Whitewater, Wisconsin

Fred Wurzbach, Niki Glen, and Caryl Yasko completed a fresco February 19 in Whitewater, Wisconsin. The project was sponsored entirely by the artists to try out commercially available materials. Pictures of the work are not back from the photo labs at this date. Seventy-five square feet was painted in two full working days. The fresco is a giant water-color of figures ascending. Figures are free flowing, stylized, with decorative

prints used in clothing and wide use of calligraphic line. Fresco is an ideal medium for calligraphic line. The composition is an interior view looking outside through vertical rectangles of carpenter gothic in burnt sienna. What suggests the exterior view through the window shapes is a variation of yellow ochre planes, one simple branch of a flowering tree and two other groupings of stylized flora. The figures are high major on a high minor background similar to the Japanese Ukiyo-e.

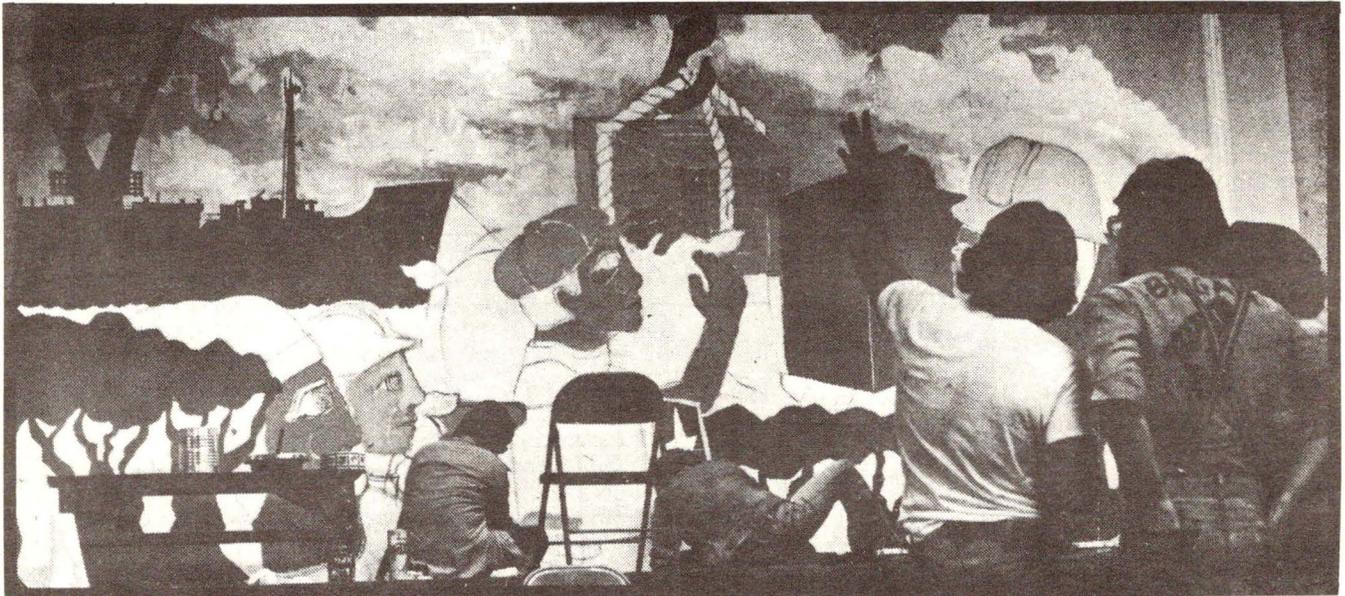
Fred Wurzbach has some plastering experience. He knows an old plasterer in town who plastered for a fresco artist in Lake Geneva. Through this contact, materials were ordered from an old gravel pit in Janesville and the project began. The old plaster was torn down, any broken lathing repaired, and thoroughly soaked with water from a sprayer. Gypsolite and sand forms the scratch coat. The scratch was built up quite thickly in order to match the 100 yr. old plaster sections not torn down on the edges of the work. While waiting for the scratch coat to set on the second day, the drawing was prepared. Painting started on the afternoon of the third day on a very small section in order to get the feel of the painting procedure and timing.

Glen and Yasko had to tackle the rest of the work on their own, learning to plaster and paint continuously for the next two days. Two parts hydrated finish lime with one part silica sand form the finish coat. They traced over the hand held cartoon with ordinary pencils onto the barely set plaster. This leaves a beautiful smooth indentation similar to embossed paper. It also gives the finished work an added dimension. Pigments, brushes, scaffold, water, had to be ready-on-the spot so that the section could be painted within two hours or until the pigment no longer was absorbed into the surface. The last section for the day was beveled outward with a knife around the contours of a shape to prepare for the next days' batch of new plaster.

The paint just flows from the brush. In all of the background area, which is predominantly French yellow ochre, only four teaspoons of dry pigment was used — and much less of blue, cadmiums, and alizarine crimson. The whole project cost about \$40, not including the pigments and brushes which Yasko had on hand, and Wurzbach's plastering tools. Seventy-five square feet of fresco used up 80 lbs. finish lime, 100 lbs. gypsolite, two five-gallon pails of builder's sand, and 40 lbs. silica sand.

Anyone who enjoys the challenge of watercolor or egg tempera with its limitations and sparkle, with its need for discipline and control, should feel comfortable with fresco. The result is metamorphosis. The wall talks in line and color and shape from within and behind the surface, a remarkable and uncanny personification of a wall.

Fred Wurzbach, Niki Glen, Caryl Yasko



Mural expressing solidarity of longshore workers of Chile and the U.S. painted by the Brigada Orlando Letelier in North Bend, Oregon. Photo: Fred Lassel/People's World

## Letelier Brigade in Oregon

The December 15, 1979 edition of the **People's World** describes a new mural painted in the seaport community of North Bend, Oregon, by the Brigada Orlando Letelier, expressing the solidarity of Longshore workers of Chile and the U.S. as well as the need for world peace. The brigade uses the techniques developed in Chile during the Popular Unity government and has painted murals in New York, Chicago, Denver, San Francisco and, now, Oregon. The mural is 10'x20' and depicts, principally, longshoremen at work. It is painted inside the wall of Local 12 dispatch hall.

## Thai Artists Break Through Culture Dictatorship

On Nov. 16th, the 1st All Thailand Open Art Exhibition opened at Silpakorn University, the school of fine arts, Bangkok, with 1000 pieces in all media representing hundreds of artists of all persuasions from every region of the country. The exhibition was organized despite government harrassment, and its "objective is to establish an independent Art Association on the national level as an alternative to the 'Official Academy.' So far the organizers have rallied many people to their side, . . . this show has been mocked by the 'Official Academy' as a 'Reject Show,' but who cares, only a few people are now interested in the 'Official' show anyway and that's why they have supported our project overwhelmingly. The majority of the works are produced by artists who have boycotted the official shows for many years."

The situation obviously parallels the struggle against the government controlled Salons in France 1850 to 1880. Reject Show? — Salon des Refusés!

Noting this parallel a Thai artist says "This situation reminded me of a manifesto written by Courbet . . . We are (also) preparing a manifesto for our opening . . ."

Here in the States our response to this reliving of century-old art struggles may be that it is provincial, and in a real sense we are right. Today the industrial countries are the metropolis and the dependent, semi-colonial countries are the the provinces, stagnant and isolated. If for a moment we place ourselves in the position of the Thai artists we will recognize the enormous significance of such an exhibit and the major effort that it represents.

Artists in Thailand, as in many other dependent countries, work in geographic, economic and linguistic isolation from the main centers of contemporary art. Art magazines and books are largely unobtainable and few can read those which do arrive. Teaching is almost always second hand, arts employment almost non-existent, except tourist-crafts production. Often there are NO shows other than the annual official show. All cultural activity remains under tight central government control, characterized by rampant favoritism, which prevents the formation of any independent, self-directed art 'world.' With no outlets of any kind, artists remain isolated from each other, forced to withdraw into their private struggle for survival, unless they opt for the guerilla-held countryside, where silkscreen or woodcut prints are usually the only media practicable.

Of the moribund annual government sponsored National Exhibitions, a Thai artist writes, they "have been heavily and widely criticized by artists of various convictions and commitments . . . We have no 'Gold Medal' no prize, no reward to offer anyone, the only incentive for them is to show their works to the people as much as possible." After Silpakorn U., the show toured to six other locations through December. "Many of the artists have no faith in the Official national exhibition — the jurors are generally termed as 'Cultural Dictatorship.' Many of them have been jurors for over 26 years, they are averaging about 18

years per person. Less and less people submit . . . The jurors are (so) outrageously corrupted that their invitations to artists were ignored. They had to postpone the deadline for submitting the works." Into such a stifling *huit-clos*, the All Thailand Open comes like a burst of fresh air, revealing and stimulating unsuspected evolutions and energies. One of the shows prime objectives "is to encourage people to work and produce more."

A sign of the energy stirring in the Thai art world appeared earlier last year in a remarkable project resulting from a course in "community art" at Silpakorn. Students, acting without permission, put up in the street a life size mixed media tableau satirizing the rigged elections. Created in 3 nights and 4 days of teamwork, the piece was removed by the police after two days, and officially denounced despite (or because of) favorable reaction by the public and the press. The piece includes three animal-headed plaster politicians on a stage complete with posters, party emblems, free items to hand out to would-be-voters, recorded speeches (parodies of the styles of well-known figures) and two life-size spectator mannikins with abstract-symbolic heads, who appear to mix with the live spectators.

Viewing the photos, I am reminded of Berlin Dadas, and closer at hand of Keinholtz, — in the combination of finely crafted plaster figures with abstract-symbolic heads, real decor and pointed satire. This piece however is in no way an undigested imitation. It has its own distinctive flavor, — less vitriol and more tongue-in-cheek. The life-size narrative tableau, after all, has a long history in Asia, dating back thousands of years to ancient Chinese imperial tombs. All of it is logical and consistent. The only absurdity is in the consistency itself, the absurdity of the real elections revealed as staged farce. The spirit of the piece is one of entertainment rather than of *epater-les-bourgeois* provocation. The emblematic aspect of the characters: Mr. Honest the Monkey, Mr. Supreme the Bird, and Mr. Greed the Horse, seems to be based on animal fables. The party name and slogan ("Rest and Sleep Party," "Don't Know, Don't See, Don't Do") also draw on folk sources, reflecting the popular and demystifying intention of the piece. It was aimed at a general audience and appears to have succeeded well, perhaps because of its functional use of contemporary art idiom. Certainly the assured and confident use of contemporary "western" form combined with traditional Thai folk elements says much about the creative hybridizations characteristic of the Thai cultural resistance. The Thai government which has welcomed U.S. capital and military presence, remains feudal beneath its westernized veneer. Thai artists are breaking through the Cultural Dictatorship, in part by converting "western" forms to their own use.

John Weber

## Swedish Muralist Arrested

Stellan Lindblad, who lives in a traditional workers part of town, called "Söder", has been involved in demonstrations against the houses being torn down. The landlords want to build new expensive housing ordinary people can't afford to live in. After several demonstrations a group of 200 people decided to do a mural to coincide with a demonstration which was going to pass a big wall. They arranged a group of demonstrators to stop when they passed the 300 meter long wall to protect the painters from the police. "We started to paint and the police rushed forward almost immediately. I managed to paint just a small part before I was arrested together with several others . . . We are now awaiting trial on charges for heavy damage, which means a prison-sentence. However people in high cultural positions, are fighting the trial, calling the mural folk-art and a document . . . The mural is still there, not technically very good because of the circumstances it was created under. It depicts "Söder" . . . and what has happened there during the last year. The legal mural-movement is also slowly growing. Several murals have been done this summer, in and around Stockholm. I painted the front of a shop in the "Old Town" . . . and . . . together with another artist (am) planning to work on murals with immigrated groups, especially people from Greece. Sweden is growing more and more racist, much depending on the conservative government we have had for the last 3 years.

In the National Murals Network International Newsletter, Winter, 1979, we covered some of the basic information regarding the Stockholm Subway Station murals. An English summary regarding the work has now been received as well as recent photos. "The excavation of stations in bedrock brings several advantages, including better climatic protection, lower cost . . . elimination of train noise and the avoidance of demolition in built-up areas . . . By leaving the rock exposed, the entire complex is contained in a continuous rock *chambre* in which the platforms stand out as light, colorful islands . . ." The stations are planned to give a "light and reassuring appearance." Included as well as the technology of electronic information, stairs, ramps, platforms "The first stage comprises the structural frame, rock excavation, concrete works for escalators, concourses, etc. The later stage comprises second fittings such as suspended ceilings, wall linings, street structures, furnishing, etc." Work started in autumn of 1969 and continued through summer of 1974.

Per S. Reimers

The newsletter has received an announcement of an exhibition at the Centro Proceso Pentagono in México, D.F., of Santiago Rebolledo. It is encouraging to hear of an exhibition expressing a more radical point of view in an essentially repressive atmosphere.

## A Short Introduction to Scottish Murals

Murals have been painted in Scotland over the last 10 years with the majority executed in the last 4, due to the support of several regular funding sources (some of which are already disappearing with the present political climate in Britain.) It is difficult to pinpoint the beginnings of murals in Scotland as individual artists and communities have their own points of departure and reasons for painting. Generally speaking, however, murals are the result of an awareness among artists and people in communities that the arts were out of touch with many groups in society, leaving a wealth of creativity untapped and neglected which could be put to use in several positive ways to enhance, support and reflect peoples' lives and also reclaim the artist as a valid, accepted part of the real world. In short, through the public arts, visual and performance, artists hoped to offer everyone an opportunity for a direct creative experience and one that was founded absolutely in the ideas and energies contained in any community, neighborhood or individual.

Murals for us have provided one of the best ways of bridging the gap between art and the public and they provide an accessible introduction for communities to a shared way of working and the whole concept of involvement in an artistic activity. The whole process, from design to execution, is shareable. Techniques are as simple or as complex as the situation demands and subject matter for the mural in most cases emerges after a lot of discussion with all interested parties. Most murals are created in direct response to the community and closely reflect the ideas and feelings contained therein.

The murals have been used in many ways: as an introduction to a community for the artist, who may then develop other activities there; as an educative activity; as a means of community expression; a tool for social change; sometimes as just a joyful activity intended for fun and, again, as a serious attempt to re-define the arts in meaningful terms for people. The important point is that Scotland needs all the creative energy it can get and the whole problem of defining a community arts project has been left as loose as possible by Scottish artists in order to encourage all forms of creativity in as many ways as possible. Murals are one aspect of this work, a process that is always open to new and different ideas. By keeping all doors open we hope to encourage more artists to recognize the public arts as a valid way of working and to enlarge the whole concept of what makes art Art.

Scotland has no recent tradition of public art similar to the Mexican murals, for example. Exterior murals in particular are very new for the various communities in which they are painted. Partly because of this, it is not easy to recognize any truly collective politics within communities, no politics capable of being translated pictorially as an accurate representation of that community's concerns. Secondly, many issues are also negative ones — poverty, alcoholism, bad housing, vandalism — which many people, quite rightly, do not want to see on the walls around them (at present anyway), even if the mural shows positive solutions or achievements. Therefore, in many areas simply the introduction of color contains all the politics of a work,

breathing a new life into bleak walls and landscapes and generally helping to create a more pleasant, supportive atmosphere. Artists support these feelings, understanding that the fact that people can and do change their own environment visually and then in other ways is in itself a powerful political expression. It makes many other things possible when people can see changes effected by their own hands and murals are one way of developing this kind of confidence and supporting a desire for change.

However, subject matter for murals, largely resulting from close discussion with the relevant people, uses mainly pleasant themes: community centers depicting the activities within, flowers, animals, circuses, portraits of local characters, abstract designs and other such things. These are within everyone's experience, making the painting of them easy and accessible and open to all. No one hesitates to paint a bird where a flag might be significant of a precise concern speaking to a few people only. Art itself has no inherent restrictions either in content or method and muralists in Scotland want to keep that freedom at work in a public context to encourage as wide a response as possible.

As yet then, there are few murals which deal pictorially with radical issues, though situations change and already there is one important painting in the Jack Kane Centre, in Craigmillar, Edinburgh. The wall shows the struggle for the area of Craigmillar to get a community center built there and the eventual victory. (The mural is on the inside wall of the Jack Kane Centre's Theatre Hall). It is significant that this mural is painted in an area where the public arts have been active for over 15 years but in most other areas in Scotland murals are exciting, unusual activities. Interesting not because of the opportunity of airing a view but for the enjoyment of time spent painting or looking at them.

There are several milestones in the introduction of murals to Scotland, 3 of which are briefly discussed here.

Interestingly, some of the first work was by an American artist, Ken Wolverton, who came to Scotland about 8 years ago and worked with the Theatre Workshop, Edinburgh and in a low-income housing estate (project) in Edinburgh called Pilton. A self-styled "graffiti artist", Ken's painting does not deface existing designs, slogans or names, but incorporates them with the help of the previous painters and other members of the community. The result is a new design reflecting the collective ideas of the neighborhood. This was the first work of its kind in the Pilton area but it opened the doors for other projects there and also interested other artists in the potential of art in public situations.

David Harding, former Town Artist in Glenrothes New Town, Fife, worked for over 10 years as part of the town's planning and building team; the job of artist being full-time and long-term. A New Town is built from scratch on land completely cleared for the purpose and denuded of its organic landmarks, then covered with impersonal, largely characterless architecture. David saw his job as that of a catalyst for many kinds of creativity within the town and as a kind of aesthetic conscience influencing the visual character of its various neighborhoods. The work took many forms: 3-D sculpture, murals, various arts workshops



Detail of mural by Elizabeth Kemp, Scottish muralist, at the Jack Kane Center depicting a variety of current social issues, ideas, people, etc.

and sessions all designed to develop and support identities, interests and concerns of the town's inhabitants. The arts in Glenrothes were developed to be an integral part of a planned whole and this concept has been variously adapted by muralists who also recognize the value of the artist at work within the built environment and who use many of David's ideas as guidelines for a socially conscious art form.

The third main inspiration for murals is from the Craigmillar Festival Society, a local community group in Edinburgh which has developed, over 15 years, a whole self-regenerative program of work. Based on the arts, no society has now expanded into many other activities to promote a positive vision of life in the years ahead. Murals were painted in the area by various community arts teams (funded, a year at a time, by Government Training Programs) whose job was to "upgrade and visually improve the Craigmillar area". The teams employed were in direct relation to responses from the community, work being supervised by the Festival Society's Executive Committee, itself a democratic, fluid body of people. The teams worked for 4 years. Changes of government affected continued funding, and the most recently finished arts project, apart from the Jack Kane Centre mural, is a concrete playstructure with New York artist Pedro Silva, who worked in Craigmillar from June-October, 1979. In 3 months Pedro and a local team built a "Mermaid" 60' long x 20' high of concrete covered in tile mosaics; she is also a fountain with her own pool and

sprays water from her mouth and along her tail. It is a real measure of the Craigmillar Festival Society's work that such a project was made possible and that because a community group feels strongly enough about their cultural identity as creative and contributive members of society, an exciting and influential art form came to Scotland. Otherwise, their inclusion of murals within their program of self-improvement and changes has been recognized as one of the most valuable developments in the Scottish mural movement.

## London, England

The Greenwich Mural Workshop has just completed a mural at Macey House, Meridian Estate (which is what they call housing projects). They are also starting a project for a Neighborhood Project in North Lewisham as well as working on the Rathmore Youth Centre projects. Gloria Mark, from Cleveland has been working on the Lewisham job, which involves painting a steel roller blind which rolls down over the front of the building like a giant window shade. There is also a small mural in the window, and a sign above the blind.

## Letter From India

A letter from Amit Ray, formerly of the Chicago Mural Group and now living in Kanpur, India, makes some suggestions for community murals. He says that "we should invite comments and short articles from people from different disciplines, with their views of the (mural) movement. Especially sociologists and social anthropologists, etc. The cross-examination of their expertise will surely benefit the movement in terms of the philosophy and depth of the subject's complexity. We as artists will make better judgments of our own quality of work, and exposure to these others will make our field wider and thus help it have a larger impact."

Ray continues to note that these are, of course, only his personal thoughts, and he welcomes response. Some people have responded skeptically, noting that outsiders who do not experience the process of painting murals but only try to observe it are usually opportunists with only a superficial understanding of murals and no commitment to their communities. Others have asked if an audience reached by academics such as sociologists and anthropologists is of any value to the community mural movement. "Aren't we trying to organize people in neighborhoods and other communities to get control over their own lives? If so, how will an article by a sociologist help us?"

In the spirit of Ray's note, we request further comments on this subject.

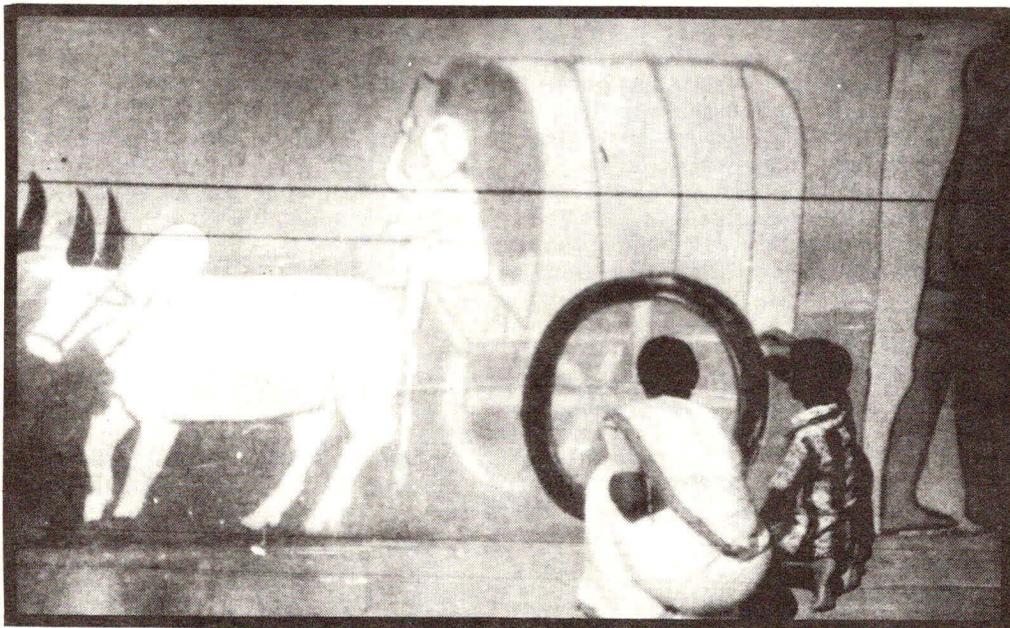
## Public Art in Modern India

Michael Greenlaw writes from Madras, India, that around election time "art fairly took to the streets in a big way. At night masses of people gathered at quiet road junctions and began drawing organized political symbols in chalk first and later with paint. One was forty feet in diameter. Buses and traffic waited while the painters moved in their own time. All political parties have strong visual symbols and the parties become known through them, perhaps to help the folk who cannot read.

Wall paintings too are highly organized. One night a wall would be lime washed and the next night with the help of lights painters would move in, sometimes sign painters, and would execute the design. If it was particularly complicated, the process would extend into a third night.

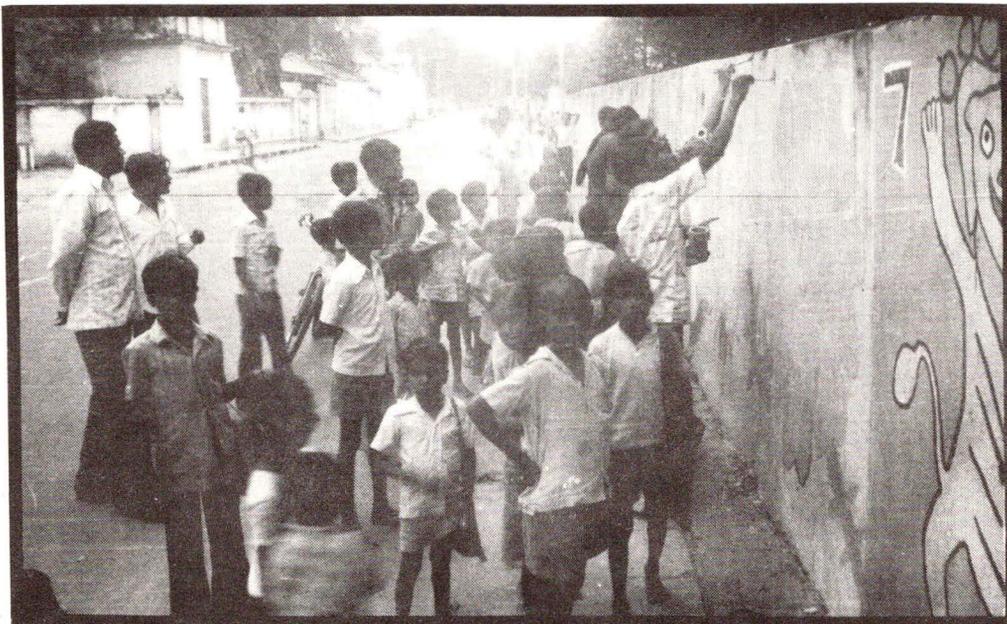
A day or so after the elections, movie posters covered up many of the walls."

Of his own work with deaf children, Michael writes that the opportunity for expression is having marvelous results in stimulating their artistic interests. First a wall or two, then the playground equipment, next the interior of a hotel. A 72 meter wall was done for about \$34, a lot of money in India, and then they painted a sign over the entrance of the School for the Deaf. On each side of the gate was a mural, and each letter of the sign included objects which began with the letter, e.g., the E had many eyes in it, an O had lots of 1's, etc. "Being deaf, the children sometimes didn't understand what I meant," writes Michael, "but they went ahead themselves and often with better results!"





Three candid photos of Indian mural painting in progress. Remember, these are being done often when the heat is intense, and still the fascination attracts interested groups — and future muralists? Photo: Michael Greenlaw



## Cueco and French Public Art

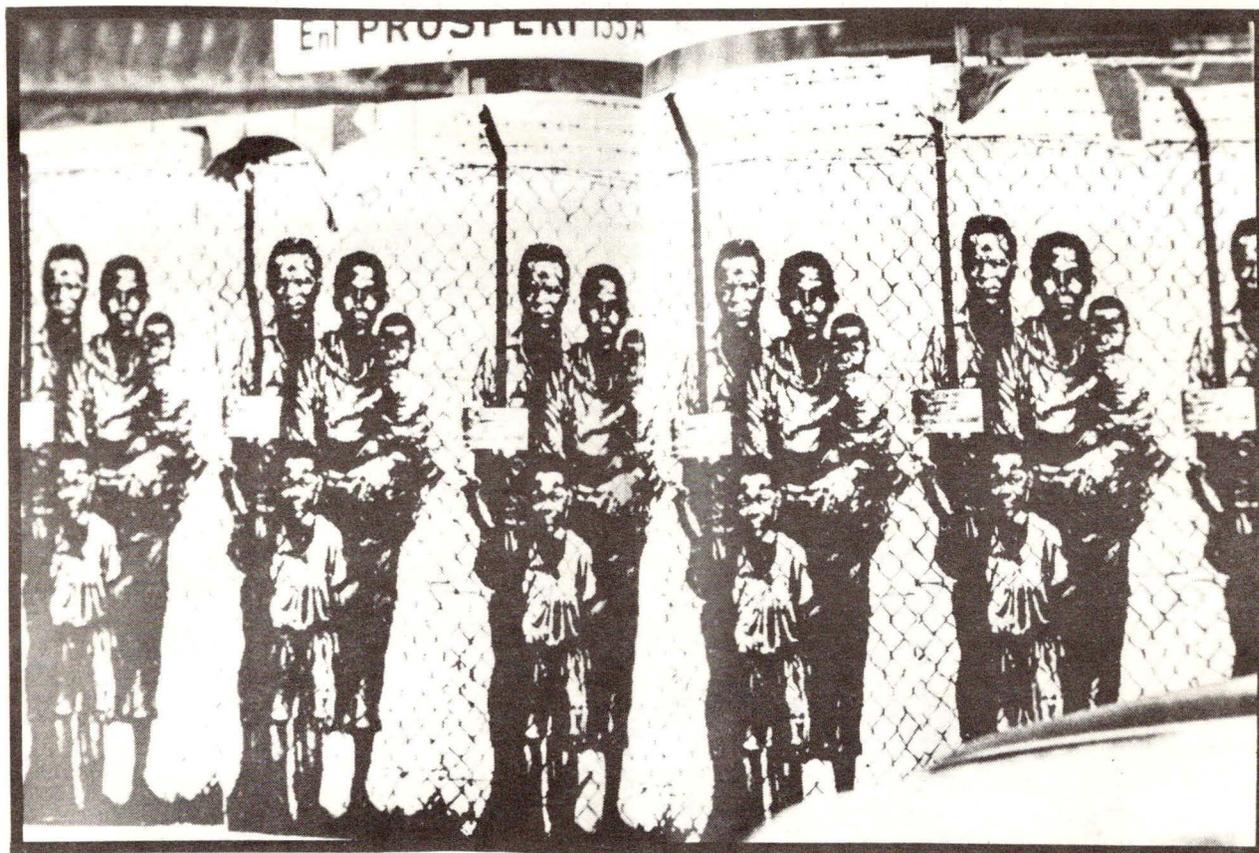
The destiny of the painter Cueco is closely linked to that of the "Malassis" cooperative,» – which transformed the artistic methods in France over the last ten years, with the introduction of collective methods in painting. This cooperative association was created in 1971, by five painters (Cueco, Fleury, Latil, Parre and Tisserand) who had all contributed to the "Salon of Young Painters" in 1968. It became the vanguard of a trend in painting which intimately mingled art and politics. The members of the "Malassis" group preferred to return to painting itself, rather than to spend their time discussing it. Their militant determination contributed to the climate of political and social protest that followed the events of 1968, and was taken up in the resurgence of popular feeling throughout the country. As Cueco declared at the time: "The struggle of the workers requires what we can contribute in imagination and skills, in manipulating a medium of communication as active as the visual."

This radical attitude drew the cooperative into a spectacular series of pictorial manifestations aimed at denouncing the capitalist order. They used painting to portray the political and social order in a critical light which denounced a certain image of power and capitalist society. One of their most important works was "12 Years of History in France." – They ex-

pressed themselves in a figurative and narrative form, by using numerous identifiable symbols easily accessible to a large audience; thus their work responded to the demands of mass communication. Their work, executed on a huge scale and difficult to move from its original place of creation, was unsuited to commercial exploitation in terms of the art market. Though naturally better adapted to the context of public art, it made little headway in this field because of the way public commissions operate in France.

A measure of the limitations of their work with local arts administrations was the single project that they were commissioned to execute by public authorities: the 2000 square meters of mural painting commissioned by the municipality of Grenoble in 1975.» – This project marked on stage in the decline of the cooperative's activities, which have now almost totally ceased.

Cueco has never abandoned the principal aims of the cooperative and has continued the fight to free painting of the restrictions which have been imposed upon it. For the last few years, he has been extremely active in the field of cultural action, and has participated in some projects of Public Art (mural paintings and mosaics) within the urban redevelopment projects in and around Paris (Forum des halles, Le Vaudreuil) etc. But the difficulty of opposing the dialogue of power through painting alone has forced him to keep reinventing other means of action.



Taken from the French book *La Peau Des Murs: Ernest Pignon Ernest*, by Marie Odile Briot, Catherine Humblot, *et al*, this photo illustrates one of the forceful techniques employed by Ernest Pignon Ernest in combining a muralistic scale with silkscreen reproductions. The life-size silkscreens are pasted behind a chain-link fence, thus dramatizing the plight of Algerian refugees in France. Other themes similarly treated include health and industrial safety, state violence, etc.

In his native area, at Uzerches in the Correze (an agricultural area in central France) he set up his principal project a year ago; a non-profit cultural association called "Countryside Considered." The local population and volunteer professionals collaborate in this association, which is supported materially and financially by the public authorities. Its theme is "the countryside:" a neutral theme without apparent controversial content, which aims to develop an idea of research and exploration of the local government, perceived differently by each observer: the country people who live there, the people who pass through (tourists), the people whose profession it is to investigate the countryside (scientists, botanists, etc.) and, of course the artists. Each group, formed at the request of the local inhabitants, is oriented towards a discipline of research. Several groups have already been set up and are operating: a botany group, a geology group, theatre, music and visual arts groups, etc. The activity of the association should go beyond simply research and venture into fields of future activity which will become evident later. The impact of the establishment of the association should generate interest, and individuals will be placed in a creative situation, generating an exchange and confrontation between the different groups. The project aims to make the local people aware of the extraordinary variety of both in the cultural field and in their own community. It will be a task demanding patience and stamina which necessarily impinges on the political — a certain way of being political — but a form of action amply suited to the needs of today.

Through his activity in organizing this association, Cueco is also attempting to transform the operations of the cultural world. He criticizes the present situation which implicates cultural activity so deeply in the process of consumerism maintained by the capitalist society. The difficulty as he sees it is to "make culture understood not in terms of a consumer product, but in terms of social relations and communal life. But if you propose something else, a way of life, or a way of being together, which is not a marketable product, no one wants to know. The only attitude towards culture that power understands is: what are you going to sell us, what is the finished product that you are going to sell us? And I am trying to set up a situation in which there is no finished product, but in which culture will be understood in its real sense: as a process of knowledge. The work of art will be mine, and belong to other people too, with all the possibilities that implies; a cooperative effort, for example."

As a prelude to the establishment of the association, Cueco has painted a series of canvases on the countryside of Correze. He takes as a base a plot of ground which he has managed to reproduce in all its diversity. Looking at the canvas from a distance, its complexity becomes a harmonious unity. In this way, Cueco conveys the visual complexity of the world, and its apparent unity. A subjective vision which he enriches with his memories from the past, by bringing into his peaceful universe a hidden throng of half hidden bodies, resistance fighters who died during the Nazi occupation. "The countryside of Correze," he explains, "is the place where the Nazis fought during the Second World War."

Within the Visual Arts Group he works in, Cueco is still questioning his own role. He has chosen to make

his workshop a public meeting place where local inhabitants can meet. How will his work develop in this new context? It is a new situation which he weighs up in terms of resistance and confrontation and which may, perhaps, open up the way to a rethinking of his own way of working and to important projects undertaken in common with the local population.

Hervé Béchy, October, 1979

1. see French survey in 2nd National Mural Conference Chicago 1978
2. see Murals Newsletter, Winter 1979

## Painting the Town

We keep hearing rumors of books on murals which are going to be published, but these rumors rarely precede actual books. Still, it is likely that two new books will be out sometime next year treating aspects of the U.S. mural scene, and in the meantime, those of you with access to English publications might want to look at **Painting the Town**, by Graham Cooper & Doug Sargent, London, Phaidon Press, £3.95 (a bit less than \$8).

The text tends toward the superficial, but nevertheless contains a reliable guide to walls recently painted in England. For the most part, these murals are very polished, obviously done by artists with extensive fine arts training. The opening line is: "Murals are a practical way of brightening the environment," and the illustrations (excellent color photographs) would bear out this attitude toward their creation. In the final few pages are murals which, rather than merely trying to be "attractive to the community," actually depict community people engaged in action around an issue important to their lives, such as the Battersea Bridge mural of the Wandsworth Mural Workshop and Brian Barnes (see elsewhere in this newsletter for more about its recent destruction), or the "People's River" mural by the Greenwich Mural Workshop.

## A Book on Law and Art

A useful book for muralists is **Law and the Arts** by Tem Horowitz, ed., 1979, published by Lawyers for the Creative Arts, Chicago. Of special interest to muralists is the section "Visual Arts and the Law," pp. 82-116 by Clarence S. Wilson, Jr.

# Rivera Frescoes in Detroit

## At Center of Museum Battle

Special to The New York Times

DETROIT, Dec. 16 — Rivera Court is a peaceful place, where visitors to the Detroit Institute of Arts stroll past the frescoes of Diego Rivera, the Mexican artist who tried here to capture the essence of industrial America in the tumultuous 1930's.

For the last two months, however, the room has been the center of a controversy involving the museum's officials, its employees, its patrons, and art historians from several major universities.

In October, the city's Arts Commission voted to drill a hole in the middle of the court floor and put a stairway to the museum's lower level. The stairway, officials say, is needed to improve traffic flow through the museum.

But 105 of the institute's 265 employees joined a petition drive to protest the plan. At best, they said, a stairway would transform the room into a major traffic center that would shatter its contemplative atmosphere.

### Hazard to Murals Cited

And they fear that the construction could damage the irreplaceable murals, which depict life on the assembly line at the Ford Motor Company's sprawling Rouge complex. The institute officials deny that.

Their revolt was joined by a University of Michigan art history professor, who has declared in print that the proposed stairwell would give Rivera Court the ambience of an "undistinguished suburban shopping mall."

The campaign has produced at least a temporary victory, with museum officials agreeing to delay construction — which had been scheduled to begin next month — while the Arts Commis-

sion reviews its plans and considers alternate proposals.

The professor, 36-year-old Richard Axsom of Ann Arbor, noted that the 48 signatures on a petition recently presented to museum officials included those of professors from Yale, Vassar, Columbia and the University of Michigan, and that those represent only "an initial sounding."

He has formed an umbrella group to unify opposition to the stairwell, saying his hope is to "take the protest, visibly, to the people."

But the museum's director, Frederick Cummings, said that Mr. Axsom's objections "won't hold much water." Vibration tests have shown that the construction will not damage the murals, he said.

Further, he said, "The Rivera Court was never designed for contemplation. The murals are dynamic and reflect the spirit of the 20th century, which — especially in Rivera's mind — is movement, action, the machine."

### A History of Controversy

The murals were commissioned by Edsel Ford, son of Henry Ford, the auto pioneer, and were completed in 1933. They have a history of controversy.

Rivera, a Communist who died in 1957, portrayed life on the assembly line as dreary and tedious — a view that did not win great approval from the city's industrial and civic hierarchy when the murals were unveiled.

But Edsel Ford, a man of influence in the city's arts and industrial community, defended the frescoes, and they have survived as one of the highlights of the museum collection.

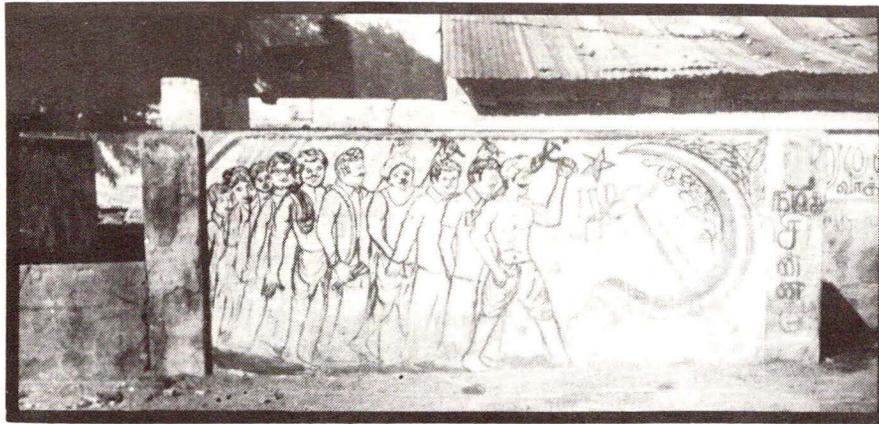
THE NEW YORK TIMES, MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1979

## TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

Two technical questions have recently been sent to us. We pose them in hopes that folks with suggestions will write us. We will publish the responses in the next Newsletter, and in the meantime send on answers to the people who posed the questions.

1. "I am coordinating a mural project which will be about ten feet off the ground and measure about 30' x 40'. Are there alternatives to plywood or masonite that might be longer lasting and lighter, more movable (sheet aluminum, fiberglass, etc.)? If not, are there any acrylic or polyurethane materials that can be used to seal the panels?"

2. "I would like to see a discussion on moisture problems and their solutions. I'm not talking about how to waterproof or determine moisture before the painting, but those problems occurring six months to a year after the painting."



A rare example of a communist mural in India, painted prior to the recent elections. Black paint on light wall, near Maduri. Photo: Michael Greenlaw

## Source of Professional Mural Slides

Some of you many not be aware of the existence of a source of highest-quality art slides of Mexican and Contemporary U.S. Mural Movement. They are available from Rosenthal Art Slides, 5456 S. Ridgewood Ct., Chicago, IL 60615, at a cost of \$1.20 — \$1.50 each (which, is what art slides normally run for). John Rosenthal, who offers an excellent collection of over 21,000 art slides, took the trouble to select the murals his collection covers, with the muralists themselves, and has their permission to re-sell the images of their work. As a source for those of you who want to begin a collection of mural slides, and especially for those of you who can get a local or school library or art center to do the buying so that the images are available to local people, Rosenthal's collection is a solid place to begin.

The entire offering, of which the mural slides are a relatively small portion, is listed in two catalogs (\$2.50 for one, \$4.00 for both). Check it out.

## COPYRIGHT FOR MURALISTS

A muralist can acquire copyright by placing his/her/the group's name with the © and the date on the mural, or by signing the date, ©, and the name of one of the artists on behalf of the group. It is wise to create a written agreement that specifies the names of all artists in the group and any other conditions which the group agrees to operate under.

If the muralist produces posters, cards, etc. of the mural, each reproduction must include the copyright notice. If you publish or agree to the publication of any reproduction of your work without the copyright notice, you will have lost your rights to copy that work for life. If someone takes a photograph of the mural, you can refuse them the right to publish the reproduction, or state in writing: "I give permission to \_\_\_\_\_ to use a photograph of my mural in one issue of \_\_\_\_\_ and request that my copyright notice be published with the reproduction." A written agreement could

also include payment to you for use of the reproduction x number of times.

Place the copyright on the face of the work: ©, name of the artist, date of publication.

Register each work with the copyright office in Washington, D.C. anytime after the year of creation until the 28th year of the first term of statutory copyright. To register or renew, send completed forms, photographs of the work, and \$10. to Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20559. Copies of the form may be ordered from this same address, and are supplied free of charge.

Group registration may be used, where all works for a single calendar year painted by one group can be entered on a single application for a single fee.

The benefit of registering a work is that in the event that a copyright infringement occurs, you may sue for attorney's fees and for statutory damages **only** if you have registered the work before infringement occurs.

There is a "fair use" clause in the copyright law. This says that use of the image or part of it for criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research, is not an infringement of copyright.

In determining whether or not infringement has occurred, the following are considerations: whether money has been made as a result of infringement; the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; effect of use on potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

The formal citation of the copyright law is Public Law 94-553. It is 62 pages, and was written on October 19, 1976 and became law in 1978.

from Leith Johnson, Artist Equity of Northern Calif.; Bay Area Lawyers for the Arts

Note: In California, an act was passed on August 1, 1979 called the "California Art Preservation Act." It provides for financial compensation to artists whose works are defaced mutilated, altered or destroyed. Sec. 987 (h) basically excluded murals, but, just in case it happens, check the law. Your mural might be covered if you had a contract/it could have been removed.

## MURAL CONTRACTS: Useful Info

We offer the following information only to help you understand what might go into a contract, and to help you figure out whether or not you should try to get a written contract to do a mural. If so, perhaps even if you are not sure, you should seek qualified legal assistance. This is not legal advice we are offering.

But it is important to note that the contract points listed below, and the contracts that some muralists and mural groups have created, came only after years of struggle in their communities. Owners of walls, cities, and others who many sponsor murals are often either ignorant of potential problems or sometimes anxious to keep all control in their hands so that they many rip off the mural for their own benefit. In some cases, mural projects have stopped short for over a year while contracts were negotiated. This might be especially true of a city contract because of the bureaucracy and also because such contracts are precedents and therefore must be drawn up without benefit of previous examples.

Even once you have a contract, remember that it is worth something only if the parties enter into it with goodwill. If someone, say a landlord, breaks his or her part of the bargain, you can only gain your part of the bargain if you go to court — and that means hiring a lawyer and spending lots of time and money (someone's, even if the lawyer is a volunteer). Even then, you might not win. What it boils down to is this: Agreements to do and support murals are only as strong as the strength of community support they have from beginning through painting and afterwards. There is no substitute for organized community support. This means having community members available by telephone, and kept regularly informed about the process of the project. One way to avoid going to court is by having community pressure brought to bear on a reluctant landlord or other sponsor, including a city government or its agency.

Remember: whether you need a contract or not, and what that contract should contain, depends on your particular circumstances. Don't assume that you must have a contract, but if you think you might, we hope this information will be helpful to you.

In the following items, "(group)" has been used to represent a muralist or a group of muralists. Some contracts use names, some say "artist," some use group names such as "Cityarts." The other party to the contract may be a sponsor, landlord, co-sponsor, city, or another group. Be specific, and fill in the appropriate name or designation where it belongs throughout the contract, we have used "(sponsor)."

The following items are a compilation of items from several sample contracts sent to the Newsletter. We wish to thank the following for their help:

on the wall productions, 1930 Chouteau,  
St. Louis, MO 63103  
Public Art Workshop, 5623 W. Madison,  
Chicago, ILL 60644  
Terry Lennox and Ruth Resnick,  
New Haven, Conn.  
Cityarts Workshop, Inc. 525 E. 6th St.,  
New York, NY 10000

and Heidi Bogin, Esq. of the law firm of Corwin and Frey, and the Arts and Business Council of New York.

Sometimes a landlord will balk at a formal contract. In that case, perhaps a simple letter of agreement, including the main points, might do the job.

Other points to consider:

In some cases, an easement for a particular wall may be the appropriate document.

You may want to make special indemnification clauses if volunteers are used. In some states/cities, laws prohibit people of certain ages using scaffolding, or swing stages (sometimes without a large bond posted), etc.

You may want to specify that painters are covered under workman's compensation laws.

A separate contract may be appropriate for design of a mural, in which case several of the above items are still pertinent, but an additional clause about obligation to continue with the project may be necessary: "Nothing herein shall be construed to obligate (group) to prepare a mural or (purchaser or sponsor of design) to purchase the mural. The parties understand that any agreement as to the preparation of the mural based on the design called for herein shall be left to future discussion and agreement between the parties."

**Be sure to specify who owns the copyright to the design.**

1. Identification of parties to the agreement.
  - a. "Agreement is made this (date) day of (month), 1979 between (name of your group or people) (address), and (other party, building owner, wall owner, sponsoring agency, etc.; address).
2. Location of project & nature of project
  - a. Where is the mural to be located; do you need to specify if it is going to be painted one place and mounted another?
  - b. The nature is the painting of a mural.
3. Co-sponsorship
  - a. If your group and another are co-sponsoring the project, say so: "(group) and (co-sponsor) agree to co-sponsor a mural known by the project name (name) which will be located (location, if not noted before).
4. Joint approval, if co-sponsored.
  - a. "The design, color schemes and location of the mural will be approved in writing by the (your group) and (appropriate authorities of co-sponsor) before painting of the mural begins. All subsequent alterations or modifications will be subject to the same method of approval and both the parties agree to render decisions within oneweek of any proposed change."
5. Term of Agreement, Time of Performance.
  - a. States when the project will begin, and when it will be finished by; further notes how long this contract is binding.
6. Payment schedule and amounts.
  - a. Who pays how much to whom and when — all at once, three installments, weekly installments?

7. Duties of all parties.

- a. Spellout who will do what; e.g., "(Group) will employ and supervise the artists and designated for this mural. If additional assistants are necessary to complete this project within the scheduled time, (group) will notify (sponsor) before employing such assistants and upon notification (group) shall employ such additional personnel . . .

"(Sponsor) will submit to (group) in writing prior to the beginning of this mural the names and titles of those individuals who have the authority on behalf of (sponsor) to approve the design, location and color of the mural . . .

"(Sponsor) will provide adequate storage space within close proximity to the mural site for use by (group) during the scheduled time. (Group) will have access to this space at all times . . . At all times when muralists are not present, the designated storage area will be kept secure.

"(Sponsor) will provide adequate lighting, safe stanchoned space in front of mural, etc."

8. Materials.

- a. Specify types of materials to be used, who provides them.

9. Permits.

- a. Who will get permits, who is responsible for this.

10. Insurance.

- a. Who will take out liability and health coverage, in what amounts for how long.

11. Indemnification.

- a. Also known as a "hold harmless" agreement. "(Sponsor) agrees to indemnify and hold harmless (group) against any and all liabilities, loss, damages, costs, or expenses which they may hereafter incur, suffer, or be required to pay by reason of the services performed under this agreement."

12. No Lein.

- a. No leins, the co-sponsor or owner of wall or sponsoring agency agrees, will be placed on (group).

13. Copyright.

- a. This is often a difficult area. The law was changed significantly in January 1979, and we hope to publish an outline of the new law's main points in the next Newsletter. What follows are some points to consider.

- b. "(Group) will exclusively own the copyright on the completed mural. The completed mural will stand as is for a minimum of five (5) years."

or, "The (group) shall have the right to copyright, reproduce, publish and otherwise use the Mural, and the (person or agency granting permission to paint it/paying for it) hereby expressly relinquish any right they may have, or may have had, to copyright said mural. Any such reproduction, publication or use by (group) shall give appropriate credit to the (sponsor). Any royalties received by the (group) for the reproduction, publication or use of the Mural shall be the property of the (group)."

One city contract adds: "The City, through its duly authorized officers, shall have the right to

fair use of the mural on a royalty free non-exclusive basis, provided such use is limited to the governmental purposes of the City of (wherever)."

14. Maintenance/disturbance

- a. These considerations have grown since the early years of community murals for obvious reasons — now it is obvious that murals need periodic maintenance, and that parties to a contract should agree not to disturb a mural once it is painted. What follows are points to consider.
- b. "(Landlord, purchaser, etc.) agrees not to obstruct or alter visibility of mural for a minimum of 5 (five) years."
- c. (Landlord) agrees "to exert my best efforts to assure that no one shall deface or otherwise mar said mural, but I shall have no financial responsibility in the event said mural shall be damaged by any third party. Recognizing the cost of construction and the artistic value of said mural, I promise to pay the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) (fill in your own amount) to (group) as liquidated damages if I should cause the substantial destruction or obliteration of the mural. This agreement is void in case of condemnation, demolition or destruction of the building."
- d. "If the mural is removed from the wall upon which it is now mounted, the (group) shall be notified no less than 60 days in advance of such proposed removal. The (group) may, at its option, itself remove the panels from the wall or supervise such removal, provided that if, at the time of such removal, . . . (group is not employed by the City, it) shall be compensated for its services in connection with such removal at the rate of \$6.50 per person, per hour, up to a maximum of \$(fill in amount) for the services performed under this section."
- e. The (City) shall have the right to erect the mural elsewhere, but only in a setting protected from exposure to the weather and only if the mural is erected in its entirety, using each panel in its proper sequence. The (group) shall have the right to supervise the installation of the mural at such other location. The (City) may, instead of installing the Mural elsewhere, place it, properly covered or wrapped, in storage in a place where the Mural is reasonably secure from loss, theft, destruction or damage from any cause whatsoever, provided such period of storage shall not exceed one year. The (group) shall be notified of the place where the Mural is stored as aforesaid and shall have the right to approve the place and conditions of storage, which approval shall not be unreasonably withheld. Failure to respond within fifteen (15) days after receipt of notice, as evidenced by the (group's representative's) signatures on the return receipt, may be construed by the City as tacit approval. If, at the end of the one-year storage period, or at the end of such further period as the parties may in writing agree upon, the (City) is unable to, or chooses not to, install the Mural elsewhere in its entirety, the (group) may acquire the Mural, and all right and title to and interest therein, upon payment of \$1.00 to the (Ci-

ty). The cost of removing the Mural from its place of storage and shipping it elsewhere shall also be borne by the (group).

f. The (City) shall use reasonable care to protect the Mural from defacement, vandalism, theft, unexplained loss, mildew or dry rot and other excessive or unreasonable physical deterioration, and fire, damage or destruction, willful or negligent, by any officers, employees or agents of the City or by any other person or persons, known or unknown.

g. Except upon prior notice to and upon the prior written consent of the (group), the Mural shall not be obscured or obstructed, in whole or in part, by partitions, whether fixed or movable, by office furniture or equipment or by any other things whatsoever, except, with regard to its present place of installation, as such obstructions existed as of (date, include photo or map of them) attached hereto.

h. Except upon prior notice to and upon the prior written consent of the (group) nothing shall be attached or secured to the Mural in any way, nor shall any part of the Mural be removed, cut into or modified in any manner whatsoever.

i. In the event of any breach or violation of Section 4, the (City) shall notify the (group) immediately that the City learns of or proposes such breach or violation. The (City) shall, within five (5) days after such notice or within ten days after such breach or violation, whichever shall come first, restore the Mural to its condition preceding such breach or violation, but only if such restoration involves the removal of any obscurement or obstruction, or of any attachment of foreign object, or the replacement of any removed panel. If such breach or violation involves removal or destruction of, or damage to, any portion of the Mural such that, in the determination of the (group), the artistic integrity of the Mural is compromised, (the group) may elect to restore or repair such damage, or to purchase the Mural "as is" from the (City) for \$1.00 and bear the expense of removing same from the place where it is then installed or stored. If the (group) elects to restore or repair the Mural, the costs of necessary materials shall be borne by the (City) and, if either of the (group) is not at that time employed full time by the (City) through CETA or any other source, the Artist or Artists not so employed by the (City) shall be compensated for such restoration or repair services at the rate of \$6.50 per person per hour, up to a maximum for both artists of \$50.00.

15. Additions and changes to mural

a. Agree on how changes or alterations are to be decided — examples say the same way original design was agreed upon.

16. Changes of address.

a. Addresses for the group or its representative artists and for landlord, city agents, etc. are given. Then, "In the event of any change in the person designated to receive notice or the address listed above, all other parties hereto shall be promptly notified of such change."

17. Mural acceptance — termination

a. "If at any time during the course of the work done on the mural, (group) is unable to obtain the requisite approvals or (landlord or co-sponsor) fails to fulfill contract, (group) may terminate its obligations under this agreement."

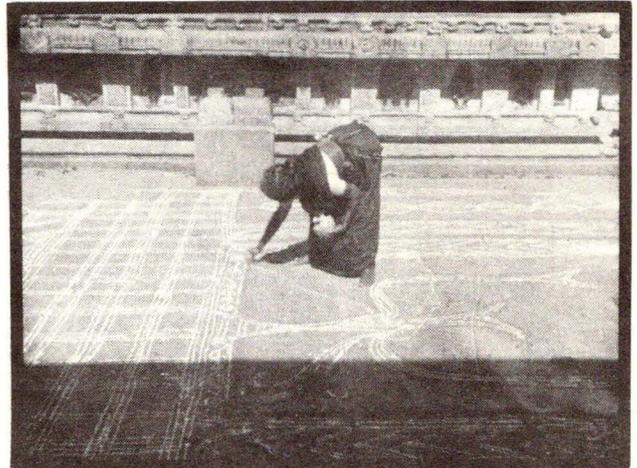
b. "Upon termination by (group) of the mural prior to its completion, (group) will be entitled to its share of the total compensation of the project up to the time of such termination."

18. Successor and assigns.

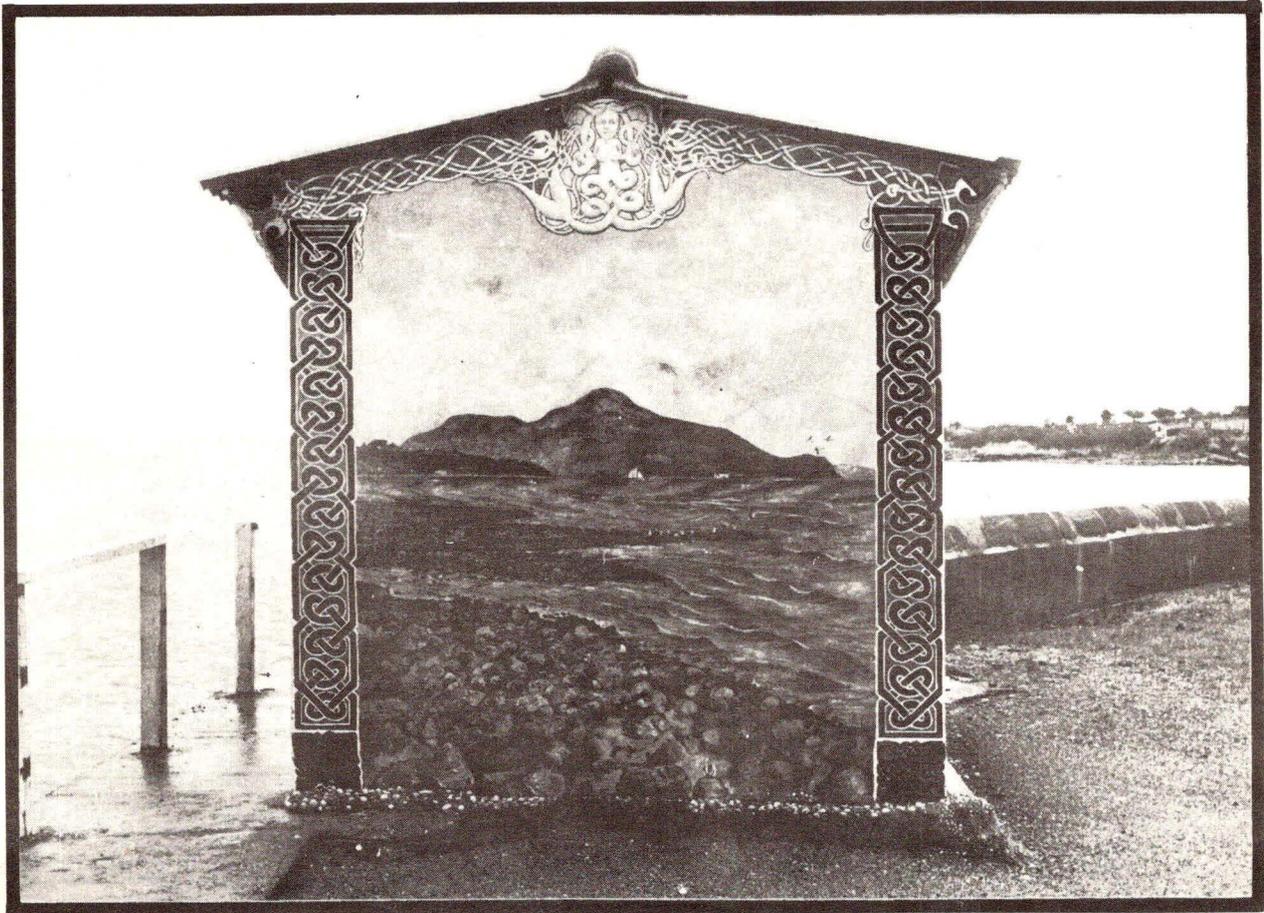
a. "This agreement shall inure to the benefit of and shall be binding upon the parties, their successors and assigns. If at any time during (specify period) co-sponsor (or landlord or purchaser) is no longer the owner and/or supervising agency for the location, co-sponsor (or etc.) agrees to give (group) prompt notification of the change but not less than two months prior to such change."

19. Execution.

a. Signatures and dates must be witnessed/notarized officially for the contract to be binding.



Sri Vishnu temple, Maduri, a woman paints an elaborate and symbolic column on the courtyard. Note the large scale. Photo: Michael Greenlaw



Whiting Bay bus shelter, Arran Island, Scotland, an example of the beginnings of community-oriented mural work in Scotland, August, 1979. Directed by Arran Community Arts Project, Ken Wolverton and Chrissie Orr.  
Photo: Linda Miller

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### DONATIONS

We hope readers will be able to donate \$5-10 and institutions (libraries, museums, etc.) \$10-20 to help support continued publication of the Murals Newsletter. Checks should be made out to "Murals Newsletter," and mailed to P.O. Box 40383, San Francisco, CA 94140.

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