Deadline for Next Issue

The date by which we must have in our hot little hands anything you want printed in the Spring issue, is Friday, March 13, 1981. Yes, Friday the 13th! We're serious about deadlines, and if you don't get us the material on time, it will just have to wait six months before it appears — and that is a disservice both to your work and to the muralists throughout the U.S. and world who could benefit from your news. Mail material by Monday, March 9, 1981.

Money

Some folks have sent in $10 contributions, and that helps tremendously. So far we have been unable to scrounge up any grant support, but we continue trying. Until then, virtually all labor is donated and everything else is done as inexpensively as possible while maintaining adequate quality. Those $10 donations help a lot, and we ask anyone who hasn't sent in some bread to help us keep publishing, to do so soon.

Spring Issue

We did not receive articles on Institutional murals for this issue, as we had hoped to, but we think that murals done in senior citizens' centers, union halls, women's centers, schools, programs for the disabled, etc., are so important and relatively unknown that we are again asking for articles on these types of murals to be the focus of the Spring issue. We also plan to have an update on recent murals in the San Francisco Bay area and in San Diego.

Technical Column

It has been suggested that we run a column with technical information about paints, wall preparations, grades of plywood or masonite, scaffolding, etc. We think it is a good idea, and if you send us questions/information, we'll find the answers and share whatever comes in with everyone. Of particular concern these days is the quality of the several "anti-graffiti" varnishes available. Personal experience, good and bad, would be appreciated.

Conference?

Muralists in southern California are trying to secure enough funds for a conference. More word on success or failure, plans or disappointment, in the Spring issue.

Cityarts Workshop has new Address

Cityarts Workshop has moved to 417 Lafayette St. 2nd floor, New York, N.Y. 10003. Same telephone (212) 673-8670.

Reminder

The Grant's Tomb issue still has not been settled. The National Park Service has just issued a Planning Report for the Tomb and they intend to hold public hearings in the first week in October, although opposition to the sudden scheduling might delay it. For the moment, the only person currently designated to listen to the testimony is the same official who has been in charge of this matter all along. Some impartiality!

For information and, especially, offers of support and help, contact Cityarts Workshop at (212) 673-8670.

Correction

We wish to correct errors published in the last News­letter about Scottish murals. We inadvertently reversed the photograph on page 17. We also failed to note correctly that it was in fact painted by three artists: Paul Rime, Brian Halliday, and Jackie Waterson, not Liz Kemp. The error was ours. We apologize for it and hope the record is now set straight. Also that muralists in Scotland continue to paint such fine walls.

On page 20 of the most recent, Spring 1980, News­letter our caption to the photograph of Ernest Pignon Ernest's work was in error. In fact the work itself, a life size silkscreen, includes the chain link fencing so that the family appears to be behind the fence. The work was designed to dramatize apartheid in South Africa on the occasion of a visit of a South African rugby team to Nice, France. The stadium and streets leading up to it were plastered with this silkscreen so that anyone going to the match would be confronted with the issue.

Ernest Pignon Ernest's work has dealt with the plight of Algerian immigrant workers and their oppression in France, industrial health and safety issues, and women's oppression. We regret our captioning errors.

Artworkers' News Special Mural Supplement

Volume 9, Number 9, May 1980 of the ArtworkersNews included an article on David Alfaro Siqueiros, and ten pages on U.S. community murals edited by Eva Cockcroft. It is published by the Foundation for the Community of Artists, 280 Broadway, Suite 412, New York, N.Y. 10007. Single Issues are $1, but we do not know if they have back issues. Still, it would be worth it to track it down at a library or school.

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Editorial:

Ruling Class Supports Its Own Art Priorities

A demonstration by community arts groups at the opening of San Francisco’s new Performing Arts Center (PAC) in September points out the continuing expenditure of large amounts of money for establishment-conservative-elite art (in this case at least $36 million, not counting tax breaks and side deals), while only a pitance makes its way to poor communities. In the past ten years virtually every major city in the United States has suffered a similar imposition.

We aren’t talking about the cost of tickets, not what is paid to be a passive spectator, but the cost of supporting people’s active, creative participation in an art they help make because it is part of their lives. “Experiencing the arts” has come to mean, for the establishment, buying a ticket and joining a passive audience, whether it be at an opera or a museum. The elite, of course, would like to see all art treated as only entertainment and thus, by romanticizing real issues and struggles into insignificance, they reinforce their own ruling class values. In the arrogance demanded by a need to make everything a buyable or sellable commodity, it is totally foreign to think that millions upon millions of people in this country would actually do art if given a decent chance. So far, murals painted with or by communities are the vanguard of community mass participation in art.

The current economic trends in the country make the arts more dependent on private or corporate funding because the recession has cut back public funding of “inessential” services. If the ruling class really believed arts were inessential they wouldn’t donate millions for it as they do. What they mean is that art is inessential for poor people, i.e., people with tastes different than their own. At a time when schools and community programs are cutting art out of their programs, PACs like so much cultural caviar are being stuffed down our civic throats. Meanwhile, elderly people are eating out of garbage cans or scrounging dog food.

When you depend on corporate and private money, you paint what they want. Remember, “aht” is an investment to them, and, like everything else, what matters are tax breaks, profits, one’s own private pleasures; not the cultural/artistic lives of the millions of the rest of us. Of course the best use of money these days is war, and that’s where the government spends its most gigantic sums. What are the priorities here? As a friend pointed out the other day, “Can you imagine what murals we could paint with the cost of some wing nut for an F-16?” Yes, we can imagine, and it makes us angry.

The wonderful diversity of arts in which the vast, vast majority of people are interested is caught in a constant struggle, constantly threatened with extinction while elite arts find millions. This, of course, is nothing new, but the diversion of fund priorities in our society today is clearly toward arms and elite arts, obviously away from whatever community oriented arts we gained in the struggles of the 60s and 70s.

PACs destroy low-cost housing, cheap parking, small businesses, people’s housing, and replace them with expressions of elite cultural tastes, expensive and inaccessible to the working classes, or even middle class people. The wealthy come into the inner cities from their suburbs only for the work in the womb-like protection of downtown office buildings or to visit PACs, then flee. We’re left in our cities with their art. Swell. Their art is OK, too, and we are not attacking it but the absence of support for the rest of the population’s creative lives.

We’ve talked before about urban redevelopment (Murals Newsletter Fall 1979), but PACs are a doubly damnable perversion because the destruction of people’s homes and cultural lives is done “in the name of the AHTS, dahling.” Not only are our lives upset and left without the culture they need, but this is done to us in the name of the very thing most creative, most expressive of human uniqueness.

Health care is cut back (not a problem if you can afford private doctors), education (“pay for private athletic and music lessons, they have no place in public schools”), social services, abortion (well, for the poor anyway), housing in major cities, a $100,000 house might be barely average. We give $1 billion to bail out Chrysler, and they lay off 40,000 workers. Our needs, including cultural, are obviously low priorities compared to company profits.

Why is this in the editorial of the National Community Muralists’ Newsletter? Because as members of the National Community Muralists’ Network we are committed to building a community based public art movement. In the communities where we live and/or work, we seek to create an art of high quality which is freely accessible to the people in their movement against racial, sexual, and economic oppression.

We need to join others in demonstrating against cutbacks and for more arts and basic support programs. We should use these themes in our work which articulates issues of importance in our lives. The murals recently painted against the current hysterical militarization, reminding us of the Chicano Moratorium, supporting the conversion of nuclear research from weapons to peaceful uses, are all examples — and there are hundreds more.

In short, the cutbacks of funds for regular peoples’ cultures, for poor peoples’ cultures, for working class and Third World cultures hit us directly, and these distortions of human priorities in the richest country in the world need to be fought at every moment.

FIGHT AHT WITH COMMUNITY ART!

Editorial Group
Kathy Cinnater
Tim Drescher
Claire Josephson
Emmanuel Montoya
Jane Norling
Jo Seger
Fran Valesco
Arch Williams
Mural Network Initiates Anti-War Murals

At the instigation of Chicago Midwest Region muralists the Newsletter's last issue suggested that people in other cities organize and paint murals at the end of the summer showing our concern with the militarization currently being supported by our government. To date we have heard of three murals that grew out of that suggestion.

In Chicago, Casa Aztlan and the Chicago Mural Group sponsored a mural where, on August 23, more than 30 artists began painting a "protest mural against current U.S. government war preparations."

"The mural was painted on a railroad viaduct located on 18th St. and Western Avenue in Chicago, near the Mexican Pilsen community, where some of the artists live.

"The work coincided with the twelfth anniversary of the 1968 anti-war Democratic Convention protest in Chicago, and the tenth anniversary of the National Chicano Moratorium in Los Angeles.

The artists came together for this multi-ethnic, multi-racial project in this presidential election year to protest renewed U.S. militarism. A majority of Chicago's active muralists are participating in the project; the first time since the Vietnam War that a large group of artists are making a joint public statement."

“The mural is divided into a dozen film frames, each focusing on a distinctive anti-war image, and was organized by the National Murals Network... Local Pilsen artists arranged for the site. The paints and all other materials and labor were donated by the artists and friends, free of government and corporate monies.”

A statement handed out during the painting read in part;

We call on all people of conscience to join us in taking action against preparations for World War Three and against any “noble” military interventions in Latin America or anywhere.

We oppose draft registration, the increasing military budget, and the use of land and resources for military purposes — be it the naval artillery range in Vieques, Puerto Rico or the mining of uranium in the Black Hills, South Dakota.

We are painting to exercise our right to free speech.

The youth of our communities must not be sacrificed in a war for oil.

We are confident that their militarists will be defeated by the people's struggle.

In commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the August 29, 1970 Chicano Moratorium against the Vietnam War, five Bay Area artists joined together to paint two large mural panels concerning issues vital to the Chicano-Latino community. The panels appeared on stage at the Chicano moratorium rally at Salazar Park in East Los Angeles on August 30, 1980.

Panel I is titled “Stop Police Repression and Build Barrio Unity,” and is shown on the left. The second panel depicts the theme of “Unite to Stop War Preparation and the Draft.”

In a statement, the artists said that “We, as cultural activists” are part of the San Francisco branch of the August 29 Chicano Moratorium coalition. We five artists, Tony Chavez, Kathy Gallegos, Maria Gonzalez, Emmanuel Montoya, and Jane Norling, designed and painted the panels. Some of us had never worked on a mural before. We all had fulltime jobs and worked on the panels evenings and weekends for five weeks."

The panels are available to groups in the Bay Area for display at political/cultural events, libraries, and for use in schools or anywhere where they can contribute to the education and inspiration of Chicano and Latino people as well as others who are fighting for peace and against the current militarization in the country.

The same call for anti-war murals resulted in a project now underway in Berkeley, California, where O'Brien Thiele, Keith Sklar, Nancy Iswoman, Laura McNall, Ariella Seidenberg, Deborah Green, and Nina are painting several panels concerning Nuclear Warfare: nuclear hazards, the mythology of the "Soviet threat," and increased arms spending. This group is working with the Livermore Labs Conversion Project, whose goal is to convert the nearby Livermore Radiation Laboratory from arms research to peacetime scientific work. At this writing, U.C. Berkeley, which administers the Lab, has just renewed its contract with the military, in spite of local protests and opposition.

The panels will be set up at various locations and used at teach-ins about nuclear power/research. They are designed to be freestanding and to work either independently or together.

Chicago, 1980, detail of Anti War Preparations Mural.
PAW Peace Mural

A dramatic new Peace Mural was dedicated Tues., Sept. 9 in the first floor of its host home, Columbia College.

Conceived and created by Mark Rogovin and Barbara Browne of the Public Art Workshop in Chicago, the dedication of the mural serves as the launching of a national Peace Museum, whose purpose is to create a positive change in public consciousness and to point toward a new vision and dimension for peace. It is envisioned that the Peace Museum will host exhibits, present film, theater, musical events, sponsor conferences and festivals, and various additional activities designed to present all means of expressive communication for peace.

The Peace Mural is an 8' by 36' acrylic montage of human imagery taking the viewer through four states of mind and action: aware to attentive, past confrontation and finally to freedom. The mural has been executed at the Public Art Workshop and is to be on permanent view in the first floor lobby of Columbia College. The public is welcome to see the mural during the college's open hours. Columbia is located at 600 S. Michigan Av., Chicago.

A mural in Nicaragua

THE HISTORY of U.S. intervention in Nicaragua is being painted on the Matagalpa police headquarters.
Mexican Master Muralist Camarena Dies at the Age of 72

Jorge Gonzalez Camarena died in México City on May 24th of this year. His remains were received in national homage in the Palace of Fine Arts. Mr. Miguel Alvarez Acosta, who spoke in behalf of the Secretary of Public Education, referred to the persistant struggle of Gonzalez Camarena against the "War department, this preoccupation is seen extensively represented in the commanding pacifist feeling of his work." This past September saw the first one-person exhibit of Camarena's work in a foreign country when 50 of his pieces were displayed in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Jorge Gonzalez Camarena was born in 1908 in Guadalajara, Jalisco. In 1918 he moved with his family to México City and four years later he entered the National School of Fine Arts (San Carlos) where he studied and worked for eight years.

Camarena had executed many works throughout México; murals, canvases, sculptures as well as mosaic murals. Only once did he execute his work outside of his native country. In 1965, in Chile, he painted a large mural, using acrylics, in the “José Clemente Orozoco” School of Fine Arts of the University of Concepción. The theme: “The Integration of Latin America.” The mural was donated by the Mexican government. His assistants were the Chilean artists Albino Echeverria and Eugenio Brito along with the Mexican painters Manuel Guillén, Xavier Villaurrutla, and Salvador Almazar.

He used various mediums throughout his painting life; oils, oleo-wax, acrylics, as well as vinilite. Camarena had invented his own method of composition in 1934 which used harmonic geometry as the base. That same year he expanded his artistic horizon and started to play the chirimia* and became part of a quartet that interpreted Pre-Hispanic music. He took his work into the third-dimension and in 1954, in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, executed on the outside wall of the Institute of Technology of Monterrey the bas-relief mural “La Cultura,” in rock, mosaic and rubber paints. In 1975, also in Monterrey he executed a monument to Fray Bartolomé de las Casas measuring approximately 32 feet in height.

Throughout his life Camarena had been very active in various public issues; for example, in 1929 he was involved with the movement at the National School of Fine Arts (San Carlos) to bring in Diego Rivera as director. The initiation of the demolition of the Castle of San Juan de Ulua in 1953 prompted Camarena to organize a defense committee to preserve and restore this important monument in Vera Cruz.

In 1970 Jorge Gonzalez Camarena received the National Premium of the Arts, in the realm of Painting. In his words of appreciation he said, “I receive this award with the conviction that for me it signifies a profound national compromise that is preferred to the worthy recognition that can signify the contribution of my past work experiences along with the practice of my visual art profession. Because certainly, since the beginning of a lengthy youthfulness, it is already a sustained life on foot before an easel or high above on the scaffold in front of a wall; eventually exchanging the brushes for the chisel in front of a rock or the pen to affirm that in my concept as a painter I correspond, knowingly, to the inherent art of universal brother and sisterhood, which I am from my Mexican particularity.

“And I will not forget to acknowledge what is done up to now is not enough to satisfy the self and the strict longing to accomplish a better painting, whose objective appears an illusion that regresses at the same time it advances.”

*Chirimia — a flageolet — a wind instrument somewhat like a flute, with a mouthpiece at one end, six main finger holes, and sometimes keys.

This article was summarized and translated into English by Emmanuel Montoya from a Biographical Synthesis of the life of Jorge Gonzalez Camarena compiled by Raquel Tibol of México. The synthesis appeared in the June 25, 1980 issue of La Semana de Bellas Artes, the weekly newspaper published by the National Institute of Fine Arts in México City.
Workers! Education Mural in Australia

Geoff Hogg writes from Victoria, Australia about current projects down under. He says that "our work in Melbourne has been developing for six years. We have tried to produce work that is public in form and with an imagery that is particular to Australia and its cultural sources. We recognize the need to do this if we are to produce work of lasting value but that has the capacity to become central in the ongoing efforts to achieve independence and a progressive society."

The Cato Street mural is unusual to say the least. It is not designed for a 'cultured' elite; it is not simply a flourish of introspective images, and it is not an aspiring display piece for an 'artiste' on his individual way to fame and fortune.

The concept of this form of public art, which deals with the lives and struggles of ordinary people, is worthy of the active support of trade unions and their members. The Federation was proud to be able to contribute in its own small way to the realization of this mural. It is situated at 7 Cato Street, Hawthorn, a suburb of Melbourne. Make your own appraisal – it is well worth looking at.

The most recent mural Geoff worked on was painted at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, and looks at the institution's history from its founding as a democratic educational concept in the last century. It was originally a "Working Men's College" financed by subscriptions from trade unions. The mural depicts its history up to its current integration into mainstream education.

The mural is about building workers, their industry and, more generally, about the type of society in which workers live. Builders' Labourers gave their own opinions to Geoff and the collective of painters as to the content of the designs; and our scaffolders, with the co-operation of Cyclone, erected the scaffolding.

The initiative and organization for the project came from Melbourne artist Geoff Hogg who worked in closely with the Federation in the planning and painting of the mural.
Sardinian Murals — A Public Expression of Rebellion

The Sardinian mural movement, which produced about 1000 murals since it started in 1978, is not typical for wall-painting in Europe at all. Its character and dimension is unique, at least in West-Europe.

The murals support the struggle of the Sardinians for independence against colonialism, emigration and unemployment, a struggle against the destruction of their essential conditions for life and their culture, that has a several hundred years old history. Painting murals became a movement because of this struggle and is now part of this struggle, a part to keep its history alive.

Most Sardinians are goatherds and small farmers. Basic parts of their conditions of existence were destroyed by government administrations enforcing legal affairs and the distribution of the area. The destructive laws did not fit with the historical Sardinian social system based on collectivism. These facts made it possible for the island to be exhausted by a ruinous exploitation of the raw materials (which were exported) and left the people of Sardinia poorer than they had been before. All that and state-repressions could not destroy their pugnacious spirit and their revolting against the government. In 1979 the Italian government planned to build a NATO-troop training ground at the Pratobello, where the meadows of Orgosolo were placed. When the troops approached to protect this project, the inhabitants of Orgosolo, women, men, children and old people occupied the meadows, barricaded the streets and exchanged the road signs to irritate the military troops. This resistance led to a solidarity action of an extent never known in Sardinia before. Their slogan was "military out, keep your hands off our meadows". (1)

This happened about the time when the first murals in Sardinia were painted. At the very beginning, painting the walls was done on the initiative of a teacher, who did murals with his pupils in San Sperate which show the lives of the farmers and the goatherds. (He was inspired by the murals of Siqueiros which he had seen when he spent a few months in Mexico.) In the same year this teacher, Pinnecio Sciola, founded Sardinia's first mural group, which was called "Paeso Museo", which means "our village is our Museum".

The idea of painting pictures on the wall was picked up by the inhabitants of Orgosolo after the struggle about the ground of the Pratobello. A woodworker reproduced this conflict in some murals. He wanted "to give his rebellion a public expression". Until 1977 ten villages in Sardinia had their own murals, most of them done by young people. Since 1978 the painting of murals is increasing very quickly in Sardinia. In about forty of the 350 villages you can find them. Most of them have got about ten murals; in Orgosolo there are 100 and in San Sperate 350.

Painting murals became a part of the political activities. The murals show the daily life in the villages and their history. Other very important subjects shown by the murals repeatedly are, as mentioned above, unemployment, emigration, colonialism and necessary reforms. There are no long discussions about what to paint. "Issues reproduced on walls are familiar to everybody. There are no differences we must discuss. The people here all feel the same. We all have got the same ideas... Even an illiterate understands the information." (2) Most of the muralists are amateurs, often children and young persons, but also workers, goatherds, farmers and women. They paint what they feel — about their living conditions, misery, hunger and injustices. The murals are one expression of their collective feelings. "There will be no mural that is invented by just one person". Everybody agrees to the murals, identifies with them. They are all proud of having a mural on the wall of their own house and are pleased to place them at the painters' disposal.

GUNDI BUCHSBAUM

(1) Granzer/Schütze, Corazzu, Köln 1979.
(2) Pasquale Buesco, a daily hired man and a painter of murals

For further information see: Der Stern Nr. 46/1979, Neues Forum Heft 305/306 1979, Der Stern Nr. 32/1979, Texte und Medien Nr. 11/1979.

Piero is alive and fighting with us. Our ideas will never die.”
Piero, a resident of Orjosolo, was killed at a demonstration. Sardinia, Italy.
History of Orgosolo, Sardinia, 1977, Italy.

New Murals in Brussels/Belgium

Seventeenth Mural in the Northern Quarter of St-Josse/Brussels.
Place: rue de Brabant
Surface: 400 m²/3 frontages
Initiative: Academy of Arts/St-Josse
Subject: "Is happiness only on walls? . . ."
Realization: May til August 1980
Artists: Metallic Avau
Josiane and Patrick Clymans
Bruno Collard
Simone Costa
Marie-Pierre Desbarax
Pierre Dulieu
Ignace Guisset
Christanne and David Devondel
Subvention: Department of the French Community
Support: Assubel
François de Cugnac (Sirtaine)


Stephen Lobb of London

Greetings to all our friends,
Some fine walls were opened and others started here last year and there seems to have been at least as much mural activity as ever before; the one great disaster was the destruction of the great Battersea Bridge Mural in South London.
There is a mix of muralist working in the U.K. — some committed to working with communities, some working as individual artists with an attachment to the neighborhood.
In 1978 Greenwich Mural Workshop set up a conference for all muralists and a result of that resolved to set up a U.K. and Eire network whose function would be to keep muralists informed about mural activities and lay the basis of further meetings. The network lists over 100 muralists but we think this now needs to be updated to include more people who have started since then.

FUNDING
Muralists are funded mainly by local authorities, the Arts Council of Great Britain or the Regional Arts Associations. Other funding comes from Trusts and Foundations and a little from Industry, and occasionally from development aid from Central Government towards New Towns and Inner City areas. The amount of mural painting here is not as great as in the States, there are still relatively few of us; whilst some are well supported, others — particularly those just starting to work — find it very difficult financially. Future developments for funding here are uncertain. Local Authorities have been showing more interest during recent months in sponsoring murals, but the Conservative government has cut back heavily on local government spending overall. In some places the arts are already being hit; at the same time there are signs that reaction to the cuts in social services, health, education and so on, are stimulating an aggressive political response from people in the arts. The Arts minister in Government talks of financial assistance from industry for the arts, but this vague hope shows no sign of success, and would be less likely to benefit our fringe sector than the traditional artists.
Muralists who receive grants to work throughout the year are able to set up close continuing association with communities.

ORGANISATIONS
Some muralists are part of community arts groups whose range includes activities like drama, poster printing, puppetry, photography, etc. Small groups like ours, with four or five workers, are attracted towards this diversity out of interest and because of demand, but find the number of roles we consequently give ourselves too much to handle.

CHILDREN'S MURALS
There is a tradition here for muralists to work with children. Whilst some groups, e.g., The Islington Schools Environmental Project, make a speciality of this and do it well — the majority of children's murals are done at such speed and with such awful organisational problems and with so little ambition that the results are bad. So we are looking for an improvement here, advising people where we can, that the artist must have satisfactory time and finance in order to do a good job.
BATTERSEA MURAL

To go back to the Disaster of the year. The Battersea Mural, in South East London, was 100 yards long by 5 yards high and depicted what local people wanted, by way of decent public housing, improved leisure and play facilities, light engineering industry for employment, gardens and urban farming and better transport facilities, and all these were shown on the left side of the wall. In the centre was a huge broom sweeping away all that was unwanted: derelict, polluting factories, high rise luxury apartments, expensive restaurants and clubs and the businessmen, beaurocrats and politicians who would make it possible. All of these were shown being brushed into a huge consuming fire.

The mural had enormous prestige 'the best mural in the South of England' said a Tate Gallery official; was appreciated by thousands who travelled past it each day to work, and was the focus and rallying point of local people to advocate local socialist policies and oppose conservative oppression. The wall was demolished in 5 hours one night in June by developers. The purpose was to destroy something which opposed them and to make way for them to acquire the vestpocket park which the wall protected.

The colossal vandalism was attacked by media, politicians, artists and local people, and the charges against the artist Brian Barnes, who in defending the wall was arrested for assaulting the police, were thrown out by the magistrate. The developers are now ineffectually trying to give away money to the arts in appeasement.

What we have learned from this is perhaps predictable: Get a lease on your wall at all costs for legal protection. Don't underestimate the power, cash and unscrupulousness of the opposition. Don't expect the establishment to protect murals as they would any other work of art.

MATERIALS

Interest has been growing in the use of more permanency in materials. One group, Public Art Workshop in London, has been using Keim paint, which is silica pigment mixed from powder form with water and fixed with special fixative when the image is decided; it is reputed to last 200 years in good condition. Other people are using tiles and mosaics. Pedro Silva worked in Scotland last summer on a giant Mermaid with the Craigmillar Festival Society, and the mosaic patterning all over her, and the fountains within her, are due for completion this year. An impressive Mosaic wall was also completed in John Kraska's Hill Street project in Glasgow last year. In Nottingham a large fresco has been painted at a school and because the climate has deterred fresco painting for centuries here it will be very interesting to see how it lasts. A commercial muralist in Somerset — Philippa Threlfall — who worked for several years making mosaic images from modelled tile, glazed tile, and pebbles pressed into concrete — is now using a method using glass fibre for the mosaic base, and this we hope to report on soon.

EUROPE

Although we are so close to Europe we have few contacts there, although murals of interest are reported from Sweden, Holland, Germany, France and Portugal. The British Council, a small government agency demonstrating British culture abroad, is preparing a touring exhibition of British murals starting in Norway and Turkey this summer. We hope through this to develop exchanges with muralists wherever it goes. (Incidentally, if you have a city gallery that would be interested in putting on the show which is on 40 metres of boards, and would like to see it, then get them to write to the British Council, 65 Davies Street, London W.1.).

Brian Barnes and the Wandsworth Mural Workshop, Battersea mural, destroyed in 1979 by urban renewal and the local authorities.
CURRENT ISSUES

At a Community Arts Conference in March there was discussion about 2 particular aspects — working class partisanship, and quality. For some it is enough that artists are making art more widely accessible, that whilst the process is progressive (i.e. “to be painting in public is to be making a social statement) the political or social content of the product may be ambiguous. The other side would have the artist much more committed to socialism, affiliated to labour organisations, working specifically with working class people and making of the product an overt social or political interaction.

The argument about quality is one where there are those who say “It is enough that we are working with the less advantaged people”, and there are others who say “The quality of work must be at least as good as that of artist working in a traditional way, or else we don’t change the social situation in which the working class are once again getting second best.”

Though this is a very generalised picture of the situation it describes key issues in our development of our direction, ones that we have to resolve. At the same time we are trying to prevent polarization over these issues because the mural movement is hardly a force here, and we see more benefit in positive dialogue about methods, political ideas and affiliations, than in disruptive criticism. Because it engenders polarisation some of us are also beginning to get weary of our “Community Artist” title. There are other reasons:

The name suggests (a) you are a do-gooder, even a stand-in social worker (b) the art is therapeutic and ameliorative, even that it has become “craft” that is, lost its assertive quality of provoking sight and thought. We want to have the word “Artist” redefined so that we can be called just “artists”. Instead of a dictionary definition that reads: “Artists, n. One who avoids social commitment so as to concentrate on higher personal consciousness and produce Art which through esoteric mystery or lack of explanation, fails to communicate anything to most people.”

We want instead something like: “Artist, n. One who in contact with society produces through skill Art which is the communication of observations and ideas which are straight away beneficial to his or her culture.”

The terms of Community Arts grants in the U.K. depend on us working with the people, passing on skills etc., but at the same time the Arts Council often suggests this process diminishes the quality of the work. Whilst we vigorously defend ourselves against these attacks (and have a reputation for the acerbity of our defence) we are also aware that the quality is not throughout as good as it should be. The reason is not inadequate relationship with local people. Sometimes we are just tired! It may also be that we haven’t realised that we are in the Front Line. What we mean by this is that: THE MEETING OF ARTIST AND PEOPLE IS CREATING THE NEW WAVE AND THE FUTURE OF ART.

We think that the public artist that works with or for the people did not get there because of his or her social principles alone but because the continual regeneration which art has always gone through has (through historical necessity) come up with this connection between artists and people as the next step. If we are the New Wave then the innovation and radicalism that entails is the challenge we have to meet!
Street painting has been flourishing here since the late '60s. So far no-one has created murals with a particular feminist message - but women are highly active in street painting projects, and things are moving. Charlotte Greig reports.

A community art project aims to release people's creative ideas. But this aim is interpreted in different ways. Community art can be seen as a harmless enough activity - it may, indeed, make local authorities feel more comfortable about conditions in a depressed urban area; or as a way of raising people to appreciate high culture (this kind of 'thinking often dominates the attitude of the Arts Council and other funding bodies). Alternatively, community art can be far from pacifying - a force for social action and change. And the reaction of Tory councils to community art - cutting aid to arts centres, demolishing murals like the one in Battersea, resisting community artists' projects - has, recently, involved action by artists and people against the councils.

Painting a mural means battling for permission to use sites, and making links between people in an area to carry out co-operative work. When a mural goes up through joint activity between artists and local people, many developments are possible - individuals taking more interest in their own creative ability; people becoming aware that their environment is something they can challenge, that it is - or can be - their responsibility. People can actually get to know each other and the nuclear family opens up.

The last possibility is particularly important for the woman with children who lives in an urban area with few amenities. Community artists often come into contact with women through their children, and the married women in a neighbourhood may provide the most support for the projects.

An important factor is the high proportion of women working in community art as a whole. These artists don't necessarily have a commitment to raising specific feminist issues in their work (although there is frequently a strong anti-racist and anti-sexist emphasis) - but they can often provide a point of contact for women who are isolated, overworked or bored. The language of feminist debate can seem meaningless and patronising to the woman who finds herself in a limited situation and who needs to work out her problems from within these limits. Women's potential to change restricted lives can often come about more effectively through meeting for a specific purpose: in this case, to paint a wall.

Women artists working in the community don't all have the same idea of what they're trying to do. The function of community art is ambiguous - is it a way of keeping people happy or a vision of change? It's not surprising then that the artists themselves look at their roles from very different points of view.

Carol Kenna lives in Charlton and set up the Greenwich Mural Workshop together with Steven Lobb. They have painted several large sites - Creek Road in Deptford, Floyd Road in Charlton, and the walls of some local council blocks. The workshop has never had enough money to pay anyone else to join in the actual painting, but does have close links with local people. Carol's work entails lobbying for site permission, contacting tenants' associations and knocking on doors to find out what pictures people want, collating these ideas and checking with the tenants, cleaning up the walls, stencilling the design and helping to paint it. She thinks that murals can make important statements from local people to the outside world; for example, the riverside mural at Greenwich shows the decline of the dockland area. Making a mural can also bring out discussion between residents; one council block, Macory House, has portraits of the people who live there together with well known political figures of the past. At present all the projects are initiated and organised by Steven and Carol. But Carol is hoping to see social activities springing up independently of her art workshop. A spin-off from one project which might point the way was the revival of a community centre that had...
fallen into disuse. It has now expanded to become a place where women teach each other skills like carpentry, and organise activities with their children. Several years ago Emily Young set up an association called 'Public Pictures' to bring community artists together. In 1977 she painted some impressive murals under the Westway in North Kensington. She wanted to create symbols that were easy to relate to - figures of men, women and children. In comparison the well known murals further along the Westway by Paul Rochford and David Binnington are far less sympathetic to the people who live near them. A gold plaque tells us the Rochford/Binninton murals are "dedicated to the people of Paddington"; but they effectively reinforce the notion that male-dominated capitalism is all powerful and inescapable. On one wall, gloomy white collar workers sit under machines; on the other, there's a macho vision of the future - male construction workers building a new technological utopia. The Arts Council gave £17,000 for these murals which in many people's opinion intensify the ugliness of sub-Vestway land. Emily Young's six bays of paintings were done for a total cost of £6,000.

Marcia Allen works on a variety of projects around London, often in schools and youth centres, supervising and bringing together simple designs painted by others. She has worked in co-operation with the job creation programme and has painted public spaces (for instance, a British Rail waiting room). She thinks that many women are drawn to community art because there is no formal entry system as a rule - and it certainly seems that formal entry gives women fewer chances, to judge by the lack of 'artists in residence' posts given to us by the Arts Council and the Gulbenkian Foundation.

Freeform is a group of about 20 artists who teach and work on projects that use a variety of skills - not only painting but writing, acting, performing, filming, dancing and singing. A typical project might involve local people in painting a mural and then organising a festival to celebrate. The group work mainly with children and are based in Dalston, East London, though they also get invited to take part in projects around the country. I talked to three women in Freeform: Barbara Wheeler Early, Hazel Goldman and Diane England. Barbara and Diane both have small children (as do many of the artists I spoke to) and they feel that this provides a strong link with other working mothers. One of their projects took place in an area where architects were lobbying for better housing conditions. In this kind of situation a mural quickly painted up by local people can show residents that things are moving. Freeform gets children to make films which are then premiered at a party in a flat that tenants have gained the right to use by squatting. Hazel and Barbara point out that most of the people in the council blocks here had never met socially before. One of their council block schemes involved women living in the flats who helped to organise and paint a mural in the forecourt of the building.

Recently, a mural has been completed at the Thessaly Road council estate, Battersea. It stands in a playspace, formerly a disused area in the middle of the estate. The playspace is largely the work of a tenant, Pat Cook. She suggested the project at a tenants' association meeting in 1977, and a few tenants started to clear the land with little help from the then Labour council. After struggling on with no money for a year, Pat Cook managed to get an urban aid grant and a garden was completed. However, since the land is owned by the council on a yearly lease to tenants, there are fears that the Tory council will reclaim the property.

Pat Cook was also involved in the mural project with Brian and Aileen Barnes. They publicised a meeting about the mural, leafletting houses and putting up posters. At the meeting, they showed films of work on a mural and asked for suggestions for a theme. When people decided on a seaside scene, they organised a trip to Southend; the mural is a series of portraits showing everybody who went on the trip. Pat Cook is in the foreground of the painting, since she initiated and saw through the total project.

Women community artists have shown that they can be mothers as well as, and not instead of, creative workers. Their activity can reach the many women isolated by work patterns and family life. So far, I haven't heard of any explicitly feminist images on our walls and bridges. But there is a lot of scope for painters from the women's movement to build on their work in the community by taking their art and feminist politics into the street.
Detroit

Several publications coming from Detroit are of interest. One is the recent booklet, *Art In Detroit, Public Places* Alan Dennis Newrockie, Wayne State Univ. Press, 1980. Although it misses most of the community murals, it covers sculpture and the more decorative murals, mostly in the downtown area. Alec Pollack, City Planner, was responsible for some of the push towards public art and helped towards the creation of some of the murals.

*The Rouge, The Image of Industry in the Art of Charles Sheeler and Diego Rivera,* is a catalogue from a 1978 exhibition at the Detroit Institute of the Arts. In part A is a documentation of Rivera's impressive frescoes done in 1932 of the Ford automobile plant in Dearborn. The mural, located in the Detroit Institute of the Arts, was recently in danger of being damaged by a proposed widening of the entrance. Fortunately this was forestalled and the impressive room still remains intact.

The Detroit Mural Artists Guild was established in 1966 and in 1977 received a CETA grant. Under the direction of Ruth Loring Janes, murals were completed at Fort Wayne Historical Museum, the Detroit Zoo and the Downtown YMCA.

The Guild was continued by artists from this CETA program who were interested in working together on developing additional mural projects. By incorporating as a non-profit organization in 1979 they became eligible for grants from public and private funding sources.

Presently the Guild is composed of 10 artists committed to executing large mural projects, increasing public awareness of the esthetic value of fine art murals and developing public and private support for mural projects.

Nate Thomas, one of the members, is presently working at the Detroit Council of Arts. This organization is also involved in community arts. Recently projects in Detroit include a mural by Dennis Orlowski, a Hispanic mural in one of the neighborhoods and a mural at the main public library. Since unemployment is now running at 25% in Detroit some efforts towards a community spirit are underway, such as the creation of more mini-parks and small conveniences, such as drinking fountains attached to fire hydrants.

Lansing, Michigan

The Popular Arts Workshop in Lansing, Michigan, has been involved in 10 murals between 1975 and 1979. Included are several portable murals, a hospital project, a three dimensional theatrical sculpture and several outdoor murals.

Gary Andrews, when contacted in July, 1980, spoke of summer jobs for youth that would be sponsored through the Lansing Chamber of Commerce. He was a bit discouraged because of lack of foundation and other bases for support. Anyone who could give some feedback on how to enlist support or share experiences and problems of smaller cities should contact him at P.O. Box 15052, Lansing, Michigan, 48901.

Oatman, Arizona

Brightly painted signs saying "Oatman Murals" now greet tourists who enter this former ghost town. A dirt road leads behind Main Street to the site of an abandoned mine whose remaining concrete walls are now covered by two large murals painted by local artist Jim King.

It took six months to complete the murals, half of it spent in preparatory work. The site had to be cleared, ramps built, materials gathered, scaffolding built, and walls replastered and primed. It was his first mural and was physically difficult for King, who has a wooden leg.

King had a theme and rough sketches but worked out details and the color scheme as he went along. The top mural, "She Sees", is a mythic response to the desert in contrast to the worldly theme of the large wall below, titled "Death of a Muralist".

During spring vacation King involved the children of Oatman in the project. Photographer Carol Stetser primed the lowest wall and provided paints and brushes. Each child was given a section to paint whatever s/he wanted.

Painted by Jim King, Oatman, Arizona.
San Diego: Undocumented Worker Wall

Michael Schnorr began the drawings for the undocumented worker mural during the summer of 1979 while living in Palermo, Italy. The conditions of the undocumented worker as an undocumented worker and not as an illegal alien is an international problem. In many parts of Italy, and especially in the south, the undocumented worker class is made up of north Africans and Turks. In Germany and Switzerland the undocumented workers are Italians, Greeks, Yugoslavians and others. In North America the undocumented worker is usually Mexican or Central American and it is an American situation that predominates in this mural in Chicano Park, barrio Logan, San Diego.

Schnorr says that "the style of the mural is to me a kind of story book painting through symbolism. In the case of this particular mural the story of text is in the bottom section in the form of a poem (in Spanish and English) of which each stanza is descriptive of a particular section of the painting. I wrote the poem during the painting of the mural and it was translated into Spanish by Marla Pesqueira."

This was painted by Leticia Diaz, a young student at AAMA (Association for Advancement of Mexican Americans), an alternative Chicano school in Houston.

A brief description of each painted section from the ground up:
1. The border crossing: figures as part of the landscape, mountains and water as barriers to cross, immigration helicopters, a seal and a whale as mammals (people) caught and put in boxes on display.
2. Two realities of crossing the border, to be eaten by the immigration monster or to be burned like Icarus flying towards the sun; there is a road, more water, a rope ladder, a concrete fence topped by a chain link fence with barbed wire; all of these are closer views of the border and what is felt and encountered along the way.
3. The center of this section is a person's shirt without a head; in its place is the yoke of an oxen, there are arrows and flames coming out of the back of the shirt and there are 2 hearts in the body of the shirt, one surrounded by flames symbolic of the homeland, the other of water symbolic of the crossing; there is a wolf demon on the right and an airplane pointing downwards to the left, both symbols of evil or disaster.
4. This section is about overcoming obstacles, the immigration monster seen in section two appears here again in the right hand corner as pink tongued and harmless; in the opposite corner is an abstracted bull shape with a flag in front of the shape, a human figure made up of pants and stars is seen leaping over all and into space (freedom). This is a positive portrayal of action versus the disastrous results of the action of the Icarus figure in section 2.
5. The top figure is a person with a hammer and a book breaking down a wall (symbolic of barriers).

Review

The first thing a muralist might notice about California Murals (Berkeley: Lancaster-Miller Publishers, 1979. $8.95, 57 ppg.) is that it is not in any way a survey of the thousands of murals painted in California. It is a group of twenty six personally selected details (twenty-one in color). In only six cases is there a view of the whole mural, and one of those (the only mural painted by a black artist) is printed in a miserably unsatisfactory black and white. Most often the photos (4.75" x 7.25") show only a small detail, in one case a single square foot of "Our History Is No Mystery," a mural of over 2,500 ft. The book's title is further misleading in that all examples are selected from the San Francisco Bay Area or pop Los Angeles walls, totally ignoring the important mural work done in East Los Angeles, San Diego, the central valley, Sacramento, etc. The result is a highly personal collection of mural details lacking any sense of context — muralistic, artistic, or social/community.

The brief verbal information sheet facing the photos provide an uneven compilation of facts and an unreliable paragraph on what the two observers who wrote the book think of as motivations and, sometimes, the issues surrounding the walls.

In fairness, we note that the color photographs are of excellent quality, but we also note that the authors, Yoko Clark, Chizu Hama, and Marshall Gordon, gained a great deal of help from Bay Area muralists by promising that they would not publish in the U.S. or in English, but only in Japan. These agreements were betrayed, and the feeling that the authors did not know enough about the U.S. mural movement to do justice to the artists' or communities' efforts is proven by the resulting book.

Newsletter Editorial Group
History lesson taught under a hot sun

By JANE DeLORENZO
Staff Writer

The 40 young people weren’t sitting in a classroom, but they learned a few things this summer—a little about history, a little about art, a little about cooperation, a little about themselves.

The learning took place in the outdoors, under a sometimes scorching sun, in—of all places—the Tujunga Wash. The group, mostly teen-agers, spent the biggest chunk of their summer painting a colorful and historical mural on the wall of the flood control channel which extends into North Hollywood. Not only did they get paid minimum wage, but they also got their names attached to a larger-than-life work of art.

“Some of these kids learned more history this summer than all their life in history classes in school,” said Glenna Boltuch, director of the Los Angeles Murals Program in addition to her directorship at McGroarty Cultural Art Center in Tujunga.

The design of the mural required research of the 1930s as well as the examination of visual historic materials of that era. Six historical consultants conducted the study and gave a presentation to the young workers before the actual painting began.

The new section of the mural was designed by Judy Baca, with the assistance of Jan Cook. The art work begins with Prohibition and travels through time to the start of World War II.

“The job pays a lot less than I’m used to making, but I wouldn’t trade it for anything,” said Cook, a former commercial artist.

“They are really good kids,” she said of her fellow workers. “They’re all good-natured.
There's no ugliness. It's a good lesson in getting along with your neighbors.'

Cook estimated that only a fifth of the young workers had ever taken an art class before. But they all worked hard and did their best, she said.

"One thing about this mural is that it presents teen-agers as a resource rather than a problem.''

In addition to instilling a sense of self-worth and pride in the young artisans, the project also had a practical purpose. "I think what really sold the city on the project was the cleaning up of the neighborhoods, eliminating graf- fiti and involving local kids in creating community pride in their neighborhoods," said Boltuch.

The mural also brings some artistic expression to an area which might otherwise be void of such design, she added.

The project is co-sponsored by the city murals program of the Cultural Affairs Department and the Social and Public Arts Resource Center (SPARC). Funding was provided by Project HEAVY, the Summer Youth Employment Service and CETA Title VI. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers supplied all the paint and other equipment.

Assistance also came from such organizations as the National Endowment of the Arts and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District.

"This was a tremendous coor­dinated effort," Boltuch said. Her organization also is involved in mural projects in East Los Angeles and a mural design plan-

ned for Eagle Rock City Hall.

Boltuch, who worked on murals in New Mexico, joined the citywide program in 1977, becoming director later that year. The program began in East L.A. but soon spread throughout the city. Another mural project is schedul­ed to begin this month in Van Nuys, she said.

She hopes the program will keep on going "year after year."

Anyone interested in seeing the Tujunga Wash Mural as it looks in this Bicentennial Year for Los Angeles is welcome at the dedication ceremony Sunday, Sept. 14. The event will be conducted from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Cold­water Canyon Boulevard in North Hollywood, beside the Tu­junga Wash Flood Channel be­tween Burbank and Oxnard streets.

Included will be guided tours, music and a special video documentary showing the making of the mural.

Detail of the 1980 portion of the Tujunga Wash Mural, Los Angeles.
Two weeks ago the fences leading into the Montgomery Palisades condominiums in South San Diego sported colorful murals by two award-winning South Bay artists.

Today they are covered by a coat of subdued brown paint.

THE ARTISTS, Patricia Mercado and Enrique Hernandez, both recent graduates of Montgomery High school, never even had the chance to complete their work.

Area residents and potential buyers complained to the condominium owners that the paintings were too bold, that the design and color of the murals, which faced each other in a 25-foot-wide driveway, didn't match.

And so, after four weeks of work, with one more still to go, the murals were destroyed.

THE PAINTINGS were done as part of the Montgomery Palisades Mural Painting Contest, sponsored by Community Arts in conjunction with the condominiums.

The contest was designed in an effort to dissuade graffiti and provide a means of expression for talented — but undiscovered — artists to demonstrate their artistic ability.

"But the whole thing turned out to be quite sour," said Walt Bowse, project public relations director.

"The idea was to create a positive reaction. But we've gotten nothing but negative feedback."

THE INITIAL phase of the contest began with artists submitting color renderings of their ideas for murals to be painted on the wood fencing that surrounds the South San Diego condominium project.

The renderings were reviewed by a panel of four judges, and three winners were selected on the basis of artistic merit, originality and suitability for the project.

The winning artists received a $200 cash prize. Three prizes were awarded — One to Mercado and another to Hernandez. The third was split between San Diego artist Teresa Mill and El Cajon artist Nancy Schaffroth for their combined effort in a mural entitled "Daybreak of a New Eon."

That mural is the only of the three which remains. The colorful painting, dominated by sleeping figures, is meant to suggest a new age of spirituality.

THE MURAL, which separates the condominiums from the 7-Eleven Market at 3490 Palm Ave., is about 6 feet high and 120 feet long.

Bowes hopes it will not suffer the fate of the other two. Mercado, too, hopes the mural is not destroyed.

And she wishes she could have had the opportunity to complete her own. "They didn't even see the whole thing," she complains. "They never even saw it completed. They didn't take into consideration our work or anything."

"They just didn't like it."
A Mural To Live By

by Sara Siegler Brenner

One of Los Angeles' latest murals comes out of a community of people not often recognized, because they do not obviously resemble one another. Nor do they apparently share a single history or culture. But all nine muralists do hold certain characteristics in common. They all have been personally affected by cancer. They have all worked and talked together in group-counseling sessions sponsored by the American Cancer Society (ACS), and they all have hope and the desire to share it.

Their mural, entitled "Living with Cancer," is a two-panel, 8' x 8' painting that depicts the struggle from despair in diagnosis, to new meaning and creativity in life. It is a vibrant design of primary colors and basic emotions. At the center are two women, one black and one white, touching. Connecting . . . two women, helping each other survive trauma and feel the pleasures that remain theirs. Around that center are scenes of the various life-support systems, ideas, and people that can give meaning during the cancer experience: the doctor, counselor, family, other women, and the beauty and peace of the universe itself.

The story behind this starkly beautiful new mural started with group-counseling sessions led by ACS Social Worker Maxine Bernard Shear. During those sessions, each of the seven group members who had cancer shared her personal responses and discovered among the others common fears and hopes. Each woman found out how cancer acts as a leveling agent that brings women of all ages, and ethnic backgrounds together. To paint a mural that would reveal that experience to others with disease, or to others with different problems, was a natural next step. But like other L.A. mural-groups, these women had to spend many hours together talking, learning about one another, and defining their aims before any brush touched paint.

The next stage called for Glenna Bulloch, Director of the Los Angeles Citywide Mural Project. Involved with mural projects throughout the city since 1976, Bulloch had worked on the Boyle Heights and Tujunga Wash projects, in addition to the RTD "portable murals." She had a lot to give to this undertaking.

Bulloch came to sessions. She listened. She related the reactions of the soon-to-be-painters with those of her mother, who also dealt with cancer. And she helped put together all the images she heard each woman describe. She drew a composite of each participant's designs with a feeling and creativity that only a seasoned muralist, personally touched by cancer, could have supplied.

The only thing left was the painting. So, in January, Johnette Duzen, Michi Iida, Catherine Leary, Eanedina Morales, Alice Joy Rosenfeld, Maxine Bernard Shear, Diane Simons, and Wilda Whitefield joined Glenna Bulloch . . . in a paint-spotted basement of the Old Venice Jail Building (the Social and Public Art Resource Center). There the women dabbed and dripped and filled in the blanks of their own design.

Eanedina Morales still describes her feelings about the project with enthusiastic joy. "We did the mural to show people, especially women, that to have cancer doesn't mean giving up hope; women can help other women. When I first had my mastectomy and was told about the Coastal Cities Unit of the American Cancer Society, I went to find answers to my questions about cancer. What I learned was that I didn't want to and didn't have to die . . . that many people, in fact, live with cancer. And so I put my feelings into the mural." Morales had never painted before, but she now wishes to do more painting and art projects during the rest of the life she feels she's been blessed with.

Johnette Duzen, a long-time painter, had never worked with a group in a project like this. "It turned out to be an upbeat subject that emphasized healing rather than fear. And I'm glad to have been a part of that."

At last month's "Artists' Preview" of the mural, Norman Cousins, former editor of the Saturday Review and author of the national bestseller Anatomy of an Illness, gave the dedication speech and also acknowledged the "upbeat" aspect of this work. Himself a survivor of a supposedly irreversible disease, Cousins stressed in his talk to the artists and their audience, the need for all physicians, family-members, and friends to encourage the faith, self-nourishing hope, and positive feelings of the patient who lives with disease. This mural does just that.

But aside from its importance to the Los Angeles people struggling with disease, "Living with Cancer" remains a remarkable accomplishment in its own right. Says Mural Project Director, Bulloch. "Mural-painting is an art form open to people in their own neighborhoods, and its popularity represents a move away from professional and artistic elitism and a step toward community sharing. The message of the mural is that people can affect their cities."

In painting this mural, special people with a special problem joined together not to display their aesthetics, but to affect the city and communities they live in, to present a whole vision comprised of several individuals' personal images, symbols and scenes. They depicted the experience of cancer, a disease that affects more people in Los Angeles than do all the mailing lists of this city's museums and galleries. And as the mural travels the city, during its year-long series of displays, it will continue to tell the story that, even for those with cancer, life can contain hope and joy and creativity.

To hear that story and to see this mural before it begins its citywide tour, you may contact the Coastal Cities Unit of the American Cancer Society (6733 Sepulveda Boulevard, Los Angeles 90045 / 390-8766 or 670-2650).
In Fresno's civic center John Sierra with an Art In Public Buildings commission was embellishing the five­
storied facade of the State Building with draftsman­like images of local history. This kind of photo­realist il­lustration that is being increasingly adopted by skilled
muralists has the virtue of being readily legible and im­
presses the authorities. It has something of the popular
feel of New Deal murals but requires long training com­
pared to the high­contrast realism which requires skill
to draw, but can be filled in by less experienced
teenagers. As a style Sierra's realistic illustration is
academic and conservative, but his symmetrical
decorative design shows that he is pushing beyond the
style's limits.

With the advice of the Fresno artists we found our
way to a community center on the north side of Visalia
where Ruben Tavares has done attractive Native
American frizees and Al Hernandez was working with
other young people on a Chicano heritage wall.
had disappeared. We confronted the official in charge who explained that it had been dismantled during a recent renovation; a janitor confirmed that it had been taken to the city dump. We drove out there, questioned personnel, but they did not remember it. Armando did his best to contain his fury and humiliation.

Off campus in Isla Vista are to be seen a great number of student murals on the sides of boarding houses, groceries and eating places done over probably a dozen years. Most were unsigned. There are landscapes, seascapes, skyscapes, hippy paradises, and on the People’s Service Center enlargements of Indian rock painting. Downtown it’s worth taking in Warshaw and Peake’s 1959 semi-abstract murals about Don Quixote in the Public Library, and for lush academic history painting, the high walls that envelop the council chamber in the old Court House done by Dan Sayre Groesbeck in 1928.

Saticoy

Armando directed us to this small town among the lemon groves east of Ventura where in 1975 farmworkers refused to be evicted from their company cottages when the growers decided to sell the property rather than bring it up to the state building code. When the advice of Cesar Chavez, the 82 families raised the money for a down payment and bought their village of 18 acres. They organized their own community, calling it Cabrillo Village, and put together a cooperative housing corporation to rehabilitate older structures and build new quarters themselves with funds and training provided by the government. They saw their new skills as construction workers and cabinet makers as a means of lifting them out of low-paying orchard work forever. It was this story that their young people painted on their workshop with the help of Ventura artist Ricky Delgado.

Phoenix

The next day we were in Phoenix looking at the work of Zarco Guerrero, an accomplished portrait sculptor whose firm handling of three-dimensions also shows in his murals. He explained that the artists of the area had not succeeded over the years in getting together to do any extensive neighborhood painting although there were frequent requests from the barrios. In his studio in nearby Mesa there were portable murals with the faces of Geronimo, Joaquin Murietta and prototypes of the Mestizo race. He does these at schools with students and carries the paintings about to spark new projects. Zarco also organized Xicanindio in 1975 as a service that exhibits Chicano and Native American community art around the country, and it has been funded by the NEA.

Santa Fe

We saw in Phoenix one of the walls done early in the ’70s by Los Artes Guadalupanos de Aztlan, the Santa Fe group whose activism and outspokenness cost them their survival. But one of their original members has been active again. The recent work of Gilberto Guzmán seems to me to mark him as one of the first rank muralists of the national movement. This is to be seen in Gold Star Mothers of 1977 which he did in the Bataan Memorial Building to commemorate the death march in the Philippines during World War II during which many Chicano troops died. The mural in somber orange shows the mourning mothers swaying as they clutch wilted roses. It is a masterpiece. The following year in the State Library next door, Guzmán painted two friezes, one commemorating the revolt of the Pueblo Indians in 1680 that drove the Spanish out for 20 years and another showing the Indian corn goddess. Both display the big swinging forms in rich orange, yellow, red and green that are the hallmark of Guzmán’s work.
When Zara Kriegstein saw these and his easel painting, she gave him a show in her new October Gallery in London in 1979 and smoothed the way for his doing an anti-war mural across the street. Then she returned with him to Santa Fe and did the public relations necessary for the two of them and a number of local artists to undertake the approximately 20 x 100 side of the State Archives building. They had to overcome the reputation of Guzmán as a political painter and the Chamber of Commerce’s effort to have all structures in the city look like adobe-colored pueblos devoid of imagery. Although the muralists were painting a state building, they had to do it out of their own pockets. Guzmán, hoping the project would open new possibilities for a mural group in Santa Fe, sold his van for paint and has been living from hand to mouth. The mural itself will be titled Multiculture and is a celebration of the contribution of the varied peoples who have built the city. Guzmán’s swinging design is readily recognizable in the big blue Spanish bull at the left looming above swaying roses and a cow’s skull, while at the right he is responsible for the design of the blooming cactus; meanwhile in the bottom center a corn goddess lifts up the contributions of technology. Above her Kriegstein is painting a rather gypsy-like version of the old fiestas before their commercialization that Guzmán laments. If anything can open up new opportunities for muralists in Santa Fe, this work should. Their problem will be how to move from this to sharper social and political statements when they are not working from an organized community base.

One of the painters who worked early on Multiculture was Linda Lomahoftewa, who has a position at the Institute of American Indian Art. In 1977 and ’78 with Graciela Carrillo of San Francisco she helped paint the entrance way to the Kiva Theater at IAIA with colorful medleys of the art, music and dance of Native Peoples, one titled Canto Indigen, the other Canto Espiritu. There are older murals, sculpture and painting on exhibit at the institute.

Albuquerque

Here we were taken around by Francisca Herrera and Fernando Peñaloza. She is a school teacher and writer well informed about local muralists, and he is a native of Bolivia, who lives in Church Rock and has done murals around the state and in Lubbock, Texas. Fernando like others complained that New Mexico does not invest public money in the arts either through CETA or neighborhood youth programs. As a counselor of young people he involves them in art activities and was responsible for one of the 1979 murals at the South Valley Multi-Purpose Center that presents the view that he says all Native America religions teach — that mankind can only be saved by a fundamental spiritual change. On an adjacent wall Manuel Unzueta had painted his vision of the elderly and young looking toward a better life. And around the corner Enrico Vasquez and Manessa Crumbel depicted a woman telling young people about a past of calavera farmworkers and shadowy Indians.

At the North Valley Community Center in 1975 Francisco LaFebre directed a group of local people in covering the exterior walls with big bold faces that culminate with an angry Native American threatened with crucifixion who confronts the modern skyline of the city. This had provoked considerable controversy, we were told. We were also shown a very handsome frieze that envelops the student lounge at Albuquerque High School that LaFebre painted in 1978. It consists of bright images recreating the past of indigenous peoples, Hispanics, Frida Kahlo along with kids today and a foetus for the future. LaFebre also has filled the lounge of the Chicano Studies building at the University of New Mexico with murals.

Probably the earliest community mural in the city is Walter Boca’s South Broadway Cultural Center showing 1973 at the creation of the solar system, its flourishing under the Native Americans and destruction by modern madness and technology. One of the most recent
ensemble of murals is a series of dancers around the big patio of the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center done by different native artists. Some are slick and touristy, but others more authentic.

On our way south through New Mexico we sought out Manual Acosta's academic but socially conscious murals at the First National Bank in Las Cruces.

El Paso

We arrived in this west Texas city on the Fourth of July streaming colors done in 1975. However, his Medal of Honor Mural at the VA, which is advertised in tourist brochures, was inaccessible because of the holiday.

We did have the good fortune though of connecting with Mago Orona, who had recently completed a monumental two-story high composition in the cafeteria at Valle Verde Community College. She had worked with students for two years doing sandcasting in the desert and implanting broken colored glass in the panels, some of which are mounted away from the wall. The theme is the overcoming of the divisions and contradictions within individuals and society by a new compassion. Mago also does works on a similar scale that are assembled from five and six foot long linoleum block prints. She took us to the studio she is having built in Ciudad Juarez where she plans to open a school for her artists is Carlos Rosas. Barrio residents' efforts to refurbish the housing for its present residents on the basis of historic preservation.

San Antonio

The easiest murals to find here are Juan O'Gorman's in the civic center where in 1966 and '67 he employed the technique of colorful rough stone mosaic he had used on the library at the Universitaria National in Mexico City. His theme here was the cooperation of the two cultures.

We then began seeking out local muralists and spent an evening at the home of Jesse Treviño. He had lost his painting hand in Vietnam in 1967 and says it took him two years to learn to paint with his left. The bitterness with which he returned still shows in the mural that he painted on his bedroom wall in 1972 in billboard scale photo-realism. There is an attractive girl's face bigger than the shadowy portrait of himself in combat gear, covering one of her eyes is a purple heart held by his stainless steel claw; and there are glimpses of a beer can, coffee, bread, a car and pills to complete Mi Vida. He became a student at the local Our Lady of the Lake University and during the Chicano activism of 1974 filled three sides of the student lounge with La Historia Chicana, monumental but somber images of the struggle of indigenous peoples against conquistadores, a Zapata-like figure lifting rifle to the ceiling, farm-workers and a young family against their black and red banner. Since then he has concentrated on large realist air-brushed canvases that record the persons and places of the Westside that are close to him: seven brothers, a snowcone man at his stand, El Progreso drugstore, a shopwindow with religious articles. With such work he has had one-man shows and has built a successful career.

The most hopping community-based mural activity in San Antonio currently is at the Cassiano public housing project where Anastasio Torres and a team of mostly high school dropouts have in a year and a half completed 28 end walls of apartment buildings. There were four in progress and he hoped to do at least half of the 170 walls available. Torres, who was originally a social worker, organized the Community Cultural Arts Organization to encourage the youth to return to a high school where there is an excellent commercial art program. He hoped to get them jobs also doing signs for local shops. The city had provided a grant of $35,000 and the Levi Strauss Foundation had also contributed. Some of the teenagers have stayed with the team from the beginning. They do the research for the murals and make presentations to the Residents Association for approval; increasingly the tenants were making suggestions. A year ago, Torres said, they would not have permitted the walls on Zapata and Villa. The murals that extend along both sides of Hamilton Avenue offer a panorama of Raza history, romantic indigenous chiefs and damsels, religious imagery and a wall urging support for the UFW in a state where the union has had an unusually difficult time of it. What is particularly impressive besides the sheer number of works is the skill of the teenagers in modeling in color. Impressive also are the tight ship that Torres runs and the seriousness of the young painters.

There were other isolated works around the Chicano Westside of the city, and Torres had offered to help Blacks on the Eastside to get started. He acknowledged that murals had started late in San Antonio because of lack of interest, but now they are well under way.

Raul Valdez, detail of outdoor stage, 1979, Hillside Park, Austin, TX.
Austin

Here we found our way by thumbing through the phone book and coming upon the Centro Cultural de Lucha (League of United Chicano Artists), which we learned supports a Ballet Folklorico, literary journals, exhibits, seminars and an art program. At the Centro Raul Valdez had done a pair of powerful murals, but his most impressive was an outdoor stage in Hillside Park, on both sides of which he had painted in 1979 surging figures based on Siqueiros and Orozco but strong and original in their combination.

On the other side of town across the street from the University of Texas, we simply chanced on Carlos Lowry and team finishing off blown up movie frames with images of the Odessa Steps, Citizen Kane, The 400 Blows, Bogart, Chaplin, Keaton and Jimmy Cliff on the 35 x 140 side of the Varsity Theatre. Carlos, a refugee from Chile, designed the wall as a project of Interart-Public Art, which has 32 painters who have done murals for a bicycle shop and restaurant. Some painters volunteer; there was just one CETA salary and merchants paid part of the costs. There were leaflets being passed out requesting funds. Interart’s work is often witty, professional and socially conscious. One of their most original painters was Carlos Osorio who was lost to the group when he returned recently to Puerto Rico.

Crystal City

We had heard there were murals here where La Raza Unida Party was organized and where Chicanos had been elected to the principal public offices since 1968. We went directly to city hall and got our information from an official who made it clear that things had not changed that much because the Anglos still controlled the local economy. Carlos Lowry had told us about Max’s Pot (Maximum Potential), some appropriate technology people in Austin who had designed very simple solar collectors and hot water tanks, which we found mounted next to the most modest cottages in Crystal City, provided free by a federal grant and manufactured there at the Community Center for Self-Help. And there were also murals, particularly those done by Antonio Flores at the Centro de Salud and the school district office where a three-faced mestizo was depicted trying to grasp needed government funds. There were also Chicano heritage murls at the elementary school done by adults and children.

San Juan

We were disappointed to find nothing in Laredo after talking to a number of museum people there and headed into the lower Rio Grande Valley. One of the high points of the whole trip was to walk into the Centro Campesino Miguel Hidalgo in San Juan and find the big meeting hall enveloped by murals. There were bigger than wall high men and women — black, brown and red — trying to free themselves from entwining vines while a farmworker’s eagle smashes the crucifix another is bound to. These were done by Mexican muralist Artemio Guerra Garza in 1974 and ’75; on another wall, Adolfo Martinez, who teaches at nearby Pan-American University in Edinburg, depicted a crowd of campesinos witnessing the signing of a contractor in front of the state capital beneath the caption “En Texas Si Se Puede.” Next to it artist-organizer Chip Jeffries painted a similar subject set in the fields. These had been done for UFW convocations there, Jeffries’ back in 1978, Martinez’s as recently as February when Cesar Chavez attended. The farmworkers, who had organized here in 1967, had built their hall and now had groups in five colonias on the Mexican side as well as along the U.S. bank. There still were no contracts, but as elsewhere the UFW had organized around social services, and there had been job action to get better working conditions and public services. Although there had been divisions, Jeffries, whom we talked with in Houston, thought the UFW was close to collective bargaining in south Texas. The people at the Centro were great to us: Sister Tess Brown, a staff person, Rebecca Flores Harrington UFW Texas director and the members who took us into the colonias to meet their compadres.

Corpus Christi

The next murals we saw were in Corpus where Leo Carriilo, who teaches in the Ethnic Studies Department of the University, took us around to the works that had been done as part of the Canto al Pueblo in 1978. At a mental health center there was the intense figure of a Chicano leaning out of the pages of a book and pondering among symbols of the Native American and Texas heritage painted by Roell Montalvo and 12 members of Los Artistas del Quinto Sol. Manuel Martinez of Denver had done an earth mother rising like Maiz from the ground with the help of campesinos. And Aurelio Diaz, Salvador Vega and other members of MARCH who had come from Chicago had done images of the struggle for Aztlan on four sides of a small building. There was also the happening in which children and their parents from a housing project did the side of a supermarket with the help of Carlotta Espinoza, and the moving image of an old man in the Retema Manor West convalescent home, completed by Armando Estrella in 1978 three months before he died. Carrillo said that he and other local people were hoping to organize a Chicano cultural center and museum in Corpus.
Houston

Here Leo Tanguma took us to see his 260 mural of struggling Chicanos, *Rebirth of Our Nationality*, painted on the side of a factory in 1972 with the help of 150 barrio youngsters. The paint is only slightly faded and peeling, and the work remains an important landmark that political groups do their graffiti beneath. We then visited *The People's Judgment Against Institutionalized Brutality and Racism*. Leo began it in 1978 and has had to stack its big 600-pound panels outdoors against a shed. Their imagery of Third World people abused by Houston police, Somoza, Ian Smith and Idi Amin makes clear why the work has not found a home. Afterwards Leo took us down to the river where the cops had drowned a teenager they had beaten, which the mural records. He also showed us a model that he had designed for yet another free-standing monument made up of similar large painted panels on which a number of artists were to work. The next day we met him at a public housing project where mostly Black people live. There a teenager was painting a frame around a mural Leo had done in their recreation hall showing a sambo-mask being removed from the face of a strong young man surrounded by Black leaders. Its titles: *Free At Last?*

Nearby Leo was helping a team set to work on the first of the end walls of the apartment buildings. He spoke of a program he was organizing with the Art Department of Texas Southern University, which was across the street, whereby students would get course credit for similar work in the projects.

Leo told us to go over to Hannah Hall, a classroom building that also housed TSU's administration. It was astonishing. Three floors of murals, perhaps as many as 70 paintings that had been done by art students since 1952 as part of their degree work. Painted in the corridors where hundreds pass daily, these were not in-class exercises but public art. The quantity and force of these works can only be compared to the tiers of paintings at the National Preparatory School in Mexico City where Orozco, Siqueiros, Rivera and others began the Mexican mural movement in 1922. All of the TSU murals express some seriously considered version of the Black experience through three decades. Early ones were concerned with the ravages of World War II and the not so Cold War as well as issues of racism and social injustice. Later works dealt with Black activism and showed a growing appreciation of the African heritage. In a phone conversation weeks later John Biggers, the Art Department chairman, said he saw an increasing subtlety in recent works that introduced lyrical elements. During our visit Biggers was out of the country, but Carroll Simms, who also has done murals but mainly teaches sculpture and ceramics, showed us around. Simms said these murals were the "equivalent of classical Negro spirituals" because they were part of the community and expressed the "environment of daily living and the impact of social and cultural forces." He explained that some of the paintings that were of less abiding interest were covered over by new ones; he also pointed out where some fine ones had been destroyed without notice when the computer center moved in and wanted to exhibit its wares through glass windows.

Carroll told us how the program originated, and this is laid out in detail in the book that he and Biggers did for and illustrates many of the murals, *Black Art In Houston*, edited by John Weems and published by Texas A & M University Press, 1978. Simms and Biggers had both been students in the early '40s at Hampden Institute in Virginia. There Victor Lowenfeld came in 1940, hired to teach psychology. He was a Viennese Jew who had been trained as an artist and became interested in art as a means of working with the handicapped, which led him to psychology and study with Freud. Escaping Hitler, he came to England with the help of one of the chief proponents of people's art, Herbert Read. After teaching a year at Harvard, he decided to work with Black students and came to Hampden. When he saw that no art was taught there, he offered a course against the advice of the administration that believed that the students were only interested in jobs. Of the 800 at Hampden, 750 tried to enroll. The course continued to be immensely popular because Lowenfeld presented art as a means to self-awareness through consciousness of your people and roots. Biggers says that there
already was a Black consciousness in the '40s that he and his fellow students brought to Lowenfeld's classes, but that it needed drawing out. Lowenfeld was an admirer of how the Mexican muralists were achieving this and encouraged his students to do murals at Hampden. In this atmosphere Charles White was invited to the institute in 1943 to do a mural that turned out to be his best known, The Contribution of The Negro to American Democracy. Among the students was Samella Lewis who painted murals there and later with William Walker at the Columbus (Ohio) Gallery School of Arts in 1947 and '48. She went on to become an important artist and scholar Art: African American and a proponent of the community mural movement, while Walker, of course, became one of its chief artists.

Meanwhile Biggers became chairman of the Art Department at what in 1949 was the Texas State University for Negros (later TSU) and transmitted much of Lowenfeld's teaching. A number of his students went on to do murals in the community, mostly in Houston, and as the school was becoming integrated, Leo Tanguama enrolled and was allowed to meet the mural requirement with his Rebirth of Our Nationality. Biggers himself has painted murals at the university through his tenure. His most recent, the Family of Man in the cafeteria of the Student Union because of its linear style seems almost to be woven like some of the looms it depicts. In his studio there was yet another work under way, this one on music. As early as 1953 he painted the Contribution of Negro Women to American Life and Education at a Houston YWCA, and in 1956 a work depicting longshoremen behind the platform at their local's hall. Murals in a home for aged Black people, a library and other public places followed.

The murals at TSU were a revelation for me. They made me suspect that not only this institution but Black colleges in the South in general had been the principal patrons of socially conscious public art between the New Deal programs of the '30s and the beginning of community-based work in the late '60s. During the Cold War when McCarthyite repression had eliminated the possibility of government commissions, it seemed that it was these schools that encouraged and protected the tradition of people's murals. With this as a hypothesis, I began to seek them out in the Deep South. We visited Talladega College in Alabama where Hale Woodruff in 1939 did his still fresh sequence on the Amistad mutiny and the founding of the college decades later by the American Missionary Association that had provided the legal defense for the ship's slaves and return them to Africa. The Amistad murals reveal not only the influence of Diego Rivera but also Thomas Hart Benton. At Atlanta we sought out the 1952 murals of Woodruff where he adopted a much more African imagery, Jeaneslie Halloway, chair of the Art Department at Spellman College next door, showed us a very handsome canvas of his where he had used African motifs in his later almost totally abstract work. In Nashville at Fisk University we saw the 1934 murals of Aaron Douglas, the first Black artist to return to African imagery. Here he combined flat silhouettes and angular figures borrowed from sculpture and gave them something of the suavity of the current Art Deco style. Although some of these mural friezes are now obscured by a computer center, there are still full length panels to be seen. The Douglas murals here where he taught indicated that Black murals had come to southern colleges as part of the Negro Renaissance and preceded even the sponsorship that New Deal art programs had provided for a few during the later '30s.

One of the surprises of the trip was to go into the library of LeMoyne College, a small out of the way, still largely Black institution in Memphis and find an extraordinary beautiful mosaic mural that Ben Shahn had designed for it in 1962. It shows a part white, part black man lying on his back beneath a great pair of eyes emerging from the flux of the cosmos. In one hand he holds up a construction that looks both like a molecular diagram and a work of art, suggesting the human effort to construe the universe. We found two other Shahn murals in Nashville, one dating from 1969 at Peabody College (a large former White state teacher's college, now part of Vanderbilt University) and the other from 1959 at "The Temple" (Congregation Oheb Shalom). In the latter a rabbi is shown blowing the New Year horn above faces that are yellow, black, brown and white. At the same time Shahn was doing murals for synagogues in the North, but most were on exclusively religious themes. These works indicate that even the greatest socially-conscious muralist of the '30s, who like other New Deal muralists could no longer secure government commissions during the postwar era, was constrained to patronage not only from congregations of his religion but also from a Black college and a southern White one. It was at Syracuse University in 1967 that Shahn's most outburst mural, his Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti, was finally executed, three decades after its design was exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in 1932. I think, however, that the impact of Shahn on the new community muralists did not come by way of this work that was dedicated the same year as the Wall of Respect, as from their awareness of Shahn and other muralists' work done during the '30s. But the hypothesis suggested is, I believe, substantiated the more we see and review the work of the past: that during the McCarthy era it was not only the synagogues but even more, colleges, especially Black institutions, that were sustaining this art. Some of the muralists who were to provide leadership in the community-based movement received training in these schools. How many is not yet clear and requires research. Before leaving Houston we didn't want to miss Rufino Tamayo's America inside the Bank of the Southwest. Completed in 1956, it is one of his most socially powerful works, showing a sprawling naked woman, half red, half white, howling and raising her fist.

New Orleans

From Houston we drove to New Orleans where through the local art council we made contact with a young and talented Black Artist, Richard Thomas. His home is filled with large easel paintings on social themes, some done in the manner, he says, of Larry Rivers. He took us out to the Treme Community Center where about the entrance he had painted in 1979 a sequence of momentos of Satchmo's career — simulations of an early poster and photos and an imaginary jazz funeral for him. Inside Richard worked with young people on a low wall requiring them to show whatever could pass in front of a wall of that height. The result is an amusing and imaginative sequence of out of figures. He also took us by other works he had done on a library and rec center. Richard was trying to make up his mind about taking on the tribulations of a muralist's career and was eager to find out what was happening elsewhere around the country.
He also showed us some of the scrapes that remained of the murals in Treme that Bruce Brice had painted in 1971 in an effort to stave off the demolition of the Black neighborhood which contained many old and historic buildings next to the French Quarter. We could make out the bulldozers driving off residents better in the photos Brice showed us later. The murals were done in Brice's bittersweet "primitive" manner of tiny marionette-like figures. The urban removal was to make way for a new performing arts center. It was with some irony that the ground's around it were called Louis Armstrong Memorial Park and the installing of an excellent statue of Satchmo by Elizabeth Catlett Mora, the Balck sculptress and graphic artist whom many muralists know as a friend. The residents were shoved off to public housing projects, one in a remote part of the city, with further irony named Desire (which, in fact, a bus, no longer a streetcar is called). Desire was the ugliest and most frightening public housing we saw during the trip. In mid-day young men obviously jobless were lounging on doorsteps, waiting for something to happen. There Brice in 1971 had done a still decipherable mural that retold the story of a young tenant who had been left to bleed to death by the police after they shot him. Brice set this next to a scene of White slave traders brutalizing Africans. We spent an evening with Brice among the calculatingly "naive" easel paintings and offset color posters he makes a living by. He was finished with doing "charity work" and that now everything was for sale. He still loved the old ways and the old timers of the city, the social clubs with their impromptu jazz blasts and the tap dancing of kids in the street. This he tries to preserve in his pictures. And like the jazz musicians who will hire themselves out while still doing their own thing when the spirit moves them, he believed he could preserve his integrity and survive by his art.

At Dillard University we found a moving Goya-like rising or migration of Black people painted by James DeLoache in 1963 and presented to the institution by the NAACP. And at Southern Louisiana University in New Orleans, Jack Jordan, chairman of the Art Department, and Jean Paul Hubbard, from the Baton Rouge campus, had done in 1975 a big Contribution of Blacks to Louisiana History packed with portraits and episodes from three centuries.

Richard Thomas introduced us to Dooky Chase's restaurant, a gathering place for Black artists. Leah Chase, the proprietress, hangs their work on the walls, and we met Samella Lewis there. We came back two more times because the food is great and moderately priced and Mrs. Chase lays out on the walls in New Orleans called lagniappes.

Steve took us out to the Neighborhood Arts Center in the heart of the ghetto and close to Braves Stadium. It is staffed by up to 36 persons and supported by CETA, the NEA and Georgia Council for the Arts and Humanities. On its facade a well-drawn and colorful mural illustrating different areas of Black culture had been done by Steve as well as Amos and Truman Johnson and David Hammons in 1977. Steve also facilitated some children's work, including a Black Statue of Liberty, on a small building in the back and other walls inside the main structure which was filled with works by varied hands, including Lucius Hightower. We also visited the handsome mosaics of Lev Mills that he completed in 1979 in the new MARTA subway. There were the Johnson brothers' Togetherness walls in Martin Luther King's neighborhood and downtown their particularly well rendered larger-than-life realist images of African sculpture, King Tut, Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois, Malcolm, King, Angela Davis, Train and a Black boxer who make up Atlanta's Wall of Respect.

Rev. Diana Worthy escorted us through the Shrine of the Black Madonna, the local center of Black Christian Nationalism. The auditorium was enlarged by bright silhouette panels done in 1975-76 by John Riddle, who now directs the Neighborhood Arts Center, and the vestibule doorway was embraced by portraits of American Blacks and African sculptures painted by Henry Blackburn, who also did murals, we were told, at the Houston shrine. The BCN maintains a youth and cultural center next door and owns an apartment complex for members.

Atlanta like Houston, Dallas, Austin, New Orleans, Greenville, South Carolina, Memphis and other southern cities has its share of super-graphics designed by artists and executed by sign painters, usually on the more grimy walls in or near downtown. However, Urban Walls Atlanta, after being prodded by Steve and others, finally commissioned a Black artist to do one. The result was a Romaire Bearden near the state capital in Bearden's more recent semi-abstract style with an unrecognizable and rapidly fading portrait of Martin Luther King, Jr.

We drove a half hour south to McDonough to see the Jean Charlot mural of 1941 in what was once the post office. The work which celebrates Blacks working the cotton gins is incredibly monumental and beautiful for its miniscule size.

Tuskegee

Tuskegee Institute was our next objective, for we had heard that Nelson Stevens had just completed a mural there. It hangs in the inner court of the new administration building, is about two stories high and contains portraits of Booker Washington, Carver, and other figures associated with the school and Black history from Harriet Tubman to Malcolm and King. They are rendered in Stevens' accomplished style of web-like color but tighter and more photographic than some of his earlier work.
South Carolina

We could discover nothing in Savannah or Charleston but looked up Ralph Waldrop in Columbia. He invited us to his home and gave us a slide show that he takes to schools and potential clients to introduce them to the possibilities of murals. The next day he was out at 6 am with a crew of five teenage Black painters doing a wall that faced an apartment building for the aged. The wall had been prepared before and the background color laid in; by 10 am it was completed, and at 5 in the afternoon dedication festivities were under way. It showed a rising sun radiating the profiles of the seniors he had photographed a few days earlier. This was characteristic of his method. He described himself as a "hustler." He had a wife, children and mortgage and said that he had to earn $100 a day to pay the bills. Therefore he was continually pursuing new contacts and trying to work out more efficient techniques. The long wall of 26 monumental portraits of kids for the International Year of the Child had been completed by a team of nine in as many hours: three for preparing the wall; three for transferring the images by slide projector and night; and three for painting the two-tone high contrast faces. He worked from photos collected through a newspaper contest. His crews paint with four-inch rollers. Besides accepting payment in hard cash, he bartered his paintings for a gallon of oysters, groceries, a year of day care or dental services. TV interviews help publicize his work. He involves the people where he paints as much as possible in selecting the subject and doing the actual painting. But he used a crew of high schoolers to embellish the corridors of the Art Department at the University of South Carolina with tongue-in cheek takeoffs on famous works of art. One of the faculty said that his colleagues could never have organized such a project.

Ralph claims to have painted 109 murals since 1975. He says that he painted himself out of a job in Lancaster after three years during which he worked at every school in the adjacent counties. We drove up to Lancaster, and indeed the murals that he had done in 1977 and '78 on the backs of 13 shops on the main street constitute a masterpiece. Looking out on the parking area are over-sized portraits of local kids and adults doing their thing. Significantly Blacks mix with Whites on the walls while in fact they live on opposite sides of town. Until recently jobs in local textile mills were reserved for Whites only. On one wall there is a Black dentist bending over a patient; on another a Black policeman. All of these, too, were done from slides projected at night. However, one wall is filled with blowups of young children's drawings of themselves. The last of these walls shows 16 people striding toward you beneath the caption "Forward Together: The Spirit of Lancaster."

Tennessee

We stopped briefly to see some murals at Knoxville College that Dale Chandler had supervised in 1971 and a powerful biography of Martin Luther King done by Albert Dotson in 1977 that hangs nearby.

After the visit to the Aaron Douglas and Ben Shahn works in Nashville, we went on to Memphis. One of the most impressive new murals we saw during the whole trip was A Tribute to Beale Street that a team of 40 art students was finishing under the direction of Charles Davis and George Hunt as a part of a project set up by Shelby State Community College. The mural was being done on the side of a clothing store within sight of the downtown pedestrian mall. The big, colorful, beautifully executed wall traces the history of Black music from a stream of rainbow melody that issues from the horn of an African tribesman, turns into railroad ties, a piano keyboard, guitar strings, river waves churned up by a sternwheeler and finally becomes the folds in the gown of a blues singer. This ties together other vignettes that include Black slaves and cottonhands, gambling, W.C. Handy (or Satchmo), Boss Crump and Elvis, who got his start singing blues. (The mural will become even more of a landmark because a statue of Presley was being mounted just across from it.) The painting has tremendous verve and should certainly open up the doing of outdoor walls in Memphis.

Charles Davis says that he did his first mural, Afro-Occidental Projections, in Miami in 1974 as part of an Art in Public Buildings program and other walls at the University of Miami and the Model City Cultural Arts Center, where murals are still being done.

**Dallas-Fort Worth**

We then headed toward north Texas and in Dallas met with Karen Post who with muralists was trying to organize Wall Art Magic to seek grants and CETA positions and pursue commissions from businesses. Most of these artists were responsible for some of the 18 murals done with local youth as Neighborhood Walls Unlimited in 1979. It had been made possible by CETA and administered by the City Arts Program under the park and Recreation Department. But Dallas had limited its CETA jobs to 12 months, so the muralists were now seeking to create their own organization. Under the old program one of them, Carlos Vargas, had done three murals, one showing youngsters of different colors geometrically arranged as in an Aztec codex reaching out to each other. Another celebrated the Black community with a simulation of blown up snapshots of local people borrowed from the bulletin board of the printing company inside. The third was a graphic display of Aztlán motifs on a Mexican restaurant. Another artist, Henry Howard, directed a work on the outside of a hospital depicting the contributions of Blacks to medicine. Working by himself in the lounge of the International Resources Center at Southern Methodist University, he did an accomplished painterly scene of African and U.S. Blacks, and this year he completed stylized realist vignettes of local life with a portrait of Martin King for a community center named for him. Some of the CETA murals were less socially conscious: there is a giant ice cream cone and pond, a big diesel engine with a girl in front advancing out of the wall, and a panoramic baseball game in a gym. All we could find in Fort Worth after many phone calls was a humorously intended Historia Mexicana that included welders working around an actual gas meter. The mural had been painted by a group from the Mexican American Youth Organization directed by Tomas Bustos on the exterior of the North Branch Public Library in 1975.

**Old West Murals**

Shortly over the stateline of the Texas panhandle on old Highway 66 (now I-70) is San Jon, New Mexico, which is little more than one big mural. It is more than 100 feet of Main Street around 1880 and includes a simulated stable, dance hall, dry goods store, saloon, cafe and appropriate inhabitants; on the nearby range cowboys are rounding up cattle. A big sign that projects from the wall beckons drivers to “Stop, Look 66 Mural by Leona Mills Head.” An adjacent bronze plaque adds to her name “BA, MA” and identifies this as an “American Revolution Bicentennial Project” of 1976. There was an open bar behind the imagery but no one in sight. The mural points to a whole genre of works produced in the region. We saw two other store front works that depicted a local version of the Old West in Salina, Utah, done by the students of North Sevier High. And in Ojo, New Mexico, next door to Tierra Amarilla, where the land grant controversies have centered, there was an adobe partly occupied by a barber shop with a frieze handled in the style of 1930s’ illustration that captured sheep and cattle grazers and Comstock wagons. Elsewhere many of these have been adopted by the outsides of cafes and souvenir shops, and they seem connected to the murals that frequently grace sporting goods stores across the country.

Forty students directed by Charles Davis and George Hunt: Tribute to Beale Street, 1980, Memphis.
Colorado
We arrived in Pueblo on a Sunday, a bad day for getting information about murals, so we drove around the barrios. We inquired at a cottage that had a big high-contrast Indian painted on it and were directed to a few sites on the East and West Sides. An unusually accomplished work was on the side of a grocery and showed a chicano family, including a child with a banded foot, rendered in a highly refined style, a kind of personal Art Deco. It urged residents to “support the Puebla Neighborhood Health Centers” and had been done in 1979 by Pedro Romero. Nearby was a high-contrast Che on a retaining wall, and on the concrete composition, unsigned, showing a woman-faced Mexican eagle embracing guerrillas against a backdrop of the White Hemisphere. On the West Side we found some other unusual Chicano images, one on a garage depicting a big elk charging a placidly reclining nude woman holding out a red apple. Or was it a heart? Pueblo clearly deserves closer examination.

Later that day we drove up to Colorado Springs and headed for the Art Center for information. (There was a magnificent exhibition of their collection of early Navajo rugs, which look nothing like recent weaving.) An accomplished wall in the parking lot had just been painted by Doherty High students with graphic renderings, often witty, of works in the museum. We also read in the press that a group had banded together as Los Pintores and with the help of city council and CETA funds and the sponsorship of the Latino Coalition were doing portable murals on Native People and Chicano themes to be shown in the parks and a church.

In Denver Manuel Martinez was our guide. At 33 he is a veteran and regarded as such by other muralists there. In 1966 and ‘67 he was doing posters, leaflets and newspaper illustration for Reies Tijerina, Cesar Chavez and Gorky Gonzales. In ‘68 he was working under Siqueiros at the Polyforum and active with the striking students in Mexico City at the time of the Tlatelolco massacre. He participated in an effort to create a union between them and Chicano students, helped draw up the Spiritual Plan of Aztlan at the Youth Liberation Conference in 1969 and was doing community organizing in the early ‘70s. He did his first murals, he says, in ‘66 or ‘67 and helped organize a Citywide Mural Program under the Colorado Migrant Council in 1975. In its offices a number of works by him, Carlos Rosas and Carlos Sandival are to be seen. One of his strongest images is at Alma Park where he pairs a Native American bearing flaming bowls and a young athlete with weights. At another park Urban Dope and Rural Hope, which he did with Sandoval in 1977, proposes the family and music as alternatives to drugs. At the State Department of Employment he shows a woman turning the earth and men building with adobe and brick. And in the administration building of Auraria Higher Education Center (University of Denver), he depicts modern Chicano culture arising out of the sacrifices of the past. Similar staircase murals were done by Mahto-Wicha-Kiza (Ray Winters) for Native People and Jim Turner on Black and White cultures.

Manuel also took us to a neighborhood wall painted by the Brigada Orlando Letelier and a local artist. While photographing it, we were approached by a young woman who urged us to come inside to a community meeting which was deciding whether to endorse a mural program of some of Manuel’s friends for a housing project. There were some articulate people around the table who after a slide presentation and explanations by the artists agreed that the city should be pressed to provide funds. The painters had organized as the Chicano Humanities and Arts Council and had already done credible work that we visited the North Lincoln Housing Project. Among the leaders were Al and Fred Sanchez.

Murals have been done around the pool at La Raza Park for years. Manuel had done some which were now gone, but Roberto Lucero’s pre-Columbian designs of 1971 were still bright. Portraits of Los Siete de Boulder done by Ruben Landford and Arnold Muniz in 1974 recalled the bombing of two cars in which community organizers and friends were killed or maimed. And another section of dressing room wall was being prepared for repainting by Lorenzo Ramirez and some youngsters. The work here was supported by Servicios de la Raza. There are also murals to be seen inside the headquarters of the Crusade for Justice.

Looking Back
Our southern journey was a profound experience for both Ruth and me. We came to realize that there was a wealth of public social art created over decades in this part of the country and that it was being carried on by a new generation. The contribution of once all Black universities to this has been very important and deserves further study, as do the roots of the community murals among other groups. We were moved by the often lonely struggles of artists who for years have remained committed to people’s art. And there are the new energies that also need support. I have also the nagging sense of what has not been done but could be, an awareness of tremendous potential.

There need to be increased efforts at communication for muralists to realize that they are not alone. There is much also to be learned from one another. But most important is to strengthen the community base that this movement is all about. Perhaps the major obstacle to the doing of social art has been the painters and neighborhoods having to seek funding from the establishment which they also want to criticize. This is part of the larger problem experienced by all working people: how to gain their share of the wealth of this country that they produce. The only solution has always been to organize. Our southern journey confirmed once more to us that the principal objective of murals today should be to raise the consciousness of ordinary people as a means to their empowerment. But that requires more than painting, consuming as that is. It requires that the muralists themselves and those of us who support them help organize neighborhoods, union rank and file and grassroots political parties that will work for government for the people. It is important that murals become widely understood to be as necessary as other public services because they are a medium of democratic process. It has been said by others that the most effective defenders of murals against censorship are the muralists’ constituencies. These communities need also to apply pressure at all levels of government for public funds for public art. And this requires sustained political organizing wherever we are.
HOW TO PAINT A MURAL  
(90 frames/20 min.) Cost: $20

This filmstrip is a complete step-by-step guide to painting a mural. Youth are shown working with professional artists on a mural project in the San Fernando Valley, CA. Each step of the process is shown from the initial planning stages through the actual painting and completion of the mural. This program is geared to children and adults painting their first mural.

MURAL RENAISSANCE: SURVEY OF U.S. CONTEMPORARY "PEOPLE'S ART"  
(120 frames/25 min.) Cost: $20

In the past decade, there has been a renaissance of public art throughout America. In virtually every major city and in scores of smaller cities and towns, artists have created murals of dramatic social impact and impressive stature. Through interviews with contemporary muralists and photographs of murals throughout the U.S., teens and adults will explore the public art movement which has added a major chapter to the tradition of socially engaged art. To be available Sept. 1980.

FORGOTTEN HERITAGE: THE NEW DEAL ARTS PROJECTS OF THE 1930's  
(90 frames/20 min.) Cost: $20

During the Depression Era of the 1930's, the first and only era of mass federal support for cultural programs was created. Through interviews with former WPA artists and archival photographs, this filmstrip explores the social circumstances and art programs of the New Deal. This program is excellent viewing for teens and adults interested in exploring the arts and society.

ATTACK WACK: THE PCP STORY  
(65 frames/10 min.) Cost: $15

Former PCP abusers tell their personal stories about their involvement with the drug Phencyclidine, also called Angel Dust. The filmstrip explores the issues of peer pressure in drug use, the choices involved in drug taking, the personal problems which developed with misuse, and individual’s struggles with rehabilitation. It can be used to initiate discussion with young people about the drug PCP and about decisions regarding drug taking behavior.

The nine-minute film of the painting of the Tujunga Wash mural, titled “The Great Wall of Los Angeles,” is now available with Spanish subtitles from SPARC Media Resources, 685 Venice Blvd., Venice, CA 90291. Also available are four recent filmstrips.

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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