

# COMMUNITY MURALS

FALL 1981



## This Issue

The cover of this issue of **CMM** shows Farabundo Martí and Augusto César Sandino together as symbols of the struggle raging throughout Central America. In both El Salvador (Martí), and Nicaragua (Sandino), the vast majority of the population lived in a poverty enforced by militarist, reactionary governments supported by a high-living, super-wealthy ruling class. Two years ago Nicaragua ousted the dictator Somoza and began the long and difficult process of building a country that would meet the needs of its population. Today, the people of El Salvador are engaged in a struggle similar to Nicaragua's, and we place the two symbols of those struggles together on our cover— both printed in the colors of the victorious Nicaraguan people as a gesture of solidarity and hope for both.

Inside, there are photographs of recent murals painted in Nicaragua, some by the Brigada Orlando Letelier, a group of Chilean exiles now living in the United States, and others by recent visitors to Nicaragua and by the Nicaraguans themselves. These murals articulate with visual imagery the aspirations and cultures of Nicaragua and its people, the wonderful spirit of those who are winning their fight for self determination. Murals are a part of that victory, and have a role to play in the futures of both Nicaragua and El Salvador.

We try to print everything that is sent to us as soon as possible. Sometimes material included in the **CMM** does not represent our particular views, but if we think it is worth discussing we print it and hope that you will send in responses. In particular, **CMM** has printed views on graffiti that are different from those of the Editorial Group (see the introduction to the Metallic Aveau letter inside) but which are commonly held views.

We feel it is more important for the **Magazine** to let muralists know what other muralists are doing than to print only points of view with which we agree. If you disagree with something in the **Magazine**, or think a point mentioned needs correction or clarification, write us.

## Next Deadline

Any material for the next edition of **CMM** must be in our hot little hands before March 12, 1982.

### Editorial Group

Kathy Cinnater  
Tim Drescher  
Emmanuel Montoya  
Jane Norling  
Ray Patlan  
Fran Valesco  
Jo Seger

labor donated

Cover design: Jane Norling  
Typesetting and printing by La Raza Graphic Center, S.F.

This project is partly supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C., a Federal agency.

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As you see, the **CMM** has received a grant from the NEA which should sustain us through the next issue in Spring 1982. We hope we can keep the next format and size beyond that, but if not, we will do what we can afford. If each reader (YOU!) sent \$10 per year, we would be able to do it without the hassles of applying for grants, doing their bookkeeping, etc, but we do not want to institute formal subscriptions so solve the problems and send us \$10 in the spring.

We want to acknowledge the extensive help from the Galeria la Raza in San Francisco, without whose help we would not have produced the last issue of **CMM** when we did. Ralph Maradiaga, René Yañez, María Pinedo, Carmen Lomas Garza, and Kate Connell are a pillar of community arts support throughout this city, have been for a decade, and we hope will continue to be. Their commitment and integrity, not to mention their abilities and hard work, made a difference. Many Thanks.

**CMM** wishes to give special thanks to Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard for their selfless and successful efforts in helping **CMM** secure a supporting grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

We encourage readers of **CMM** interested in learning about NAPNOC (Neighborhood Arts Program National Organizing Committee,) its activities and its publication **NAPNOC Notes**, to write them at P.O. Box 11440, Baltimore, MD 21239. It is an excellent source of information about what is really happening in Washington about the arts as well as what other progressive community arts groups throughout the country are doing.

**CMM** wishes to call readers' attention to a pamphlet recently published by District 1199, National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees, RWDSU, AFL-CIO titled **Our Own Show**. This 25-page booklet offers numerous concrete examples of possible ways to start community-oriented cultural projects in street fairs, film, TV, radio, schools, etc. The booklet is a Bread and Roses Publication, and may be obtained for \$2.95 each from Moe Foner, District 1199 Bread and Roses Project, 310 W. 43rd St., New York, N.Y., 10036. Bulk rates available. Telephone (212) 582-1890.

Color reproductions of the some Murals of Aztlan show are reprinted on ppg. 44-45 of the October 1981 issue of **Q-Vo** magazine, Vol. 3, No. 3.

### "Sorry, Our Mistake."

In the previous issue, **CMM** failed to credit Cityarts Workshop in New York with the two murals on p.6, "Children Are Meant to be Happy," and "The Future Springs From the Past." More photographs of recent Cityarts projects may be found in this issue.

We also inadvertently omitted the name of Dave Rosenbaum as the author of the article reprinted on pp. 34-35, "Oatman Murals Creating Controversy in Mine Town."

# Editorial

Reagan and the New Right have coopted, or tried to coopt, the cultural arena. Their simplistic references to "traditional family values" (sic), education, religion, etc. are code words disguising their real interests which are greater control, racism, private profit, divisiveness among working community and third world groups, etc. We must try to restore this connection between culture and our lives as a positive force, not merely a source of fear.

As community muralists, who strive to give visual form to issues confronting our communities, who devote our organizational and artistic skills to broad movements against racial, economic, and sexual oppression, we cannot afford to be too casual or narrow or ignorant about these issues. The need to unite with other like-minded groups against a common enemy is paramount in these times. Checking out murals in other neighborhoods, and other mural groups in your city, etc. We must also support community artists in trying to keep alive—in body as well as political spirit—when they branch out to graphics, design, or even when they move into business in order to support growing families. See the article in this issue by Lincoln Cushing.

The Nazis, KKK, the biggest businesses, are all organizing in public schools, through rallies, paid advertisements, and so forth. As muralists our responsibility to be as clear and as forceful as we can about the dangers of the several forms of fascism which threaten many of our communities. As Bertram Gross puts it in his recent work *Friendly Fascism* (M. Evans & Co., N.Y. p. 346), "...despite substantial erosion in constitutional democracy, there are still many people and groups who insist on using the freedoms and opportunities that are available. I am not referring only to the electoral, legislative, and judicial machinery of representative government. I am referring to organization, neighborhood organization, and a host of spontaneous or only semi-organized movements of self-help or defense against resurgent militarism or corporate aggression." To have

any meaning at all, our liberties must be used. When muralists stop insisting on using our basic rights of expression about community issues, if we "sell out" to abstractions suggesting that our common bonds exist on a metaphysical level instead of in the world, then the most visible form of public artwork will have effectively died; will have become decorative, petty, Now is time for extra vigor, renewed strength and political sharpness in images.

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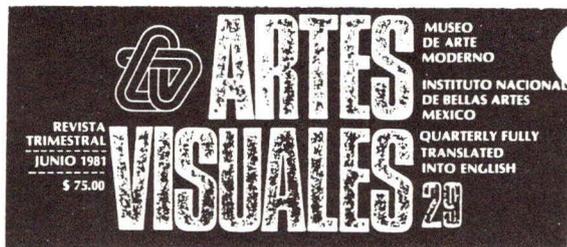
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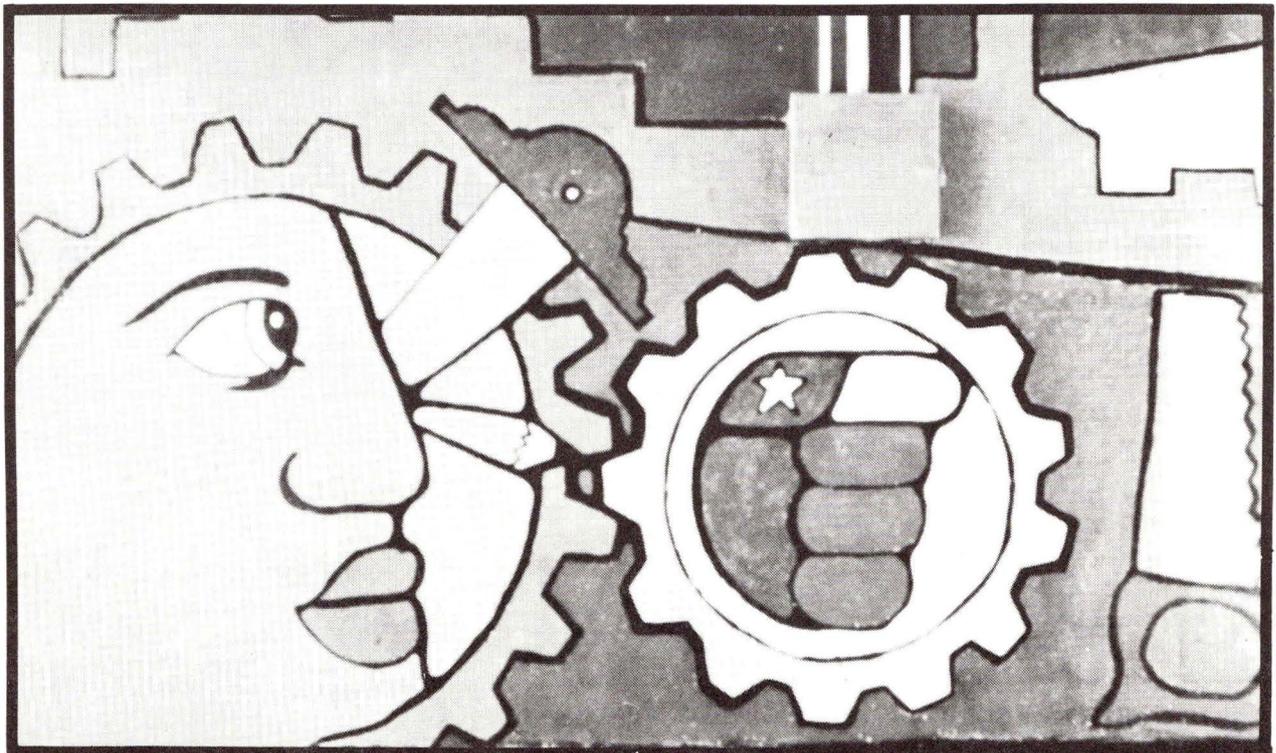


Entre las publicaciones recibidas, recomendaríamos por su información, *Community Newsletter-National Murals Network*, que, para vergüenza de los muralistas mexicanos, se publica en los E.U.A.<sup>4</sup> Realiza una labor exhaustiva de recopilación que permanece dedicada a la respuesta muralista. Sus colaboradores trabajan gratuitamente y sus fondos provienen de suscriptores y donadores más que de subvenciones. De orientación no exclusivamente chicana, contiene información en torno del movimiento muralista en general. Está lleno de escalofrantes detalles sobre la destrucción de murales —y sobre qué hacer para impedirlo—; incluye proyectos de restauración (como el mural de Siqueiros en Olvera Street, en el centro de Los Angeles). Sigue la pista de los más viejos, de los pioneros del muralismo. Anuncia trabajos sobre el muralismo, recién publicados o por publicar, de autores de todo el mundo. Los programas de Cerdeña y Nicaragua en materia de murales. Y en su último número (otoño de 1980) incluyeron un reportaje de Alan Barnett<sup>5</sup> para el que recorrió 20,000 km. en una

The Editorial Group of *CMM* is happy that the prestigious magazine *Artes Visuales* is impressed with our work.

What lies at the basis of the success of *CMM* are the contributions sent in by muralists throughout the world. We are proudest of the wide-ranging, integrated character of the magazine, which shows the similarities of interests within the international mural and progressive public arts community.

*strictly in art establishment terms or as an outgrowth of a Chicano condition, and mainly because we feel this selection is the strongest content oriented work we were given for review. Among the publications sent, the Community Newsletter-National Murals Network, is to be recommended for its information; and to the shame of the Mexican Muralists, it is published in the U.S.A.<sup>4</sup>. An extremely thorough coverage of the work that remains devoted to the muralist answer, it's labor is donated and money comes from subscribers/donators rather than from grants. Not solely Chicano oriented, it carries information on the overall movement; loaded with frightening details about the destruction of murals and what can be done to avoid this, it includes projects for restoration (like the Siqueiros mural on Olvera Street, downtown, L.A.). It keeps track of the older, pioneers of muralism; announces recently published or future titles on muralism by authors from all over the world; Sardegna and Nicaragua mural programs; and, their last issue (Fall 1980), contained Alan Barnett's<sup>5</sup> report of an 11,000 mile trip in a Honda, mapping out his search for murals in the sunbelt: an amazing account of a hot summer ride with the find of one mural every day, except for one. Sparc Media Resources<sup>6</sup> offers films on the mural movement and Self Help Graphics<sup>7</sup> organizes art education as well as other community oriented activities, and Lace Gallery was the first gallery to move downtown Los Angeles in what is now considered Soho West, to be followed by fashion hyped anglo galleries.*



Details from the Humbolt Avenue underpass, Chicago, completed in July 1979. This detail shows man as a creator, with saws, a T-square, gears, a pencil as symbols of his ability to make a vision happen. The mural is done in three sections, and on one is a line from a poem by Pablo Neruda: "I don't want to continue living in the darkness; not to be the root of a tomb." Photo: B.O.L.

## The Brigada Orlando Letelier

When the fascist Pinochet, supported by his U.S. friends in the C.I.A. etc. took over Chile in a military coup one of the first things he did was order the country's murals to be whitewashed because he understood how important they had become expressions of poor and worker's sentiments. In those dark days, thousands of artists of all kinds were arrested, imprisoned without trial, tortured; some have not been heard from since. The intervening years have proven that the artistic expression of an oppressed people cannot be destroyed as progressive Chilean culture has begun to reemerge both within Chile and throughout the western world. In Europe and the United States the work of Chilean muralist has been continued in the work of mural brigades, four of which work in Europe, and one, the Brigada Orlando Letelier, paints in the United States and, in the summer of 1981, in Nicaragua.

The Brigada, named after the Chilean diplomat assassinated within three blocks of the White House in Washington D.C., consists of four people. Orlando Letelier's two sons, Francisco and José, René Castro, and Beyhan Cagri. Their views about their role as muralists, and the selflessness and highly principled commitment to their painting, is exemplary, putting to practical result Pablo Neruda's idea of "murals as the people's blackboards."

The style has come to be known as the Chilean Mural Style, using flat colors and basically flat images, often drawing on symbols popularised during the brief years of Chile's last elected government under Salvador

Allende. An important aspect of this style is the production process, which always seeks to include community members and is concerned with issues affecting them directly. This concern for process and content gives the murals immediacy, and their technical ability adds to the impact, because the Brigada considers its work as significant art. Their murals are not simply wall paintings, but are "painting wedded to architecture, public art conceived in a given space, art rooted in a specific human and historical context." Thus the murals become not only aesthetic enhancements of neighborhoods, but educational tools and the artists become facilitators of a truly public creative process.

The Brigada feels that using Chilean symbols in conjunction with new, sometimes local, symbols helps stimulate international solidarity. In recognition of their powerful artistic achievement, Chilean artists in Europe were invited to participate in the Venice Bienal in Italy.

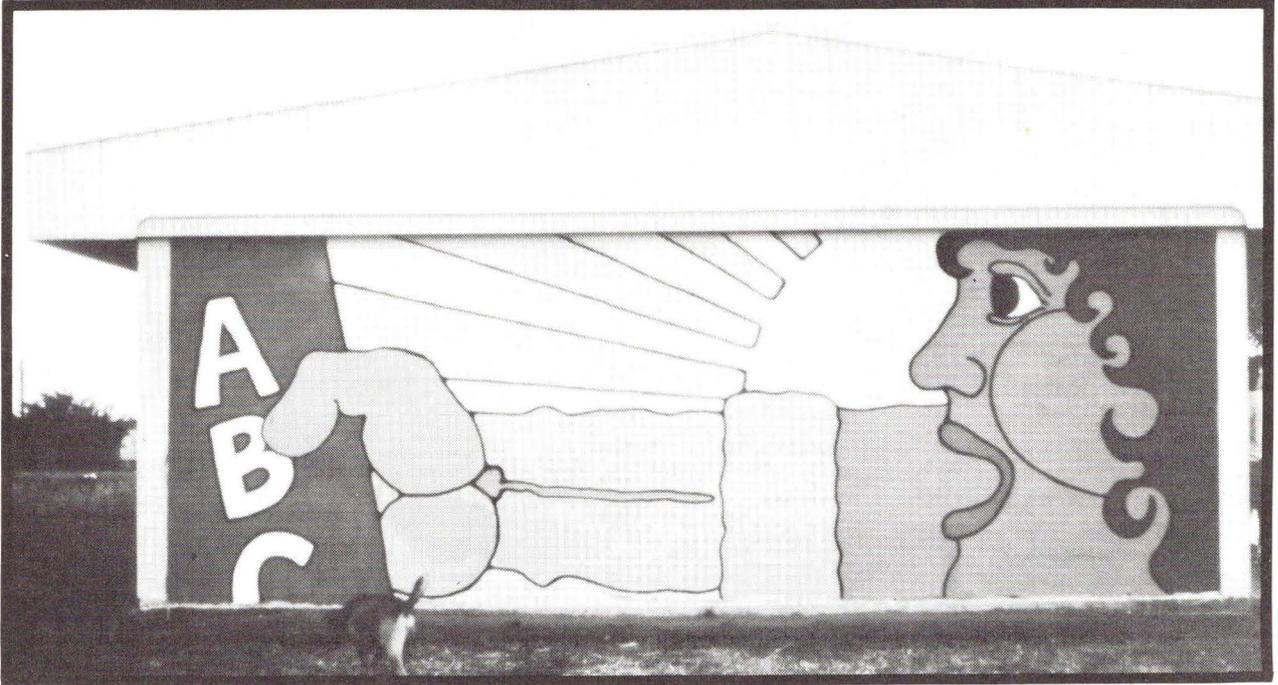
Perhaps the best introduction to their work is a statement in their own words:

For us in the Brigada, the most important lesson has been the act of mural painting.

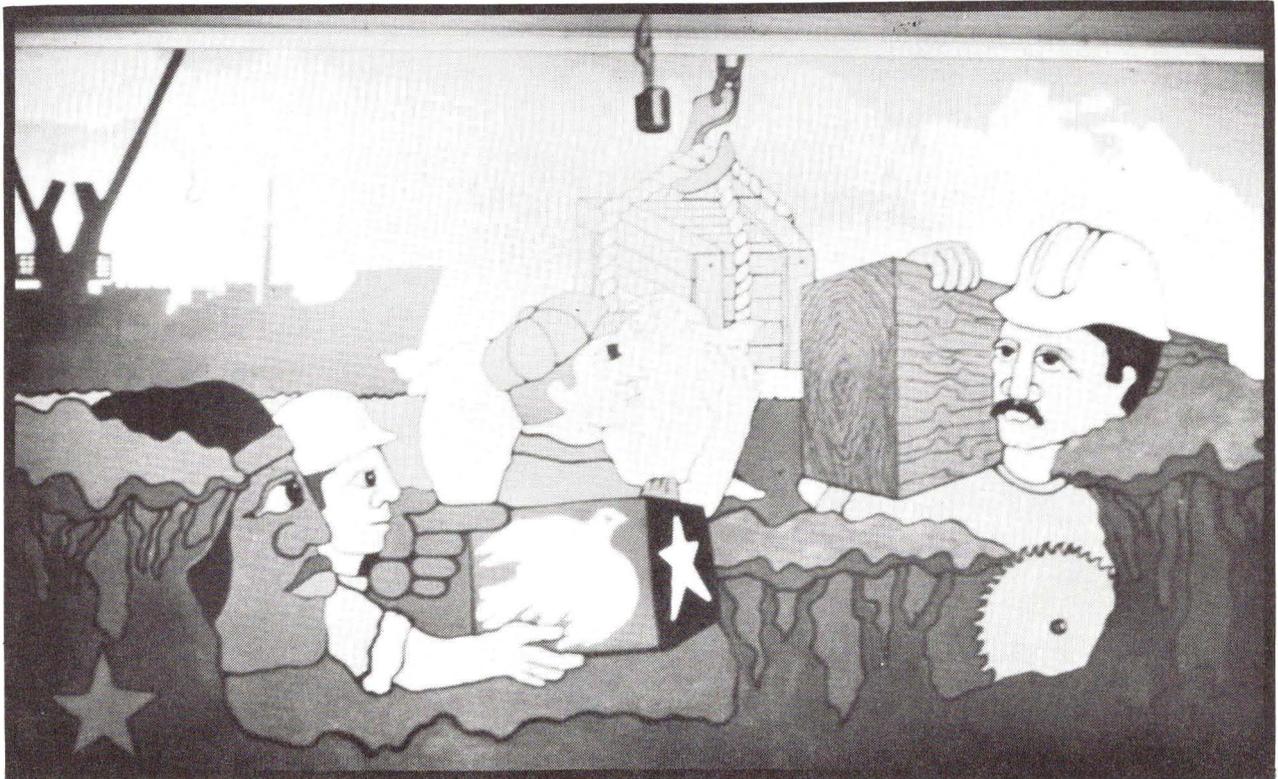
It has been a process that allows people to express their ideas, while affecting their environment and the lives of those around them. This act is a cultural gesture of human expressions and commitment. Through the act of painting a mural, people are united forever as a result of their collective effort.



The Brigada Orlando Letelier was working on this mural on the side of Casa Nicaragua in San Francisco on July 19, 1979, the day the Somoza Regime was toppled. The mural combines Chilean and Nicaraguan symbols beneath a handshake of support between the two countries. Photo: Tim Drescher.



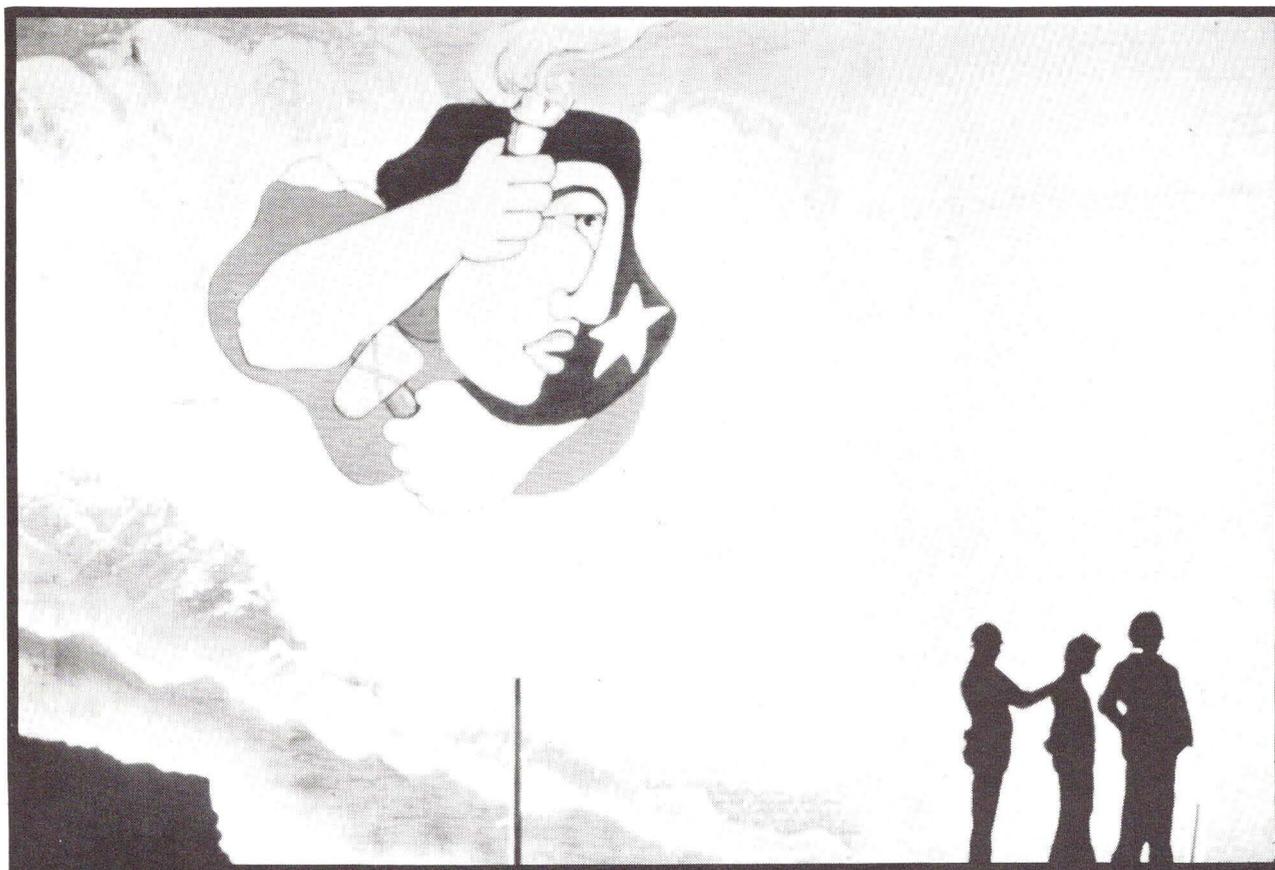
One of a series of three murals painted by the Brigada Orlando Letelier on a grammar school in Maria de los Angeles, 1980. Photo: B.O.L.



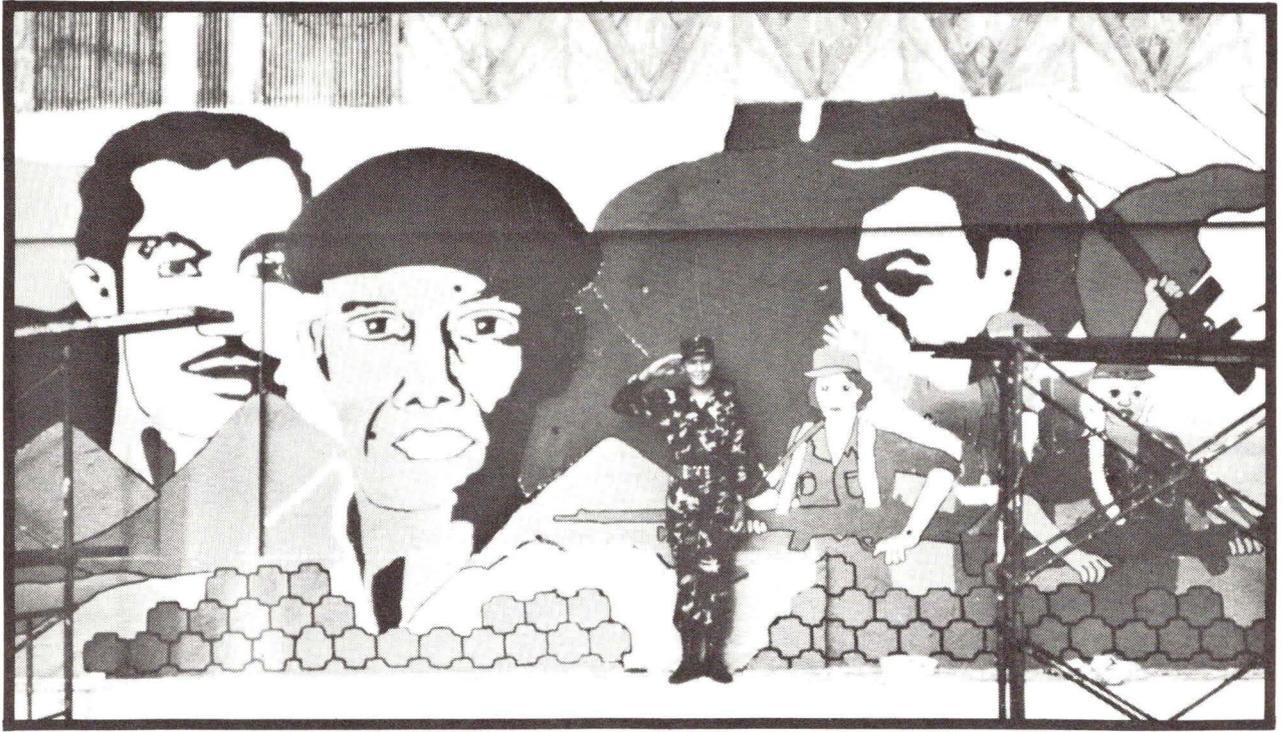
On November 17, 1979 the Brigada completed a mural in the International Longshore Workers' Union No.12 Memorial Hall in Coos Bay, Oregon showing friendship and solidarity among workers around the world. The mural has images of workers and Indian women—land is being taken from the Indians, and their forests are being cut down. The mural was painted as a gesture of support for the union, which has steadfastly refused to load or unload cargo from or to the fascist regime of Pinochet, the man who led the coup against Allende. Jimmy Herman, President of the ILWU, signed the mural with his handprint. Photo: B.O.L.



This mural was completed in September, 1978 at 138th St. and Broadway in New York City, funded by a local church organization. An early effort of the Brigada, it shows the resistance to oppression. The face holding the hatchet represents working people and their tools, against a factory indicating progress. The other face becomes the Chilean flag. (Detail.) Photo: B.O.L.



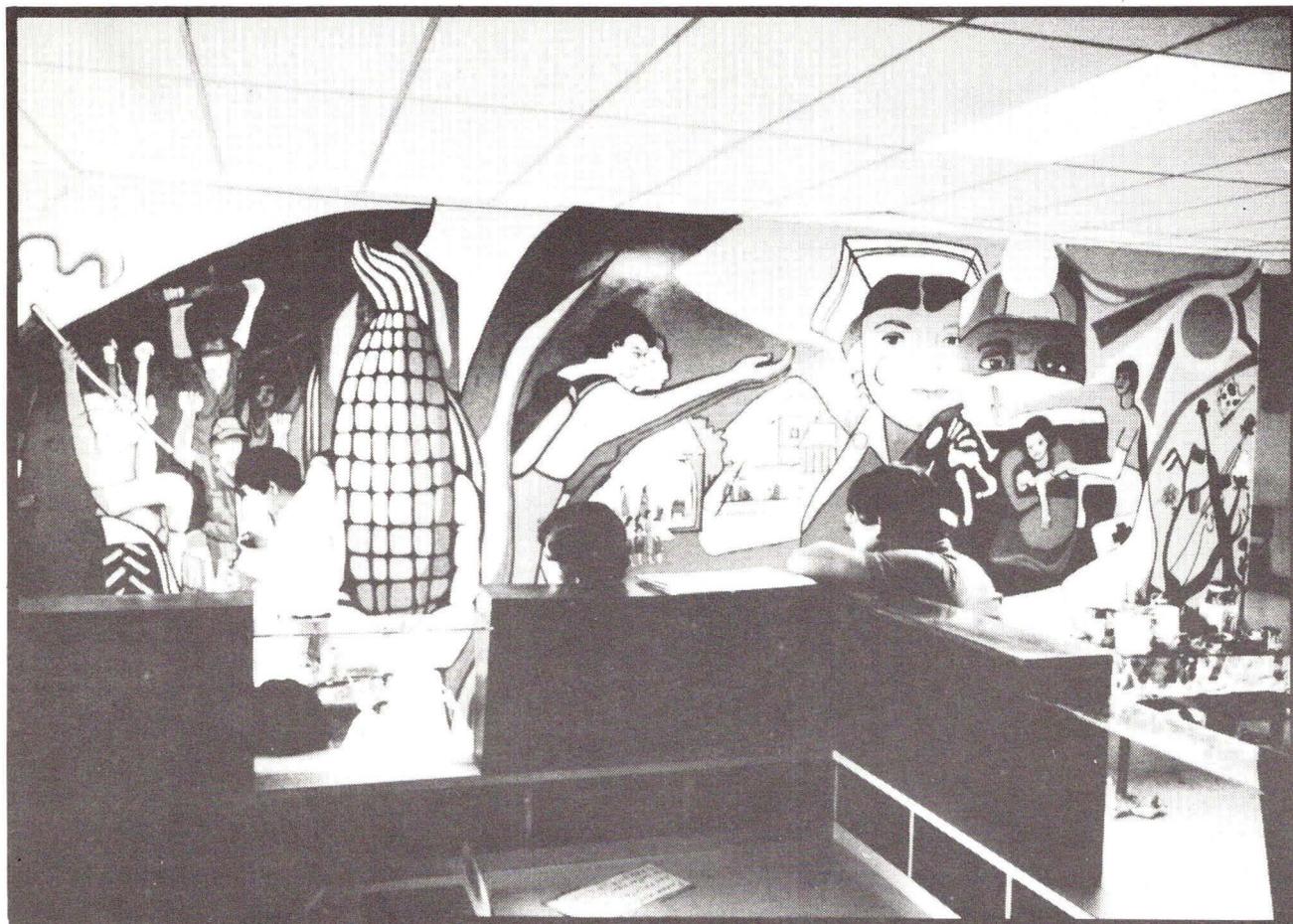
In July 1979 the Brigade completed this mural on the side of Zick's Market in Denver, Colorado. The silhouettes show two soldiers and a prisoner. Liberty is shown coming over the mountains. The light in the mural comes from around her and all figures have light on them except for a kneeling figure about to be killed, who is not shown. The Brigada was helped by Citywalls Mural Group in Denver, a Chicano group, and by other local artists. Photo: B.O.L.



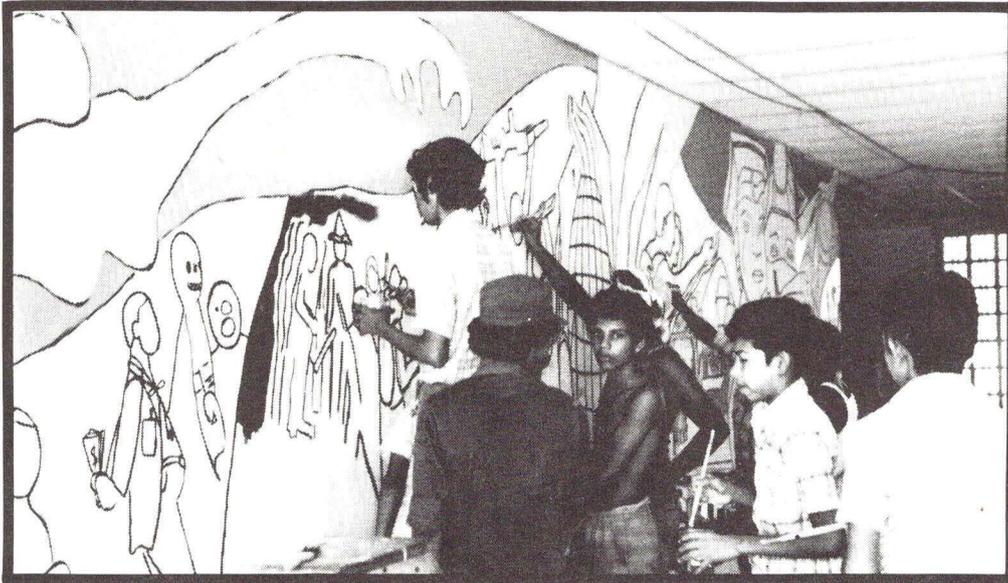
"Un Solo Ejército," painted in 1980 at El Chipote, Nicaragua. Photo: B.O.L.



Painted at the Ministry of Construction in Managua in 1980, this is a small detail of the long mural. Photo: B.O.L.



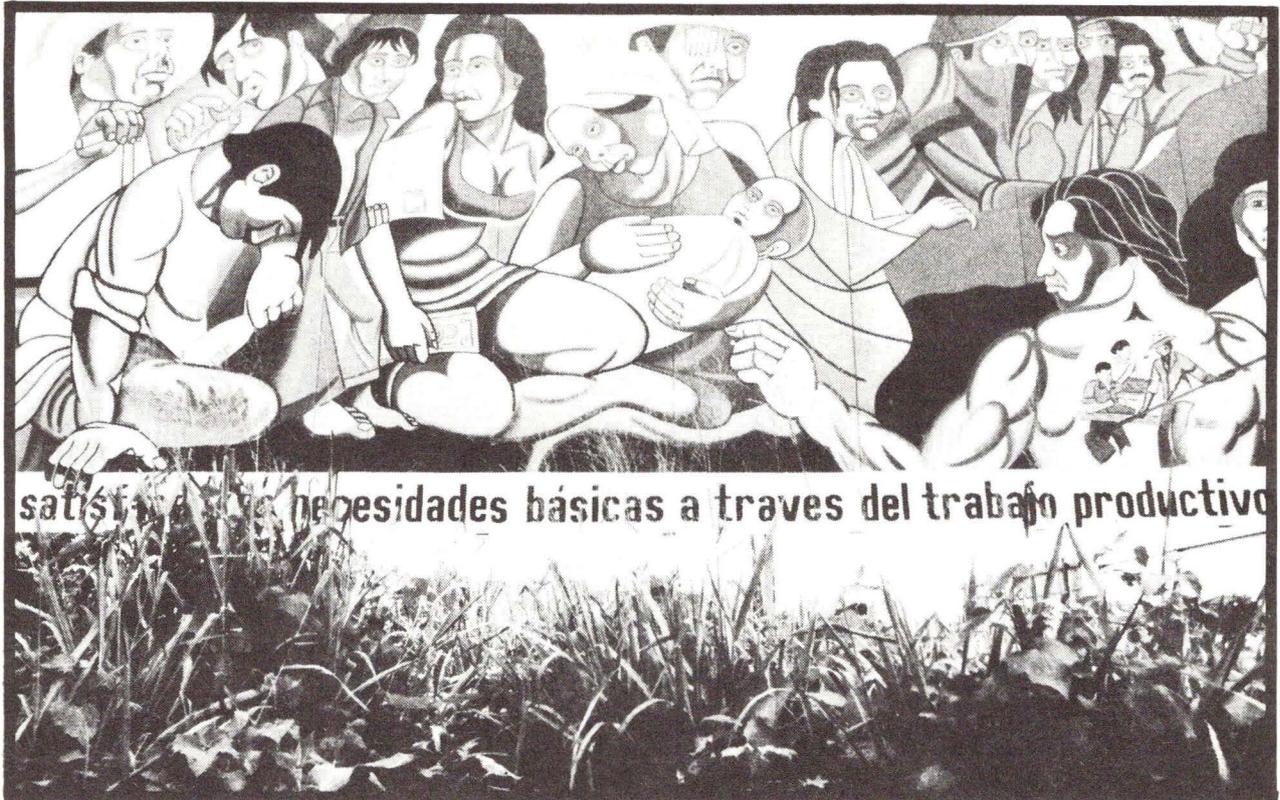
***Homage to Revolutionary Health Workers***, Hospital Escuela, Oscar Danilo Rosales, Leon, Nicaragua, (9 x 34' July 1981) The mural was painted collectively with young artists from the Centro Popular De Cultura in Leon, David Kunzle, and Eva Cockcroft and took nine days to complete. The idea was not only to do this wall, but to provide the young artists with the experience of doing a mural so they would be able to continue as a mural group. The design was a combination of elements reached through discussion and drawn by the six people in the design group which included two very talented twelve year old boys, two young artists in their 20's and Orlando Pastora, "responsible" of the center and a poet and artist. The various ideas and images were combined into a working design by Eva and the color by Pastora. Five to six more compañeros joined the group during the painting. The content was a combination of the motto for the year—Production and Defense—and the history of the Revolution with emphasis on Health Care since the location was in the entrance to the big Social Security hospital in Leon. It begins with the misery of the past and a symbolic figure that both protects the people and reaches toward the future. A Somocista doctor turns his back on the people. This is followed by the guerrilla struggle and the victory. In the center, the ear of corn, painted like a grenade, symbolizes both Production and Defense. The post-victory period begins with the brigadistas of literacy and health, two small scenes of a clinic in the countryside and vaccine being brought to the Atlantic coast indians. Modern medicine is symbolized by the figure of the Doctor and Nurse embracing the people and the figure treating a child while rejecting death. The mural ends with an image of defense in the sense of preparedness in which rifles and flowers mingle in the fantastic garden of a future peace. Photo: Eva Cockcroft.



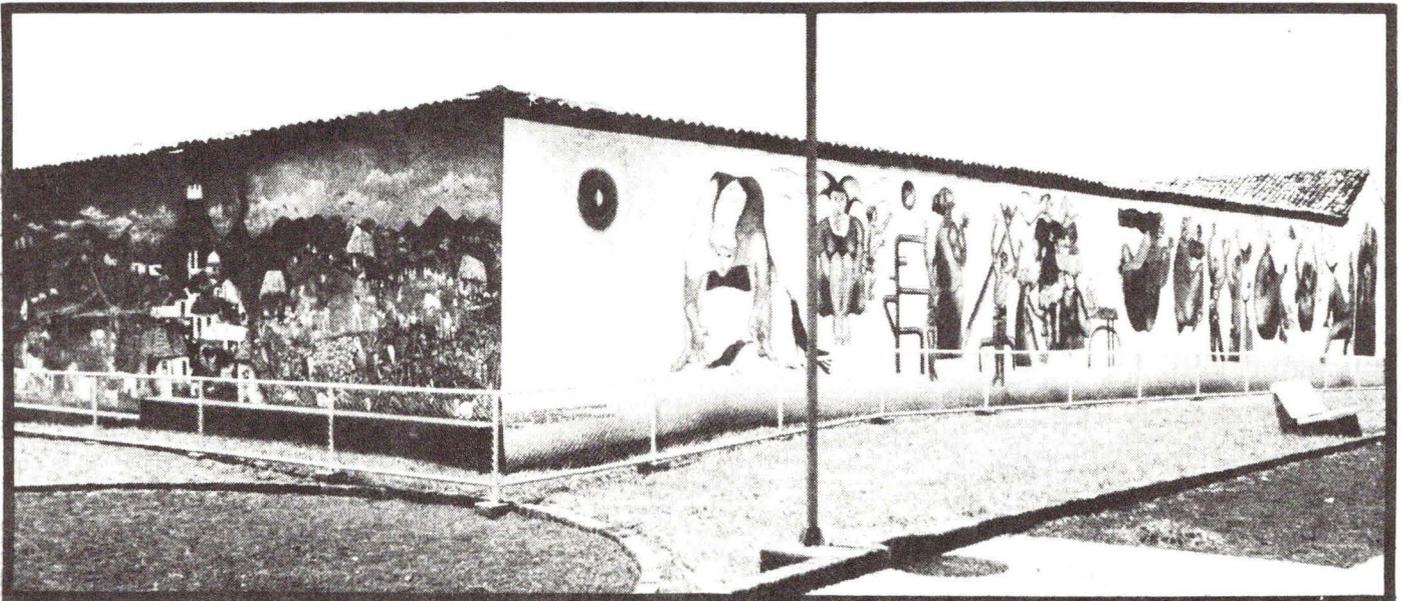
**History of Nicaragua:** A thirty foot mural made for a photographic exhibition, "Twenty Years of Struggle," which depicts the history of Nicaragua from the conquest to the Revolution. This section shows the installation of the puppet Somoza regime by the U.S. (marines top and right); the fake democracy which brought only death (skull), the suffering and jailing of the indigenous population and the beginnings of the FSLN guerrilla struggle. Photo Eva Cockcroft.



Detail of a mural in the Airport by the Panamanian mural brigade Felicia Santizo, which painted a number of murals in Nicaragua shortly after the triumph. Their best known mural—on the military school on the road to Jinotepe on the outskirts of Managua is now largely destroyed through paint deterioration—but still interesting. Another, in Estelí, remains in good condition. Photo Eva Cockcroft.



**Communal Solutions to Social Problems:** A billboard or "rotulo" sponsored by the Ministry of Social Welfare of which 18 identical handpainted versions exist throughout Nicaragua. On the left, the social problems left by the Somoza regime—on the right, of which only the beginning can be seen in this detail, the same people cured and productive. Photo Eva Cockcroft.



**The Parque Luis Alfonso Velasco murals.** Literacy mural by Antonio Canals—one of three murals on the same building each of which represent a stylistic current in Nicaraguan art. "Primitivist" mural — the combined work of three leading "primitivist" painters who represent perhaps the most characteristic tendency in Nicaraguan easel painting. Fostered in Ernesto Cardenal's celebrated community of Solentiname, where peasants and others gather to paint and write poetry until it was bombed by Somoza, "primitivist" painting thrives today in exhibitions at home and abroad—and is remarkably successful as a mural style.

# EUROPE

## Murals in West Germany

In 1973 a new cultural conception was ratified in Bremen, a liberal idea of "Art in Public Spaces" that was exceptional in West Germany. The conception included the idea that people should take part in deciding which artworks will be located or executed in their neighborhood. They would also participate in planning with regard to contents.

The results of resident's contributions depend a great deal on the artist's opinion about community work, and the execution is, normally, the artist's own business. But, nevertheless, the results of "Art in Public Spaces" are remarkable. The painting of walls became a constant part of this public art conception. Since 1976, nearly 30 very different murals were executed in Bremen based on financial support of about one million German Marks appropriated by the Senate.

One of these projects is painted on an air-raid shelter in Gropeling, a part of Bremen where mainly workers live. Students and teachers of the "Bremer Hochschule für Gestaltende Kunst und Musik" spent two years in preparations. They talked with residents and collected facts about historical and contemporary events. They then put the past 90 years of the town's history on the three walls, 531 square meters.

The first wall, one of two small ones, is called "a village becomes an industrial town." It shows the beginning of industrialization of an idyllic countryside area — derricks, machinery and chimneys beside windmills and fields. This change was caused by the founding of the Actiengesellschaft Weser in 1872, a dockyard which still plays an important part in the economy of this area.

The second wall shows the period from WWI to the present. Out of the last days of WWI sprang the November revolution which spread to the cities all over Germany in a few days. The demands were for no more war, down with the monarchy, for democracy and a Räterepublik (soviet republic). The monarchy was overthrown but the fight about the new constitution of society went on — soviet councils or parliament? Riots occurred in January 1919 and workers' councils were declared in some cities, but most of them survived only a few weeks.

The height of prosperity, 1929, is marked by the passenger liner Bremen, but soon after, in the Depression, a crowd of people are shown, jobless men and women personifying the labor movement which was breaking up as the Third Reich began.

The next portion shows Hitler and the persecution of political opponents and the destruction by the Nazis of the memorial for those who died in the struggle for a soviet republic. The AG Weser builds battleships now, not passenger liners.

A later panel shows the end of the Third Reich, the towns in Germany destroyed, and the women who started to rebuild the society out of the ruins. These women became a symbol, the "Trummerfrauen."

The final panel shows how computers are rationalizing the production process, and the AG Weser is building overseas tankers. The motto of this third wall is "crisis and short time work in the ship building industry" because there is not enough work for all the employees at the docks. The shape of a group of men hanging together appears as a clenched fist.

Gundi Buchsbaum

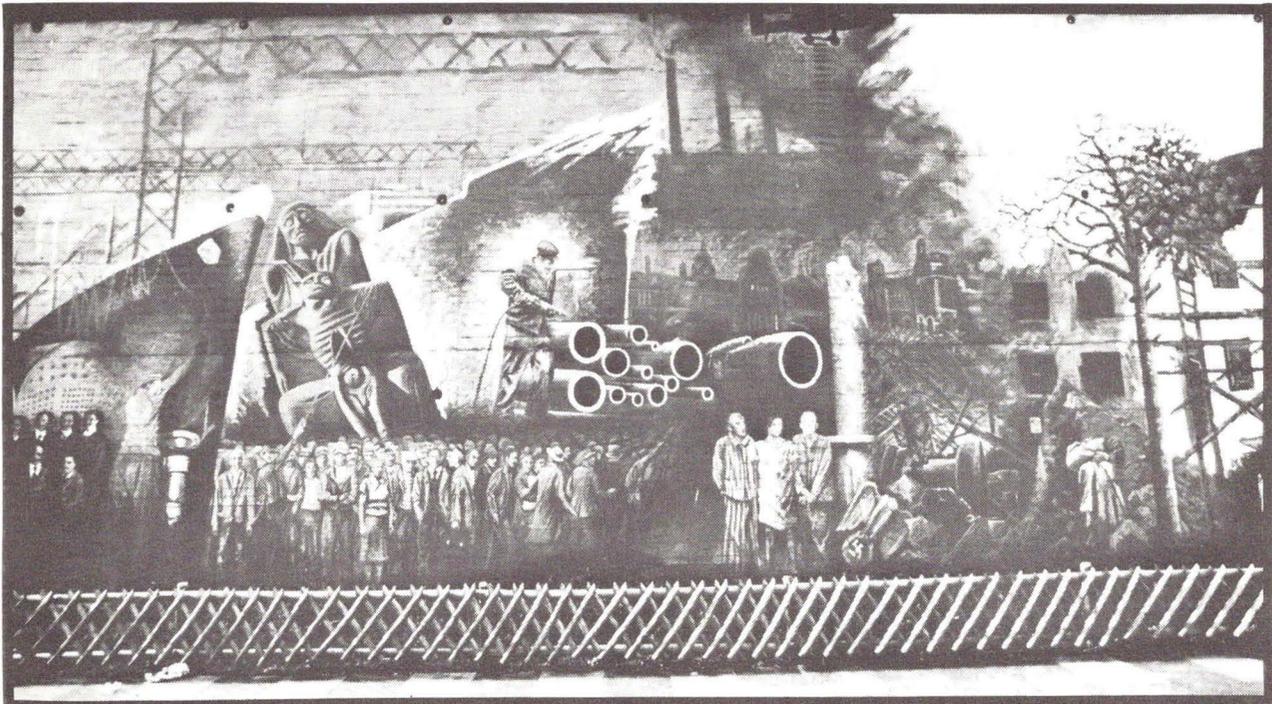
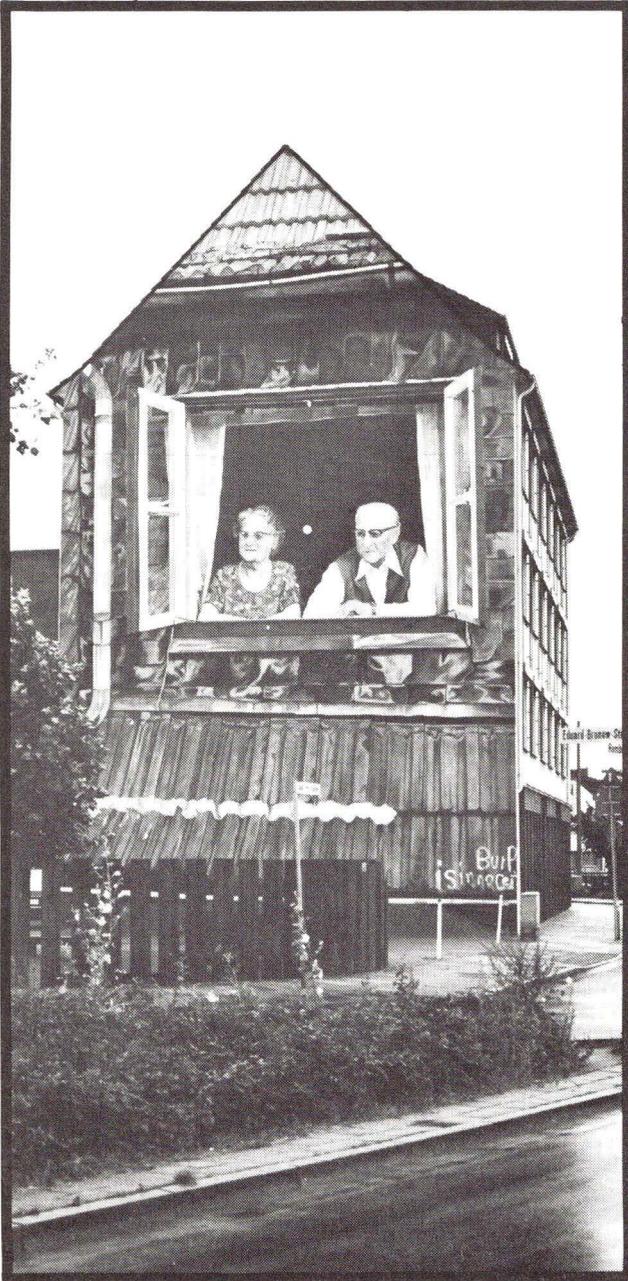
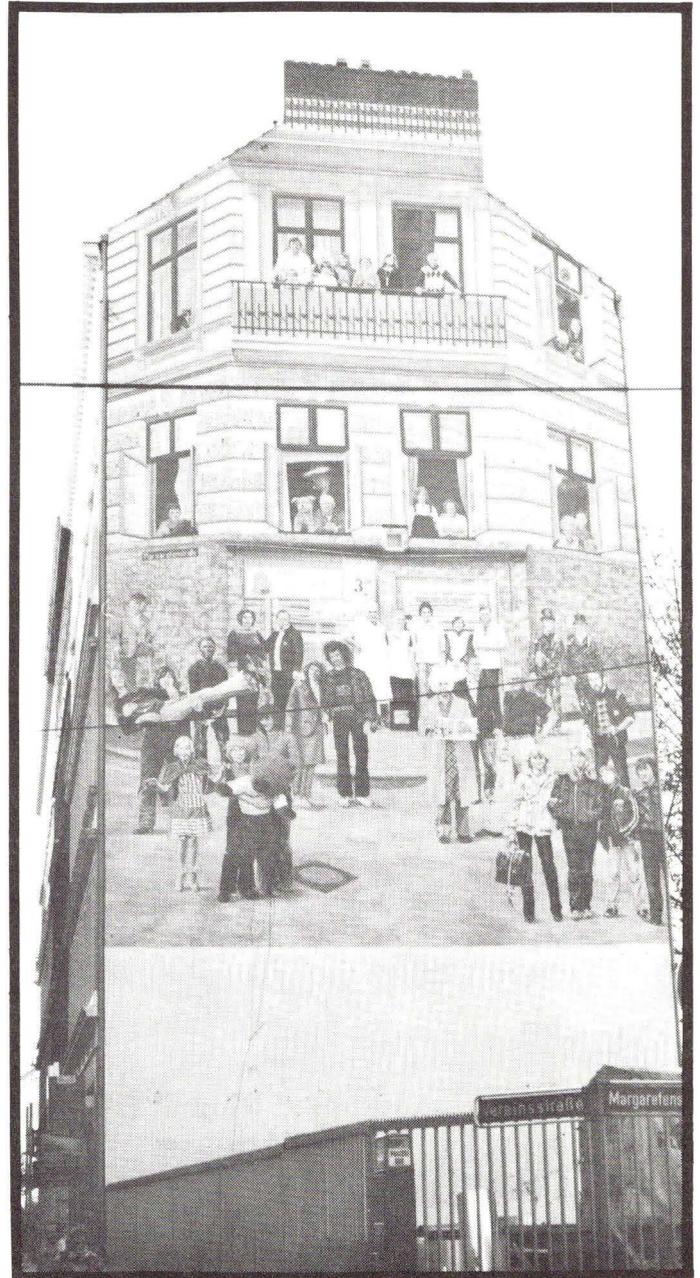


Photo: Volker Barthelmeh



Bremen, 1976, Peter K.F. Kruger. This is the first mural done with the Bremen "Art in Public Space" program and it has become very popular outside Bremen as well. Photo: Volker Barthelmeh.



Hamburg, 1979, Eckart Keller and Sonke Nissen. The mural shows 42 local people of the Hamburg Schanzenviertel (the name of a district of Hamburg) who live and/or work in the district. The preparations for the mural began the previous summer and were undertaken by the personal initiative of Keller and Nissen. In the winter of 1978, local authorities granted 34,000 DeutschMarks for the project, and the muralist executed it the following summer with help from friendly painters and illustrators. It was dedicated at a street festival. Photo: Volker Barthelmeh.

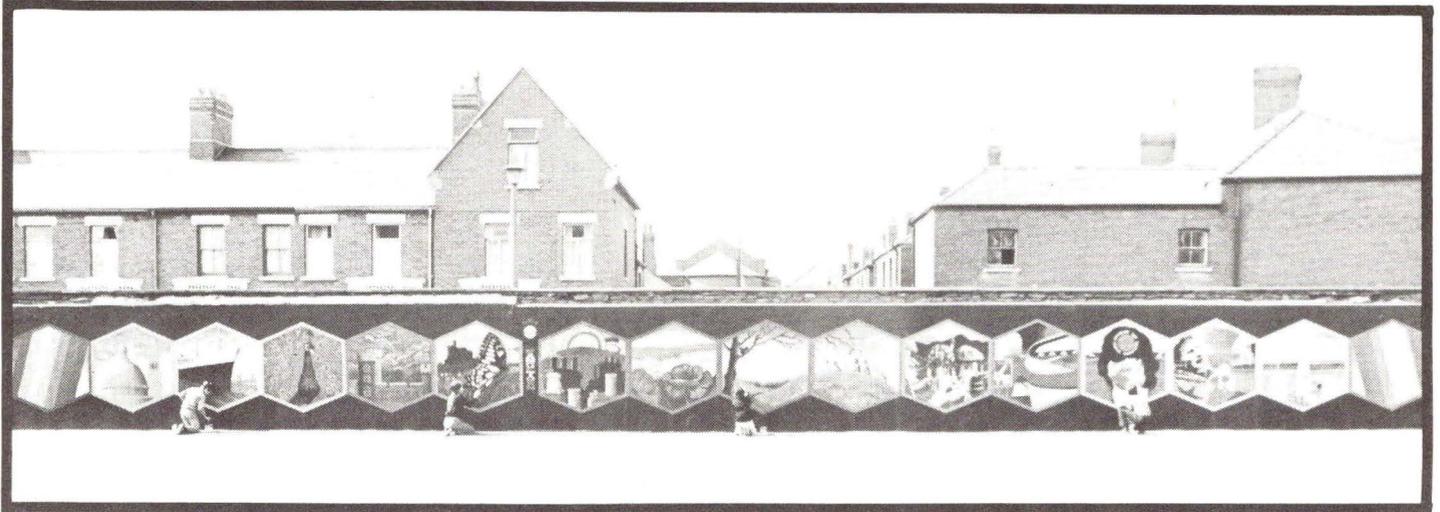


Oldenburgh, Germany, 1981. Eckhard Haisch and 11 neighbors painted this mural which started with a street festival organized by the artist, who had won a municipal competition for this mural. The neighbors gathered and drank and ate what they had brought to the festival, and it was all photographed. With these photos and self-painted portraits of themselves, the neighbors and artist formed a design which was later put onto the wall. Photo: Volker Barthelmech.



## Mural Art in Brussels

Along with a number of other companies in the Brussels area, Levi Strauss Europe has sponsored a very unique and excellent program of mural art in the "Quartier Nord St-Josse" neighborhood in Brussels. A large number of buildings in this neighborhood were demolished for a redevelopment project which was later abandoned. A local neighborhood organization, with the help of Levi Strauss Europe personnel, assembled a group of artists and obtained funding to paint 12 large murals on the exposed faces of a group of buildings in the neighborhood. It is hoped that this project will contribute to the renewed pride and vitality of this neighborhood. If you would like to investigate a similar program in your community, please get in touch with Fred Kirschstein in San Francisco, or Josiane Bourguignon in Brussels. *International CIT News*



A long shot of the recent mural painted in Cardiff, Wales, by Alan Warburton and the Grangetown Junior School in July 1981. The mural stretches 80ft. by 8ft. high, and is titled "Images of Cardiff." Photo: Alan Warburton.



Several murals were destroyed in the summer of 1980 when authorities ordered the total destruction of Paris VIII Vincennes University. The murals had been painted by students of the art department.

Laid out around Paris in Vincennes Park, the "experimental" university was built after the demonstrations of 1968, in reaction to the stagnant state of education at that time in France. It profited from its unique status: a university open to teaching working people, to foreigners, and with multi-disciplinary teaching. Many important research workers have given lectures and have taught at the school.

In the face of university centralization in France, this open university was doomed to becoming a "ghetto" because of the innovative and critical ideas discussed there. The Ministry of Universities and the City administration of Paris, after a few years reprieve, decided last year to put an end to this experiment for once and for all.

During the summer of 1980, with the protection of the Paris police, bulldozers destroyed all the buildings along with their many murals.

Now transferred to the north of Paris, in St. Denis, the University Ministry hopes to regulate Paris VIII and make it into a "normal" place of study—discouraging many workers wishing to continue their studies, removing the school's unique status, and limiting the number of foreign students, especially from African countries. Pierre Vergnac.

# MEXICO

## Notes on Muralism in Mexico

### Vlady

Vlady has almost finished his mammoth mural project in the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada where he has been working for the past seven years to cover the more than 2000 sq meters of the interior in fresco. Vlady's fresco technique is far from traditional in the sense that he works very directly in a coloristic, abstract expressionist type of technique with drips, big brushes etc. Unlike the "great tradition" of Mexican muralism Vlady's intention is not didactic or socio-political — neither is it abstract — rather it is personal, symbolic, and expressive of a rather confused and contradictory, though grandiose, world view. Vlady proclaims himself an individualist, a "hormonal dissident", a great painter, a colorist — and opposes beurocratism, leftist imbecility, the Soviet Union and US imperialism. According to Vlady, painters should not think, they should paint — and his primary concern in painting, he says, is the color and whether it "works." His workshop includes a half dozen young painters (including an American mural student from Texas, David Santos) who assist him, learn fresco, and traditional painting technique. He loves to discuss philosophy, art, etc. — and when I told him that his emphasis on individualism, and self-expression without any sense of a need to communication, etc. contradicted entirely the premises on which our mural movement was based — ideas of collectivity and responsibility to community we got into a fine discussion. Part of the difference between our two points of view, we decided in the course of discussion was a result of two very different historic conjunctures. Vlady, whose family suffered Stalinist persecutions before coming to Mexico in 1942 comes out of a background of false collective ideology and beurocratism which leads him to emphasize individual liberty of expression. We, on the other hand, come from an overemphasis on individualism and competitive values that leads us to the other extreme.

Definitely the most exciting large-scale mural project in Mexico that is happening NOW.

### Gerardo Cantu

Gerardo Cantu is a graphic artist and painter from Monterrey whose mural at the Preparatoria at the University in Monterrey deals with the social conflict within the highly industrialized society of that city. (Monterrey is the home of the ALPHA group among others of Mexican capital the core of private capital development) "Black Gold or Portrait of a Society" was commissioned from the artist (who also did a mural for the Monterrey Anthropology Museum) and painted on canvas. After it was completed there was a long struggle to get the painting installed because of controversies about the content. In the center and oil tower crossed by a reclining prostitute and topped by a Uncle Sam vulture is filled with the levels of Monterrey society the rich on the shoulders of the poor. On the bottom foreground are the students and behind them the factories on the left and the school on the right. The size is about 4 1/2 by 5 meters.

### Arnold Belkin and his students

Arnold Belkin teaches a course on muralism at the Academy of San Carlos for graduate students in painting. His students work collectively on mural projects. In the summer of 1980 the group designed and painted a very long mural on a wall outside the cultural center of Contreras site of one of the original factories in Mexico City. For this reason the mural deals with the theme of labor history and workers. Some of the same group with new additions began work this fall on a mural for the CUC (University Cultural Center) cinema that deals with the subject of movies. As a method of working, one of the group who is a writer, worked up a script from the group discussions. This mural is still in process.

Belkin himself in October 1979 finished a mural for the National Museum of History based on the famous photo of the meeting of Zapata and Villa at the National Palace. Although not very large (2.30 x 3.50 meters) and painted on canvas in acrylic it is one of Belkin's most beautiful works and a fascinating example of how a photo can be used, changed, interpreted, and still keep some of the original photographic quality. Belkin is currently working on a commission for the Society of Engineers.

### TIP (Taller de Investigación Plástica)

The Tip group in Morelia, Michoacan, led by José Luis Soto and Isabelle Campos is doing collective political murals related to the problems of the indigenous communities, the Tarascan (or Purépecha speaking) peoples near Lake Patzcuaro. Their murals are designed through consultation with the town or group and then approved by the people. The design is projected and painted by the villagers themselves. They also work in sculptural and theatre projects. One of the most interesting walls politically is the mural in Santa Fe de la Laguna, on the northern shore of Lake Patzcuaro. Four of the men from Santa Fe had been killed in the course of a land dispute between the indians and the cattle ranchers of Quiroga. In a demonstration of protest by the indigenes from Santa Fe at the capital of the state, Morelia, TIP provides a sculpture that was so realistic (and distressing) that the demonstrators were ordered to remove the bodies because they represented a health hazard. The mural in Santa Fe commemorates the victory — and the dead. Santa Fe is now the site of even greater controversy. It has been chosen as the location for a nuclear energy plant on Lake Patzcuaro which is now in the planning stages.

Another mural by TIP was painted to mark the second meeting of the independent indigenous organizations from Mexico and Central America at Cheranastico in March of this year. The mural was painted by townspeople and participants at the congress in about a day and half. Jim and I went to help and watch and were very impressed with the seriousness and dedication of the participants.

Eva Cockcroft



Arnold Belkin students: Graciella Madrid, Evangelina Barrientos, Lola Muñoz Pons, Arriosto Arturo, with cooperation of Ray Patlan



Arnold Belkin



Detail of opposite mural



TIP

## 20 How Politics Determines Form — Another Example

In a conversation with a member of the editorial group of *CMM* last year, Vlady explained that his formal principles, the brightly-colored abstractions and lack of narrative content, were motivated by a political position which rejects through style the political-social principles of the Mexican muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros. It is an exceptionally clear instance of form growing out of politics, because Vlady, whose father was secretary to Leon Trotsky when the exiled Russian revolutionary was in Mexico shortly before his death, is vehemently opposed to the forces which ousted Trotsky from Russia. Siqueiros, on the other hand, was a staunch defender of the Russian revolution and its descendants in the Third International. Thus by rejecting Siqueiros' mural principles of polyangular perspective, narrative content, integration of architectural space with the mural itself, Vlady sees his own arts as rejecting the political forces Siqueiros supported.

### More on Oaxaca Mural

In our last issue (Spring 1981) *CMM* carried an article titled "Oaxaca in the History of Mexico: Arturo García Bustos," (p.29) in which we offered a translation of an account of Bustos' recent mural in Oaxaca, Mexico. The following article, from *Unomasuno*, suggests of the tensions surrounding Bustos' selection as the painter of the piece. This "debate," however, can also be seen in another context, one we feel is significant enough to mention here, i.e., it is possible that the underlying (and unstated) reason for the objection to Bustos is not that he is not a muralist, but that he is not an "internationalist" in style. Those questioning his selection in the following article all share identification with the group of Mexican artists which has allied with internationalist styles as opposed to and often in direct rejection of, indigenous Mexican expression. The most important internationalist is Tamayo and his "circle" might oppose an "outsider" simply on these grounds.

### Oaxaca Painters Protest

Melo Ferreras, the director of the School of Fine Arts of the Benito Juárez Free University, said yesterday that the government of Oaxaca should convene a national assembly to choose the artist to paint the murals in the Government Palace of the city.

The official said, "I believe that in any cultural activity, particularly in the case of a mural painted in a public building, the opinion of the cultural community should first be solicited."

Ferreras also commented that the most basic and adequate manner of choosing the artist would be "...to hold a meeting at the state — or, better, at the national — level to select the most appropriate artist. This would be the most democratic method of realizing a work of this nature."

"Personally," said Ferreras, "I feel that the artist who paints this mural should be prestigious and should be from Oaxaca, since the work would be a great attraction not only for the city but also for tourism. In my opinion, the most likely candidate would be Rufino Tamayo because of his recognized international scope."

"It is often said," Ferreras commented, "that Tamayo has given nothing to his city. However, his city has given nothing to him, and the state has never accorded him the slightest form of homage."

Then, referring to Arturo García Bustos, who has already begun the murals in the Government Palace, the director of the School of Fine Arts said, "All I know of him are his engravings. Regarding his pictorial work, I am uninformed. The fame of the artist, in this case, is not important; what matters is the quality of the work."

Referring again to the mural, Ferreras said, "The work should be an historical review as well as an affirmation of the cultural and political values of the region."

For his part, Mario Díaz, Director of the Miguel Cabrera Cultural Foundation, stated that Oaxaca is a state in which the works of its artists are not present. "I believe that the most obvious approach is that the state should attract its own artists."

"As a Oaxacan," he added, "it pains me that we do not have the works, for example, of Gabriel Cabrera (17th and 18th centuries) or of Tamayo, Toledo or Rodolfo Morales, Oaxaca is seedbed of artists, some of the international repute. It is a state in the vanguard of art, which is as important as food; and the government should attempt to promote and preserve its artistic riches."

"How many people wouldn't come to Oaxaca to see a mural by Rufino Tamayo — or by any other painter, even if unknown — if he were Oaxacan? This would be very stimulating for the Oaxacan artists," he concluded.

Finally, Oaxacan painter Rodolfo Morales commented that while not passing judgment on the work of Bustos, he disagrees with the government's policy of commissioning murals. "I believe that Oaxaca needs other things," he said.

"Personally, I have no intention of painting a mural. I would have painted it free, and I believe Francisco Toledo would have done likewise. However, I insist that I cannot understand why money is wasted on things which aren't needed. Oaxaca is a city which has more urgent problems to solve."

From *Unomasuno* -- June 1, 1978, p.19  
Translation: Marcia Rautenstrauch

# Carlos Sandoval to Complete Mural in Zihuatenejo, Mexico

Carlos Sandoval, son of Ernesto and Mary Sandoval of San Pedro, will soon complete the first painting by a Chicano on a public building in Mexico. The Municipal Library in the city of Zihuatenejo in the State of Guerrero is the site of this most interesting and important project.

The artist began painting horses at the age of five in San Pedro with the able instruction of Jinio Lobato, his cousin, the son of Francisco and Andreita Lobato. Carlos attended grade school in San Pedro until 1952 when the Sandoval family moved to Pueblo. The artist continued art studies at Pueblo's East High School, the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, Penn., and Metro State College in Denver. Carlos was before returning to Colorado.

Carlos has painted several murals in the Denver area. His work will be featured, along with artwork by other Chicano artists of Colorado, in a full-length film being produced by Chispa Productions of Denver. Chispa is the first professional Chicano film group in Colorado to produce films on Chicano topics.

The painting is a very important project for the people of Mexico, and will increase their understanding of the history and culture of their brothers to the North in the U.S., ACCORDING TO Armando Federico Gonzales, mayor of Zihuatenejo. He also points out that symbolically, the spiritual unity that is portrayed in the painting



Recent Photo Of Mural.

between Chicanos and Mejicanos will be a mutual recognition of one another as the same people divided by history and a border.

Armando Gonzalez played an important role in making the mural project a reality. Working with Maruca Salazar of Chispa Productions, who is originally from Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico Mayor Gonzalez visited Denver and noted the many resemblances between Chicano art and the great works of the Mexican muralists, Orozco, Rivera, and Siqueiros.

"The message in the murals was unity, unity among Chicanos in its purest form, or spiritual unity," Mayor Gonzalez noted. While in Denver, Gonzalez discussed the Chicano artwork with Danny Salazar, Maruca's husband, and Juan and Susan Salazar, Danny's brother and sister-in-law,

all with Chispa.

Gonzalez immediately suggested to Maruca Salazar the possibility of having a local Chicano artist paint a mural in Mexico which would also portray that Unity between Mejicanos and Chicanos.

Maruca then contacted Carlos with the idea and the artist accepted wholeheartedly. Thus, after many phone calls and letters between Zihuatenejo and Denver the mural became a reality.

## Many Symbols

The mural includes many aspects of culture history and society shared by Mejicanos and Chicanos. For example, the background of the mural is a silhouette of a Mejicano wearing a sombrero, the spirit of Chicanos past. Other symbols of importance to Mejicanos and Chicanos in the mural include the pyramid, symbolizing the cosmic element in nature; the cross which symbolizes the Christian and Indian duality; the four corners of the earth; the four colors of people; the four directions; and the four elements of Earth, Wind and Fire and water which are basic to the cycle of life.

The feathered serpent symbolizes Quetzalcoatl, the god of various native tribes of Mexico. The tree of life shows roots deep in the earth like those of the Mexican people. The mestizo face symbolizes both the emergence and conflict of the Spanish and Native people and the creation

of a new race and culture. Industry is shown to reflect the Mexican and Chicano workers who provide the labor of both Mexico and the U.S.

The serape, which in the mural blends into the earth, reminds us that all material things are only temporary and will eventually return to the Earth. The Skull symbolizes the spiritual cycle of life, death and infinite knowledge. The adobes symbolize survival. The man and the eagle symbolize the same elements of freedom, domination of space, power, and majesty. The corn symbolizes life and the dove is peace.

## Unique Features

The painting includes many purely Chicano and unique to the native people of the southwest or Aztlan. The mountains, for example, have a personal meaning to the artist, symbolic of the Sangre de Cristo Range in the San Luis Valle. The mountains have historical significance and are also a symbol of survival to the people of the Valley. The artist's palette is also a personal symbol and depicts the basic colors or red, blue, yellow, black and white the artist uses.

The buffalo is very important for it symbolizes life to many native people, providing their food, shelter, clothing and tools, plus a spiritual significance as well.

The symbol of the United Farm Workers Union, the eagle, is also present, with the face of a woman farmworker in the center. Carlos explains that this best symbolizes the Chicano, because of all the mestizo face, all merge together.

Tierra y Libertad, Julio, 1980

X VIVA X

# SIQUEIROS

David Alfaro Siqueiros, renowned Mexican muralist who was recently invited by the Pope to paint a Christ figure for the Vatican, again becomes the subject of controversy due to his ideological position. Siqueiros, whose life has been a series of revolutionary actions against tyranny and oppression, who fought both in the 1910 Mexican Revolution and in Spain against Franco, who has served several jail sentences for his Communist beliefs and whose paintings reflect his passion for justice and human values, feels that painting a Christ for the Vatican is not at all extraordinary for a man with his particular philosophy. The famous muralist in a recent interview declared that Christ's attacks on the basic tenets of Roman Society were as revolutionary in that day as were the revolutionary activities of Engels, Lenin and Che and therefore he sees no contradiction between his own values and those values that Christ stood for.

Controversy has followed Siqueiros throughout his career but few Chicanos are aware that one of those controversies involved a painting that he dedicated to the Chicano Community of Los Angeles that was subsequently covered with white wash by the racist Angelenos. The story of Siqueiros' 1932 visit to Los Angeles, during which he painted two murals, is recollected in his book *Mi Repuesta* wherein he explains that the political atmosphere forced him to leave Mexico and come to the City of the Angels to teach a mural painting class at the Chouinard School of Art. It was while at Chouinard that Siqueiros painted, on request from Mrs. Chouinard, a mural on an exterior wall of one of the school's buildings which he titled *Mitín en la calle* (street meeting) and which portrayed black and white people having a meeting. The painting brought forth much public criticism due to its interracial theme and Mrs. Chouinard was forced to first erect a wall in front of it to block it from public view and later to demolish the mural wall altogether.

The publicity received from this first mural brought forth an offer for a second Siqueiros mural from an individual who owned an art gallery in the old plaza of Los Angeles and who hoped to profit from the publicity attached to Siqueiros. However, the American businessman also wanted

to avoid any negative repercussions and therefore the contract called for the preselection by him of the theme *Tropical America*. Siqueiros mentions in passing that the businessman's conception of Tropical America differed markedly from that portrayed in the mural, which was a man on a double crucifix with the American eagle proudly perched on top.\*

This second mural, which is the one dedicated to the Chicano Community, again brought forth a torrent of public criticism and resulted in the expulsion of Siqueiros from the country. After his expulsion arrangements were made to cover the mural with white wash and thus erase from memory the 1932 visit of the muralist.

Fortunately the gentleman who white washed the painting was sympathetic to the work of Siqueiros and he did it in such a way as to not damage the painting. Today the white wash has weathered and the original mural is beginning to surface, probably in better condition than if it had been exposed to the elements for all these years.

Siqueiros views his work in Los Angeles as marking a departure in traditional mural painting because of technical innovations, but also because for the first time painting was visible to the common man.†

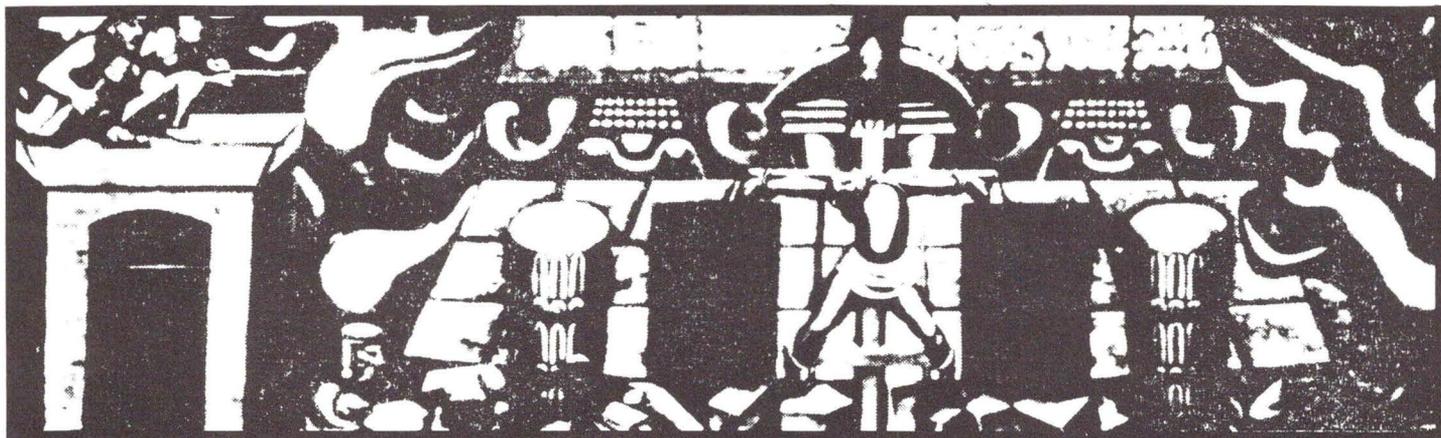
The white washed mural, *Tropical Americana* of Los Angeles, is still the only public Siqueiros mural in the U.S.A. It is a shame that society has chosen to shield such a fine work not only from La Raza, but from the eyes of the world as well.

C/S

\*"El señor como buen Yanqui capitalista, se había pasado la noche pensando en el tema. Como es fácil comprender para el America Tropical significaba un continente de hombres felices rodeados de palmeras y papagayos..."

†"El mural exterior era sin lugar a duda el segundo paso de nuestro movimiento muralista en Mexico: pintar en el transito de los multitudes bajo el sol, bajo la lluvia."

Con Safos, 1971



# ARGUMENT RAGES



## MURAL MAKING -- A MUSEUM AFFAIR

MURALS OF AZTLAN: THE STREET PAINTERS OF EAST LOS, a bicentennial event taking place at the Craft and Folk Art Museum 5814 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, from April 28th through July 12th, 1981 brings together nine of the most recognized Chicano artists of Los Angeles who will paint murals on portable canvases in the two museum galleries. In the true folk tradition of street painting, the public is invited to watch the artists work and talk with them about their different approaches to mural painting. The exhibition has been made possible by grants from the California Arts Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, and Tosco Corp.

This group of Chicano artists -- Carlos Almaraz, David Botello, Gronk, Wayne Alaniz Healy, Judithe Hernandez, Willie Herrón, Frank Romero, John Valadez, and George Yepes -- who share the conviction that their art should be directly accessible to the public, have worked in the barrios or neighborhoods of East Los Angeles for the past ten years, painting murals on the walls of stores, restaurants, alleys, freeways and housing projects, engaging in a vital social dialogue with their community.

The word "Aztlan" from the Nahuatl language of the Aztecs refers to the mythical northern paradise of the Aztec nation and is used to symbolize the new Chicano cultural renaissance in Los Angeles and the greater Southwest.

What has emerged in the last ten years is a vital new cultural force that is giving the Mexican-American a new cultural image and stature in American society. Along with this awakening cultural pride, a new Chicano aesthetic has developed, synthesizing the monumental style of the Mexican muralists, the vivid colors and dynamic lines of Mexican folk art, and the graphic directness of European/North American contemporary art.

The subject matter of the Chicano murals comes directly from the street vernacular: '39 Chevies and the Virgin Mary, calaveras (skulls) and gang graffiti, broken hearts, flowers and the Plumed Serpent. In the early part of the decade, the murals were, in a sense, living newspapers and

expressed the pain and anger of the barrios, becoming a collective statement of individual feelings with collective ideas and symbols.

Frank Romero, curator of this exhibition, who has been engaged in photo-documenting folk art in the barrios of East Los Angeles since 1971, explains that the mixed iconographies reflect the volatile alliance between cultures in East L.A. -- traditional Mexican symbols juxtaposed with urban-American metaphors. "The main thrust of the mural movement," he says, "has been to identify these 'folk themes' and give them a constructive interpretation, thereby fostering a positive cultural awareness in the community."

Many of the early murals faded because of the poor quality of paint used and improper wall preparation. Some were painted over. Now into the second decade the artists are able to use durable materials as the community recognizes the value of their work.

The artists, whose work schedules at the museum will vary, begin painting the murals at the opening of the exhibition on April 28th and will finish them by June 2nd, at which time the completed murals will be on display through July 12th, with photographs and a slide show documenting the process.



JOHN VALADEZ

"Altar" and "Portrait"

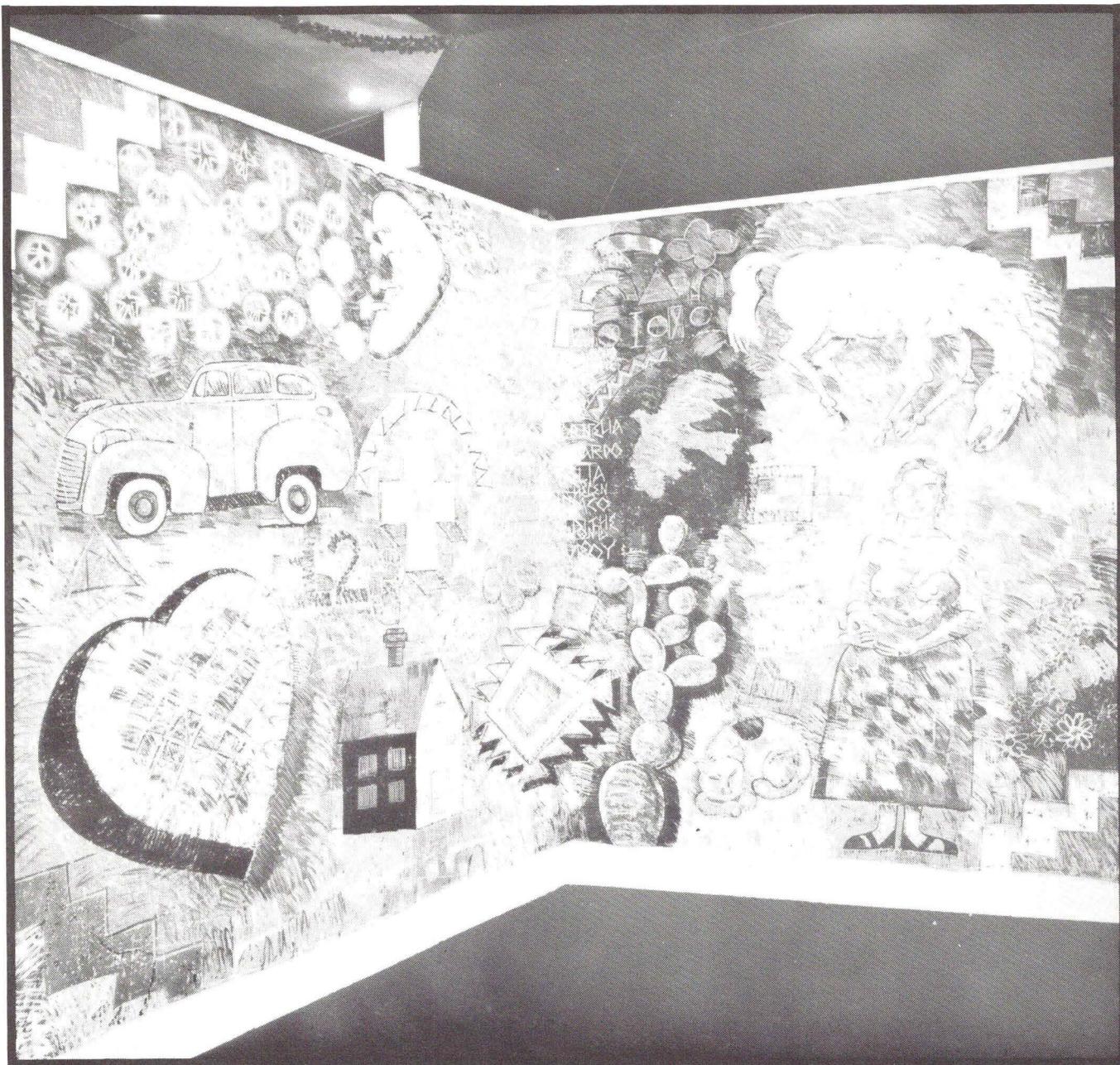
10' X 10' and  
9' X 9'



"BICENTENNIAL BLUES FOR  
LA REINA DE LOS ANGELES"  
BY 1961 BY  
BOTELLO, HEALY, & YEPES OF  
EAST LOS STREETSCAPERS

EAST LOS STREETSCAPERS: David Botello, Wayne Alaniz  
Healy, George Yepes

"Bicentennial Blues for La Reina de Los Angeles"  
15'H X 16'W



FRANK ROMERO

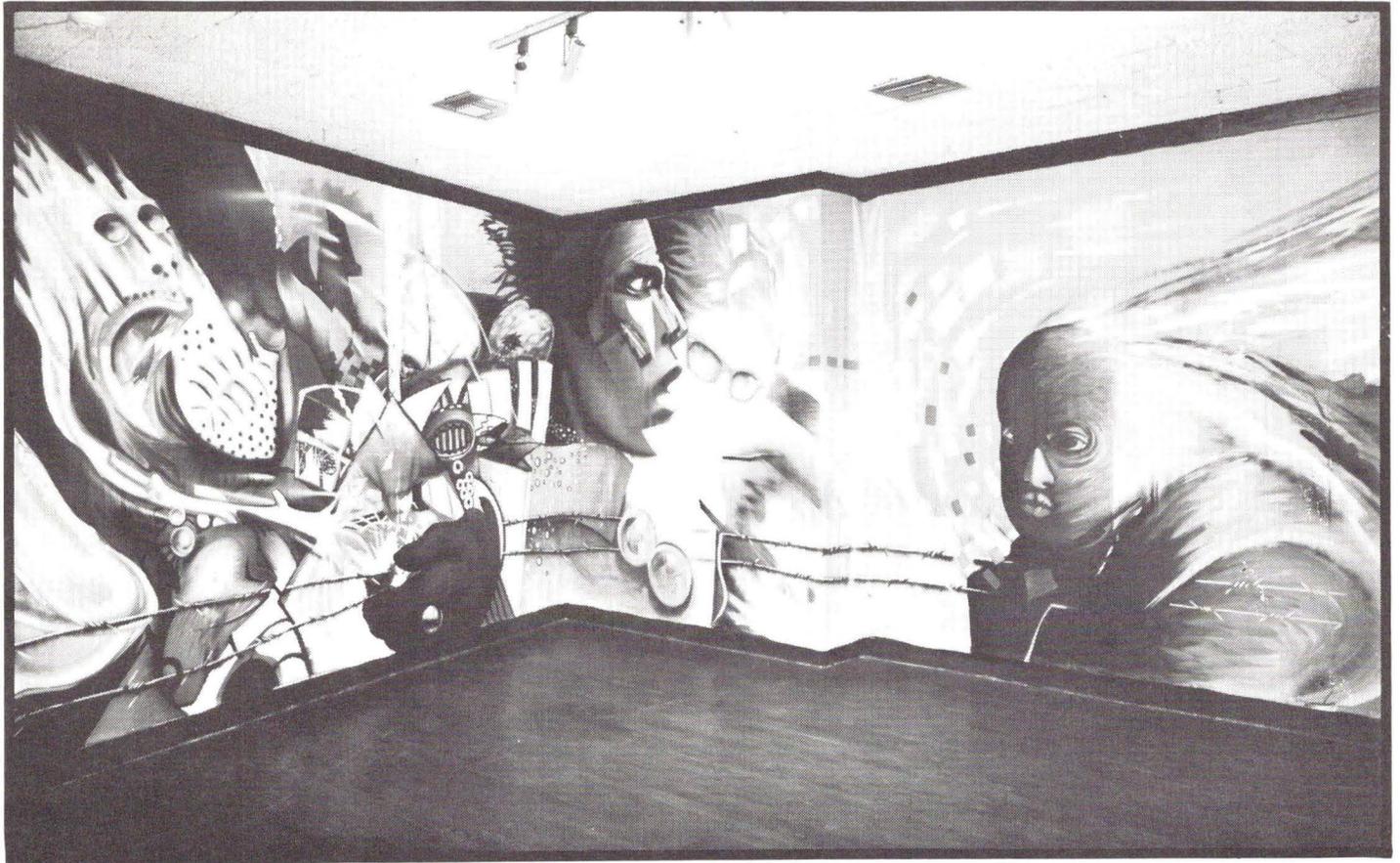
"Por La Familia"

12'H X 21'W



JUDITHE HERNANDEZ

"Suenos Oaxaquenos" 15'H X 15'W



GRONK and WILLIE HERRON

Untitled, as yet

10'H X 75'W

## Chicano Art — Looking Backward

... *Murals of Aztlan*, featuring artists who have done murals in East Los Angeles within the last decade, is, to my mind, a thoroughly contradictory and artificial construct. This is not to fault the participating artists, whose roster includes several of the most talented in the Los Angeles area, all of whom have been, or are, members of artistic collectives with venerable histories: Los Four, ASCO and the East Los Streetscapers.

For this Los Angeles Bicentennial event, nine artists — Carlos Almaraz, David Botello, Gronk, Wayne Alaniz Healy, Judithe Hernandez, Willie Herron, John Valadez, George Yepes and Frank Romero — were organized by the latter to paint murals on portable canvases in the CAFAM galleries over a period of one month. "In the true folk tradition of street painting, the public is invited to watch the artists work and talk with them about their different approaches to mural painting," says the museum's press release. The event was structured presumably to replicate the process of East Los Angeles neighborhoods where artists painted murals "on the walls of stores, restaurants, alleys, freeways, and housing projects" while "engaging in a vital social dialogue with their community." After completion, the murals and documentation of their production will be on display until July 12, after which they are slated to travel. As giant canvases, they will also be for sale, probably, as one muralist suggested, to a corporation or collector that has the money and space to own them. Completing the validation and packaging of the murals as marketable art are a poster and a catalog.

A number of conceptual problems attend this exhibit — some esthetic, some social. Murals on canvas, dissociated at their inception from a predetermined location and audience, violate the root meaning of the "mural," which is by definition an artwork intended for a wall. "A successful mural," says Ralph Mayer, "is not merely superimposed embellishment: it must be appropriate to and partake of its architectural setting." It has distinct laws of composition and perspective. In addition, the social history of Chicano murals (and the Mexican prototypes from which they often drew inspiration)

is predicated on the notion of public art as an alternative to privately owned and gallery art which is neither accessible nor of relevance to large segments of the barrio communities. For the street mural, location is part of its content, and its subject matter is meaningful to the residents in whose environment it is placed. Their needs have been a crucial part of the "vital social dialogue" in which many muralists are engaged, and all barrio muralists are aware of the ways in which a community can accept or reject a mural.

The fashionably located Craft and Folk Art Museum on Wilshire Boulevard's Miracle Mile has placed a framework around East Los Angeles muralism which decontextualizes it and violates its function. It is not "folk art" in the correct meaning of that term (art forms produced by people without formal training but with an established tradition of styles and craftsmanship) but contemporary art with a popular audience. The work was not meant to be produced in a gallery for sale to private collectors. Finally, the attitude of the public best symbolizes the "exotic" and alienating nature of the event. Gallery visitors come equipped with as many cameras as questions, and the dialog that takes place is largely motivated by detached curiosity. Other visitors watch the mural production while dining and chatting on the balcony restaurant above the gallery. It is a pleasant way to spend the afternoon. □

Shifra M. Goldman  
ARTWEEK June 20, 1981

## ARTWEEK August 1, 1981

*As an artist who is a participant in the Murals of Aztlan exhibition discussed in your "Overview" section (ARTWEEK, June 20, 1981), I would like to respond to some of Shifra Goldman's comments.*

*In her opening statement she establishes a thoroughly confusing basis for her criticism that neither exhibition was retrospective in nature. Although she notes that neither was intended to be a retrospective of Chicano art, she blithely dismisses them as simply a focus on "an older generation of Chicano artists." Isn't that somewhat like dismissing a bowl of fruit for not being the orchard? Why is it wrong for Chicano artists to exhibit their current work and not be held responsible for the entire art history of our culture? Furthermore, I am sick and tired of people, like Ms. Goldman, who impudently suggest that my commitment to my people is in danger of being compromised by my professional success! Why should changes in my work and social-political attitudes be construed as compromising my commitment to my Chicanismo, while in another artist the same would be perceived as personal and professional growth? Are Chicano artists so shallow and corruptible that at their first chance at mainstream success they'll forget who they are? Or, is she insinuating that without the backdrop of Chicano art our work would have no validity based on its own merit?*

*This dilemma, as Ms. Goldman sees it, is most certainly not the "unspoken or perhaps subtheme" of the Murals of Aztlan at the Craft and Folk Art Museum. CAFAM should be applauded for its effort to showcase contemporary Chicano artists! If Chicano art were as well accepted and recognized as Ms. Goldman thinks, why can the art institutions in LA (LACMA, LAICA, Barnsdall, etc.) only point to one or two (if that many) Chicano shows in the last ten years? The exhibition at CAFAM was intended to feature artists who have been major forces in the East LA mural movement and to give the public a closer look at the mural process. It was never meant to recreate the street environment, architecture, or audience. How could it! I intensely resent Ms. Goldman's assertion that our work outside the barrio somehow becomes "decontextualized" and its function violated by the "folk art" tradition of CAFAM and the museum setting itself. What rubbish! Of course what we do is not folk art!*

*This was an exhibition with the two specific purposes I previously stated. Given the purposes, the context of the museum is as appropriate for this work as the streets of East Los are for our street murals. Moreover, the pieces for the museum were not specifically produced with the intent to sell and Ms. Goldman has no right to imply that we are less than loyal to the Chicano cause if we begin to realize financial reward for our work. Those of us who have persisted in the face of great odds and pursued our careers as artists will grow in spite of people, like Ms. Goldman, who would eternally chain us to "Chicano art." That too is a form of segregation.*

*As our Mexican predecessors before us, our work will mature and change. Chicano art and Chicano artists, I am sure, will always pay homage to the traditions of the Mexican/Chicano culture. As time goes by, the relevance of our work to a larger international audience will become more and more apparent.*

Judithe Elena Hernandez de Neikrug

In response to Judithe Hernandez (whom I have known as a person and an artist for at least six years), the framework of the *Murals of Aztlan* exhibit at the Craft and Folk Art Museum toward which I directed my criticism was that of the museum itself, presumably with the knowledge and consent of the artists. I did not invent the terms "folk art tradition of street painting" (which Ms. Hernandez herself correctly rejects), nor the notion that the interplay between artists and spectators as the murals were painted was intended to be a replay of the barrio street process. These were taken directly from CAFAM's publicity.

Secondly, the issue of possible cooptation through professional success was originally raised not by me, but by a respected pioneer Chicano artist, Malaquias Montoya (see his "A Critical Perspective on the State of Chicano Art," *Metamorfosis*, Spring/Summer 1980) with whom an appreciable number of Chicano artists agree, though I only do partially. "Chicanos," Montoya says, "cannot claim to be oppressed by a system and yet want validation by it as well as by their own communities.... Instead of continuing to explain [to the Chicano communities] through their art the existing conditions and how to change them... Chicano artists are competing among themselves for the diminutive funds made available. Once again they are allowing themselves to become subservient to the dominant culture." There is a certain applicability in this statement to the present case in which CAFAM took advantage of Los Angeles' bicentennial to obtain funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, and the Tosco Corporation (which surely paid the museum's overhead and publicity), so that this exhibit cannot be said to have been mounted, as is suggested, as purely a matter of principle. Each artist was paid for her/his participation as well as retaining possession of the finished works (not for sale?) — some of which have now been sold to a private collector. Several artists, including Ms. Hernandez herself, stated that they would not paint in the streets as they did in CAFAM; that the content was more personal. What then happens to the construct of the supposed street mural process under these conditions?

A further question that arises is why, in view of the hundreds of murals available to the public within a few square miles of East Los Angeles, it was necessary to recapitulate this activity in a gallery environment, on canvas? The answer becomes obvious. Gallery visitors — many of whom I am sure have traveled around Europe and Mexico viewing murals at scattered locations — will not travel ten to fifteen miles (even with an available Goetz Gallery map) to see murals *in situ*. They fear to go to the barrio. Therefore CAFAM brought the barrio to them, tamed, sanitized and air conditioned. (It reminds one of exploitive films like *Gang*, *Boulevard Nights* and *Mojado Power*.) Could one imagine Mexican muralist Siqueiros, originator (in Los Angeles' Olvera Street) of the outdoor or street mural, performing under such circumstances? Siqueiros was one who early on spoke against art for private collectors and sought to take murals into the street for the people, and therefore was and is honored by the Chicano art community.

Everything in its place, however. I am certainly not the one to pigeonhole Chicano artists. I am in favor of having works of merit suitable to gallery exhibition and private acquisition exhibited in major (or minor) institutions; of artists addressing themselves to national and international audiences and making artistic statements about any and all subjects. I certainly wouldn't claim that all Chicano artists *should* make murals or do public art; not all Mexicans did, do, or should. My activities in the last ten years as a modern Latin American art historian, critic, teacher and curator make this evident. In reviewing the works of four Chicano artists (two of whom are part of the *Murals* show) at the LACE Gallery (see ARTWEEK, September 20, 1980) I documented precisely the type of establishment racist standards about which Ms. Hernandez so validly complains. However this is different from exploiting and turning into "exotica" an outdoor militant art form and its process, originally created for an embattled working class (which rarely or ever visits art galleries and museums), for the sake of an artist's upward mobility — or "personal and professional growth" and "financial reward," as Ms. Hernandez puts it. I wish her and her fellow artists at CAFAM every possible merited success in the private domain, but reserve my right to criticize objectively the sociological and ideological, as well as the esthetic aspects of any given art situation.

— Shifra M. Goldman

The Murals of Aztlan show raises valid questions. I do not criticize the idea of having such a show. Of course the environment is distorting, and the artists are put on display as exotica for entertaining the middle class (liberal) gallery goer who is too snobbish, scared, or lazy to seek out the murals *in situ*. Of course (some) of these same gallery goers have visited those murals in Italy, Mexico, which are relatively convenient (how many go out to Chapingo?), but **those** murals are already **validated** by art historians, tourist bure etc.

I think it is well that contemporary muralists fight for recognition and the opportunity for continued work, commissions for permanent media, etc. by every available means without allowing their work and themselves to be turned into commodities, amusements, etc. Such a show is an opportunity to educate and win over some of the middle class audience, to fight for the cultural hegemony, or at least influence, of working class and minority culture.

I believe the "Murals For the People" exhibit in 1971 at the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art, where William Walker, Eugene Eda, Mark Rogovin, Mitchell Caton and myself participated, was handled by the artists in an exemplary manner. It differed from the Aztlan show in two major respects. 1) We did murals, on panels, planned for **specific** locations in the communities we served, with the design, etc. worked out in advance with the organization for which the panels were done. Mark's, a traveling mural, was for the Angela Davis Defense Committee. Mine went to the LADO health center, and is now in the Centro, Ruiz Belvis. Eda's was designed for Olivet Church (never installed), and Walker's is at the South Side Community Art Center. Mitchell's I am not sure about.

2) **We controlled most of the information.** We wrote the press releases, published a Manifesto, the "Artists' Statement," and the first list of murals. Both were given to **all** visitors and we held an evening seminar which was well attended. We foresaw the pitfalls of CAFAM's typically well-intentioned but patronizing and exploitative PR blurbs.

A final point. We demanded and obtained two thousand free tickets to distribute in the neighborhoods. We were able to do all this by negotiating from strength. We told the museum that we already had an audience, and that we could not risk losing our credibility with that (street) audience merely to put on a show for the paying customers.

I do not think it is fair to cite Siqueiros, since he already had at least a few supporters at the highest level, and for part of his life the muralists were the most official art world beneficiaries of high patronage, etc. We do need to fight on all fronts, and to contest the right to show in "regular" galleries. Personally I am furious that I can't show in Chicago, that Bill Walker gets no official commissions, etc. But one must be completely lucid and consequential in dealing with art world institutions.

I guess that adds up to saying that I in part disagree with Malaquias Montoya's statement that "Chicanos cannot claim to be oppressed by a system and yet want validation by it as well as by their own communities." I think Hans Haake is right that in a limited way the galleries, museums, schools, universities offer a valid field of struggle for the influence of the middle class and, especially, of the intelligentsia, and even more particularly of other artists, art students, etc. Being locked out of the Art Institute School has hurt us, no doubt about it...At

the same time, one must have an adequate consciousness of the tremendous cooptive ability of the institutions, of their partially hidden control by the bourgeoisie, of the very great difficulty of turning them to other purposes, even temporarily and marginally. Minority artists, political artists, community artists have no choice but to contest art world turf, and now even more so than a decade ago. They must not deceive themselves, however. To justify a struggle for recognition on grounds of "personal and professional growth" is to accept the premises of the established institutions. Growth is not possible without time and therefore support, but the art **world** is an **ideological** arena first and last, and everything about a show by "dissident" artists has ideological implications. That pieces were not produced with the specific intent to sell cannot eliminate the ideological consequences of them, a) being sold, b) having been produced without specific intent.

Even on that point I must admit to mixed feelings. It is also encouraging that someone bought the pieces, isn't it? The problem is the confusion of purposes, which is bound to be transmitted to both younger artists and to the community.

John Pitman Weber

## More on Portable Murals

These articles, letters and comments raise a number of important questions for muralists, and not only for members of ethnic groups. They raise the entire question of the relationship of muralists/community muralists, to galleries and museums. The idea of painting a picture in one place and locating it in some other, unknown place, leads us to question the viability of "portable murals."

Portable murals are usually painted on canvas or masonite panels about 4' x 8', attached on the back in such a way that they can be taken apart or folded up and put into the back of a station wagon or pickup to be taken to different places, set-up and displayed. On the one hand this makes it possible for many different people to see the piece, but because the artist(s) does not know exactly who they are or precisely the architectural nature of the location of the piece, and because the need for portability demands small works, three uniquely muralistic potentials are lost; scale, relation to architectural space, and direct relation to the viewing public. Sometimes, doing portable murals might be an excuse not to work "on the streets," a reason for making images abstract and general so that "they can relate to anyone," since no specific audience is in mind. But portable murals done with a particular theme in mind make it possible for the image to be appropriate on the occasions it will be used. An example might be nuclear dangers, or police repression, or U.S. military intervention in the Americas. None of these themes has to be portrayed in abstract terms, but murals using them are not going to be put up just anywhere, for a completely generalized public to view. They will be used at rallies, demonstrations, parts of street fairs, lectures, etc. where attitudes of the audience are already known to some extent. In this way portable murals can relate quite well to several audiences.

It is true that architectural relationships are sacrificed in small, portable pieces, but still too many portables are even further limited by conceiving of their panels exactly as an easel canvas, i.e., as if it were automatically framed, limited for a wall — even if it needs to be a large

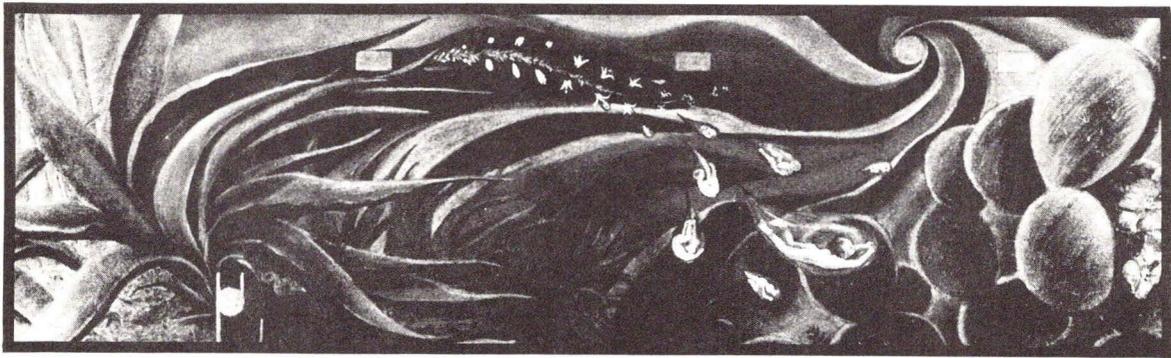
wall. Portable panels can be "folded" in such a way that the piece creates its own three dimensionality, manufactures its own architectural space — and relates to it in its design. It is not possible to paint several figures of widely varying sizes on a single portable mural, but if the piece is conceived as a backdrop for speakers at rallies, or as a temporary "wall" divider at a fair, it is possible to utilize different sizes, even details blown up into whole panels if it is going to be a backdrop on a raised speakers' platform, with great effect.

As with all murals, then, what matters is not the particular means of expression, not whether a piece is por-

table or permanently located, but the social political understanding of the artist(s). How the painters conceive of the relation of their topic and its expression to a particular group and place is what matters most. How the piece affects people — which people it affects: these are all-important and determinate of all else. Personal expression finds its place here when it is devoted to maximizing these goals in a truly social monumental art.

Tim Drescher

# UNITED STATES



## Library mural artists to use new technique

A mural at the Terrazas Branch Library is making art history.

When complete, it will be the first in the United States to be painted with a new resin technique and will be one of only two three-dimensional murals in the country.

The art project is headed by Santa Barraza, a 29-year-old graduate art student at the University of Texas. She and four other UT art students will spend the next five months painting the mural for an outside wall of the branch library at 1105 E. First St.

The mural, approved Dec. 18 by the Austin City Council, is entitled "Dar Luz," meaning to give light, or birth.

Blue and green are the predominant colors in the portable mural which will measure 45 feet long by 12½ feet tall. Flowers from an aloe vera plant spawn bubbled fetuses

which float toward a prickly pear cactus, symbolizing a challenging world. Discreetly tucked in the upper lefthand corner of the mural are the praying hands of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Mexican-American patroness of fertility, struggle and unity.

"The theme centers around motherhood and presents the harmony between nature and mankind," said Barraza, of 2704-B Catalina.

The artists believe their project will be the first mural painted on Fiberglas, a product previously used for sculpture and industrial purposes but not for a mural, notes Barraza. The Fiberglas allows for three-dimensional art, more vivid colors and a variety of textures.

The title "Dar Luz" appropriately expresses Barraza's personal artistic ambitions. "Now that I have an opportunity to teach young kids about art, I want to pass it on," said Barraza.

"Chicanos need heroes and positive modern images of their culture. Mexicans are usually portrayed as bad guys in school books. If the kids are not getting it (cultural history) in the classroom, they should get it through art. This will be public art, and it'll be in their community," said Barraza.

"The mural can be interpreted in many ways," said senior art student Sandra Rodriguez, 24, a native of Mexico City also working on the mural. She and her fellow muralists traveled to Mexico City in August to study murals, interview artists and research materials needed for the project.

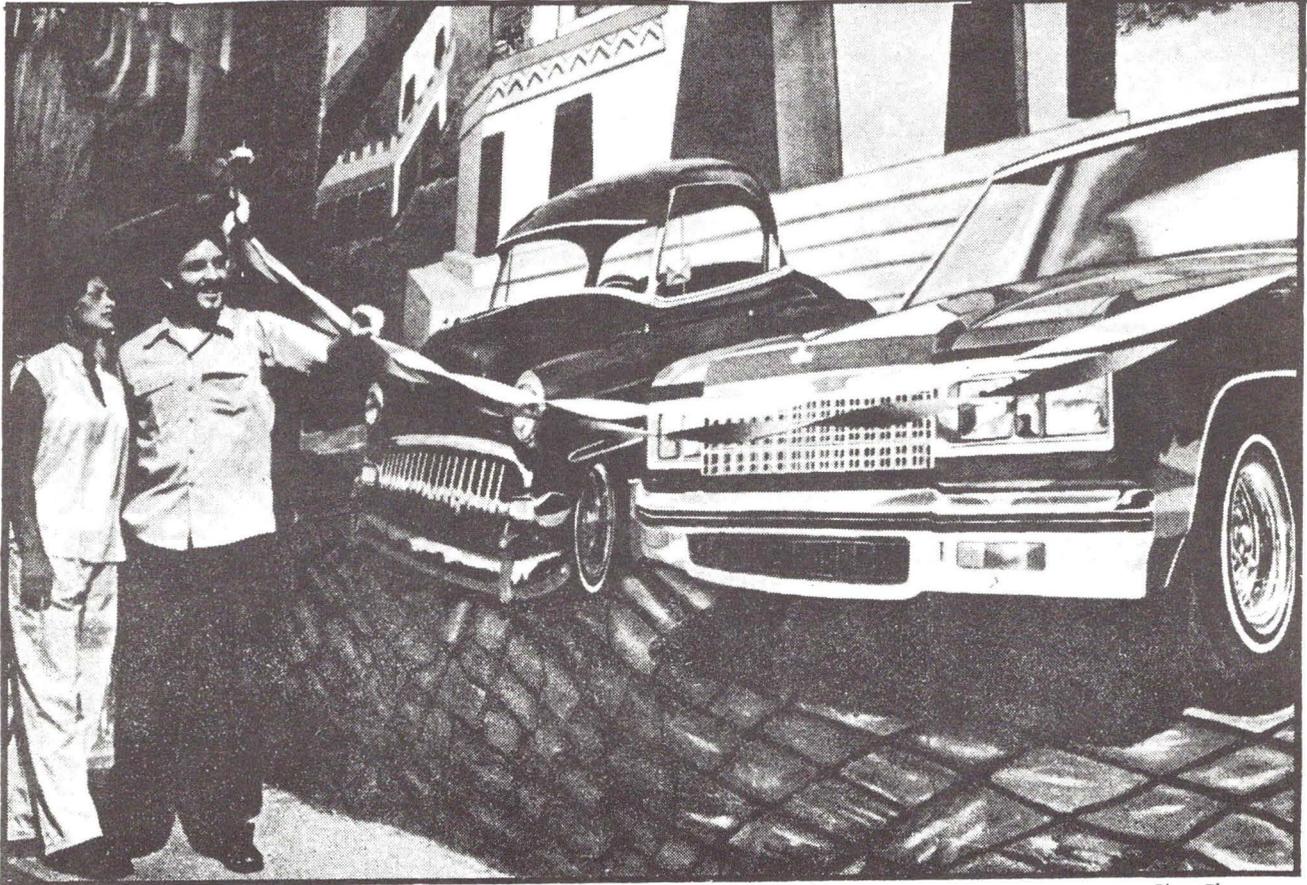
Also involved in the project are Raymond Salazar, 22; Martha Sanchez, 21; and Mary Jane Garza, 24. All are senior art students. Barraza will receive a Master of Fine Arts degree in December 1981.

The project has cost the group \$1,200 thus far, and Barraza estimates a final cost of \$10,000. She received a \$300 UT Research Grant and the Brooke Community School donated funds for the purchase of resin paint and the respirators the artists must wear when working on the mural.

Interested persons may send tax-exempt donations to League of United Chicano Artists (LUCHA), P.O. Box 6173, Austin, TX, 78762. — Julie Fernandez

*American Statesman,*  
Austin, Texas, Jan. 9, 1981.

## 'Hijos del Sol' mural honored



—Jim Chapman

HAYWARD, October 19 -- Dedication ceremonies highlighted the completion of the Hijos del Sol ("Children of the Sun") mural located at the Tennyson Center shopping complex on Pompano Avenue in South Hayward.

"The mural," as one young participant described it, "represents yesterday, today and tomorrow as we live it each day."

The mural project was directed by Enrique Romero under the sponsorship of the Hijos del Sol Youth Program/La Familia Counseling Service. It involved 28 Raza youth, from the initial themes to the actual painting.

The mural itself is divided into five sections or sols (1,900 sq. ft.), representing the history of Raza as it has evolved up to the present, as well as expressing Chicano/Latino hopes for the future. From a depiction of the Aztec city of Tenochtitlan, the mural goes on to describe the revolutionary period of Mexican history. It also shows Raza's current-day struggle with modern society and its technological advances, the self-destruction of this

supertechnological order leading to a "bridge" symbolizing the crossing over to a new era, "an era of splendor and beauty," in which people will work together to make their communities a better place to live.

With these visions in mind, the mural dedication ceremonies were characterized by a hopeful, festive atmosphere. Los Olmecas, a ballet folkloric group from Hayward, began the ceremonies followed by guest speakers, a presentation of certificates to youths and others who participated in the project, and the blessing of the mural.

Following the music of José Luis Orozco, the festivities moved to Weekes Park Community Center where a "Touch of Class" Disco D.J., Low Rider car exhibits, and a piñata for the children awaited. TEATRO GUSTO did their powerful play "The Leash," which expressed both the anguish of barrio warfare and Raza's determination to work together. The evening ended with more music from "Touch of Class" with the floor being dominated by dancing and celebration.



Fresno Bee

## Mural trumpets refrain of unity to Hispanic youth

By DIANNE SOLIS  
Bee staff writer

Andy Pinedo has spent the past five months toiling in lettuce fields, a United Farm Workers flag by his side.

Alex Alvarado has labored over a shrine to the Virgin of Guadalupe.

Mario Rodriguez has spent his time painting the streets of Fresno's Chinatown red — and green, brown, blue and silver.

Through it all, the teen-agers have never been much more than an arm's distance away. Monday morning they celebrated the completion of their efforts by dedicating a brightly hued mural — a mosaic of scenes inspired by their Hispanic culture.

"I never dreamed it would turn out as beautiful as it did," said Josie Alvarez, the owner of El Nuevo Triunfo. The exterior side wall of the Mexican restaurant and food store at 1323 Kern St. has been the canvas for the mural and work site for more than a dozen teen-agers since April.

The undertaking was the brainstorm of the Chicano Youth Center, a southeast Fresno club frequented by barrio youth often dubbed "hard-core" and "F-14 types" by law enforcement authorities.

The theme of the mural is unity, said Alvarado, 19, the project leader.

A bold banner on the bottom reads "End Barrio Warfare."

Across the top is a lively scene showing the street outside El Nuevo Triunfo bustling with cars and people. In the middle of the scene, two arms are locked in a handshake depicting unity of Chicanos from northern and southern California.

In the middle of the mural is a likeness of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

"The virgin is very symbolic of our people because religion brings us together. She's the founding mother of our culture," said Alvarado.

Many of the mural's scenes sprouted in Alvarado's artistic imagination but others were taken from Mexican calendars featuring historical scenes. There are likenesses of Aztecs, an eagle with a snake in its mouth, and Adelitas

(women soldiers in the Mexican Revolution of 1910) with their soldier husbands. The eagle is from the Mexican flag.

From the present, there are scenes of farmworkers and a UFW flag and demonstrators denouncing President Reagan and praising bilingual education.

On each side of the virgin are two webs that could represent the future. One is a web of trouble symbolized by drugs and alcohol. Another is a web with various symbols of potential luck such as a winning hand of cards.

"It takes time to play the cards," explained Alvarado. "If you play 'em right, you get someplace in life."

The mural could help Alvarado get someplace. He has three requests from business owners who would like murals for their stores.

Different people will have different interpretations of the mural, said Alfonso Hernandez, 30-year-old director of the Chicano Youth Center. But Hernandez emphasized the message, "End Barrio Warfare," and said he hopes barrio youth would see "there's more to life than shooting and hurting each other."

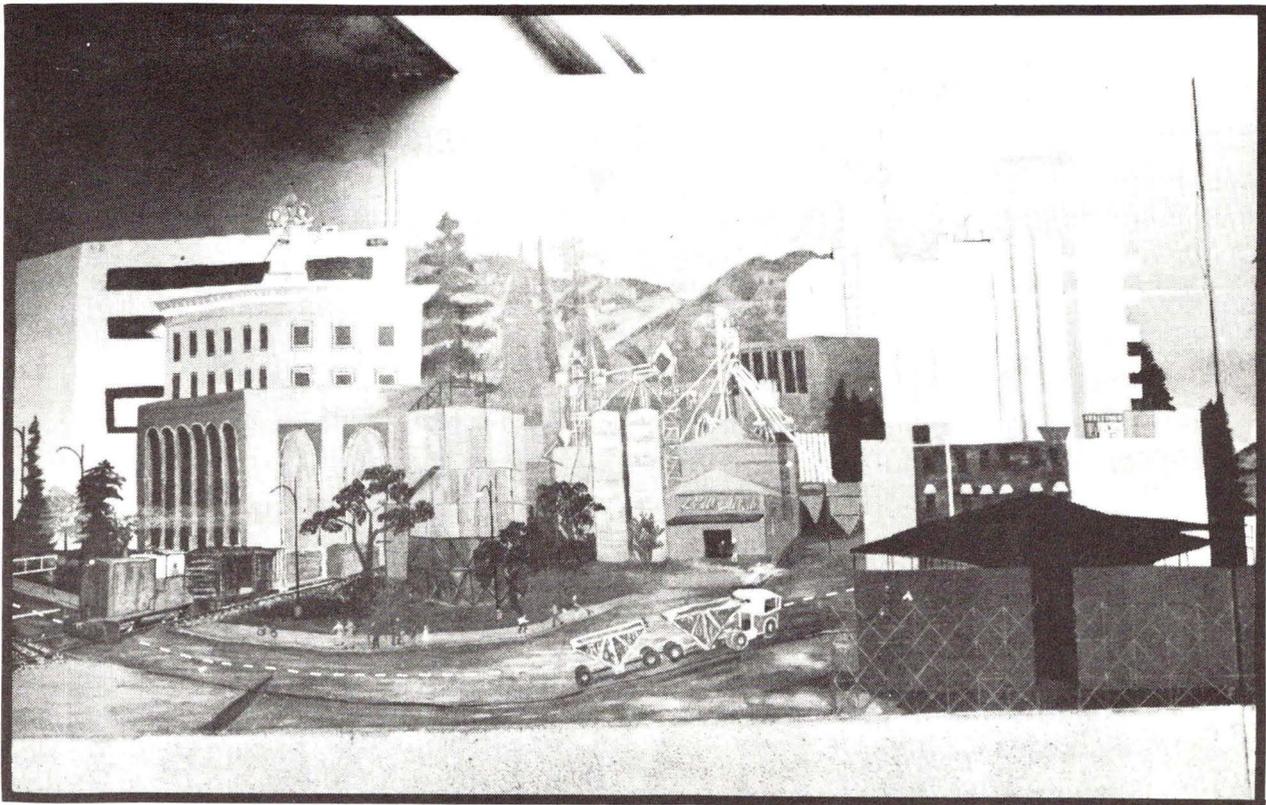
Hernandez said he also hopes the mural will pump new life into Chinatown by becoming a tourist attraction of sorts. It is the second mural for the west Fresno

community. In 1971, artist Ernie Palomino left his colorful mark at Tulare and F streets.

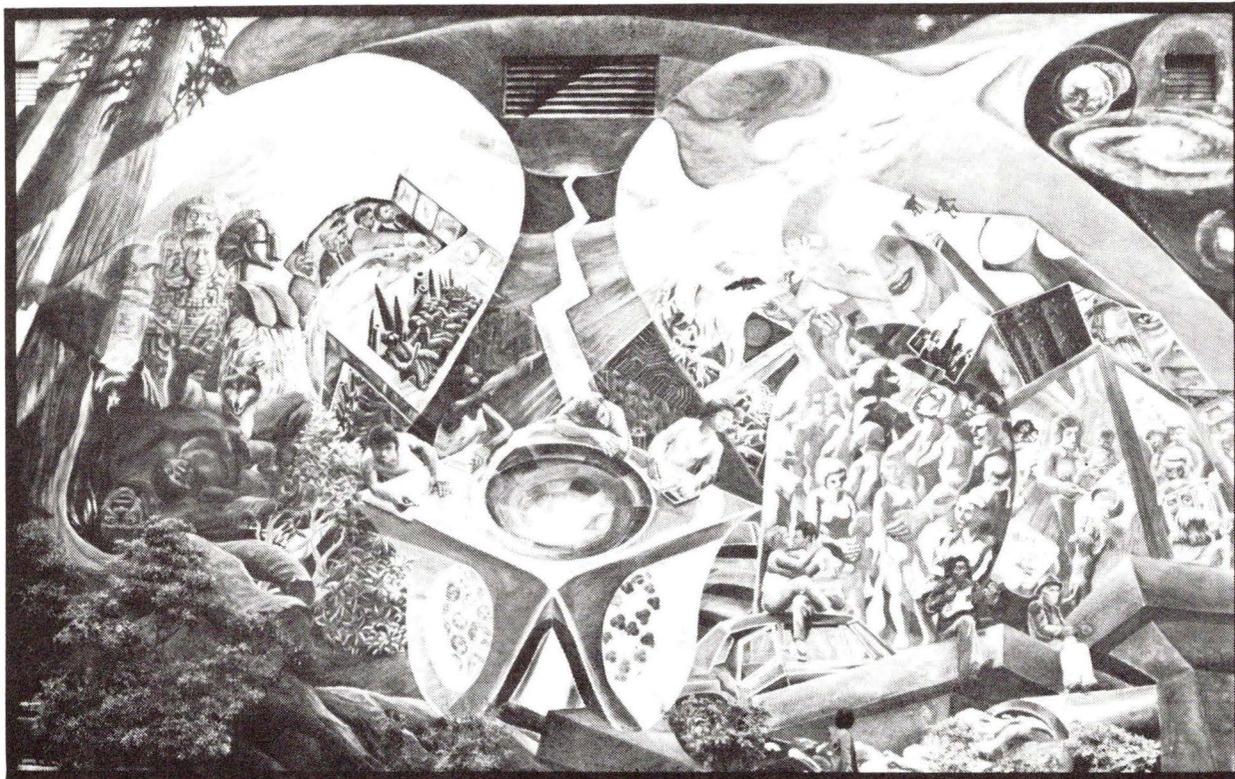
About \$2,000 worth of paint was used on the mural and countless free meals were supplied by Alvarez, the restaurant owner, who acknowledged she was leery of the project and the artists at first.

"People see these kids with their baggy pants and their headbands," she said. "They don't stop to think what's inside those clothes. When you get to know them, you see they're like anybody else."

*Fresno Bee*, Aug. 11, 1981



Detail of a mural completed in March 1981 in Santa Rosa, California by a team led by Jim Curtis. The mural is seven feet off the sidewalk, and contains numerous small figures which are visible to children (and others) walking next to it. The entire wall is some ninety feet long, and only part was painted. Its basis theme is a clash between appropriate technology and forces of urban renewal. Curtis writes that "although mural art is social/cultural/political by nature," he was forced to deny this to have the design approved. The only reason the design was finally approved, Curtis believes, is because he had petitioned the neighborhood with a copy of the sketch and that expressions of power (voting power?) convinced the board. Assistants were Thomas M. Hall, Mike Finch, and Louis Billy. Photo: Jim Curtis.



# Telegraph Avenue's heroic new mural

PEOPLE'S WORLD  
SATURDAY, AUGUST 30, 1980

**BERKELEY**  
**THE HUGE** mural on the gymnasium wall of Willard School has just been completed by a collective of 10 or so Bay Area painters. Conceived and organized by muralist Osha Neumann, the project took a year from the time permission was granted by the Berkeley School Board to the day the scaffolding was finally removed last week (Aug. 20).

The mural, painted on a 40 X 65 foot wall that faces Telegraph ave., stops pedestrians and slows traffic. Full of ideas and motion, this giant movie screen-sized painting draws you in and leads you from scene to scene. What, at first glance, appears to be a disconnected collage expressing bits and pieces of the world we live in, becomes a clear picture of what things have come to.

The most stable images in the mural are three redwoods that disappear into the blue sky. Superimposed on them are two vanishing species, the condor and a grizzly. The eyes are drawn to the roots of the trees where an Indian woman is lying on her back, her infant child on top of her.

Her head is back and her flowing black hair blends with the shadows of the roots of the trees. But something is wrong about her—her head is in an unnatural position, it is upside down to the viewer and her eyes stare blankly into the street. Is she dead? Genocide?

Suddenly the stability of the natural scene is lost and the viewer is thrown into the turmoil that the rest of the mural is about. From the military industrial complex with its finger on the button down to the unemployment line, you uncover layer after layer of meaning as you follow the sweeping arcs and disappearing spirals. Through all the scenes of alienation and potential disaster the mural offers the hope that the students pictured in the center will figure a way to a better future.

**THIS MURAL** will probably be criticized for trying to say too much. Actually, it doesn't say enough. It lacks a clear image of class struggle. Let's hope this talented collective is given the resources and the wall on which they can say more.

—JOHN WESTER

*Below is a small fraction of an extensive article on Osha Neumann in the East Bay Express (June 6, 1980) by Robert Hurwitt.*

"It's a political mural, of course, because my consciousness is political and it penetrates everywhere in what I do. But I wanted to put the politics in the broadest possible terms. It's all about scales: the levels of disjunction between varieties of experience.

"The mural is divided into opposites: large—small; earth—sky; past—future; nature—civilization. Since it's for a school building we show students trying to study amidst being aware of all that is going on around them. The message, I think, is the vastness of all this knowledge and its potential for great good on the one hand and for complete destruction on the other."

(When not working on the current mural, Osha teaches a fairly full workload at the Alternative School—where he is also engaged in a mural project with his students—and teaching a mural class for Vista College at La Pena, 3105 Shattuck ave., Berkeley.)

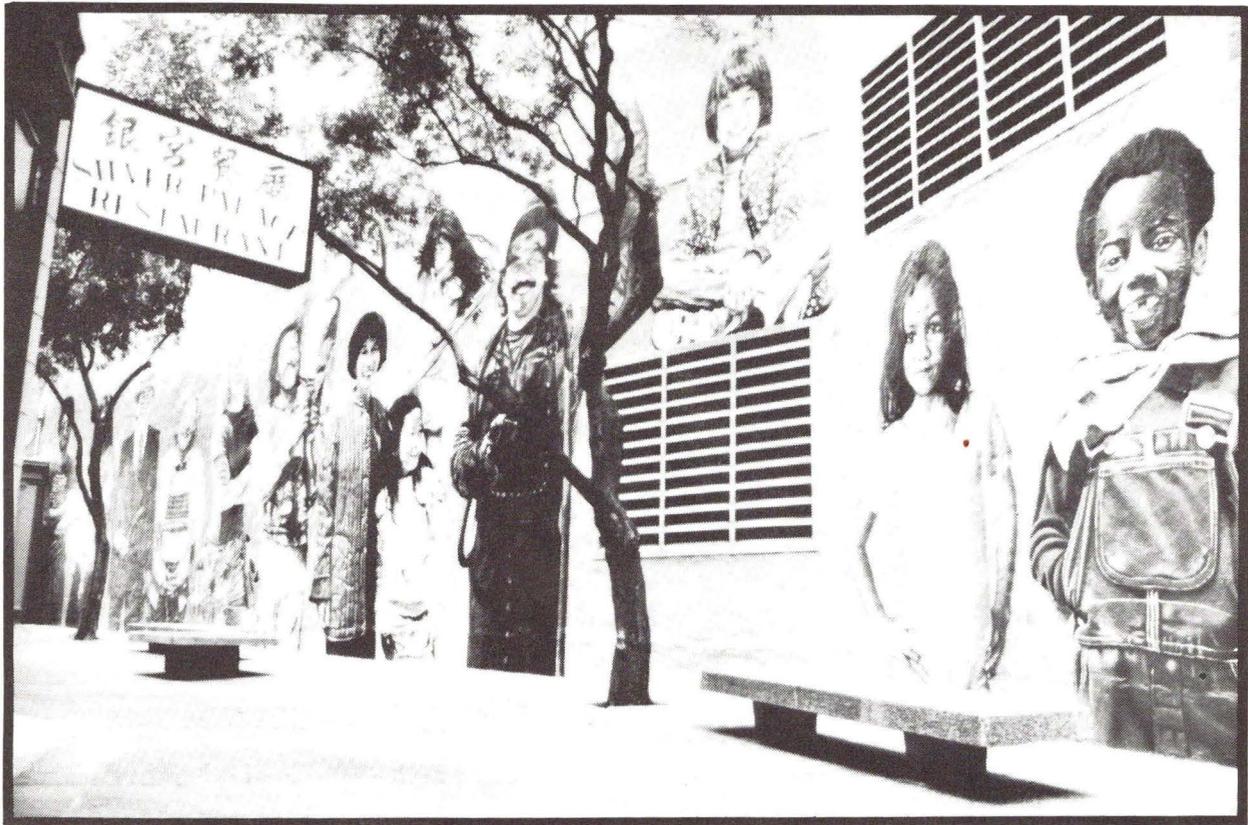


Photo: Daniel Galvez

# Mural reveals the many faces of Oakland

By Eleanor Edwards

A few weeks ago an old man, obviously inebriated and down on his luck, stumbled into the narrow, crooked alley that separates Liberty House from A Central Place in downtown Oakland.

Halfway into the lane he stopped. Instead of the usual graffiti-marked and urine-stained space, he found a parade of giant-sized people smiling down on him from one wall. Two young men, dwarfed by the figures, were putting the finishing touches on a mural so warm and realistic one feels an instant camaraderie. After watching the artists a while, the old man insisted on buying them a beer.

"Oakland's Portrait" works that kind of magic. The mural so dominates the once-stark Liberty House wall on 15th Street between San Pablo and Telegraph Avenues that it has transformed a dreary alley into a sunny, congenial oasis in the midst of urban grime.

The twenty-three people— young and old, blue collar workers, retirees, blacks and whites, business people, Latinos, but all of them Oaklanders—gaze down from the wall with happy, satisfied expressions. We're glad to be here, they seem to be saying, inviting passersby to share their good cheer. And most of them, like the old bum, do.

It's a mark of the mural's impact that it has been "hit" with graffiti only three times since work began last summer, the most recent obscene, spray-painted comment done months ago before the portrait began to take final shape.

Nearly \$2,500 in nickels, dimes and quarters, many from children, has been dropped into the bucket the unsalaried artists hung on a tree, and the manager of the hot dog restaurant across the way has set the artists up for lunch almost every day for the past ten months.

"It's a welcomed sight," says Wallace Lau, the manager of the

Lucky Dog outlet that shares the alley space with "Oakland's Portrait." "They've improved the whole area, and people go out of their way to come and appreciate the work."

Lau is so enthusiastic about the mural that besides giving the artists free lunches he's hung a blueprint of the sketch for the mural and a smiling photograph of its designer in his restaurant.

Daniel Galvez, the artist whose idea it was to paint the portrait, is a small, swarthy man with a grin that lights up his whole face. He's delighted with the kind of reception the mural has received.

"We've had people come from all over to see it. They like it. I can tell by their smiles. And that's enough to say our art is working," he said recently, sitting with his co-workers Juan Karlos and Keith Sklar at a table in Lau's restaurant.

With the mural only days from completion, the three reflected on the ten months of work that had gone into the portrait.

The impetus had come from the Alameda County Neighborhood Arts Program, which with the city of Oakland was seeking artists to create a publicly-funded downtown mural.

"It couldn't be a political, economic or social statement. It had to be a 'safe' wall. So Daniel came up with the idea of doing people," Juan Karlos recalls.

Out of seven or eight possible sites, they chose the Liberty House wall because, Galvez says, "We liked the feeling of closeness. You couldn't get away from the wall. I wanted the intimacy and the confrontation of these gradiose figures."

Galvez, who has worked as a studio portraitist as well as a muralist, knew the kinds of people he wanted to include in "Oakland's Portrait." So, armed with a camera, he went looking for them: a school teacher with her student, a female friend who is a construction worker, a blind woman who works downtown. A man who "just came jogging by one day before the drawing was finished" was invited to be in the portrait.

"And of course," Galvez adds with a grin, "We all painted ourselves in it."

Using slides of his subjects, Galvez arranged the figures to his liking and made a line drawing to scale of the entire project. Another slide was made of the drawing and then, working at night and using a projector, the artists enlarged the figures and transferred them onto the wall. The sketching, which would have taken months using the old cross grid method, was done in six evenings.

But by then Galvez and Karlos had run into a major problem. The CETA contract that was to have paid their salaries had expired. Although the county and city still had funds to pay for the paints and scaffolding, the artists would have to work for free or give up the project.

To Oakland's benefit, they kept working and were soon joined by Keith Sklar, who had just moved to the Bay Area from the east coast where he had painted murals in Washington, D.C., and Connecticut.

Sklar shrugs when asked how he could afford such a long-range gratuitous commitment to a city he hardly knew.

"You rarely make money beyond living wages on a mural anyway. This kind of art form is much less respected in this country than in other countries, like Mexico," he says.

Galvez considers the mural "my studio—and an artist spends his life in a studio, sometimes making nothing. We can't sell this, but we get recognition from it."

"It sells us," Juan interjects.

All three are hoping "Oakland's Portrait" will lead to other, more lucrative contracts but so far, says Galvez, "We haven't caught the big fish yet."

He has had a couple of commissions for portraits from people who have seen and liked "Oakland's Portrait," but mostly Galvez and his co-workers have had to depend on the small change that is tossed into their bucket and on donations from a few supportive people like Wallace Lau.

The L. J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation gave the artists \$1,500, Liberty House donated \$300 and a Halloween benefit sponsored by A Central Place raised \$900. The artists have also sold about 75 blueprints of their working sketch at \$10 each and six framed, limited edition sepia versions at \$50 each.

When all that ran out, they took a break from the mural and painted houses and signs, which stretched the mural project to ten months instead of five or six.

With few monetary rewards, the real benefit in the project for the artists has been the interaction between them, the individual knowledge they shared, Karlos says. A fabric painter who had never worked in the photorealism style of the mural, Karlos says he thinks the experience will help him get other, similar jobs in the future.

The delays may have had other benefits as well. People who watched the mural slowly evolve took on a proprietary interest toward the "Portrait."

Some of them suggested subjects to be included in the "Portrait." Others just came to watch the work, passing their lunch breaks on the benches in the alley. One unknown admirer carefully erased a charcoal sketch of a subject the artists had made, obviously thinking the scribbled drawing the work of a graffitist.

"The wall has been good bridging the gap between the artist and the community," Karlos says, "Because they saw us working."

"And they watched us make mistakes," Sklar adds.

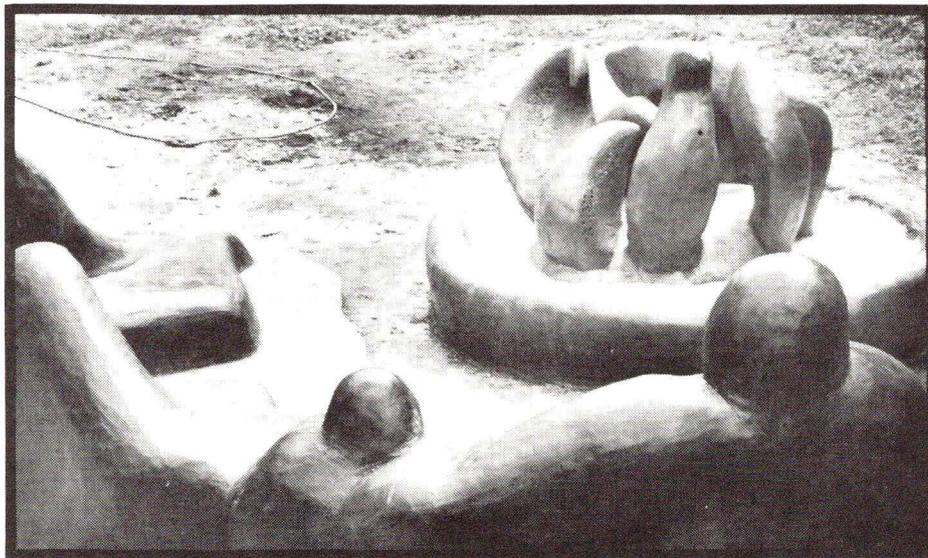
Galvez believes the mural has been favorably received because "it counters mass advertising, those huge photorealist billboards—here was real quality 'advertising' with no strings attached."

Some of the people whose portraits make up "Oakland's Portrait" have come by to watch the progress, and all of them are expected to show up this Saturday for a public celebration marking the completion of the "Portrait."

There will be music, dancing and entertainment in the alley from 1 to 4 pm after a formal dedication of the mural by Mayor Lionel Wilson. If it's anything like the Halloween benefit, it should be a lively affair.

"Out of all the murals I've worked on," Galvez says, "This has far surpassed the others in terms of feedback. That's what's kept us going."

The Montclarion  
June 17, 1981



**A Chicago Mural Group project** led by Lynn Takata and John Pitman Weber with Frenchy Le Tendre, José Gonzalez & CETA team. At Logan Square Boys and Girls Club, sponsored by Youth Service Project Incorporated with funds from Dept. of Human Resources, Chicago, and grants to CMG by Chicago Council on Fine Arts, Illinois Arts Council and NEA Expansion Arts. Concrete from Material Service Corporation.

The sculptures are to be the focus at a landscaped garden-sitting park, unfortunately fenced in and only partially accessible to the neighborhood. This fact led to some conflict with the Boys' Club directors over control of the project on their property as well as to the isolation of the process from the community. Landscaping, which remains to be done, was designed by a local landscape architect. We hope this would be our dreamed of chance to "collaborate" but no such thing occurred. At any rate it was not the collaboration we had dreamed of.

Technical: Foundation of 40" deep cassions, each with a bundle of re-bar, spaced at 3' to 4' intervals poured into post holes, capped with a 4" to 6" pad reinforced with 4" sidewalk mesh. Armature of re-bar covered with 4" mesh and 1/2" mesh. Concrete free formed (hand applied)— No. 2 sand approximately 2:1 ration with portland cement with albitol additive. Finish layer with color and DARAX added (the DARAX adds air bubbles to the concrete, called "air entrained." The air-entrained mix is said to be more resistant to spauling due to freeze-thaw cycles because of greater resiliance. Approximate strength of 2,000psi at 10% air content. (The air-entrainment can only be done with a mixer.) Frenchy came down from Wisconsin to be our welder. So you see, we learned a lot.

Most of the time was spent building up the armature, a tedious task once the re-bars are shaped. Day after day of tying mesh. The cementing was exciting and fast. Cast concrete sculpture presents the same problem for sustaining the interest of a team—most of the time goes into preparation, with little result to show until near the end.

Other projects: Caton and Jones on 71st and Jeffrey, after being run off another site by homeowners alarmed about "slum" art; Lynn Takata continuing work at Goldblatt School (westside.)

Three areas divided \$100,000 in community development cash for arts projects of all kinds, to individuals for work with youth, maximum \$3,000 grant. One mural funded in each area. Program expands to five areas next year with \$150,000.

October 22-23 Conference in Chicago on Art, Architecture, and Community at Circle Campus of University of Illinois will involve some of the muralists (Weiss, Weber, Gonzales, Bechy, others.)

## Popular Arts Workshop Lansing, Michigan

The Popular Arts Workshop PAW remains stalled with large segments of the depressed Michigan economy. Its 1981 "Downtown Walls" project to create a series of graphic walls within a one mile radius of the state capitol dome wound down to a back burner position when its "seed money" request for funding became a victim of the state legislature's budget cut of the Michigan Council for the Arts.

The serious project to provide jobs for artists and training for youth was twelfth from the cut-off line in the Arts Council's priorities. Most established funded groups took an across the line but back as well. P.A.W. has never received any state or federal funding.

The process of organizing the project continues with the monthly meeting of a Downtown Walls Task Force comprised of local people interested in urban environmental beautification. As of this writing, it looks like one wall could be completed this season, through a project dollar appeal to get it going this year. A 28' x 200' wall has been contracted but no financial support is available from the owner, Lansing Arts Council.

P.A.W.'s initial project, Turner Minipark, 1974-6 (2 x 80' x 120'.) a three dimensional participatory street corner, began showing its six years of use, and a neighborhood fund-raising campaign is being mounted to create a "mural maintenance fund."

Vandals spray bombed the P.A.W. Ethnic Festival Mural 1977-78 (28 x 44') in downtown Lansing's Riverfront Park on April Fool's Day. The 44-figure mural depicting ethnicity of the community was extensively defaced.

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Among the figures obliterated was Lansing area native Malcolm X. Other figures were also sprayed, scraped and hammered on, and physical deterioration of the bridge abutment upon which the mural is painted continued to worsen from the effects of salting the roads during the winter months.

P.A.W. continued working with the North Lansing Community Association to develop a summer youth project in cooperation with a local youth service bureau, the Youth Development Corporation. It was submitted to the state office of Criminal Justice Programs as a block grant project. The local police objected in the city sign-off process, because it would take \$21,000 from the total they could possibly get for their operations. Community pressure strategies are underway at this time to try to get over this hassle.

P.A.W.'s efforts in Lansing, although not thematically political, have always been very political.

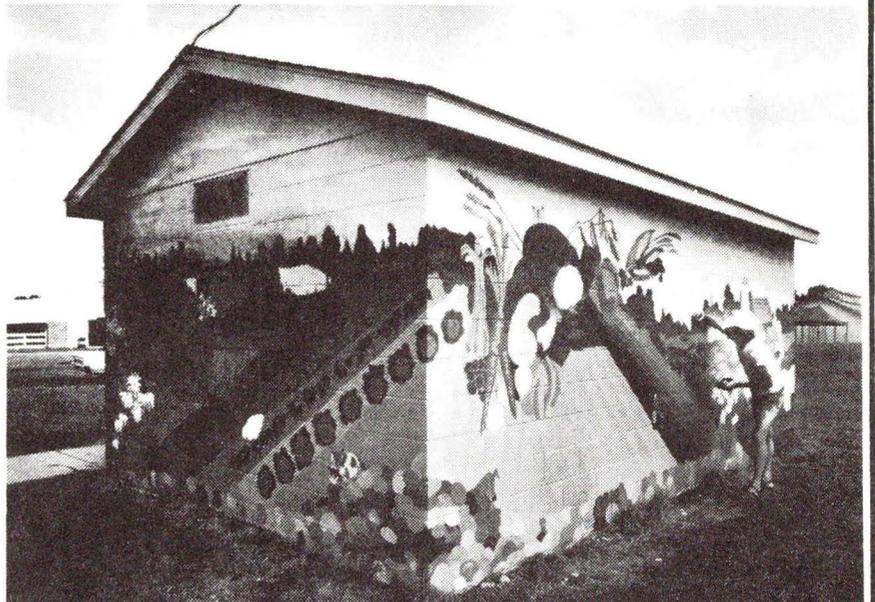
We are currently documenting our collective efforts in a slide show, Public Artworks—1975-80 with funds received from the Lansing Federated Cultural Appeal, a group of the large local arts groups organized to corner the local dollars and resources. The Appeal supports the local arts bureaucracy and doles out small grants to the area's community based arts groups. The slide show will document P.A.W.'s dozen arts projects in Lansing, Flint, Mason, and Onondaga, Michigan. P.A.W., P.O. Box 15052, Lansing MI. 48901.

## Mason's "Murinal"

A gala champaign dedication, August 21st, marked the completion of the Ingham County Fairgrounds "Murinal."

Over 75 community supporters of public art attended the summer evening event, which featured entertainment by "Ready for the Blues," refreshments, a slide show, project exhibit and talks by mural team members. The completed artwork was received by Richard Cheney, President of the Fair Board, which had provided the resources to make the project possible.

Sponsored by the Ingham County Arts Commission, the "Murinal" was created in a public art process which included the cooperative design and rendering by a team of local artists and interested community people. The "Murinal" began last spring when P.A.W. member Gary Andrews approached the County Arts Commission regarding bids for painting at the Fairgrounds. . . .



A public art wall mural/demonstration project, sponsored by the Ingham County Arts Commission and supported by a grant from the Ingham County Fair Board.

Photo by Greg DeRuiter

As long as I can remember, I always wanted to be an artist. I received encouragement from home, had a wonderful high school art teacher, and was further trained at Cooper Union in New York City and Cranbrook in Michigan. I pursued many interests — graphics, photography, sculpture, architecture, ceramics, and art education. All these experiences influenced my direction toward creating art in public places. Working and living in the Boston area since 1972, more time is devoted to my own work and I relate to school and community groups as an artist in residence.

My technique employs a medium of concrete and mosaic; I embed a variety of materials in concrete using color and texture, sometimes carving into the concrete or casting with it. This medium offers many opportunities for people of all ages to make clay pieces, collect objects, and contribute other skills in a collaborative concrete collage. I grew up in Southern California and, as a teenager, discovered Watts Tower. This beautiful folk art dream palace made a lasting impression and is probably the reason mosaic is my medium of expression. Because of a deep interest in folk and children's art, I have divided my time between my own projects in this technique and directing projects with community groups. This kind of participation promotes a shared sense of ownership and gives groups a chance to contribute in a meaningful way to their own community.

I first began using concrete while working with children in a neighborhood art program at the Henry Street Settlement in New York City. I embedded children's clay pieces in such projects as outdoor murals, play sculpture gardens, and paved areas. This made it possible to bring the spirit and delightful joy of their imaginations into the reality of their otherwise drab neighborhoods.

There are many different approaches in the organization and planning of a mosaic project. Variables such as size, age, ethnicity, special group interests, and the location of the mural placement are important considerations. Each new project is another exciting



*Installation of 'Betance Mural' at Villa Victoria*

adventure; each neighborhood group, different and unique. The important challenge is to integrate the art work with the needs of the community and the architectural environment. I feel it is important to work with architects in the planning stage to integrate the art work; I wish there were more opportunities for this to happen.

In creating the Judge Baker Clinic Mural at Children's Hospital in Boston, it was imperative to involve the staff and the children undergoing treatment in changing their environment. They shared in making and collecting the objects which were put in the mural; the bas-relief became a visual and kinetic adventure. Viewers could see

themselves in mirrors, find recognizable objects such as magnets, pennies, marbles, words, seashells, or just enjoy the sight and touch of whimsy in clay pieces made by children. The tactile quality of the medium provokes the viewer to participate.

The Betances mural is composed of several hundred clay pieces made by children, adults, handicapped, and elderly residents of the Villa Victoria housing development. Located in the Hispanic section of Boston's South End, the mural commemorates a patriotic leader, the Abraham Lincoln of Puerto Rico, Dr. Ramon Emetrio Betances. The mural is ideally located within Betances Plaza, the physical and symbolic Hispanic cultural center of the community. Before beginning work on this mural, I went to Puerto Rico to gain a better understanding of the culture and history of this community. This was an invaluable experience. I worked with the residents, developed the overall design, unified the hundreds of clay pieces, and sculpted the portrait of Betances.

My largest work to date is the Celebration of the Underground at Park Street Subway Station in Boston. The mural, commemorating the opening of the first American subway in 1897, is a bas-relief of carved and textured colored concrete embedded with old trolley parts, tools related to subway construction, seashells, rocks, bones, ceramic pieces, and colored glass tesserae. The mural was made in 128 sections, is 110 feet (33.0 m) long, weighs over 12 tons (10,908 kg), and took more than one year to complete.

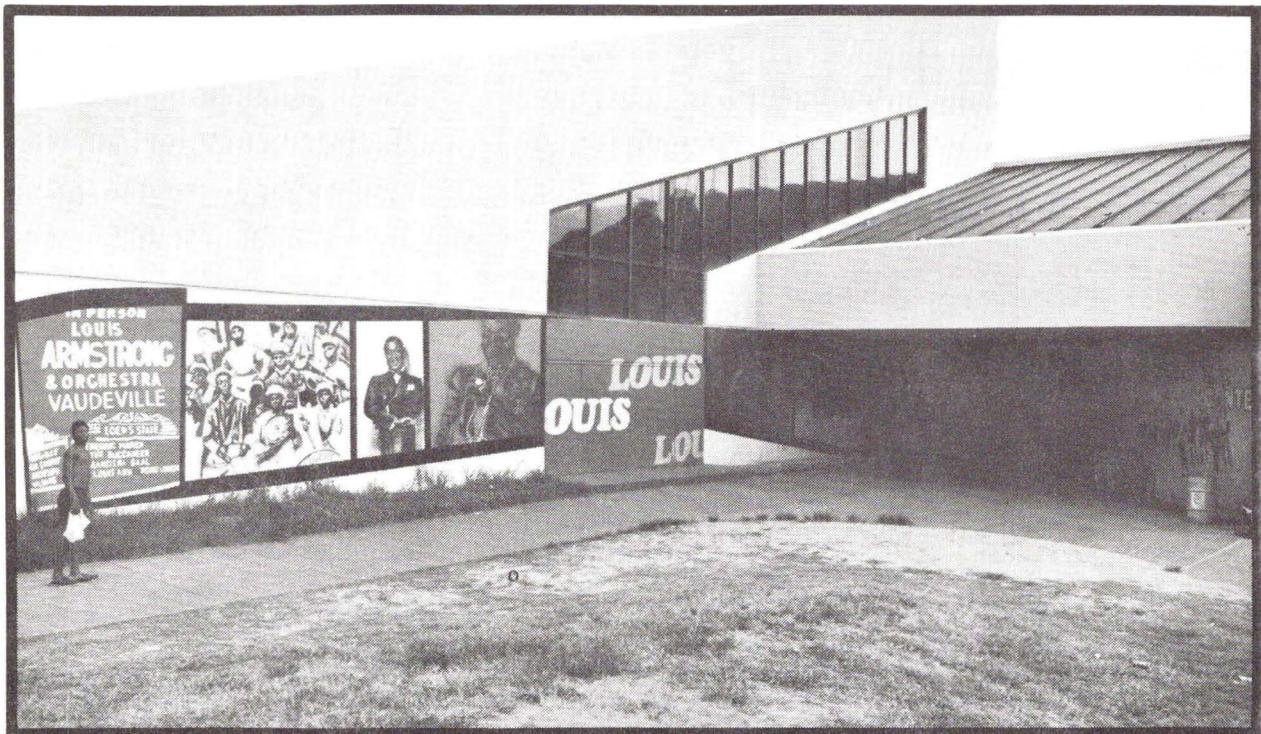
Working on the subway mural presented a completely different challenge involving a tremendous amount of research on subways and transportation, as well as the history of the site. I rode every subway line and became acquainted with motormen and mechanics. All these experiences went into this work—a mural to celebrate the underground and engage the passersby in a captivating experience during their wait below ground.

Concrete strengthens with age. Projects utilizing this material can be made for

interior or exterior spaces and the sun, rain, and snow enhance their beauty. The medium, both simple and complex, is virtually indestructible and exists well in an environment that allows viewers to experience its tactile nature.

The strength and richness of what I do is dependent upon the participation, mutual trust, and understanding of many people. As an artist, my goals are to enhance the quality of my own expressions in the medium and to work with architects and planners in the development of more opportunities for artists like myself who wish to create art with and for people—improving the quality of life for all of us.

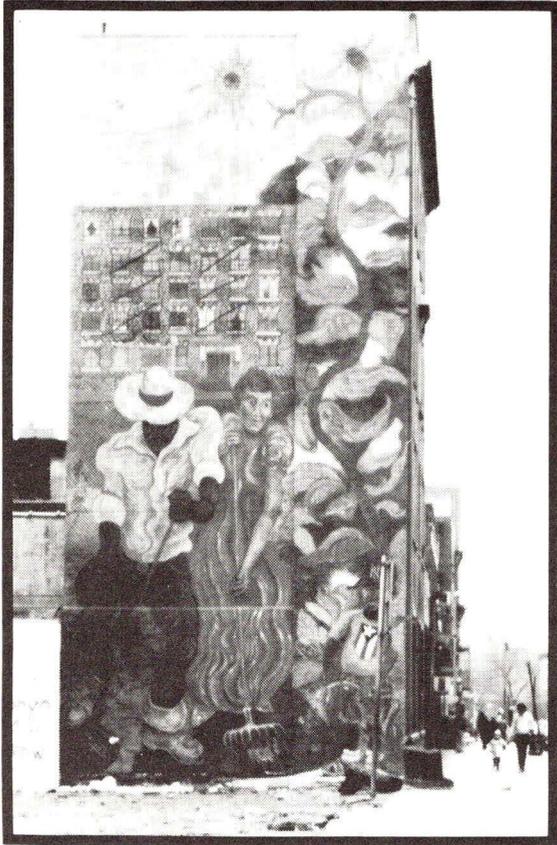
*Lilli Ann Killen Rosenberg*



Richard Thomas, *Louis ouis Lou*, 1979 Treme Community Center, New Orleans. Photo: Alan Barnett.

## 44 Cityarts Summer 1980

This past year, Cityarts sponsored murals on walls as diverse as an underground tunnel at Bellevue Hospital, a storefront in Oceanhill-Brownsville, and a park watchtower within view of boats touring Manhattan. We completed 6 murals this summer and 2 workshops, bringing our total projects for 1979-80 to 14—far more than ever before. Our commitment to community responsive art continues with themes related to neighborhood history, unity, and revitalization at the fore.

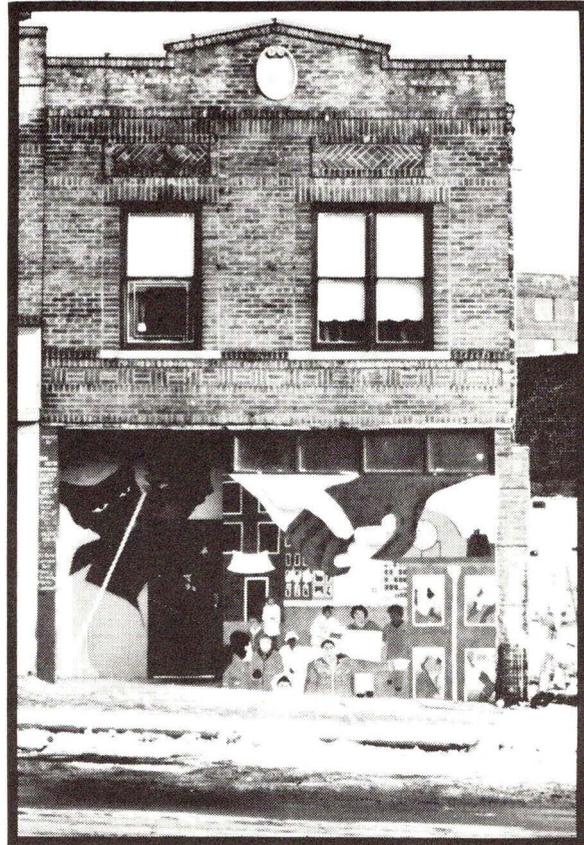


Cityarts Workshop, Inc. 1980 Robert Espier

### Unidos Venceremos 50' x 25'

East 103rd St. between Lexington and Park Avenues

A community park, playground and garden are planned for the empty lot which this mural overlooks. The land is owned by the people of 103rd Street as a public land trust, the first in East Harlem. Appropriately, the mural depicts residents of the community at work in their garden. The composition of the mural had to accommodate the irregular surface of the wall which divided it into two vertical sections, the right projecting out further than the left. The left part shows garden workers in the foreground and a familiar cityscape in the background. The narrower right section is dominated by a bold sunflower both unifying and enlivening the composition. References to Puerto Rican culture can be found throughout the mural. The mural was co-directed by Vivian Linares and Manny Vega.



Cityarts Workshop, Inc. 1980 Robert Espier

### Rebuilding the Community in Unity and Struggle

10' x 20'

317 Rockaway Avenue, Brooklyn, New York

This transformation of a storefront housing office in Oceanhill-Brownsville was co-sponsored by the local Tenant Association. Project Director Mariko Lockhart, with a crew of neighborhood youth, painted a mural that traces the history of this community's efforts to rehabilitate its housing. Tenants are shown in the 1960's demonstrating for their rights and in the 1980's moving into newly renovated apartments. In a reference to local job training programs, both men and women are depicted with their construction tools. By utilizing recessed wall space at the storefront's entrance, the mural incorporates the building's structure and takes on a three-dimensional character.



Church Avenue Mural 17' x 54'  
1711 Church Avenue, Brooklyn, New York

Cityarts Workshop, Inc. 1980 Robert Espier

Church Avenue is enjoying a renaissance as a bustling commercial street, and this mural is its symbol. The Church Avenue Merchants Block Association and community leaders requested a mural that would document the unique history and present the multi-ethnic character of this neighborhood. The Flatbush Historical Society researched archival materials for Project Director Joe Stephenson who incorporated images from them in the mural. The Dutch Vanderveer windmill, turn of the century ice skaters in Prospect Park, a famous art deco apartment facade, a typical Victorian home and the Flatbush Dutch Reformed Church all make their appearance. Unusually located above the entrance to the "D" Church Avenue Subway station, the mural can be seen by more than 10,000 pedestrians every day.

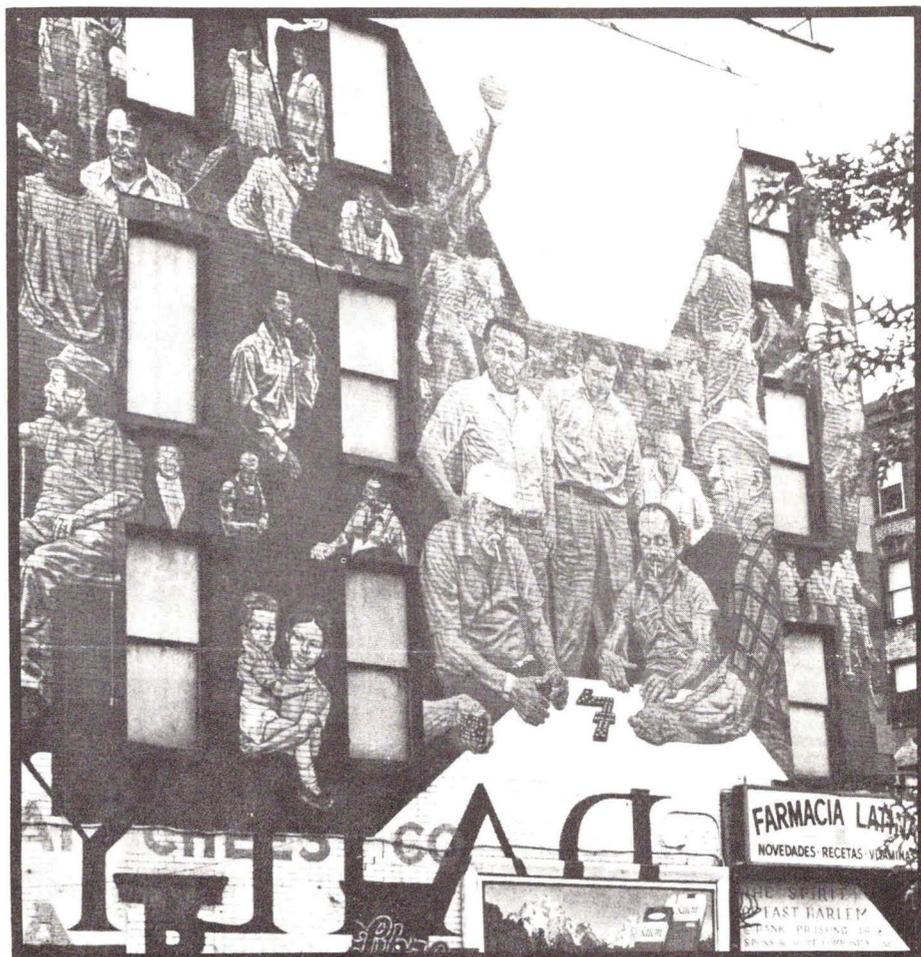
## WALL PAINTINGS BY HANK PRUSSING



1603 11th Avenue  
Brooklyn, N.Y., 11215  
Phone: (212) 788-2389

When a strong affinity exists between a work of art and its surroundings, that work can be called a mural. Much more than simple adornment, the mural actually draws its visual statements from the very structure about it. For example, the ambient colors, materials, proportions and design detailing of a room are played with or played against the mural's form and content. Also involved are less tangible presences like the room's function, its user's goals & self-image, and any relevant links to the surrounding community.

Each work pictured here was created for a unique client with unique design requirements. Fresh challenge is the delight of a muralist's work. Fresh visual statements, specially created, are the delights of a muralist's clients.



"The Spirit of East Harlem", corner of Lexington Ave. & 104th st., Manhattan



## 'Silhouette Technique' Used On School Mural

Students in the twelve grades at Burnt River school completed recently the huge mural "Everybody's Somebody" and dedication was held Friday at 12:50 at the school. The mural, a portion of which is shown at left, depicts the student activities and was done by silhouette method under the direction of Faylinda Kodis from Corvallis who is spending nine weeks at the school as artist-in-residence. The mural took five weeks to complete and is sponsored and funded by Eastern Oregon Arts Council and the Burnt River school. At right, Tami Sullivan, representing the student council, Melvin Munn, representing the school, and Gordon Schroeder, school board chairman, sign a contract stating that the mural will be maintained for five years before painting over it. The 60x9-ft. painting is done in many colors with life-size figures.

Ms. Kodis is teaching basic drawing at the Burnt River school and a number of the students' pencil sketches were also on display.

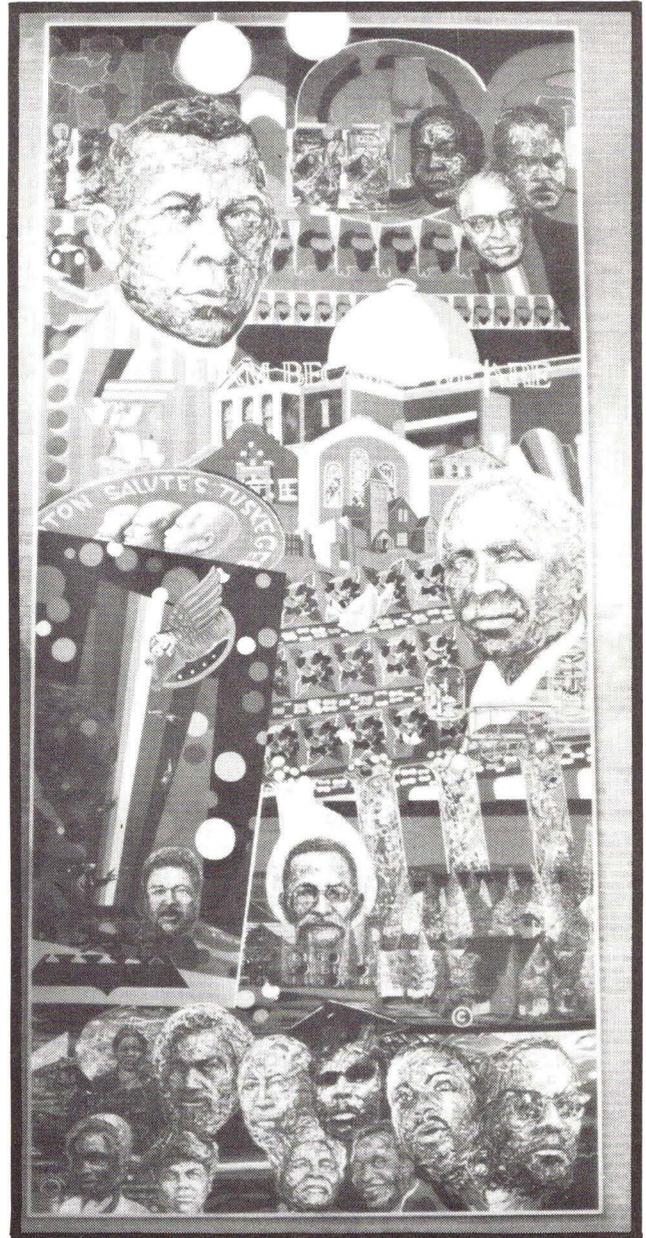
The school, located at Unity, is a very modern and attractive facility and the mural which is located on the hallway wall facing the library in the elementary section is welcome addition to the decor.

*Pioneer Express*, Feb. 19, 1981. Photo: Shelley Reilly

## Baltimore

Beautiful Walls for Baltimore. Since August, 1975, the City's only mural programs has worked with community leaders, neighborhood groups and public institutions to produce over seventy murals. The project has utilized the talents of close to fifty unemployed artists and has not only visibly enriched the City scape, but also brought a sense of pride to urban renewal areas by creating a sense of community togetherness and art to many.

Mayor's Advisory Committee on Art and Culture  
Baltimore, Maryland



Nelson Stevens, *Centennial Vision*, 1980, Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama. Photo: Alan Barnett.

# PRO-GRAFFITI

Community Murals has published articles from other sources about graffiti. The letter below, from Metallic Avau, publisher of *Aerosol* in Brussels, Belgium, criticizes us for going along with those who have a narrow view of graffiti. As we mention in this issue's editorial, we do not necessarily agree with articles we publish. We think it is often more important to show muralists everywhere what other muralists are thinking than simply to print our own ideas. Still, Metallic Avau's letter raises some important questions, and we do wish to make an editorial comment about the issue of graffiti:

Avau is right that we must avoid elitism in our attitudes toward graffiti. This does not mean we cannot encourage more proficient technical expression. It does mean that we should not cut ourselves off from others, especially now from graffiti makers. In fact, we urge all readers to join with graffiti makers and to challenge those who would encourage elitist, competitive division among us over this issue.

The main point is this: at this time "anti-graffiti" is a code for right-wing, racist, anti-youth-of-color repression. Graffiti is being used as an excuse to hound Third World youth, to harass and intimidate, and to establish and increase a police presence in poor neighborhoods. But many residents in those very neighborhoods also feel that graffiti is ugly, that it hurts their living space, that it turns a poor neighborhood into a slum. Often, graffiti defaces homes people have spent years working for. We might agree that graffiti could be an effective political tool if done with more consideration for where it was put and how it was designed. Police use these understandable neighborhood objections as an excuse, and the youth doing the graffiti are often not aware of such issues, or do not care. Perhaps it is easiest to understand if our homes are not the ones being marked up.

It is a difficult problem, and its very existence is certainly a symptom of deeper, underlying causes such as frustration at lack of opportunity, education, privilege, and other outlets for expression. Still, whatever else it may be, graffiti is a political battleground between right and left, conservative and progressive. The objection is that graffiti challenges the institution of private property by defacing it. Graffiti's foes never discuss the much greater defacement of human lives resulting from private property, e.g., real estate speculation which drives working people out of their homes.

Perhaps typical of the way in which authorities fail to come to grips with the sources of the problem is the recent call on several fronts to define graffiti as a serious crime, as if putting youths in jail will solve either their problems or anyone else's. In an article by Mike Mewhinney in the Sept. 27 San Francisco *Progress* newspaper, the author quotes Bruce Goldstein, "who chairs the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce's Crime Prevention Committee," as saying, without any support whatsoever, that "graffiti generally starts with a small marking pen and then is painted on with spray paint. Next, said Goldstein, the trashing and window breaking begins and finally arson." Arson is a crime often perpetrated by building owners who want to destroy old buildings in order to pave the way for new and more lucrative sources of income in poor neighborhoods. To suggest that its beginnings are in graffiti is absurd, but such viciousness is being taken seriously by governments.

In the magazine *Aerosol*, which I have published for four years, I defend street art and thus, naturally mural art, but also, and with desperate eagerness, graffiti.

After the appearance in *El Tecolote* of the article titled "Anti-Graffiti Campaign," reprinted in *CMM* I would like to share some reflections.

Already in previous issues of *Murals Newsletter* I noticed that you repeated at length the generalized opinion according to which graffiti is a blemish, an act of vandalism, or at the limit of acceptability, an expression and nothing else.

I don't see how those who struggle for community muralism place only mural art on a pedestal. Why this aversion to graffiti, which is a mode of expression in its own right, and often an art, in this same way as other mural arts? What I am suggesting does not concern only me, of course; fortunately I am not alone. It is true that we are not numerous who share this belief, but that is not important.

Graffiti is incontestably different from mural art by virtue of its form and the approach to the surface, but is this not at the basis of all mural expression? This spontaneous form, often savagely vandalist, I admit, is it not also a poetry of the oppressed, a cry of the rejected? In fact, the only artistic language of a whole part of our contemporaries, and not only of the youngest.

The signs, slogans and other logos which the representatives of this culture trace on the walls with such spirit, are they merely the results of an exclusively barbarous pleasure? Honestly, I don't think so.

I have been able to appreciate "on the street" the extraordinary graffiti phenomenon in its American context as well as its European, and it seems that we are witnessing a veritable explosion of repressed sensation. The vase overflows, and I think that we still measure with difficulty the invigorating scope of what has been occurring right before our eyes for more than a decade; and what a privilege it is for us to witness it.

I admit that many graffiti would be better placed somewhere else. I acknowledge that it is not all in good taste, far from it. But the other plastic arts, of easel or not, are they always of the best quality and highest taste? Consequently, permit me to insist on a fact which seems essential to me: it is necessary that we stop police repression towards graffiti and graffiti makers—as if it had something to do with a flagrant legal offense. Truly, one has the impression of being a witness of a witchhunt of the worst kind of McCarthyism.

Instead of considering graffiti as an Egyptian plague, I wonder if it would not be more worthwhile to consider a radically different approach, more comprehensive and open, not of graffiti as a problem, but of the social phenomena and their artistic extensions?

I believe that the primary job of publications which are interested in mural expression, which do not "run in the streets," must be to work for a change of mentality.

Metallic Avau (Brussels)  
Translation: Marc Zussman

The following press release shows how proposed legislation works—and moves us a step closer to a police state. Youth putting “placas” on walls “defaces private property,” is condemned without mention of businesses, architects, planners who deface entire cities. The inversion of priorities leads to legislation that makes it a bit easier to restrict First Amendment rights, and one reader of **CMM** adds that it is “ridiculous to criminalize spray paint and create juvenile delinquents for doing calligraphy!”

We agree. The issue is serious. Its implications **very** important for all of us.

## ALATORRE HELPS LOCAL RESIDENTS FIGHT GRAFFITI

Assemblyman Richard Alatorre (D-Los Angeles) is joining local residents in the fight against ugly graffiti that defaces public and private property.

Over 100 Elysian Valley residents recently joined Alatorre in painting over graffiti marring underpasses of the Golden State Freeway. They included the young and old, retired persons and youth group members....from all races and backgrounds.

With encouragement from Alatorre's office, the paint was supplied free by the Los Angeles City Bureau of Street Maintenance.

Recently, the Assembly passed and sent to the Senate AB 1675, Alatorre's bill to reduce graffiti by subjecting adults and minors who carry cans of spray paint for illegal uses to new legal penalties. AB 1675 would make it a crime to sell such cans to children under 18 and create a new misdemeanor punishable by a maximum \$500 fine and six months in jail.

The Sacramento Bee • Wednesday, July 1, 1981 A11

## Spray Paint Crime Bill Gains

### Associated Press

Adults or children who carry around large cans of spray paint to write on walls could be arrested under a bill approved Tuesday by the Assembly.

The bill, Assembly Bill 1675 by Assemblyman Richard Alatorre, D-Los Angeles, would create new misdemeanors, punishable by a maximum \$500 fine and six months in jail, relating to aerosol paint containers.

It would be a crime to sell such cans, over six ounces, to children under 18. It would also be a crime for those under 18 to buy large spray paint cans.

The bill would also make it illegal for anyone to possess a spray paint can for the purpose of defacing property while in any public park or recreation area.

The bill was sent to the Senate by a 57-11 vote.

## Fran Valesco Notes on her Graphic Work

Graffiti is often part of the process of muralists. Whether they cover it, utilize it, praise it or try to get rid of it, they cannot ignore it.

In 5 years of painting murals I have spent much time in the proximity of graffiti and the people who insisted on recording their presence everywhere. As a result of this constant exposure, elements of graffiti began to appear in my personal graphic work. My current prints are combinations of xerox, silkscreen and etching. Images of animals (mostly cows, birds and fish) are incorporated with fences, walls, and writing, especially the graffiti I see on the walls around me.

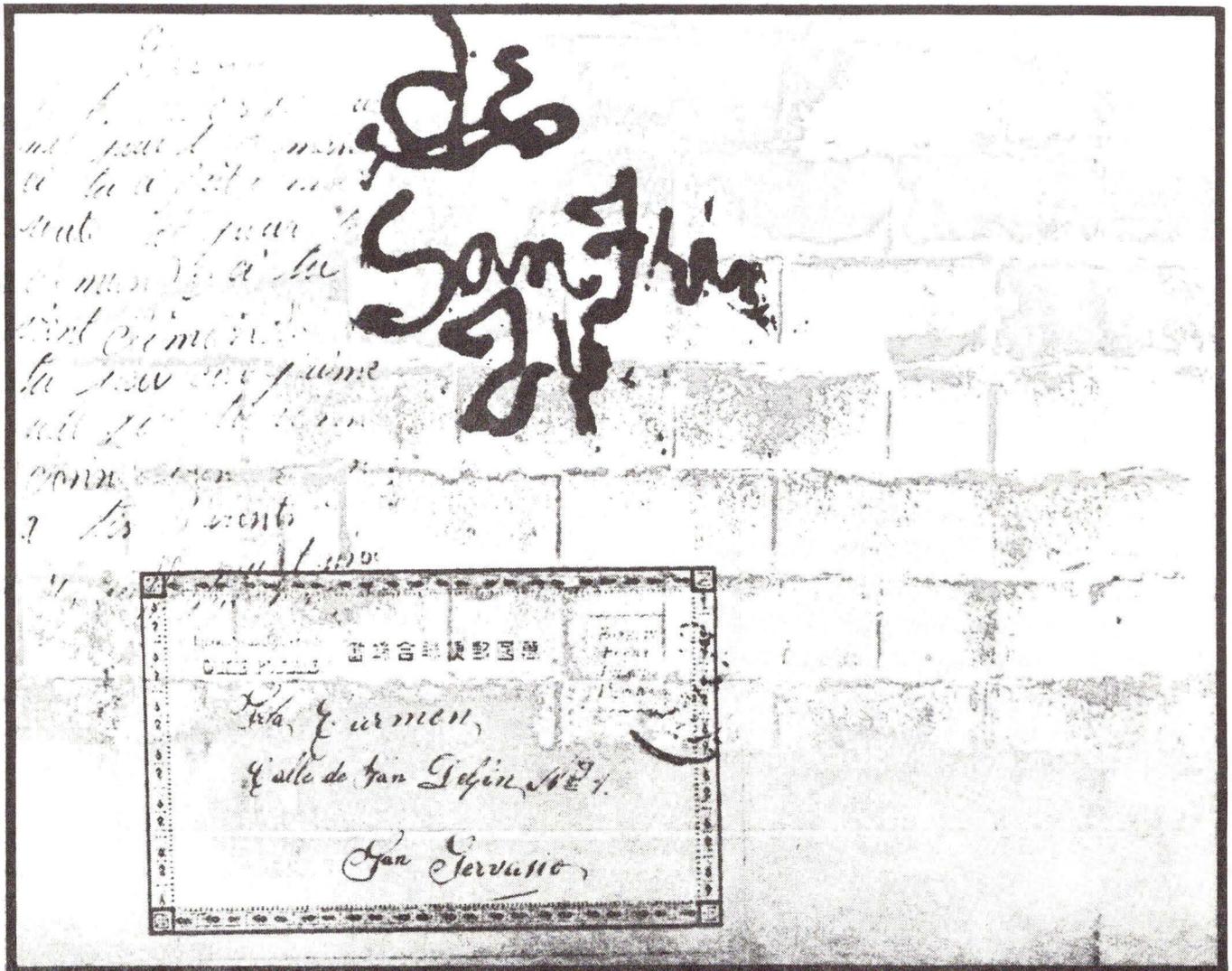
In the spring of 1980 I had an exhibition of my work at Sonoma State University as part of the dedication to the Ruben Salazar Library. During the reception I had a conversation with a local Chicano artist who was a student at the university.

The first question he asked me was why I used graffiti in my work at all. I replied that I thought it was beautiful, an important statement by part of the population, and it had a great deal of personal meaning to me, having worked as muralist for several years.

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He then launched into a long explanation of what it meant to him to be a graffiti artist. He said he did it mostly between the ages of 13 to 18. It was an important expression of his manhood; there were whole schools of style. If you liked the way your friend made a certain letter, you would incorporate it into your writing. His younger brothers and cousins would imitate his style, improve on it. Then he would do the same with them, so that it was constantly evolving. He made an important distinction between placas (putting up your name or your street or gang) and just writing anything on the wall. You could be proud of your placas.

When he was about 18, he said he began to realize that people put a lot of money and care into their property and felt that he ought to respect it more. Then he stopped making graffiti. I questioned him about what he thought the value of art school would be for himself, a young artist. He answered that self-expression was still important. He wished to keep his essential Chicano spirit but wanted to expand.

I later saw his work. When he signed his paintings, he used a graffiti style for his name.

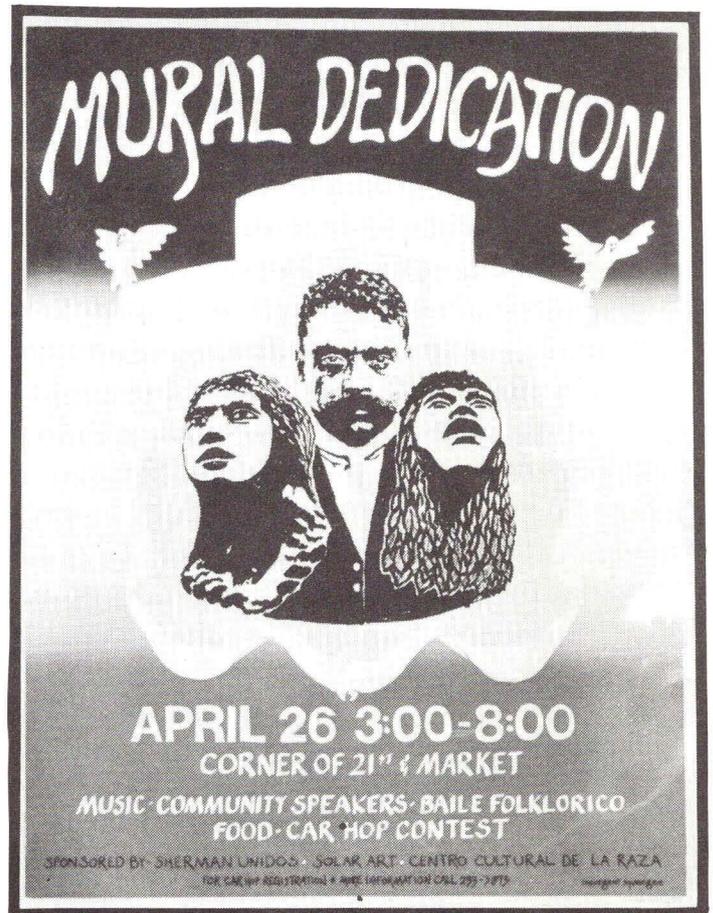
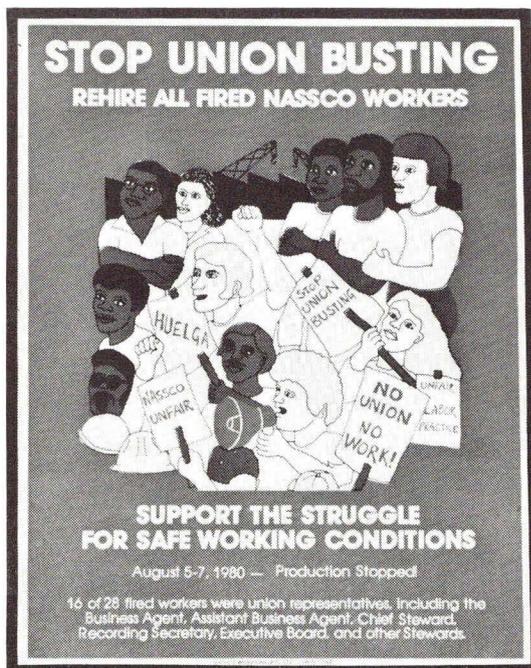


# 50 SILKSCREENING AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

One of the most depressing aspects of life as we knew it in the late 70's was the lack of stimulating and inspiring artistic expression. There were, of course — <sup>exceptions</sup> The Tom Robinson Band, Barbara Kopple's "Harlan County", and Holly Near, to name a few — but they were the exception rather than the rule. Despite all the inherent contradictions of the 60's "counterculture", it at least provided an environment for the joyous integration of one's artistic and political values.

In the 70's, progressive art, along with much of the left political rhetoric, seemingly disappeared. Yet if one looks closely at the profusion of music, murals, dancing, theatre and poetry created on a grassroots level, the signs of a new artistic awakening are there.

The connection to politics is there, too; though often a politics more defined as regional, local and community-oriented. Of the many media available to artists, silkscreening is a natural tool for social change work. Historically, it has excellent credentials. Countless public health and job safety materials were printed in the late '30's under the Work Progress Administration's Federal Art Project, which served to raise silkscreening from its lowly status as a commercial art to a medium accepted as a fine art. In the 50's, sales of silkscreen posters helped to finance the Cuban revolution; its posters later became the model for the best of socialist art. The sixties witnessed a profusion of stunning works, from the agitprop of the Paris Student Movement to Sister Mary Corita's stunning posters for peace. It is not by accident that silkscreening has been embraced by so many socially conscious artists, for it is a highly democratic art form, easily accessible to people with little money or technical skill.



Simply put, silkscreening is a printing process in which ink is squeezed through a fabric stretched on a frame. The image is produced by a stencil which is adhered to the fabric and only allows ink to pass through in predetermined areas. Stencils may be made by several methods, ranging from a blockout applied directly to the fabric to one cut on a separate sheet and then applied. Stencils may even be prepared photographically. The advantage of a silkscreen over a simple cardboard cut-out stencil is that the stretched fabric allows the separate stencil pieces to remain spatially fixed, so that there is no design constraint to make the stencil pieces touch each other for support.

Silkscreen printing is relatively cheap because it relies mostly on labor rather than equipment. This guarantees a low start-up cost and freedom from worrying that delicate or expensive equipment might be damaged. Even with the rising cost of materials, a basic printing setup can be assembled for as little as \$25.00. Silkscreening is capable of printing almost any size image on virtually any flat material. The color range is infinite, as colors may be easily mixed. Its primary drawback is that, as a hand process, large numbers of products take time and are exhausting.

## APPLICATION

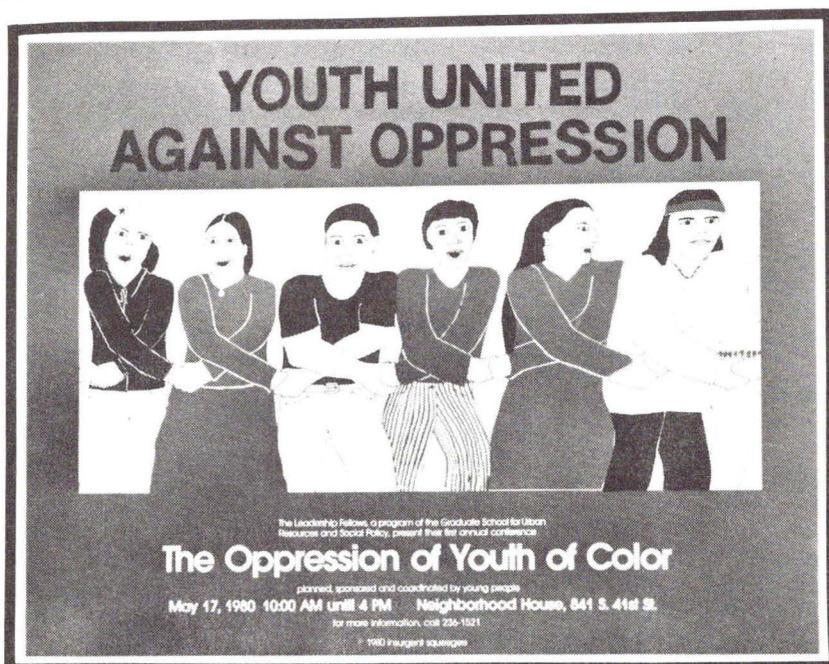
There are many ways that silkscreening can be used to develop communities and empower the individuals within them. The most obvious is through publicity of local events. With bright colors and a large format, posters for any event gain a degree of beauty and visibility otherwise unaffordable. Prints may also be sold as a fundraising device — posters, t-shirts and bumperstickers can be sold for several times the cost of materials. If posters are done well enough, people will keep them long after the original event has happened, thereby contributing to the recognition of a community's own history. Finally, silkscreening is a craft with unlimited potential for aesthetic and technical development. The learning of those skills can serve as an invaluable boost to the self-respect and employability of anyone learning them.

The ways that groups and individuals have used silkscreening in their communities is endless. The simplest arrangement is a studio set up in someone's garage or basement, used for occasional publicity. The most ambitious involve commercial studio space, often in collaboration with a similar venture (such as offset printing or a gallery), with paid staff that produce both contracted works and originals. Silkscreening's commercial applications make it easier to generate income than many other arts, but self-sufficiency is by no means easy. Many groups are fully or partially subsidized through various grants.

## WHERE TO BEGIN?

Even the biggest groups started out small. Like most crafts, learning it is generally easier by watching it than by reading about it. Most colleges or free universities offer some form of instruction, and often local artists are more than willing to answer technical questions and allow observation. Silkscreen supply houses (which are far superior to art supply stores) are also good sources of information.

A successful group is one which is not only artistically creative and technically competent, but is clear about the dynamics of effective community work as well. This involves a sensitivity to community needs, good group process, and openness to "demystifying" the art for community use. Classes and apprenticeship are essential to maintaining a healthy organization.



by Lincoln Cushing

# STRUGGLE

## Murals Destroyed by Anti-Graffiti Sealers

Extreme caution should be used when applying final sealers to a mural. Several cases have occurred recently in which the mural was severely damaged.

Daniel Galvez reports that he approached No-Mar, Inc., in San Mateo, about their anti-graffiti guard. A representative looked at the wall and informed him there was an ultra-violet light screen in Vand-L-Shield, their product, that would protect against fading. It could be used on oil based enamels and the sealer, Plastic Shield, was also formulated for use on enamels and could be used before application. Touch ups were done by lightly sanding the surface to provide tooth and then painting as normal. Cost was 50 cents a square foot or \$2,000 for this mural.

The mural was completed by June 16, 1981, and the No-Mar crew started to apply the Vand-L-Guard 105 on the 18th. After about one quarter of the mural had been covered they noticed large areas of the mural running in orange drips. One of the figure's purple shirt had turned pale, faded, and was splotted with big runs of orange. In another figure both the skin tones and its bright magenta jacket had turned orange. Evidently the product had penetrated the Plastic Shield sealer, gone through the enamel paint to the original wall surface and had made the paint run, especially affecting the areas with red pigment in them. The next day you could literally peel the mural off the wall.

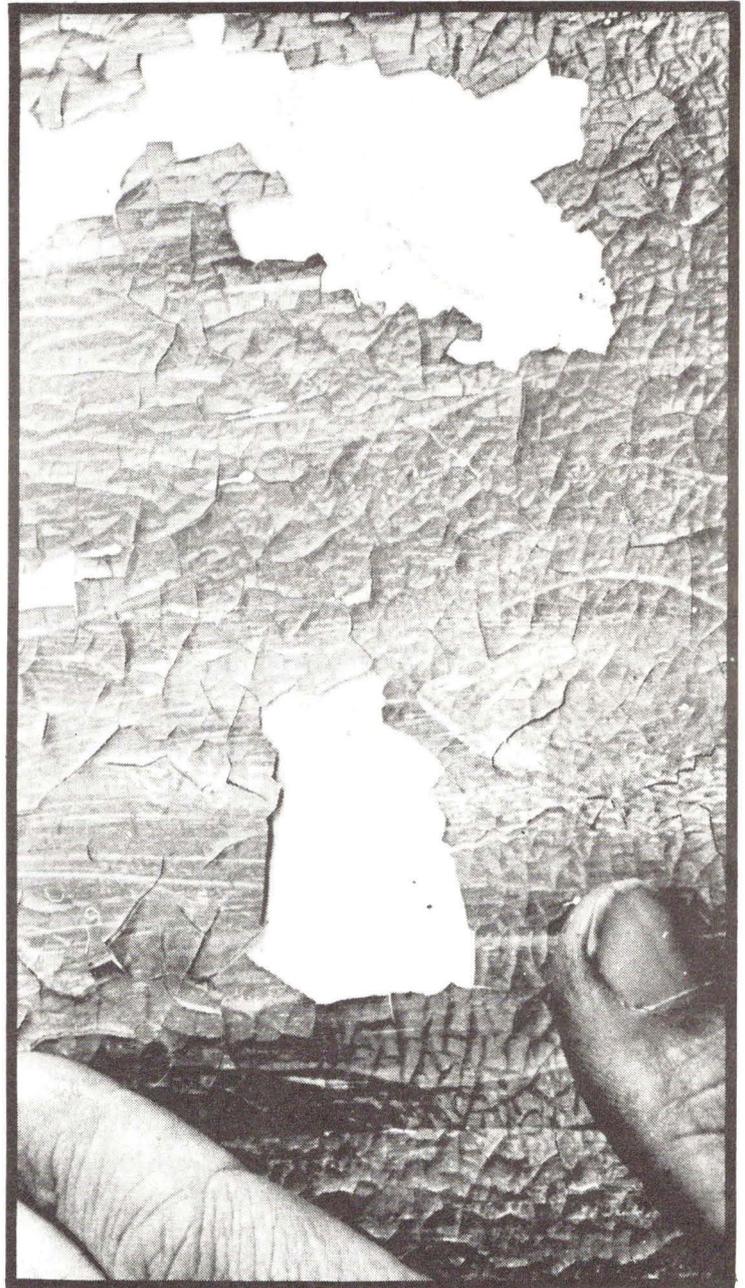
The only way to repair the damage was to completely sand blast it off, which, of course, included the art work beneath, before any repairs could be made.

In another case, Triangle Paints in Berkeley was approached by Fran Valesco for their anti-graffiti coating. In 1979, repairs were being made on a mural finished the year before that had been vandalized. A representative came out from the company to determine whether their product could be used over Politec acrylic paints and sealer. Assurances were given about compatibility. After several coats of varnish were applied, one only needed to use their Graffiti Remover No. 732 solvent and the wall would be clean.

The Anti-Graffiti Coating was applied with a roller. Like many sealers it is in an opaque state when wet, and later dries clear. The next day, when the crew returned, it was not only still an opaque white but the paint surface beneath was crazed and cracked in many places, giving the effect of an old chair left in the weather for years. Again a representative came from the company, could not explain why this had happened and advised using their product, Cello-Solve (a highly toxic solvent to be used with gloves and protective clothing) to remove the coating. The Cello-Solve removed most of the opaque varnish but the crazed paint was beyond repair.

Our conclusion is that any anti-graffiti protective type finishes should be tested on a very small area to determine its compatibility with the paint and wall beneath. Directions should be followed exactly, but even then products cannot always be relied on, as these two cases confirm.

If any readers have had experiences with anti-graffiti sealers, both positive and negative, please share them with us. We need to keep on top of technical problems, since durable paints and sealers are of great consideration in murals.



This a close up photograph of the condition of the surface of Michael Schnorr's "Undocumented Worker" mural, painted in Chicano Park, San Diego, California. Photo: Michael Schnorr. Photo taken on June 22, 1981.

The San Diego Mural Restoration Project sponsored by the Centro Cultural De La Raza strongly recommends that anyone looking for a protective sealer and/or coating for their murals be aware of the following;

1. In the last Mural Newsletter Michael Schnorr, a San Diego mural painter, recommended Vandyl Guard as a satisfactory final mural sealer.
2. There is strong evidence to suggest that after a period of time and weather changes that Vandyl Guard breaks down.
3. Vandyl Guard is a one step water based acrylic sealer that can be rolled, brushed, or sprayed. It is distributed by Raingard Products in Los Angeles, Ca.
4. Several large murals in San Diego County seem to be in decay and eventual destruction due to the use of Vandyl Guard.
5. Final lab reports are still in process as to discovering the exact chemical reactions.
6. Michael Schnorr is no longer using or endorsing this product.
7. The breakdown of the surface begins with barely perceptible hair-line cracks which after several months separate from each other, curl up at the sides and then flake off.
8. Most of the flakes are about the size of a single corn flake.
9. While the Vandyl Guard appears to cling to the surface layer of paint the real damage is when the paint is pulled away from the primer layer (or sometimes the primer separates with the colored surface away from the sealer. In our observations it appears as if the sealer has cracked its own surface, cracked the surface of color, and then proceeded to pull the color away from the primer (or when two coats of primer were used, to pull down to the initial cement sealer.)
10. All the murals affected were first acid etched, washed, sealed with a coat of chlorinated vinyl sealer, rolled with two coats of latex acrylic primer and then painted with acrylic paint, either Liquitex or Nova colors.
11. On one mural where there was a previous water based sealer and Vandyl Guard was applied over it for further protection. The Vandyl Guard appears to have shrunk or pulled away from itself into small islands not cracking the surface color as in other murals but instead giving the appearance of a dried mud flat on the surface. No flaking has yet occurred in this mural.
12. As mentioned before these problems are not immediately evident. The earliest evidence of cracking appeared one year after this sealer was applied, and of course the final results are not yet known.
13. Anyone who has encountered similar problems please get in touch with the San Diego Mural Restoration Project, Centro Cultural de la Raza, Park Blvd. San Diego, Ca. (714) 235-6135.

# mural unpalette-able

"OFTEN THE TEST OF COURAGE IS NOT TO  
DIE BUT TO LIVE."

Alfieri -- Orestes

Despite two attempts to cover it with gray-green paint, the mural on the Dell Avenue wall of what was formerly John's Market at 318 South Venice Blvd. remains intact.

The first attempt came around six a.m. Wednesday, the 25th of March. Two men, one of them wearing a ski mask, appeared before the mural with a spray machine, & quickly covered it, leaving only the faded "Pepsi" advertisement showing on the upper right hand corner.

Paul Roberts, a witness who lives across the street from the mural, phoned neighbors. 6 or 7 of them showed up almost immediately. They determined that the paint used was water based, & were able to clean most of it off with scrub brushes & garden hoses.

The second attempt came at 5:30 the following morning. According to Paul Roberts, this time 10 to 12 men & a squad car arrived. Three or four of the men stationed themselves around the

periphery of the market, & they & the police in the squad car acted as sentries while the others painted the mural over, this time with oil based paint.

It was around six when the squad car & half the crew pulled off. Those who remained apparently did so to make sure the paint dried enough to resist any attempts to remove it. Then they too moved off.

In the next six hours, the people of the Venice community responded in numbers & with outrage. Using paint thinner donated by canal residents, volunteers saw the mural slowly reappear, looking a little grayer, a little older.

Then, around noon, it was covered with a graffiti-proof coating, which was donated by the Social Public Art & Resource Center (SPARC).

Meantime, investigative efforts had been launched by members of the community & reporters: who was responsible? and why had this particular mural been singled out for destruction? were the questions asked.

54 The answer to the first came from inside the market. Managers Young & Sak Lim showed a copy of a letter they had been given by a canal homeowner. It was signed by Margaret Kang of Dallas, Texas. She & her husband own the store.

The letter reads, "regarding of homeowners of properties, if you want clean up the wall of my property located 318 S. Venice Bl. I have no objection, without any pay, thank you for your good work for that area."

It was addressed to "Mr. Collman."

Henry Coleman, producer of "Love Boat," is the president of Venice Waterways Association, a group of homeowners in the area who favor developing the canals into deepwater docking berths for pleasure boats. (The theme the mural depicts is a canal lifestyle of the late '60's & early '70's which was then being threatened with destruction by a group of homeowners, speculators, & developers known as the "Venice Canal Improvement Project," whose goal was the same.)

When reporters attempted to phone Coleman, his secretary told them that he was "swamped with meetings." He failed to return any calls.

But on Thursday morning, when people of the community were cleaning the mural with paint thinner, Coleman called the police, who showed up only to "preserve the peace, because it was a civil matter," as Sgt. Dave Nichols of the Venice Division explained.

In a phone call to Texas, Margaret Kang explained that Coleman, in a letter, said that "he wanted the area cleaned up. He said the people who painted it left already, & that it was pretty rotten, & had bad words on it."

Thinking that "cleaning up the area is good," Mrs. Kang sent back her letter of approval.

When her phone started ringing with complaints from angry residents, Mrs. Kang said, "I really am sick about it. What am I to do? I will follow majority, they should have meetings & find out what majority wants."

In the store itself, when manager Lim was asked what customers wanted, he answered, "Most people want it to stay."

When asked about Coleman, he replied, "Mr. Coleman, he not shop here much."

Friday, March 27, was a quiet day for the mural. Taped on to it was a letter written by Wendell Jones addressed "to whom it may concern." It reads in part like this:

"Mrs. Kang...gave permission to clean her wall, but never agreed to the destruction of her mural...."

"I represent the Social Public Art & Resource Center & the artists who created the mural. We do not know why the mural was defaced, or who was exactly responsible. We do know defacing private property without owners permission is vandalism."

"We have an interest in protecting the murals painted by our artists & are prepared to file charges against any person who vandalizes them. We have discussed this with the police."

Finally, in passing, when this writer appeared on the scene, early Thursday morning, one of the men who was watching the paint dry (he was later identified as Reid Monroe, former head of the Venice Waterways Assoc.) was asked by an angry protester why he didn't like the mural.

"Because nobody in it is smiling," he answered.

S. E. Mendelson

Free Venice Beachhead, April 1981



# White-washing Mural Art

## THE STRANGE CASE OF THE HOLLY COURT MURALS

**M**URAL ARTISTS MICHAEL MOSCHER AND CLAIRE JOSEPHSON were the guests of honor at a party held on July 20 at the Holly Court Housing Project in San Francisco's Bernal Heights district. Nearly 100 people, mostly tenants from the housing project, showed up to toast the two artists on the completion of the murals that lined the central corridor between the rows of houses at Holly Court. Kids brought out their radios and started dancing; and many older tenants, including some who had originally been skeptical about the murals, came up to the artists to express their satisfaction. The festivities lasted all afternoon.

Josephson and Moscher left feeling elated about the warm support they'd been shown. After all, they'd spent six months working on the brightly colored murals that depicted lowriders, as well as people with large Hispanic, black and Caucasian faces.

Less than four months later, the two artists were shocked to learn that the murals they had spent so much time and creative effort to paint had been whitewashed. What made their surprise even more complete was finding out that their murals had been painted over after a group of tenants had met and voted to have the entire housing project, including the new murals, painted white.

"If Mike and I had ever gotten any sense of an anti-mural sentiment," Josephson told me, "we wouldn't have been so surprised. But there hadn't been any. After six months of work, we were known there. We weren't outsiders."

Ironically, it had originally been the housing project's tenants who had arranged both for the mural's funding—a \$3,400 HUD grant—and the Art Commission's assistance in finding artists. It appears that, as things now stand, there are

no regulations or laws to prevent the destruction of publicly funded murals in San Francisco.

To discover the story behind the murals, I spoke with Neil Seippel, president of the Holly Court tenants association. A former worker with the CETA Arts program (which sponsored the Holly Court murals), Seippel stated, "I was the prime mover behind getting the murals. It seemed like a good idea at the time."

One of the people Seippel talked with about getting murals at Holly Court was Ann Thelin, head of CETA Arts for the SF Art Commission. Thelin said, "The procedure was the same at Holly Court as at North Beach, Valencia and the other projects which acquired murals." By her account, Seippel and the tenants, following the accustomed practice, prepared a proposal for the Community Development agency requesting a federal HUD grant to fund murals. After the proposal was accepted and HUD granted the \$3,400, the Art Commission helped run a contest to find the best muralists for the jobs.

One of the two artists picked for the job was Moscher who recalls that at meetings at Holly Court, both Seippel and other tenants were interested and encouraging. "They were very approving of my past sketches and had a lot to offer in terms of ideas for the murals," Moscher recalls. "They are proud of being multiracial at Holly Court and proud that it is harmonious there. They wanted the murals to reflect that, and they did."

Josephson, the other artist, was also pleased with the reception she and Moscher received. But she said the two of them were concerned about the fact that only about eight tenants, including Seippel, showed up at the tenants' meeting of June 28, 1979, which gave final approval to their detailed sketches for murals and which drafted a letter of support to the Art Commission.

With the artists' sketches and the tenants' letter, the full Art Commission approved the Holly Court murals project. Soon thereafter the artists began informal visits to the project to solicit even more tenant input.

Josephson recalls that the artists made a special effort to work with the children at the housing project. For one thing, she created an entire mural around existing graffiti. "What better way to create something the kids would want to preserve?"

Moscher also recalls that on his mural depicting low riders, the local youth, including some who don't live in but hang around the housing project, wanted to offer a great deal of input. "They gave me technical advice," he noted, "and some of the older ones told me to include some kids on bicycles. They said the kids would like that. So I did."

Tenant input notwithstanding, Moscher insists that the murals became different only in detail, not in overall concept or design, from the original sketches approved by the tenants' association. When the tenants held the party on July 20 to celebrate the murals, the artists assumed that their project reflected a genuine collaboration between the artists and the residents of Holly Court.

A few weeks later, however, the San Francisco Housing Authority informed tenant association president Seippel that Holly Court was slated for renovations which included painting. "First of all, when the Housing Authority offers renovations, you have to jump, or they pass you over for maybe three or four more years," he told me. So over three Thursdays in late September and early October, Seippel called tenant meetings to discuss renovation priorities. On the list was exterior painting.

"People felt we had a chance to make this place look like home," Joanne Cortez, vice-president of the tenants' association, explained to me. She says she felt that the murals detracted from the atmosphere tenants wanted to create here. Referring to the murals, Cortez said, "They make the place look awful. I don't think murals should be any place where people live. On recreation centers and the like, yes, but not on homes."

Even Seippel, the "prime mover" behind the murals argued against them. "Would you like murals on your house?" he asked me. "Would Mayor Feinstein? Would the people up on Nob Hill? We don't want to look like other projects."

When asked about the fact the tenants had not only approved the murals in principle beforehand but had also okayed the designs, Cortez said, "They looked different once they were up. It wasn't what we expected."

So Seippel and Cortez proposed to the tenants that the entire project be painted a nice white color while the opportunity presented itself. Those present at the meetings, approximately 15 to 25 tenants, voted on each mural individ-

ually, and decided to paint over all but one—done by children several years ago.

Did the tenants association notify the artists or the Art Commission of their decision? No, and according to Seippel, there wasn't any reason to. "There was never any general support for the murals," he claimed. "The tenants decided through parliamentary procedure to get rid of them. That's all."

The tenants association then notified Larry Custus, head of maintenance at the Housing Authority, of their decision, and the painting began soon thereafter.

I asked Custus what he thought of the request to whitewash the murals. "We left it all to the tenants," he said. He said the fate of the paintings "makes no difference one way or another to me. Our

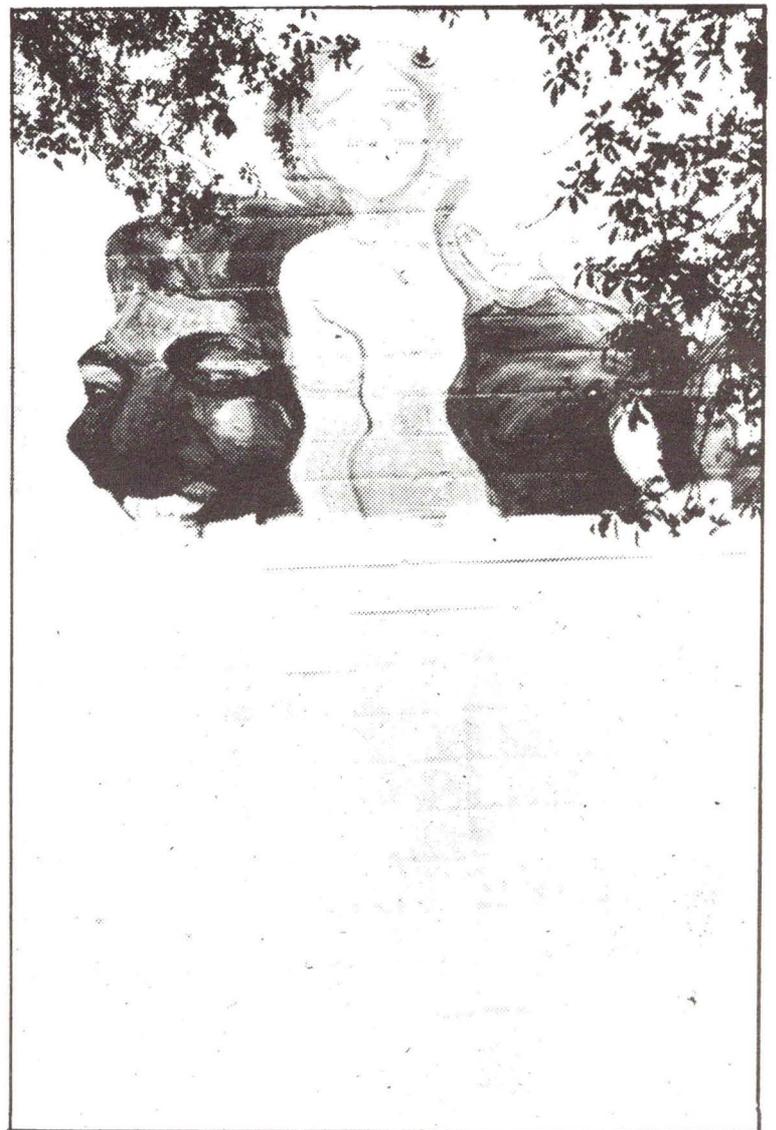
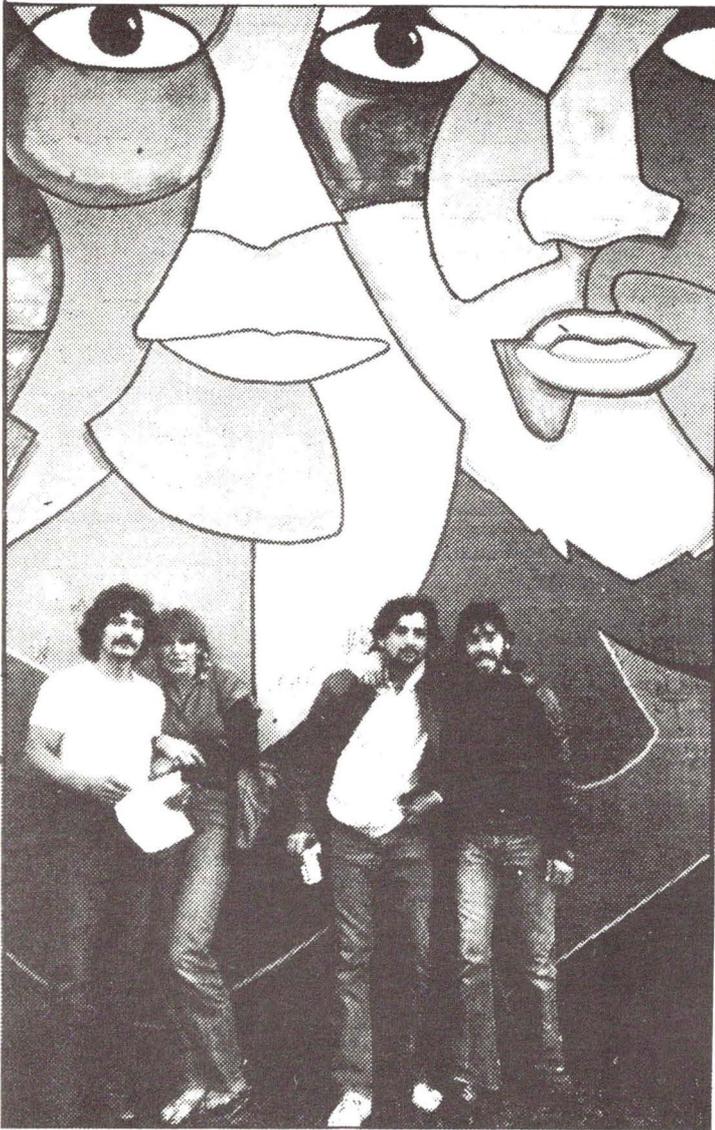
only function out there is to put the paint on the wall. The tenants decide which walls." He said his only concern was that the tenants' association leader make an effort to have representative meetings by posting advance notices of the meetings and keeping attendance records.

Custus did suggest, however, that he had understood that there was some kind of agreement between the Art Commission and the tenants over the maintenance and duration of the murals, but he said no such agreement had ever been formally forwarded to him.

Was there such an agreement? Apparently not, but Joan Ellison, director of the Art Commission, called the actions of both the tenants and the Housing Authority "totally improper" and said that as far as she was concerned the ten-

ants "have broken the law." (She was referring to the California Arts Preservation Act, which forbids the destruction of fine art. But the statute appears to have a loophole in it so that mural art on public housing is not to be covered in the absence of a specific contract guaranteeing its preservation.)

I asked Ellison why the Art Commission had not raised a cry when the destruction of the murals, which at the time was still in progress, was first discovered. "I called Carl Williams, the executive director of the Housing Authority, and asked him to stop the painting," she said. "I also wrote a letter to Community Development [in the mayor's office] asking them to work on a proposal for a contract between artists and tenants over mural work. Neither was very responsive."



Holly Court murals: before and after the whitewashing. Photos by Alan H. Stein (right) and Mark Richards (left).

Meanwhile, the once brightly colored walls of Holly Court are white. On a recent visit there, I spoke to some young tenants. One, expressing her displeasure over the whitewashing, told me she was going to "get a spray can and paint over those new white walls." Another, voicing a popular rumor there, said that "it was no big deal. They're just going to put the murals back up again."

Graffiti is already appearing on the white primer coat that covers the murals, and I couldn't help wondering whether, in a year or so, the new white walls will be covered with graffiti. It appears that those who do not like white walls may well have the last word on what goes on the walls at Holly Court.

—Michael Chodos  
ARTBEAT/December 1980

## Update

The Holly Courts incident pointed up the need for San Francisco muralists to negotiate a contract with the city which protects their rights. Shortly after the Holly Courts destruction, San Francisco muralists began to negotiate a contract with the City Attorney's office. Taking a strong stand, they blocked an attempt by the city attorney to claim ownership of the copyright for the city. In April of '81, San Francisco muralists successfully completed the negotiation of a contract which includes clauses on copyright, restoration, and destruction of murals. (See excerpts below.) Regarding the destruction clause, it is ironic that the Art Commission's sentiment was to include a preservation clause that would guarantee that murals would not be destroyed or altered for a specified number of years. The city's muralists, however, appreciating the benefits as well as the liabilities of street art, rejected that concept. Their reasoning was two-fold. An iron-clad protective clause might inhibit owners from allowing murals to be painted on their walls. More important, such a clause constitutes a private legal agreement between muralist and property owner, and does not recognize the people's rights to walls and to mural art. Murals are vulnerable and frequently transient. Although that reality is regrettable at times, it is a complexity that San Francisco muralists respect.

### Contract Clauses

#### 5. Copyright:

It is acknowledged that by making the payments required by paragraph 2 hereof, the City will acquire ownership of the mural painting, however, the artist shall retain the statutorily perfected copyright in the mural painting. Artist hereby grants to the City and perpetual license to reproduce the mural painting on a limited basis for non-commercial purposes. In order to protect the statutorily perfected copyright of the Artist, the artist is authorized to include on the mural painting an appropriate copyright notice, reading substantially as follows: "Copyright

19 \_\_\_\_\_ world rights reserved." The City agrees to include a similar notice on any reproduction of the mural painting. The rights acknowledged in this paragraph are expressly limited by the provisions of paragraphs 6 and 7 of this Agreement.

#### 6. Restoration:

It is mutually agreed and understood that should the City, in the sole discretion of the Art Commission, determine to repair or restore the mural painting created pursuant to this Agreement, during the lifetime of the statutorily perfected copyright holder said work of repair in restoration of the mural painting shall first be offered to the extent practical, to said copyright holders. For purposes of effecting this section said copyright holders shall provide a complete list of all artists who actually participated in the execution of the mural painting to the Director within thirty (30) days of the completion of the mural painting.

#### 7. Alteration or Destruction of Mural Painting:

The parties hereby agree that the City shall have the right, in its sole discretion, to take any action with respect to the wall or building upon which the mural painting will be executed including, but not limited to, the destruction, removal or painting of such wall or building. It is acknowledged that certain actions which the City may take with respect to such wall may result in the destruction or obliteration of the mural painting. The City agrees, however, that it will not attempt to alter the mural painting unless such alteration is a necessary consequence of the destruction, removal, alteration or redecoration of the of the wall or building on which the mural painting will be executed. In the event of any proposed alteration, Artist shall be given sixty (60) days prior notice, but said artist shall have no power to prevent the actions contemplated. The right of the Artist to notice pursuant to this section shall continue for the life of the statutorily perfected copyright, and then expire. Should the City sell, transfer or otherwise alienate the wall or building upon which the mural painting will be executed, all rights of Artist in the mural painting and in the tangible property on which the painting appears shall terminate and expire, but Artist's rights in and to the statutorily perfected copyright in the mural painting shall not thereby terminate or expire. For purposes of effecting this section, it will be the responsibility of the statutorily perfected copyright holder to continually notify the Art Commission of any change of his or her current address.

## BYE-BYE BIDDLE HELLO...who?

As NAPNOC notes goes to press, there's been no official word. But the Washington Post and New York Times have each leaked it, and when you call the White House they remind you that appointments aren't official 'til they're formally announced. So it appears to be official: President Reagan will name Francis S.M. ("Frank") Hodsoll, principal policy deputy to White House Chief of Staff James Baker III, to head the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

Hodsoll, 43, has been making official appearances as White House representative at arts-related meetings. He's made introductory remarks at the Washington meetings of the Presidential Task Force on the Arts & Humanities: "President and Mrs. Reagan... personally care about the arts, perhaps more than any other first family..." And calls to the White House to investigate speculations about the Reagan administration's arts policies and appointments have been referred to Hodsoll's office. (He's also coordinating the Reagan task force on immigration.)

Hodsoll, who's from Los Angeles, is a lawyer with degrees from Yale, Cambridge, and Stanford Law School. He entered the foreign service in 1966, after two years with the New York law firm, Sullivan and Cromwell. He acted as assistant program adviser at the Supreme Allied Command in Brussels from 1967-69 and returned to Nixon's State Department as a political affairs officer until 1971. He was assigned as a detailee to the Council on Environmental Quality (1972-73), then served as special assistant to the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. With Ford in the White House, Hodsoll moved to the Department of Commerce (1974-77), where he served briefly as then-Undersecretary James Baker's executive assistant before becoming Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy and Strategic Resource Policy. He returned to the State Department in 1977, where he directed the office of Law of the Sea negotiations, later becoming Special U.S. Deputy for Nonproliferation. He resigned in August, 1980, to serve the Reagan-Bush campaign as coordinator of preparation for the debates.

The extent of Hodsoll's arts involvement appears to be some undergraduate activities at Yale (The Post mentioned coordinating some college choral concerts at Carnegie Hall.)-- a fact that is likely to spur some arts world controversy. Hodsoll is known as a "good manager," but as far as his positions and loyalties on arts world issues go, we can only speculate. Chances are, his inexperience in arts administrations will be forgiven by the arts establishment, which takes hope from Hodsoll's White House connections. There's little question about his Senate confirmation once nominated.

Hodsoll can be expected to cleave to the Reagan line and support "our national treasures" with all the Endowment funds that can be mustered. People who do cultural

work in poor communities, rural areas, minority neighborhoods or whose work focuses on radical or controversial themes shouldn't expect much from a Hodsoll Endowment.

Why Reagan would nominate Hodsoll -- who's shown no previous interest in cultural policy -- remains a mystery. Insiders speculate that Hodsoll is being rewarded for faithful campaign service with a "plum" position that doesn't carry much weight in the Reagan administration. The Departments of Energy and Labor have already been handed to a dentist and a building contractor on the same basis.

Don Adams  
Arlene Goldbard

September 1981

## O'Higgins Mural Endangered

Upon receiving word of the impending destruction of a mural painted by Pablo O'Higgins in Hawaii a Committee of Concern was formed in Mexico and the United States with members from the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Salon de la Plástica Mexicana, directors of art museums throughout the United States, professors, muralists and members of organized labor. The coordinating committee drafted a letter which was sent to Mr. Carl Demaso, President, International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union ILWU Local 142, 415 Atkinson Drive, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814. The union is planning to tear down its old headquarters which houses the O'Higgins mural, and put up a new building in its place. The letter argues that this should be done without touching the mural, which is delicate and irreplaceable.

Because similar issues continue to arise throughout the world, we think a couple of paragraphs from the letter are worth quoting in full:

The letter notes that "throughout the modern world there is a general problem concerning the preservation of artworks as the forces of progress come into conflict with painted expressions of genius which can't be easily or safely moved to another location. These situations are difficult because both desires—to build and to preserve—are positive and well-intentioned.

"Over the years, artists working with architects, city planners, builders, and design committees have worked to save artworks which would have been lost or endangered by otherwise desirable building plans. Often the artist have pointed out that the desire to build and the desire to preserve aren't mutually exclusive. In actual fact, preserving a work of creative originality can often lend strength, beauty and dignity to a new building project if the artwork is incorporated into the new structure with taste and imagination."

These points seem well-taken and of possible use in other, similar situations which will arise in the future, Readers of **CMM** are encouraged to show their concern for the preservation of this master's work by writing to Mr. Damaso themselves.

## DONATION

We hope readers will be able to donate at least \$10 and Institutions (libraries, museums, arts councils, etc.) at least \$20-30 to help support continued publication of *Community Muralists' Magazine*. Checks should be made out to "*Community Muralists' Magazine*," and mailed to P.O. Box 40383, San Francisco, CA 94140.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Endangered Artists

French-based AIDA, the Association Internationale de Defense des Artistes, is trying to rescue artists and performers as Amnesty International does for political prisoners, reports Claudia Oberascher in *Plus* [No. 12], a magazine supplement of papers in Düsseldorf, Hamburg, and Zürich. Founded in 1979, AIDA has hundreds of members in France, Germany, Belgium, and The Netherlands and is planning chapters throughout Western Europe and the U.S. In France members include Yves Montand, Simone Signoret, and Claude Lelouch.

AIDA has helped save Alba Gonzalez Souza, a forty-six-year-old pianist from Uruguay, who was beaten in prison in Bogotá, Colombia. Concerts in South America and Europe drew public attention to her plight and she was freed. AIDA also helped release dramatist and director Liber Forti in Bolivia and the Argentinian pianist Miguel Angel Estrella from a Uruguayan jail. Now, reports Ms. Oberascher, "AIDA is sponsoring a huge mural in Paris as a memorial to a hundred artists who have disappeared in Argentina."

World Press Review/June 1981



Community Sculpture Protesting U.S. Intervention in El Salvador arising from Emeryville Mudflats, California Freeway I-80.

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