

# COMMUNITY MURALS

WINTER 1985

VOLUME 10, NO. 1



# EDITORIAL

## Art and Apartheid

We have talked before about issues which offer artists opportunity for active social involvement, such as the anti-nuclear movement and non-intervention in Central America. To that list should be added the anti-apartheid movement, fighting against South Africa's policies of official separation of white, black, Indian and "colored" races.

As a recent statement in *Art & Artists* says, "Art affirms life. *Apartheid* denies it. As artists we must use our art as a weapon against this vile system that negates the humanity of the overwhelming majority of the South African people and deprives them of the opportunity to develop their creative potential because of the color of their skin.

"*Apartheid* legislates racism. Black South Africans cannot vote. Black South Africans cannot freely assemble. Black South Africans must carry passbooks. . .

"Black South Africans are exiles in their own land. They make up over 85% of the population of South Africa, yet are

forcibly consigned to 13% of the most arid territories of their land—so-called "homelands" that are a sham and are scattered in pieces."

A number of organizations in this country have taken public stands against apartheid, and thus offer a wide spectrum of groups for artists to join with in committing their art to the fight against this monstrous outrage. These organizations include labor unions (such as Local 10 of the ILWU in San Francisco which refused to work South African cargo), many community groups (see list below), and even mainstream politicians and cultural figures (among many others, Massachusetts Republican Senator Lowell Weicker challenged the tacit position of his party and President Reagan by being arrested for demonstrating in front of South Africa's embassy in Washington on January 14).

Apartheid is a clear form of internal colonialism within South Africa, but is similar to some practices in the United States, too. For example, the Immigration Service (INS) carries out raids against places it feels might harbour undocumented workers, including workplaces and private homes. Too bad for the Latino who, like South African

blacks, is caught away from home without the necessary identification card.

Just being aware of apartheid is not enough. The growth of a large and public movement against it provides the opportunity for artists to take effective action using their skills. Pick up the telephone, go down to headquarters, join the demonstration planning committee and apply your skills on behalf of this important struggle.

We look forward to the day when South African artists can freely paint their own history in monumental outdoor murals throughout their country. And we look forward to community artists throughout the United States putting their art "on the line" against apartheid.

ART AGAINST APARTHEID is an independent activity organized by a coalition of artists and supporting organizations and sponsored by the Foundation for the Community of Artists with the support of the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid.

For more information: *Art Against Apartheid*, 280 Broadway, Suite 412 NYC 10007. (212) 227-8473. All contributions are tax-deductible and can be made out to FCA/Art Against Apartheid.

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Cover photo: Western Addition Cultural Center mural by Dewey Crumpler (detail). photo by Tim Drescher  
Back cover graphic: Lincoln Cushing.

## Deadlines:

Materials for future issues must reach us by the following dates:

Spring 1985 by Thursday, April 25, 1985

Summer 1985 by Thursday, July 25, 1985

Fall 1985 by Thursday, October 3, 1985

We must have possession of any materials to be included by these dates. Please send us information, with black and white glossy photos (and slides, if possible) about projects in your part of the world.

### Editorial Group

Juana Alicia	Nancy Hom
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Lincoln Cushing	Odilia Rodriguez
Tim Drescher	Arch Williams



Special thanks to Jo Keroes

# RESOURCES

## Mass Media and Visual Arts

*Art in the Age of Mass Media*

by John A. Walker

Ploto Press, 1983

124 pp, illustrated; \$12.95

Mass media are inextricably linked to our modern era; this book explores the relationship between such media and the visual arts. Walker's central thesis is that the contradictions inherent in mass media can, and should, be exploited by progressive artists. Examples of artists who have integrated popular or mass communication forms in their work include Van Gough and John Heartfield as well as poster artists and community muralists. In all, Walker offers a provocative and encouraging analysis.

—L.C.

## Slide Library

Women Artists Slide Library

Battersea Arts Centre

Old Town Hall, Lavender Hill

London SW11 5TE, England

The slide library consists of a historical archive section and a contemporary section, and is actively seeking contact with women artists in the U.S. Membership costs 6/year (about \$9.00) which entitles artists to submit and borrow slides for a limited period. A quarterly newsletter is also included.

L.C.

## Poster Slide Show

Vietnam-era Protest Poster Slide Show

AQUON Archive

1741 Virginia St.

Berkeley, CA 94703

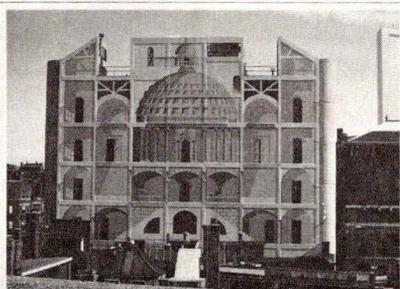
(415) 849-1154

Michael Rossman's poster archive is one of the best in the country, and this slide show is the first effort to make its massive contents accessible to educators and cultural workers. These are first-generation slides, photographed directly from the posters. Various sets are available for rental or purchase, as well as a prepared text in written or tape form. The full set consists of 230 slides and rents for \$55; a "core" set of 55 slides rents for \$30. A prospectus including color xeroxes of the slide set and text is available for \$10 postpaid; \$5 will be refunded with its return.

—L.C.

## 1985 Calendars

### STREET MURALS CALENDAR 1985



*Street Murals Calendar 1985*

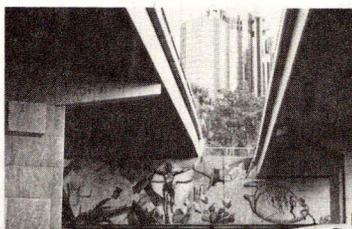
Off the Wall Calendar Co.

P.O. Box 486

Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

\$7.95 plus \$1 postage

14 full-color plates of some of Boston's best murals.



CALIFORNIA CHICANO MURALS

1985 CALENDAR

*California Chicano Murals*

SPARC

685 Venice Blvd.

Venice, CA 90291

\$5.95 plus \$1 postage

12 full-color reproductions of works from San Francisco to San Diego.

## MURAL FILM

*Anatomy of a Mural*, a film about the painting of a mural at San Francisco's Mission Cultural Center (V. Spring 1983 CMM), is available for rental, \$30, or sale (by arrangement) from the film's producer/director at a new address: Rick Goldsmith, 1315 Martin Luther King Way #4, Berkeley, CA 94709, or call (415) 525-0916.

## Merging Art and Politics

*Get The Message?*

A Decade of Art for Social Change

by Lucy R. Lippard

E.P. Dutton, Inc., 1984

343 pp, illustrated, \$16.95 paper

Lucy Lippard is one of the most articulate and prolific writers on progressive visual art in the U.S. today. This collection of essays, spanning from 1970 to the present, is an insider's history of the many trends, issues and players that insist on merging art and politics.

Because the articles were written at different times for different publications, each one devotes a large portion of its content to convincing the reader that art and politics *are* mixed—an unnecessary effort for those who are already involved in activist or progressive art. However, even the most committed artist can benefit from the enormous number of examples provided—emergent feminist work of the 70's, protests of straight art museum exhibits, performance art, murals—and settings, including China, Nicaragua, Australia and England.

—L.C.

## Mexican Murals

*Murals of Mexico*

by Philip Stein

Art Workshop Productions

553 Prospect Ave., River Vale, N.J. 07675

\$8.00 plus \$1.00 postage and handling

This is a handsome new booklet that should prove to be an exciting introduction to the Mexican Mural Movement and especially useful for a traveler in Mexico. Written by Philip Stein, a North American artist who spent ten years in Mexico from 1948 working with the mural movement and David Alfaro Siqueiros, it presents some excellent individual portraits of *Los Tres Grandes*: Siqueiros, Diego Rivera, and Jose Clemente Orozco by photographer Juan Guzman. The fourteen color reproductions of major murals are outstanding and the cover photo and another of Siqueiros working on his murals are worth the price of the book alone.

After a brief and concise history of the Mexican mural renaissance, "one of the great art movements of modern times," Mr. Stein looks more closely at the biographies of the "Big Three" and Rufino Tamayo. Finally, there is a selected list of murals and their locations in Mexico City and throughout Mexico.



## THIS IS IT!

This is the last free issue of *Community Murals*. From now on, if you do not subscribe (\$12 a year for four issues), you cannot receive the Magazine. Use the enclosed post-paid envelope now! Please!!

We have managed to distribute *Community Murals* in Newsletter and Magazine form for free to those who requested it for nine years, with the generous help of readers and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Galeria de la Raza/Studio 24 in San Francisco. We don't need to tell you about the priorities of NEA funding. They have finally reached us. If we are to survive, it must be because there are enough subscriptions to keep *CMM* going.

We feel that the resources offered by *CMM* are too valuable to let the Magazine expire, and if you agree, you will send a subscription immediately.

In the past year alone *CMM* has carried articles on billboard "correction," graffiti, reviews of dozens of publications specifically aimed at community visual artists, significant poster projects from several places, community murals from throughout the United States and countries all over the world, legal rights and the struggle against destruction of our works.

The Magazine is produced by community artists for community artists. We have relied on our readers, on *you*, for information in the past, and now we must rely on you for survival (and we still need and rely on your photos and articles and letters). For \$1 a month (25¢ a week!) *CMM* can continue as before.

Copies of most back issues are available at \$3 per copy, with only Spring and Fall 1981 and Fall 1984 in limited supply. Order missing numbers now and make your collection of *CMM* complete.

For those of you who may be able, supporting (\$25), Sustaining (\$50) and Gift (fill in the amount) subscriptions are available. Only through the latter category will we be able to send copies to prisoners and others who cannot afford the Magazine.

Residents of Great Britain may subscribe by sending L 15 (L 20 for institutions) to *Community Murals Magazine*, 84a St. Stephens Ave., London, W12, England.

## Letter from Ireland

*Editorial note: The following is a letter from Julian Watson taking us to task for some things we said in comparing two Irish murals in the Spring 1984 issue (p.8). He also kindly explains something more about Irish murals, and offers a reading list, too. While we do not always agree with his points, we welcome the corrections and the spirit of clarification in the letter, which we reprint here in full.*

*A brief glossary about terms used:*

*Catholic—Republicans—Nationalists. Fought against William in the Battle of the Boyne, 1690.*

*Protestant—Loyalist. Supported William (and thus the status quo) to keep out the Catholic James II.*

*England is largely Protestant, and Ireland mostly Catholic today, with a mixture in Northern Ireland, Derry and Belfast.*

Dear Community Murals,

You were doing what is always a dangerous thing, namely saying that style indicates a number of other definite realities, or using the abstract to define the particular.

To clear the political desks first. It is always likely when talking about political art that the speaker's politics will interfere with his artistic judgments. I should make it clear, therefore, in order to avoid the response, "well, it's just a difference in political opinion," that very generally speaking I would agree with your political view on Ireland. Implicit in your article was that a united Ireland is a desirable thing, that the British are an unabsorbed presence and that in Northern Ireland there has been a long history of political and social nepotism on the part of the Protestants. We would probably disagree on everything subsequent to those very broad statements (each containing a book's worth of discussion) because, as an inhabitant of these islands, I will have a different emotional attitude to yourselves, as well as being party to a great deal more information. It is on this latter point, in direct relation to the murals, that I wish to expand, for you really did get it badly wrong!

Political mural painting in Northern Ireland is *all* working class art. Whether one agrees with the politics of Loyalism or not, the history of Loyalist wall painting is one of the most fascinating and unique stories among all manifestations of working class art. The Loyalist wall painting that you showed (Spring 1984) has an especially interesting history. I spoke with the artist, Bobby Jackson, about two years ago. It represents King

William III (a Netherlander invited into the position) crossing the Boyne at the battle which finally crushed James II of Britain's hopes of a return to the throne and the possible reinstatement of Catholicism, as well, of course, as suppressing Irish efforts to reinstate their own independence. On the other side of the mural is a depiction of the Relief of the Siege of Derry, the moment, in the same war, when the Loyalists in Derry were saved, after a protracted period of forced and gruesome isolation. That's what it represents. It is not possible to go into a detailed discussion of the historical aspects and ironies here, other than to say that Britain in those days was not quite the big imperial lump that it was subsequently to become. It seems to have had something of an understandable paranoia of being invaded, having suffered both invasion attempts and a very nasty civil war over the previous 100 years. As is usual in such cases—and as we can see in many places in the world today—one man's security is another's bondage. . .

son, now an old man, still is not) formally trained. It was the traditional father-to-son training in the trade, at a time before glossy design workshops, screenprinting and large firms. They copied the image from Loyalist postcards and prints doing the rounds. They also painted a gable end mural of King William landing at Carrickfergus. Bobby Jackson has repainted and spruced up these murals every year since they were first done, usually in time for the 12th July celebrations (when the Orange Lodges march in commemoration of the above events). Eventually the area became so run down that the city council scheduled it for demolition (in the early 70's, I think). The local people raised such an outcry about the imminent destruction of the paintings that the one on the low wall was saved—indeed the entire wall was uprooted and put in the centre of the new housing estate. The gable-end mural was destroyed. An interesting side line here. The (Catholic) contractor responsible for the demolition was known to Bobby Jackson. The artist painted out his own mural before the demolition so that the contractor would



Nevertheless, for the Protestants and Catholics of Ireland the die was largely cast. Bobby Jackson said to me, "that man is where we got our religion and our freedom from." The bitter experience of the penal laws and subsequent responses to resulting protest, have also dictated much of Catholic feelings in the matter. . .

But back to the mural and Bobby Jackson. The mural was painted on a walk down a back alley of a run-down terrace house area in Derry some 50-60 years ago. Bobby Jackson and his father were decorators and signwriters and their house and workshops were just next to the walk. They were not (and Bobby Jack-

not be accused of destroying a Loyalist mural. Bobby Jackson is undoubtedly firmly from the Loyalist tradition. Nevertheless he seems to have been very happy to paint Hibernian drums and perhaps he would best be described as a tolerant, traditional man who is unable to see that his tradition had more provocative implications in the hands of more volatile men.

So...the mural was *not* "painted recently," even if it is still maintained properly. It was *not* painted by someone with "extensive formal training". The image is from already popular imagery in the form of cheap post-cards and prints—one step removed from "an

earlier 17th Century painting." The wall certainly took time (!) but in all probability the only public financial resources involved were those spent in transplanting the wall. Derry City Council has almost always had a Catholic majority so it is my guess that the transplanting will have been approved by folks who "dug with the other foot." Whatever, most of my friends in Derry are Catholic and whenever we have talked about the wall there has nearly always been a respect for Bobby Jackson's achievement, even if the content was not close to their hearts. Finally, the wall is *not* in a "relatively well-to-do area of Derry." The housing estate that surrounds it is typical of the junk put up by planners in these times. Similar housing schemes are to be found in every working class area of Protestant or Catholic Derry & Belfast, and indeed in most sizeable cities in Ireland, Britain and beyond.

Loyalist wall painting is now a much shrunken tradition. It is fascinating for it predates any other popular mural movement that I know of. It probably started in the first years of this century with the introduction of commercially available, cheap housepaints. I do know of one very professional mural in Coleraine—another one in Ballymena by (I think) the same hand was paint-bombed. It may have been the same one that was stopped by the police. Other Loyalist murals are generally quite a bit cruder than the particular example of Nationalist wall painting that you illustrate. Bobby Jackson's mural is the last remaining mural from the heyday of Loyalist wall painting (probably at its best during the 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s) still kept in top condition. One other in Belfast has been revived by the younger generation but it looks quite a bit different from twenty years ago—a good deal simpler. If Loyalist wall painting revives it will either be with an increase in confidence (highly unlikely) or with the achieving of a new range of symbolism to fit the changed times.

You miss out on a whole range of interesting stuff on the Nationalist murals too, maybe because it doesn't quite tally with your neat thesis. Nationalist murals were a very rare sight before 1981. One in the Ardoyne in Belfast, two or three in Derry, but that's all. No one knows why they didn't paint murals. Maybe because they didn't feel like it or maybe because the Loyalists were doing it. With the advent of the Hunger Strikes the notion quickly emerged. Graffiti became more organized, advertising hoardings [billboards] were being painted out and there was a lot of solidarity. Moreover there had been an officially sponsored community mural scheme in Belfast for several previous summers and it just

may be that the notion had got into the blood (It's a naive irony, but one cannot be certain). By the end of the summer the quantity and variety of murals that had appeared within the span of about five months was stunning. I reckon about 150 murals were painted in the two cities during 1981. The one you illustrate is from the second crop done in 1982. From that year onwards there have been less murals painted, but nevertheless fresh ones have continued to appear. They have also become more officially and closely bound to the Sinn Fein political campaign and rather less spontaneous (this changes their character, perhaps, but does not particularly lessen their interest). None of the Nationalist murals quite have the neat anecdotal detail of Bobby Jackson's mural, but many have been a good deal more sophisticated in handling and composition—contrary to what you claim. I have spoken with a number of Nationalist mural artists and know of others. At least one did a full course in art college and another took an art "0" level exam while serving a prison sentence. Some other of the murals were indeed quite crude and that is not surprising for some of the artists I spoke with were not much over fifteen or sixteen. As I say, the quantity and variety was stunning. Many of the murals have gone now, either being replaced by new ones, neglected, or paint-bombed. The attitude behind them depends on the circumstances. At present Nationalist politics has left the tense days of the hunger strikes and are now concentrating on achieving wider support through the more prolonged, less emotional slog of community politics—interspersed with occasionally bombing factories and armed attacks on present or past members of the security forces.

The British army has certainly thrown paint at many of the murals. I don't know of any mural painters who have been arrested while painting murals, though I would guess (again, I haven't heard of it) that some have been harassed. One night, about two years ago, a slogan writer was shot by a policeman who said he thought he was pointing a gun at him (take sides according to your pre-conditioned bent). Most mural painters seem to have been happy to paint their works in broad daylight and it does not seem to be an activity that people associate with danger. Contrary to what you suggest some of those murals will have taken days, not hours, to do, being much larger and more intricate than either the one you show or Bobby Jackson's mural. It is no fun living in say, Catholic West Belfast, but it is a bit different from what you suggest.

If you equate working-class politics with socialism then you should be care-

ful how you tread when studying the position of the IRA in relation to the working class and/or socialism. Books have probably been written on this one too! In the broadest terms there is a socialist stand within the Republican movement and the violent split between the Official and Provisional IRA in the early 70s represents to some degree the split between the socialist and the nationalist. It is the Provisionals who are using armed force now, while the Officials have largely fallen by the wayside in terms of having an effective voice. Be that as it may, most socialists known to me in the north steer clear of either of them, or their political wings. They may agree with the idea of a united Ireland, but they are also aware that the achievement of this depends on many factors. The healing of the massive division in the working class, made infinitely worse by the misery of fifteen years in conclusive and tortuous violence, is one of those factors. Obviously my personal sympathies emerge here, but what I have said about the murals, would I believe, be corroborated by any well informed and interested individual, irrespective of his or her political affiliations.

Finally a few recommended bits of reading for anyone genuinely interested in developing an understanding of the complexities of the political situation:

*Uncivil Hours*: Pdraig O'Malley (Blackstaff Press, Belfast.) The author is American but he has a far more intelligent approach than the Leon Uris approach to matters). One of the most recent and comprehensive examinations of attitudes in every corner of the conflict.

*Fortnight Magazine*. (7 Lower Crescent, University Road, Belfast) Comes out monthly (!) and has an independent, debating line. It frequently gets well known figures from opposing views to write.

*A Place Apart*. Deruba Murphy. Gives a good description of what it is like to live in N. Ireland. It is a bit less tense now (the book was written eight years ago), but it is also perhaps more bitter. I personally don't rate the political discussion very highly, but the book has great sympathy and humanity.

An extensive discussion of the murals is to be found in *Circa* No. 8, Jan-Feb, 1983. Copies can be had from *Circa*, 22 Lombard Street, Belfast, BT1 1RD.

I'm glad to hear about your magazine and to know that it exists, but forcing a fully grown adult into a baby's nappies is not conducive to the expansion of understanding!

All good wishes,  
Julian Watson

# Letter From Pete Seeger

Mark Rogovin, director of Chicago's important and unique Peace Museum writes that "Pete Seeger stopped by for a few hours while on his way to Chicago's celebration of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. Of the many things he wanted to talk about was an idea he had regarding works of art on the waterfronts throughout the country. I asked him to jot down the ideas to send to Community Murals, so here they are."

For river murals - no words

Oil tanks



gas tank



water towers



factories



old power plants



new power plants



retaining walls above high water line



old boats (abandoned)

new boats

bridges

Feb. 1985

Dear Community muralists -

Many rivers and bays + lakes now have organizations like the Clearwater, fighting to clean up pollution and restore the shores. I hope some of you will join them and get their support in putting murals on various masonry + metal surfaces — pictures which can be appreciated from a very great distance

Sincerely

Pete Seeger



## Three Responses to Alan Barnett's Book

*Community Murals Magazine* offers here three responses to Alan Barnett's new book, *Community Murals, The People's Art* (Philadelphia: The Art Alliance Press; New York and London: Cornwall Books), 1984. 516 pages. \$60. One is a review/response from John Pitman Weber, one a comment by Osha Neumann, one an introductory review by Tim Drescher. We encourage readers to share their responses in future issues.

October 1, 1984

Dear *Community Murals*,

With what excitement I received a copy of Alan Barnett's volume on *Community Murals*. It is a big and generous book in every way—a major piece of documentation. It is an enormously ambitious attempt to survey, if not the whole country, at least a major part of it. The massive number of illustrations (many of work unpublished elsewhere) makes it a stupendous contribution—one for which I am most grateful. So much work I haven't seen before! I am fascinated. This book will be an essential reference, and belongs in every college library and every public library system.

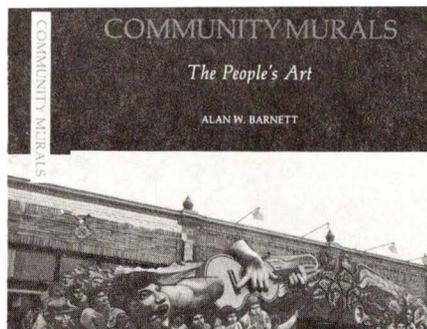
Of course a book of such scope cannot hope to do everything well; and since Alan has implicated me with a bunch of quotes, I feel obligated to scold him for his sins. First, I wish the photos were sharper. More important are various omissions. In particular, I believe the omission of Lilli Ann Killen Rosenberg from the chapters on the beginnings of community murals to be a major historical error. Other omissions are a result of limitations of geographic coverage, the natural emphasis on the Bay Area, and the long delay of publication. In effect, the documentation of most areas, including Chicago, ends in 1977. Despite Alan's claim to cover through 1980, he fails to report, or discuss the work of artists who had emerged as major figures before 1980. I know who they are in Chicago: among others, Lynn Takata (mentioned once, but name misspelled), Cindy Weiss, Beth Shadur, Kathy Kozan. He also misses major trends which had clearly emerged by 1980. In particular, *Trompe L'oeil* as architectural decoration. He refers to the concern for permanent materials as a developing trend, but only a half dozen examples are given. The work of L.A.K. Rosenberg (NOT SHOWN AT ALL) provides splendid examples from the early 1960's on. We can only hope that the first

edition sells out *rapidly* so that Alan can give us a second volume covering the late 70's more thoroughly. And continuing on into the late 80's!

Finally I have serious disagreements with his decision to omit discussion and documentation of work done with children. (With the exception of Nancy Thompson and Alvarado Workshop in San Francisco.) Obviously one can't discuss everything, but I don't think public art with children is peripheral to our movement.

All in all, what a splendid book. Thank goodness it's finally out. Congratulations, Alan! We all owe a lot to your perseverance, patience, to your belief in our work and to your vision of a democratic culture. And despite the similarity of titles, I do hope Alan will continue to contribute to *Community Murals Magazine*.

John P. Weber



## Review

Although there is much potential for controversy in Alan Barnett's book, I suspect the discussion will range mostly around his political perspective or the useful/awkward effort of trying to fit community murals into an "appropriate technology" framework. Rather than take up these topics at this time, some preliminary remarks are offered here by way of introducing the book to community muralists who may not yet have had the opportunity to read its 516 pages.

This book is important to the community murals movement in two ways. First, its existence gives a kind of validity to community murals: "They must be important to have such a large book written about them." The existence of the book gives the mural movement the sort of attention it has deserved for years, but has not been given by mainstream publications. But it is important to note that it is a book written *about*, not particularly *for*, community muralists. Its primary direct value to community muralists is in the hundreds of photographs the book contains, giving muralists the opportunity to study many more murals than it is likely any of us will see in person. Furthermore, there is an enormous amount of informa-

tion contained in the book, and even though there are many relatively small errors, the basics are there to provide the starting point for further studies.

Perhaps the most important element of the book for its intended audience (which is probably people more interested in reading about art than engaging in it on a community level) is that it begins each chronological chapter by setting out the political, historical, and social contexts of the period. As individual murals are discussed, they are placed within this informing set of relationships, thereby enlarging the walls' meanings and demonstrating respect for the essential social element in the artworks.

And yet there are serious problems with the book. While the general reader should find it informative, several artists have commented privately that Barnett simply "doesn't understand," so one should take it all with a grain of salt. The book is a general reference, along with *Toward A People's Art* a point of departure, but not an authoritative last word on murals.

More objectionable than differences between author and artists about meanings is the condescending tone of the work, as seen for example, in the designation of certain community works as "masterpieces." This is a notion most useful in establishing a hierarchy of artists' worth, but is potentially divisive within communities. It is not the way progressive muralists discuss community murals. Or, again, in presenting lists of famous black figures in murals, why are other names given in full but Louis Armstrong referred to as "Satchmo"? Other examples could be given.

It should also be noted that, although it may not have been within the author's ability to control, the book's production is nevertheless disappointing. In a \$60 art book a reader (not to mention a muralist) has a right to expect sharper black and white photographs of the murals. It is unfortunate that so many had to be taken from slides and not directly from black and white negatives. There is an unusually high number of typographical errors, columns are sometimes tilted, and part of one paragraph (p. 88) is omitted.

Finally, despite the similarity in titles, this book is not affiliated with or sponsored by *Community Murals Magazine*, as the dust jacket disclaimer states. Still, the Magazine is conspicuously absent from the list of mural resources in the back of the book, even though the book itself attests to the Magazine's importance through the many note references to it in its earlier newsletter incarnation.

—Tim Drescher

## Community Murals on the Coffee Table At Last— Or Why I Haven't Been Able to Read Alan Barnett's *Community Murals*

When I first began painting, way before I was a community muralist; when I still imagined myself in the great tradition of misunderstood avant-garde artists of the last century or so, I hoped that at some time I would be the subject of an art book—one of those fancy high priced ones. It would tell the sad, sordid, passionate story of my life in an introduction (interspersed with black and white drawings and facsimiles of my letters). This would be followed by the plates, in glossy glorious color. Whatever wreck I had made of my life would hardly matter. All would be redeemed and transfigured by my art. If you have an art book about yourself, you've made it. You're OK. And now Alan Barnett has given me that longed-for badge of approval—me of course, and hundreds of others.

I can look myself up in the index, and read the paragraphs of text that describe my humble efforts with obvious respect and deference, recording as well my profound and not quite profound reflections on the task of being a muralist. Because I no longer see myself in that model of an avant garde artist, I can of course also take pleasure in the recognition. But when I pick up this book and try to read it, I find myself browsing here and there, and then putting it down. Why? I would send it home to my mother if she were still alive. I'll show it off to my friends. I will certainly take it along when I am looking for funding for a mural project. But I wonder: who's going to pay sixty dollars for a book like this?

Will "outsiders" (non-muralists and groupies) gravitate towards it in the art book section of the book stores? Will they longingly caress its pages wishing they had the sixty bucks to spring for it, wondering whether, if they didn't feed the cat for a month, they could afford it? I'm not sure they will.

Partly, the problem lies in the pictures. People buy records for the quality of the sound, not the literary merits of the linear notes. People who will spend sixty dollars for an art book want their visual kick. The images must convey something of the excitement of the originals. Unfortunately the vast number of black and white pictures in the book lack crispness. The color reproductions are somewhat faded and, in the murals that I know personally, not particularly accurate. But there is a further problem:

The book is exhaustive, and also exhausting. One wonders why anyone would want to see so many murals. One admires the persistence, the tenacity, the consciousness, the dogged determination to see everything to which this book is a testament. Did Mr. Barnett, standing before his upteenth community mural, ever stop and say: "This is just God awful. If I ever see another picture of a clenched fist rising from broken chains I am going to scream and begin graffitiing it myself personally?" Probably he didn't. He has been a faithful historian, a documentor without parallel of a significant movement whose place in history it is difficult to judge.

Every mural, and especially every muralist whose work appears in this book will be grateful to Alan Barnett. He has been an ally. His work legitimates us (even if the form of legitimization is traditional). But could we have wanted both more or less?

Art history and art criticism have produced consistently among the lowest form of intellectual discourse imaginable. It's hard to talk about written art without drifting off into a philosophical never-never land, a landscape full of great, puddling abstractions in which one is bound to get one's boots stuck. "Beauty", "truth", "realism", "subjectivity", the object"—all buzz around in the artist's head, and with luck it is the art that ends up on the wall. But when critics put the buzzing down on paper, it often looks just silly. To his credit, Alan Barnett avoids the pitfalls of profound-sounding, empty language. But the price is some neglect of the critical task.

Art is not a simple subject. Whatever it's about—the struggle to reconcile the temporal with the infinite, the inner world and the outer, the impossible and the real (or perhaps some totally differently defined struggle)—is enormously problematic. In a modern world in which the horror of reality so often transcends imagination, (Auschwitz), form struggles to come to grips with the events which are beyond comprehension (Hiroshima). There never have been easy answers to the relation between art and life.

Mixing the questions of art and politics only makes for more difficulty. The two have been uneasy bedpartners for years. Sometimes they have seen themselves as wary allies: distrustful of, threatened by, and dependent on each other; other times they have seen each other as enemies. Marriage counselors from the political side of the family are always trying to join them together. Marriage counselors from the artistic side are always advising them to separate for their own good. There is nothing easy and simple about their relationship. Art is in an intense, difficult, and unstable rela-

tion to the world. Revolutionary politics can struggle for self-definition in almost as elaborately tortured forms as art does. Art, politics, and the reality which they both are trying to confront/transfigure exist in unstable balance at best.

All these tensions are present in the project of painting community murals. At times, out of these tensions, something miraculous and wonderful is born. At other times formula solutions avoid the problems, and formula explanations justify the formula solutions. One wishes in Alan Barnett's book some more recognition of the difference. Art and radical politics are both about taking risks. There must be room, especially in the criticism of our friends, for heretical thoughts.

Semi-heretical observation:  
When I went to New York a couple of years ago and toured the community murals on the Lower East side I found those murals curiously flat, labored, and stiff. They were obviously sincere, well meant, but beneath a layer of New York filth the murals seemed unable to challenge the immensity of the city, nor genuinely capture its spirit. On the same trip I fell in love with and was overwhelmed and awed by the graffiti in the subway—its wild disrespect, its illegal brilliance, its formal daring (I know this is no longer an original observation, and the subways have had their Alan Barnetts). Next to the subway graffiti, the community murals looked conservative, even reactionary. Why? And why are the New York subways not mentioned in this book?

Second semi-heretical observation:  
Rockefeller may have dug Rivera's mural out of Rockefeller Center when the artist taunted him by placing the head of Lenin conspicuously on the wall of that temple of capitalism. But Rockefeller thought well enough of Diego to ask him to paint there in the first place. And Rivera (one of whose murals still adorns the Pacific Stock Exchange in San Francisco) thought well enough of Rockefeller (or at least his money) to accept the commission. Is there something about art that transcends class? Is this what makes it such an unsatisfactory tool of the revolution (when it is reduced to a tool)? Are there hard and fast distinctions between high art and low art; political art and non-political? And now that revolutionary muralists have their own traditional symbol of legitimization—the coffee table book—what is to be expected next? A museum retrospective?

Undoubtedly the critics who will address these questions will use Mr. Barnett's encyclopedic *Community Murals* as their source.

Osha

# INTERNATIONAL

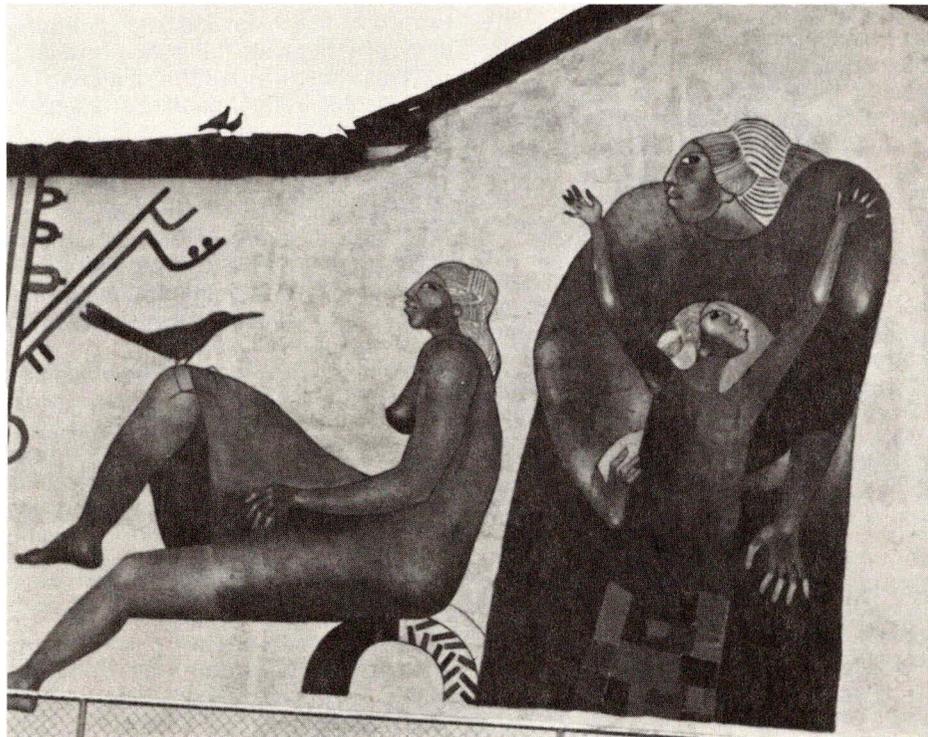
## Alejandro Canales

After seeing the dynamic power of his decorative figurative images appear on yards rather than inches of space, it is not surprising that Alejandro Canales admits that in recent years he has done very few easel paintings "as my mind is now primarily focused on murals." Before the 1979 Revolution he had never painted a mural, but "necessity forces one to learn." To commemorate the first anniversary of the revolution, he was one of the first artists who was asked to try his hand at painting a mural at the Luis Alfonso Velazquez Elementary School, located in the 1972 earthquake-destroyed district of Managua. Now thousands of international tourists annually visit this reconstructed, tree-planted site in order to attend cultural activities and admire the murals.

The theme of this mural is the Literacy Campaign, which is symbolically portrayed through stylized, multi-colored forms of women and children, against the stark white background of the 70-foot-wide by 14-foot-high school wall. What is particularly pleasing to me is Canales's personal, lyrical vision of the women whose full forms are portrayed with dignity and tenderness as they embrace a child or reach downward toward a bird or outward in space. Details such as fingers and hair are often rhythmically elongated.

Rather than conforming to a stereotypical form concept, each of his figures is a personal portrayal of the Nicaraguan people. Although he had six assistants, Canales considered the compositional challenge of this immense space as "difficult," but now, after five years of experience, "the process is much easier." However, in his recent mural each of his images is usually filled in with a flat application of color instead of the blended color of his early murals.

When I met Canales, he was working on an enormous mural (30 meters tall and 14 meters wide) on the facade of the Telcor Building near the Plaza of the Revolution. At this time his two brothers and father have become three of his six assistants. Ironically, his father, a retired Coca Cola factory worker who does some of the less demanding tasks, never recognized Alejandro's talent as a child,



which he manifested especially in elementary school. Canales was born in 1945, and at 12 years of age he was apprenticed to a carpenter, but continued to draw and paint on his own.

Canales describes how his artistic training was initiated at age 16 through unique circumstances when he became romantically interested in a young woman whose father was a custodian of the National Fine Arts School. He explains how as a demonstration of his love, he gave her gifts of his tempera paintings and small sculptures that he had created on his own. The woman's

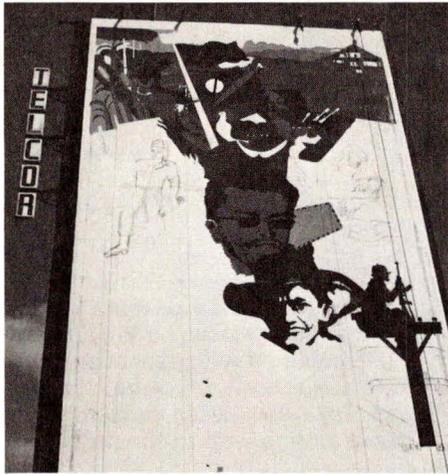
father was impressed by the gifts and showed them to the director of the art school. Subsequently, Canales was given a scholarship to the National Fine Arts School where he was then able to study drawing, painting, and sculpture from 1961 to 1970.

In the years that followed, Canales struggled to maintain himself through sales of his art work. In 1977, after becoming involved in the revolutionary movement, he began to demonstrate his abilities on walls or large sheets of paper by creating quick drawings, caricatures, or graffiti for street audiences that por-



photos by Betty LaDuke

tray political ideas and events. Therefore, mural painting seemed a logical follow-up activity, except that now his imagery is designed to have a more permanent and universal aesthetic appeal.



After several months of planning and one month of work, this current TELCOR mural, scheduled for completion by the 5th annual July 19th celebration of the

revolution, is based on the theme of Communication Past and Present (Fig. 5). Unlike his earlier work, the forms and background space will be completely filled in with subtle mixtures of warm and cool color which he prepares for his assistants to apply within his compositional outlines.

The complex design of this immense mural begins at the top edge with a rural farm scene. Horizontal lines dissect the lower landscape area which contains a satellite dish. A vertical pole with the red and black FSLN flag leads downward to the heroic revolutionary portraits of Fonseca and Sandino. A black silhouetted profile of a soldier with a rifle using a telephone pole for an observation post leads the eye to the bottom right-hand corner. Even in this incomplete stage, the mural's color coordination and composition are impressively revealed.

Located near this TELCOR mural on a small horizontal building is another Canales mural completed in 1982 on the theme of "THE COFFEE HARVEST." The figures in this mural are closer to the style of his first mural, LITERACY CAM-

PAIGN. Three seated women with upraised arms are picking the deep red coffee beans. The intense white of the background space flows between the decorative patterns formed by the coffee bean clusters and the women's hands, and also surrounds their buxom forms beside their large baskets that contain the picked coffee. Unfortunately, the wall space seems too small for these dynamic female forms. Even though these over-life-size women are well designed, they seem cramped within this narrow, horizontal space approximately two meters high by seven meters wide.

In the past few years Canales has been kept busy with opportunities to paint murals in Managua's Ruben Dario Theater and the Social Security Building. He has also painted murals in Mozambique, Africa, Eugene, Oregon and Seattle, Washington, and looks forward to future opportunities which combine more travel and mural painting.

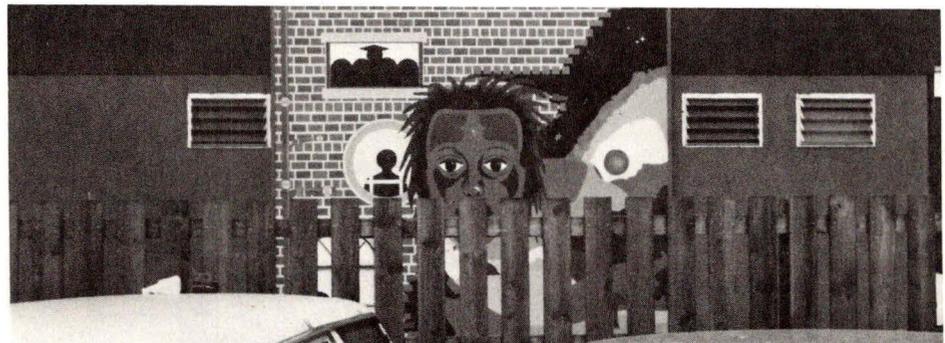
Betty LaDuke  
Professor of Art

Southern Oregon State College

## Limbo

London muralist Barry Burnett has recently completed a ten square foot mural at the Afro Caribbean Community Association in Brixton. Funded by the Inner City Unity of the Lambeth Council, and painted on marine plywood, the mural seeks to illustrate the split between cultures that a young British-born black person might experience. As Burnett points out, "Internal experiences are common among the black youth of the UK today, but not dealt with by society at large. On the one hand you have a cold, unfeeling, emotionless society and on the other you have a tropical paradise melting into a bottomless lake of African culture." The mural seeks to articulate the tensions between the two.

Burnett continues to describe one of the experiences in painting the piece. "When I was ready to begin work, scaffold in place, etc., a number of community residents assembled and began to protest my actions, so I had to stop work. The opposition seemed general, and not opposed to anything in particular, so I had to abandon working on the wall and complete the project on plywood panels, which changed the composition. The site I chose to erect the panels on was about 300 yards down the road from the original site. When I got it up, the very same people who had complained before congratulated me and helped erect and secure the work to its new location. At least the stage is set for more murals!"



# UNITED STATES

## Raya's "Portrait of America"

One concerned private citizen in St. Louis has recently commissioned Chicago artist Marcos Raya to paint an indoor mural, and the result, pictured here, is *Portrait of America*.

The work took about one year to complete and is composed of four plywood panels measuring, in total, 10' x 14'.

A statement by the owner, who wishes to remain anonymous, says

that "I wanted to support a living artist who was not turning out the morally meaningless and aesthetically underpowered 'office art' that I was being offered."

The work was done inside Raya's studio at Casa Aztlán in Chicago, where he teaches art to students from that Latino community.

The owner further states that he hopes that "the readership of *Community Murals* will be as struck as I

was by the mural's power and originality, and in being so will see that support on a personal level for muralists like Marcos Raya can be as rewarding to the client as it is vital to the artist."

Photograph is by the owner.



## Mural Depicts History of Opposition to Nuclear Weapons

Boston artist David Fichter recently painted a 70 ft. mural in Atlanta, Georgia, on the theme of the history of opposition to nuclear weapons.

The mural was sponsored by P.A.N.D. Atlanta (Performing Artists for Nuclear Disarmament) and local businesses of the Little 5 Points area of Atlanta.

On October 5, during the Week of Concern for Disarmament and International Peace, hundreds of colorful balloons that were hanging in front of the mural were cut loose. As the curtain of balloons soared up, the newly completed Seminole Peace Mural was dramatically unveiled. Musicians, poets, and dancers celebrated the completion of the mural.

In many ways the mural was a collaboration between the artist and the local community. Three Atlanta artists, Tom Ferguson, Karen Edwards, and Cynthia Schurzinger, helped Fichter in painting the mural. A rough sketch of the

mural was shown to as many people as possible in the community to solicit comments and suggestions, which were incorporated into the design.

"Wherever possible I tried to tie the history of opposition to nuclear weapons to local issues and movements," explained Fichter. The civil rights movement and peace with justice figure prominently in the theme of the mural.

The final image of the mural depicts people standing in front of a bulldozer which represents an unpopular local highway project. "The unification of the community in opposition to this highway project is symbolic of the type of grassroots organization which is needed to stop the nuclear arms race," Fichter said.

The mural is chronological. It begins with a Hopi kachina figure, warning the human race of an ancient Indian prophecy of the nuclear destruction of the planet.

The ghostly, mournful face of Albert Einstein dominates the birth of the bomb, while atomic scientist Leo Szilard vainly attempts to prevent its use on Japan. He clutches the atomic scientists' petition of 1945, which predicts the beginning of a nuclear arms race, the prevention of which "is the responsibility of the United States, by virtue of her lead in the field of atomic power."

This section is followed by images of the bomb falling on Hiroshima.

The middle of the mural chronicles the movements and actions of the 50's to ban nuclear testing. "The Golden Rule" sails towards a nuclear test in the Pacific ocean, next to a huge depiction of a nursing mother with her child. Portraits of various peace activists, including Dorothy Day, Bayard Rustin, and Peace Pilgrim are painted into this area.

The third section shows the peace movement dovetailing into the civil rights movement of the early 60's. A profile of Martin Luther King Jr. contemplates two hands breaking chains, one of which takes on the shape of a dove.

The final section of the mural includes members of the Plowshares 8, who are striking missile warheads with a hammer and pouring blood over them. Overhead, many arms and hands raise up the planet earth.

While painting this outdoor mural in the Little 5 Points area of Atlanta, Fichter talked with the frequent visitors. "Almost everyone voiced approval for the mural, despite the strong message inherent in the subject," said Fichter. "The experience really convinced me of the power of art to express an important political message."

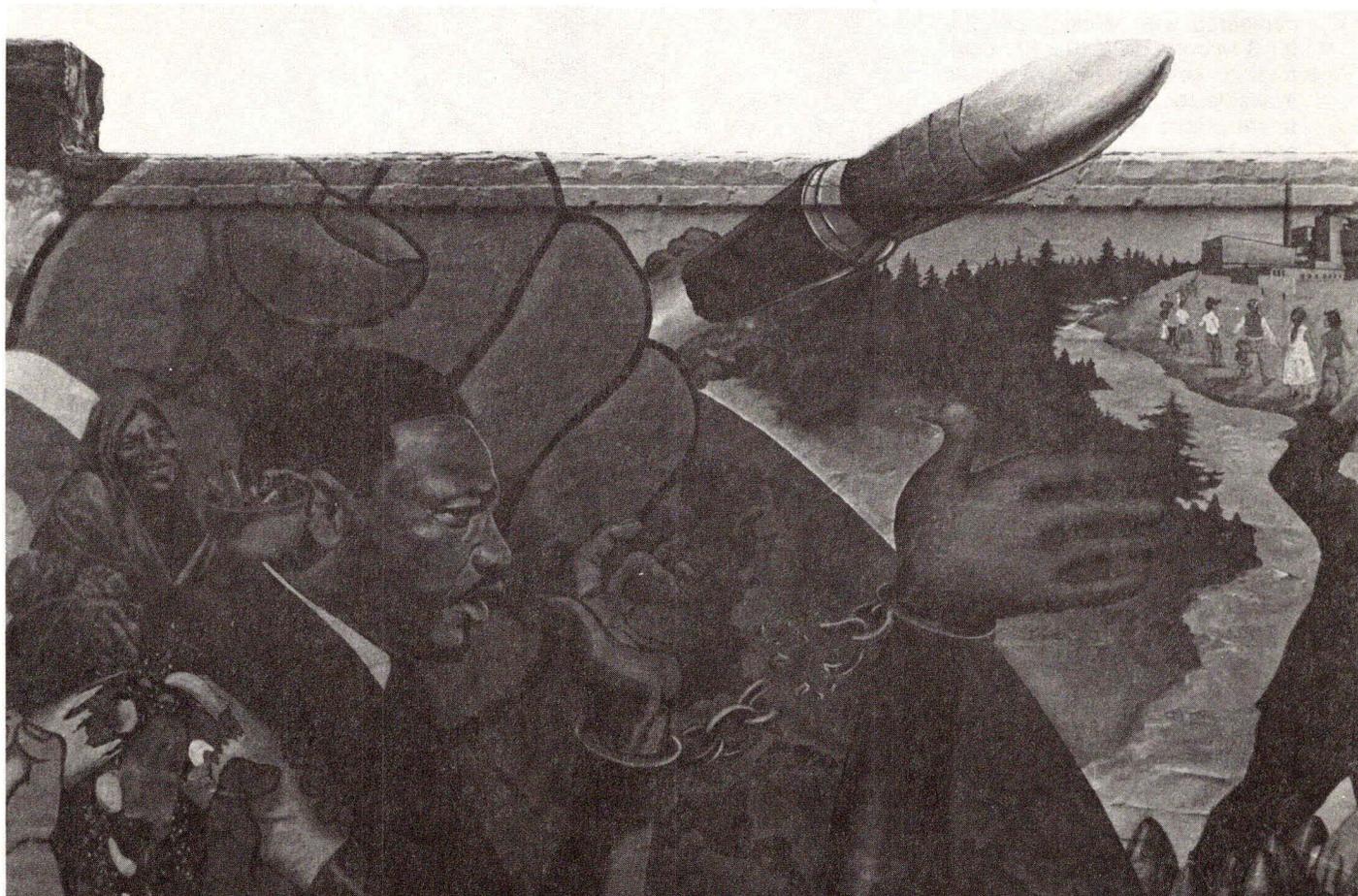


photo by David Fichter

# Voz Libre

I began considering the Pedro J. Gonzalez mural project (Voz Libre) after seeing the video program *Ballad of an Unsung Hero*. The video (shown nationally on PBS T.V.) covers the life of Don Pedro from the Mexican revolution to Los Angeles radio personality, to San Quentin, to deportation, etc.. A heroic struggle that covered a long period of time (Don Pedro is now 90) and a story that has taken its place in Mexican and Californian history would also lend itself to a co-operative mural project. In October of 1983 I explained my ideas to the staff at the Centro Cultural de la Raza and also discussed aspects of experimental application in terms of the techniques I wanted to use in producing the mural.

## Techniques and Reasons

- I. To use a portable, flexible and durable surface (100% woven polyester canvas).
  - A. To incorporate artists who cannot work comfortably on scaffolding. To facilitate easy transportation of 10 x 10' sections (permanent surface is 10 x 60' vertical position). To make adhering to final surface as easy as possible. To do this in an economical manner compared with working on site for 3 months on a 10 x 60' scaffolding. To have various panels available for easy viewing in different places when finished and prior to mounting. To add additional information to experiments done by Fabbio Reti in France. To do something in a different way.
- II. To use oil paint sticks as the only paint material.
  - A. In order that the change in material used would accelerate creative use of materials. To incorporate visual techniques that are common to drawing as well as those used in large scale painting. To try a new form of oil based paint for outdoor sites. To try something new.
- III. To work as a co-operative team as much as possible.
  - A. To build artistic familiarity within a group. To vary the amount and sources of input. To take people who had been raised in Mexico, Mexico and USA, USA, Japan on a common theme. To deal with the co-operative nature of work. To save time.
- IV. Use a local living character to develop the idea of local people having a history that helped change history.

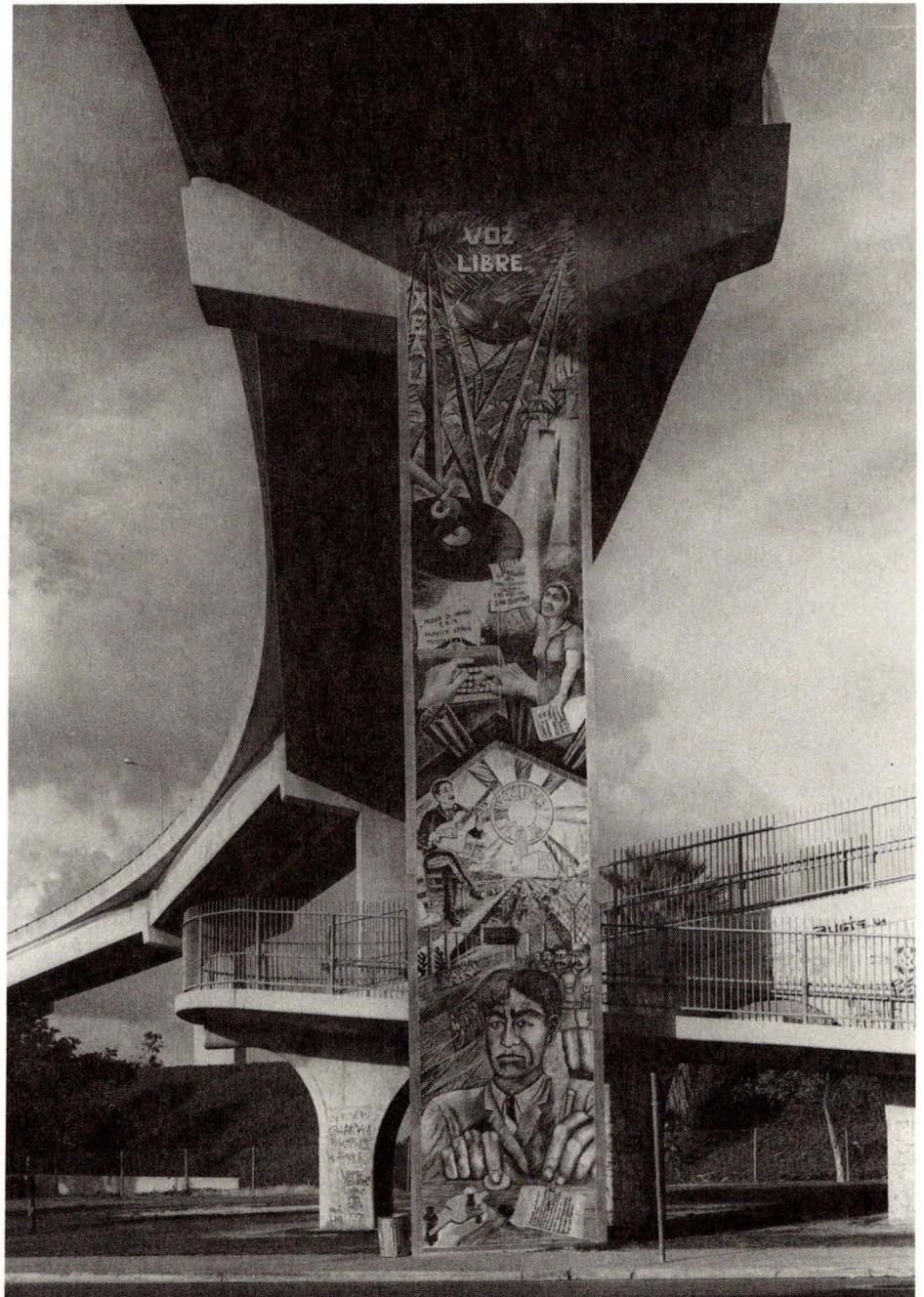
- V. Add to the collective expression of the history of Chicano Park and the history of the border region of San Diego and Tijuana.

The mural was dedicated December 16, 1984 in Chicano Park, San Diego. Adhesion to the 10 x 60' vertical pillar (bridge support) was accomplished by using an epoxy A and B type concrete glue that is rated as excellent for concrete and dissimilar materials. The epoxy is polyester based as is the base material used in the canvas. The 6 sections of canvas were allowed to dry for 6 months before being adhered to the final surface. The backs of the canvases were washed with water, degreased with methyl

alcohol and flushed with water. The mounting of the canvases took four people a full day of work. The canvases were covered with two coats of Sol U Var as a protective sealer/varnish.

Problems encountered with this technique are being evaluated and will be presented in the next issue of *Community Murals*.

Michael Schnorr,  
Project Coordinator,  
San Diego California  
Muralists:  
Yasue Doudera,  
Carlos Esparza,  
Victor Ochoa,  
Guillermo Rosette



## Chicago Mural Group

"The Art of Bill Walker" (co-founder of The Chicago Mural Group)—An Exhibition of Drawings, Paintings and Photographs, was on display at Chicago State University; Nov. 14 - Dec. 17, 1984. Victor Sorell, advisory board, CMB, was the curator/organizer.

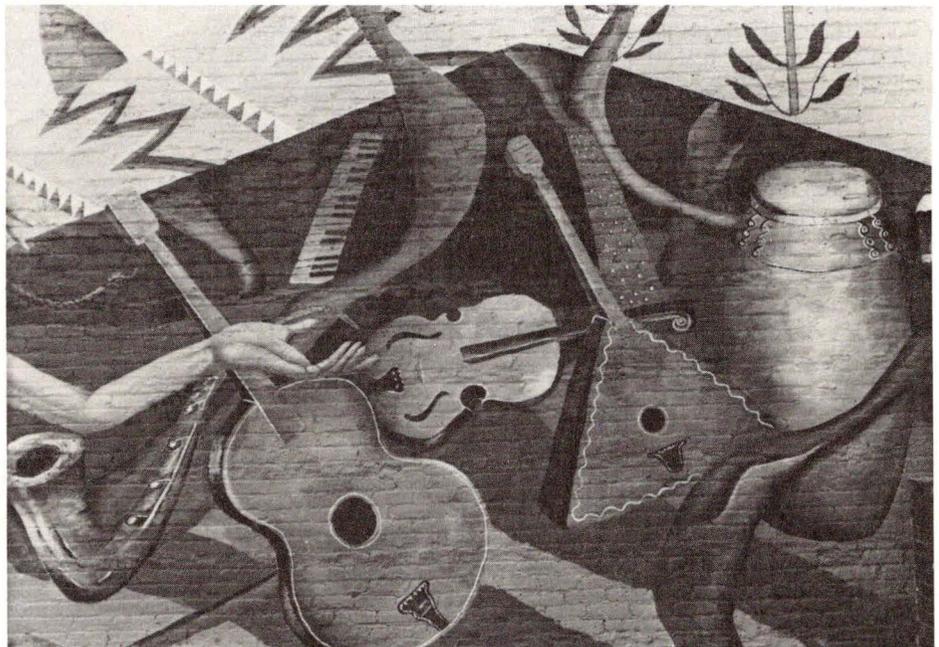
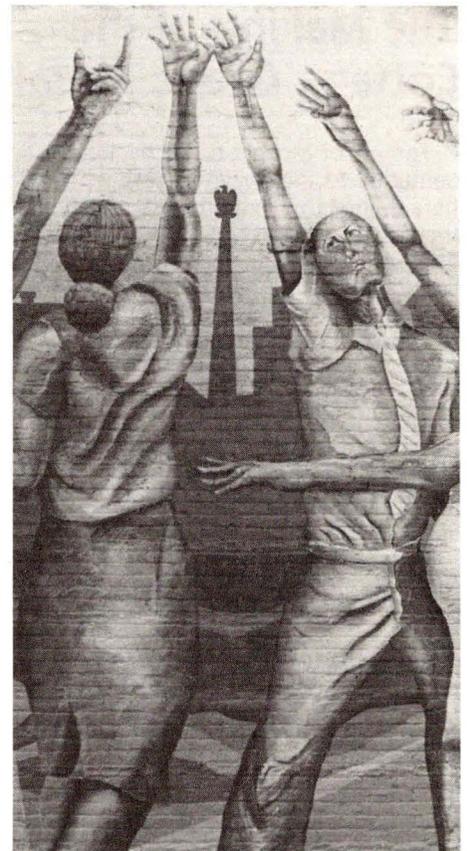
Mirtes Zwierzynski had an exhibition of her work at The Art Supply Store and Gallery, Crete, Illinois. Her one-person show was Nov. 11 - Dec. 14. Paintings by John Pitman Weber, celebrating the spirit of the people of Central America, are on exhibit at the Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ, 615 W. Wellington through December 21. The exhibition also features large banners, made by John, which hang from the ceiling of the church. Weber is leaving December 28 to Nicaragua for a one month trip to work with artists in Managua. Invited as a cultural exchange project, for the public art "Renaissance", in Nicaragua, John will be showing slides of our work to the artists there. If you would like your work to be included please get slides to John before he leaves. John will also be bringing art materials with him. From the sale of prints at his exhibition at the Wellington Avenue Church, monies will be used to purchase paint, brushes, canvas, etc. that are so much in demand by artists in Nicaragua. If you would like to make a donation of materials, or money to be used for materials, please contact John Pitman Weber at 583-9890.

A dedication of the Venetian glass mosaic mural by Cynthia Weiss, with Miriam Socoloff and Mirtes Zwierzynski was held at the Farnsworth Center for Business, in Aurora, Illinois where the mural is installed in the lobby. "Centrifugal Forces," as it is titled, was dedicated on Dec. 1. Lynn Takata was featured on Two On Two (Channel 2, TV) on Nov. 18 with her mural at the Crown Community Academy.

Also featured on TV was John Pitman Weber, on Nov. 17, Channel 5 News with his mural on Hoyne Avenue. From his most recent solo exhibit at Gallery 345 in Manhattan, Weber was reviewed in the November issue of *Arts Magazine*.

"Talking Walls" a video tape produced by LA Films, Chicago, on the St. Mary of the Lake mural by Kathy Kozan, (painted this past summer) is available for purchase and rental. The 12 minute color video is in VHS, 3/4", and professional BETA formats. "Talking Walls" was independently produced for Kozan, who holds the copyright. The film shows the process of painting a community mural within a neighborhood. Kathy Kozan's latest project is redesigning a commercial restaurant interior and exterior to be executed in trompe l'oeil (fool the eye)

murals. The restaurant, currently the Beefsteak Inn on Sheridan Rd., will be called Pierre O'Brien's. Patrons entering will walk through rooms designed to change from interior to "exterior" space, through a "town Square", pub, cafe, garden and bakery. Work will take place over the next 4 months. Carlos Cortez is among the board of directors of Artists For Sharing sponsoring exhibits and performances in The Caldwell Gallery at North Park Village, and throughout the city.



# The Making of the Cottage Grove Mural

The art of Mosaic dates back several centuries to the Byzantine era when artists trained in this craft were masters of the day. Because a revival of this ancient art form has been ongoing in the Chicago area for the past several years, artist Nina Smoot-Cain and the Links' Art Committee Membership and President Allene D. Gayles, of the South Suburban Chapter, felt that this process would be most appropriate for a lasting mural project in East Chicago Heights community. Members of the Chicago Mural Group heartily agreed with this idea and secured partial funding for this project from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Illinois Arts Council. In October of 1982, the superintendent, Mr. Shirl Gilbert, agreed to present the proposal to the School Board and they consented to have this permanent art work on an exterior wall of the new addition to Cottage Grove Middle School.

The actual process began with preliminary sketches which were shared with other artists and interested residents of the community. Based upon suggested modifications from these resources, a master drawing was jointly created by artists Cain and Dixon. This master drawing, in color, is called "the Cartoon."

Color selections were made according to the availability of *Venetian Glass Mosaic* tile, imported from Italy.

Awaiting the tile shipment, the "Cartoon" was enlarged to the actual dimensions of the mural and taped to an eight foot by eight foot plywood base.

The task of cutting and laying the tile began. This phase of the process was enjoyable but tedious because it involved cutting the glass tile in pieces ranging from 1/8 inch to 3/4 inch to fit the shapes and contours outlined in the drawing. As each small segment was completed it was secured with a clear contact paper. It should be noted that the skilled and the unskilled alike cut and laid 22,000 pieces of glass over the course of 12 weeks. It should be further noted that some of those 22,000 pieces of glass cut and scarred the hands that laid them.

When the tile was completely laid and covered with contact paper it was then cut into one and two foot sections for a more efficient installation.

The actual installation process took three days and was done by professional tile setters and assisted by the artists. On the first day the installers floated an eight by eight foot wall of cement 3/4 of an inch thick on the existing brick wall. A thin layer of the same mixture was applied to the wall in small areas the sec-

ond day and the Mosaic sections were fit together like a jigsaw puzzle. Those few tiles that did not remain secure with the contact paper were reset by hand. On the third day, the contact paper was removed and the grouting process completed and the surface of the Mosaic Mural refined. The bull-nose terra cotta border constitutes the framing of the mural.

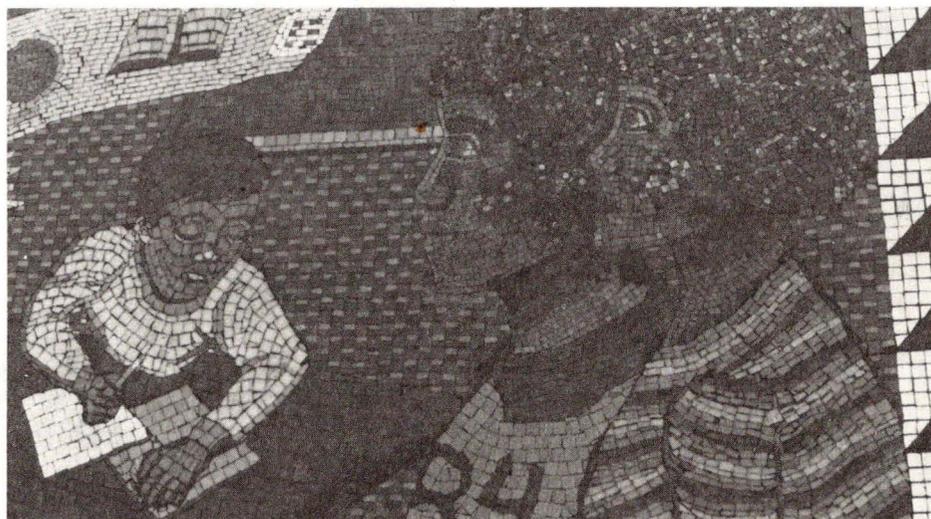
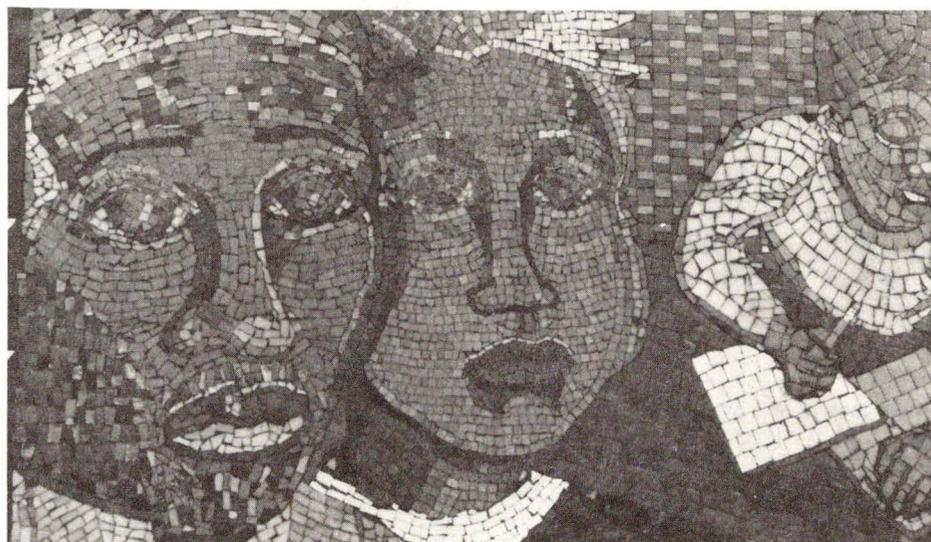
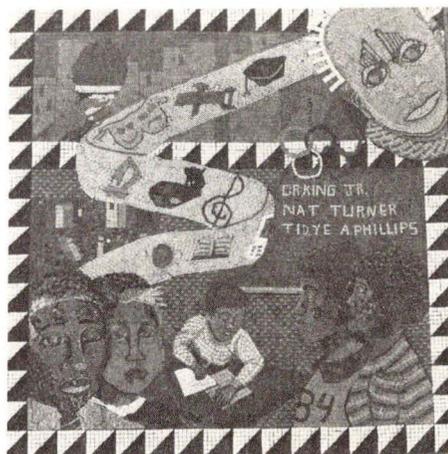
Throughout the twelve week process, the artists had the good fortune to work with many volunteers, both adults and children. The endeavor became one of teaching and learning, creativity and sharing. The evidence of this cooperative effort is presented for your enjoyment today.

Member of the South Suburban Chapter are:

- |                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Georgia Blackstone | Patricia Harris       |
| Jane Brown         | Yvonne Rouhlac Horton |
| Jo-Ahn Brown-Nash  | Gwendolyn Lee         |
| Willene Buffett    | Ruth Love             |
| Juanita Butler     | Chase McJunkins       |
| Lois Butler        | Toni Moore            |
| Nina Smoot-Cain    | Sherby Jean McCrowey  |

- Audrey Carter  
Joan Coleman  
Mary DeJohette  
Bernice Deloney  
Marilyn Epps  
Carolyn Epps  
Katherine Gavin  
Allene Demby Gayles

- Joyce Norwood  
Yvonne Robinson  
Constance Shorter  
Gloria Simms  
Gertrude Tandy  
Alma Vineyard  
Anna Washington  
Arlethia Wright





## “Reflections”— John Wehrle

“Reflections” is a 30 feet by 100 feet illusionistic wall painting combining trompe l’oeil architectural and landscape painting techniques, suggesting a beach scene reflected in a downtown San Francisco building.

This project was funded by O.C.D. through the Mural Resource Center and required over two years, five different

wall sites and two designs before final funding approval was obtained. The approved site is owned by the Bank of America, who also contributed funds to the project.

Once the site was approved, a design was drawn to a scale of one inch to two feet and enlarged onto the water-blasted wall using a grid system. The original design had the seascape reflected in a modern mirrored glass building, but after the design was on the wall, the artist felt that the arches were more in keeping with the front facade and surrounding architecture. The existing bubble window and electrical conduit dictated the place-

ment of the painted architectural mullions.

The painting was executed with Politec acrylic paints. Large color areas were mixed to shade and some lighter areas were glazed with thinned pure pigment to inhibit fading. The work was done from a rolling scaffold which covered about one arch-width of the wall. The facade and sky were painted first, with more complex landscape features following on subsequent passes. The painting took six months to execute and the artist was assisted in portions of the drawing and architectural painting by Dan Fontes and Jim Petrillo.

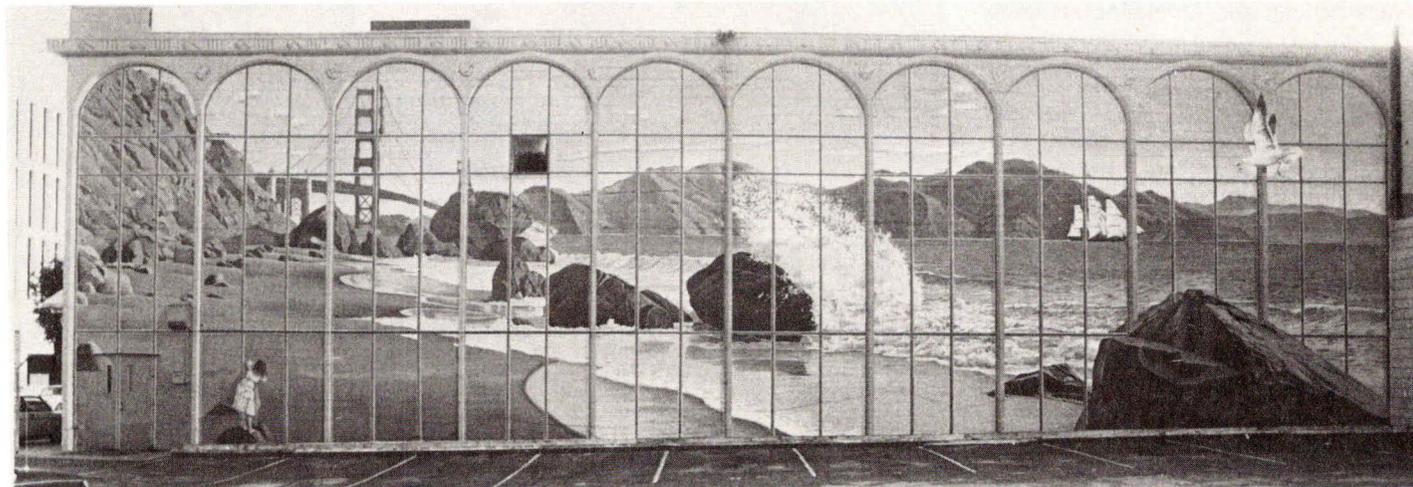


photo by John Wehrle

## Jobs Bill Mural Program a Success in San Francisco

In May of 1983, the Mural Resource Center submitted a proposal to the office of Community Development for funds allocated by the Jobs Bill, which were ear-marked to provide employment and training for the unemployed. The proposal was the result of the work of members of the MRC Advisory Board who, with the MRC director, Kathie Cinnater, identified and developed approximately 20 mural sites throughout the city. In addition, the group determined many other details of the budgets, policies and guidelines. Subsequently, five of the sites were chosen for funding by the OCD (the grant totalled \$100,000). By February, 1984, the go-ahead had been received by the MRC and the project was ready to get underway. Because of the heavy administrative tasks involved with the Jobs Bill and an additional \$100,000 in grant money that had been awarded to the MRC, Kathie turned the

directorship over to James Kuromiya and worked with staff member Nancy Graham on the Jobs Bill Murals. Together they juggled all the inevitable bureaucratic snafus and assisted the

muralists with community outreach. The following information covers 4 of the 5 JB Murals (the fifth, a Hunter's Point Housing), will be ready for the next issue).

Site	Muralist	Assistants
Western Addition Community Center 762 Fulton St.	Dewey Crumpler	Kemit Amenophis, Broonie Long, Sandra Roberts
"Ang Lipi Ni Lapu-Lapu" (Descendants of Lapu-Lapu) Dimasalang House 50 Rizal	Johanna Poethig	Vic Clemente, Presco Tabios
Martin Luther King Swimming Pool 3rd and Carroll Ave.	Horace Washington	Kate Singleton, Seitu
Hunter's Point Housing 90 Kiska Rd.	James Phillips	Sara Williams, Todd Stanton
"Tools For Peace" 3199 Mission at Valencia and Fair Sts.)	Arch Williams	Mario Turcios, Anthony Senna, Ann Fitzpatrick Jo Tucker (volunteer)

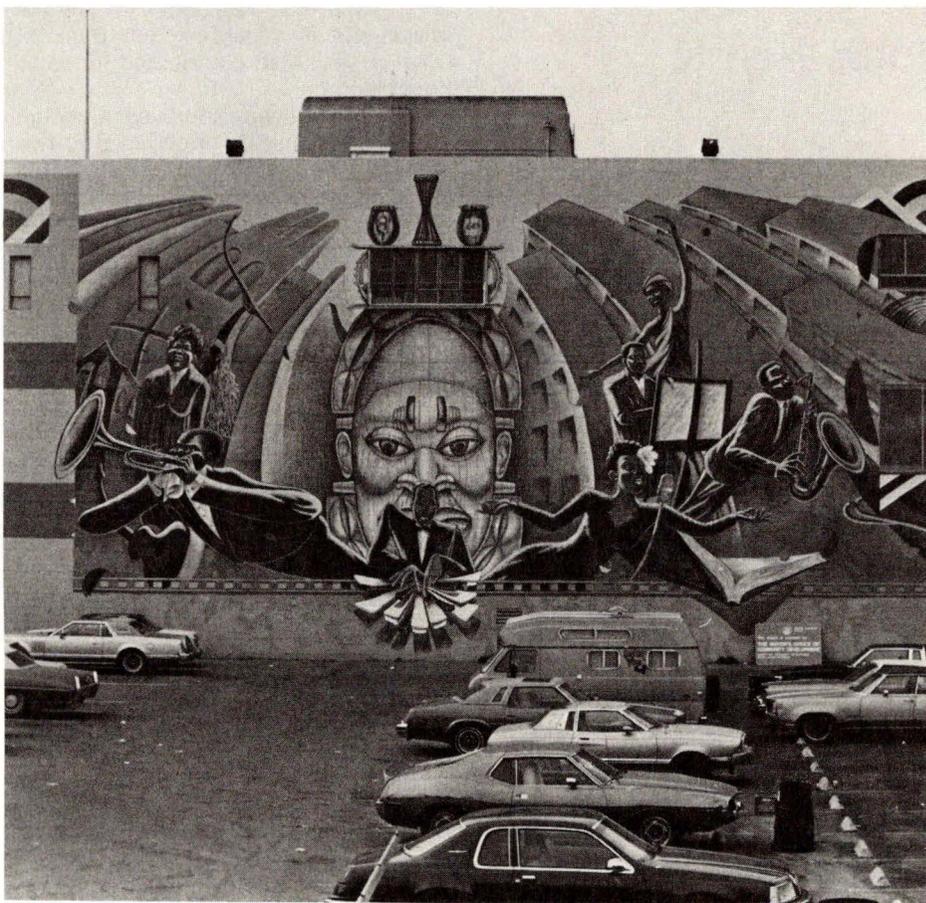
### Western Addition Cultural Center

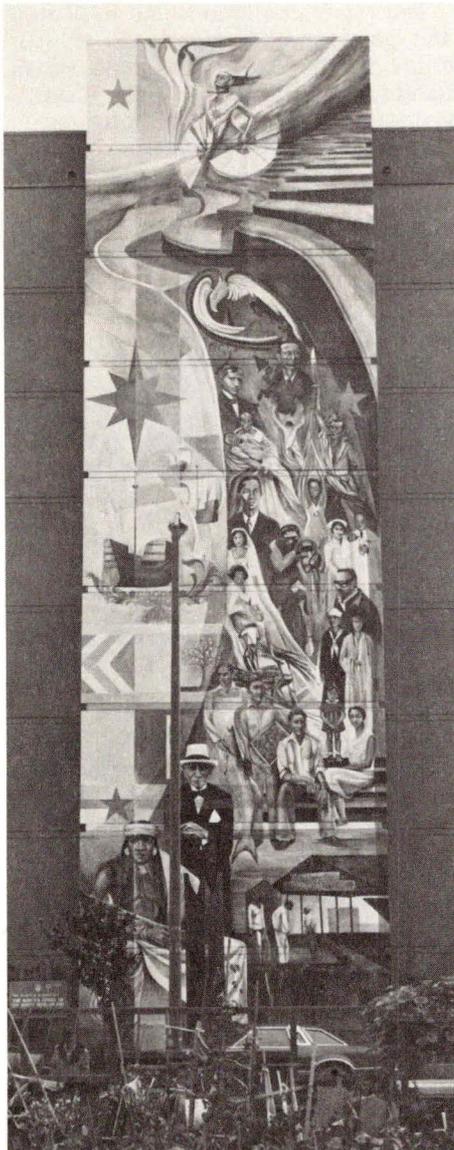
On October 24, 1984, Dewey Crumpler dedicated a huge new mural in San Francisco's Western Addition area. The dedication was attended by hundreds of local residents and visitors who came to admire Crumpler's latest community artwork which, like the dedication and the Western Addition Cultural Center building on which it is painted, is a celebration of the arts.

The images combine painting, dancing, drama, music and links in all between African and African-American expressions. The focus of the design is the drum and the figures around it (Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Hale Woodruff, Mahalia Jackson, Kathryn Dunham) demonstrate in their individual expressions the power originating from the drum in their culture.

Also central to the piece is a representation of an Ife mask, from what is now Nigeria, showing the majesty and glory of black people's African past.

The wall is 45 feet high by 131 feet long, and was sponsored by the Office of Community Development, the Mural Resource Center of San Francisco. The mural is painted on concrete with Politec Mural acrylic paints.





## Ang Lipi Ni Lapu-Lapu (Descendants of Lapu-Lapu)

This mural heralding the Filipino odyssey to America is significant in many ways: It found its place on the eastern side wall of Dimasalang House, a low-cost housing project in San Francisco, which is home to many Filipino senior citizens. Dimasalang House is situated in the South of Market area, behind Moscone Convention Center, where street names honor the memory of Bonifacio, Lapu-Lapu, Mabini, Tandang Sora and Rizal, all of them historical figures portrayed in the mural.

It is a work of art created by artists with a deep sense of love for the Philippines and the Filipino community. In designing the mural, Johanna Poethig, a San Francisco muralist, worked with the ideas of the community through personal encounters, researchers and collaboration with Filipino artists, especially Vic Clemente and Presco Tabios whose knowledge, ideas and aspirations are reflected in the mural.

This is the first mural in California, possibly in the United States, which deals with the history of Filipinos and Filipino-Americans. It portrays their experiences, struggles and contributions to their country of origin and the country of their destination.

The panorama or visual images of Filipino odyssey starts from Lapu-Lapu, the hero of Mactan who fought Magellan, moves through the galleon trade (Manila Acapulco trade) and the establishment of the first Manila Village in New Orleans, includes a Filipino *manong* (oldtimer) residing in the International Hotel, the cannery workers in Alaska and the

agricultural hands in California's valleys, the succeeding waves of professionals. Outstanding Filipinos who helped shape the Filipino mark in American life are featured: Carlos Bulosan, the writer; Vicky Manalo-Draves, winner of two gold medals at the 1948 Olympics; Pancho Villa, a great Filipino boxer; and Larry Itliong, a farm labor leader.

Filipino heroes like Dr. Jose Rizal, Andres Bonifacio, Apolinario Mabini, Tandang Sora and, of course, Lapu-Lapu are portrayed vividly as the sources of inspiration and tradition of the Filipino in America.

The mural illustrates the Filipino people flowing in waves from the Banaue rice terraces, one of seven wonders of the world, connecting their odyssey from their roots, their native land to their present home in America. Stylistically, Mother Philippines is portrayed as a woman leaping from the terraces with doves of freedom in flight. Lapu-Lapu sits at the base of the mural in full splendor of the Filipino heritage.

*The Artists:* Johanna Poethig is a caucasian American who grew up in the Philippines through the first 15 years of her life as a daughter of a Presbyterian minister engaged in urban renewal work in the Philippines. Vic Clemente, a Filipino political exile, came to the United States three years ago and has since painted vivid images of social realities in the Philippines. Presco Tabios is a Filipino-American with profound ties to his ethnic roots as reflected in his writings and artworks; he has been involved with the Kearny Street Workshop and the Asian-American Theater Co.

Written by Pilac  
(Philippine Arts in the Community)

## Martin Luther King Swimming Pool Mural Project

Horace Washington's ceramic tile mural is on the exterior wall of the Martin Luther King Swimming Pool in the Bay View Hunters Point area of San Francisco. The mural's six panels are portraits of historical people in Black America past up to the present. Each panel is approximately six feet in height and is composed of forty-two eight inch tiles. The artists transferred the eighteen portraits to the tiles in four months. Some of the glaze colors required three coats on the two hundred and fifty tiles comprising the mural. After the tiles were fired in the kiln, the three artists installed the work in this manner. First the steel frames and wire screen were attached to the wall. A coat of mortar was then applied over the screens. The tiles were attached with a cement mixture and finally grouted in.



photos by Horace Washington

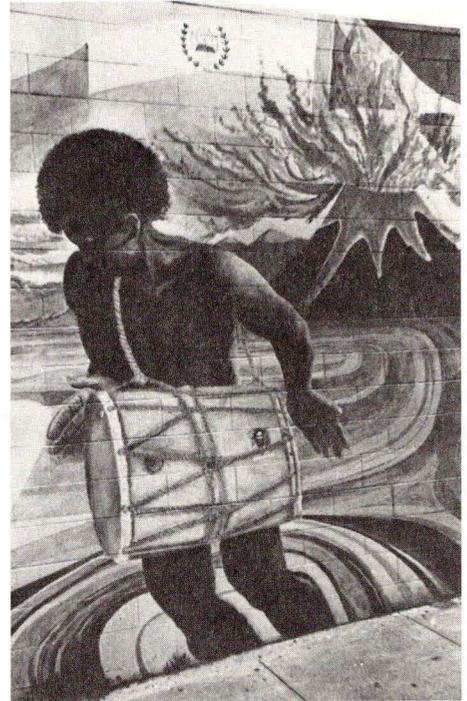
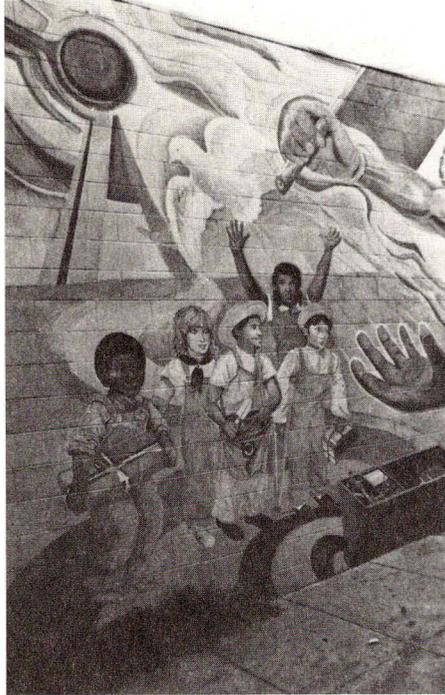
## “Tools For Peace”

This mural is another call for non-intervention in Central America and self-determination for its peoples. The dedication was held on November 17, 1984 with a large gathering of neighbors and friends. Great music was provided by Achyutan and the Front Line Express: Achyutan-drums, Barbara Collins-flute, vocals: Susan Laraine-tenor, Jane Hastay-keyboards and Richard Saunders-bass. Avotcja read some of her dynamite poetry and Mexican food was provided by the merchant of the building on which the mural is painted. He even allowed the artists to brick-up the one window in the wall to give a continuous surface. The mural was painted with Politec Mural Paint on the wall composed of cinder blocks.

The mural can be described as follows. As a Grenadian forcefully beats his drum, his country's flag flies above the erupting volcano, symbol of the revolution. On either side of that flag are the flags of El Salvador and Nicaragua. Emerging from the flames and smoke is an Amazonian woman representing the power of the matriarchy and bringing with her peace and light. She is holding the long banner of flags of Central and South America, Puerto Rico, the Phillipines, Cuba, Haiti, and the African Liberation flag. The first four flags are of the Contradora group who have been trying to negotiate a peaceful settlement but have been blocked by the Reagan

government. Hearing her call, children from the United States gladly pack a box of tools, books, and medical supplies for the struggling people and refugees of Central America. Beside the children a breakdancer spins on a landscape of emerging ellipses as dancers and musicians from Mexico, Central America, and the Phillipines celebrate their culture. Finally, two Guatemalan children are pictured examining a newly arrived box of drawing and art supplies.

The team also found time to design and paint another mural, “El Pulgarcito/Tiny Thumb”, a nickname for El Salvador, in Balmy Alley for PLACA. Anthony Senna was also motivated to create a fine drawing which was used for the cover of *Community Murals Magazine*, Summer, 1984, showing his impression of “Tools For Peace” in progress. This mural is in the Bernal Heights district.



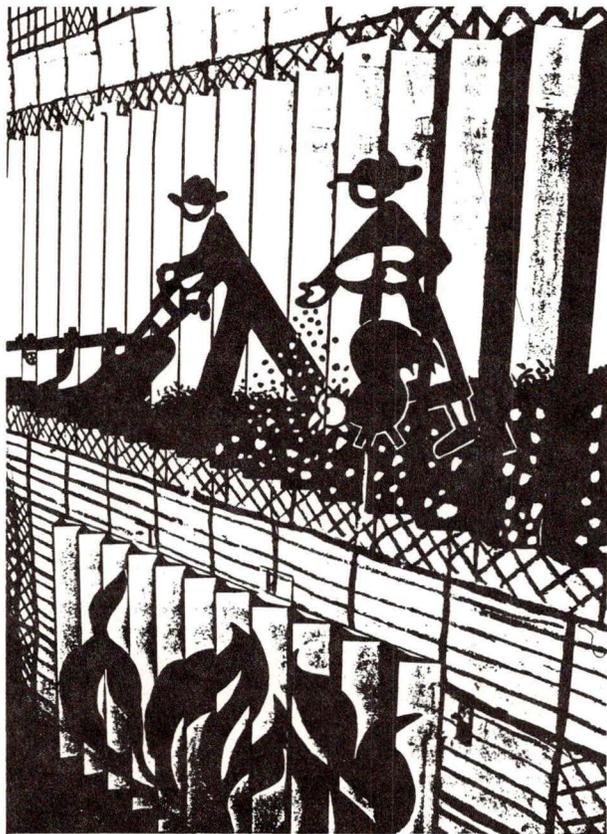
photos by Arch Williams

## 3-D Images

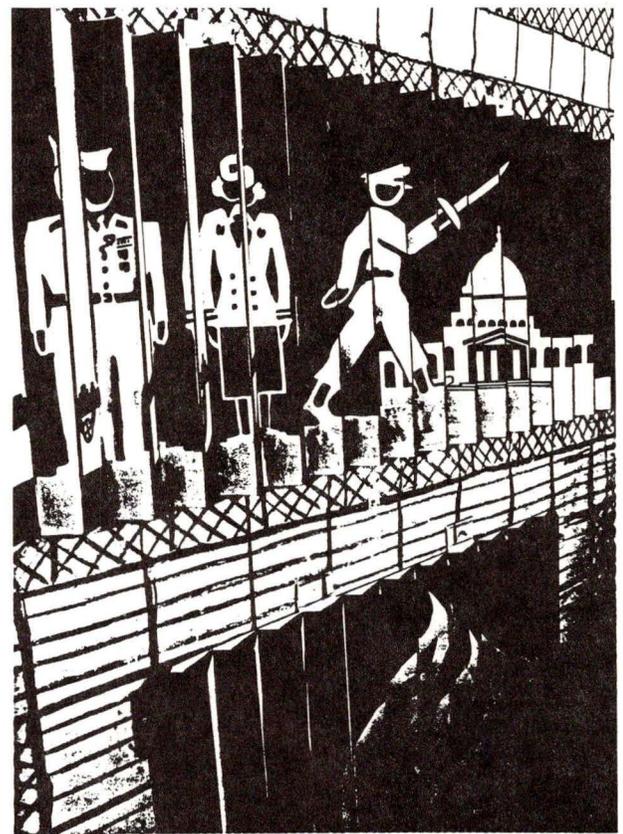
Both of these works are composed of two separate images which are split up into strips and positioned at opposite angles to each other. The result is that each image is fully visible from one direction only, and when passing the piece it appears to slowly shift from one image to the other.



"Washington" screenprint by Lincoln Cushing, Fall 1984. 14" x 17", black and three shades of red corrugated and mounted on masonite.



Detail of 3-D Glass Painting Based on "Cincinnatus" (citizen-soldier/citizen-farmer) Legend." Commissioned by the Veterans Administration Art-In-Architecture Program, Washington, D.C.



"The Veteran's Lobby: A Glass Hearth"; (detail of cardboard model). Main Entry, Seattle Veterans Administration Hospital © 1984 Richard Posner.

# OFF THE WALL

## Lisa Kokin - Batik Artist

Lisa Kokin's work crosses two boundaries—one between art and craft, the other between "political" and "fine" art. Her batiks defy easy categorization and stand alone in their eloquent portrayal of social themes.

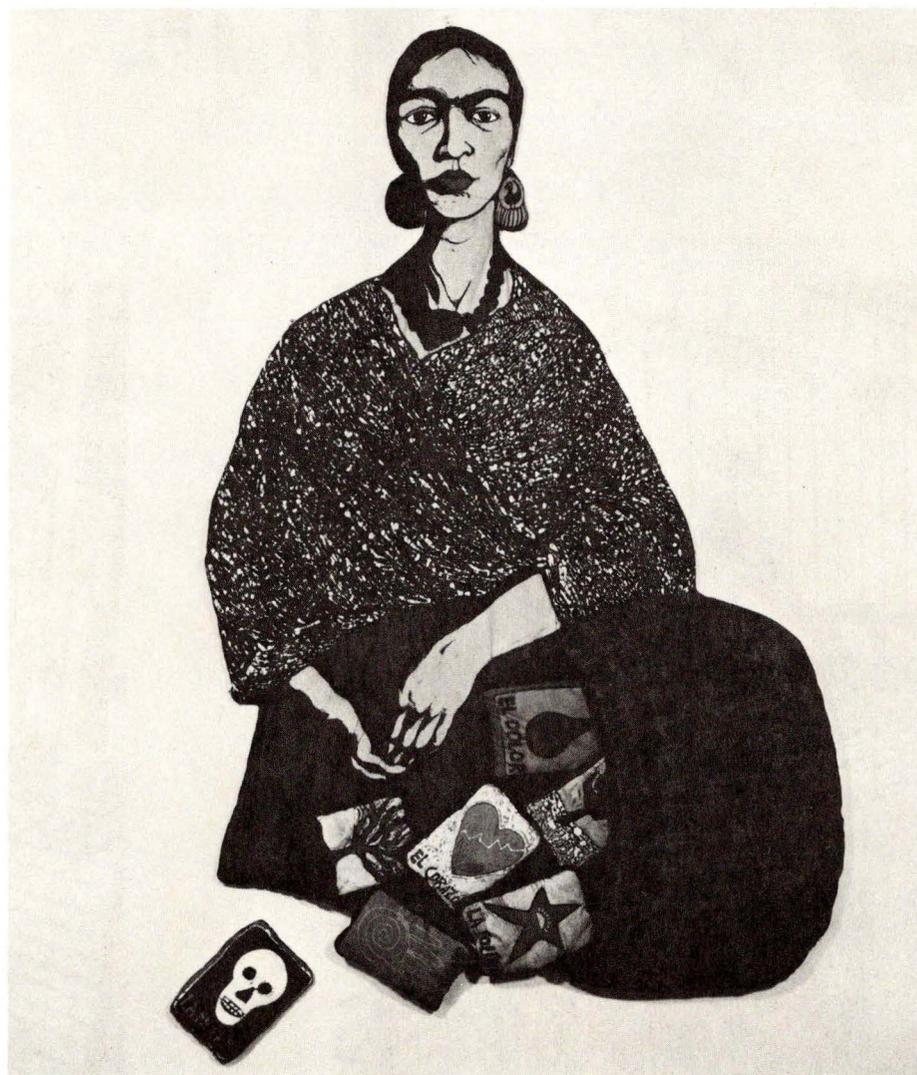
Lisa learned the principles of batik while studying Spanish in Mexico in 1970. A year of art school in San Francisco was of little use ("I didn't want to stomp all over a canvas and cut it up and set fire to it, which is what was being done at the time,") and she began to seek her cultural development through other means. The coup in Chile inspired her to begin producing socially-relevant batiks, and soon she joined up with a design collective which produced graphics for progressive groups in the Bay Area. Her batiks during this period included works on Palestine, South Africa, Jewish culture, and old people. A trip to Cuba in 1979 resulted in a series on the progress of the revolution there. Further travel in South America inspired 20 batiks on El Salvador which took over a year to complete. In 1983 she was invited to Nicaragua by the Sandinista Cultural Workers Association (ASTC), a trip which was the source of her current series.

Lisa's work is often based on slides taken during her travels. She begins by assembling images and drawing a full-color mockup of the final piece. This is followed by transferring the design to cloth, waxing the resist, and immersing the fabric in multiple dye and rinse baths. Over time she has refined her techniques to produce a richer palette of colors with more subtle effects, and often includes embroidering and quilting in the final piece. Because her batiks combine a high degree of craft and original imagery, her work often falls between established distinctions. Her work is often seen as too craftlike (i.e., "women's work") to be seriously considered as fine art, and too visually realistic for the normally abstract fiber arts community. Needless to say, her political themes work against her in both arenas.

Lisa acutely feels the numbing isolation common to artists in North America. "Everybody who does artwork, especially people who do political art, knows that

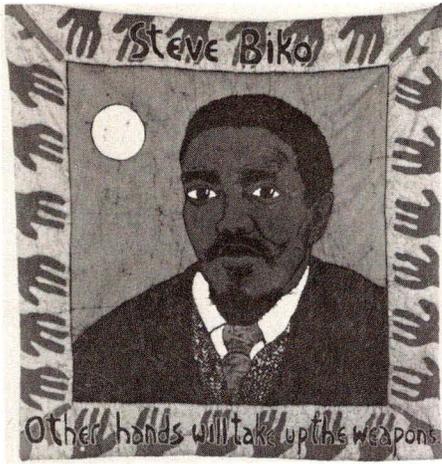
we are marginalized in this society that doesn't value art very much. Other countries are much more integrated in this way. I've had a show at a museum in Holland, and I could never imagine having a show in a museum here, especially considering the political climate of the 80's." She has exhibited widely in Europe and Latin America, and believes that travelling has helped to establish a link with other cultures that is essential to properly representing them in her artwork.

"I know that art by itself will not eradicate injustice. I also know that it can contribute to a change of consciousness, can inspire and educate, bring beauty into people's lives, interpret and give meaning to a history which is sometimes overlooked, revive traditions in danger of being lost, speak the truth. It is with the hope that my art can do at least some of these things that I continue to paint wax on cloth and dip it in dye to form images that affirm my faith in humanity."  
—Lincoln Cushing



"Loteria de la Vida: Portrait of Frida Kahlo"—Executed for an exhibit at San Francisco's Galeria de la Raza. Lisa considers Kahlo to be an impor-

tant figure as a woman artist and a progressive. The cards represent elements of her life—pain, hope, death...



"Biko"—Part of a series on Southern Africa and Mozambique, produced right after his death in 1977

Nicaragua series . . .

"Pan con Dignidad"—A street vendor in Masaya. Title is from a popular song, "Bread with Dignity." This is typical of her efforts to show the strength and dignity of the people that is evident from looking at them and talking to them.



"Vive—Mother of a Martyr"—Many Nicaraguan women suffered loss of family during the revolution. "I wanted to capture her strength which had an element of sorrow beneath it."



"No Pasaran"—A typical scene in Nicaragua, this one in Masaya.

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