

COMMUNITY MURALS

FALL
1982



Questions about the Women's Movement

The eight questions below are meant as starting points for a discussion which will help us all to better understand the women's movement and its relationship to visual arts. We hope many readers will send in answers, or partial answers, or responses to the questions *before February 1983*, and we also hope those responses will clarify the issues of feminism for artists.

Whether or not they relate directly to the questions below, observations about women muralists are especially welcome.

1. How is the emergence of the women's movement reflected in the visual arts?
2. How do progressive images of women affect a viewer's consciousness?
3. How does the women's movement relate to itself and to other progressive movements?
4. How is the women's movement being used in reactionary ways?
5. Is there a need to make distinctions in our work among women in different racial and class positions?
6. What connections exist between feminist and gay/lesbian cultural production?
7. How does a feminist consciousness affect the way art is produced and distributed?
 - a. Is the goal creation of a separate system of galleries, publications, events, etc.?
 - b. Or is the goal to make an impact on the already established system?
8. Does a commitment to feminism mean use of certain subject matter?
 - a. Or is the fact that an artwork is created by a woman enough to make it feminist?

Editorial Group

Miranda Bergman
Kathy Cinnater
Jo Drescher
Tim Drescher
Emmanuel Montoya
Jane Norling
Ray Patlan
Arch Williams



Thanks to Tony Chavez, Jo Keroes

Labor donated

Cover art: Ray Patlan

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Deadlines

Any material for our Spring 1983 issue must be in our hot little hands before *Friday, March 4, 1983*. If you want to submit something, just do it. Send us the information, preferably typed, but not necessarily, with black and white glossy photographs (best size is 5 x 7 or 8 x 10) or color slides. It's that simple. Remember, this magazine focuses on visual artists, so photographs are most important.

Responses to the questions about the women's movement should reach us by the end of January, 1983, so that we have time to work with the expected debate.

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Art and Society

Community Murals Magazine is adding a new section concerning the relation of society to public art. These sections, which we hope will encourage debate, will try to give some clarity to important topics/concepts/issues/questions in the hope that artists who understand the issues better will produce more effective art on behalf of people's struggles. Our goal is clarification, not necessarily to achieve political unity. We agree that clarification is often needed, even if we cannot offer answers to these highly and complex topics. It is at least important for more artists to know what the questions are.

The process of writing these sections is this: The Editorial Group selects a topic for a future *CMM* issue, and asks people throughout the country whom we know to be articulate and knowledgeable to write a summary of the main points of the question. (In this edition of *CMM* the issue is Chicano Nationalism.) We realize that these are not necessarily the most important topics for all

visual artists, and that in any given project immediate concerns will and should dominate in making design decisions. Still, we think each topic will be helpful to all artists, in this case whether Chicano or not.

When drafts are sent to us, we combine them and send them out again with requests for responses to the points listed. We also will print these lists, as we are doing here. Readers with different experiences are invited to send us their helpful clarifications and disagreements, and we will then publish them (or a selection if there are too many). We see this as an ongoing process.

The "topic" for the Spring 1983 issue will be the women's movement, what it is and its relationship to the visual arts. Suggestions are welcome, as are short essays in response to the questions listed on p.2 in this issue of *CMM*.

We receive a great deal of our published material from artists and supporters throughout the country, and this is one way we have found to try to give activist community visual artists a larger role in the magazine — and a larger impact on the thinking of other artists.



Editorial note: This billboard was "improved" in the southern California high desert last year. CMM would like readers to send us examples — slides or black and white photos — of other such efforts to improve the blight of ugly and exploitative billboards throughout the country. Photo by Luisi, 1981.

Street Murals

Volker Barthelmeh has produced a book by the name of *Street Murals* whose subtitle is "The most exciting art of the cities of America, Britain and Western Europe." It is 120 pages in length, published by Knopf for \$11.95, and should be available generally in bookstores now.

It is a limited book, with barely three pages of sketchy text, but it contains excellent color photographs of community-based murals along with fine arts works and trompe l'oeil. The large format permits 5 1/2 x 8" color reproductions, which are outstanding. Several of the walls are given only in details, making it impossible to get a sense of the entire wall, and leading to the overall feeling that the book's main interest is in the murals as art, perhaps as photographic objects, rather than as visual manifestations of living communities. Nevertheless, the book would seem to deserve serious consideration by anyone interested in murals today.

Tim Drescher

Beautiful House?

For those of you who do not make *House Beautiful* part of your regular reading, *CMM* directs your attention to the August 1982 issue and its article on "Wall Art: Painted Fantasies & Elegant Glazings." The article has nothing to do with community mural painting, but provides excellent photographs of decorative, trompe l'oeil paintings done inside wealthy homes. Technically, some of the ideas are potentially very useful to community muralists.

Book on Chicano Murals to be Published

Mural historian Victor Sorell has contracted to publish a study of the Chicano murals in the United States, to be called *The U.S. Chicano Mural in Critical Perspective*. It will give muralists and scholars a chance to speak about the murals, and is being edited with muralist Ray Patlán.

Any muralists who are not aware of this project, or who are not on *CMM*'s mailing list, should contact Victor personally at:

250 S. Whiting, Apt. 911
Alexandria, VA 22304

Author's Query

For a book dealing with the activities of the Mexican muralists Rivera, Orozco and Siqueiros in the United States during the 1930's, I would appreciate hearing from anyone who knows the present whereabouts of Clifford Wight, Rivera's chief assistant on the San Francisco and Detroit mural projects (1930-33), or information concerning his association with Rivera and subsequent career.

LAURANCE P. HURLBURT
2920 Low Road
Middleton, Wis. 53562



01184

ASOCIACION SANDINISTA DE TRABAJADORES DE LA CULTURA
"YEAR OF UNITY IN THE FACE OF AGRESSION"

Managua, Nicaragua

Dear

The organization of writers, painters, dancers, musicians, actors, photographers and circus artists in revolutionary Nicaragua, the Sandinist Association of Cultural Workers (ASTC) needs your help.

The Nicaraguan Revolution has opened infinite possibilities for the development of cultural expression. It has stimulated its artists' creativity, and it has managed to discover --among common people-- new artists and writers who are producing a real people's art and who now find they have new possibilities through which to express their creativity.

And yet the economic situation our small country faces is terribly difficult. Nicaragua is moving ahead with its singular revolutionary process in the midst of all kinds of pressures. It's logical that those determined --at any cost to defend their sovereignty, dignity and independence should face these problems. But it doesn't make them any easier.

We feel that intellectuals and artists throughout the world --honest intellectuals and honest artists-- should help support the struggle for free expression in countries that for centuries have suffered the oppression and exploitation of imperialist interests. And so we feel that honest intellectuals and artists from the developed countries, within the context of their possibilities, should attempt to support the struggles of intellectuals and artists who in these countries are trying to develop their art, their literature, their theater and dance and photography in the midst of such severe financial limitations. We lack work materials of all kinds, instruments, bibliography, adequate workshops and studios... everything the Revolutionary government would like to be able to give us but for which there are literally no funds.

Nicaragua's economic situation was further and seriously affected by the heavy rains and floods which devastated the country during the month of May. Crops lost, thousands left homeless, heavy losses in infrastructure, housing, bridges, highways... simply another serious hardship for this heroic people who are determined to keep on struggling and not give up.

We need your help. The Sandinist Cultural Workers Association (ASTC) --with its Unions of writers, artists, dancers, musicians, actors, photographers and circus people-- need what you can offer in order to make better theater, better paintings and sculptures, better drawings and engravings, better photography. In order to be able to print our works, in order to be in a position to raise circus tents and assemble stages. The cultural workers of free Nicaragua --who take their art to the furthest reaches of the country, to military units and peasant bases, factories and schools-- need the solidarity of their progressive brothers and sisters throughout the world: economic support (no matter how little of much), material support from individuals, from groups, organized or not... the solidarity necessary for us to continue to implement cultural projects and offer even better conditions for our people's creativity.

Please send a check (a personal check is all right, but it should be made out in the name of Rosario Murillo, the ASTC's Secretary General as the name of the organization is still in the process of being legally registered), or any other kind of aid to the ASTC, Parque El Carmen Managua, Nicaragua. Our artists, and our people in general, will be grateful!

In struggle,


ROSARIO MURILLO
Secretary General ASTC
P. O. BOX 5867



RM/mchl.

UNITED STATES

Bay Area

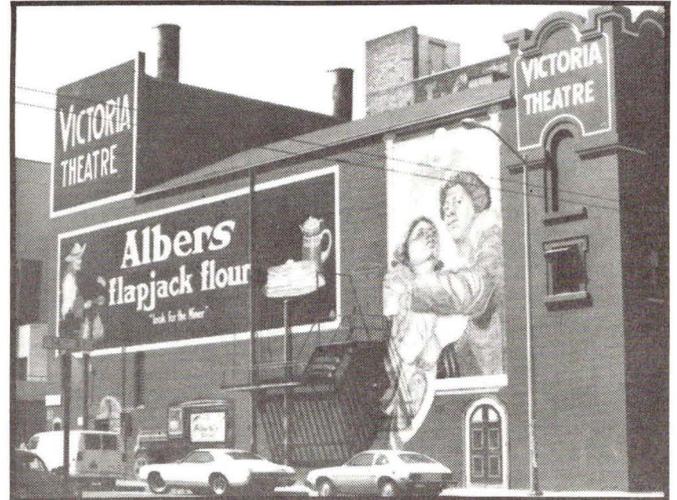
Bumper Crop of Murals in San Francisco

In San Francisco, 1981-82 may be remembered as a banner year for community murals. In many sections of the city, murals have been painted, often the fruits of several years of support work by artists and community groups. Many have been funded out of some \$100,000 in neighborhood Initiated Improvements Grants from the Office of Community Development, which the city's Mural Resource Center has finally been in a position to secure and administer a portion of for murals. Meanwhile, when the impasse over a viable contract between muralists and the city (*Community Murals*, Fall 1981) was broken and resolved in the muralists' favor, painting was able to begin on several previously deadlocked projects.

Among those then able to be painted was the wall facing Stockton Street in the Ping Yuen Housing Development. Josie Grant, who had painted five other murals in the Ping Yuen projects, first applied for an N.I.I.P. grant for this wall in 1979 as she was about to leave a five-year CETA funded position as a muralist and art teacher. While Ping Yuen's gardener had suggested the "Eight Immortals" and Chinese Zodiac symbols that appear in her earlier murals, Josie decided on the theme of t'ai chi postures (for their visually suggestive names, like "carry tiger back to mountain") for this 20' x 160' wall. Opposition had been voiced by members of the San Francisco Art Commission's Visual Arts Committee (who must approve city-funded projects) who felt it was inappropriate for a non-Chinese to paint that subject matter in that Chinese neighborhood. In her defense Mr. Lee of the Chinese Tenants Association said "Nobody paints the old Chinese style in Chinatown any more except Josie Grant". She has applied for funding for one more mural in Ping Yuen, this one portraying the "Monkey King" from Chinese Opera, protector of households.



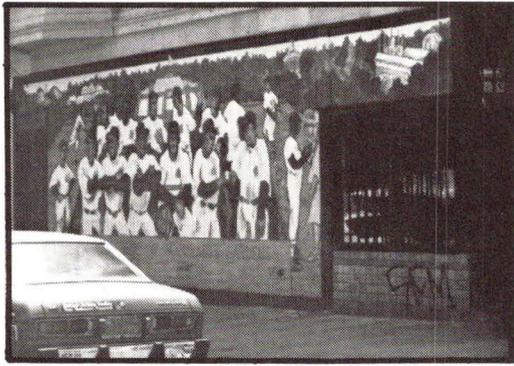
In North Beach Housing Project a mural of the California coast's frolicking seals and underwater life was completed by Kim Sites, who laid the groundwork for this project with the housing project's tenants while she was working under CETA funding in 1980.



North Mission Association Organizer Victor Miller laughs as he recounts how the neighborhood association chose muralists for four spaces along 16th street to be funded by an N.I.I.P. grant from O.C.D. Tales of lost slides, heated tempers, impatience with the machinery of city funding, breakdowns of continuity as neighborhood residents dropped in and out of the choosing procedure and last-minute decisions by the committee in the overheated back room of a 16th St. cafe are his recollections of a process in that neighborhood that began in fall 1980 when a dozen sites were first screened for suitability. While community decisions (and their implementation) are not always simple things, in this case the results justify the struggle. Of 16th street's four murals funded, two are completed and two on the way.

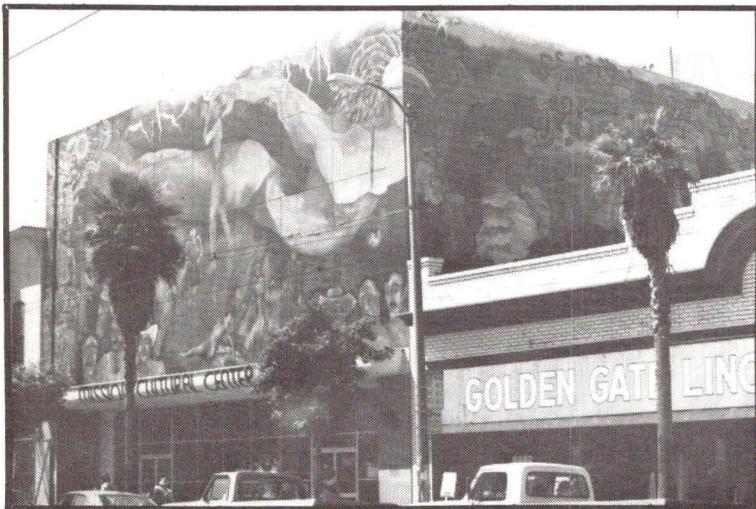
On the side of the community-oriented Victoria Theatre Claire Josephson and Monica Armstrong painted a pair of embracing young lovers in a style reminiscent of a Mexican movie poster of the 1940's, except using modern Mission District teenagers as models (in a photo session prior to painting the image the kids joked about how the girl's boyfriend would like to see her with his buddy in a clinch three stories high!). Beside it a neighborhood sign-painting company restored a painted billboard from the 1920's.

A smaller mural on the same "entertainment strip" on 16th street of small restaurants, neighborhood bars and theaters was painted by Mike Mosher, depicting a neighborhood professional baseball team of the 1920's and an amusement park of the 1880's, that played and stood a couple blocks from that site. Soon to be installed are two murals on landscape themes by John Rampley and Cynthia Grace, being painted on plywood panels.



The front of Mission Cultural Center, the San Francisco Art Commission's Neighborhood Arts Program's multipurpose center at 2868 Mission Street oriented towards the needs and interests of the Mission's large Latino community, has just been decorated with a mural by Carlos Loarca, Manuel Villamor and Betsie Miller-Kunz, all Mission-based artists. The Center's jaguar symbol, a figure with a feathered headdress and other Aztec/Maya motifs exists beside melancholy modern campesinos, campesinas and the cadejos — dogs of Mexican folklore that lead drunks home to safety that have figured in Carlos' easel paintings. Skeletons dance while other musicians and dancers evoke the activities and classes going on inside the Center. The mural's purples, steaming greens and fleshy waves of red and orange attract the eye to the Cultural Center even on this busy street.

The minipark on 24th street between Bryant and York in the Mission has contained several murals since 1974 but some had become seriously graffiti damaged, unpopular and of dubious aesthetic distinction in the eyes of the neighborhood. On one such wall a new mural has been painted by Miguel Ventura Rios along with Chris Velásquez, "dedicated to the memory of María Martínez" — a long time community activist in the Mission District who died earlier this year — and "also to the mothers and children of the world".



Doves of peace fly and a film strip of an astronaut ripples above the heads of a unified and strong sampling of La Raza that observes the mural's lesson illustrated in massive building blocks: A is for Aztec, one heritage of the Latino people, showing the carved Quetzalcoatl of the temples; B is for Bomb, the threat of the atomic ones threatening all life on the planet, while C is for literate and healthy Children, everybody's hope. Upon its completion Rios was awarded the Citizen's Certificate of Merit

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from the City of San Francisco, and funding has also been provided for the restoration of his earlier mural of indigenous Mesoamerican life, just across from his recently completed mural.

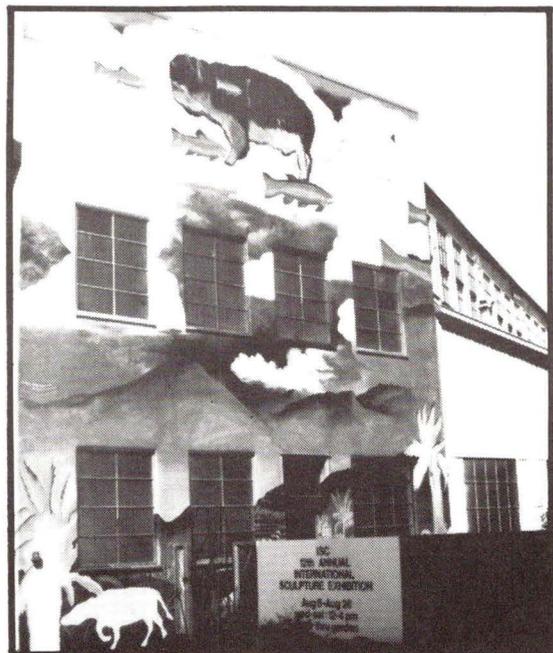
Along the back of the park Emmanuel Montoya has begun a mural on three walls (one the back of a three-story apartment building, that will show, in illusionistic windows, domestic scenes typical of the neighborhood. Clean new plywood panels to replace old ones have been installed and primed.

The new 24th Street minipark murals represent the culmination of a campaign by interested parties in the neighborhood to correct and improve past beautification efforts. Replacing a hodgepodge of murals with a more unified design, leaving up the ones they have lived well with, the visual impact of the minipark site has grown along with the mural consciousness of the neighborhood.

At Folsom Playground, Folsom at 21st Street, Ray Patlan directed a project resulting in a mural on the back wall of the tennis courts, with "VARRIO FOLSOM" in monumental letters, unity handshakes, sports, flags, classic cars and symbols of San Francisco. (See adjacent article.)

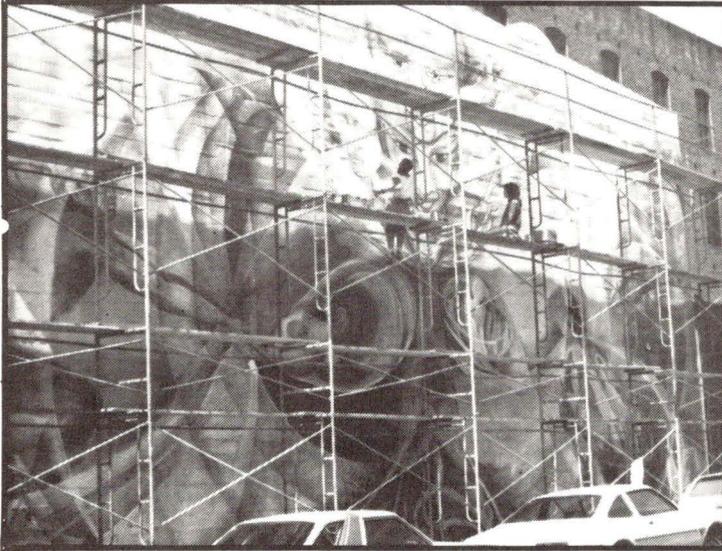
Fran Valesco has completed two prominent outdoor murals in the city in 1982. The first, of desert plants with a border of Mayan Motifs representing the passage of time, is on a 10' x 60' wall outside St. John's School. The school, students and neighborhood were all supportive and helpful in the painting process; the only problems encountered were technical ones, where an oil base primer has hopefully checked an efflorescence that appeared on the cinder block surface.

Her second mural commands a two-story wall on the South of Market Cultural Center. The neighborhood consists of small industrial/warehouses/commercial concerns, Pilipino and Vietnamese families, and artists lofts, so Fran thought a "West meets East" theme was appropriate. The American Bison and trout hover in a western sky above a water buffalo and tropical plants in a composition which is suggestive of some of Fran's own silkscreen prints. Funded by an N.I.I.P. grant, painting help included teenagers working in the city's Summer Youth Program, friends, and volunteers from the Sunset Mural Workshop across town.



8 Two other murals similarly funded in the South of Market area are Judy Jamerson's rainbow in the playground in the Pilipino Educational Center, and Bob Gayton's Peoples' Park mural on Sixth street. The controversial People's Park ("Wino Park"), provided by Glide Memorial Church, faces an uncertain future (might the fact that it's on prime downtown real estate have something to do with it... ?) so it is fortunate that the inspirational images of men involved in careers and community are painted on panels attached to the wall. A questionnaire circulated in the area asked the park users what they would like to see on the wall before designing and painting began.

In San Francisco County Jail Number Two, in the Hall of Justice on Bryant street, Mike Mosher completed a four-wall cycle of images sketched inside and outside jail in a project initiated by Deputy Andrea Elukovich of the Sheriff's Department, organizer of its Jail Arts Program.



Just across Gallagher street from the housing for elderly that was wrested as a concession from the developers of the Yerba Buena district (destroyers of the Yerba Buena neighborhood in which many seniors lived) Claire Josephson, Selma Brown and Johanna Poetthig are completing a 32' x 40' allegory of life's more natural transformations on the side of Saint Patrick's Day Care Center. The working title is "Cycles of Life" or "Elements of Infinity" or "Which Came First...?" — there are both egg forms and a chicken in it — depending on which artist is asked. A tree of life at the center of the mural is clustered with faces that represent successive generations.

The mural now covering three sides of the Ortega Branch of the S.F. Public Library is the latest for the Sunset Mural Workshop, a group of artists living in the Sunset district assembled in 1978 by Henry Sultan and Julia Marshall.

The workshop evolved out of an initiative six years ago by the Sunset Community Education Center of the S.F. Unified School District to find artists for a 225' long wall on Ortega St. in front of the Library and Center, and painted its "History of the Sunset" there with its all-volunteer team. Shortly after its dedication in 1979 they began soliciting funds for the Library murals from private sources, with funding coming from the Zellerbach Family Fund, Chevron USA, the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library and the Noriega Merchants Association. Though over \$6,000 was raised, the entire Library project — which includes two walls yet unpainted, a children's mural and a staircase connecting the "History" mural with the Library's — costs are running to nearly \$10,000, so a novel fundraising scheme was hatched. For a \$25 donation via Friends of the Library a benefactor's name can be listed as publisher (vanity publication... ?) on his or her favorite book, painted in the large bookshelves that are a major part of the mural on the wall of the Library visible from Ortega street. The murals' visual interplay "works beautifully" according to Ortega Librarian Mary Landgraf, who explains how each wall's theme reinforces the passerby's perspective of the site: at the east entrance, where children are visible in the nearby playground and A.P. Giannini Middle School, a swirling "mandala" filled with active youth was painted. From the north, where the inside of the Library is visible through large windows, the painted shelves filled with the mural's supporters' favorite books; and from on the west wall, where the ocean wind is at your back, you see a blue sky over the dunes filled with intricate kites that were painted on plywood then affixed to the wall. Other members of the Sunset Mural Workshop are Jim Cotter, Rob Langenbrunner and Paul Kensinger.

At other Branch Libraries around town, Arch Williams is completing his mural wrapping around the playground side in Bernal Heights on Cortland street and Margo Bors has painted a small mural depicting events in the history and growth of the neighborhood at the Potrero Hill Branch on 20th at Arkansas streets.

Elsewhere in San Francisco Jim Dong continues work on a mural on Japantown Community Center, visible to cars travelling west on Sutter street. Betsey Green has a project at Florence Martin Children's Center on Page St. in the Western Addition, and Patricia Rodríguez will soon paint upon the San Francisco Women's Building. At the Joseph P. Lee Recreation Center in Hunters Point, Dewey Crumpler, whose "The Fire Next Time" mural covers the front, has begun an outdoor wall which will be the largest mural in San Francisco when complete. It's been a year of accomplishment in this city for muralists as a whole to be proud of, with new work appearing in many diverse neighborhoods, which will further give inspirations and impetus to next year's struggles and satisfactions of public art▲

Mike Mosher

Photos: Martha Edwards



Varrio Folsom Mural

Early September saw the dedication of the Varrio Folsom Mural project at the park-playground at 21st and Folsom Streets, in San Francisco's Mission District. The project was directed by Ray Patlan and executed by a group including Julian Torres, Steve Berrios, Mike Padilla, Julio Ruoano, Carlos Gonzalez, Virginia Leyba, especially "Grandma", Lucy Borrego, and other Folsom Park Home-girls & Homeboys. It was financed by monies from the Mayor's Office and the Zellerbach Foundation.

The subject of the mural is the playground itself. It shows things the local youth feel good about, such as women and men together, which is a symbol of the artists' wanting women to be able to use the park more. Women had not been able to use the park for a long time because of its reputation.

There is also a section showing graffiti "signatures" which were painted over the mural, as a part of it, after the mural had been painted over earlier graffiti on the wall. The point is that both are part of the park and its users' lives — from graffiti can grow other art forms.

The cityscape points out that the park is part of the city, but also apart from it. This mirrors one of the concepts behind the Varríos Unidos logo calling for unity among the different groups in the Mission District.

The process of the mural's interaction with city officials is notable. Originally, as Patlan describes it, a "corny, typical" design was submitted in order to get the project underway, but the youth in the park began to make changes — they wanted their own mural, and Park & Rec objected to alterations which defied their authority. The muralists persisted. Park & Rec objected, for instance, to cars in the design, saying that such images promoted car clubs, etc., as if that were somehow bad. They also said the two central figures looked too much like confrontation.

The muralists went "over the heads" of Park & Rec to the Visual Arts Committee of the San Francisco Art Commission, and with the youth themselves in attendance and introduced to the committee, the design as the youth had done it was approved. This surprised Park & Rec, apparently. Although it took them over six years to replace vandalized electric lights in the park, and although they wanted four walls painted, for free, of course, and although they did not attend the dedication or contribute a single dime to the project, they nonetheless felt they could control it. The youth of the Varrio Folsom prove by their mural that they believe residents and park users should control their park.

Mural Resource Center

The Mural Resource Center opened its doors some three years ago with the help of the Neighborhood Arts Program's Ceta Arts program. Our goals were then, and still are, to work for the vitality of the mural movement, to provide arts services to the community, to promote murals and community visual arts which enrich our lives. We offer a variety of services, and general information in demand by the general public. Frequent drop-ins to the center are interested in our mural map, slide collection, and advice on the mural process — how to get a mural project started in their neighborhoods, schools, or what-have-you. Muralists use the Center to network with other muralists, exchange information, and get technical advice. Funding assistance is in great demand by everyone.

For the past two years, the Center has worked with the office of Community Development to secure HUD Block Grant funds that supported a number of mural projects. (Mike Mosher covers these, and other projects, in detail in his article, page 6.) So far, we have sponsored a total of eighteen murals with these funds, so it has been two years of inspiring activity and support from San Francisco's vital mural community.

The Center is facing yet another funding crisis this year as public funds continue to shrink. The local Community Development Office is following federal and local pressures and cutting its funding of community organizations and public beautification in order to pour money into housing. (We all know that the lion's share of those funds end up supporting the developers with only token housing resulting for the poor.) San Francisco muralists are once again rallying to protest these priorities. If you would like to help us with our letter-writing campaign, send letters in support of public funding for murals to:

Mayor Diane Feinstein
City Hall
Civic Center
San Francisco, CA 94102

In the meanwhile, interested and involved artists are strategizing survival techniques. Everyone in the area is encourage to join us in this important work. Everyone else is invited to drop in and see us when you are in town!

Kathy Cinnater
Director
Mural Resource Center
934 Brannan Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

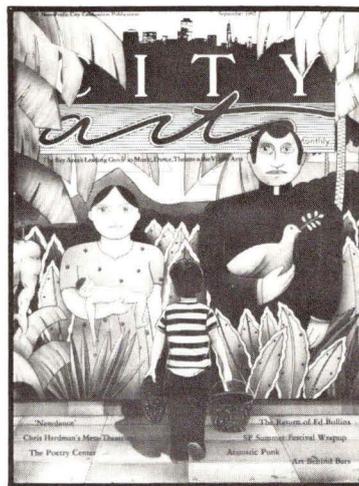


Photo: Martha Edwards

The STRUGGLES Continue

Fine Arts Plagiarism

We publish here, so everyone can see it for themselves, the original billboard mural painted at the Galeria de la Raza in San Francisco by Herbert Sigüenza, and the altered "interpretation" of it by a local fine arts magazine. Sigüenza's letter is self explanatory. The magazine explained their cover as follows: Cover artist "Anthony Delgado, illustrator from Berkeley, makes an airbrush interpretation of a Mission district mural." That the "interpretation" removes the politics and makes a strong visual statement about a peoples' struggle into a quaint stereotype of pacified Latinos somehow seems typical of a fine arts attitude.



Herbert Sigüenza's letter to *City Arts Magazine*:

Dear Editors,

I was surprised when a friend of mine told me he liked the cover I did for September's *City Arts* cover. I didn't know what he was talking about, until I finally saw the issue and realized where he was mistaken. Actually, I think your magazine was very much in error for allowing that cover to be printed. It was very irresponsible to let artwork be printed without first finding out more information about the source from which Delgado had "interpreted" his images.

I am basically writing to inform your readers about the images that were portrayed on the cover. First of all, the images shown were but a small portion of a billboard, not mural, that I and Emmanuel Montoya had recently painted for Amigos de El Salvador, a local refugee program on the side of la Galeria de la Raza on the corner of 24th and Bryant Steets, about 5 months ago. Since then, the billboard has been changed. I am a strong supporter of public art and consider myself a "peoples' artist"; but when original images are taken and literally copied by another artist who is additionally getting paid for it, then that is totally unacceptable, unethical and needs to be defended. The main thing that bothered me about the cover, besides not getting proper credit for it, was that

Delgado "cropped" the work and portrayed it completely out of context. The piece as a whole had an uninhibited social and political message which was totally lost on the over. If the magazine's policy is to avoid religious and political issues, then the original work was totally inappropriate for your cover. Furthermore, that same work was reproduced into two thousand calendars by Los Amigos de El Salvador and distributed nationally to raise money for the refugees. So in a sense, these images were not just mine, but the communities' they served. I am submitting the drawing so you can print it in its entirety.

I am not the type of artist who jumps at any chance for a plagiarism suit or makes quick publicity for himself because of a mistake. However, I do believe artists have to protect themselves and the images they produce, so I am requesting your magazine to print a formal apology to Amigos de El Salvador and myself for using our images without our permission.

Herbert Sigüenza
La Raza Graphic Center

In response to Sigüenza's letter of protest, *City Arts Magazine* apologized, reproduced the original painting in their following issue, and announced that cover artist Anthony Delgado would donate his cover fee to the Amigos de El Salvador Refugee Program.

Mural Defaced

The People's Wall mural, painted on the parking lot wall of John Adams School at Hayes and Masonic Streets has been seriously defaced. White painted graffiti smeared on the mural reads "ugly" "hate" "paint it black" "kill commies" and similar variations on a malevolent theme.

"I have been out of town so I haven't seen the graffiti myself," artist Miranda Bergman, one of the muralists who created the Wall in 1976, told the *Newspaper*, "It sounds like more than just graffiti — it's an attack on what the mural says."

People's Wall, which depicts historical struggles of San Francisco's people, suffered a similar graffiti attack in 1976, for which the vandal later apologized in the form of a \$75 check to the artists and the statement that his handiwork was "a psychotic attack. . .that made him feel terribly guilty," Bergman said.

Restoring the mural this year will be difficult, said Bergman, since "all of us are working full time. It's a hard problem, but we will do it because we believe in the mural."

Any assistance from community people is welcome — be it donations, supplies or artistic assistance. For more information call **626--5537**

by Sharon Elise Dunn

The Haight Ashbury Newspaper, July, 1982

In August, the Haight Ashbury Muralists and their supporters returned to the wall with special solvents and a lot of elbow grease. The combination removed most of the defacement, and the wall is once again "clean." Several calls have been received expressing gratitude from local residents for the efforts to preserve the wall from ignorant vandals.

The Haight Ashbury Muralists thank all who helped bring *Our History is No Mystery* to light again. We point out that *People's Wall* is the name of a good documentary by the Haight-Ashbury film collective about the painting of this mural and that the mural's name is *Our History is No Mystery*.





The Solidarnosc Mural: Images of a Movement Slugging it Out on Canvas

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Our work was not commissioned. Neither is it our first attempt, as individuals, to understand the warfare underway in Poland. With a canvas as our terrain of activity, we have produced a portable mural that frames in its images a view of what the movements expressions represent to us and what it has faced because of its revolt. The results is not the articulation of an artificial political unity. The *Solidarnosc* mural is a problematic and variegated panorama, a reflection of that same multiplicity in ourselves and Poland.

Social movements necessarily create (and inspire) their own art. Whether slogans hastily painted on walls and billboards or the more carefully articulated images of posters, photography and murals, these cultural expressions are as vital and expected in our lives as the "political" forms such as conferences, theses and strikes.

The mural offers a kaleidoscopic image of its subject. Out of the thick and near formless interior of the painting emerge discernable scenes and structures. As the piece spreads itself out to the borders these images are enlarged, take on clarity and articulate definite messages.

Painted not in the reds of "official" Communism, but of the now-outlawed national and social uprising, the mural *Solidarnosc* mixes the shadows of a society slugging it out under the searchlights.

Images of barbed wire, handcuffs, water in the form of splintered glass showering on the Polish people and the smashing of a television monitor — the electronic mouthpiece of authority — show how this war is being fought.

In this contest with State power, elements in Solidarity make their intentions quite clear. The image of workers leisurely rebelling against the time clock points to what the rebellion can become: a social movement that breaks the dead time of work.

Solidarity does not suggest that it has been a unified controllable movement. To draw attention to the actual political boundaries, our mural challenges in paint Lech Walesa's tragic disbelief at being delivered to prison, with the anger of a woman still delivering a blow to the televised image of Poland's new Commandant. Whereas Walesa represents the wing of Solidarity that believed in a negotiated recognition of the State, this faceless woman suggests another portrait — the diffuse movement of direct revolt against capital and authority in all of its forms.

If the image was simply to memorialize Solidarity, our images would be carved on a tombstone.

Artwork and the art worker suffer from the same nauseating preconditions as with any other job: the market and the State dominate the circulation of art while many artists willingly accept their role as aesthetic servants subservient to technique.

Movements in art that began with a radical critique of society often occupy the same neutralized terrain as political movements of a similar character. The explosiveness of their ideas and actions is absorbed by the system in a process that deflates their original intent. What started as an oppositional current becomes defined by the rule makers as a natural social development or style. The sanitizing of the punk critique into a fashionable urban lifestyle is the most recent example of how the "old masters" extract for their own purposes the power of our imaginations.

Mural art suffers from other vulnerabilities as well. Because of its very form, murals generally require an expansive and *public* landscape. On occasion, small businesses, autonomous cultural centers and organizations representing the working class have such area accessible. But the majority of murals are produced under the guidance and for the purposes of the State. In museums, libraries, universities and banks, these murals are decorations that offer a textbook portrayal of history.

Beginning with the murals generated during the Great Depression, the predominant themes have been of a working class willingly producing the hardware and obeying the laws of 20th century capitalism. Revolts and social conflicts, when they are sketched at all, are canonized and frozen in the past. The purpose is to suggest that such things don't happen any more in a society so willing to expose itself through murals.

We created a portable mural so we would not have to deal with real estate or the State. This awareness explains why the mural is displayed where you come together *after* work: cafes, theaters, bookstores, clubs, etc. The daily struggle within and against the society of work can't possibly succeed if our only focus is the mega-machine of the workplace.

Art is not intrinsic to the artist or the curators of art. Developing its sensibility by all of us and producing what can be imagined are indispensable tools if we are to penetrate through the horrific relations that are the framework of this society.

Our identification in the mural with the artistic expression of the "Polish imagination" exists because our social conditions are nearly the same. A world of work is imposed on us as much as it is enforced in Poland. The military's seizure of the Polish factories, like the transformation in this country of military personnel into "public" air traffic controllers is a reality that links both societies together. The Polish workers not only produce wealth for a worldwide market, they help produce a struggle against it which is worldwide. As it says in the mural: We All Live In Poland.

David Pingitore



'Street Tatroo' brightens underpass

By Eleanor Edwards

For the most part, the streetscape around the Greyhound station leaves a lot to be desired in the way of urban amenities.

There are no trees except for some struggling saplings in the mini-plaza across the way. The few businesses nearby seem marginal at best, and the streets that intersect the area are wide, busy and boring. To top it off, the freeway runs right by, casting a gloomy shadow where it crosses San Pablo at West Grand.

But now a lively cast of dancers, musicians, smiling children and just plain folks is moving into the old neighborhood, changing the look of the place in one dramatic stroke.

They're the figures in a mural called "Street Tattoo," a project of the California Arts Council, Oakland's Pro Arts, muralist Daniel Galvez and dozens of others who have contributed time and money over the last nine months to bring the mural to life.

Galvez, best known for his conception, supervision and execution of "Oakland's Portrait" (also known as the Liberty House mural), was named one of about a hundred artists-in-the-community by the California Arts Council last fall.

The \$8,400 grant enabled Galvez to become the artist-in-residence at Pro Arts, where he started last October to work on the mural.

"The concept for this mural was to include the community in workshops as well as in the execution of the mural," Galvez explained recently. So every Saturday from October through December he held a free workshop to which people were asked to bring black and white photos of people doing things — dancing, playing, working.

From well over 70 photos, Galvez and the workshop participants chose 22 that formed "a kind of rhythm, a composition that flowed from one end to the other," he said.

Then they made a drawing from the photos, projected the drawing onto the freeway overpass wall and sketched out the larger-than-life figures. Actual painting started in February and is scheduled to be finished by the end of September, in time for a grand dedication during the Oct. 9-17 Oakland Festival of the Arts.

About 15 people from their 20's to their mid-60's are doing the painting. The majority of the painters were already working as artists, Galvez said, but few of those who contributed photographs were professional photographers.

The total cost of the project is about \$25,000. In addition to the California Arts Council grant, money has come from the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, the Foremost-McKesson Foundation, the Zellerbach Family Fund, the National Endowment for the Arts and the city of Oakland through its community development grant program.

The muralists have also benefited from Caltrans' largess. The original plan had been to

paint the mural on the side of the Gryhound station but while the local manager reportedly was all for the idea, the regional authorities wouldn't go for it. The state Department of Transportation, which is "really good about letting artists use their underpasses for murals," according to Pro Arts executive director Sara Lutman, came through in the pinch.

The muralists work every weekday and welcome visitors.

The Montclarion, Aug. 18, 1982

California

from *Cultural Democracy*
 Issue No. 23 July-August 1982
 by Arlene Goldbard and Don Adams

Activist Artists' Advance

In June, 1982, SPARC (the Social and Public Arts Resource Center, in Venice, CA) sponsored a small conference called Activist Artists Advance in a summer mountain camp outside of Los Angeles. It was, as the name implies, an artists' retreat. For two and half days nearly seventy artists from California (and a few from elsewhere) met to discuss shared problems and propose solutions to the difficulties of doing progressive art in the United States today.

The conference evaluations included observations that a model emerged of an entrepreneurial approach to organizing, which some felt was successful and others felt failed in the basic political organizing objectives even when it was good for particular artists. Some felt that it was useful enough to share different models of how to work — how to create and distribute activist artworks.

For some, a sense developed that the movement was too fragmented, that the "movement needs a sense of unity, of moving together." One example of the differences within the group was reference to a "split between Marxism and feminism," or "Marxists and feminists." As always happens with such gatherings, clarity about real differences emerged only on the final day, after everyone had discussed intensely for a day and a half. Perhaps the best thing the conference provided, then, is greater clarity on some of the issues we confront in our work and lines and which need more group discussion for resolution.

The Advance, held June 18-20, was the 4th in a series of meetings on art and politics which brought together both avant-garde and community-oriented artists to discuss common concerns. Its predecessors were "Art as a Vehicle for Social Change," held in Cincinnati in June, 1980; the "Art Politik" conference held in Seattle in June, 1981; and the February 26th Movement sponsored by Political Art Documentation and Distribution in New York this year. The Advance was the first of these conceived largely as a working session, perhaps as an antidote to the frustrations of protracted talking about differences without an anchor to concrete practice.

The Advance brought together upwards of 50 people, mostly visual artists, for a weekend of sharing and discussions at a summer camp in the high desert northeast of Los Angeles.

Getting to Know You

Participants were a mixed bag. The largest group was radical feminist artists, most from the Los Angeles area, many of whom had worked together in groups like the Fem-

inist Art Workers, Sisters of Survival, Mother Art, and Women's Graphics Center. The rest were a scattered group of men and women, mainly from California but also from other parts of the country, some muralists, some painters or sculptors, photographers, media artists, performance and conceptual artists of many types. Several people crossed these formerly-solid lines; it was interesting to see that, indeed, it is not possible to be both a community muralist and a feminist performance artist.

The Advance began with a Friday night program of slides and introductions. Several themes emerged as participants, in introducing themselves, put forward the ideas they wished to discuss. Chief among them was the relationship of politics and art. One artist said "I'm interested in the grey area between art and propaganda." Another wanted to talk about "the difference between politics and socially-concerned art." "How is art used to promote social change?" "I want to talk about political effectiveness." "I want to integrate my artistic and political sides." "I want to ingest my personal art into the political artwork I do."

One performance artist said "I want to look at the other side of political effectiveness; let's not throw out the art in our rush to be politically effective." Others added that "Artists can't create social change, only support it."

Though, needless to say, this question was never resolved, it arose again and again. How does the socially-conscious artist stand in relation to political and social change? Does the artist follow the lead of political groups? Or run a parallel course? Or take the lead as the embodiment of social conscience? Even more fundamental, how do people change? Is consciousness-raising the key, or can artwork be instrumental in other respects?

Other participants wanted to spend their time talking about a "new means of judging political art; we need effective criticism," and about "a support structure within the left." And they repeatedly raised one of the key process questions: "I want effective models for collaboration." "I want to move from personal, individual work to collaboration."

Santa Cruz Conference on Chicano Culture

by Nina Serrano

15

Esencia, July, 1982

On the first sunny days after rain, flood and storms
On a green grassy knoll overlooking the Pacific Ocean
Amid the songs of birds and the barks of sea lions

Approximately seventy-five artists and cultural workers sat indoors to consider the past, present and future of the Chicano art movement and its individual artists.

The conference at UC Santa Cruz was characterized by warmth and frankness. A moment of controversy occurred when art historian Shiva Goldman called for a stop to graphic images of the Chicana as passive (the "helper", the "sexy ornament", etc.). However, by the second day, controversy dissolved as California women artists Judy Baca (Los Angeles), Sue Martinez (San Jose), Patricia Rodriguez (San Francisco) and Carmen Lomas Garza (San Francisco) spoke.

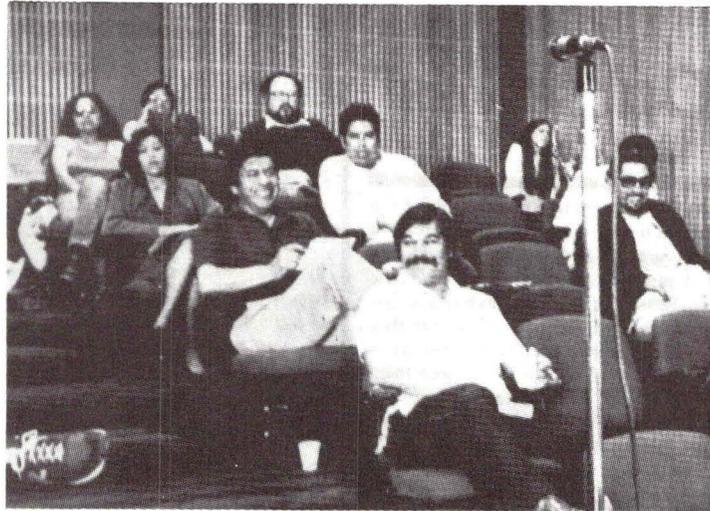
Judy Baca is creating the longest mural in the world on the side of the Los Angeles aqueduct, a twenty-five-minute walk. The multi-cultural mural displays the history of all the peoples who have lived in the immediate area. As the project takes shape over the years, some of the original painters 'graduate' to the designing group and help train new community muralists.

Carmen Lomas Garza works at the Galeria de la Raza in San Francisco, along with Rene Yanez and Ralph Maradiaga, who also participated in the conference. Carmen said home altars were the first art she ever saw and the first she studied. She showed slides of personal altars (in bedrooms) of older Los Angeles women (her grandmother's friends.) These were examples of working class art in the Barrios throughout California.

Sue Martinez, artist, editor and San Jose printer, observed that "Most Chicano art takes place in the home... the gardens, loteria cards, make-up, costumes and felt pen drawings." Sue seeks out Barrio art to publish in *El Tecolote*, a bilingual Bay Area newspaper.

Patricia Rodriguez, "Mujeres Muralistas", (Women Muralists) told how her group created murals in the parking lots of Paco's Tacos (24th Street and South Van Ness) and the Mission Hiring Hall (Mission between 24th and 25th Streets) in San Francisco. There were no women role models to follow, so they had to develop their own female-oriented imagery, and paint it. Patricia went on to create a series which she called "Visual Interviews", of life masks of her former teachers. Among the subjects are the foremost Bay Area Chicano artists including Malaquias Montoya.

Malaquias Montoya also spoke about female imagery. "I knew things were changing when some people started complaining that the female figures on my silkscreen posters looked too much like



Film producer, director and playwright Luis Valdez was among the many participants gathered to discuss Chicano culture. He urged Chicano artists to "make a name for yourself... become visible..."

men." In fact, slides of his prints made clear his respect for human beings at work. Malaquias showed a series he created of Mental Health posters in which the figures are working and using tools symbolizing his vision of a healthy society. One of the state mental health officials who commissioned the work said that these tools in the workers' hands made him think of weapons which implied violence. A student participant in the conference congratulated Malaquias on the slides of his art.

Malaquias spoke about his grandmother who lived in the mountains. She had little money yet her home was always very attractively decorated. She told him of getting pails of colored sands from the mountainside to tint the walls. Blown-out tires she found on the old highway near her home she made into tire print-blocks, creating borders by printing around the edges of the wall with the tire block dipped into the earthen tints.

His brother, Jose Montoya, graphic artist and poet, spoke of the Chicano artist-organizer (a term applicable to many of the participants) organized Chicanos into the universities and kept them there. Only the artist returned to the Barrios. "The other professionals had to go on to other places to pay back their student loans," Jose quipped, adding that the prisons also send their graduates back to the Barrio.

Nane Alejandrez was such a graduate; "Ex-Vato Loco," he called himself. He presented a slide show covering many aspects of tattoo art, including clandestinely made prison tattoo machines, created from contraband materials. Prison tattoos, which often take from six months to a year to complete, are done under difficult conditions: the artist may be moved to another prison, the tattoo apparatus may be confiscated; ensuing punishment. "Tattoo artists deserve credit," said Nane as he documented their art, which he says has been with humanity

since 1800 BC in Egypt.

Thomas Ybarra, moderator for the sessions, kicked off the discussion on "Artistic form in the Barrio" by saying "We are a working-class people." He recalled the different kinds of sunbonnets for field work made by women in his native Texas. The nuances of bonnet styles pinpointed where the wearer was from, and who she was. "Chicano artists," Tomas said, "use images to show themselves as working-class people," not as quaint stereotypes.

Ralph Maradiaga presented slides of exhibitions and posters from San Francisco's Galeria de la Raza, covering its twelve-year history. Ralph and Rene had to teach themselves to be curators. For each of their shows, they re-paint the gallery walls to a color or colors appropriate to each exhibit. This is a radical departure from the traditional white walls used at most art galleries.

The Galeria de la Raza makes itself highly visible to its community utilizing a giant billboard on its Bryant Street exterior wall, and its front 24th Street windows to announce and publicize exhibits. Ralph noted that young people in the Barrio have shown most interest in gallery viewings when they could easily identify with the subject. Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) exhibits have become a November custom at the Galeria. Teachers throughout the city take children to visit it.

Among the many talented and productive participants at the conference was theatre and film director and playwright Luis Valdez (Zoot Suit). Luis hosted for the conference participants, an evening of poetry and music at the Teatro Campesino's "Etc. Cafe" in San Juan Bautista, less than an hour's drive through beautiful countryside.

Luis MC'd the evening's entertainment which included Jose Montoya's poetry. "La locura cura" (madness cures), said the poet referring perhaps to the use of humor in his poetry which reflects the

Sacramento Valley rural and Barrio life. "La locura cura" (madness heals).

Alurista from San Diego read from his works and told how "Chicano Park" was established in San Diego, with middle and high school students as the troops who create it. Luzma Espinoza of Sacramento read from her poetry about her youthful experiences arriving in the United States from Mexico. She often incorporated sound effects, chants, and songs in her work.

Ear splitting sounds of a highly original Chicano punk rock band, "Los Illegals", filled the night. The young people say it is excellent music. "Los Illegals" performed behind barbed wire with a shred of a handkerchief, a hat and other reminders of human struggle caught on it. A giant elongated stuffed figure hung suicide-style on stage, throughout their energetic, well-lighted and choreographed concert.

Ed Carrillo, a Santa Cruz artist, organized the three-day event. It is not clear if he was responsible for the weather but the people, the place and the "show and tells" spoke well for the Chicano artists' sense of beauty. Ed described the pain of having his mural erased in his home town. This lament was heard from several artists in response to Picardo Chavez's videotape about murals being painted over.

The theme of "mural removal" echoed Harry Gamboa's remark that "Chicanos are a phantom culture." The Los Angeleno thought Chicano art should be more visible and regional. His slides of his own "Performance art" reflected both the entertainment industry and ancient tribal ceremonies of the Los Angeles region and involved actors, costumes and the music of Los Illegals.

In his final remarks on the last day Luis Valdez described a "greased pole effect" among Chicano artists: If one artists makes it 'up the pole', others try to pull that one down. He, too, urged Chicano artists to be more visible. "Make a name for yourself. If Chicano artists were more visible it would improve the situation for everyone."

Tim Drescher, editor of the magazine "Community Murals" accused community college and university administrators of destroying murals. He suggested that mural art's nature being collective and public can be seen as a threat by the establishment. Tim added that women have been a moving force in the mural art movement.

Eva Cockcroft, author of *Towards a People's Art* (1977), noted that having a book go out of print, as hers has, is equivalent to having a mural painted over. It is no longer available to people. It is fortunate that *Towards a People's Art* will be reprinted in Mexico, because it includes all the Asian, Latino, Black and Native American murals in the United States. Some of them are already gone.

In summary, the moderator, Humanist Thomas Ybarra, concluded that "Chicano art and culture in California" conference had a harmonious way of being diverse and yet unified.

16 Murals of Yolo County

Yolo County has not had very much mural art. Compared to urban areas such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, or Sacramento, the walls here are fairly bare of painting. I have watched walls around the county for signs of life since I first moved here in 1963. Every painting became a valued friend and it was sad to see them go. Wall painting, exposed to the elements, is not a timeless artform and a mural is not forever. With the harsh summer sun, winter rains, and the burned material in the air (you can feel it in your eyes much of the summer), the best prepared surface and location (north-facing to minimize fading) isn't going to last more than 30 years. Given political and other realities, a five year mural is aged, and two years a more typical lifespan.

Murals are often painted by groups denied access to other channels of communication and therefore are political in the broadest sense. Frequently a mural combines words and pictures. It is difficult to make a political statement with pictures alone. Much of California's mural art is found in the barrios. Painted walls can be traced back through the Mexican mural movement of the 1930's to the embellished stone temples at Chichen Itza and Teotihuacan. Walls in East Los Angeles and the Mission District of San Francisco are alive with color, meaning, and local culture.

Woodland has several good examples of commercial wall art. Foy's Toy Store on Main Street has a colorful front wall measuring 50 feet by 40 feet designed by Bill Empey of San Francisco. Currently, businessperson James Mean is locked in battle with the city over a partly completed nautical painting on the side of his import store at 414 Main Street. The planning commission wants him to obtain permission to put up the mural and so far Means has resisted. The Nugget Market has a splendid ceramic gold rush mural painted and fired by Mexican artists. The tiles were first laid out to form a solid surface and the mural painted directly on them. Afterwards the tiles were fired at 1800 degrees. The most delicate part of the operation was transporting the tiles and setting up the mural. Each tile had to be numbered on the back. Not a single tile had been broken or lost in transit. The painting was done by artists in Monterrey, Mexico. Probably the most unusual wall art in the city is in the South Hall cellblock of the Yolo County Jail. Painted by inmates Bill Hastings, Doug Perry, and Richard Von Millanich with the approval of Sheriff Ron Whitehead, the murals show landscape scenes, including a desert with a small oasis labeled "Bryte." The painting has been so well received that the inmates are going to undertake another mural in the North Hall of the jail.

Winters has a brand-new mural "Railroad Avenue, 1879" painted 101 years after the fact by Barbara Chandler-Dorr and Trudy Smith. With the vital art activity around Winters, more wall paintings can be expected.

Davis has three significant murals in the downtown district. Two of them were done by Terry Buckendorf with support of various community groups, including the Yolo County Historical Society and the Davis Area Chamber of Commerce who helped raise money for them. The largest, on the side of the Hotel Aggie, is based on a photograph of the town entrance in 1916. This was taken from the collection of photographs of old Davis owned by senior activist Warren Westgate. Buckendorf's second mural shows the Columbus Cafe in San Francisco with several Davis residents in the foreground.

John Doerper got his start in mural painting on the walls of the Cal Aggie newspaper office. This had been a particularly drab basement area until Doerper's artwork

brightened it up. Doerper struggled for some months for permission to paint a mural on the unused bulletin board on G Street. He was willing to do the painting without charge but did request \$65 from the city council for materials. A few years later the brightly colored valley landscape was moved to a new site at a corner of Central Park where it stands today. The painting appears somewhat lost in its present location most of the time but is happiest when the Saturday morning crowd throngs to the farmers' market.

There have also been some modest wall paintings that never attracted much attention. J & J Garage on Olive Drive in East Davis had a nature scene on its fence. Students at Valley Oak School painted a 30 foot long mural as part of a school enrichment program. The design came from the Hobbit and was chosen by a vote of the 4-5-6 graders. There is currently a feminist mural on the UCD Womens Center, replacing an earlier one coordinated by Yvonne Clearwater. DQU has had several significant wall paintings with Native American and Mexican themes.

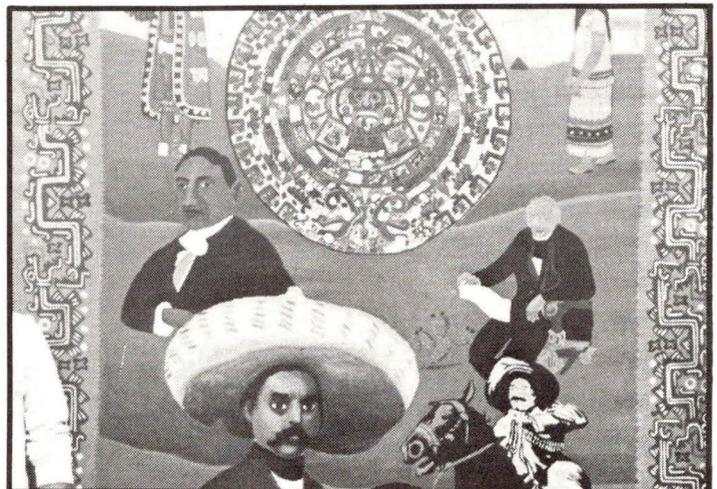
The largest and most ambitious mural project in the county took place over the period of a year on the side of Raley's Market in Broderick. The murals showed Mayan and Aztec designs and was done by students from Yolo High School and from the "Barrio Art" class at CSUS. The project ran out of money before it was completed. While Yolo art teacher David Halmi tried to raise additional funds, the building owner covered the entire project with yellow paint as a "routine maintenance" operation. The yellow wall of the present market is there except for the occasional graffiti comment. While the mural was up, it was unmarked by graffiti.

In 1976 Roger Cárdenas painted an 8 foot by 20 foot mural on plywood panels for the entrance to the Madison farm labor camp. Cárdenas worked as a paraprofessional teacher with the migrant education program in Winters and organized numerous children's activities in the camp. The mural showed the struggle of a farmworker's family and the need for children to have more education to escape the migrant life.

Many of the best murals described here are gone now. The Madison farm labor camp was bare of embellishment and artwork the last time I saw it. It might be useful to compile a list of county places where murals would be beneficial. How about the prison-like exterior of Woodland High for starters, or the Yolo County Housing Authority in Winters? Which walls around the county do you see as most in need of mural art? ▲

Bob Sommer

Winds of Change, October, 1980



City approves 'peace' mural

By CLARK MASON

James Curtis, the artist who touched off the debate over how much control City Hall should have over murals, will be able to paint his "peace" mural on a store wall at a busy downtown Santa Rosa location.

The City Council Tuesday gave its approval for Curtis to paint the mural on a television store at the corner of Fourth Street and Montgomery Drive.

Approval was unanimous, but came with only three of five council members present. The council decided to postpone the larger question of how the city should regulate such art until the full council is in attendance. Mayor Donna Born and Councilman Schuyler Jeffries were absent.

The consensus among councilmen Jack Healy, Ritch Burkart and Bill Barone is that the regulations proposed for murals and other art in public view are too restrictive.

They did not go as far as Clayton Kramer of Petaluma, however, who told the council Santa Rosa's proposed rules are tantamount to "aesthetic fascism."

Kramer said he was very offended by the guidelines, terming them "prior restraint on freedom of speech."

Burkart said, "I'd rather not have a whole bunch of controls on it. We're trying to legislate art. I really don't support the number of regulations and rules we're weighing down on art."

Santa Rosa Press Democrat, Aug. 11, 1982

Healy said, "We have to have something," but agreed the draft regulations are "a bit too much."

Several speakers pointed out that other cities have very few rules governing murals and that problems are rare. San Francisco, for instance, has virtually no restrictions for a private property owner who wants to put up a mural. The building can be painted in just about any fashion, unless public decency is offended or an advertisement is included in the artwork.

The council's decision to allow Curtis to paint his mural came at the urging of attorney Jake Rubin, who has been active in civil liberties' causes. Speaking on behalf of Curtis, Rubin noted it has been almost eight months since Curtis first proposed the mural. The attorney said delaying the matter further could have the same effect as denying it since the rainy season will be here in several months and it will be impossible to paint.

Lynn Moore also urged the council to approve the mural. She said Curtis' other works are "a delight, a pleasure to everyone who sees them."

Only Robert Bill was opposed to granting the approval. He suggested murals be relegated to "a free zone in a park-like setting," so that if some people don't like it "you don't have to live with it forever."

Bill said the subject matter in the peace mural is constantly presented in the news and he would prefer not to be reminded of it when he goes out for a walk.

Curtis plans to paint a mural with the help of fellow artists which will depict children, with a lion and lamb on one side. On the other, he'll paint a B-1 Bomber, Trident Missile, and atomic mushroom cloud.

As executive officer for the non-profit Visible Surface Mural Works Inc., Curtis has painted murals on two freeway underpasses in Santa Rosa, in addition to the inside of the Omelette Express and the outside of several buildings in unincorporated areas.

It was not until he proposed a mural on the downtown television store that he ran into a snag. The city's Design Review Board rejected it, essentially because it was not considered something that enhanced the architecture, or was an element of the building.

Curtis appealed the decision to the council in March. But the council postponed the matter until it could study the issue of murals in general. One reason for reviewing the policy was that until now the city has judged murals under the commercial sign ordinance.

With advice from the planning department, a subcommittee of Healy and Born then drew up some tentative guidelines for murals, sculptures, mosaics and other graphic illustrations that are in public view or affixed to buildings.

The proposed rules still spoke in terms of the mural being an element of the architecture of a building, like a plaster relief. But by the time the guidelines were reviewed by the Design Review Board and returned to the council this week, the board had added even more restrictions.

For instance, part of the criteria was for the artwork to result in a building which has "a three-dimensional logic, harmony and form in regard to color, shape and material."

The guidelines also would have the design board review the art in terms of its "visual contribution" to the community. Members of the board said the subjectivity could be dealt with by holding a hearing where public comment plays a significant role in approving or rejecting the artwork.

Rubin said Tuesday that he is comfortable with the city requiring a use permit so that the art can be monitored. But he said the proposed ordinance was excessive.

"The ordinance is based on distrust," he said. Rubin explained it seems to be based on the fear, looking at murals as if "some badness will be promulgated on citizens."

Chicano students at Harry Ells High School in Richmond have formed a cultural art organization called "La Raza Cultural" to express interest and pride in their heritage. A colorful 15 foot mural illustrating a range of themes from ancient Mayan legends to contemporary Chicano subjects was recently presented to Familias Unidas Clinic, a local mental health agency. The group has also completed another large mural (a section of the mural is pictured here) featuring important figures in history from the early California period to Caesar Chavez and popular musicians of today. It will be installed in the school cafeteria.

La Raza Cultural developed from the Mexican Mythology Project funded in part by a grant from the California Arts Council through the Richmond Art Center. The artist-in-residence for this program at Harry Ells and other Richmond schools is Calvin Barajas of Berkeley. Harry Ells students who participated in the mural project are: Jenny Blandon, Orlando Chavez, Luz Maria Diaz, Manuel Diza, Marquita Estrada, Edgar Gutierrez, Studio Gutierrez, Rosie De La Torre, Concepcion Martinez, Oscar Preciado, Sergio Rocha, Petra Rosales, Ernesto Vargas, Jesse Gonzales, Martin Garcia, Sylvia Gonzales, Alma Robles, Cathy Sullivan, and Malissa Gonzales. Photo: Andrea Foley.

Mural Journey through Northern U.S.



Milwaukee Journal Photo

New owner to remove mural

By Carolina Garcia
of The Journal Staff

A Chicano mural on the west side of a building at 422-24 W. National Ave. is to be chemically removed Sunday, to the dismay of the people who sponsored its painting five years ago.

The building's new owner, James L. Bauchelt, a lawyer, plans to set up practice next month with another lawyer there, but before doing so, he is having the interior and exterior of the building renovated.

Exterior work includes removing the mural, he said.

"Many businesses around here want the mural removed," he said.

He added, "I have a hard time dealing with parts of the mural, some aspects of it are hideous and if it had artistic quality as a whole, I would leave it."

Agamemnon Topitzes, who has owned Topitzes Grocery Store across the street for 55 years, said he had heard of no businesses in the area that wanted the mural removed.

"It's a shame the mural is coming down," he said. "Its true message will be lost, and it's too bad the mural was not painted on a more permanent surface."

The mural depicts different phases of the Chicano political movement. It was painted during the observance of Cinco de Mayo activities, called *El Midwest Canto Al Pueblo* (Song to the People), in 1977 when Chicano artists and muralists came to Milwaukee for the May 5th celebrations. It was

the first time the muralists, recognized both in Mexico and in the United States, had painted such a mural together on a large building. They included Jose Antonio Burciaga, Manuel Martinez and Milwaukee's Carlos Rosas.

Ernesto Chacon, one of the original organizers of the 10-day Cinco de Mayo activities, called the mural's removal an attack on the artists who painted it.

As of Friday, there were no plans to urge Bauchelt to keep the mural.

Bauchelt has received a \$1,000 grant from the City of Milwaukee's Neighborhood Improvement Development Corp. The grant must be used only for exterior repairs that cost more than \$2,000.

Bauchelt said the grant included a provision requiring removal of the mural. He said a member of the Walker's Point Development Corp. — the neighborhood organization that helped him obtain the grant — had urged him to include the provision.

But Gary Pachucki, a staff member of the Walker's Point group, said he was aware of the mural's significance and denied having recommended its removal.

Mary Anne McNulty, a board member of the Walker's Point group, said this was an example of conflicts in the neighborhood in which old ideas and values were disregarded by new property owners unaware of the area's cultural history and population. *Milwaukee Journal*, September 17, 1982

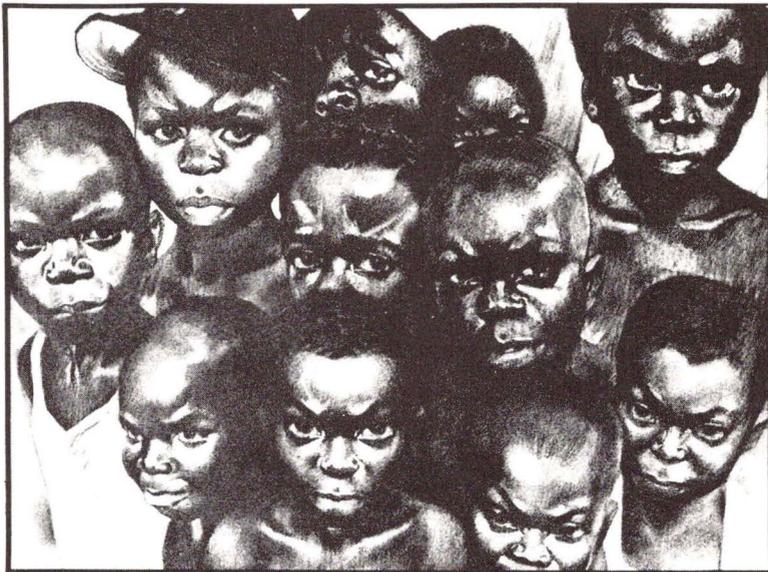
CMM has learned that the mural described in this article was painted out in September. Apparently, local Chicano merchants did not support efforts to preserve the wall, and that was partially responsible for its demise.

Muralist Meets Trouble with Street Fair Committee

Jon Onye Lockard of Ann Arbor, Michigan, is a well-known artist and educator in Southeastern Michigan, where he lectures in Black History at the University of Michigan and teaches Drawing and Painting at Washtenaw Community College. His long and varied artistic career has taken him from early Motown Record covers through murals in Detroit bars, portraits and graphics, culminating in the 1980's with masterful murals at Wayne State University's Manoogian Ethnic Heritage Center (earning him official citation from Detroit Mayor Coleman Young) and a cycle at Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio on the life of Paul Robeson. In a milieu of much educational apathy Lockard instills social consciousness in his students; he is active in Black art nationally (a vice president of the National Conference of Black Artists) and community arts locally; the majority of murals in schools, institutions and on the street in the Ann Arbor area, when not directly involving Lockard, are the work of students who've passed through his classes and influence. He has also exhibited twenty-three times in the annual Ann Arbor Street Art Fair, every summer since its inception... until 1982.

The Ann Arbor Street Art Fair held beside the University of Michigan's central campus was the inspiration of area artists and local merchants, drawing mammoth crowds into the area (despite sweltering summer heat) and gradually spawning several concurrent art fairs in other nearby business districts in the city. In recent years, however, many conservatives and progressives alike have shared the belief that even the original Street Art Fair had succumbed to a crass lowest-common-denominator commercialism; a place where too much production pottery and "cute" novelty paintings and crafts (and in front of the shops, last years Levi's and U of M t-shirts) are unloaded, rather than a showcase for the area's leading Art work. Points that the Fair's officials point to proudly — that 800 artists from as far away as Florida and California had applied to fill 300 slots, and that 38 artists from the previous Fair were rejected this year — the Fair's critics see as just more evidence that it no longer really serves or is responsible to its locality. "NUKE THE ART FAIR" buttons have become a hot-selling item.

Needless to say, Jon Lockard was chagrined when his work was deemed "unacceptable" on a form letter he received in the initial stages of the Fair's jurying process; besides the opportunity to display his year's worth of easel paintings and popular prints — and secure larger commissions — his pastel portraits executed on-site were consistently such a crowd pleaser that Art Fair officials had frequently shuffled the site of Lockard's booth around in order to draw audiences into out-of-the-way corners of the event that the crowds had bypassed. Further application and inquiry only brought an official reply that he was rejected on the technicality of having exhibited "commercially printed prints" and works by another artist (stained glass panels by one of Lockard's students faithfully transcribing designs from Lockard paintings) at his booth the year before. By mid-May, with the Fair only weeks away, Lockard's supporters had come together in a group called the Committee for Salvation of the Human Experience in the Visual Arts (SHEVA), seeking to reverse a decision that smelled of "artistic bigotry and racism" and calling for a thorough review in public hearing of a selection process carried on in private by anonymous jurors with no accountability. In appearances before Ann Arbor's City and Human Rights Commission, SHEVA's Bamidele Demerseon and Leslie Kamil-Miller expressed skepticism at the Art Fair Committee's argument that Lockard had been fairly judged by a jury of fellow-artist peers, since



A popular lithograph by Jon Onye Lockard

there were no other portraitists in the Fair and in over two decades of participation Lockard had never been approached to help jury (and for that matter, in no single Fair had more than four Black artists ever exhibited). City Councilmen proposed that the Art Fair Jury annually submit its findings to the City Council for review "to make a public matter public"; to an invite to appear before the Council and explain the Fair's side of the story, the Fair's official spokesman snapped "We won't be at the meeting. We'll be setting up the Art Fair; We won't debate this issue in public".

By this time supporters of the SHEVA position included the Mayor of Ypsilanti, Michigan (ten miles from Ann Arbor), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, members of the National Conference of Black Lawyers and diverse members of the University faculty and Ann Arbor population. The services of the Center for Constitutional Rights, the New York-based law firm founded by William Kunstler specializing in civil liberties case, were secured and motion for a temporary restraining order to overturn Lockard's rejection filed in the 15th U.S. District Court. Lawyer Mark Gombiner argued that racial discrimination on the part of the Street Art Fair's jury had violated the artist's due process freedom of expression as well as his and also sought compensatory and punitive damages and attorney's fees. The restraining order was denied by the court, that ruled the four-day fair wasn't really an arm of Ann Arbor City Government (though it clogged its street police and trash removal services) and that nothing has kept Lockard from self-expression. Noting Lockard's credentials, Judge Charles Joiner said "I can't believe reputations are made or broken in the Ann Arbor Street Art Fair" and added a "personal opinion that the Fair would be better with more Black artists." Kunstler counseled his client that he might try civil disobedience, setting up an exhibit at the Fair and risking a ticket or arrest, and called for Black artists to swamp next year's Fair with a thousand or more applications.

Jon Lockard's work stands apart from the contemporary American art mainstream of predominantly formal concerns and/or representational subject matter that's isolated from its context and sheathed in (or blunted with) mannered ambiguity. Art for him is not a parlor game, for there is little time for such diversion in a world where so many needs must be addressed, so many wrongs righted. Lockard's painting aligns with Black cultural traditions

20 (along with the paintings and murals of Charles White and John Biggers) where a clear, unambiguous voice addressing society's outrages and injustices with righteous indignation is respected. Those who try to brush aside the Black experience and culture (out of troubled conscience?) must find it all more disconcerting when those themes and content are embodied in Jon Lockard's precisely drawn and modelled figures. To organizers selecting safe and decorative material for a show with an eye on the fast buck, such powerful clarity of vision and purpose as his must be very disturbing indeed. Black culture is continuously forced to struggle for major recognition and the experience of seeing minority expression — and critical expression at that — pushed out of the exhibition space is by no means unique to John Lockard.

July 21st through 24th the Ann Arbor Street Art Fair went on as scheduled, without Jon Onye Lockard. Well-publicized art aficionado Joan Mondale breezed into town and sniffed around favorably. But Lockard realized that his court action had at least brought out into the open a lot of issues too often unspoken in the city in particular and the art world in general. The letters page of Ann Arbor's daily paper debated his situation all summer, many decrying the

fact that local art professionals had to suffer the galling jury for the "open air dimestore" that turned Ann Arbor into a "white middle class ghetto." But in reply to one particularly virulent letter (that spoke mockingly of "busing of Black artists") Lockard himself composed a cool essay that set forth the reasons for his choices in the struggles of that trying summer:

"I do argue... that a group of people of similar backgrounds, trainings, taste and experiences often present a monolithic approach in their conceptualizations... Any body of people in judgement capacity ought to reflect its constituency...

However, this fair has its own history. We are looking at a situation where there is an absolute refusal to even acknowledge that there are different aesthetic approaches and conclusions that exist in the same space at the same time.

...The essence of (your) insults is for an entire people, a culture, and experience, a way of seeing the world, to be completely ignored." ▲

Mike Mosher

Mural depicts Baraboo centennial

BARABOO — Five artists, working since early March in a sunny room in the civic center here, have compressed this city's 100-year history onto a mural that is eight feet high and 40 feet long.

From Indians to towering steel grain elevators, the glossy, colorful mural is a visual celebration of Baraboo's centennial. It will be moved today from the community center to Budig's Corner Drug Store, the oldest business in town, where the mural will be displayed on an outside wall this summer. The mural will be removed in the fall and displayed permanently in the civic center.

The mural will be unveiled and dedicated this afternoon at 4 p.m. at a ceremony at the drug store.

The artists, who volunteered their time, are Scott Sprecher, Craig Dob-

son, Louy Danube, Beverly Dischler and Craig Smith. Smith, the chairman of the group, moved to Michigan to take a new job after completing his section of the mural.

The mural began as four sketches, each containing 25 years of Baraboo's history. The artists, according to Mrs. Danube, spent long hours reading histories and viewing slide programs at the Baraboo library to gather material for the mural. Meetings were held each Tuesday night so the artists could compare drawings and make sure the mural formed a cohesive whole.

When work on the actual mural began, the 40-foot length was broken into four sections and then each of those sections was also divided in half horizontally.

The mural is just one of several centennial projects being overseen by

the city's centennial committee, according to Nita Dippel and Lorraine Kindschi, two of the committee's three chairmen. Rev. J. Adrian Pfeiffer is also helping to chair the committee.

This weekend, in addition to the dedication of the mural, events include the centennial parade and the state high school rodeo. The parade is scheduled for 10 a.m. Saturday and the rodeo will run all weekend at the Sauk County fairgrounds.

Planning for the centennial has been going on since January, Mrs. Dippel said.

Several centennial events are also scheduled for August including Old-Fashioned Days on Aug. 4-8 when there will be sales downtown, a street dance, a farmer's market and a vintage fashion show. A centennial pageant is scheduled for Aug. 28.



A "Forbidden" Mural May Spring to Life Again



The "forbidden mural," judged unfit for the eyes of Winnetka junior high school students and hidden away for nearly half a century, seems bound for a second unveiling.

Until recently, the 400-square-foot work hadn't been seen since shortly after it was painted on a plaster wall in the north suburb's Skokie School. Shut up behind a false wall in 1934, it later was painted over.

Forbidden, but not forgotten. The school was closed in 1978, but when plans were announced recently for its conversion to senior citizen housing, old-time residents reminded District 36 officials about the buried mural.

"I got drawn into the story," said Business Manager Gene Kucharski. Intrigued about the lost painting, which had been banished for its supposed "communitistic" message and other unhealthy attributes, he decided, "Let's find out, is it there or isn't it?"

It was. After consulting school records, Kucharski moved a set of filing cabinets and exposed a 3-by-8-foot section of the mural that painters had missed during a 1952 remodeling. The rest of the 40-foot-wide work lies beneath layers of paint applied then and during succeeding redecorations.

WHAT WILL happen to the mural now—whether it will grace a wall of the housing center or be relocated—hasn't been determined. But apparently its exile has ended. The Winnetka Historical Society has shown interest in preserving the work, and so has the federal government.

Karel Yasko of the General Services Administration, whom Kucharski telephoned in Washington last week, said the mural is government property because it was commissioned by the 1933-34 Public Works Art Project.

Yasko said the program placed 15,000 pieces of work in nonfederal buildings, and employed—at an average of \$30 a week—3,500 artists, including Raymond Breinin, who painted the Skokie School mural.

After his people research the Winnetka work, Yasko said, "A conservator will probably go take a look at it, and see about the feasibility of restoring or relocating it."

He indicated that the government's interest in the work is as much historic as artistic. And the mural's history is more colorful than most. "In most places," Yasko noted, "people were thrilled beyond words to have a genuine, handpainted picture."

BUT THE WINNETKA school board of 1934 was appalled, and not beyond words, by Breinin's work, titled "Give Us the Unity of Men and We Shall Build a New World." The board said of the mural, which depicted laborers and was dominated by three embracing figures—a white, a black and an Oriental:

"Industrial in subject matter, it is communitistic in character, the workers are dejected, the atmosphere is sinister and threatening. . . . It is unsuitable for children of the junior high school."

Defending the work, Supt. Carleton Washburne retorted that "Breinin . . . has power in his paintbrush. He may be an artist who will go down in history. My pride in Winnetka and my respect for creative works combine to make me shudder at the idea of ruthlessly destroying his work because we don't want a rumpus."

The board compromised by erecting a wall a few feet in front of the picture, and older Winnetkans recall prying aside a panel and shining a flashlight on the "forbidden mural." When the school was remodeled in 1952, the wall was torn down, and workmen simply painted over Breinin's work.

Washburne, who died in 1968, would no doubt be pleased that the mural is likely to again see the light. Breinin, who's still living, has mixed feelings.

From his studio in Scarsdale, N.Y., the 71-year-old artist said, "I'm a little annoyed that this particular painting is causing all this interest. I think I've become a far better painter since then."

His paintings have appeared in *Time* and *Life* magazines and been exhibited in every major American art museum, Breinin said. As for his work in the early 1930s, he said, "I was very young, and doing what was popular at that time."

It wasn't long after he painted the Skokie School mural that Breinin built a bonfire outside his studio on Chicago's South Side.

"I destroyed most of my paintings of that period, something like 100 of 'em," he said. "I'd like to burn 'em all."

Chicago Sun-Times, March 28, 1982

Lawmakers play amateur art critic

Gary Wisby

FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

OLYMPIA, Wash. — A giant cover-up is planned for the chambers of the House of Representatives, where a false wall will hide two black-and-white abstract murals that made lawmakers see red.

Artist Michael Spafford, who created "The Twelve Labors of Hercules," said he is "really getting upset."

Spafford, a highly regarded Seattle artist and University of Washington art professor, called legislators "gutless" for refusing to let him either finish the work — his original commission was for two more murals — or tear down the art.

After months of grumbling, House members voted March 7 to tear down or cover the murals, which were attached to visitor gallery walls last July.

Keith Angier, head of the state Department of General Administration, said Thursday that experts have concluded the murals cannot be taken down without damaging them. He said state crews will shield them with some kind of false walls that could be removed easily in the future.

The two murals, each 46 feet wide and up to 10 feet high, are mounted on the north and south walls of the gallery. Each contains six pictures portraying Hercules, a

Greek mythological hero, who performed 12 labors — such as killing the Nemean lion, cleaning the stables of King Augeas and making off with the girdle of Amazon Queen Hippolyte.

The murals were almost unanimously panned by the 98 House members when they came into session in January. Members used words like obscene, pornographic, inappropriate, sloppy, amateurish and out-of-place.

Some visitors and lawmakers said the pictures look like sexual encounters.

The art cost \$82,980 in public funds, but despite a state budget crunch, legislators said the murals had to go. COMMUNITY MURALS MAGAZINE/FALL 1982



In the Fall 1981 issue of *CMM* was an article, "Creating Public Art" by Lilli Ann Killen Rosenberg, describing the process of her work and showing a photograph of several people working on the Betances Mural at the Villa Victoria housing project in Boston. The photograph above shows the central portion of that mural much more clearly than the previous picture did. Rosenberg does the overall design work for her murals, but residents contribute small clay pieces on whatever they think is important. Rosenberg then integrates them all into the bas-relief mural, and gives overall unity by design and by including Venetian mosaic tiles throughout the whole. In this case, the Edison Power Company paid c. \$15,000 for the entire project since it is located on a power substation in the center of the Villa Victoria housing projects. *CMM* plans to present more information on Rosenberg's work in the spring issue. Photo: Weber

Northern Journey Part I: San Francisco to Baltimore

Two years ago I reported in these columns on the six weeks that my wife Ruth and I spent driving across the southern states in search of murals and finding them practically every day. This last summer we undertook a similar expedition across the northern tier where we were more familiar with earlier work. Our intention was to catch up on recent painting and to seek out the roots of the movement in earlier decades. The result was as rewarding as our southern journey.

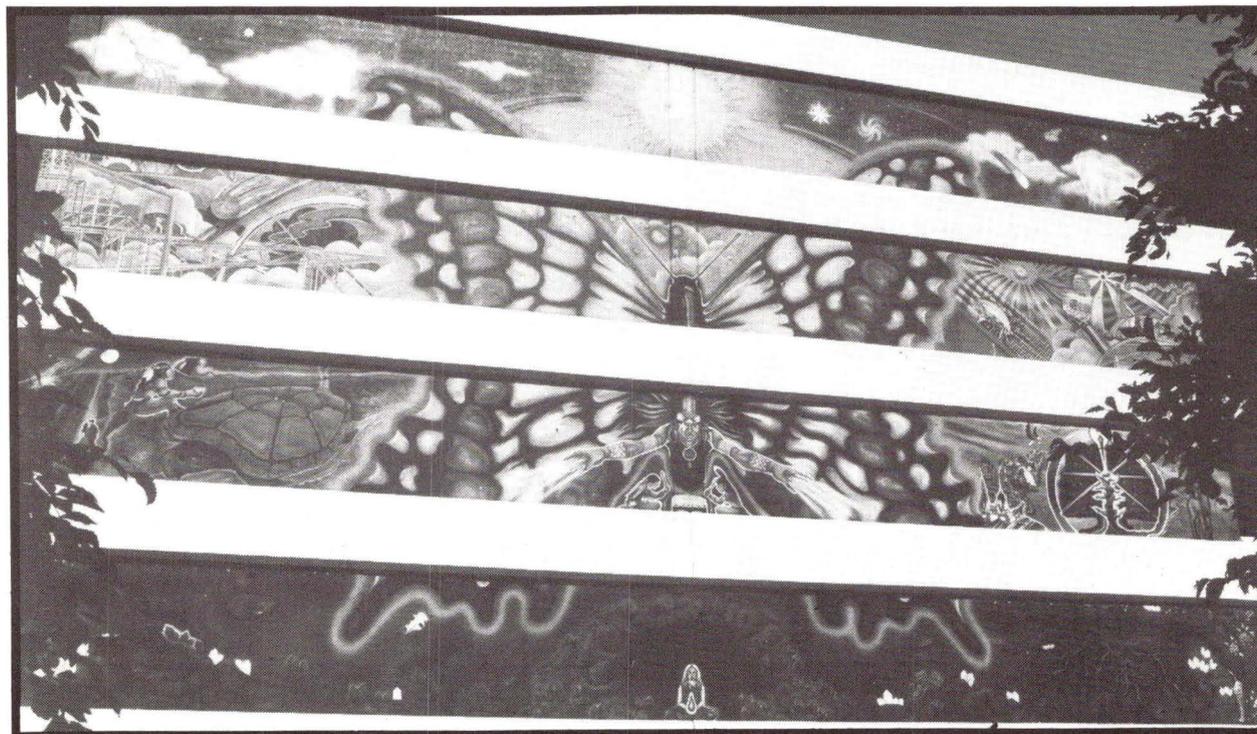
We departed from the Bay Area in mid-June, drove 11,455 miles during nine weeks, and once again found works we had never seen before almost every day. What was painful was to pass by cities and towns where you suspected if you took the time, you would find wall art, but we had locations we already knew about that we would never make if we reconnoitered too much. We depended on information from back issues of *Community Murals* and a fellow murals prospector, Jim Prigoff, but another major resource of course was the muralists themselves we met along the way. Once again we found that their generosity and hospitality are exceptional. They took us to mural sites, talked with us for hours, and put us up, sometimes for days.

What was most astonishing to us was that in spite of the depression, murals are being done. It is of course partly because of hard times that they are being created. It was a comparable crisis that produced the community-based movement in the first place. It is after all hardship that often leads us to seek out one another and learn the arts of cooperation.

SACRAMENTO

Our first stop was to visit the newest work of the RCAF (Rebel Chicano Art Front) here and to meet with the group. *Metamorphosis* was painted in 1980 on the exterior panels of the five-story parking structure that serves Macy's in the downtown shopping mall of the California capital. This was one of the most prominent sites that community muralists have secured and is testimony to the achievements of one of the oldest surviving mural groups in the country. The mural was funded by the city's program that sets aside 2% of the cost of new public buildings for art, and its design was selected over 34 other submissions to the art commission. Artists Esteban Villa, Viento-Stan Padilla and Juanishi Orosco ingeniously overcame the architect's absurd prohibition against painting on the five big concrete beams that cut through their design. They conceived of their panels as levels of human development and created a single big bright butterfly to symbolize the transformation of nature and consciousness from one stage to the next. The human figure in the center is both the *mestizo* and Quetzalcóatl, the *indio* man-god of culture. The huge moth is also a tree of life rooted in the earth and evolving through the efforts of native peoples and modern technology to a fuller life in the cosmos.

The artists had to steer between warnings by the authorities against producing subversive imagery and criticism from the other direction that they were not political enough. Their solution was to translate their commitment to social change into ethnic imagery, a strategy they have followed after their early militant murals in the late '60s. Although the images are pretty clear, a caption near the base explaining details would help. The artists were able to employ teenage apprentices from José Montoya's barrio art classes who had had previous experience in mural work and who they hoped would be doing their own murals in time. The RCAF was now working on a new commission for murals in the widely used underpass that joins the Sacramento mall with Old Town.

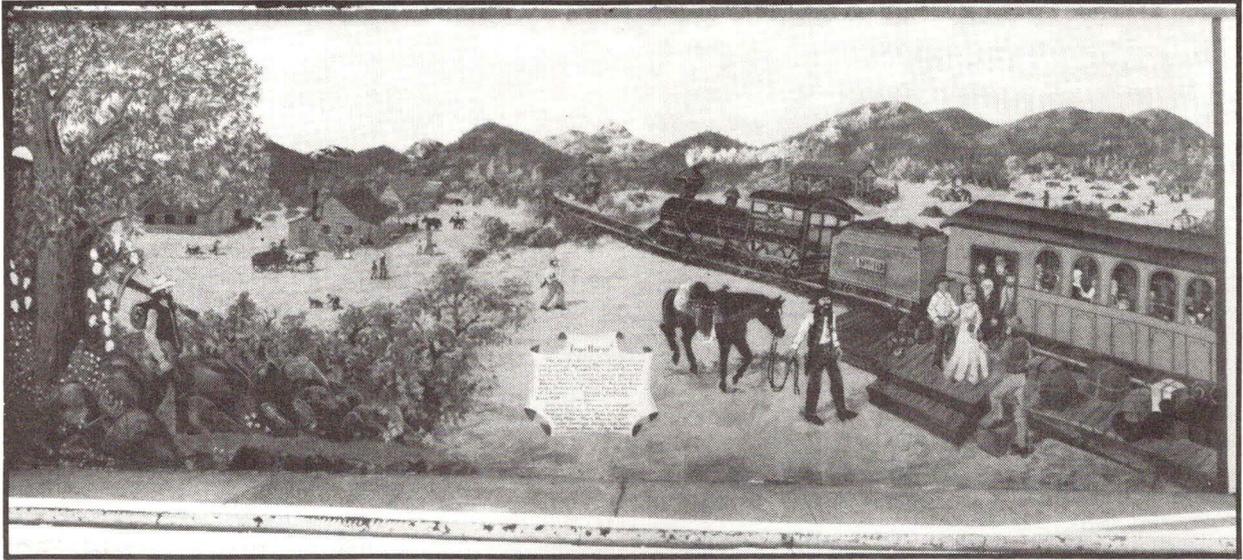


Metamorphosis, Esteban Villa, Viento-Stan Padilla (RCAF), 1980; Macy's parking building, Sacramento

24 AUBURN, CALIFORNIA

Here in the foothills of the Sierra we saw some of the 15 historical murals on the Mother Lode that Stewart Feldman has been doing since 1970. They are on shop fronts, theaters, the chamber of commerce, a title insurance office, in schools, restaurants, a public pool and a shopping center. His puffing locomotives, miners and

trappers, accented with black that suggests old engravings are probably deliberately "primitive." We were able to catch Stewart for an hour at home, and he showed us the elegant stained glass he also does. A former sculpture student at Brandeis, he spends 20 hours a week teaching in the public schools.



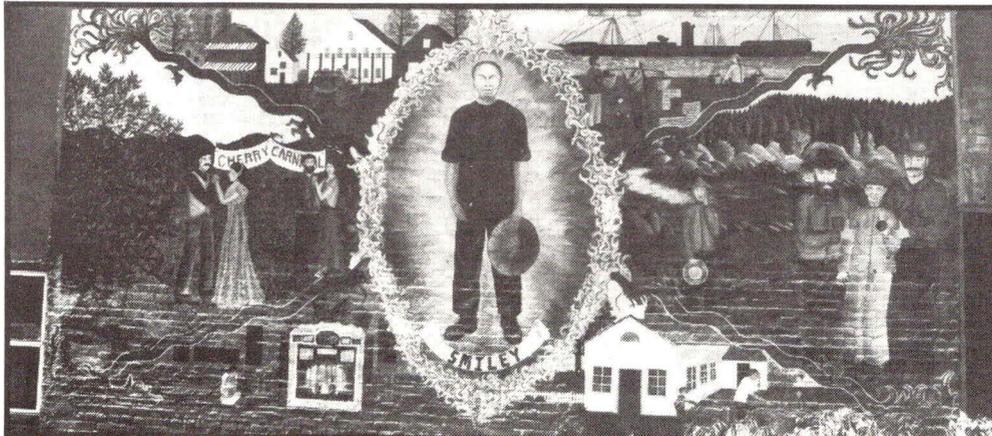
Iron Horse, Stewart Feldman, 1978; Chamber of Commerce, Auburn, California

NEVADA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Historical murals were also the program that Doris Barker set for the CETA Youth Employment Training project she directed nearby in Grass Valley, Nevada City and environs during 1978 and '79. The local CETA director, Ron Hunt, told us how he had pushed for the project and run interference against the county supervisors who had difficulty understanding why public money should be spent on art in an economically depressed area. Barker, a commercial artist now working in Sacramento, brought a great deal out of the trained and untrained painters she worked with. A particularly handsome piece is a 20 x 60 foot commemoration of Lyman Gilmore, one of the inventors of the airplane whose hanger once stood on the site of the school gym that provided the surface for the mural. There the old eccentric is at his drawing board above the clouds alongside a draftsman-like rendering of his flying machine. Another well executed work on a rustic shopping center in Penn Valley shows mining, stage coaching and timbering in the area a century ago, and yet another at Donner Summit recalls its past.

There were 30 such works the group did, but perhaps the one with most social bite was directed by Jill Rosenberg on the side of a row of country stores in North San Juan. This shows Smiley, a Chinese immigrant who stood up against discrimination when there were 10,000 "coolie" laborers here. Around him are vignettes of their arrival in this country and harassment by Whites. Jill, who had done murals in a hospital in Austin, Texas and a Tucson jail, said she preferred doing spiritualist painting. She is a member of the counterculture of North San Juan that has a strong sense of community, and operates an alternative school. She told too about how the CETA muralists had to fend off newspaper cartoons and complaints about using public money to indulge hippie artists. Oddly enough it seems to have been hard for the local business establishment to grasp the connection between historical murals and the gussying up of one Mother Lode town after another to attract tourists.

The contrast of Jill's socially conscious mural with the other historical works, which at best commemorated the labor and ingenuity of the first settlers here, was our first



Smiley, Jill Rosenberg, 1979, North San Juan, California

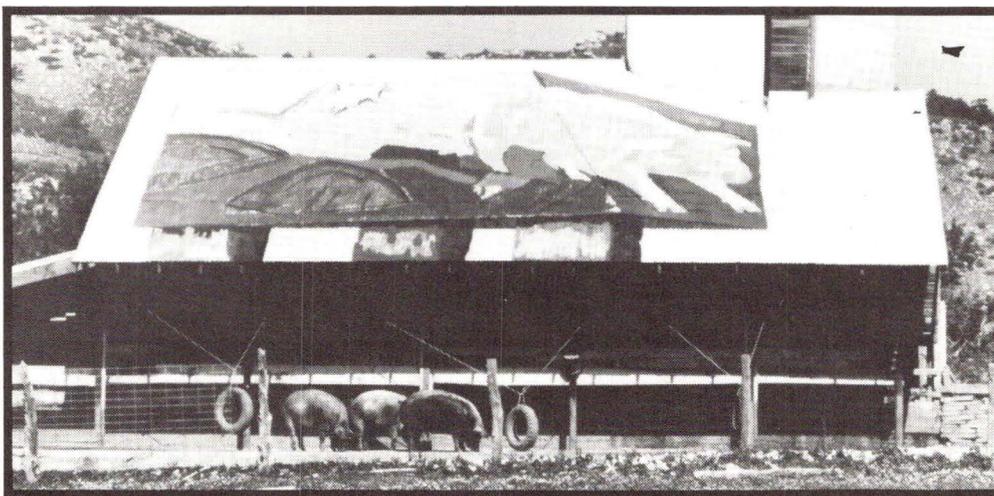
taste during the trip of varied forms of public art involved in the resurrection of America's ambiguous past. Some of the murals that have been done with CETA and Bicentennial funds are picturesque reconstructions of history that neglect the exploitation and struggle. They are connected to the transformation of the old warehouses and plants of the inner city into quaint restaurants and boutiques and former working people's homes into gentrified townhouses. Mining towns are turned into vacationers' resorts. America is being sweet-pickled to make it attractive for the new professionals and their families as cities lose their manufacturing and become centers of administration, finance, entertainment and tourism while industrial investment finds higher profits and fewer health and safety regulations overseas. This is a process that has been going on for more than a decade that muralists have protested because it is the neighborhoods where they paint that have most frequently been subject to urban renewal and gentrification. What came home to us during our trip is how public artists have been increasingly invited to contribute to their own removal.

There were no more murals until the rock art of Native Americans in Utah, practically all that remains of a civilization of centuries ago. These petroglyphs of masked dancers and animals we saw in Capitol Reef National Park are moving reminders of the connection of art to the life of a people.

murals in past years and left the festival early to catch up on their recent work that continues to express their feeling for their history and the land. That night we slept under a mural of a Mexican street scene painted directly on the wall above our bed in a La Quinta Motel in Denver. There must have been a hundred others there. Multiply that by the other motels in the chain, and you realize the opportunity that had been opened to muralists.

COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

The next murals we encountered were a few recent historical, essentially decorative, pieces here, but it was a local cop who told us to visit the municipal court house. We were impressed that he knew the name of Thomas Hart Benton, but as it turned out, it was the work of Kenneth Hudson he directed us to. Hudson, we learned, was teaching at a local college between 1934 and '38 when he did the 12-foot high panels that completely envelop the courtroom. They might indeed have been mistaken for bundles on their backs as they are driven out by an armed "pioneer" who stands over the body of a dead "redskin." In the most up-to-date panel, a pair of hunched unemployed men watch the more fortunate with recent purchases and tugging at loved ones. One of the amusing aspects of all Benton; although not as accomplished, they shared his trenchant wit. Ironically behind the jury box a panel showed Indian refugees bearing all their earthly possessions in



Lazy M. Mitchell, Untitled, undated; U.S. 36 north of Boulder, Colo.

COLORADO

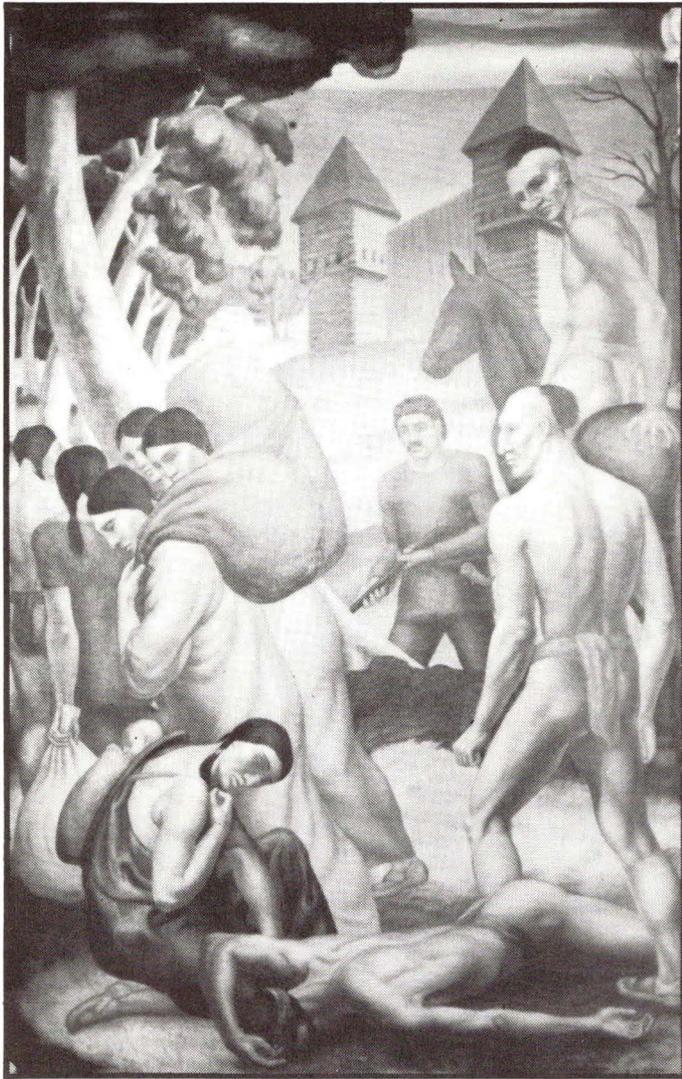
In the eastern foothills of the Rockies we had one of the delightful surprises of our trip. Some miles north of Boulder on U.S. 36 we were caught up short by the painted galvanized roof of a hog shed beneath which porkers were silently feeding. Above them on the roof was the image of a 15-foot long yellow pig descending across blue hills or was it mounds of mud? A star and what looked like the signature of Lazy M. Mitchell hung over it all, but no one could be roused from the nearby farmhouse to tell us more.

We had phoned ahead to Denver and were told that Chicano and Native American artists from the Southwest were gathering up at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park that weekend for a Festival of the Winds. The festival focused on the connections of art and the folklore of indigenous people, and we met Denver muralists Carlos Sandoval, Jerry Jaramillo and Steve Lucero, who have been associated for a number of years as IAM (Incorporated Artes Monumentales) in which Al and Fred Sanchez also play leading roles. We had seen some of their

the murals is that the male figures appear to have been done from the same model. Nevertheless, this is one of hundreds of little known New Deal mural projects that exhibit historical understanding and style.

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

One of the revelations of the trip was the *Social History of the State of Missouri* that the real Benton painted in the lounge of the state House of Representatives in 1936. I had long believed that Benton was the protagonist of sentimental art of a rural America that in fact had never existed and an outspoken opponent of progressive causes during the '30s. His murals here in the state capitol made clear that he was more complex than that. Above the doorway through which members of the House enter this large sumptuously furnished chamber is a scene of the James brothers holding up a train, clearly Benton's comment on the legislators. In other vignettes, a mother wipes her infant's bottom as she turns away from a political harangue; an Indian is being taken in by a jug-toting frontiers-man; a Black is being lynched, a Mormon tarred and feathered;



Kansas City Boss Pendergast and his pals are enjoying a cabaret show of almost naked dolls. Against these episodes you are shown the back-breaking work of farmers and their wives, timbermen, machinists and meat-cutters. Benton contrasts the high living of the rich entertained by Black jazz musicians with Black cast-outs rummaging among garbage and riding the rails. If Benton had abandoned the Marxism of his youth and attacked what he regarded as foreign ideas, socialism and experimental art, he continued to champion working people and folk culture, illustrating here scenes of Huck Finn and Jim, Frankie and Johnny.

Aesthetically the 15-foot high mural that wraps around the chamber is stunning. Enveloped by all these scenes, you are drawn into the spaces the painter carves out, sometimes like stage sets with cut-off walls. The big panels on both sides of the Central doorway splay sharply out into depth at the corners and form new vanishing points with the converging perspective of the lateral walls. The blue tonality of the whole, together with the energetic angular figures are clearly inspired by El Greco. My excitement about Benton seemed validated when later in Chicago Bill Walker insisted on taking Ruth and me to see an exhibition of the Missourian's work and made clear his own admiration. The importance of Benton also came home to me when I recalled his influence on the Amistad Mutiny murals of Hale Woodruff that we had seen at Talladega College two years earlier.

Kenneth Hudson, Untitled, (detail), 1934-38; Municipal Court, Columbia, Missouri



Social History of the State of Missouri, (detail), Thomas Hart Benton, 1936; State Capitol, Jefferson City, Missouri



Wall of Respect, Leroy White and six other artists, 1968; St. Louis, Missouri

ST. LOUIS

We came down from the freeway into St. Louis at Grand Boulevard in the heart of the inner-city. We had never seen anything like it, not even in the South Bronx. In neighborhood after neighborhood the two and three story red brick houses and stores were boarded up, burnt out, half demolished. Wide areas were leveled and left in rubble. Where it finally seemed you had left the devastation behind you and trees were lush, there it was again in the middle of a block, the windows boarded up. In areas where Black people lived (we were later told they were about 60% of the population) they lingered on door stoops, people of all ages but predominantly young men. We were also told that many still lived behind the boarded up windows and doors, some paying rent to landlords, some squatters. Occasionally a big polished car would drive up to seemingly deserted houses and park. A bent over figure, his hair awry, his eyes wild, hobbled on a cane. When you looked close, he seemed no more than 30. Overhead police helicopters fluttered, constantly on patrol. In the course of a few days we discovered some intact well-to-do areas especially in University City. One night we got lost driving and found ourselves in the midst of happy, well-dressed young people strolling among the outdoor cafes and art galleries. We spent an hour on a terrace chatting with them and dipping french-fried shrimp in spicy tomato sauce. A young woman was going to law school; her friend was working on a MBA; another was taking his time to decide the next step in his life. This only served to sharpen our sense of the blight that was penetrating the city and its neglect. You stand alongside the emptiness that is all that remains of the Pruitt-Igoe public housing since it was dynamited years ago by the authorities because it had become a jungle, and you can see Eero Saarinen's hyperbolic stone hoop, the *Gateway to the West*. And you wonder, what kind of city is this? What kind of nation is this? There must be nothing like it in world.

Leroy White

It was in the midst of this desolation that we came upon St. Louis' *Wall of Respect* with the faded faces of Black leaders only just decipherable on the brick. Leroy White, one of the seven painters who worked on it in 1968, told us that when they painted here, this was a thriving community. They had seen the article in *Ebony* about the Chicago painting of the same name and wanted to do something similar. Most of them were sign painters. Leroy is still a commercial illustrator and designer. They worked on weekends for a month. Leroy recalled that while he was painting, a young man watched him silently for a long while. Finally he asked, "Did you do that?" He could not believe that a face could come out of a brush held by a man on a ladder propped against a wall. Leroy wanted to get kids involved. School classes were brought by their teachers, and the artists printed up a leaflet with brief biographies of the figures on the wall. While the painting was going on there were rallies and entertainment that continued for a while afterwards. Someone painted on the wall Marcus Garvey's words, "Up You Mighty Race." One day Leroy saw a black limousine drive up and businessmen in flannel suits get out and throw paint at the wall. Living nearby, he always restored it after the repeated defacements. Leroy said he wanted to repaint the *Wall of Respect*, that maybe he would use an air brush. He and his son had been studying as much about murals and fresco technique as they could find and were anxious to get a wall. He was hungry for information about murals elsewhere.

The neighborhood only began to deteriorate in the early '70s, Leroy said. There had been no riots in St. Louis when they were occurring around the country. What happened was that old plumbing and wiring simply gave out; roofs needed replacing. Owners could not get loans for repairs; people stopped paying rent; landlords sometimes abandoned their property. Tenants crowded in the remaining livable space, which hastened its deteriora-

28 tion. It is of course a familiar story all over the country. The big GM plant in St. Louis had closed down two years ago, and unemployment was deep. There was new urban-homesteading, but it was mostly gentrification, not housing for Black people. Leroy said there was not much organizing by the poor, only some among middle-class Blacks.

In search of the *Wall of Strength*, another mural we had been told about, we were informed by a neatly dressed young Black man of about 20 that it had been on the church on the corner, but now nothing remained but weeds among the scattered brick. How had the neighborhood declined, I asked him. It was rats, and people not taking care of the property, he said. They were all at one another's throats. It began when they were kids. They had not gotten themselves together as they do when they work on murals, he went on. He directed us to a wall painting in another neighborhood that he said would show us what he meant. On it youngsters and oldsters of the North Neighborhood Association stood shoulder to shoulder with brooms, a mower, paint roller and garbage can on the side of a two-story house. This was the 1979 handiwork of On the Wall Productions. We had also seen *The Emergence of Pride*, which they had helped a group of Black artists do in 1976. It was a handsome, highly stylized scene of people lifting their chins and chests high. Around it now was little more than rubble.

On The Wall Productions

We spent a morning in the studio and home of Sarah Linquist and Bob Fishbone, who are On the Wall. They had married last November after a long association and were planning a honeymoon in Bali, where they expected to find the closest integration of art and everyday life. Now they were living in an old brick house facing a neighborhood park in a run-down part of St. Louis which young artists were trying to bring back. Sarah and Bob had met at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, in the early

'70s where murals were being done in a communications course. Though they were not into painting at that time, the idea was planted, particularly experimental work with media. They moved to St. Louis permanently in 1974 when they ran a summer program of street events and got turned on to murals by someone in city government. Their first mural dates from that year when with 25 friends they painted a time lapse sequence of a giant butterfly emerging from its cocoon above a downtown parking lot. It was well received; they did a few pieces the following year and in 1976 received an NEA grant which was matched by local urban unification money. On the Wall Productions was under way. Their projects are often visual high jinx like a sunrise painted on three walls which when seen by morning commute traffic at one point become continuous. But there has been a persistent social content in much of their work since 1975 pieces like *A Human Race*, which shows runners of different colors in friendly competition, and *Environmental Response* that celebrates urban vegetable gardening. The following year they painted *Wall of Meditation* that shows an elderly gentleman lounging on his piece of turf considering what is happening to his neighborhood, as they described it. In 1977 *Get the Lead Out* called on house painters and the community not to use lead-based paints where children might be exposed to it. That year, too, their *Face of a Nation* offered a giant portrait of an aging Indian chief with tepees in the far distance and the St. Louis skyline closer at hand. Twice life-size Black residents stride out of the wall beneath a four-story high sky with the moon in its different phases somehow echoing them in *The Sky's the Limit*, a work they did for a neighborhood bank with the help of Ta Daas in 1979. Last year On the Wall put its visual ingenuity to work on behalf of the Souldard neighborhood's effort to restore itself and bridge past and present as well as different ethnic groups. This was the painters at their best, combining their humanity, wit and technical skill.



Souldard: *Where the Past Meets the Future*, Sarah Linquist and Bob Fishbone (On the Wall Productions), 1981; St. Louis

We had arrived the morning after Sarah and John had been through a public meeting in which they had to confess to residents who lived near the Southwest High School that they were wrong in not drawing them into preliminary discussions concerning a mural on the front of the school which showed mascots of nine suburban schools amidst luxuriant foliage. When we saw the mural, it seemed an attractive decorative piece reminiscent of a Henri Rousseau jungle, but it generated a brouhaha that hit St. Louis newspapers and scared the schoolboard at first into offering to sandblast it off the walls. Sarah and John said they had thought it was sufficient to consult only the students and involve them in the painting. The evening meeting, they thought, had straightened matters out.

Their local success had opened the way to projects in Baton Rouge, El Paso and this year at the Knoxville World's Fair. Now they were involved in raising funds to re-paint their most famous and infamous work, *Lindy Squared*, that had been demolished in 1981 by a wrecker's ball and now they hoped to re-do at the airport. This computer read-out image of the hero of St. Louis had provoked the dismay of some muralists and progressives because the flier had also been a supporter of the Nazis during the '30s. Looking back, Sarah and Bob could count about 50 murals to their credit in nine years, works that had generated the painting of others in St. Louis as well as delight and serious reflection.

Sarah and Bob directed us to a moving image of a Black St. Francis praising the sun and God on a ghetto wall, said to have been painted by a priest. Nearby on the outside of a cocktail lounge were the full length portraits of Jack Johnson, Joe Lewis and Mohammed Ali.

EAST ST. LOUIS

If St. Louis had some comfortable and renewed areas to redeem the rest, the East St. Louis we saw had none. There we found at least two murals of Dalton Brown, who had formerly painted in Chicago. On the facade of the *Monitor* newspaper he had done an impressive painterly frieze of African imagery and on a nearby cleaner's more graphic bright, flat masks and figures. It was work in this style we also discovered in a railroad viaduct together with another artist's, all part of what was clearly stenciled "Mayor Mason's Beautification Project."

JOLIET

We spend some hours in Joliet, trying to locate Kathleen Farrell but having to be satisfied with a few of her murals and some interesting work of others. We caught her small but handsomely painted post office piece done in 1981 for the International Year of the Disabled, really an easel work rather than a mural, but using a hard-edge solarized light technique to capture the touching disjointed motions of her figures. We found the very big *Downtown Is Our Town* that she directed and which though showing signs of age still effectively affirms that it is the work of ordinary people which makes a city and gives them the right to control it. We were directed to a neighborhood work that turned out to be a powerful, even strident, indictment of drugs and boozing done in 1978 by Lloyd Davies and titled *Recovery*.

On our way out of town we struck one of the strong surprises of our trip — the wall of the Brothers of Soul Club House, a motorcycle gang's lair. The title of the mural, if it was intended as such, might as well be the inscription on the swelling gas tank of one of the pictured bikes driven by a brown skulled wildcat: "Love Is A Real High Performance Thang." The kind of love was vivid: above a naked brown-skinned male rearing back on his feather-

skull mantled bike in ecstasy and leaving a rocket-like blast behind. The style that was probably borrowed from a biker's comic strip was accomplished. Club members who were hanging out there were delighted to be photographed in front and said that the artist, Johnny Gathbright, had done the work last year replacing an earlier piece of his. The new mural, they said, had caused accidents among passing motorists. Understandably so.



Love is a Real High Performance Thang (detail), Johnny Gathbright, 1981; Joliet, Illinois

CHICAGO

Alejandro Romero

One of the most impressive and promising new muralists on the scene in this country must be Alejandro Romero. Two of his works are to be seen here. *La Familia* at Chicago State University hangs above the steam tables in the cafeteria, an enormous factory shed-like space where the utility ducts high overhead are exposed. They are reflected in the long slim 12 x 54 painting that has a monumental presence. This is achieved largely by the fish-eye view in which all of the figures, towers and machinery lean backward as if you had to tilt your head to take them in as they loomed overhead. It is a device of Siqueiros and Camarena, but handled adroitly here. Romero has borrowed widely from his Mexican predecessors but always consistently with his own vision, which is of a surging creative humanity with the almond shaped eyes and faces of *mestizos* energetically

Continued on page 32

DOWNTOWN

1. HISTORY OF SAN FRANCISCO, Rincon Annex Post Office, 99 Mission (Spear and Mission) (indoors), Anton Refregier, 1947**
2. STOCK EXCHANGE, 155 Sansome (indoors), Diego Rivera, 1931 (Can be viewed Mon.-Fri. 9-11 or after 2:30. Must call in advance to view mural, 421-5167.)
3. TACTILE MURAL, California League for the Handicapped, 1299 Bush, (indoors) Cynthia Grace, 1976*
4. NEW COLLEGE OF CALIFORNIA SCHOOL OF LAW, 50 Fell (indoors), Ray Patlan, 1980-81

CHINATOWN-TELEGRAPH HILL-RUSSIAN HILL-NORTH BEACH

5. PING-YUEN HOUSING, MURAL OF THE BOK SEN (8 IMMORTALS), 3 WISDOMS, AND THE CHINESE ZODIAC, 895 Pacific, Josie Grant, 1978*†
6. COIT TOWER, Telegraph Hill, 19 murals by 20 WPA artists with numerous assistants, 1934** (Tours for public, Saturdays, 11:00.)
7. NORTH BEACH HOUSING, 600-650 Francisco, a) Jackie Ortez, 1977, b) Kim Sites, 1981*†
8. SAN FRANCISCO ART INSTITUTE, 800 Chestnut (indoors), Diego Rivera, 1931

WESTERN ADDITION

9. WAPAC, 1956 Sutter, Art Workshop, David Bradford with Arthur Monroe, 1975†
10. PAGE-LAGUNA MINI-PARK, 273 Page, Josie Grant, 1975*

HAIGHT

11. OUR HISTORY IS NO MYSTERY, Masonic and Hayes, Haight-Ashbury Muralists: Miranda Bergman, Jane Norling, Vicky Hamlin, Peggy Tucker, Tom Kunz, Arch Williams, 1976
12. 200 YEARS OF RESISTANCE, Haight and Masonic, Haight-Ashbury Muralists, 1976
13. RAINBOW PEOPLE, 1434 Haight (indoors), Haight-Ashbury Muralists, 1974
14. COME TOGETHER, EACH IN YOUR OWN PERCEIVING OF YOURSELF, Page Street Library, 1815 Page, Selma Brown, Ruby Newman, 1976*
15. SPIRIT OF YOUTH IN AMERICA, Paltenghi Youth Center, 1525 Waller, Charles Edward Lobdell, 1976

MISSION

NORTH MISSION

16. VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION OF SAN FRANCISCO, 401 Duboce at Church, Caleb Williams, 1979*
17. MISSION HIGH SCHOOL, Church between 17th and 18th Streets, Judy Jamerson with Mission High School students, 1981*
18. SAN FRANCISCO COMMUNITY LAW COLLECTIVE, 18th St. and Dolores, Michael Rios, 1977*
19. VALENCIA GARDENS HOUSING, between 14th and 15th Streets and Guerrero and Valencia†, a) BRYCE CANYON, Jack Frost, 1975, b) BLACK WOMEN'S FACES, George Mead, 1976, c) WORLD VIEW, George Mead, 1976, d) PLANET EARTH, Guillermo Pulido, 1975
20. MISSION NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH CENTER, 240 Shotwell, a) NUCLEUS FAMILY, Michael Rios, b) HUMANIDAD, Graciella Carrillo, 1976*

24TH STREET

21. MINI-PARK MURALS, 24th St. between Bryant and York, a) NORTH AND EAST WALL, Michael Rios, Tony Machado, Richard Montez, b) WEST WALL, Mujeres Muralistas, 1975
22. A BOUNTIFUL HARVEST, China Books, 2929 24th St. Susan Cervantes with Denise Meehan and Precita Eyes Muralists, 1978*
23. BALMY ALLEY MURALS, Balmy Alley between 24th and 25th Sts., neighborhood artists, children and others, 1973
24. GARFIELD PARK SWIMMING POOL, 25th St. and Harrison†, a) SOUTH WALL, Precita Eyes Muralists, 1980*, b) EAST WALL, Domingo Rivera, 1975
25. BERNAL DWELLINGS, 3100-3200 Army†, a) KOOL BLUE, Susan Cervantes with neighborhood youth corps and tenants, b) Graciella Carrillo, Patricia Rodriguez and tenants, c) Michael Rios, Graciella Carrillo, Fran Valesco, Sekio Fuopopo, 1975
26. FAMILY LIFE, THE SPIRIT OF MANKIND, FOUR SEASONS OF LIFE, Le Conte School, 3125 Army, Susan Cervantes, Judy Jamerson, workshop volunteers, neighborhood youth, 1977*†
27. LULAC BUILDING, 3200 26th St., Gilberto Ramirez, 1975*
28. PARA EL MERCADO, Paco's Tacos, South Van Ness and 24th St., Mujeres Muralistas, 1974
29. BART STATION, Mission and 24th Sts., Michael Rios, Tony Machado, Richard Montez, 1975*
30. LATINOAMERICA/PAN AMERICA, 2922 Mission between 25th and 26th Sts. Mujeres Muralistas, 1974
31. BANK OF AMERICA MURAL, Bank of America, Mission at 23rd St. (indoors), Chuey Campusano with Michael Rios, L. Cortazar and 5 Mission District artists, 1974
32. DESERT, St. John's School, 1050 South Van Ness between 21st and 22nd Sts., Fran Valesco, 1982†

BAY-VIEW/HUNTERS POINT

33. THE FIRE NEXT TIME, Joseph P. Lee Recreation Center, 3rd and Oakdale Sts., Dewey Crumpler with Tim Drescher, 1977*†

OCEANSIDE

34. ART OF THE AMERICAS, San Francisco City College Theater, 50 Phelan (indoors), Diego Rivera, 1939-40
35. FLEISHACKER ZOO, Great Highway, a) STORY OF NOAH AND HIS ARK (Mother's House), Helen Forbes, 1938**, b) ELEPHANT HOUSE MURAL, John Rampley, 1978*
36. HISTORY OF THE SUNSET, 39th Ave. and Ortega, Sunset Mural Workshop, Henry Sultan, Julia Marshall, Fran Valesco, 1979

RICHMOND

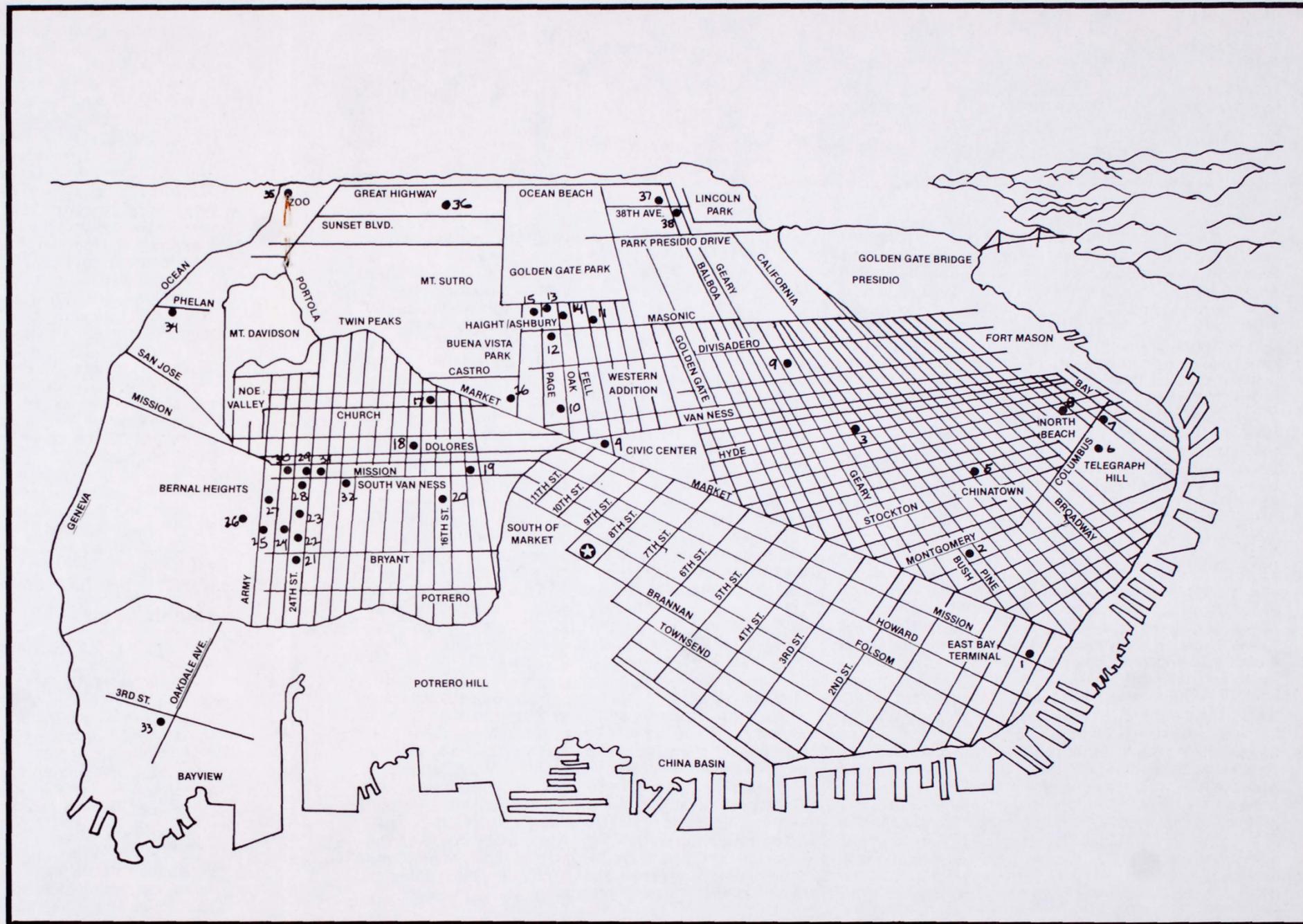
37. BALBOA THEATER, 38th Ave. and Balboa, Fran Valesco, Claire Josephson and volunteers, 1979*
38. GEORGE WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL, 33rd Ave. and Geary (indoors), a) LIFE OF WASHINGTON, Victor Arnautoff, 1935**, b) TRYPTICH, Dewey Crumpler, 1974

★ MURAL RESOURCE CENTER, 934 Brannan St., 552-2131

* Includes CETA Program funding

** W.P.A. Program

† S.F. Mayor's Office of Community Development (OCD)



San Francisco Mural Map



La Familia, Alejandro Romero, 1978; Chicago State University, Chicago

working with their hands and machines. Vibrating outlines and multiple perspectives of the same face contribute to the implied motion. This work was done in 1978; his second in this country in 1981 at a West Side bank is even narrower and longer, 10 x 72'. Behind the tellers' area, it offers a similar portrayal of urgent human evolution and productiveness, but it replaces the overall bluish tones of *La Familia* with more colorful hues. Romero, who received his training in Mexico, the U.S. and France, has lived mainly by his prints, posters and easel works. Some of the former are over-sized and have the same subjects as his murals; others are of masked, frenzied celebrants of the *Día de los Muertos* and the *Fiesta del Sol*. His wife, whom I was alone able to reach since he was in Mexico with an exhibit of his art, says that he mainly wants to do murals. He had done some in Mexico in the late '60s and has a commission for a large indoor work there now.

Pilsen Barrio

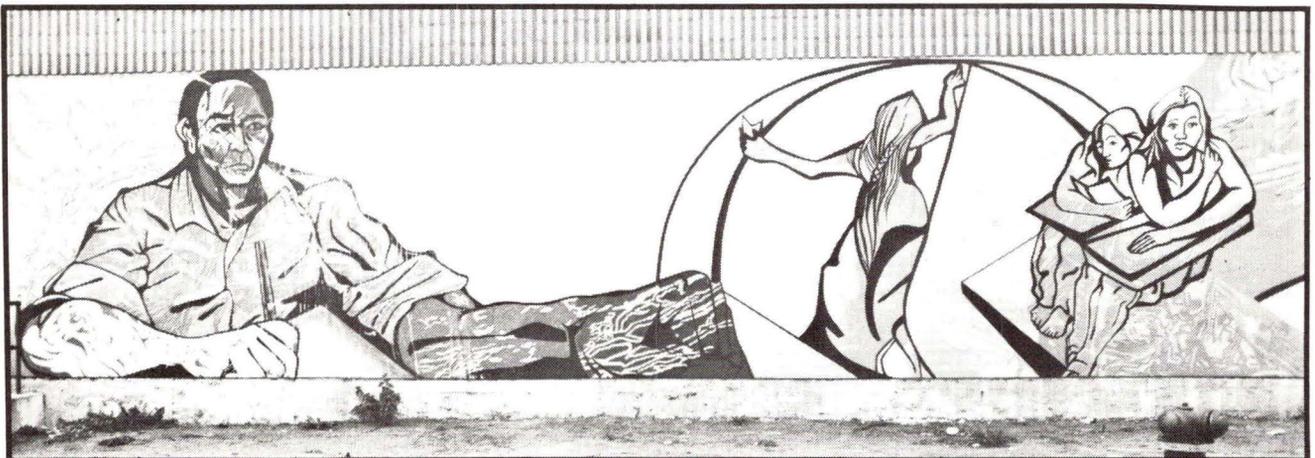
This trip was the first chance I had to see the 1979 mural at Benito Juarez High School designed mainly by Jaime Longoria and executed with Malu Ortega y Alberro with the assistance of Salvador Vega, Marcos Raya and Oscar Moya. It is a totally unexpected Chicano work. Marcos said that the imagery derived from monster comics and was therefore more immediately comprehensible to teenagers than their elders. There is a very legible sympathetic portrait of Juarez who seems to represent the self-determination of native people and their education in contrast to the gang fights and drugs of the streets. The whole is rendered in a Japanese-like calligraphy against a delicately toned and creased background which was produced by Malu with the help of a computer. Its title is *A la Esperanza* (To Hope). The response to the mural was mixed, and the painters had done public presentations to explain it.

One of the dissenters, Raya said, was Aurelio Días,

who has since secured a commission to do the other side of the gym. He rolled out the big canvas cartoon for us to see, a more immediately legible frieze in his characteristic style of rosy hued round-headed stocky figures that include Raza leaders calling for bilingual and bicultural education. He will be executing the work with 12 students and is being funded by the Chicago Council of Art. After years of association with Casa Aztlán, he left it in 1979, but his work with teenagers has continued to spread throughout the West Side, and he works in his basement studio where older women make brightly hued paper flowers. He was also helping mount the national Canto al Pueblo that was to occur in the playing field of the high school in July.

While I was talking with Marcos Raya, he was teaching young apprentices how to do restaurant murals. He had altered his 1972 *Homenaje a Diego Rivera* by adding an MX missile beneath the capitalist at the controls and added flags and figures to commemorate the struggles of the people of the Caribbean and Central America. He had also contributed a major section to the *Anti-War Mural* on Western Ave. that Chicago and Wisconsin artists had worked on in 1980. Outside of recent work in San Francisco, these two works are the only current murals I have seen that deal with imperialism and war.

Casa Aztlán was re-shaping its studios on the upper floors and Salvador Vega had a commodious place there where he was experimenting with air brush work. On a foundry in Pilsen we saw Oscar Moya's long mural that compares the misuse of metal, as Marcos Raya explained it, to the abuse of another precious thing, women. A new talented Pilsen muralist made his appearance with an impressive wall on the side of the Eighteenth Street Community Development Corporation, which already had seven rehabilitated buildings to its credit. He was Bill Campillo, who illustrated the group's achievements with construction workers repairing one of the local red brick buildings while further back a group was demonstrating.



A la Esperanza, (detail), Jaime Longoria and Malu Ortega y Alberro, with the assistance of Salvador Vega, Marcos Raya and Oscar Moya, 1979; Benito Juarez High School, Chicago



Untitled, Bill Campillo, 1982; Eighteenth Street Community Development Corporation, Chicago

West Town

It was by sheer chance when driving along North Ave. that I saw a group of teenagers working on a scaffolding and ladder at Association House, a community center that has been serving the area since 1899. The two stories of images declared that their roots were in Puerto Rico, and the five members of the crew said that a band shell and play areas were to be developed in front of the wall. There was no professional artist guiding them but two of them had done other murals in the neighborhood. What was especially impressive was that a group of young people had organized themselves on the strength of the example set by professional muralists like Mario Galván and John Weber who had worked in the area in the previous decade. The current project was being funded by a CETA Summer Youth Program locally directed by William Delgado, who came out and showed us around the community. He took us to a gang mural that showed two klansmen around a shield, the insignia of the Untouchables, a branch of the Latin Kings, the biggest gang in the area. Delgado said that it had been painted eight years ago. Since then it had been the target of innumerable defacements. The Untouchables were becoming more socially responsible and had asked Association House to replace the mural with another. It was on a thoroughly trashed building where a child had been killed by a stray bullet during a shootout for which a kid was doing time although it was said he was not responsible. Across the street a school that had been fully enrolled was closed down and due to be converted to condominiums. A big white sportscar, likely a real estate agent, drove up to it as we talked. The neighborhood was being gentrified, and Delgado wondered for whom his summer youth crews were raking up litter while we walked by.

He advised us to look up Gamaliel Ramirez at the Humboldt Park Cultural Art Center further west along North Ave. The Center was bustling with a silkscreen crew doing a poster announcing the dedication of the new mural illustrating local life that Ramirez and assistants had done in panels to be mounted outside. There was also an exhibition of photos in its gallery. The Center had begun as a YMCA art workshop, but with funding fading, Ramirez wanted to re-organize as a non-profit to tap local businesses. He believed he would also get more under-

standing from art rather than social agencies and was planning to apply to the NEA. Having done six murals, three with the Center, he regarded art as both therapy and skill training for the young.

Calvin Jones

After having seen so many community murals over the last dozen years, I should no longer be surprised at the high quality of work I frequently meet, but Calvin Jones and Mitchell Caton's *Builders of the Cultural Present* again provoked the question, "What is a work like this doing in this kind of place?" It was a busy corner in an integrated middle class neighborhood on the South Side (actually where I grew up). The answer of course is that where else could it appear? What museum would show it, though it is of extraordinary quality by any standards? Could the prospect of a gallery exhibit have stimulated the artists to do something like this? It is Jones' tonal modulations and Caton's flat African patterning that suggest museums. When a day later I met Calvin for the first time, he said that if some people are shy about going to museums, art should be brought to them.

Calvin said that he and Mitchell were originally from the streets and had grown up in the same South Side neighborhood. Caton, he said, became a pin-striped suit account executive for a big corporation, while he became a successful head of an advertising agency in Kansas City. He quit that world in 1970 because of its deceptions and became co-director of AFAM, a cultural center on the South Side that did theater in the round, jazz and poetry readings. Meanwhile he turned his talents for portraiture and illustration to easel work and sold out his first show that year. From then on he averaged two shows a year until four years ago. There was no problem finding a place to exhibit or sell. By 1976 he became bored and joined Mitchell and Justine DeVan on his first mural, *A Time To Unite*. He said he stays home a lot and gets embarrassed about talking with people on the street while he is painting. At his one-man gallery shows he hides his shyness by playing jazz. Because he was working on a new exhibit, there would be no mural this year. Caton, he said, is also a recluse, wants to be with his family and lives by his commercial art. Both Mitchell and he, Calvin confided, are legally blind.



Reagan Ax Cuts Aid to Millions (unfinished), Bill Walker, 1982; Chicago

Bill Walker

I was able to catch the exhibit of Bill Walker's pen and ink drawings at the South Side Community Art Center just as they were being taken down. They offered trenchant glimpses of the ghetto rendered in harsh stick-like black and white manner. It was amidst this life on the South Side that Ruth and I renewed our acquaintance with Bill beneath his *Peace, Peace*, painted in 1980. He was his usual friendly and uniquely dignified self. He introduced us to Tom Norwood, the proprietor of the liquor store where the mural was painted, and a young man, whom Bill later identified as gang leader, who had come up to show him drawing and poetry he had done. Bill was planning a *Wall of Poetry* across the street, and when we returned six weeks later some of the young man's comic strip Vikings were on the wall. Bill thought it was important that these 17 and 18-year olds who were into drugs and gangs be given the chance, as he put it, "of coming forward on a positive path." Poems of locals, always moving, already appeared on *Peace, Peace* as they had on the earliest murals in Chicago. Along one side here of a panel showing a confrontation between the Klan and Blacks and portraits of Malcolm, King and Elijah Mohammed were pasted items from Black newspapers and the cover of the current *Community Murals*. Bill said he wanted local folks to know that their art was being seen around the country. Bill has also commandeered another wall opposite for an even larger display of newsprint, which included a story about someone who had traded his baby for a car.

I had caught a glance of another mural down 47th Street, but Bill did not want to me to go over to see it. He finally agreed and it turned out to be a beautiful work addressed especially to children, *You Are As Good As Anyone*. It was in a yellow tonality, much lighter than Bill's more familiar blue murals, but it was badly scarred and coming off the old wall. At the street end was a six-foot high face of Martin King painted on rough brick that made it look like a mosaic. Bill began to pull a big section of plaster with his images on it from the wall in a gesture of his disappointment at what was happening to the work, and we had to plead with him to stop.

Around the back of the liquor store where *Peace, Peace* was painted, Bill was still at work on an even larger wall over which the caption "*Reagan Ax Cuts Aid to Millions*." Here the thin eyes of the Great Communicator grinned at grim Black people as a big skull loomed behind. This theme appeared again in a mural Bill was working on some blocks away on another building owned by Tom Norwood. Here the smiling Mr. President seemed to be popping up jack-in-the-box-like out of a real garbage can that had been placed strategically beneath him. Above were itemized statistics on cuts in social services in the community while the title *Reaganomics* was inscribed at the right, and a woman with an empty plate stood at the left. Next to her there was a standoff between members of the revived Nazis and Klan on the one hand, and on the other, neighborhood clubs. The caption read: "How Come We People Can't Be More Together?" This was driven home by the big White and Black faces



Reaganomics (unfinished), Bill Walker, 1982; Chicago

on the second story of an adjoining building. These murals were the only ones we saw across the country that addressed the depression in the inner cities.

Around the corner from *Reaganomics* Bill had painted a Black junkie and the outlines of Federal prosecutors Dan Webb and Jim Schweitzer who were currently investigating police collusion with the heroin traffic in the city, which had already resulted in some convictions with sentences up to 33 years. He added in large letter, "If you are not careful it can happen to you." Bill had been attending the trial of the police, the "Marquette Ten," and was doing drawings that he planned to exhibit. Further along the wall he had invited local gang members to add their logos in what he called *The Wall of Graffiti*.

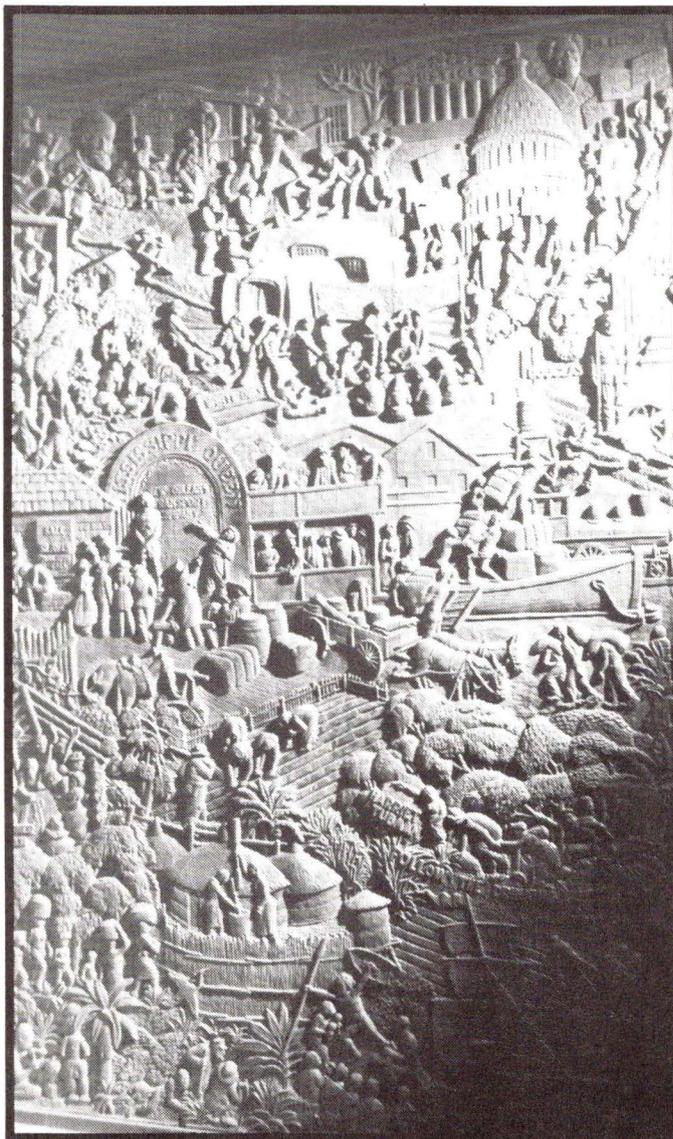
The next day we drove out to see Bill's mural of last year he had painted in the daycare center at Gautreau School. Done in Bill's yellow palette, it was a delightful frieze of children playing and learning. When we later visited Bill's mural inside the Stranger Home Church in Cabrini Green, we realized that his lighter style actually goes back at least to 1971 when he began this, the best preserved of his early murals. This extraordinary work (illustrated in *Towards A People's Art*, p. 241), is seldom seen because of its location, but it is accessible on Sundays before or after services. Bill says that it helped the minister at that time lose his job because it made no explicit reference to religious subjects. It is simply a celebration of the Black family and especially children. In this mural and *Black Love*, which was also done at this time, Bill began his efforts to work out the relation of his figures and space to the architecture in which they fit. This occurred while he became acquainted with the murals of Rivera and began learning from them.

Bill played us a tape he began in 1978 and was still working on. It is reminiscences of his life set in the framework of memories while workin on the *Wall of Respect*. It is frequently poetic with occasional rhyme and reveals Bill as a master mimic of Black voices. He begins with Alley B where he grew up in Birmingham and his special attachment to his mulatto grandmother who refused to be overcome by the hatred of both Blacks and Whites. "She learned," he says, "to judge people by deeds, not by color." He indicts Reverend Preacher who forever called on folks to confess and give, which they did until they could escape North. In Alley B, Bill remembers, there was a spirit to live not touched by Reverend Preacher. He recalls his having begun to draw at three and his Aunt Stel proud that he might grow up to be an "artist person." Bill says that "what mattered to folks was to seek the God-given power in themselves to seek a way out at least for their children." He was brought to Chicago when he was 11.

Piecing together the tape and his remarks at other times, the outline of his life emerges. After being drafted and rising to the rank of corporal in the Air Force during World War II, he spent 4 1/2 years at the Columbus College of Art and Design in Ohio. "I had to succeed for those who had given all for me," he says. He had first intended to be a fashion designer but actually started out after college with murals in barbecues, night clubs, churches and a community center in Columbus, Nashville and Memphis in the early '50s. Returning to Chicago, he did easel paintings of clowns, Parisian scenes, landscapes, still lifes and long-necked Caribbean women for interior decorators. The tape recounts the painting of the *Wall of Respect*, "the mother-trucking wall," that the local addicts opposed. "My craziness," Bill says, "was beyond their widest imagination." He had spent six years in the area doing a lot of sign painting, learning and getting known. "We artists of OBAC (Organization for Black American Culture) went where most people would not go, he says of the group to whom he brought the idea of doing the wall.

Bill lamented that young Blacks today are different from those of the '60s and they do not have the conscientious leaders. He sees the present as a time of crisis for public art because of the cutbacks of funding and the political emergency. "It is a test period," he said, "of whether artists can hold on to their principles and weather the storm." There is a need of artists to come together in cooperative businesses, he advised, such as sign painting and interior design. They could job some of the work out to others and use the profits for murals.

Bill suggested we visit the Du Sable Museum of African-American History which Margaret Burroughs directs. There we found a big wooden panel — certainly a mural — meticulously carved by Robert Witt Ames. *Freedom Now* contains 40 scenes detailing Afro-American experience from slavery through the March on Washington. Ames, who was born in Illinois and raised in the Philippine Islands, practiced law in California, but, dissatisfied, turned to a carving, recalling the work of Philippine craftsmen. He spent six years planning and sculpting the mural which after its completion in 1965 was "discovered" and toured the country. While we were visiting the museum, it was being filmed for a video story about a boy whose life is changed by seeing the history of his people depicted on it.



Freedom Now, Robert Witt Ames, 1965; Du Sable Museum of African-American History, Chicago



Martin Luther King Memorial Wall (unmounted portion), Eugene Eda, 1982; Chicago

Eugene Eda

On our return West we passed through Chicago and contacted Eugene, whose new mural at Chicago State University we had seen on our way east. It is done in the Egyptian style he had used since the *Wall of Dignity* in Detroit in 1968 and later at Malcolm X College in Chicago. In his new work like the earlier, Eugene employs these figures borrowed from ancient tomb painting to exemplify the high culture African people are capable of. But some of them are modern construction workers, including a woman. He was still at work on additional panels for Chicago State, but now he was absorbed on what was to be the *Martin Luther King Memorial Wall* or the *Wall of Respect II*. It was a sequence of porcelain enamel panels to be mounted on a concrete matrix already in place at the scene of the 1967 work that is widely regarded as the beginning of the community mural movement. Since the original wall was destroyed by fire in 1971, the area has been renewed and a human services center has taken the place of the original shops and apartments. Eugene says that he had pursued the commission for the new mural seven years, competing against hundreds of proposals. The city had originally wanted to spend only \$5,000 and some of the entries would have cost \$100,000. He finally got them up to \$25,000, a large part of which was spent on materials. There was some bitterness among Chicago muralists that a number of them had not been selected to work collectively on the mural.

We saw Eugene's panels at the foundry arranged in the sequence they would be mounted at the site. He got the go-ahead and began painting on June 1 and was under pressure to complete them fast. He finished August 10. The imagery is largely portraits, as the original *Wall of Respect* was. The first section deals with slavery, the struggle for emancipation and finally Reconstruction. The second and third deal with Black leaders in education, culture, sports and business, and the fourth section makes the connection between racism and economic exploitation and links portraits of Garvey, Robeson, Malcolm and King. There is some imaginative symbolism, such as the face of a jowled businessman masked in the head of a bald eagle, but portraits no longer have the power to move viewers they had 15 years ago. Eugene seems not to have foreseen the limits of his medium. Oddly he departs from his characteristic hard-edge, flat "Egyptian" style, which would have worked well in porcelain enamel. Instead he combines this crisp manner with painterly effects like explicit brushwork that is not effective here. Hopefully this memorial not only to King but to the first mural of the movement will lead people to realize what has been achieved since 1967 and what remains to be done.

Chicago Mural Group

John Weber was just back from a trip to Belgium and France, where he had done workshops. Hervé Béchy, he reported, after two years of effort received approval from the socialist national government for the park murals he proposed in the working-class district of Paris where his Atelier d' Art Public operates, but was turned down by the conservative municipal authorities. John thought Hervé should leave Paris and settle in a left wing suburb where there would be government support. John was feeling similarly about himself and Chicago where he felt there was little funding for socially conscious murals. He said he could stay and do participatory murals which he believed limited his opportunities for innovation as well as income. But he wanted to develop his art and earn enough to support his family. He was not working on a mural this summer but preparing for an exhibit of his easel work and lithographs in New York next spring.

The CMG was now doing three to four large murals a year along with smaller projects. Alejandro Romero had joined the group that still included John, Lynn Takata, Cynthia Weiss, Beth Shadur, Calvin Jones, Mitchell Caton and Jose Guerrero. Some days later we saw the very handsome mosaic *Fabric of Our lives* that Cynthia Weiss and Miriam Socoloff had done at the Jewish Community Center in West Park that celebrated the immigration, labor struggles and culture of Jews. This was the most successful of the increasing efforts in mosaic or cement that the CMG had undertaken in recent years and points to the growing tendency to work in permanent media.

Mark Rogovin

Mark's silhouette mural for Columbia College demonstrates how unexpectedly powerful this technique can be just because it is limited to expressive gesture and carefully selected detail. Its recall of the demonstration and police riot that took place just outside on Michigan Avenue during the Democratic convention in 1968 as well as that whole era make it especially moving. This summer Mark and the Public Art Workshop were mounting baked enamel panels on a firehouse but his main activities were absorbed by the exhibition of the incredible drawings of the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the Peace Museum, which he now directs. The museum offers a good space for portable murals, and René Yañez of the Galeria de la Raza was talking about the possibility of a show there of the *In Progress* portable murals concerned with war and peace in the Americas that began in San Francisco and would gather additional works as it traveled through California.

Astrid Fuller

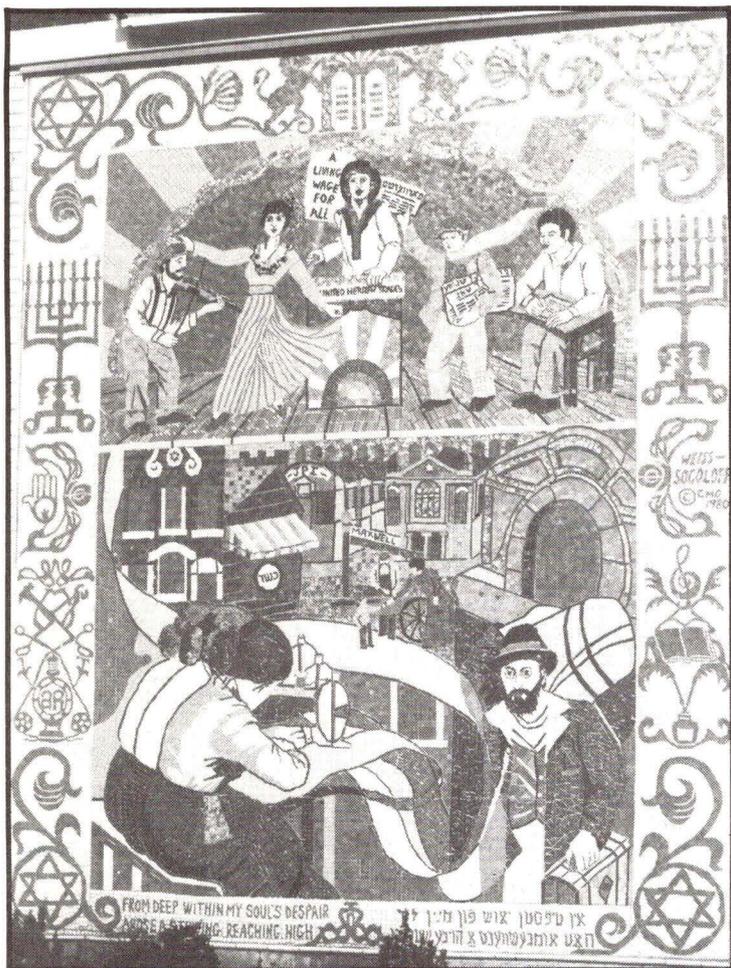
Near the underpass murals of Hyde Park we came on an important recent work of Astrid warning that the long-term lease of the Chicago school system was soon to expire and that there was a risk of the schools being sold off for private profit.

WISCONSIN

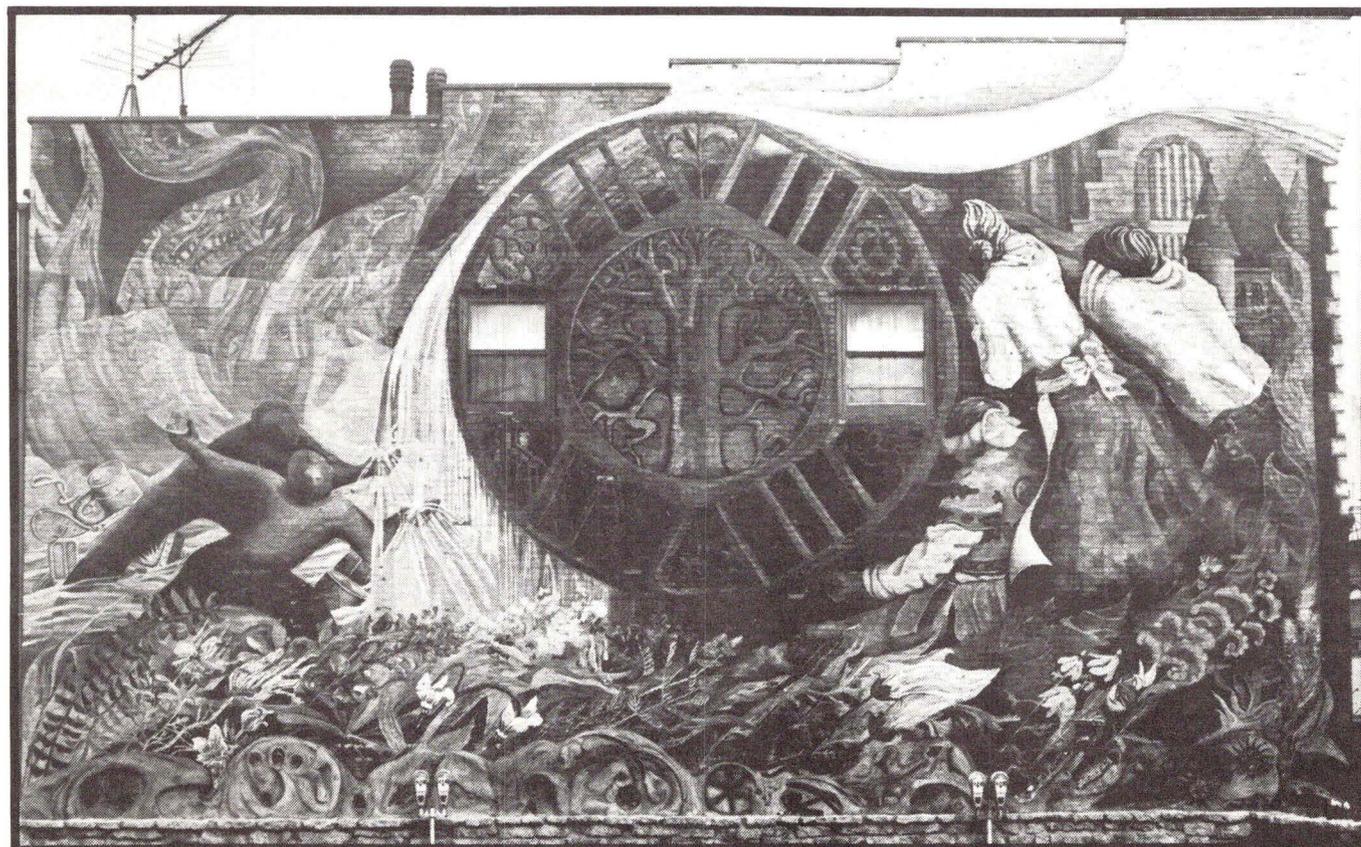
Caryl Yasko

We drove up to Whitewater and spent two delightful days with Caryl and her family. Caryl has been doing residencies in high schools throughout the state that last six weeks to a semester and has all the work she can handle. The only other muralist also getting these positions, she said, is Holly Highfill. She reports that it is hard for artists in Wisconsin and they feel isolated. Caryl served on the state art commission between 1978 and '81.

As we drove into downtown Whitewater we immediately caught sight of the mural she did where the old city hall used to stand. The mural, as John Weber says, is her masterpiece. It shows a big waterwheel and working people of the past putting their shoulders to it as water from above also drives it suggesting a technology that cooperates with nature. In the middle of the wheel is the big oak from which the town was surveyed. Refreshed by the water that comes off the wheel, two indistinct figures are meant to suggest the indefinite future, Caryl says. Below, caught up in the motion of wheel and people, the flowers of the prairie and woodlands lean in the breeze. Caryl says she has loved flowers since she grew up in Racine, and she encourages them in her garden. Beneath these is a hand-molded concrete wall in which a plowshare, cog wheels, chains and gears, horseshoes and crockery have been embedded to evoke the past. These had been contributed by local people along with the stone quarried nearby that was used to construct the garden in front



Fabric of Our Lives, Cynthia Weiss and Miriam Socoloff (Chicago Mural Group), 1980; Chicago



Untitled, Caryl Yasko and assistants, Whitewater, Wisconsin

38 Metal dust from the auto shop behind the mural tones the cement. During the two months that Caryl and her assistants worked on the wall, she broadcast early morning progress reports over the local radio station. Caryl is now working on having the town put a fountain in the little plaza that has been created.

Caryl also pointed out to us the first mural in White-water, a supergraphic by Chicago muralist Sachio Yamashita that zebra-striped across the two facades of a building on a downtown corner, pretty startling for this Republican dairyland town.

Caryl drove with us to Madison to see *Our Search for Knowledge In An Ever-Changing Universe*, which she had done with Niki Glen and John McNeilles in 1977. Though faded considerably, its imaginative design was still clear. We also sought out Niki Glen's *the People Are A River* done at the University YMCA in 1975 and a half dozen other works done by students and the local counter-culture.

In Fort Atkinson we visited a new work done by high school students guided by Caryl. At a main downtown intersection, it is the brightest thing in town, using her yellow, orange and green palette and her characteristic wheeling forms, but the thinking and execution, she said, were the students'. What it showed was the misuse of technology — old machinery in black and white woodcut style; an empty-headed TV addict manipulated like a marionette; camera, calculator, computer whose wires bind up a person. But another figure is trying to hold back the hands of a clock at the last minute before the firing of a nuclear missile. Posed against all this is a golden ring of dancing figures suggesting that the energy of people can be used to their advantage. Caryl says that she had led extended discussions on the theme with the students who had not previously thought much about these matters. Then they worked collectively from "scribble draw-

ings," abstract lines and shapes that seemed to them the basis for a satisfying design. From this they began to pull out figures suitable to their theme. This, Caryl had found, was an effective way of working with inexperienced young people. The results were telling.

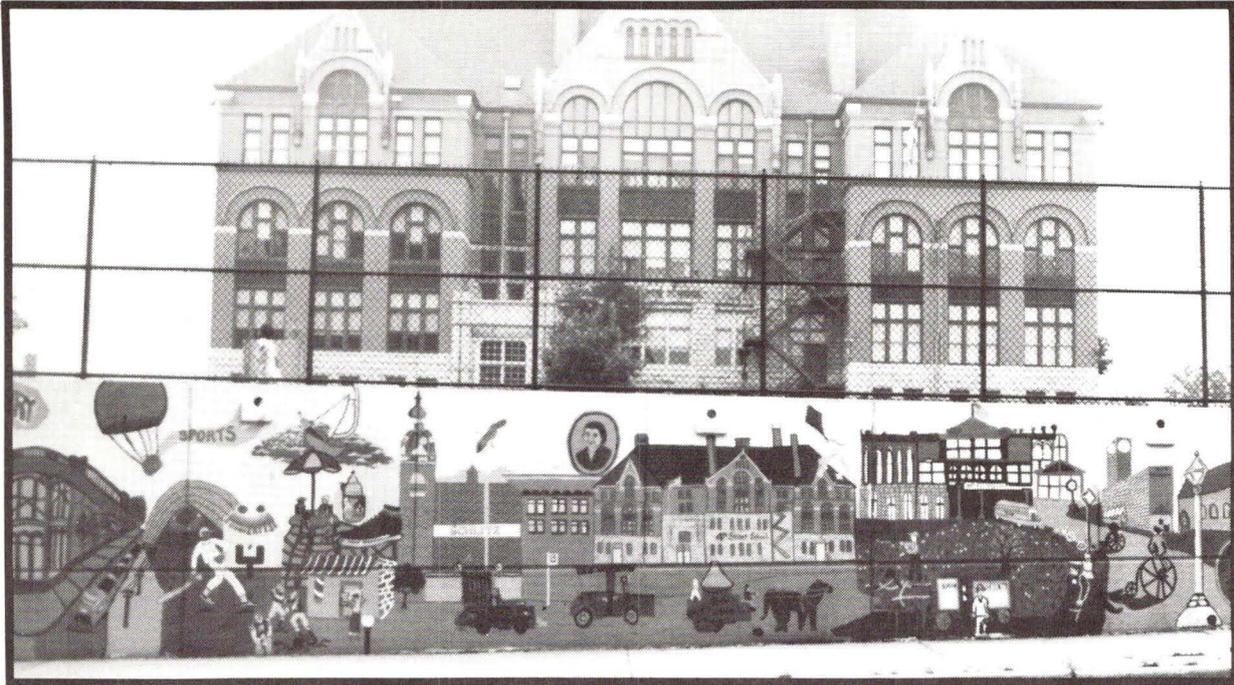
Milwaukee

We now headed here and were only able to contact the husband of muralist Marie Burton, but he gave us addresses to some sites. There was the *Wall of Life* that she had worked on with Evenly Terry Bridges and young people in 1974 on the outside of a toy factory facing a playground. It showed a Last Supper with a Black Jesus surrounded by his apostles, including Malcom and King, Jackie Robinson, Paul Robeson and Frederick Douglass. We were also to find a work of the following year that Marie directed, *Celebration of Cultures* at the St. Rose School. There was the delightful *Milwaukee Illustrated* that Marie and the children of the Fourth Street School painted on a retaining wall so that the portrait of the ancient, gabled school is seen directly beneath the actual building a block away. It is made to butt up against the equally old Schlitz brewery, actually across the street, while presiding over both is an oval portrait of Golda Meir, who apparently taught there before going to Israel. The rest is a chronicle of local landmarks.

Aurelio Díaz had told us about a mural done by him and others during the Canto al Pueblo that was held here in the late '70s. The big portraits of Che and an archetypal Latina were still there, but only just, for the building behind the mural was being gentrified into attorneys' offices, and the mural, the renovators told me, would be removed. I should take it with me, they only half jokingly proposed. They complained how such things often done at the taxpayers' expense defaced handsome old buildings.



Untitled, Caryl Yasko and students, 1982; Ft. Atkinson, Wisconsin



Milwaukee Illustrated, Marie Burton and students, 1978; Fourth Street School, Milwaukee

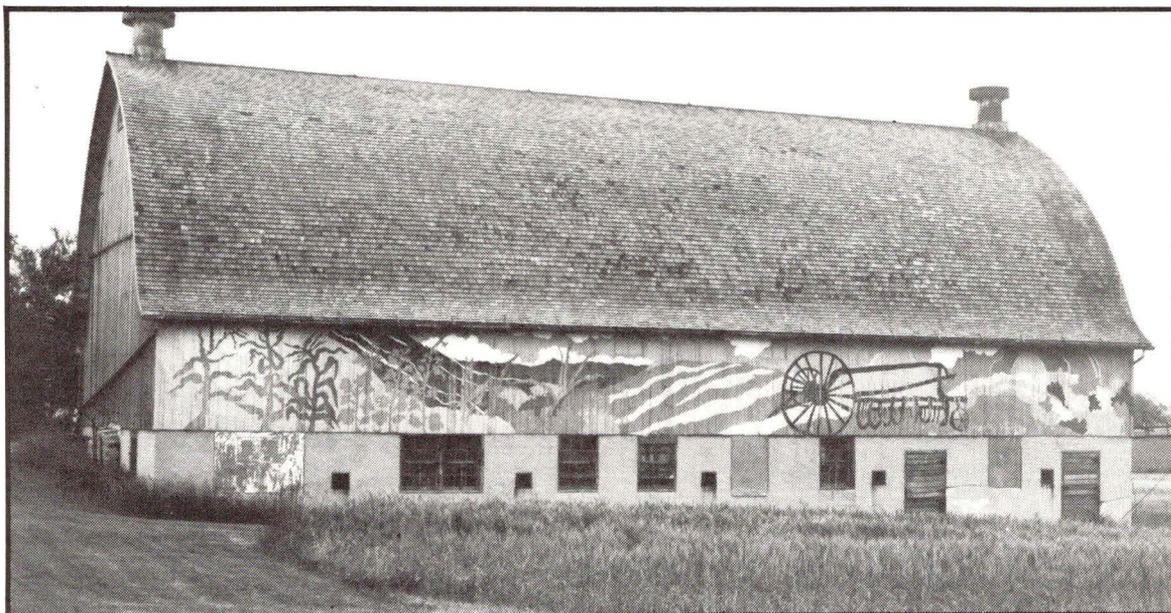
NOTRE DAME

We stopped in South Bend to see Millard Sheets' mural on the library of the university. The *Word of Life*, completed in 1963, is 12 stories high and is entirely composed of different colored panels of granite shaped to create an image of Christ, his apostles and church teachers. It looks down on a reflecting pool and tree-lined mall and can be seen from inside the football stadium a quarter mile away, which has led to this imposing figure with his arms raised being christened "Touchdown Jesus," as if a conversion had just been made.

Black dancers, singers and musicians filled the two-story side of the Inner City Arts Council in the heart of the North Side ghetto. And on the southern outskirts a series of highway underpasses had been decorated by Jan Eckrich in 1981 with bucolic scenes of harvesters, apple pickers, cows and children, competently rendered in a style of 1930s magazine illustration. Beyond the city limits in Oak Creek we found one of the Dairyland Graphics, a series of barn murals done during the late '70s. This one was the work of Barbara Manager, a stylized scene of a scratch harrow, corn and plowed hills.



Community artists, Untitled, undated; Inner-City Arts Council, Milwaukee, Wisconsin



Untitled, Barbara Manager (Dairyland Graphics), late '70s; Oak Creek, Wisconsin

OHIO

Yellow Springs

Our next stop was this small town that revolves around Antioch College, an innovative socially conscious institution that has nurtured activists and sent community workers throughout the country. Its murals go back to Gilbert Wilson, who painted three large panels in the gym in 1939 and '40. They compare social chaos with representatives of the different races conferring around a table while the fruits of the earth radiate overhead. In the center naked figures of different colors affirm our common humanity.

We were able to meet with Michael Jones, now director of the art gallery at Wright State University near Dayton and a ceramic sculptor, who had been at Antioch during the early '70s and been involved in its mural projects. The key person behind them was Michael Fajans, he said. Fajans had graduated there in 1970 and went on to teach a popular communications course called Public Works. In those years there was a strong feeling for community among students, faculty and townspeople; the college wanted to break down the elitism of an expensive institution. This contributed to the effort to create a collaborative public art. It all began in 1972 when the building that housed the communications program needed a new coat of paint, and Fajans recruited 40 people to do a mural which showed the row of houses and trees that would be seen if the building were not there. No one had done a mural before, but in a weekend they created an illusion that still works today. That spring six of them did a powerful high contrast mural that showed U.S. soldiers driving Vietnamese before them. That image also remains, but spattered with red and white paint. During the summer of 1973 Fajans' students worked with the help of an NEA grant and a local match, doing outdoor walls around town. Although they were all politically committed, Jones says, their principal drive was technical exploration. They did a two-tone high contrast copy of an old photo showing a locomotive pulling into the station on a building at the old site; a mirror-image on a pizza hut of the highway a half mile up the road; a fish-eye view of an instruments company across its wall. There were also the moving portraits of two young Black men on a barn, now indecipherable. *Earthrise*, a vision of our

planet as seen from the moon, can be viewed on another barn. In 1974 Public Works went up to Chicago and painted five semi-trailers. The course had also mounted short-term sculpture and performance works to galvanize a public response, but it finally broke up as people went off on their own projects, such as Sarah Linquist and John Fishbone who organized On the Wall Productions in St. Louis. Fajans is in Seattle and has muralized there.



Untitled, Michael Fajans and students, 1972; Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio



Crucifixion, Bill Walker, 1953; Zion Church of God in Christ, Columbus, Ohio

Columbus

We now went on to the capital of Ohio mainly to visit one of the early murals of Bill Walker which he had done in 1953 just after finishing at the Columbus College of Art and Design, where he had returned in 1979 to give a commencement address. The same minister who had commissioned the work almost thirty years ago was still there at the Zion Church of God in Christ. The painting behind the altar is totally unexpected. It is a close-in view of the Crucifixion. The bloodied and torn body of Jesus is surrounded by the faces of his followers and persecutors. It is an extraordinarily powerful vision that reminds you of Grunewald and Bosch. The technique is black drawing over a somber painterly surface. The work is in need of care due to water damage.

Rev. Holmes at 68 reminded us of Bill's account of the Reverend Preacher in his Alley B tape. He had met us at nine on a weekday morning in his shiny maroon Cadillac, was dressed in a light three-piece suit and graciously welcomed us. The steps to his church were upholstered in plush green outdoor carpeting, and he removed the silver cross and vessels from the altar so I could photograph the mural. The conversation turned to the Hinkley trial, and he spoke of the need for more severe punishment. When I asked how he accounted for there being more Blacks in prison than Whites, he inquired whether I had not heard about the curse of Cain and Ham that made Blacks more prone to crime than others. He took off his fedora and asked if we hadn't noticed that Black hair was different from ours. He had been sitting here on the platform with his congregation one evening, he told us, when an armed Negro appeared at the entrance and took a collection of their valuables. He conceded that capitalism meant different things to the rich and poor, but he thought that Black folks had to learn from the Hebrews how to outsmart those who took ad-

vantage of them. He let us know that his grandfather was White and his father, who was a skilled carpenter, a castrator of livestock and something of a witch doctor, had owned some property, which he now had turned into a home for old folks where they could live without any charge. Guessing where we were coming from, he said yes, he had read Mark and Len, but their teachings were not practised in Russia. I observed that Jesus was a communist. He smiled and agreed. He kept reiterating that he was only an ignorant man, although at another point he told us he had two college degrees. This animated discussion occurred on the podium of the church where Rev. Holmes obviously felt at home. He would break into broad gestures and raise his voice so that he could be heard in the back row. When I returned to Chicago, Bill asked after the Rev. Holmes. I told him, and he laughed.

The Columbus **Crucifixion** was not Bill's first mural, which he remembered was done in a community center here but could not recall which. It was about 12 x 17 feet, he said, and showed four inter-locking faces suggesting good will and peace, later a familiar motif of his. There had been no training in murals at the Columbus College of Art and Design, but he said he had wanted to work on a large scale at this time. He recalled that in the early '50s he was painting seven days a week and learned much from Samella Lewis, who had studied mural painting at Hampton Institute with Charles White and Viktor Lowenfeld. With her, Bill worked on a number of murals at barbecues in Columbus before moving on.

While driving around the city, we passed a few supergraphics, but on the front of the Grogan Boys' Club we saw a stylish frieze of Black dancers swinging around the sun. It had been done in 1978 by Sankofa, an artists' group, and the art class of Professor Pheoris West at Ohio State. Carlyle Johnson, another instructor there, was also doing murals with his students.

42 MILLVALE, PENNSYLVANIA

The murals that Maxo Vanka undertook in 1937 and again in '41 at the St. Nicholas Croation Catholic Church are profoundly moving. Described effectively in the Spring '81 *Community Murals*, they contrast the lives of miners with those of the rich, and indict war that sets working people against each other and their religion. The murals succeed in spite of an academic illustrator's style of the '30s because of the intensity of their statement.

Father Romildo Hrboka, the present pastor and principal of the adjoining school, appears in an altar mural painted in the '50s by Joki Knezvic amidst Croation peasants. He showed us around and invited us to the rectory for fruit and then slivovitz as the conversation leapt from Vanka to politics. Maxo, he said, had married a Jewish girl and was ostracized by both Croats and Jews. Hrboka himself had been raised in Yugoslavia and sent first by the church to Vienna and then to the U.S. He said that his only real education was his current study for an anthropology degree in Pittsburgh. Unemployment in Millvale was severe, and the Church, he said, could only apply band-aids. He blamed the unions for their excessive demands now that business was in trouble. The Croats who had been there for four generations were going to California. Opposed to the communism of Jugoslavia and Cuba, he described himself as a "moderate socialist." He had read the Pope's encyclical on labor that was issued last fall that called for a role for workers in controlling the production that is carried on for them, but he said that the American Church had not yet decided how to implement it.

Hrboka asked to be excused for ten minutes to meet with a young couple who were planning to marry. He said he would not be long because there was no advice he could give them. He would send them to a psychologist if they wanted more. He and the Pittsburgh archdiocese were reluctant to bless marriages most of which broke up in a few years. He said the current policy was to condone couples going to bed with each other outside of wedlock if that was what they really wanted.

WASHINGTON, DC

Howard University

We spent much of our time here with the artist faculty of Howard, which was founded just after the Civil War for Black students, and though now integrated, remains largely a Black institution. On the front of the Fine Arts Department building there were two big panels by James

Padgett showing Black artists, musicians and speakers painted in a strong wood-cut style. As a Howard student, he had done three impressive murals on the outside of the Shaw Community Health Center in 1972. Now he was teaching at Central State College in Wilberforce, Ohio. The doorway, stairwell and corridors of the art building were also graced by murals on Afro-American themes, including a violently expressionistic piece indicting Black oppression that David Mora had done in 1971, similar to those he had painted in San Francisco about that time. Next door in the new student union was a porcelain enamel frieze by Jacob Lawrence. Titled *Exploration* and mounted in 1980, it consisted of a sequence of brightly colored, freely shaped scenes illustrating this theme in the arts, sciences and medicine. There was a smaller Romare Bearden panel in the lounge, and some buildings away there was a new black metal relief looking almost like wood carving of a young man and woman showing the connections of research and practical application done by Elizabeth Catlett, a major graphic artist as well as sculptures. Formerly Charles White's wife, she is also David Mora's mother. The Fine Art Department has an outstanding collection of African sculpture on display in its gallery and storage rooms filled with important easel work by Black Artists. Eugene Eda had done a mural of heroic political figures here and Charles White died while teaching at Howard in 1979.

Knowing of my interest in murals, some of the faculty remembered that there was one that had been stored away years ago, but no one knew just where or what it was. They persisted and after a few days rolled it out as we gathered around to see what it might be. We were astonished. It was a 5 x 13 foot oil cartoon for Five Great American Negroes that Charles White did in 1939. "Illinois Art Project" was inscribed on the back, which meant WPA. In it a barefoot Sojourner Truth, Booker T. Washington, Frederick Douglass, Marion Anderson and George Washington Carver could be distinguished. Later I learned that it had been done for a 14 x 44 foot work intended for the George Cleveland Branch of the Chicago Public Library, and whether it is there I do not know. It is likely that White brought the cartoon with him for an exhibit of his work at Howard in 1939 or '40. Its portraits and design are some of the best to be found in his murals. A little paint had chipped off, but in general the work was in good shape.

While around Howard we had a number of visits with Jeff Donaldson who had been teaching a Social Painting course since he had arrived in 1970 and was responsible for getting his students' murals up on campus and in the



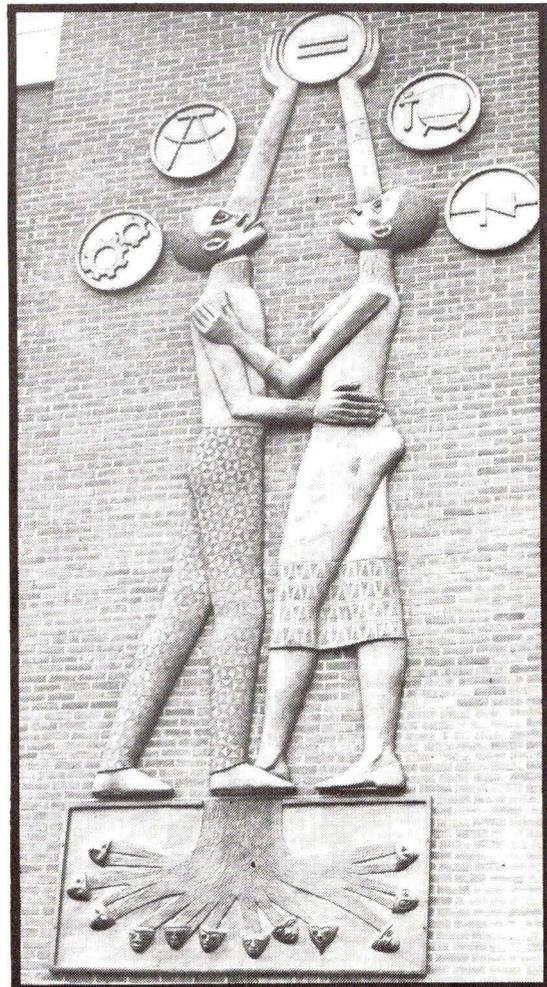
Exploration (detail), Jacob Lawrence, 1980; Student Union, Howard University, Washington, D.C.



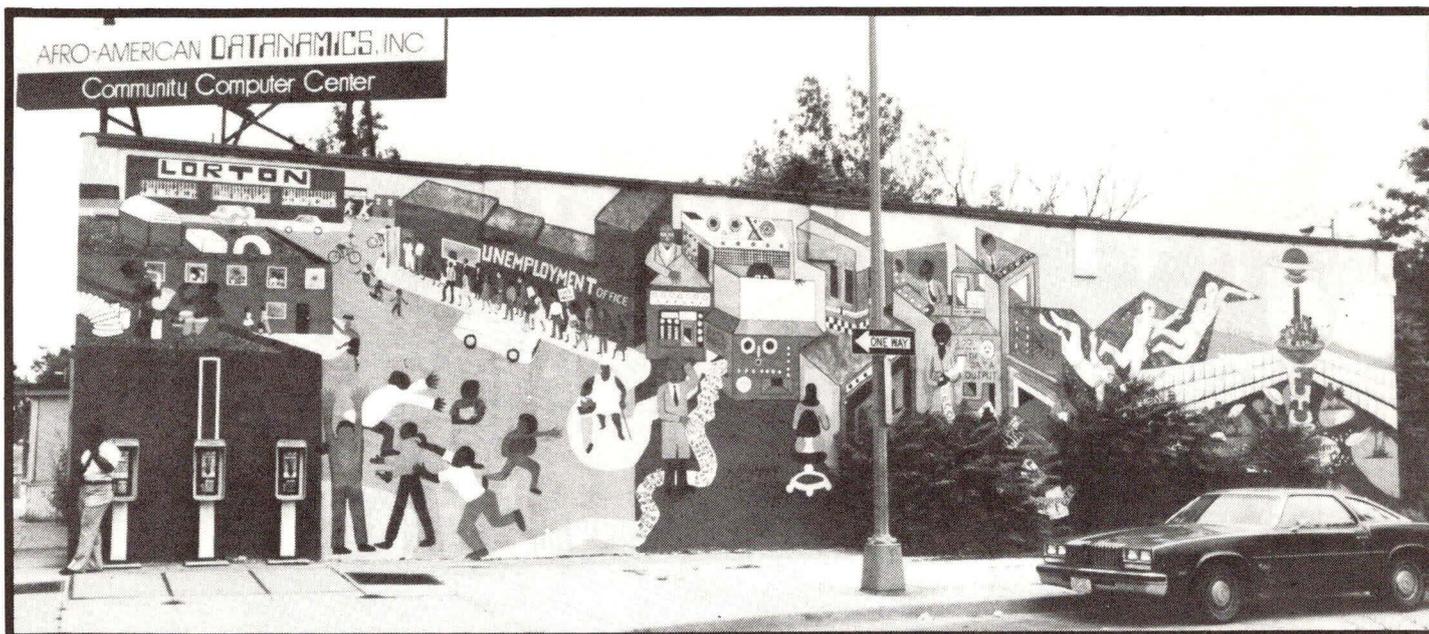
Cartoon for *Five Great American Negroes*, Charles White, 1939; Howard University, Washington, D.C.

city. Besides Padgett's, there was William Battle's frieze at Pride Inc., done in 1972 and works by Dan Wynn of that era and a recent wall by Clayton Lang done nearby at the Afro-American Datamatics computer center. The last, in a style reminiscent of Jacob Lawrence, contrasts unemployment lines with young people rushing to prepare themselves in the new technology.

Jeff Donaldson first painted murals in 1960 at what is now the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. It was in a course taught by John Howard, who had worked with Hale Woodruff on his murals at Talledega College and Atlanta University. Jeff's mother was an Arkansas school principal, and Jeff spent his summers in Chicago where most of his family settled. In 1967 he helped organize OBAC with the intention of involving local artists, musicians and dancers in the Black Power and Pride movement. He confirms that it was Bill Walker, the oldest member of the group, who brought in the idea of doing the *Wall of Respect*. Jeff said OBAC was only a project and that it broke up after the success of its mural because its members did not want the media to say that middle-class Black professionals wanted to exploit this ghetto undertaking. Jeff and four or five of the eight artists plus Nelson Stevens decided to form a new organization in 1969 to create an aesthetic by studying African art that would speak to Black people in this country. They called their group Africobra (African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists). Nelson Stevens later reported that they also explored the color systems of Stanton McDonald-Wright and other Synchronists, an American group of the '20s, and indeed there is a family resemblance in the art of their members and some figurative, they all have energetic styles that range from webs and bubbles of color to angular patterns that suggest African textiles. The 14 artists of Africobra also exhibit together, often at colleges. In 1980 they organized a showing of their art to commemorate the uprising in Soweto.



Youth Aspire, Elizabeth Catlett, 1977; Chemical Engineering Building, Howard University, Washington, D.C.



Recommendation: Prepare Yourself for the Future Through Art and Technology, Clayton Lang, recent, Washington, D.C.

Jeff, who has served as chair of the Fine Arts Department at Howard, during recent years has been carving and painting easel-size panels of corrugated cardboard, cutting away layers to expose the ridges and grooves. Panels titled *Victory in Zimbabwe* and *Afro-diaspo* are mural-like because the warriors and voluptuous women are flattened and suggest ancient tiled walls and wood carvings. The cheap material they are made from sets up a poignant contrast of ghetto and grandeur. Jeff said that he had given up pushing his art, for it was impossible for Black artists to sell in DC. When we visited him at home he was at work with four students on a mural-size family tree for the reunion that night of a prominent Washington family. They were affixing 600 name tags to its purple branches. He thought this might offer some promise as a way for artists to make some money.

James Phillips, another Howard art faculty member, showed us photos of his big abstract murals based on African designs, one of which had decorated the outside of a campus theater. He had also taught the Social Painting course, done a number of murals in Baltimore and directed the brightly painted walls that turned the garages and small buildings behind the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art into a Zulu-like village.

Near Howard there were a number of murals done by varied groups. Facing a playground on a Shaw community urban renewal wall there was a striking frieze of big black portraits, some flat with thin white eyes, some modelled by a trained hand. It was inscribed MICCO. Along 14th Street there was a work that was remarkably decorative and political done by the Grupo Muralista de el Centro Gráfico. A slave ship and the Klan, a Pre-Columbian pyramid with jutting fist, a montage of the inner-city and portraits of Black and Latino leaders along with Emma Goldman were handsomely rendered in a cartoon-like, tragic-comic, yet dignified way. Close at hand was El Centro de Arte with attractive graphic murals at its door and in the backyard.

In contrast to all this and nearby was the NEA sponsored *Periwinkle Shaft* done by Robert Rauschenberg in 1980 at the Children's Hospital. It was a pair of murals and mirrors reflecting them at both ends of a double bank of escalators at the main entrance. The images were illegible, even when you stood still on the landing. The only

thing you could make out was the big signature of the artist, perhaps 10 feet long, inscribed on a flanking textile.

Another publicly sponsored sort of a mural was the eye-teasing louvers of Mame Cohalan installed this year opposite the new East Wing of the National Gallery that showed you different perspectives of colorful but empty arcades as you passed before it. DC has its share of supergraphics and what one of my students once called "trump-louy" pieces. A favorite among natives was the huge pink canyon that rises over you when you come up the escalator out of the new subway downtown. My favorite bit of public extravagance, however, was in the refurbished lobby of the Library of Congress. It was simply luck to find among this bewildering maze of marble columns and arches and fresco virtues one of the latter identified as "Erotica." Mind you, Erotica in the Victorian halls of the Library of Congress. The image was of a fully draped lady with her blouse slipping discretely off her shoulder and her painted lips slightly parted as she gazed at a table on which she had drawn or written something concealed from us.

Artocrats

I met with A.B. Spellman, head of the Expansion Arts at the NEA, who reported that his funding had not suffered cuts. In spite of Reagan's efforts to halve NEA allocations, Congress had maintained them at their existing level when Reagan took office. Although Expansion Arts has been one of the principal agencies to support community murals for over a decade, it has no idea of how much it has given; a breakdown of grants for them has just not been done. A.B. observed that bad murals add to the blight of ghettos and that some muralists showed their work too soon, which struck me as a curious misunderstanding. Although Benny Andrews, who did powerful political murals during the '60s now heads the Visual Arts Program, its Works of Art in Public Places no longer funds community murals but is concentrating only on artists of "national reputation," such as Rauschenberg, whose *Periwinkle Shaft* it had supported. I was again told at Visual Arts, as I had been a few years ago, that it simply has not received many grant applications from community muralists.

My conversation with Caryl Yasko (who is male and



Erotica, Barse, Jr., 1896; Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

unrelated to the lady muralist) was more interesting. He is the General Services Administration's consultant on historical preservation and is particularly interested in identifying and conserving murals as well as other art of the New Deal era. He had an old high-ceiling office which was packed with paintings and cartons of files that practically buried him as he sat at his desk telling about his work and ambitions. During the summer he had an exhibition of New Deal paintings at the American Museum of Art in DC. We had already seen it and were impressed by the variety and quality of work that is frequently lumped together as "Social Realism." Among these pieces had been about eight cartoons for murals. Uniting all these works was a pervasive interest in the daily life and work of ordinary people. Yasko was delighted at the news of the rediscovery of the Charles White at Howard, which as a WPA project was the property of GSA. As in all cases of such identifications, GSA encourages local public authorities to keep and maintain their treasures, and there may be federal funds for their restoration. Yasko instituted a policy that requires all federal administrators to inventory the works of art in their offices and sign a document that makes them responsible for them so they are not tempted to take them home.

When the Federal Art project of the WPA ended in 1943, there was no government sponsored public art until 1963 when during Kennedy's administration, GSA provided that 1 1/2% of all new federal buildings construction that exceeded \$200,000 was to be earmarked for art. Suspended between 1968 and '72 the program has now been restored. GSA maintains a registry of slides that all artists are invited to contribute to so that a design review

panel of which Yasko is chair can select three to five artists to make submissions for each new building. Public hearings are held in the community and the panel makes the final decision. Yasko felt that the selection of the panel is locked too much into the art establishment. He added that post offices are no longer commissioning murals because their buildings are frequently not owned by the government nor well enough built.

Yasko, an aging but energetic bureaucrat of the best kind, talked about his ambitions. He would like to compile in a GSA computer a national public art inventory. He would also put into it a photo of each work that could be electronically transmitted with essential information to terminals in libraries all over the country. Currently he is encouraging people throughout the nation to help with this by sending him information about works in their localities. This particularly offers projects for college students and researchers.

HAMPTON, VIRGINIA

From Washington we drove down to the Hampton Institute, founded in 1868 for freedmen and Native Americans, but where Whites have always attended. We wanted to see the best known of Charles White's murals and explore the impact of Viktor Lowenfeld, who introduced murals into the curriculum there in the early '40s. Lowenfeld, a Viennese Jewish refugee, who taught briefly at Harvard in 1938 and already has a reputation in Europe for his *Nature of Creative Activity* and his study of the art of the blind and mentally handicapped, was recruited by an innovative president of Hampton in 1940. The thrust of Lowenfeld's teaching was that art was necessary to the mental and creative growth of everyone, and this became the basis of his organizing the art department at Hampton and his involving students in the doing of individual and collective murals all over the school, we were told by the retiring ceramics teacher who had studied under Lowenfeld. The students had plenty to say; they were political; what was necessary was to make it possible for them to express themselves, he said. We saw three of their murals, one of them of chained naked Black people, a crucified Jesus and a tumbling capitol dome, and another contrasting the struggle for what is labeled "democracy" with the "slavery" of profits. At this time in the early '40s, John Biggers and Amella Saunders (later Lewis) were there as students and painted lynchings, chains, the American flag and prostitutes, which made the trustees restless. Charles White and his wife, Elizabeth Catlett, were invited to teach at Hampton in 1943. It was then that White undertook *The Contribution of the Negro to American Democracy*, apparently with the help of some of the students, among them Biggers, whom I was told appears in the upper right corner. It is White himself and his wife and child who occupy the center foreground, symbolizing the Black family. The figures look as if they were carved from wood or stamped from metal and are crowded together in a montage with machinery and a giant worker overhead, features influenced by Rivera. During the '50s the mural was boarded over because it was said that it expressed a Black nationalism incompatible with the aims of the campus YMCA where it was installed. We were also told that it was pressure by the trustees that accounts for Lowenfeld going to Penn State in 1946 where he was followed by Biggers. This was to persuade us to visit the university on our journey home.



The Contribution of the Negro to American Democracy, Charles White, 1973; Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia.

BALTIMORE

We renewed our acquaintance with Bob Hieronimus on the lawn in front of the building at Johns Hopkins University where his *Apocalypse*, which he began in 1968, embraces the ceilings and walls of the student chapel and stairwell. A spiritualist response to the Cold War, it has been restored a number of times and still has its original rich tonalities and Kabalistic design. He said he has not done a mural since 1978. Most of his efforts have been directed to research with the State Department on the reverse of the Great Seal (the pyramid and eye on our dollar bill) and pursuing the connections between the Dead Sea Scrolls and ancient Egyptian monuments, as well as developing a sister-city relation between Luxor, the site of some of these temples, and Baltimore. He was off in a few days on a second trip to the Middle East to do his bit for the brotherhood of man.

Later that day we visited James Voshell at his loft in one of the city's ghettos where he still finds the subjects for his painting. Jim had done a number of moving photo-realist murals funded by Beautiful Walls for Baltimore, but the CETA grants it depended on had ceased and so had its murals in 1981. There remained a 1% for art in public buildings program and a slide registry, but he had not been called. While Jim had not done a mural on a public wall since 1976, he was painting large scale canvases in which he records the kids, stoop sitters and working people of his neighborhood with honesty and respect. He was just opening a one-man show at Townsend State College which featured a 5 x 12 foot frieze of the stark backs of decaying row houses. He was exhibiting regularly and was able to live modestly by his painting alone. He says he paints 80 hours a week and asks up to \$4,000 for a work, which he calculated meant he was being paid at a rate of \$2.50 to \$5.00 an hour.

We spent the evening with Monique Goss, an old friend, who had headed Beautiful Walls for two years. Now she was doing residences in schools for the Maryland Arts Council. She was bitter about the way city money for the arts was tied up in the mayor's office. She prefers to do abstractions even in her murals, and her easel work by her own account is a meditation on sexuali-

ty and reveals her admiration for Georgia O'Keefe, Judy Chicago and Ashile Gorky.

Monique took us around the city pointing out the very few new murals, one at a Native American center, and we ended up at Baltimore's refurbished Inner Harbor, the city's conception of a people's culture. There was an Afram festival that Friday night and a whole weekend of Black music, dancing and crafts along the waterfront with its pleasure craft, aquarium, the old U.S. Constitution and the tower of the International Trade Center. Each weekend there was a festival of a different local ethnic group down there amid the glass-house bazaars of eateries and boutiques, some quite expensive, but at least a place to come and see thousands of people and enjoy what breeze could be stirred up on a hot summer night. The spirited crowd of perhaps 25,000 was racially mixed. Shop clerks, waitresses, busboys, cooks, dishwashers and maintenance people had replaced empty docks where once longshore and warehousemen had worked. We were meeting again the familiar consumers culture that was taking up a little of the slack in America's deindustrialized cities. The establishment had also found a way of managing the ethnic restlessness and organizing what might otherwise become a threat. We saw the same thing in Chicago with Mayor's Byrne's "Taste of Chicago" and "Chicago Fest," summertime often free entertainment for the masses, which as a matter of fact Jessie Jackson had led a boycott against when blacks had not been appointed to public offices. Here in Baltimore booths were full of the trinkets and blouses made by ill-paid peasants halfway round the world and locally stenciled T-shirts, and I was reminded of Monique and Jim's laments about how poorly Baltimore treated its artists. I realized that there is a comparable undercutting of artists and workers at home by labor abroad exploited by multi-national capital. ▲

Alan Barnett

Photos: Alan Barnett

Alan's "Southern Journey" appeared in the Fall 1980 issue of CMM. His book, Community Murals is in page proofs and is due to be published early in 1983 by the Art Alliance Press and Cornwall Books. Part II of "Northern Journey," documenting murals on the East Coast, will appear in the next issue of CMM.

ART & SOCIETY

Chicano Nationalism

This is the section mentioned in the Editorial about the relation of politics to visual arts. There are many important topics worthy of discussion, of which Chicano Nationalism is only one, but since a number of readers had expressed interest in it, we begin this section with a discussion of what Chicano Nationalism is and what it looks like, and what some of its implications are.

"Nationalism" and some associated words are frequently used when talking about Third World art, but these terms — including "national consciousness," "cultural nationalism," "self determination," "national minority," and "nation" — might be confusing to someone whose focus has been primarily their artwork. What follows is an attempt to clarify some meanings and implications of the concept of "Chicano nationalism" because it in turn helps us understand some of the implications of our art.

Chicano artists embraced "cultural nationalism" at the beginnings of the *movimiento* and never proceeded to "revolutionary nationalism" which would have meant revolutionary action, not reform of existing inequities. Revolution, after all, means overthrowing an existing economic and political structure and replacing it with another structure. This was done in the American Revolution, all the Latin American revolutions of the early 19th century, by the African colonial countries when they replaced English, Portuguese, and French colonialists in the 20th century — from Algeria to Angola — and by Latin American countries like Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada which have evicted dictators.

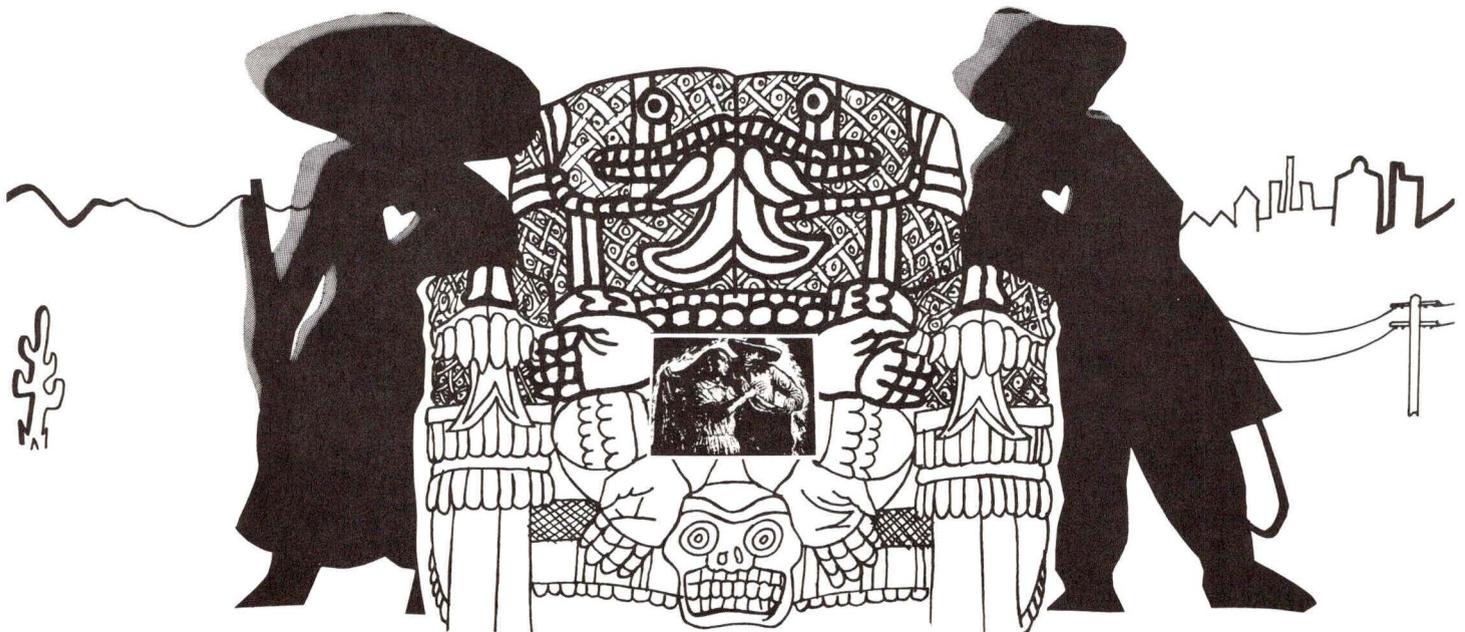
All the implications surrounding nationalism are important, but there is great diversity in the issue, and the same answers are not appropriate in all situations. There is, for instance wide geographical diversity among Chicanos, and the issue takes a different form in Texas than in, say, Michigan or San Francisco. The main concern of visual artists must always be the specifics of the immediate situation in which they are working at the moment. Questions about nationalism may in fact be quite far from the center of our work at sometimes, but may be crucial to it at others. *Community Murals Magazine* hopes this discussion will be clarifying and useful to visual artists everywhere, and we hope these ideas will germinate in your minds, in discussions with friends and co-workers, and bear fruit in your future work.

1. Are Chicanos a national minority or are they a nation?
 - a. The traditional characteristics of a nation were that it was a stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture
 - b. It has been pointed out that it is not necessary for a nation to have a single language, or that language and territory must coincide, or that it be a stable group.
 - c. It has been argued that a nation must have a consciousness of itself.

- d. A national minority can be defined as a homogeneous group that does not yet constitute a nation-state.
2. People who believe that Chicanos are a nation believe that they have the right to decide for themselves whether to secede from the United States, form their own country, implement reforms, etc.
 - a. People who believe that Chicanos are a national minority believe that they have a right to an equal voice in the institutions which affect their lives such as housing, medical, legal, labor, educational, and land ownership systems, but they do not believe in the right to political/economic secession.
 - b. Regarding Chicanos in the U.S., it may be asked, "Whose land is it?" How can Chicanos achieve full development individually and as a people without sovereignty?
3. Another way to view the issue of nationalism is to note that when a group of people is discriminated against on the basis of common characteristics such as language, skin, color, customs, then those people unite around those characteristics as the basis of a struggle against that discrimination. This can become a national struggle.
 - a. People's cultural expressions (including dance, painting, music, etc.) are how identity and traditions are carried from one generation to the next and spread among the people. These expressions are crucial to the survival of a national identity.
4. Is Chicano oppression in the United States mainly because they are working class (with additional oppression because of language, physical characteristics, etc.)? If so, then Chicanos are primarily U.S. citizens and constitute a national minority within the United States.
 - a. If, on other hand, Chicanos share their status with Mexicans, are treated as if they did not have U.S. citizenship, as if they were Mexicans, then Chicanos and Mexicans share a national identity and Chicanos constitute a nation taken in the Mexican-American war of 1848 and should be reunified with Mexico.
 - b. Some believe that Chicanos within the U.S., on the basis of common experience in the land of the southwest, constitute a nation within the borders of the U.S. and should neither be part of Mexico nor of the U.S.
5. Some think only nations located outside the borders of the dominant country have the right to self-determination.
6. A basic question on nationalism is that of assimilation vs. cultural persistence.
 - a. Are there forces/groups/people in the community supporting assimilation to Anglo culture in place of that mixture of Mexican and U.S. culture which is Chicano?

- b. Are there organizations in the Chicano community which actively promote the body of ideas which is Chicano? Are there some which claim to but do not, for example, which try to establish their cultural identity as Chicano when their primary interests are self-advancement or profit, not group identity and self-determining political power?
- c. Superficially nationalism in the form of style, appearances, and other identifications, can be used in a reactionary way, as when city officials wear sombreros in a Cinco de Mayo parade.
- d. The national sentiments of a people can be used to perverse ends, as when German fascists used a form of nationalism to justify anti-Semitism.
- e. Nationalism is about pride and self-determination, not superiority over others.
7. What is the relation of Chicano nationalism to other Latino groups?
- a. Note that the term "Hispanic" identifies Chicanos with a ruling and conquering class (Spanish), is used by Chicanos to pretend that they are not working class, to escape racial discrimination, and is used by the U.S. government to blur important distinctions among different peoples, for instance, Nicaraguans, Mexicans, Chileans, etc.)
8. How does nationalism appear in visual arts?
- a. Images of a strong, positive nation; for example: revolutionaries, contemporary heroines and heroes (Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, Reies Tijerina, etc.), visionary images of collective work/education/life, victories of other nations (Nicaragua, Cuba), solidarity with other revolutionary nations (sometimes symbolically through use of flags, ancient/pre-conquest images).
- b. An example: *Charros* derive from ruling class, Spanish colonials, whereas *vaqueros* derive from working class cowboys. Use of one or the other apparently has clear reference to assimilationist or self-determinist ideas. However, many Chicanos today actively identify as *charros* in parades and celebrations in their communities as symbols of how they see their cultural traditions. In such ways do complexities arise in depicting nationalist ideas in visual arts.
9. The relationship between class and national oppression is tricky. Often, Chicanos are exploited both because they are working class and because of racial, linguistic, cultural characteristics.
- a. It has been pointed out that the struggle for Chicano self-determination is both nationalistic and class-based. Chicanos who ally themselves with a Chicano ruling class then only substitute one set of rulers for another, and still keep Chicano workers subjugated.

We encourage readers to send us clarifying distinctions about other groups than Chicanos — we know different groups have different experiences, and we want you to send us examples from the visual arts of how these different positions appear. ▲



Reagonomics and the Arts

Lately, I've noticed it again. Most of the art press reads as if the "art world" were a different planet, inhabited solely by curators and collectors, far from the crumbling reality of here. Of course, the art press, like the rest of the media is responsible more to its advertisers than to its readers. One takes that for granted. Still, I am baffled, as I struggle through pages of metaphysics on "modernism" and "post-modernism" (a decade ago, the term might have embodied an insight) to find no acknowledgment that the entire ideological base of formalist connoisseurship has been swept away by events; nonplussed, as I search for a protest, or even serious critique, of the New Right arts policy of the Reagan administration.

Perhaps I am exaggerating. Not everyone has been hurt equally. The big institutions will carry on, despite their annual budget crises. The margins — artist-run programs and spaces, local and neighborhood arts — are in more jeopardy. These are the margins of growth, the forward edges, the alternative which once offered artists the possibility of a dignified work life.

Coverage of the Endowments distracts us from the main attack. The art press has been looking in the wrong direction. The deepest cut in arts support was the elimination in early 1981 of public service jobs under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, CETA. CETA was a mainstay of numerous municipal arts programs, neighborhood arts groups, small theaters, and other artist run programs. Most federal dollars came to these programs through the "back door" — to put people to work, rather than to make art or develop local cultural life.

If it was not a real arts program, CETA was still the first federally funded employment program for artists since the 1930's. Far more than the creation of the NEA, CETA in practice reflected the widespread political will, at the local level, that government take some responsibility for subsidizing cultural life and for ensuring wide accessibility of art and art activities. Local governments were not required to hire artists or to make CETA positions available to arts groups, but cities of all sizes, even small towns, chose to do so. Access to culture began to seem like a natural right. Those programs which relied heavily on CETA have been left with skeleton staffs.

The private sector cannot and will not replace those losses. Tax cuts and recession spell reduced giving, with more strings attached. According to one fundraiser for a struggling theater, foundations are consciously exercising a triage, giving larger amounts to fewer groups, those most able to "institutionalize." Criteria are professional administration, hierarchical organization, good accounting, and "board development." Those ready and willing to run in this race may survive. The conditions are chilling to say the least. The pressures against artistic risk-taking are great. Self-censorship of social-critical or anti-establishment content is assumed. As usual, the problem in "selling-out" is a shortage of buyers.

Of course, there was some well-publicized protest of the proposed cuts in the Endowments. Coalitions were formed, most of them top-heavy with Big Names representing blue-ribbon institutions, the would-be national treasures. A few, such as the Keep-the-Arts-Alive Coalition in Illinois, included the entire spectrum of arts programs and tried to generate grass-roots support. As expected, performing artists, especially the performing arts unions, were more politically active than the unorganized visual artists. For a brief time, eloquent pleas for the role of art in American

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life were voiced in the Congress and in the press. Through these vigorous lobbying efforts, the Endowment cuts were held to 10 percent for this year. Cautious self-congratulations seemed in order, along with a general attitude of "cut your losses" and learn to live with the new rules.

The small cuts, however, mask large policy changes. For example, Expansion Arts reduced the number of its grants by 45%, following a strategy of saving a core of older, more established programs. Again, cutting losses, there is little to hope for from Washington before 1985. The arts are nickle-and-dimed to death. At less than half the cost of a single B-1 bomber, buying peace with the art world comes cheap. The Pentagon now spends more on the arts (military bands and so forth) than does the NEA.

These blows fall on an art world in an unprecedented and wondrous state of anarchy. The entire ideological framework supporting the validation of "quality," of establishment "high art" values, has collapsed. Years of persistent effort by feminist, minority, and, yes, also by neighborhood artists, have blown away old myths, dissolved old categories. The mountain has fallen into the sea. Content and social context can no longer be brushed aside as irrelevant to esthetic significance. From Fashion Moda to the *Dinner Party* to Chicago's Peace Museum (pick your own) the straws in the wind have become a blizzard.

Betting on the art market hardly seems like realism — more like an absurd retreat into quaint illusions and marginality. The very existence of the art market as a broker of social-prestige objects depends on the gross excess of offer over demand, on the unemployment of the majority of artists, and on the exclusive possession of the product by a monied few. As is well known. Besides, most cities have no art market to speak of. But cultural directions and energies well up irrepressibly from the street, from the context, from contradiction, from the people. Those frozen in a defensive stance, will end up defending mere artiness, not art.

We reject the way the art market has denied art's social function and defuses it by setting up false dichotomies between abstraction and figuration, "political and formalist," high and low culture. Perhaps the most insidious idea we have to combat is that you have to give up art to be involved in the world, or give up the world in order to be an artist (the alternative being that impotent neutral ground currently offered artists by the dominant culture).

We are convinced that it is possible to overcome the conflict between "my own work" and outreach, between collective work and "getting back to my studio"... we have to develop new forms of distribution economy as well as art, open up the old forms and, most important, support each other in our efforts to understand the process of doing so. Upfront, February 1981.

To my mind, these words by Lucy Lippard and Jerry Kearns of Political Art Documentation and Distribution, PAD, are in tune and on time. There's plenty to be angry about. And the future is ours to shape. Unless we're all blown away. ▲

John Pitman Weber
New Art Examiner
April, 1982

Bob Sommer is Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Davis, and has long been active in environmental and cultural struggles. He is thus uniquely qualified to offer ideas about the psychological effects of murals. He is author of numerous articles and books, including *Personal Space, Tight Spaces, and Street Art*. His article on the murals of Yolo County appears elsewhere in this issue of CMM.

Some Psychological Aspects of Community Murals

Limitations

To view a topic from the perspective of a single field necessarily constrains one's vision. An economic analysis of murals might overlook historical forces, but an exclusively historical approach would neglect psychological forces. The obligations of an author are to state limitations in scope and method while at the same time showing how a single view fits into a larger picture. Reductionism is a second danger in approaching an issue from a single approach. To discuss psychological factors may leave the reader with the impression that the roots of mural painting are largely psychological. The mental state of an individual does not arise fullblown out of nowhere. It is the product of cultural, political, and economic forces interacting with a specific biology in a physical and environmental context.

Definition

A community mural is a wall painting that involves the people in the public location where the work will be displayed. Two requirements in this definition are a *public location* and the *participation* of the potential audience. The public location sets off the mural from most studio painting, and community participation distinguishes it from other types of public art. Neither the nature of public space nor the degree of community participation needs to be defined rigidly. A public location can be anything from a school cafeteria to the exterior of a downtown skyscraper. The work can be indoors or outdoors, on a building that is publicly or privately owned, but the work must be in a place where many people will see it over a period of time. Participation by the people affected will also be a matter of degree. They may help to select the content and raise money for the work, or plan and execute the painting themselves with or without the advice of a professional artist. A mural for the hallway of a convalescent home would qualify as community art if the residents and staff were consulted about the nature of its work and its location, contributed suggestions for theme and content, even if they did not join in the actual painting.

Scale

Public spaces tend to be larger than private spaces and will accommodate people on the move. For these reasons, the mural must be pitched at a scale larger than the typical studio painting. Size does not intersect directly with quality. Making something larger does not necessarily make it better. Edward Bruce and Forber Watson, who were involved with the 1930's WPA murals, comment derisively about "mere glorified pedestrian enlargers who try to increase their stature as artists by diligently painting large walls." A muralist must take into account the viewing distance and movement pattern of potential viewers. Some of the audience for an exterior piece will be in cars or buses, or travelling less rapidly on bicycle or

foot. The work must be meaningful to those who can see it briefly from some distance away. Billboard advertisers are aware of this phenomenon, and avoid complex messages unintelligible to speeding motorists. Ideally a mural should have different meanings to viewers at various distances. It can convey a general theme to those speeding by at a far distance, and a fuller, more detailed content to those who can spend time examining it up close. A mural that is meaningful only at a single scale will likely confuse or oppress people who view it under different circumstances. It would be a mistake to create a cafeteria mural that was meaningful from a location halfway across the room that overwhelmed people sitting directly beneath it.

Site specific

An exterior mural exists at the boundary between the building and the street, and bears a different relationship to each. It is of the building but directed toward an outside audience. The occupants of the building feel some responsibility for its presence and contents, while those outside perceive it as part of their immediate environment. The mural is physically connected to a site. According to Bruce and Watson, the freedom of the artist is "qualified by a whole of relationships. Fixed dimensions, the architectural setting, the uses of the building, the appropriateness of subject matter create new aesthetics, technical, and social problems which the artist is called upon to solve... If legitimate external limitations to freedom arouse the imagination to greater effort, the artist has found his or her calling. If they thwart the imagination, dilute the effort, the artist had better return to a personal domain there to create works conceived and completed without thought of architectural surroundings or structural distractions." (p.3)

The community muralist knows in advance where the work will go and who will see it. Before the work is started, the artist is obliged to study the site, talk with the residents about their concerns in general, and about the artwork in particular. *The community artist is obliged to undertake this research on site and audience.* Creating a mural for a convalescent home, one must know something about the culture and background of the residents and staff, their concerns and hopes, and something about visual acuity in old age. There have been some important findings about the decline of vision in old age and how elderly people are affected by glare. These must be taken into account in artwork for a setting populated by older people.

Time specific

Particularly for those who create community murals for outdoor locations, impermanence is a fact of life. One should not aim at creating a timeless work on a building likely to be razed or repainted in a few years. Following the experiences of the past 15 years, a community mural probably will last 2-5 years. There have been cases where the bureaucratic wrangling, planning, and fund-raising to get a mural started exceeded its life span. Even under the best of conditions, with ironclad agreements from the building owner, a good primer, high quality paint and glaze, an outdoor mural is not likely to last more than 30 years. There is no point in creating a mural that will be appreciated in a hundred years if the work itself will only last five. However, impermanence also frees the artist from having to create a work that will be meaningful or appreciated 30 years hence. One can create murals on topical issues. An artist may create a wall painting about rent control or the imminent destruction of an important building without worrying that the issue may have little meaning in the next century. The piece may be stronger and more effective if it is connected to enduring themes of human existence, but that is not a requirement.

Transience also means that the artist must be somewhat philosophical about the work. Once it is on a wall, some degree of detachment is necessary. How long the mural remains depends on factors outside the artist's control. The artist will not own the wall nor the mural. An overly intense identification with a transient piece can be bad for the psychological health of the artist.

Projection into the future

The impermanence of murals relative to most studio work may not figure prominently in the consciousness of those who create them. For the Lower East Side teenagers on a Cityarts project, a five-year lifespan for a mural may seem a very long time, stretching from the young painter's early adolescence into full adulthood. The idea that work will endure for several years brings a sense of responsibility. The mural is a projection of self and group into the future.

Group involvement

The blurring of the distinction between artist and audience in a community mural has implications for the way the work will be created and perceived. When people are involved in the creation of something, their perception of it is changed. The underlying psychological process is described as *group involvement*. This can be found at many levels and degrees of intensity:

"These are peaches from our own tree."

"My father built this chair."

"This was a weed-covered lot before our neighborhood association cleaned it up and made it into a park."

As one of Willie Loman's sons said in *Death of a Salesman*, there was more of Willie in the work he did on the house than in all of the ladies wear he ever sold, that is, the tangible construction projects he did were more real and tangible than his sleazy saleswork. This same attitude is found among those who have been involved in artwork. Making something tangible involves the challenge and joy of the creative process as well as the possibility of future

transactions with the object created. Like all other art, a mural has the possibility of tapping deep levels of the individual and collective psyche. 51

When I photographed the Cityarts murals on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, young people came up to tell me with pride of their own role in the painting. At the Estrada Courts Housing Project in Los Angeles, murals are a source of pride among the project residents. The fact that people came from long distances to view the work confirmed the residents' belief that the murals were important. The walls are a means of confronting the larger society with the symbols of Teotihuacan and Chichen Itzá, with the unity of life and death, the importance of La Familia and La Raza. They strengthened group identity and also served as public education for a wider audience. The latter requires that the work meet community standards of quality. People will not want themselves or the collectivity to be identified with a poorly-done mural. The work must satisfy community standards which are not necessarily the standards of high art in the larger society.

Group identification has been one reason why murals have been largely kept free of graffiti when surrounding walls have been hit. People who have spent weeks creating a painting are not likely to allow others to deface it. Vandalism of local culture should not be romanticized. One can understand the identify needs of young people represented by graffiti, but there are many walls available that do not represent long hours of hard creative labor by local residents.

Conclusion

Community murals are not a psychological phenomenon although they do have psychological aspects which center about scale (large), site (specific and public), temporality (transient and future-oriented), and group identity. These factors interact to make the experience of creating and viewing community murals different from that of other artwork. ▲

Robert Sommer



Grupo Muralista de el Centro Gráfico, untitled, Washington, D.C.
For more about this and other Washington, D.C. murals, see Alan Barnett's article, p. 23.

EUROPE

Germany

Building, Squares and Streets Have to Become Canvasses

The "Düsseldorfer Wandmalgruppe" (wall painters' group of Düsseldorf) came to life in 1978, after various spontaneous painting actions. Free working artists, art students and art teachers are members of this group. Their work consists of spontaneous paintings on the walls of autonomous houses equivalent to the wall paintings on municipal buildings sponsored by the city of Düsseldorf. Right from the start the painters tried to involve the inhabitants of the houses whose walls were to be painted in the process of planning and design. During the last year this co-operation has been enlarged and intensified: long-term wall paintings developed and were realized together with people's initiatives from the area of Düsseldorf called Bilk. Together with youths and foreign children the group carried out larger wall paintings. A project completed together with the convicts of a prison in Düsseldorf and local peace organizations also belongs to the range of activities of the "Düsseldorfer Wandmalgruppe".

The formation of the "Düsseldorfer Wandmalgruppe"

The first paintings of the wall painters' group were on the exterior walls of houses that had to be pulled down in the Grafenberger Allee. Various members of the actual group

lived there at the time. The houses had been placed at young people's disposal for temporary use by the owner, The "Neue Heimat", which belongs to the labour union. The inhabitants renovated the houses by themselves, and also took part in the painting of the outer walls.

The wall paintings in the Grafenberger Allee had the principal aim of increasing the feelings concerning the social problems and expressing clearly one's own opinion. No other place could have been better: thousands of people passed the paintings daily by car. Of course, lots of problems arose. A way had to be found to communicate essential matters by means of paintings. The paintings had to be interesting in order to raise the interest of the passers by time and time again and especially of those who drove past each day.

A few months later the house owner sprayed over and covered the first paintings. The inhabitants succeeded however in saving some of the paintings. The painters decided to protest at organized meetings against this sort of censoring. The local press also helped a lot to preserve the paintings. Further painting actions on these houses took place. At this period of time interference of the police was avoided, because a growing number of people (20 to 30) participated.

Because the wall paintings received a positive reaction from the citizens and the press, the wall painters' group asked the city administration to place walls at their disposal for painting and also to take over the costs.





Düsseldorf-Flinguen,

Hellweg/Burchstrasse,

1979/1980

Orders from the City Administration

The Official orders of the city required a new work system. The group considered it absolutely necessary to inform the inhabitants and neighbours of the houses that were to be painted about the wall painting projects and to include them in the designing and execution of such. The least that could be done was to register their names for discussions about alternative projects.

In this way a working method could be developed and the keen interest of the people could be considered. This constructive criticism as well as active collaboration surpassed by far the initial, personal comments concerning the Grafenberger Allee project. The idea of a superdimensional ear was not accepted by everybody because it could be interpreted in various ways: For the inhabitants, the ear pointed out the traffic noise. As well, it could be a hint to the town to listen more about the concerns and interests of the people living in this part of Düsseldorf. The huge ear could also remind of the "big brother" who is hearing you. The city of Düsseldorf overtook the material and scaffolding costs. Beyond that only small "pocket money" was given to the painters. As the walls of the municipal houses would have had to be renovated anyway, the city could save a lot of money. Painting the walls by a painting company would have been more expensive.

The inhabitants of the houses identified themselves so much with the paintings that they asked the painters also to paint the courtyard which they financed all by themselves.

In spite of the great help of the tenants, the realization of a superdimensional eye on the opposite side of the road as a pendant to the ear seemed to fail due to the resistance of the city council which considered the eye as being too political. But when the press wrote positively about the activities of the wall painters' group the city administration gave its consent but did not take over the financing of the work of the painters. The city paid only for material and scaffolding.

Wall paintings on communal walls or those sponsored by public institutions or associations are always confronted with concealed or open censoring when critical political statements are made. The wall painters' group had this experience several times and permission was not given to a project developed with the convicts of the prison of Düsseldorf. A project, developed by order of the Koln (Cologne) museum of ethnology was rejected due to its critical significance. The design showed how consumer goods manufactured in the third world area reached the supermarket, which was situated not far from the wall painting. The picture contrasted the hard work of the people in the third world area with the profit of a big trust.

Cooperation with people's initiatives

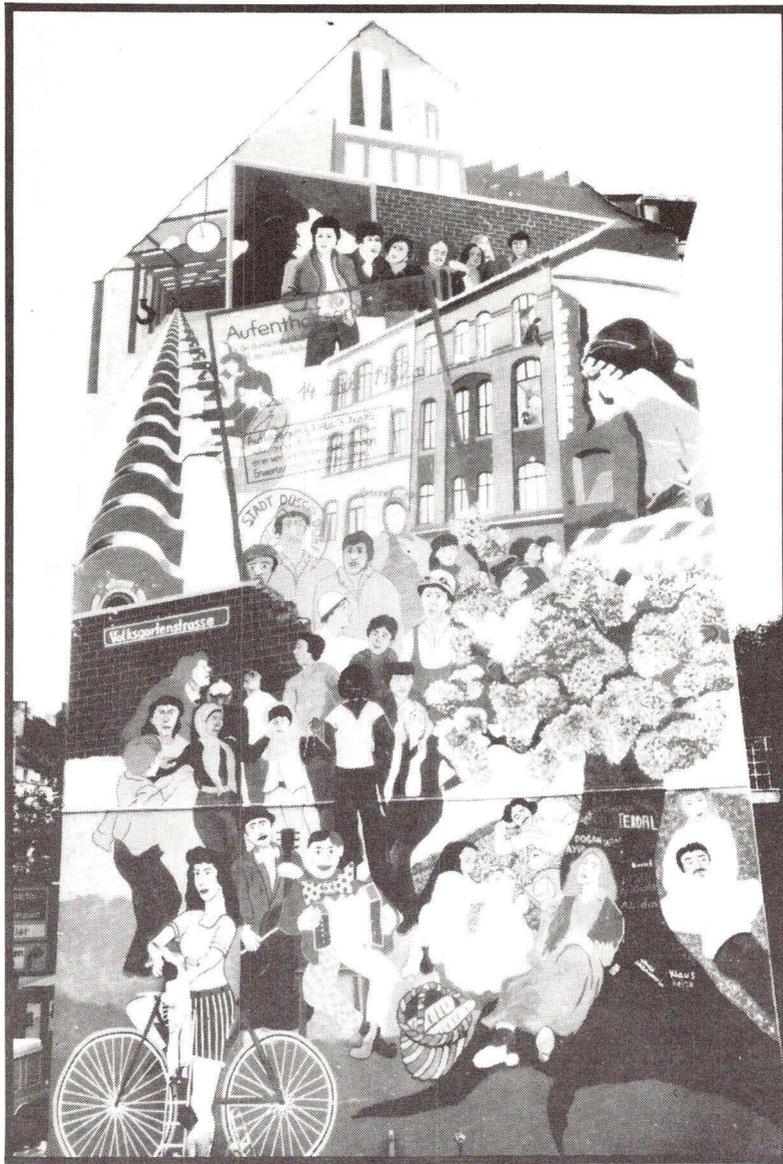
In the course of the activities the cooperation with the people's initiatives became more and more important. These initiatives have already been working in a section of the city for quite a long time, so they were familiar with the problems of the people living there. Inhabitants of this area were able to mobilize many people for actual planned activities.

Düsseldorf-Bilk is a rather large area to construct and re-build. The reconstruction of this area attracts a lot of speculators. "Save Bilk" is an initiative which include all renovation groups who plan together larger actions. We are working together with "Save Bilk" group in order to show by means of a wall painting that the destruction of this section of the city is in direct relation with the reconstruction of the diet.

A long-term preparation was required. The people living in this area were informed by information stands during street parties and by the distribution of pamphlets. They were asked to contribute to the development of the wall paintings. For two months the wall painters and inhabitants collected information, developed designs and ideas. Two designs were finally accepted during a mass meeting.



Düsseldorf-Bilk, Martinstrasse, 1980



Düsseldorf-Bilk, Oberbilkeallee, 1982

The first showed the map of Bilk as a huge Monopoly-game. Various men in black had their hands in it — town planners, speculators, etc. Each detail of the old houses, the model of the new diet and the television tower are shown. A death notice was planned as an alternative for a smaller wall, where the speculators showed how glad they are about the pulling-down of a row of old houses.

The city administration rejected placing a wall and money at the group's disposal, though never before had there been such a lot of people who were interested in such a project. The proprietor of a building who did not agree with the destruction of more houses gave his front wall free for painting. He has known the chairman of the people's initiative for many years.

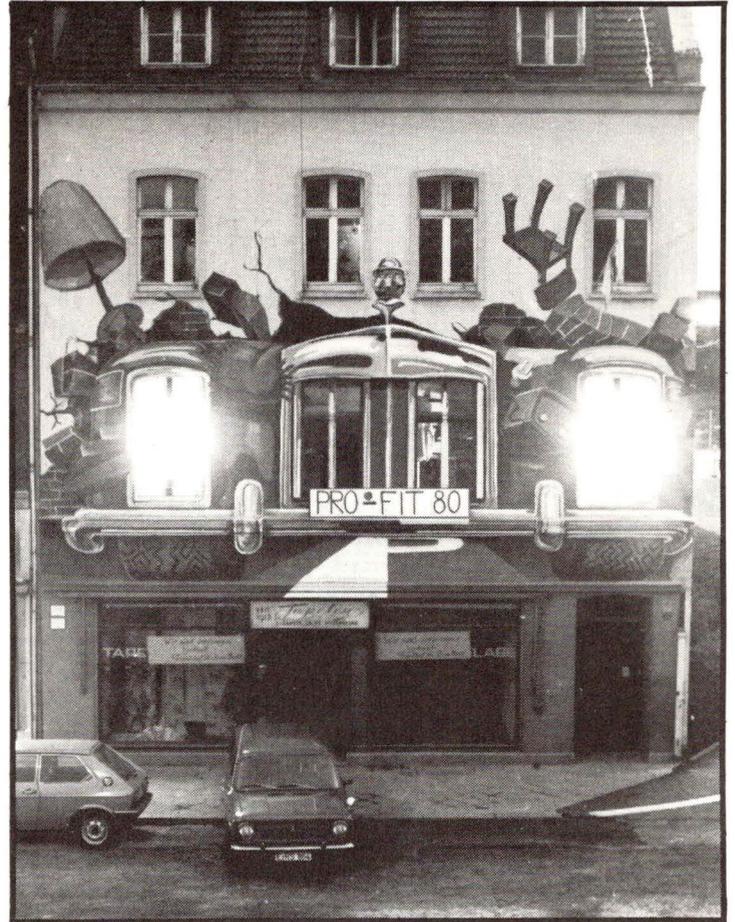
The money for the scaffolding and materials was raised by contributions. A film team of Düsseldorf which often co-operates with the wall painters filmed the project for television.

Even the second project, the death notice, could be finally be realized and was financed by the people's initiative.

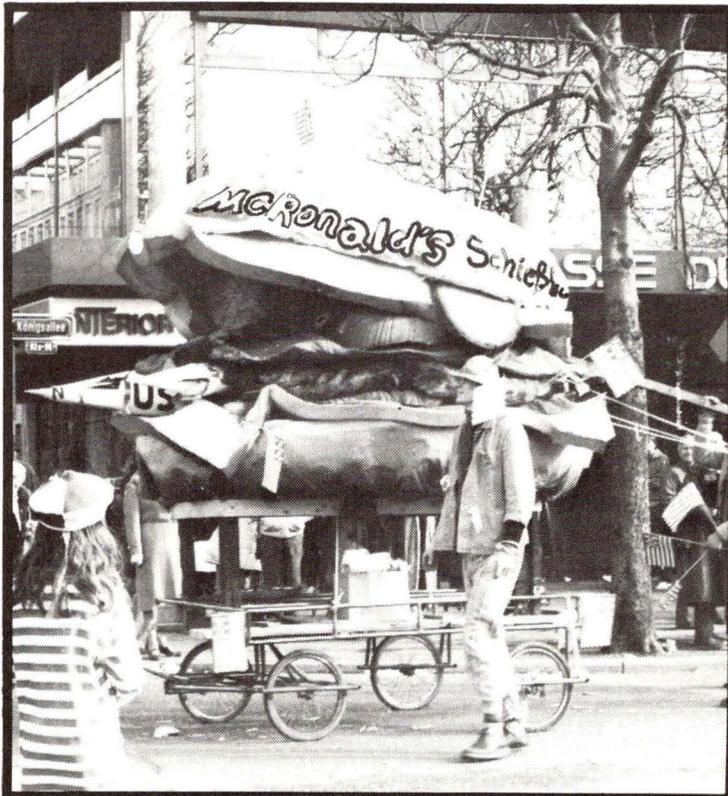
In Düsseldorf-Benrath officials said, houses should make room for parking lots for a shopping street. The inhabitants of the houses asked the wall painters' group to

support them against these plans. During a street party the people were informed about the planned pulling-down of their dwellings and the painting was joined together with the inhabitants. Due to the strong interest of public and press, the pulling-down might be avoided.

The last wall painting was completed after a 2 1/2 months' preparation together with Turkish youths who had just arrived in Germany, young Germans and the wall painters' group. After intensive discussion a design was worked out whose aim it was to work against the growing hostility towards foreigners. Subjects of the 60ft high wall painting are the sources of unemployment and the shortage of flats. It shows how female assembly-line workers are replaced by machines, how deteriorated houses are pulled down instead of being renovated. The threat of the restricted permit of residence for the foreign fellow-citizens is also shown. A happy living together by German and foreign people is set against that. One detail of the painting, concerning a line of police in front of a house to be pulled down, was subject of a conflict between the house-owner, social workers and the wall painters. The spot where the policemen were to be seen is now covered by white paint.



Düsseldorf-Benrath Hampfstrasse, 1980



Düsseldorf Carnival, 1981

Objects for street actions

We have expanded our activities with other initiative groups. The wall painters' group is also designing posters, transparents and objects which are used for street advertising actions and demonstrations. Cooperation with local peace organization is a vital factor.

We built for example, "Mc Ronald's Schießburger" ("Mc R. Shootburger") which was used in many German towns for disarmament demonstrations and against the rearmament politics of Ronald Reagan. (The pronunciation of "cheese" means in German language, to shoot") "Mc Ronald's Schießburger" was collapsable, so that various US-atomic bombs could be seen between cheese and meat. After the successful introduction of American "eating-culture," further American achievements shall now be stationed in Europe. But the opposition of the population is permanently growing.

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Photos: Willi Oesterling

Blueprints for Change

Saturday morning began with Judy Baca laying out the main exercise of the Advance -- to create conceptual models for political artwork. She began with a list of tasks derived from SPARC's experience:

1) Restoring information lost: This could include correcting media distortions and other misinformation, as is the attempt with much minority and women's art; it can also mean presenting new information, as in people's history arts projects.

2) Creating moral indignation: This is to go beyond conveying information to making people care passionately about it -- consciousness-raising, making data personal. In Judy's example, naming the number of Mexican-Americans illegally deported is imparting information; saying "Did you know one of them was your grandfather?" is encouraging moral indignation.

3) Creating alternatives: The first step here is dreaming together, collective envisioning or brainstorming, even beyond the limitations of the apparently possible. In SPARC's experience, this meant to imagine, and then produce, the world's longest mural -- "The Great Wall."

4) Taking action: This is the actual making of the work. People participate in a project and find themselves transformed in some way by the experience. To undertake effective action you must strategize, mount the action, and build in some way to evaluate the results.

In the discussion that followed Judy's presentation, Advance participants pointed out numerous elements missing from the list. Where was the place for criticism? What about developing the resources, financial and otherwise, needed to mount a successful project? How do you decide what sort of project is needed? Some people criticized the list because it said nothing about the art itself: "Art," said one participant, "is not just a transparent vehicle." Others asked about the artists' overall vision; what are their long-term goals, and how does a particular project advance them? One person raised an issue that was to reappear throughout the Advance: Judy Chicago, the artist best known for "The Dinner Party," a monumental assemblage of neglected craft forms mounted to honor women in history, said "I don't agree the artist is in the service of a group. Historically, there has been a dialogue -- and dissension -- between the individual and group. Collectivity is interesting, but not where the most

important work comes from. Being an artist means making individual choices, taking a stand, within a framework."

Ed Bereal, a Los Angeles artist best known for his work with the group Bodacious Buggerilla, responded: "There's a lot of mystification around collective work...my own work was improved by involvement in a collective. Idealistically and artistically, Bodacious Buggerilla was guided by our neighborhood; we saw continuing growth through commitment to community."

Performance and conceptual artist Suzanne Lacy and audio artist Doug Kahn from Seattle Xchange had different ideas about effectiveness. Doug asserted that: "Activist art can subvert media images. It can add politically insightful information and change advertising images to social critique." Suzanne responded: "I want to challenge Doug. We just don't know about effectiveness. We think fuzzily about how change occurs, and need to clarify our thinking."

The groups that participated in this conceptual mapping exercise came up with widely varied projects. One group comprised members of the Sisters of Survival; in their recent action, "Shovel Defense," the Sisters, dressed in their customary colorful nun-style habits, presided over a mock graveyard designed to dramatize civil defense propaganda about surviving nuclear attack by digging into the dirt. They used their group time to plan their next project, part of the "Target L.A." prodisarmament actions to take place August 7 and 8. Because they planned an actual project, their map was much more specific than most.

Another group comprised relative strangers. They found themselves drawn together out of political commonality and created a large conceptual model that was very general, adaptable to a great variety of projects. Our group chose "gentrification" as its issue, wanting to pick a problem in which artists commonly had a hand, and also wanting to assist one of its members, San Francisco artist Jo Hanson, whose work has dealt with issues specific to the changing urban neighborhood.

The issue of collaboration came up again when the group which included Judy Chicago emerged with a conceptual map drawn in concentric circles, with the artist in the center. This visual aid became the object for a heated, and unresolved, discussion of just what collaboration really is -- and what role the artist plays in it. Marshall Mayer, a Los Angeles photographer, said the concen-

tric circles spoke of a corporate model and ought to be compared to the notion of cultural democracy. "Not everyone had access to the inner circle; this implies the artist is the leader, the true believer, who convinces the rest." Tim Drescher of Community Murals Magazine said prepositions gave it all away: "To work with a community or to speak of work by a community is very progressive; to work for more often means onto or at the community." Suzanne Lacy, who presented to concentric circles model, responded by pointing to "continuing feedback within this system; there is not a single person at the center, but things have to start somewhere."

One group was dissatisfied with the assignment and decided, instead of designing a conceptual model, to criticize the proceedings. They said that criticism was discouraged and isolated from the outset, when it should be an integral part of events like the Advance; they felt that psychological jargon and principles had been utilized in discussion where more rigorous discourse should have been the aim, and charged anti-intellectualism, along with a misguided sense of the artist as leader, the "audience" as passive follower.

The Issues Surface

These discussions were very useful for us because they highlighted some of the key questions progressive artists must ask today, including perhaps the most important question: from what source do ideas in political art emerge? Does the artist do independent research, wait for inspiration, try to work side-by-side with organizers? Or is the process of identifying issues and creating artwork to be, from the outset, a group effort in which the artist's role is facilitative? Needless to say, there are many intermediate positions on this continuum, and there likely to be as many models as positions.

There were numerous structural suggestions that might be taken into account by readers out to plan the perfect meeting: Send out materials for discussion beforehand, so we don't have to spend so much time building a common basis for talking. Provide better opportunities for criticism, so critics aren't bad guys, and so they have a chance to develop alternative proposals and not simply react -- perhaps have workshops on criticism. Some people were distressed by the anger expressed by critics; others wished more overt controversy would surface, instead of innuendo and indirection. There

was discussion of the differences among participants: some people were surprised and pleased that radical feminist artists and old-style left artists could maintain a considerate and productive exchange; others wished there had been more opportunity to air differences in background and direction, and less assumption of political commonality -- did we all want the same thing when we talked about "social change"?

The State of the Movement

With perhaps fifteen minutes to spare, the agenda raced around to its last topic, the direction of the movement -- when a very interesting thing happened. There we were, miles from any town in a very quiet and rustic setting, when suddenly a deafening *WHOO-O-OOSH!* drowned out all other sound. To a person, everyone ducked and yelped at the same time, creating instant pandemonium. Apparently, a jet fighter, perhaps on maneuvers from a nearby base, flew low over the camp. After some moments, when the din had quieted, Jim Prigoff, a documenter and supporter of mural work from San Francisco, asked, "Who didn't think it was *The Bomb*?" Very few hands were raised -- and we all got perhaps the truest possible insight into the fears and thoughts of the activist artist/USA.

The discussion of the movement, unfortunately, told us much less. For one thing, a good number of the assembled artists were reluctant to admit the existence of a movement: some because they doubted others' commitment; some because they felt too isolated to be part of something so significant-seeming; some -- unfortunately -- because they felt too superior in terms of talent, direction, or reputation to join a group. But most of the Advance artists did feel themselves to be a part of the movement, though they called for principles of unity or an agreement on direction to give it shape.

Among the suggestions offered: Continue to draw up conceptual models for progressive arts projects, and forward them to SPARC for dissemination; hold regional meetings like the Advance; publicize progressive cultural practice in the broader, "non-cultural" left -- and with other cultural groups, across discipline lines; form consciousness-raising groups to discuss the questions raised at the Advance on an ongoing basis; mount national, cross-disciplinary projects to build cooperation; subscribe and contribute to progressive arts publications; and take up strategic questions on a regular basis.

For more information about the Activist Artists Advance and follow-up projects, contact SPARC at 685 Venice Boulevard, Venice, CA 90291...phone 213/822-9560.



Artistic Intervention in Paris 14th District

In a street which is scheduled to be destroyed as part of the urban renewal program, silkscreen posters have been placed all along the facades. They point out the creeping destruction. It is common practice in France, when a building is condemned and the last inhabitants have been evacuated, to seal up the windows and doors with concrete blocks in order to avoid "squatters." This poster project was organized by the neighborhood associations and was planned to coincide with a visit by the mayor in June. The posters were put up very early in the morning.

The Atelier Art Public initiated another project, located in a mini-park just outside the urban renewal area. This action was a result of the blockage by the municipality of an amenities project for the same space. (This amenity was scheduled and funded for fall 1981). It was decided

to paint wild grass on a wall. (The kind that invades vacant lots and appears in cracks of decayed walls. The purpose of the project is to show the abandonment of this place which is typical of the rest of the district. It is considered a rebel district by the municipality of Paris. The neighborhood struggle against urban renewal, plus the replacement of the rightist deputy (with the same politics as the mayor) by a socialist, served to discredit the district. Projects are stopped in this way.

This mural points out similar interventions which may take place this fall. The same symbol will then be used, painted this time on polyester canvas, applied to different walls in this mini-park and throughout the district.

Hervé Béchy
August 1982

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.

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