

**TENOCHTITLAN: THE WALL THAT TALKS**  
6029-6039 N. Figueroa Street  
CHC-2022-5945-HCM  
ENV-2022-5946-CE

Agenda packet includes:

1. [Final Determination Staff Recommendation Report](#)
2. [Commission/ Staff Site Inspection Photos—October 13, 2022](#)
3. [Categorical Exemption](#)
4. [Under Consideration Staff Recommendation Report](#)
5. [Historic-Cultural Monument Application](#)

Please click on each document to be directly taken to the corresponding page of the PDF.

# Los Angeles Department of City Planning

## RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: CHC-2022-5945-HCM  
ENV-2022-5946-CE

**HEARING DATE:** November 17, 2022  
**TIME:** 10:00 AM  
**PLACE:** Teleconference (see agenda for login information)

**EXPIRATION DATE:** The original expiration date of November 29, 2022, is tolled, and a revised date will be determined pursuant to *the Mayor's March 21, 2020 Public Order Under City of Los Angeles Emergency Authority re: Tolling of Deadlines Prescribed in the Municipal Code and April 17, 2020 Public Order Under City of Los Angeles Emergency Authority re: Tolling HCIDLA Deadlines and Revising Expiration of Emergency Orders.*

The time to act on this item has been tolled for the duration of the local emergency period.

Please note that other State law provisions may also apply.

**PROJECT:** Historic-Cultural Monument Application for TENOCHTITLAN: THE WALL THAT TALKS

**REQUEST:** Declare the property an Historic-Cultural Monument

**OWNERS:**  
Fig Crossing LLC c/o Managing Partner  
9440 S. Santa Monica Boulevard, Ste. 700  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Kayita Sky Incorporated  
3275 New York Drive  
Pasadena, CA 91107

L & H Crescent LLC  
5314 Lindbergh Lane  
Bell, CA 90201

Lodes Inc.  
6039 N. Figueroa Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90042

**APPLICANT:**  
Kathleen Gallegos  
Avenue 50 Studio, Inc.  
131 N. Avenue 50  
Los Angeles, CA 90042

Location: 6029-6039 N. Figueroa Street  
Council District: 1 – Cedillo  
Community Plan Area: Northeast Los Angeles  
Zoning: [Q]C4-2D-HPOZ  
Land Use Designation: Neighborhood Commercial  
Area Planning Commission: East Los Angeles  
Neighborhood Council: Historic Highland Park  
Legal Description: Ralph Rogers Subdivision of a Part of the Garvanza Tract, Block H, Arb 1 of Lot PT 22

**PREPARERS:** Jade Puga and Richard Montes  
Safada Y Sano  
4418 Cahuenga Boulevard  
Toluca Lake, CA 91602

## **RECOMMENDATION**

## **That the Cultural Heritage Commission:**

1. **Declare the subject property** an Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.7.
  2. **Adopt** the staff report and findings.

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP  
Director of Planning

**[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]**

Ken Bernstein, AICP, Principal City Planner  
Office of Historic Resources

**[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]**

Shannon Ryan, Senior City Planner  
Office of Historic Resources

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Lambert M. Giessinger, Senior Architect  
Office of Historic Resources

**Melissa Jones, City Planning Associate  
Office of Historic Resources**

Attachments: Commission/Staff Site Inspection Photos—October 13, 2022  
Historic-Cultural Monument Application

## **FINDINGS**

- Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” for its association with the national resurgence of the Chicano movement in the 1990s in response to racial and socioeconomic injustices the Latino community was experiencing. It is also significant for Chicanos’s contributions to the prolific period of public art that made Los Angeles a global cultural engine in the 1990s.

## **CRITERIA**

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon), building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles if it meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. Is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community;
2. Is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history; or
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.

## **SUMMARY**

Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks is a mural painted on the east-facing facade of the commercial building located on the northwest corner of N. Avenue 61 and N. Figueroa Street in the Highland Park neighborhood of Los Angeles. Completed in December 1996, the mural was designed by the mural arts collective Quetzalcoatl Mural Project, which included muralists Andy Ledesma, Anthony “Eagle” Ortega, Dominic Ochoa, Isabel Martinez, Jaime Ochoa, Jerry Ortega, Jesse Silva, John “Zender” Estrada, Oscar Deleon, and Rafael Corona. The inspiration for the creation of the mural stemmed from the loss of Daniel Robles, the best friend of one of the principal visionaries of the mural, Anthony “Eagle” Ortega, to gang violence in 1995, as well as other Latino and Chicano community beautification projects happening throughout the city in the 1990s. The predominantly Latino-populated Highland Park was intentionally selected as the location of the mural for the neighborhood's historical significance to the 1970s Chicano art mural movement. In addition, the intersection of N. Figueroa Street and N. Avenue 61 was sought out for its close proximity to the Highland Park Recreation Center to expose Latino youth who frequent the center to positive images of themselves and their ancestors's contributions to the arts and sciences.

Murals have been a popular form of Latino art since the early twentieth century. Painted during the 1920s and 1930s, early murals in Los Angeles were often created by Mexican immigrants who used the walls of restaurants as their canvases; these murals harkened back to the traditions and motifs of murals painted on Mexican *pulquerías*, or pulque bars, and they often featured scenes that depicted daily life or Mexican film stars. By the 1930s, muralism in Los Angeles was being influenced by the Mexican mural movement that was a response to the ideological changes that swept the country in the years after the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920). During the Chicano movement of the 1960s and 70s, the city's Latino community became active in using art to reclaim

their history and space, and after this period, Los Angeles became home to one of the largest concentrations of mural art in the country. In the 1990s, there was a national resurgence of the Chicano movement, and subsequent revival of politically charged Chicano murals, in response to the racial and socioeconomic injustices and discrimination Latinos were experiencing. Like the 1970s Chicano mural art movement, 1990s Chicano muralists utilized art to engage their communities to impact social change.

The subject mural is rectangular in shape and measures 12-feet in height and 75-feet in width. It is arranged in two main sections and features a 12-foot high and 70-foot-long feathered serpent, the Aztec god Quetzacoatl. Both sections are connected by earth elements, water and sky, that are depicted in a deep blue color that blend into each other. On the lower half of the entire mural, water flows throughout, with the night sky above. Section one consists of a scene concentrated around the themes of birth and creation with a matured fetus that has a baby floating in the blue waters of a circular womb. The womb emanates yellow sun rays and is held in the hands of an indigenous woman. Directly above the woman is an indigenous man with his arms extended towards the night sky, where a circular cultural mandala swirls above his head. Corn stalks flank the woman's right side. Section two depicts four scenes organized around cultural and political Chicano themes; the green plumes of Quetzacoatl form the foundation upon which each scene rests. The scenes consist of:

- a 'Day of the Dead' procession and altar featuring Our Lady of Guadalupe;
- the planet Venus above the Great Pyramid of Tenochtitlán along with a ceremonial temple containing shrines dedicated to Huitzilopochtli and Tlaloc, the Mesoamerican god of rain, with the Aztec ruler Moctezuma II accompanied by his wife and daughter at the foot of the temple;
- Chicano leaders, heroes, warriors, and revolutionaries, inclusive of Labor Union leader and civil rights activist César Chávez and Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata, overlooking an agricultural field; and
- the depiction of the 10-foot-high, seven mile long, steel wall that was erected in 1991 on the border between San Diego and Tijuana with the revolutionary Mexican insurgent, Subcomandante Marcos, leader of the Zapatista National Liberation Army, in front of the wall.

Over the years, the mural has experienced minor alterations, which include changes made in 2014 that were not reversed during a restoration project in 2018: in section one the ring of fire encircling the womb was changed to sun rays; in section two, the crown on Our Lady of Guadalupe's head, the full moon emerging from behind, and roses adorning her face were removed, rays of sun emerging from behind her head were added (in 2018 these were changed to a full moon); and in scene three, the books piled under the computer were enhanced to resemble a pyramid of books, and the corn stalks jutting out from behind César Chávez were omitted. Updates to the mural were completed by the original artists in 2014 and the 2018 restoration project was undertaken by a collaboration between Avenue 50 Studio and the original artists from the Quetzalcoatl Mural Project.

The commercial building on which the mural is painted is a non-contributor to the Highland Park-Garvanza Historic Preservation Overlay Zone. The mural is registered under the City's Mural Ordinance managed by the Department of Cultural Affairs; it was grandfathered in as a Vintage Mural since the mural was completed before the program began in 2013.

## **DISCUSSION**

Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks meets one of the Historic-Cultural Monument criteria: it “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community” for its association with the national resurgence of the Chicano movement in the 1990s in response to racial and socioeconomic injustices the Latino community was experiencing. It is also significant for Chicanos's contributions to the prolific period of public art that made Los Angeles a global cultural engine in the 1990s.

From the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, Los Angeles was a hub for global economic activity yet Black, Latino, and other communities of color were living in poverty, overpoliced, and marginalized. When the once booming California aerospace economy trickled to an end in the early 1990s economic unrest set into motion a recession, which collapsed the real estate market in Los Angeles and led to substantial job loss. The economic downturn and high rates of unemployment fueled the racist and anti-immigrant ethos in Los Angeles against Blacks, Latinos, and other people of color. Landmark events capture the racial and social inequalities of the time, such as the 1992 Los Angeles riots and the subsequent arrest and deportation of over 1,000 Latino immigrants by United States Border Patrol agents, as well as the erection of a 10-foot-high, seven-mile-long steel wall in 1991 between San Diego and Tijuana that embodied the anti-immigrant sentiment at the time. Additionally, the gang violence in Los Angeles in the 1990s became endemic with more than 5,100 confirmed gang related deaths in Los Angeles County from 1990 to 1996, of which more than 60% were Chicanos or Latinos. As a response, there was a resurgence of the Chicano movement aimed at giving rise to the political power of working-class Latinos in Los Angeles. Chicano and Latino artists proved to be integral to the political mobilization in the Latino community and together played an important role in the transformation that Los Angeles underwent from the mid to late nineties.

Los Angeles has a rich history of public art, ranging from civic projects and corporate sculpture to folk art, murals, and graffiti. The public art in Los Angeles reflects the city's vast geography as well as its cultural diversity. Latinos have been integral to the public art of Los Angeles, mostly through murals such as the subject mural. Though most frequently identified with the Chicano movement of the 1960s and its resurgence in the 1990s, murals have been a popular form of Latino art since the early twentieth century. As illustrated by the subject mural, muralism has been a way for Chicanos and Latinos to publicly express their reaction to the social, economic, and political conditions they were experiencing. In addition, this art form has allowed the Chicano and Latino communities to represent their own cultures, as opposed to having their cultures projected onto them by an outside population. The subject mural depicts empowering images of Meso-American and Chicano historical figures, places, and cultural traditions as a source of empowerment to combat the long history of negative images of Chicanos portrayed in the media.

Further, the 1990s were a defining time in Los Angeles's arts and cultural scene that marked a shift away from the glitz of Hollywood towards being more politically charged and socially conscious. This effort was in large part due to Chicano artists and their focus on social injustices, which manifested in their works across all mediums. Examples of the impact of Chicano artists at the time include the Latinos in hip-hop documentary *Pass the Mic!* which chronicles the success of the Chicano rap groups A Lighter Shade of Brown and Delinquent Habits whose albums and singles went gold in the 1990s; the Edward James Olmos directed movie *American Me* which premiered at the 1992 Cannes Film Festival in France, then opened up as the number four movie in the United States; Luis J Rodriguez's award-winning 1993 classic memoir, *Always Running: La Vida Loca: Gang Days in L.A.*, which became a bestseller and acclaimed book; socially conscious rap artist, Tupac Shakur's, 1996 album, *The Don Killuminati: The 7 Day Theory*, that went quadruple platinum by 1999; and the temporary display of the previously censored 1981 mural by

Chicana artist Barbara Carrasco, “LA History: A Mexican Perspective,” at Union Station in 1990. Although Chicano and US born Latino artists and their works remained excluded from mainstream art galleries, museums, and major art institutions in Los Angeles, they reached new heights in the broader mainstream culture of the 1990s as exemplified by the corporate advertisers that copied the style of Chicano murals in Los Angeles for their advertisements on street walls across the city. Mentioned in numerous books and Los Angeles tour guides, Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks represents Chicanos’s significant contributions to the cultural and social history of Los Angeles during the 1990s and stands as a cultural treasure within the Highland Park community.

While the applicant argues that the subject mural also “is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history” for its association with the life and legacy of César Estrada Chávez, the Mexican American child farmworker turned labor leader and union organizer, staff are unable to make this finding. While depicted in the subject mural, Chávez, an historical personage who passed away in 1993 prior to the completion of the mural, did not paint the mural and did not take part in the development of its creation. The subject mural is also not associated with the productive life of Chávez as a labor leader or civil rights activist and does not represent his significant contributions to the improvement of pay and working conditions for farm workers for which he is widely known.

The subject mural has experienced only minor alterations and retains a high level of integrity of location, setting, materials, design, feeling, and association to convey its significance. Many of the Chicano and Latino murals from the 1990s have been whitewashed, and artworks such as the subject mural are increasingly rare.

### **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (“CEQA”) FINDINGS**

State of California CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 “*consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment.*”

State of California CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Section 15331, Class 31 “*consists of projects limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic buildings.*”

The designation of Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks as an Historic-Cultural Monument in accordance with Chapter 9, Article 1, of The City of Los Angeles Administrative Code (“LAAC”) will ensure that future construction activities involving the subject mural are regulated in accordance with Section 22.171.14 of the LAAC. The purpose of the designation is to prevent significant impacts to a Historic-Cultural Monument through the application of the standards set forth in the LAAC. Without the regulation imposed by way of the pending designation, the historic significance and integrity of the subject mural could be lost through incompatible alterations and new construction and the demolition of an irreplaceable historic site. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation are expressly incorporated into the LAAC and provide standards concerning the historically appropriate construction activities which will ensure the continued preservation of the subject mural.

The City of Los Angeles has determined based on the whole of the administrative record, that substantial evidence supports that the Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA

Guidelines Section Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 and Class 31, and none of the exceptions to a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 applies. The project was found to be exempt based on the following:

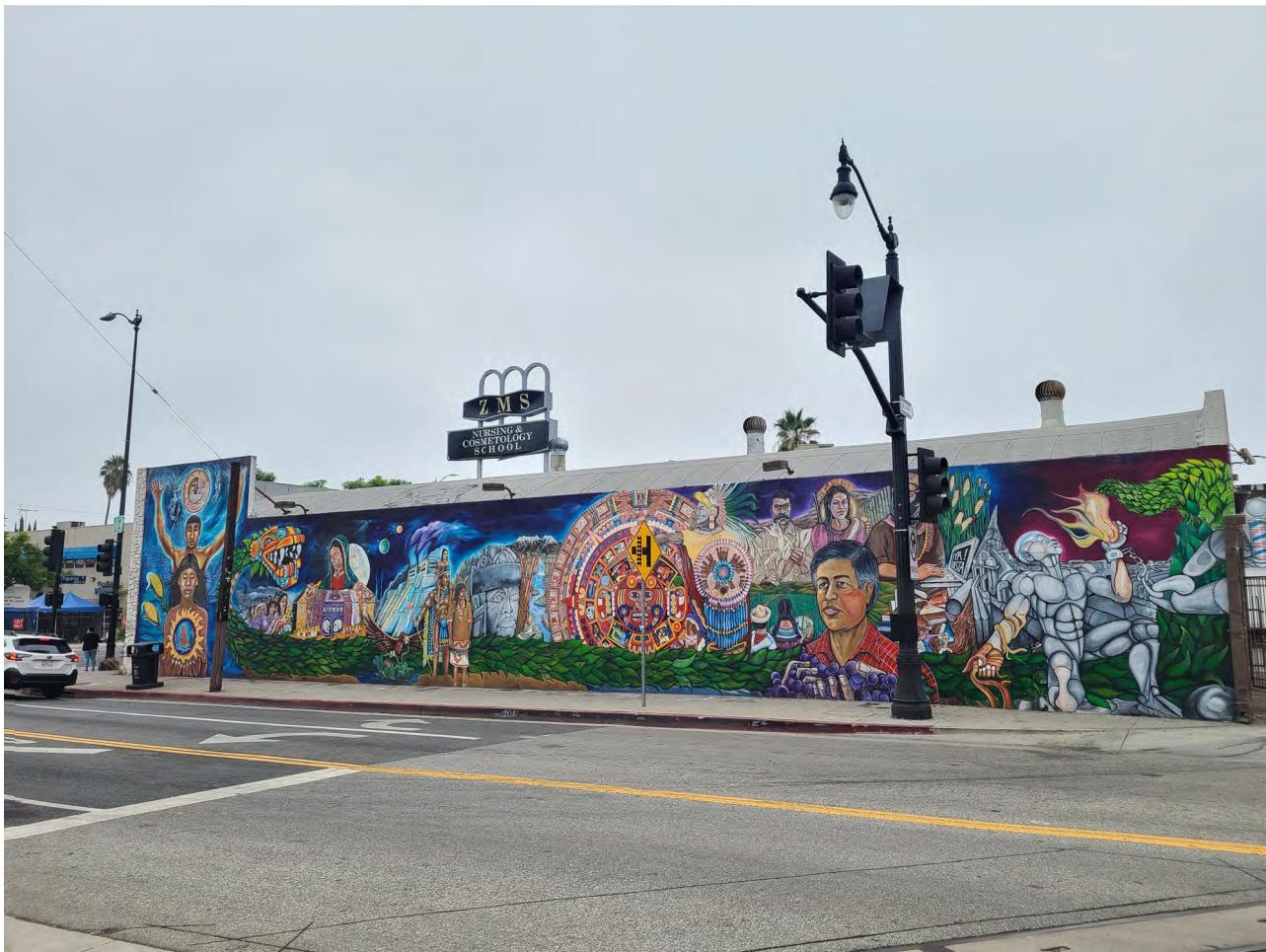
The use of Categorical Exemption Class 8 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals of maintaining, restoring, enhancing, and protecting the environment through the imposition of regulations designed to prevent the degradation of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 31 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals relating to the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction of historic buildings and sites in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Categorical Exemption ENV-2022-5946-CE was prepared on October 21, 2022.

## **BACKGROUND**

On August 17, 2022, the Director of Planning determined that the application for the proposed designation of the subject property as an Historic-Cultural Monument was complete. On September 15, 2022, the Cultural Heritage Commission voted to take the property under consideration. On October 13, 2022, a subcommittee of the Commission consisting of Commissioners Barron and Kennard conducted a site inspection of the property, accompanied by staff from the Office of Historic Resources. The original expiration date of November 29, 2022, is tolled, and a revised date will be determined pursuant to *the Mayor's March 21, 2020 Public Order Under City of Los Angeles Emergency Authority re: Tolling of Deadlines Prescribed in the Municipal Code and April 17, 2020 Public Order Under City of Los Angeles Emergency Authority re: Tolling HCIDLA Deadlines and Revising Expiration of Emergency Orders*. The time to act on this item has been tolled for the duration of the local emergency period. Please note that other State law provisions may also apply.



**CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT****NOTICE OF EXEMPTION**

(PRC Section 21152; CEQA Guidelines Section 15062)

Pursuant to Public Resources Code § 21152(b) and CEQA Guidelines § 15062, the notice should be posted with the County Clerk by mailing the form and posting fee payment to the following address: Los Angeles County Clerk/Recorder, Environmental Notices, P.O. Box 1208, Norwalk, CA 90650. Pursuant to Public Resources Code § 21167 (d), the posting of this notice starts a 35-day statute of limitations on court challenges to reliance on an exemption for the project. Failure to file this notice as provided above, results in the statute of limitations being extended to 180 days.

PARENT CASE NUMBER(S) / REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS  
 CHC-2022-5945-HCM

LEAD CITY AGENCY <b>City of Los Angeles (Department of City Planning)</b>	CASE NUMBER ENV-2022-5946-CE
PROJECT TITLE Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks	COUNCIL DISTRICT 1
PROJECT LOCATION (Street Address and Cross Streets and/or Attached Map) <b>6029-6039 N. Figueroa Street</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Map attached.
PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Designation of the Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks as an Historic-Cultural Monument.	<input type="checkbox"/> Additional page(s) attached.
NAME OF APPLICANT / OWNER: <b>N/A</b>	
CONTACT PERSON (If different from Applicant/Owner above) <b>Melissa Jones</b>	(AREA CODE) TELEPHONE NUMBER 213-847-3679
EXT.	

EXEMPT STATUS: (Check all boxes, and include all exemptions, that apply and provide relevant citations.)

## STATE CEQA STATUTE &amp; GUIDELINES

- STATUTORY EXEMPTION(S)  
Public Resources Code Section(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION(S) (State CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15301-15333 / Class 1-Class 33)  
CEQA Guideline Section(s) / Class(es) 8 and 31
- OTHER BASIS FOR EXEMPTION (E.g., CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) or (b)(4) or Section 15378(b) )

JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT EXEMPTION:  Additional page(s) attached  
 Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 of the State's Guidelines applies to where project's consists of "actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment." Class 31 applies "to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Buildings." Designation of the **Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks** as an Historic-Cultural Monument will assure the protection of the environment by the enactment of project review regulations based on the Secretary of Interior's Standards to maintain and preserve the historic site.

- None of the exceptions in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 to the categorical exemption(s) apply to the Project.  
 The project is identified in one or more of the list of activities in the City of Los Angeles CEQA Guidelines as cited in the justification.

IF FILED BY APPLICANT, ATTACH CERTIFIED DOCUMENT ISSUED BY THE CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT STATING THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAS FOUND THE PROJECT TO BE EXEMPT.

If different from the applicant, the identity of the person undertaking the project.

<b>CITY STAFF USE ONLY:</b>	
CITY STAFF NAME AND SIGNATURE Melissa Jones	STAFF TITLE City Planning Associate
ENTITLEMENTS APPROVED N/A	

DISTRIBUTION: County Clerk, Agency Record

Rev. 6-22-2021

# Los Angeles Department of City Planning

## RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: CHC-2022-5945-HCM  
ENV-2022-5946-CE

**HEARING DATE:** September 15, 2022  
**TIME:** 10:00 AM  
**PLACE:** Teleconference (see agenda for login information)

**EXPIRATION DATE:** The original 30-day expiration date of September 16, 2022, per Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 22.171.10(e)1 is tolled, and a revised date will be determined pursuant to *the Mayor's March 21, 2020, Public Order Under City of Los Angeles Emergency Authority re: Tolling of Deadlines Prescribed in the Municipal Code and April 17, 2020, Public Order Under City of Los Angeles Emergency Authority re: Tolling HCIDLA Deadlines and Revising Expiration of Emergency Orders.*

The time to act on this item has been tolled for the duration of the local emergency period. Please note that other State law provisions may also apply.

**PROJECT:** Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the TENOCHTITLAN: THE WALL THAT TALKS

**REQUEST:** Declare the property an Historic-Cultural Monument

**OWNERS:** Fig Crossing LLC c/o Managing Partner  
9440 S. Santa Monica Boulevard, Ste. 700  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

L & H Crescent LLC  
5314 Lindbergh Lane  
Bell, CA 90201

Lodes Inc.  
6039 N. Figueroa Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90042

John G. and Sonia I. Cataldo  
Cataldo Architects  
835 Mission Street  
South Pasadena, CA 91030

Location: 6029-6039 N. Figueroa Street  
Council District: 1 – Cedillo  
Community Plan Area: Northeast Los Angeles  
Zoning: [Q]C4-2D-HPOZ  
Land Use Designation: Neighborhood Commercial  
Area Planning Commission: East Los Angeles  
Neighborhood Council: Historic Highland Park  
Legal Description: Ralph Rogers Subdivision of a Part of the Garvanza Tract, Block H, Arb 1 of Lot PT 22

**APPLICANT:** Kathleen Gallegos  
Avenue 50 Studio, Inc.  
131 N. Avenue 50  
Los Angeles, CA 90042

**PREPARERS:** Jade Puga and Richard Montes  
Safada Y Sano  
4418 Cahuenga Boulevard  
Toluca Lake, CA 91602

## **RECOMMENDATION**

## **That the Cultural Heritage Commission:**

1. **Take the property under consideration** as an Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.10 because the application and accompanying photo documentation suggest the submittal warrants further investigation.
  2. **Adopt** the report findings.

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP  
Director of Planning

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Ken Bernstein, AICP, Principal City Planner  
Office of Historic Resources

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Shannon Ryan, Senior City Planner  
Office of Historic Resources

**[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]**

**[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]**

Lambert M. Giessinger, Preservation Architect  
Office of Historic Resources

Melissa Jones, City Planning Associate  
Office of Historic Resources

**Attachment:                   Historic-Cultural Monument Application**

## **SUMMARY**

Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks is a mural painted on the east-facing facade of the commercial building located on the northwest corner of N. Avenue 61 and N. Figueroa Street in the Highland Park neighborhood of Los Angeles. Completed in December 1996, the mural was designed by the mural arts collective Quetzalcoatl Mural Project, which included muralists Andy Ledesma, Anthony "Eagle" Ortega, Dominic Ochoa, Isabel Martinez, Jaime Ochoa, Jerry Ortega, Jesse Silva, John "Zender" Estrada, Oscar Deleon, and Rafael Corona. The inspiration for the creation of the mural stemmed from the loss of Daniel Robles, the best friend of one of the principal visionaries of the mural, Anthony "Eagle" Ortega, to gang violence in 1995, as well as other Latino and Chicano community beautification projects happening throughout the city in the 1990s. The predominantly Latino-populated Highland Park was intentionally selected as the location of the mural for the neighborhood's historical significance to the 1970s Chicano art mural movement. In addition, the intersection of N. Figueroa Street and N. Avenue 61 was sought out for its close proximity to the Highland Park Recreation Center to expose Latino youth who frequent the center to positive images of themselves and their ancestors' contributions to the arts and sciences.

Murals have been a popular form of Latino art since the early twentieth century, particularly as a way for this underrepresented segment of the population to publicly express their reaction to the social, economic, and political conditions of Mexican Americans. Murals have also allowed the Latino community to represent their own culture, as opposed to having their culture projected onto them by an outside population. Painted during the 1920s and 1930s, early murals in Los Angeles were often created by Mexican immigrants who used the walls of restaurants as their canvases; these murals harkened back to the traditions and motifs of murals painted on Mexican pulquerías, or pulque bars, and they often featured scenes that depicted daily life or Mexican film stars. By the 1930s, muralism in Los Angeles was being influenced by the Mexican mural movement that was a response to the ideological changes that swept the country in the years after the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920). During the Chicano movement of the 1960s and 70s, the city's Latino community became active in using art to reclaim their history and space, and after this period, Los Angeles became home to one of the largest concentrations of mural art in the country. In the 1990s, there was a national resurgence of the Chicano movement, and subsequent revival of politically charged Chicano murals, in response to the racial and socioeconomic injustices and discrimination Latinos were experiencing. Like the 1970s Chicano mural art movement, 1990s Chicano muralists utilized art to engage their communities to impact social change.

The subject mural is rectangular in shape and measures 12-feet in height and 75-feet in width. It is arranged in two main sections and features a 12-foot high and 70-foot-long feathered serpent, the Aztec god Quetzacoatl. Both sections are connected by earth elements, water and sky, that are depicted in a deep blue color that blend into each other. On the lower half of the entire mural, water flows throughout, with the night sky above. Section one consists of a scene concentrated around the themes of birth and creation with a matured fetus that has a baby floating in the blue waters of a circular womb. The womb emanates yellow sun rays and is held in the hands of an indigenous woman. Directly above the woman is an indigenous man with his arms extended towards the night sky, where a circular cultural mandala swirls above his head. Corn stalks flank the woman's right side. Section two depicts four scenes organized around cultural and political Chicano themes; the green plumes of Quetzacoatl form the foundation upon which each scene rests. The scenes consist of:

- a 'Day of the Dead' procession and altar featuring Our Lady of Guadalupe;
- the planet Venus above the Great Pyramid of Tenochtitlán along with a ceremonial temple containing shrines dedicated to Huitzilopochtli and Tlaloc, the Mesoamerican god of rain, with the Aztec ruler Moctezuma II accompanied by his wife and daughter at the foot of the temple;

- Chicano leaders, heroes, warriors, and revolutionaries, inclusive of Labor Union leader and civil rights activist César Chávez and Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata, overlooking an agricultural field; and
- the depiction of the 10-foot-high, seven mile long, steel wall that was erected in 1991 on the border between San Diego and Tijuana with the revolutionary Mexican insurgent, Subcomandante Marcos, leader of the Zapatista National Liberation Army, in front of the wall.

Over the years, the mural has experienced minor alterations, which include changes made in 2014 that were not reversed during a restoration project in 2018: in section one the ring of fire encircling the womb was changed to sun rays; in section two, the crown on Our Lady of Guadalupe's head, the full moon emerging from behind, and roses adorning her face were removed, rays of sun emerging from behind her head were added (in 2018 these were changed to a full moon); and in scene three, the books piled under the computer were enhanced to resemble a pyramid of books, and the corn stalks jutting out from behind César Chávez were omitted. Updates to the mural were completed by the original artists in 2014 and the 2018 restoration project was undertaken by a collaboration between Avenue 50 Studio and the original artists from the Quetzalcoatl Mural Project.

The commercial building on which the mural is painted is a non-contributor to the Highland Park-Garvanza Historic Preservation Overlay Zone. The mural is registered under the City's Mural Ordinance managed by the Department of Cultural Affairs; it was grandfathered in as a Vintage Mural since the mural was completed before the program began in 2013.

## **CRITERIA**

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3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.

## **FINDINGS**

Based on the facts set forth in the summary and application, the Commission determines that the application is complete and that the property may be significant enough to warrant further investigation as a potential Historic-Cultural Monument.

**BACKGROUND**

On August 17, 2022, the Director of Planning determined that the application for the proposed designation of the subject property as an Historic-Cultural Monument was complete. The original 30-day expiration date of September 16, 2022, per Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 22.171.10(e)1 is tolled, and a revised date will be determined pursuant to *the Mayor's March 21, 2020, Public Order Under City of Los Angeles Emergency Authority re: Tolling of Deadlines Prescribed in the Municipal Code and April 17, 2020, Public Order Under City of Los Angeles Emergency Authority re: Tolling HCIDLA Deadlines and Revising Expiration of Emergency Orders.*

The time to act on this item has been tolled for the duration of the local emergency period. Please note that other State law provisions may also apply.



# HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

## 1. PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION

Proposed Monument Name:				
México-Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks, Quetzalcoatl, The Wall that Speaks, México-Tenochtitlan: A Sequence in Other Associated Names: Time and Culture, Wall of Quetzalcoatl, Tenochtitlan Mural.				
Street Address:		Zip:	Council District:	
Range of Addresses on Property: 6027-6039 N. Figueroa St. & 100-117 N. Avenue 61		Community Name:		
Assessor Parcel Number:	Tract:	Ralph Rogers Subdivision of a part of the Garvanza Tract	Block:	Lot:
Identification cont'd:				
Proposed Monument Property Type:	Building	Structure	Object	Site/Open Space
Describe any additional resources located on the property to be included in the nomination, here:				

## 2. CONSTRUCTION HISTORY & CURRENT STATUS

Year built:	Factual	Estimated	Threatened?
Architect/Designer:	Andy Ledesma, Anthony "Eagle" Ortega, Dominic Ochoa, Isabel Martinez, Jaime Ochoa, Jesse Silva, John "Zender" Estrada, Oscar Deleon, Rafael Corona.		Contractor:
Original Use:	Community Beautification, Educational, Cultural History.		
Present Use:		Walking Tours, Educational, Cultural History, Ceremonial.	
Is the Proposed Monument on its Original Site?		Yes	No (explain in section 7)
			Unknown (explain in section 7)

## 3. STYLE & MATERIALS

Architectural Style:		Stories:	Plan Shape:
FEATURE	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	
CONSTRUCTION	Type:	Type:	
CLADDING	Material:	Material:	
ROOF	Type:	Type:	
	Material:	Material:	
WINDOWS	Type:	Type:	
	Material:	Material:	
ENTRY	Style:	Style:	
DOOR	Type:	Type:	



# HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

## 4. ALTERATION HISTORY

List date and write a brief description of any major alterations or additions. This section may also be completed on a separate document. Include copies of permits in the nomination packet. Make sure to list any major alterations for which there are no permits, as well.

## **5. EXISTING HISTORIC RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION (if known)**

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places	
Listed in the California Register of Historical Resources	
Formally determined eligible for the National and/or California Registers	
Located in an Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)	<p>Contributing feature</p> <p>Non-contributing feature</p>
Determined eligible for national, state, or local landmark status by an historic resources survey(s)	Survey Name(s): A part of the former Occidental Mural Walk. It is included in the Angels Walk Highland Park Guide, the 8th self-guided walking tour by Angels Walk LA Self-Guided Historic Trails, a program that highlights and celebrates the wonderful but often under appreciated history of Los Angeles and it's diverse communities.
Other historical or cultural resource designations:	

## **6. APPLICABLE HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT CRITERIA**

The proposed monument exemplifies the following Cultural Heritage Ordinance Criteria (Section 22.171.7):

1. Is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community.
2. Is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history.
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.



# HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

## 7. WRITTEN STATEMENTS

*This section allows you to discuss at length the significance of the proposed monument and why it should be designated an Historic-Cultural Monument. Type your response on separate documents and attach them to this form.*

**A. Proposed Monument Description** - Describe the proposed monument's physical characteristics and relationship to its surrounding environment. Expand on sections 2 and 3 with a more detailed description of the site. Expand on section 4 and discuss the construction/alteration history in detail if that is necessary to explain the proposed monument's current form. Identify and describe any character-defining elements, structures, interior spaces, or landscape features.

**B. Statement of Significance** - Address the proposed monument's historic, cultural, and/or architectural significance by discussing how it satisfies the HCM criteria you selected in Section 6. You must support your argument with substantial evidence and analysis. The Statement of Significance is your main argument for designation so it is important to substantiate any claims you make with supporting documentation and research.

## 8. CONTACT INFORMATION

### *Applicant*

Name:		Company:	
Street Address:		City:	State:
Zip:	Phone Number:	Email:	

<i>Property Owner</i>		Is the owner in support of the nomination?	Yes	No	Unknown
Name:		Company:			
Street Address:		City:		State:	
Zip:	Phone Number:	Email:			

### *Nomination Preparer/Applicant's Representative*

Name:		Company:		
Street Address:		City:		State:
Zip:	Phone Number:	Email:		



# HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

## 9. SUBMITTAL

When you have completed preparing your nomination, compile all materials in the order specified below. Although the entire packet must not exceed 100 pages, you may send additional material on a CD or flash drive.

### APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nomination Form   | 5. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Copies of Primary/Secondary Documentation                        |
| 2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Written Statements A and B  | 6. Copies of Building Permits for Major Alterations<br>(include first construction permits)             |
| 3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bibliography  | 7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional, Contemporary Photos                                  |
| 4. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Two Primary Photos of Exterior/Main Facade<br>(8x10, the main photo of the proposed monument. Also email a digital copy of the main photo to:<br>planning.ohr@lacity.org) | 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historical Photos  |
|  | 9. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zimas Parcel Report for all Nominated Parcels<br>(including map) |

## 10. RELEASE

Please read each statement and check the corresponding boxes to indicate that you agree with the statement, then sign below in the provided space. Either the applicant or preparer may sign.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that all documents submitted will become public records under the California Public Records Act, and understand that the documents will be made available upon request to members of the public for inspection and copying.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that all photographs and images submitted as part of this application will become the property of the City of Los Angeles, and understand that permission is granted for use of the photographs and images by the City without any expectation of compensation.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that I have the right to submit or have obtained the appropriate permission to submit all information contained in this application.

Kathleen Gallegos

2/13/2022

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Mail your Historic-Cultural Monument Submittal to the Office of Historic Resources.

Office of Historic Resources  
Department of City Planning  
221 N. Figueroa St., Ste. 1350  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Phone: 213-874-3679  
Website: [preservation.lacity.org](http://preservation.lacity.org)

***The Historic-Cultural Significance of “Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks” to the  
city of Los Angeles and the state of California.***

**written by**

**Jade Puga & Richard Montes**

**February 2022**

**Copyright 2022 Jade Puga & Richard Montes**

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This work was produced under the California Arts Council (CAC) Arts Administrators of Color Fellowship (ACF). Jade Puga was the 2021 Los Angeles region CAC Fellow, working with CAC Los Angeles host organization Avenue 50 Studio and its Founding Artistic Director, Kathleen Gallegos.



The School of Arts and Culture (SOAC), in partnership with the California Arts Council (CAC) and SVCreates, administered the fellowship. Jonathan Borca, Deputy Director for SOAC, oversaw the CAC ACF. CAC ACF programming is made possible in part by a grant from The James Irvine Foundation and a one-time increase in state arts funding.

### **Proposed Monument Description**

*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* is a mural painted on the exterior wall of the commercial building located at 6039 North Figueroa Street at the corner of North Avenue 61 (council District 1) in the Historic Highland Park neighborhood of Northeast Los Angeles, California.<sup>1</sup> The mural is at street level and can be observed from the intersection of North Figueroa Street and North Avenue 61. Painted in vibrant colors

*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* runs along North Avenue 61 and is 12 feet high and 75 feet long.

The mural, strife with symbolism, features a 12 feet high and 70 feet long feathered serpent, the Aztec God Quetzacoatl, which cradles depictions of historical scenes and figures that emphasize the Mexican and Central American's Indigenous heritage, knowledge, culture, technology, philosophy and spirituality with an awareness of the kinship between the original peoples of Turtle Island, the area known as North and Central America. The images thematically address Chicano contributions to social political movements throughout history and upto the resurgence of Chicanismo in the 90s.

### **Construction History/Style**

In 1995, Andy Ledsema and Anthony "Eagle" Ortega began assembling the team of artists that would design the mural *Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks*. The mural was completed between September through December 1996 by the following team of Los Angeles Chicano and Mexican muralists: Andy Ledesma, Anthony "Eagle" Ortega, Dominic Ochoa, Isabel Martinez, Jaime Ochoa, Jerry Ortega, Jesse Silva, John

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<sup>1</sup> See "Angels Walk LA Self-Guided Historic Trails". *Angels Walk* [Highland Park] September 2017 (13). [https://www.angelswalkla.org/wp-content/uploads/AWLA\\_HIGHLANDPARK\\_GUIDEBOOK.pdf](https://www.angelswalkla.org/wp-content/uploads/AWLA_HIGHLANDPARK_GUIDEBOOK.pdf). Accessed 21 December 2021

“Zender” Estrada, Oscar Deleon, and Rafael Corona.<sup>2</sup> The muralists were assisted by community artists including: Asylum, Fernando Bustos, John Duran and Mario Mancia. The artistic vision and subject matter depicted in the mural was conceived and designed by the collective of muralists who are the copyright owners.

The approach to creating *Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* placed high value on community engagement and was influenced by the Chicano Arts Movement of the 70s.<sup>3</sup> The production elements incorporated in the making of the mural included: 1) working towards the visibility of the Mexican American experience and the problems of justice and equality affecting them; 2) choosing a public space centrally located in Chicano neighborhoods to execute and produce their public art; 3) involving the community throughout the production phases of the mural. The artistic style of the mural is reflective of 1) Chicano/a mural Movement of the 70s; 2) the Mexican Muralist Movement;<sup>4</sup> 3) mesoamerican frescos found throughout pre-columbian Mayan, Aztec,

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<sup>2</sup> See Treviño, Jesús Salvador, director, *Latinopia Art Ave 61 Mural*. Barrio Dog Productions, Inc., 2016. *Latinopia*, <http://latinopia.com/latino-art/latinopia-art-avenue-61-mural/>. Interview with Andy Ledesma, Anthony “Eagle” Ortega. Accessed 5 May 2021

<sup>3</sup> The Chicano Mural Movement of the late 1960s into the 1970s came to define the Chicano Movement and offered Mexican American artists and their communities a forum to express social and political concerns.

#### Work Cited

Marin, Cheech. *Chicano Vision American Painters on the Verge*. First North American Edition. Little, Brown & Company, 2002 (17).

<sup>4</sup> A post Mexican Revolution movement that began in the early 1920s and was a part of the government's efforts for cultural reform. Artists were commissioned to use art to educate about the country's past and future. Inspired by the Revolution's ideal of social and racial equality of the Indian population artists created epic, politically charged public murals that stressed Mexico's pre-colonial history and culture. José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, and David Alfaro Siqueiros, collectively known as “Los Tres Grandes”, were considered the leaders of the Mexican Muralism Movement. The murals provided an opportunity to educate and inform the public with cultural identity, politics, oppression, resistance, progress, and other important issues of the time. The movement proved that art could be a valid communication tool outside the confines of the gallery and museum.

and Olmec city dwellings.<sup>5</sup> The artists were also a part of and influenced by the flourishing 90s Los Angeles muralist movement.<sup>6</sup>

Fundraising efforts for the mural were led by Anthony “Eagle” Ortega, the Founding Director of the mural arts collective Quetzalcoatl Mural Project (QMP).<sup>7</sup> He successfully rallied support from the community and raised the bulk of funding from two prominent Highland Park residents: John Densmore, former drummer of The Doors, and Zack de la Rocha, vocalist of Rage Against the Machine.<sup>8</sup> QMP received permission from Lee Lodes; former owner of the building on which the mural resides. The mural has been cited as being located at 6037 N. Figueroa Street, the former storefront Arroyo Furniture, yet the building wall that the mural is painted on is 6039 North Figueroa Street. The design was approved by the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs.<sup>9</sup>

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#### Work Cited

Kettenmann, Andrea. *Diego Rivera 1886-1957 A Revolutionary Spirit in Modern Art*. Taschen, 2000, Köln, (23-35).

For more on Mexican Muralism, see <https://www.theartstory.org/movement/mexican-muralism/>.

<sup>5</sup> “like modern Mexicans, Teotihuacanos were superlative muralists”.  
Meyer, Karl E. *Teotihuacán*. Deluxe ed., Newsweek Book Division, 1973, New York (15).

<sup>6</sup> In 1987, the Los Angeles mayor's office issued funding for Great Walls Unlimited: Neighborhood Pride, through SPARC. Between 1988-1995 SPARC sponsored at least nine murals a year.

#### Work Cited

Forward by Adolfo V. Nodal, General Manager, City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs.  
Dunitz, Robin J. *Street Gallery Guide to over 1000 Los Angeles Murals*. Revised 2nd ed., RJD Enterprises, 1998, Los Angeles (6,122).

<sup>7</sup> See Ortega, Anthony Eagle. “Mexico-Tenochtitlan Mural: Why the Need to Fund this Public Art Project?” *Ave. 50 Studio [Los Angeles]* 2017, <http://avenue50studio.org/mexico-tenochtitlan-mural>. Accessed 20 April 2021

<sup>8</sup> See Donath, Jessica. “Zack de la Rocha and the Doors’ John Densmore funded this Highland Park Mural — NOW IT NEEDS HELP.” *La Weekly [Los Angeles]* 21 February 2017, <https://www.laweekly.com/zack-de-la-rocha-and-the-doors-john-densmore-funded-this-highland-park-mural-now-it-needs-help/>. Accessed 10 May 2021

<sup>9</sup> See Oxy Arts Speaker Series “The Quetzalcoatl Mural Project” interviews with original artists and QMP collective members Anthony “Eagle” Ortega, Andy Ledesma, and Dominic Ochoa, moderated by muralist

### **Detailed Mural Description**

*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks*<sup>10</sup> distinctly features a 12 feet high and 70 feet long feathered serpent, the Aztec God Quetzacoatl and is arranged in two main sections. Both sections are connected by the earth elements: water and sky. The water and night sky are depicted in a deep blue color that blend into each other without a definite ending or beginning. On the lower half of the entire mural, water flows throughout, with the night sky watchfully above.

The following inscription is on the mural:

"TENOCHTITLAN  
THE WALL THAT TALKS"  
QUETZALCOATL  
-ARTISTS-  
RAFAEL CORONA - J. ZENDER  
ANDY LEDESMA - OSCAR DELEON  
ISABEL MARTINEZ - DOMINIC OCHOA  
JAIME OCHOA - ANTONY ORTEGA  
JERRY ORTEGA - JESSIE SILVA

Section 1 consists of a solitary scene concentrated around the themes of birth and creation. This section symbolizes the birth of Chicanismo, rooted in the Mayan and Aztec creation stories. Standing in front of the mural, you come face to face with a matured fetus. The baby floats in the blue waters of a circular womb. The womb

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Noni Olabisi at Choi Auditorium, Occidental College [Highland Park, CA] 29 January 2017,  
[https://youtu.be/vk34R\\_zKCXY](https://youtu.be/vk34R_zKCXY). Accessed 5 June 2021

<sup>10</sup> The name of the mural is a reference to the mesoamerican city Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco which has been referred to as Mexico-Tenochtitlan or simply Tenochtitlan and which current Mexico City was built on top of. Tenochtitlan refers to the Tenocha people and Tlatelolco to the Tlateolca people who collectively called themselves Mexica and were founders of the city. The Tenochca expanded their territory throughout the valley of Mexico and collectively this region has been referred to as the Aztec Empire.

### Work Cited

Clendinnen, Inga. *Aztecs, An Interpretation*. Cambridge University Press, 1991, United Kingdom (1).

emanates yellow sun rays and is gently held in the hands of an Indigenous mother. Looking up, you notice the expression on her face is peaceful; her eyes are closed. Stacked directly above the woman is an Indigenous man; he too has his eyes closed and a meditative expression on his face. His arms reach up to the torrent night sky, where a circular cultural mandala swirls above his head. The cultural mandala is meant to be a symbol of unity amongst all Indigenous peoples. Leafy *cintli*, corn stalks in the Mexica's Nahuatl language or *mahiz* in the Taino Arawak language, commonly referred to as *maize* in Spanish, flank the woman's right side. *Cintli* or corn was of vital importance to many Native American civilizations, who were the original cultivators of the crop, which helped to sustain and grow large populations.

Section 2 depicts four scenes, organized around themes of cultural and political significance to Chicanismo. This section is bookended by the feathered serpent *Quetzacoatl*, the mesoamerican deity of civilization, culture, peace, bringer of arts, poetry, writing and giver of corn for sustenance, who is associated with sky and earth. His emerald green plumes form the foundation on which each scene rests upon.

Section 2/Scene 1 depicts a 'Day of the Dead' procession and altar, with Our Lady of Guadalupe and a full moon hovering above. A procession of Indigenous people arrive to honor their ancestors. The altar offerings include incense, fruit, and pan de muerto. The altar is adorned with candles, skulls and *zempoalxochitl*, the orange Mexican marigold flower also known as *cempasuchil*. At the foot of the altar sits a blue green hummingbird. This is *Huitzilopochtli*, the Aztec sun and war god, who is a symbol of rebirth and is associated with the founding of the Mexica capital Tenochtitlán-Tlatelolco.

Section 2/Scene 2 depicts the planet Venus above the sacred and ceremonial precinct of Tenochtitlán; *Huei Teocalli* (Nahuatl) translates to Great Temple of God, referred to as the Great Pyramid of Tenochtitlán also known as *Templo Mayor*. This dual pyramid-platform temple consists of two 98 foot pyramids with two staircases leading up to a ceremonial platform with shrines individually dedicated to Huitzilopochtli and Tlaloc, the mesoamerican god of rain.

At the foot of Huei Teocalli stands Moteuczoma Xocoyotzin (c. 1466 – 29 June 1520) commonly referred in European accounts as Moctezuma II, the ninth Tlatoani of Tenochtitlan and the sixth Huey Tlatoani (Great Speaker in Nahuatl) in modern terms the “ruler” of the Aztec Empire reigning from 1503 to 1520.<sup>11</sup> The mural depicts Moteuczoma as accompanied by his wife and daughter, Tecuichpoch Ixcaxochitzin (later baptized as Isabel Moctezuma). To the left of the family is the iconic mesoamerican image of an eagle, with a serpent in his mouth on a bed of *nohpalli*, the Nahuatl word for prickly pear cactus, also nopales in Spanish. This iconic imagery references the Mexica migration story and the founding of Tenochtitlan, the current location of Mexico City. Accounts of this migration are found engraved on the Temple Stone of Moteuczoma II, also known as the Teocalli of Sacred Warfare. The stone monument was commissioned by Aztec ruler Moteuczoma II to mark the coming year

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<sup>11</sup> First contact between the indigenous civilizations of Mesoamerica and Europeans took place during Moteuczoma's reign. He is famous for expanding the Aztec Empire and making enemies of other Native groups like the Tlaxcalans which ultimately led to Moteuczoma's death and dramatic confrontation with the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés. His story remains one of the most well-known conquest narratives from the history of European contact with Native Americans, and he has been mentioned or portrayed in numerous works of historical fiction and popular culture.

#### Work Cited

Boone, Elizabeth, Hill. *The Aztec World*. Smithsonian Exploring The Ancient World, First Edition. St. Remy Press and Smithsonian Institution, 1994, Canada (147-150).

1506, which would close off the great fifty-two-year cycle and be observed in the New Fire Ceremony.<sup>12</sup> This imagery survived the conquest and was incorporated in the present day Mexican flag; it continues to be a national symbol for Mexico. The iconic Popocatépetl and Iztaccíhuatl volcanoes<sup>13</sup> are depicted in between a colossal Olmec stone head sculpture and the colorful Aztec Sun Stone.

Section 2/Scene 3 depicts thought leaders, heroes, warriors, and revolutionaries overlooking an agricultural field. Labor Union leader and civil rights activist César Chávez (born March 31, 1927 and died April 23, 1993) is depicted holding purple grapes in his hands, symbolic of the 1965 Delano Grape Strike. Wearing Mexica regalia, a Quetzal bird feathered headdress and holding a feathered shield, Cuauhtémoc (Descending Eagle), the 11th *Huey Tlatoani* ("great Speaker" in Nahuatl or what is considered the "ruler") of Tenochtitlan and the Triple Alliance from 1520 to 1521 (born c. 1495—died February 26, 1522), known for his heroism in defending the Mexica against the Spanish and their Native Allies during the siege of Tenochtitlan is depicted in the mural. He succeeded Moteuczoma who died during the early days of the Spanish invasion, and Moteuczoma's brother's 80 day reign, who died in the smallpox epidemic of 1520. Although Cuauhtémoc's reign was short-lived (1520-1521) and the Aztec empire quickly collapsed under him, he survived the conquest and continues to be a

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<sup>12</sup> See Barnes, William L., *The Teocalli of Sacred Warfare and late imperial calendrical rhetoric in the court of Moteuczoma II*, Volume 67-68, Res: Anthropology and aesthetics, The University of Chicago Press Journals in association with the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University. 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1086/693995> Accessed 12 August 2021

<sup>13</sup> Izta-Popo Zoquiapan National Park, wherein the two volcanoes are located, is named after them. Iztaccíhuatl in Nahuatl means sleeping woman. Popocatépetl in Nahuatl means "smoking mountain". The beauty and awe of the volcanoes inspired the famous Mexica love story Popocatépetl and Iztaccíhuatl which has often been described as the Aztec Romeo and Juliet.

symbol of Indigenous pride.<sup>14</sup> As exemplified in the 1996 “Rage Against the Machine” single “People of the Sun”, where longtime Highland Park, CA resident and lyricist Zack De La Rocha proclaims, “When the fifth sun sets get back reclaimed, The spirit of Cuauhtémoc alive and untamed”.

Mexican Revolutionary Emiliano Zapata, who fought against the exploitation of the poor and Indigenous, is depicted with a yellow *cintli* (corn stalk) in one hand and a red *cintli* in the other. At his side is La Adelita, a soldadera.<sup>15</sup> She carries a rifle and a basket of rations on her back to symbolize their role as soldiers and caretakers during the Mexican revolution.

Section 2/Scene 4 speaks more directly to the 90s decade, with its depiction of the 10-foot-high, seven mile long, steel Bush era border wall that was erected in 1991 between San Diego and Tijuana.<sup>16</sup> In front of the wall is a depiction of the 1990s revolutionary Mexican insurgent, Subcomandante Marcos, leader of the The Zapatista National Liberation Army (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, EZLN). The EZLN opposed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and declared war on the Mexican Government on January 1, 1994, the same day NAFTA was enacted. The EZLN demanded, “work, land, housing, food, health, education, independence, liberty,

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<sup>14</sup> Many places in Mexico are named in honor of Cuauhtémoc. Such as Ciudad Cuauhtémoc in Chihuahua and the Cuauhtémoc borough of Mexico City. Smaller towns include Ciudad Cuauhtémoc, Veracruz and Ciudad Cuauhtémoc, Chiapas. A monument on the Paseo de la Reforma honors him. He is celebrated in paintings, music, and popular culture. His image appears on Mexican coins and banknotes.

<sup>15</sup> Soldaderas refers to the women soldiers who fought and aided the rebels and federal government in the Mexican Revolution 1910-1920. They became known as Adelitas.

See, Mirandé, Alfredo and Evangelina Enríquez. *La Chicana The Mexican-American Woman*. University of Chicago Press, 1979, Chicago (211-213).

<sup>16</sup> See Dunn, Timothy J. *The Militarization of the U.S. – Mexico Border, 1978-1992: low intensity conflict doctrine comes home*. 1st edition. CMAS Center For Mexican American Studies, University of Austin Texas, 1996, Austin, Texas (66).

democracy, justice and peace".<sup>17</sup> Subcomandante Marcos is depicted looking past his shoulder at the revolutionary figures that came before him. He wears his trademark face covering and revolutionary bandolier across his chest. He holds a laptop computer that is supported by a pyramid of books and youth. On the computer screen, the words, "Ya Basta!" Spanish for "Enough!" are prominently etched. Next to Marcos are vibrant corn fields. This section ends with a passing of the torch to a future rooted in the knowledge of the past. A colossal technology man made of steel and entwined in the Quetzalcoatl feathered serpent's tail bookends the mural. The technology man holds a spark of fire in his hand that is chain linked to a futuristic steel city. While the other hand is wrapped in earthy brown roots.

#### **Current status, alterations, relationship to the Highland Park Community**

*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* has not been substantially altered since its completion in 1996. In 2009, the original artists under the collective Quetzalcoatl Mural Project (QMP) began fundraising to repair and restore the mural to its original state. Maintenance to address weather damage, faded colors and cracks took place between 2009 and 2016. In 2014, Avenue 50 Studio began operating as the Fiscal Receiver for the mural.

Founded by Kathleen Gallegos, Avenue 50 Studio is an arts presentation organization grounded in Latina/o/x culture and visual arts, located in and serving the Northeast Los Angeles community. Their mission is to bridge cultures through artistic expressions, using content-driven art to educate and to stimulate intercultural

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<sup>17</sup> For the English language text of every communique published (along with several that were not published, as well as many interviews, letters, and essays) from the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) from December 31, 1993 through June 12, 1994. See "Zapatistas! Documents of the New Mexican Revolution." *Autonomedia*, 1994, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/Zapatistas/chapter01.html>. Accessed 23 December 2021

understanding. For over 22 years, Avenue 50 Studio has engaged and nurtured the local artistic community. Programming consists of exhibitions featuring both emerging and established local and Latinx artists of all genres, monthly poetry readings, lectures, artist discussions and workshops. Avenue 50 Studio promotes and facilitates the interaction between the North East community and artists, encouraging the use of art to celebrate, commemorate, educate and enlighten.

As the fiscal sponsor of *Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks*, Avenue 50 Studio, Founding Artistic Director Kathleen Galleogos helped the original artists continue to engage with the Highland Park community through their mural. In 2014, the artists, who wanted to remain in conversation with the community through the mural, made the following changes:

#### Section 1

1. The ring of fire, like that of a solar eclipse, which encircled the womb, was changed to sun rays in the bold style of Mexican Folk Art.
2. The Spanish Conquistador Hernán Cortés and the arrival of his fleet were an added depiction to the first section of the mural. Cortés and his ship were not included in the original design.

#### Section 2

3. Our Lady of Guadalupe was altered from the original design. The gold Spanish crown on her head, full moon emerging from behind, and roses adorning her face, were removed. The direction of her face changed from profile to directly facing onlookers. Bright yellow rays of sun were added, emerging from behind her head.

4. Minor alterations to the altar include the removal of a single white candle stick.
5. A small hummingbird representative of *Huitzilopochtli*, was added to the stream of water flowing from the volcano.
6. Books piled under the computer of Mexican insurgent Subcomandante Marcos, leader of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, were enhanced to resemble a pyramid of books upon which the computer is supported.
7. The large yellow corn stalks jutting out from behind activist César Chávez were omitted.
8. The Indigenous field laborers turned 1910 Mexican Revolutionaries were removed and replaced with 1970s agricultural field workers.

With these new changes and to mark the mural's 20th anniversary, the Highland Park community supported a mural rededication ceremony with a Mexica blessing ceremony and block party held March 2016, hosted by QMP collective. In 2017, Occidental College hosted the Oxy Arts Speaker Series: The Quetzalcoatl Mural Project and invited QMP collective members Anthony Ortega, Andy Ledesma, and Dominic Ochoa to participate in a panel that highlighted *Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* mural and its relationship to the community. The in-depth panel was moderated by muralist Noni Olabisi and was integral to the 2018 renovation. In 2018, the importance of the mural to the Highland Park community was recognized by Council District 1 and the Department of Cultural Affairs who were part of 25 individuals and organizations that funded the

2018 restoration and renovation.<sup>18</sup> Avenue 50 Studio collaborated with QMP to organize this full restoration in conjunction with the original artists Andy Ledesma, Anthony "Eagle" Ortega, Dominic Ochoa, Isabel Martinez, Jaime Ochoa, John "Zender" Estrada, Oscar Deleon, and Rafael Corona.

The 2018 restoration goals were to address weather damage and repair holes in the wall but after a reexamination of the 2014 additions, the collective agreed to revert to the original 1996 mural design with the exception of the following:

#### Section 1

1. The bold sun rays in the style of Mexican Folk Art that surround the womb remain.

#### Section 2

2. The Spanish Crown and roses adorning the original 1996 Our Lady of Guadalupe remain omitted but her face was restored back to the original design and a full moon replaced the 2014 rays of sun.
3. Corn jutting from behind the activist César Chávez in the original 1996 mural, omitted in 2014, remain omitted.
4. The enhanced pyramid of books remains.

All other additions from 2014 reverted to the original 1996 design, retaining integrity of the design from its original conception and execution.

*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* continues to be a prominent and unique feature in the history of Highland Park. It is included in the Angels Walk Highland Park Guide,

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<sup>18</sup> For more mural history, see Ortega, Anthony Eagle. "Mexico-Tenochtitlan Mural: History." *Avenue 50 Studio* [Los Angeles] <http://avenue50studio.org/mexico-tenochtitlan-mural>. Accessed 20 April 2021

the 8th self-guided walking tour by Angels Walk LA Self-Guided Historic Trails; a program that highlights and celebrates the wonderful but often underappreciated history of Los Angeles and its diverse communities. The mural can be observed up close by passersby from the sidewalk and motorists from ongoing traffic. Across the street, patrons of Tacos La Estrella, one of the oldest taco stands in the area, enjoy a view of the mural. If you continue North on Avenue 61 you will cross the Metro Gold Line railway track, train commuters and community members walking to the nearby neighborhood hub Highland Park Recreation Center can take in the mural from a distance.

The mural remains in its original location but recently was thought to be under threat of being whitewashed, when the building on which the mural is painted was purchased in August 2019 for \$5.8 million by Fig Crossing, LLC. There is no contractual commitment from Fig Crossing, LLC to preserve the mural. This has prompted community organizers like Brenda Perez of Restorative Justice for the Arts to generate community awareness around the threat of whitewashing. In January 2020, Restorative Justice hosted a blessing ceremony at the mural site.<sup>19</sup> The blessing ceremony was attended by QMP, original *Tenochtitlan* muralists and over 100 community members who expressed their support of the mural.

*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* presently remains a sacred gathering place for the Chicano and Latinx Highland Park community to practice ancestral ceremonies and

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<sup>19</sup> See Garret, Grace. "Rumored erasure of Highland Park "Tenochtitlan" mural sparks community concern, building owner denies claim." *The Occidental* [Los Angeles] 11 February 2020, <https://www.theoccidentalnews.com/community/2020/02/11/rumored-erasure-of-highland-park-tenochtitlan-mural-sparks-community-concern-building-owner-denies-claim/2900054>. Accessed 12 March 2021

reflect on the past, present and future.<sup>20</sup> The mural is also referred to as *México-Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* or *Quetzalcoatl, The Wall that Speaks*, and *México-Tenochtitlan: A Sequence in Time and Culture*. Avenue 50 Studio remains the fiscal agent.

### **Section 7B: Statement of Significance - Summary**

*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* is eligible for listing in the City of Los Angeles' Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) List under the Cultural Heritage Ordinance significance Criteria 1 in the areas of important events of national, state, and local history for its identification with the national resurgence of Chicanismo<sup>21</sup> in the 90s, that influenced the local Los Angeles Latino community to organize in response to the racial and socioeconomic injustices they were experiencing and helped to give rise to the civic consciousness and political transformation of Latinos throughout the state of California.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Molina, Alejandra. "In this LA neighborhood, residents unite to bless one of its most sacred murals." *Religion News* [Los Angeles] 5 February 2020, <https://religionnews.com/2020/02/05/in-this-la-neighborhood-residents-unite-to-bless-one-of-its-most-sacred-murals/>. Accessed 20 January 2021

<sup>21</sup> Chicanismo, rooted in Mexican American's Indian heritage and Chicano civil rights movement, is a philosophy defined by the principles of self-determination, liberation, unity and community empowerment. First branded during the 1969 Denver Youth Conference organized by Chicano activist leader Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales, Chicanismo was utilized to demand a change in discrimination at schools and public spaces, for political representation, and socio-economic amelioration. Chicanismo continues to evolve and be redefined by each new generation.

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- Rosales, Francisco A. *Chicano! The History Of The Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*. Based on the four part television series of the same name. Arte Público Press, 1996, Houston, Texas (210, 256).

<sup>22</sup> See Dignicraft film and art collective, *187: The Rise of the Latino Vote*, PBS, 2020, <https://www.pbs.org/video/187-the-rise-of-the-latino-vote-vaybey/>.

*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* is also eligible for listing for its significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic and social history of the nation, state, city and community (Criteria 1b) for its identification with a prolific period of public art that made significant contributions to the birth of Los Angeles as a global cultural engine in the 90s. Its association with the life and legacy of the historical figure César Estrada Chávez, the Mexican-American child farmworker turned labor leader and union organizer, who is important to national and state history, qualifies *Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* for listing in the City of Los Angeles' Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) List under the Cultural Heritage Ordinance significance Criteria 2.

*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* is an exemplary public art with high artistic, cultural and historical value that best represents the revival of politically charged Chicano murals during the 90s and shaped the social and cultural history of Los Angeles and its communities. The period of significance is 1990 to 1996, beginning with the surge of Chicanismo that coincided with a period of deep social and economic unrest in Los Angeles. The period of significance ends in the year 1996 – the year in which the mural was funded, designed, and painted.

### **Historic-Cultural Significance Criteria 1**

(In the areas of important events of national, state, and local history)

From the mid 1980s to the early 1990s, Los Angeles was a hub for global economic activity yet Black, Indigenous, Chicano, Latino and immigrant communities were underfunded and in poverty, overpoliced and marginalized.<sup>23</sup> When the once booming California aerospace economy trickled to an end in the early 1990s – closing

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<sup>23</sup> See Dunn, Timothy J. *The Militarization of the U.S. – Mexico Border, 1978-1992: low intensity conflict doctrine comes home*. 1st edition. CMAS Center For Mexican American Studies, University of Austin Texas, 1996, Austin, Texas (168).

manufacturing plants and moving to D.C. – economic unrest set into motion a recession, which collapsed the real estate market in LA.<sup>24</sup> California's economy went through a steep and painful recession, in which the state lost over 720,000 jobs.<sup>25</sup> The economic downturn and high rates of unemployment fueled the racist and anti-immigrant ethos in Los Angeles against Blacks, Indigenous, Latinos, Chicanos and immigrants.

Landmark events capture the racial and social inequalities of the time, such as the 1992 LA riots, which were partially quelled by Border Patrol agents deployed into Los Angeles Latino communities. BP agents targeted Latino immigrants and made over 1000 arrests subjecting individuals to deportation, regardless that most were not charged with any riot related criminal offense.<sup>26</sup> In the aftermath of the LA Riots, the city emerged invigorated to overcome the socioeconomic devastation but the effects of the recession were still felt well beyond its end in late 1993; and it took the state three more years to recoup jobs lost in the downturn. The overarching job losses, widespread police corruption, crack cocaine epidemic, and gang wars plaguing the city contributed to the white middle class fleeing Los Angeles.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> For more history on the California Aerospace Industry, see Knutsen, Ashleen. "The History and Revival of Southern California's Aerospace." *KCET*, 9 July 2019, <https://www.kcet.org/shows/blue-sky-metropolis/the-history-and-revival-of-southern-californias-aerospace-industry>. Accessed 18 December 2021

<sup>25</sup> See [https://lao.ca.gov/1998/1998\\_calfacts/98calfacts\\_economy.html](https://lao.ca.gov/1998/1998_calfacts/98calfacts_economy.html).

<sup>26</sup> See Dunn, Timothy J., *The Militarization of the U.S. – Mexico Border, 1978-1992: Low-intensity Conflict Doctrine Comes Home*. CMAS Books, University of Texas at Austin, 1996 (82).

<sup>27</sup> During the 1990s the number of Whites in the five-county Southern California region declined by over 690,000. Each of the counties except Riverside lost Whites. The greatest decline by far was in Los Angeles County, where 570,000 fewer Whites were counted in 2000 than in 1990. Whites have been leaving the older and more central parts of Los Angeles County for several decades. L.A. County's White population dropped by a quarter between 1960 and 1990, but during the 1990s this net White loss became more widespread.

As the state saw an increase of immigrants entering from the Southern Border<sup>28</sup> and with the economic and social unrest mounting, a decade full of political scapegoating in the form of attacks on Latino communities began. The 10-foot-high, seven miles long, steel wall between San Diego and Tijuana erected in 1991 embodied the anti-immigrant sentiment at the time. Nineties politicians created platforms based on the false idea that incoming immigrants were draining state resources and increasing crime. Pete Wilson served as Governor of California from January 1991 until January 1999 and during his administration, a series of bills related to immigration policy were put forth.<sup>29</sup> At the forefront was the anti-immigrant 1994 California Proposition 187 (also known as the Save Our State (SOS) initiative).<sup>30</sup> The draconian Prop 187 not only denied public services, such as non-emergency public health care and K-12, public college and university education to immigrants residing in the state without legal permission, but it went further requiring public agencies to audit patients and students. This action effectively made these public agencies an extension of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). As part of his campaign, Governor Wilson attempted to sue the federal government in the early months of 1994 for the cost of educating undocumented immigrants in public schools and providing health services. Governor

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For more on the Net White decline in Southern California, see  
[http://www.csun.edu/~hfgeg005/eturner/images/Books/CFCP/CFCP\\_Ch4.pdf](http://www.csun.edu/~hfgeg005/eturner/images/Books/CFCP/CFCP_Ch4.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> Passel, Jeffrey S. and Roberto Suro. "Peak and Decline: Trends in U.S. Immigration 1992 – 2004." *Pew Hispanic Center*, 27 September 2005,  
<https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/reports/53.pdf>. Accessed 19 October 2021

<sup>29</sup> See Thogmartin, Max and Albertsen Noel. "Looking Back at Proposition 187- Twenty Five years later" *California State Archives A Division of the California Secretary of State's Office*, Digital exhibit, 2019,  
<https://q.co/arts/uPphNLcsPsxxuqKS8>. Accessed 20 December 2021

<sup>30</sup> See Doob, Christopher Bates. *Racism: an American Cauldron*. Third Edition, Longman, 1999, (179).

Wilson's attack on the Latino community propelled a new generation of Chicanos to help mobilize Latinos civically and politically.

The 90s Chicanismo resurgence was a response to the anti-Mexican, Chicano, Latino and anti-immigrant sentiment permeating throughout California. This generation of Chicanismo was further ignited by national Indigenous led movements such as "500 Years of Resistance" the 1992 protests against the quincentennial Columbus Day observations<sup>31</sup> and the 1993 communiqué, *El Despertador Mexicano*, authored by Mayan "rebels" calling themselves the EZLN (Ejército Zapatista Liberación Nacional) or Zapatistas, which called for Chicano solidarity.<sup>32</sup>

Los Angeles Chicano and Latino communities rose to the Zapatista's call striving for autonomy in their hometowns, "Ya Basta! Enough is Enough!" On January 1, 1994, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) coordinated a 12-day Zapatista uprising in the state of Chiapas, Mexico in protest of NAFTA's enactment and the negative implications it would have on the poor Indigenous people across Mexico. This uprising was the Standing Rock<sup>33</sup> of its time and many Los Angeles Chicano artists and

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<sup>31</sup> Ramirez, Odessa. "1992 — The Year Of Indigenous Peoples." *Social Justice*, vol. 19, no. 2 (48), 1992, (56–62), JSTOR, See [www.jstor.org/stable/29766674](https://www.jstor.org/stable/29766674). Accessed 4 July 2021

<sup>32</sup> Gonzalez, Pablo. "Zapatismo at Twenty-Five and its Impact on Chicana/o Activism: Part One Revista No'j." *Latinx Research Center at the University of California, Berkeley*. 2019. Berkeley, California, <https://revistanoj.berkeley.edu/2019/08/30/zapatismo-at-twenty-five-and-its-impact-on-chicana-o-activism-part-1/>. Accessed 1 July 2021

<sup>33</sup> The Standing Rock movement evolved into a powerful global phenomenon highlighting the necessity to respect Indigenous Nations and their right to protect their homelands, environment and future generations. The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe set forth a call for Native relatives from across Turtle Island to join Tribal Nations and grassroots Indigenous communities to defend Native peoples inherent rights to protect Unci Maka and our water: Mni Wiconi. For more, see <https://standwithstandingrock.net/>.

See Hersher, Rebecca. "Key Moments In The Dakota Access Pipeline Fight" *NPR*, 22 February 2017, <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/02/22/514988040/key-moments-in-the-dakota-access-pipeline-fight>.

activists made the pilgrimage to Chiapas in solidarity with the EZLN.<sup>34</sup> Upon returning home, these Chicano artists and activists galvanized to transform their communities, helping to give rise to the political power of working class Latinos in Los Angeles.

The Latino community organized statewide demonstrations against Prop 187, with their largest event occurring in Los Angeles on October 16, 1994. An estimated 70,000 protestors marched to Los Angeles City Hall to demonstrate their opposition to Prop 187. On November 2, 1994, over 10,000 teenagers across California walked out of schools to protest Proposition 187. Youth marchers from more than 30 Los Angeles Unified schools participated.<sup>35</sup> The protestors were primarily Chicano and Latino – “White Flight” made room for a new generation of Chicano and Latino activists and community leaders in Los Angeles.<sup>36</sup> Chicano and Latino artists proved to be integral to the political mobilization in the Latino community and together played a significantly important role in the transformation that Los Angeles underwent from the mid to late nineties.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> González, Roberto Flores. “Chicano Artists and Zapatistas Walk Together Asking, Listening, Learning: The Role of Transnational Informal Learning Networks In the Creation of A Better World” Part 1, Los Angeles, California. See [https://inmotionmagazine.com/auto/f\\_informal1.html](https://inmotionmagazine.com/auto/f_informal1.html). Accessed 12 August 2021

<sup>35</sup> See Pyle, Amy and Shuster, Beth. “10,000 Students Protest Prop. 187 : Immigration: Walkouts around Los Angeles are largest yet showing campus opposition to initiative. The teen-agers are mostly peaceful, with only 12 arrests reported.” *Los Angeles Times* [Los Angeles], 3, November 1994, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1994-11-03-mn-58295-story.html>.

<sup>36</sup> See Camarillo, Albert M. “Cities of Color: The New Racial Frontier in California’s Minority-Majority Cities” *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 76, No. 1, University of California Press, February 2007. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/phr.2007.76.1.1>.

For more, see

[https://www.sjsu.edu/people/ruma.chopra/courses/h186\\_M\\_Spr2011/s2/CA\\_cities\\_of\\_color.pdf](https://www.sjsu.edu/people/ruma.chopra/courses/h186_M_Spr2011/s2/CA_cities_of_color.pdf).

<sup>37</sup> See Venegas, Sybil. “The Prop 187 Moment: Post-187 and the Artistic Regeneración of a Community” KCET, 21 October 2020, <https://www.kcet.org/shows/187/the-prop-187-moment-post-187-and-the-artistic-regeneracion-of-a-community>. Accessed 26 November 2021

The systematic attacks on the Latino community continued in the form of California's Three Strikes sentencing law enacted in 1994, which disproportionately affected Latinos and Blacks,<sup>38</sup> Proposition 209 that banned Affirmative Action in 1996,<sup>39</sup> and 1998's Proposition 227, an attack on bilingual education.<sup>40</sup> Despite the dominant powers' intentions to suppress their voices, Chicano, Latino and Immigrant communities made substantial strides in the city of Los Angeles. After the devastating defeat of Prop 187, a new coalition between labor unions, Latinos and Progressives, flourished with labor leader Miguel Contreras at the helm. He is credited with rebuilding the Democratic Party and in 1995, was instrumental in helping then labor leader Gil Cedillo win a special election to fill an Assembly vacancy in an immigrant-heavy district near downtown.<sup>41</sup> In 1996, Time magazine named Gloria Molina as one of the Democratic

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<sup>38</sup> "The disparities persist when adjustments are made for rates of arrest and incarceration based on the population sizes of California's racial and ethnic groups. Examining rates per 100,000 California residents in each group, we found that African Americans and Latinos had higher rates of incarceration in general, and under the Three Strikes law in particular. The rate of felony arrests among African American Californians was 4.4 times higher than for white Californians, but African American's rate of incarceration was 7.5 times higher, and their rate of incarceration for second strikes was 10 times higher. For third strikes, African Americans were incarcerated at a rate almost 13 times higher than whites. For Latinos, the arrest rate was 50% higher than whites in California, but their incarceration rate was 81% higher, and their rate of incarceration under the Three Strikes law was 82% higher."

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<sup>39</sup> Watanabe, Teresa. "Prop. 209's affirmative action ban drove down Black and Latino UC enrollment and wages, study finds" *Los Angeles Times* [Los Angeles] 22 August 2020, <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-08-22/prop-209s-affirmative-action-ban-drove-down-black-and-latino-uc-enrollment-and-wages-study-finds>.

<sup>40</sup> See Montes, Richard, director. *Language Battle in The Classroom*, Documentary, 12 minutes, Safada Y Sano Productions, 1997. Interviews with Sherri Annis, the spokeswoman for the English for the Children (prop 227) campaign, Dr. Maria S. Quezada, President of the California Association of Bilingual Education, and Dr. J. David Ramirez, Center for Language Minority Education and Research at California State University, Long Beach.

<sup>41</sup> See Acuña, Rodolfo F. *Anything But Mexican, Chicanos in Contemporary Los Angeles*. Updated 2nd Edition, Verso, 2020, New York (205).

Party's "10 Rising Stars". Molina served as one of four Vice Chairs of the Democratic National Committee through 2004.<sup>42</sup> Although Latinos made extraordinary strides in labor and political representation, the Chicano and Latino neighborhoods in Los Angeles continued to be brutalized with gang violence and widespread police corruption as uncovered in the Rampart Scandal.<sup>43</sup> The gang violence in Los Angeles in the 90s became an endemic and has been described as the "decade of death" by Father Gregory Boyle of Homeboy Industries<sup>44</sup>. From 1990 to 1996, there were 5,188 confirmed gang related deaths in Los Angeles County.<sup>45</sup> It is estimated that more than 60% were Chicanos or Latinos that were lost to the cycle of violence.<sup>46</sup>

Anthony "Eagle" Ortega, one of the principle visionaries of the mural *Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks*, lost his best friend Daniel Robles to gang violence in July of 1995.<sup>47</sup> His death served as guiding inspiration for the creation of the mural. Another point of

<sup>42</sup> In 1991, Gloria Molia became the first Latina to join the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, where she was known as a fiscal watchdog committed to good government reforms, maintenance of the county's public health care delivery system, and quality-of-life issues—particularly for the one million county residents residing in the unincorporated areas.

<sup>43</sup> Rampart scandal involved widespread police corruption in the Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums (CRASH) anti-gang unit of the Los Angeles Police Department's Rampart Division in the late 1990s. For a Rampart Scandal Timeline, see <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/lapd/scandal/cron.html>.

<sup>44</sup> See "Welcome Homeboy." *Los Angeles Times* [Los Angeles], 3 October 2007, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2007-oct-03-ed-homeboy3-story.html>. Accessed November 2021

<sup>45</sup> For a closer look at the number of Gang Homicides from 1980-2008, see [http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ivpp/injury\\_topics/GangAwarenessPrevention/Gang%20Homicide%20Chart%20Apr%202011%20chart.pdf](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ivpp/injury_topics/GangAwarenessPrevention/Gang%20Homicide%20Chart%20Apr%202011%20chart.pdf). Accessed 13 June 2021

<sup>46</sup> Maxson, Cheryl L; Klein, Malcolm W.; Sternheimer, Karen. "Homicide in Los Angeles: An Analysis of the Differential Character of Adolescent and Other Homicides." March 2002, <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/193812.pdf>. Accessed 26 November 2021

<sup>47</sup> Glionna, John M. "Gunfire Panics Campers; Gang Member Slain : Violence: Two other gang members are wounded in Angeles Forest melee. Visitors scramble into the woods for cover when shooting starts." *Los Angeles Times* [Los Angeles], 4 July 1995, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1995-07-04-mn-20029-story.html>. Accessed 12 April 2021

inspiration for the artist group of *Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* stemmed from other Latino and Chicano community beautification actions happening throughout the city in the 1990s. An example is the public art initiative “Re-Wing the City of Angels,” sponsored by then Councilmember Mike Hernandez, which intended to unify the community in the aftermath of the L.A. Riots. The initiative helped fund several murals in Highland Park.<sup>48</sup> Another example is the Rogelio Flores Foundation, founded in 1995 by Martin Flores, in memory of his 17 year old brother Rogelio Flores, who was killed in a drive-by shooting in April 1994 also sought to create change through art. The foundation brought more resources and programming to the community, including La Belleza Del Barrio, a program that paired adult artists with taggers recruited from Boyle Heights high schools to adorn stark walls and freeway overpasses with murals depicting the rich Mexican and Chicano history. By August of 1995, La Belleza Del Barrio had completed seven murals as part of the graffiti abatement program, which put murals in place of graffiti.<sup>49</sup> The murals and other beautification projects were a means to reverse the cycle that led many Eastside boys to drop out of school and become involved in gangs.<sup>50</sup>

During a time when Chicanos were targeted by state wide initiatives and politicians, corrupt police in overpoliced neighborhoods, media outlets stereotyping

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<sup>48</sup> For more on the initiative Re-Wing the City of Angels, see Goodheart, Jessica. “Spraying Away the Summer Doldrums : Artists Volunteer to Teach Workshops to Keep Young Hands and Minds Occupied.” *Los Angeles Times* [Los Angeles] 12 July 1992, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1992-08-13-gl-5668-story.html>. Accessed 12 October 2021

<sup>49</sup> James, Ian. “Education Is Youth’s Legacy to a Community : Education: The Rogelio Flores Foundation helps Boyle Heights students’ improve their math scores.” *Los Angeles Times* [Los Angeles], 6 August 1995, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1995-08-06-ci-32068-story.html>. Accessed 12 October 2021

<sup>50</sup> “Rogelio Flores Foundation Offers Summer Workshops.” *Los Angeles Times* [Los Angeles], 17 JULY 1997, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1997-jul-17-me-13690-story.html>. Accessed 15 October 2021

Chicano males as inherently violent due to their over indexing in gang-related deaths, and with Border Patrol agents unleashed in the streets of L.A., *Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* artists were determined to use art to educate and empower Los Angeles Chicanos and youth. The mural depicts empowering images of Meso-American and Chicano historical figures, places, and cultural traditions as a source of empowerment to combat the long history of negative images of Chicanos portrayed in the media.<sup>51</sup>

The predominantly Latino populated Highland Park was intentionally selected as the location of the mural for the neighborhood's historical significance to the 70s Chicano art mural movement.<sup>52</sup> The intersection of North Figueroa and North Ave. 61 was sought out for its close proximity to the Highland Park Recreation Center, which is frequented by Chicano youth. This intersection was important in reaching the youth of Highland Park, who would be exposed to positive images of themselves and their ancestors' historic contributions to the arts and sciences.

In summary, *Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* mural, completed in December of 1996, retains integrity of feeling, reflecting a distinct period in Los Angeles that was marked by a reawakening of Chicanismo in the 90's decade; this was a response to the oppressive policies targeting Chicano communities and the social unrest of the decade.

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<sup>51</sup> Gutierrez, Felix F. "Latinos and the Media in the United States: An Overview." May 1980, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED197410.pdf>. Accessed 12 December 2021

<sup>52</sup> Highland Park is credited as the epicenter of the 70's chicano mural movement and home to Centro de Arte Público, Chisme Arte and Mechicano Art Center as uncovered in the research project and documentary "Resurrected Histories". It was initiated by Avenue 50 Studio through funding by the California Council for the Humanities and the James Irvine Foundation to research the history of art collectives in Highland Park. Project partners include Abel Alejandre of Atelier Visit, Sybil Venegas, Sarah Meacham, John Valadez and KCET Departures.

See Venegas, Sybil. "Resurrected Histories: Voices from the Chicano Arts Collectives of Highland Park." KCET, [Los Angeles] 11 January 2012, <https://www.kcet.org/history-society/resurrected-histories-voices-from-the-chicano-arts-collectives-of-highland-park>. Accessed 20 November 2021

*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* is of historic significance for its role in the 90s Chicanismo movement of Los Angeles that rose to beautify the city; unify the Latino community in activism; activate youth in civic engagement; educate on Chicano's history and ancestral contributions to the arts and sciences in order to nurture cultural pride in an effort to end to the cycle of gang violence plaguing the streets of Los Angeles. The important national, state, and local history events that *Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* is identified with are: the thousands of Los Angeles Chicano lives lost to gang violence; international protests against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) sparked by the Indigenous Zapatista movement; the rise of Latino's political power in California demonstrated through statewide protests against anti-immigrant proposition ballot initiatives; and the new wave of Latino civic engagement in Los Angeles. *Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* is the antithesis to the anti-immigrant Bush Era California-Mexico border wall erected in 1991.

### **Historic-Cultural Significance Criteria 1B**

(for its significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic and social history of the nation, state, city and community)

*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* represents Chicanos' contributions towards Los Angeles's comeback in the second half of the 90s decade. The 90s were a defining time that marked a shift away from the glitz of Hollywood and reframed Los Angeles as a place where culture was made.<sup>53</sup> Los Angeles's arts and cultural scene became

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<sup>53</sup> Zócalo Public Square Podcast "Were the '90s L.A.'s Golden Age?" moderated by Zócalo Public Square publisher Gregory Rodriguez at the Museum of Contemporary Art in downtown Los Angeles, the challenges and successes of the decade were tackled by: MOCA chief curator Helen Molesworth, American Prospect executive editor Harold Meyerson, University of Southern California race and pop culture scholar Todd Boyd, and Fernando Guerra, director of the Center for the Study of Los Angeles at Loyola Marymount University, *Zócalo Public Square*, 29 April 2016, [https://soundcloud.com/zocalopublicsquare/were-the-90s-las-golden-age?utm\\_source=clipboard&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=social\\_sharing](https://soundcloud.com/zocalopublicsquare/were-the-90s-las-golden-age?utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing). Accessed 20 December 2021

politically charged and socially conscious, thanks in large part to Chicano artists and their focus on social injustices, which manifested in their works.

The following are examples that point not only to the proliferation of Chicanismo in the 90s, but also of its impact on Los Angeles's emergence as a global cultural force. In music, the Latinos in hip-hop documentary "Pass the Mic!" chronicles the success of the Chicano rap groups "A Lighter Shade of Brown" and "Delinquent Habits" whose albums and singles went gold in the 1990s.<sup>54</sup> Chicano rapper Kid Frost was invited to participate in MTV's Rock the Vote campaign in 1990, alongside musicians Ozzy Osbourne, Queen Latifah, LL Cool J, Kiss and the Beastie Boys. A Chicano film highlight of the era is the Edward James Olmos directed movie "American Me" which premiered at the 1992 Cannes Film Festival in France, then opened up as the number four movie in America, despite being in limited theaters. In literature, Luis J Rodriguez's award-winning 1993 classic memoir, "Always Running: La Vida Loca: Gang Days in L.A." became a bestseller and acclaimed book. In 1996, socially conscious rap superstar Tupac Shakur's "The Don Killuminati: The 7 Day Theory" album went quadruple platinum on the charts and featured the hit song "To Live and Die in L.A." with the infamous lyrics,

*"It wouldn't be L.A. without Mexicans  
Black love, brown pride in the sets again  
Pete Wilson tryin' to see us all broke  
I'm on some bullshit out for everything they owe."*

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<sup>54</sup> See Montes, Richard, director. *Pass The Mic*, Documentary, 53 minutes, Safada Y Sano Productions, 2003. Chronicles the history of Chicanos and Latinos contributions to hip-hop. Interviews Include A Lighter Shade of Brown, Mellow Man Ace and Delinquent Habits.

The song was received by international audiences and was an obvious nod to and acknowledgment of Chicanos impact on the city of Los Angeles.<sup>55</sup>

Six months after the L.A. riots of 1992, Rage Against the Machine, featuring Chicano activist Zack de la Rocha as lead singer, released their triple platinum self titled debut album.<sup>56</sup> Zack de la Rocha, in addition to being one of the original funders of *Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks*, is also the son of Roberto de la Rocha who was part of the "Los Four" art collective (1973-1983) in Los Angeles.<sup>57</sup> In the 1990s de la Rocha founded the Public Resource Center/Centro de Regeneración, a space where art, community, and politics merged in Highland Park.<sup>58</sup> From this highly productive art scene, *Tenochtitlan: the Wall that Talks* was produced and stands as a reminder of the impact Chicano artists had on the cultural transformation of Los Angeles.

Although Chicanos reached new heights in the broader mainstream culture and neighborhood initiatives of the 90s, Chicano and US born Latino artists and their works remained excluded from mainstream art galleries, museums and major art institutions.<sup>59</sup> In 2006, The Los Angeles Contemporary Museum of Arts (LACMA) hired Rita Gonzlez;

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<sup>55</sup> Baker, Soren. "An Abbreviated History: The Impact of Mexican-American Rap." *Rock The Bells*, <https://rockthebells.com/articles/mexican-hip-hop-history/>.

<sup>56</sup> See Rolli, Bryan. "Rage Against the Machine returns to the Billboard Top 200 And iTunes Top 10 Amid Nationwide Protests, Conservative Backlash." *Forbes Magazine*, 11 June 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bryanrolli/2020/06/11/rage-against-the-machine-billboard-200-itunes-protests-conservatives/?sh=574051b287ae>.

<sup>57</sup> Tartan, James, director. *Los Four Murals of Aztlan: The Street Painters of East Los Angeles*. Documentary, Chicano Cinema and Media Art Series Volume 1. UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, 1974, 1981, 2004, Los Angeles.

<sup>58</sup> For more, see "Regeneración: Public Resource Center." *KCET Departures*, 14 November 2011, <https://www.kcet.org/shows/departures/regeneracion-public-resource-center>

<sup>59</sup> Yzaguirre, Raúl and Aponte, Mari Carmen. "Willful Neglect: The Smithsonian Institution and U.S. Latinos Report of the Smithsonian Institution Task Force on Latino Issues." *Smithsonian Institution*, 1994, [https://siarchives.si.edu/sites/default/files/forum-pdfs/Willful\\_Neglect\\_The\\_Smithsonian\\_Institution%20and\\_US\\_Latinos.pdf](https://siarchives.si.edu/sites/default/files/forum-pdfs/Willful_Neglect_The_Smithsonian_Institution%20and_US_Latinos.pdf). Accessed 24 December 2021

she was the first Chicanx curator at LACMA.<sup>60</sup> In 2008, Gonzalez curated “Phantom Sightings: Art after the Chicano Movement”. At the time, it was the largest exhibition of cutting-edge Chicano art ever presented at LACMA.<sup>61</sup> The title itself speaks to the exclusion of Chicano artists in the Los Angeles arts landscape. Another example of exclusionary practices includes the Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA)’s policy that permitted only artists who lived and worked in Latin America to be exhibited. Founded in 1996, MOLAA serves the highly Latino populated greater Los Angeles area and not until 2014 did they seek to change their “No Chicano” rule. In 2015, MOLAA’s exhibit “Somewhere Over El Arco Iris: Chicano Landscapes, 1971-2015” represented the first time Chicano artists had an exhibition devoted to their work in the museum’s nearly two-decade existence.<sup>62</sup> This shift in policy was thanks in large part to Chicano Art Collector Armando Durón, whose presentation and collection of Chicano art persuaded the MOLAA board to adopt a policy that includes the presentation of Chicanos and U.S. born Latino artists.<sup>63</sup> The invisibility of the Chicano artists and their

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<sup>60</sup> Rita Gonzalez was hired as an associate curator in 2006. Many of her exhibitions at the museum have focused on under-recognized Chicano artists. She curated “Phantom Sightings: Art after the Chicano Movement” (in 2008); “Asco: Elite of the Obscure, A Retrospective, 1972–1987” (2011), which was part of the first Getty Foundation–funded Pacific Standard Time exhibition initiative; and the multi-venue survey “A Universal History of Infamy” (2017), which was part of PST: LA/LA. In 2019 she was appointed head of Lacma’s Contemporary Art Department.

For more, see Durón, Maximiliano “Rita Gonzalez Appointed Head of LACMA’s Contemporary Art Department.” 28 February, 2019 <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/lacma-rita-gonzalez-head-contemporary-art-12013/>. Accessed 12 December 2021

<sup>61</sup> See <https://www.lacma.org/art/exhibition/phantom-sightings-art-after-chicano-movement>.

<sup>62</sup> See Miranda, Carolina A. “What finally broke the ‘no Chicanos’ rule at the reemergent Museum of Latin American Art.” *Los Angeles Times* [Los Angeles], 12 October 2015 <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/miranda/la-et-cam-chicano-artists-finally-show-at-molaa-2015-1006-column.html>. Accessed 24 December 2021

<sup>63</sup> The Durón Family Collection consists of over five hundred works of visual art by Chicana(o) artists who reside in the greater Los Angeles area.

works in these high profile institutions has contributed to Chicano artists being overlooked in Los Angeles's transformation as a global cultural center.

A notable exception to the nearly blanket "No Chicano Art" rule in twentieth century Los Angeles art institutions is the 1990 groundbreaking exhibition "Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-1985," also known as "CARA," at UCLA's Wight Art Gallery. This touring retrospective chronicled the 1970s Chicano movement through artworks that came to define the movement. The exhibit included a large-scale slide presentation of more than 40 murals from throughout the country, along with a videotape to show each mural in its social and geographical context.<sup>64</sup> This is believed to be the largest exhibition of Chicano work in a single museum setting along with serving to educate the new wave of Los Angeles Chicano artists; it was an early indication of the steep rise Chicanismo would have in the 90s.

Another early indication of the rise in 90s Chicanismo was the temporary display of the previously censored mural *LA History: A Mexican Perspective* at Union Station in 1990. Completed in 1981 by Chicana artist Barbara Carrasco, the mural was censored by the commissioning organization, Los Angeles's Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA). Their institutional version of Los Angeles history contradicted Carrasco's Chicana viewpoint. Unless substantial changes were made, CRA refused to install the mural at its intended location of 3rd and Broadway in downtown Los Angeles during the city's bicentennial celebrations in 1981.<sup>65</sup> The mural, painted on 43 wood and masonite panels, and the history it captured has survived thanks to Barbara's tenacity in refusing

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<sup>64</sup> Ramos Lydia, "Touring Retrospective Examines Chicano Art." *Los Angeles Times* [Los Angeles], 30 August 1990, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1990-08-30-ti-678-story.html>.

<sup>65</sup> For more, see <https://muralesrebeldes.org/la-history/>

to relinquish possession. The 90s era Los Angeles Chicano artists drew influence from this censorship of Mexican-American and Chicano history. This incident compelled Chicano muralists of the 90s to create works of art uniquely highlighting their experiences and history in Los Angeles.

Like their 1970s Chicano Mural art movement predecessors, 90s Chicano muralists were faced with social crises, so they utilized art as a means to engage their communities to impact social change.<sup>66</sup> This new school of Chicano and Latino muralists flourished in the public arts space, reviving the production of politically and culturally charged community centered murals that ushered in the 90s Los Angeles mural movement. By the mid 90s, Los Angeles had over 1,000 murals, painted mostly by Chicano Artists.<sup>67</sup> The late 1990s saw a mural restoration budget from the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, which was a boastful \$400,000.<sup>68</sup>

The mural movement of Los Angeles, closely associated with Chicanismo, was so influential on the Los Angeles landscape of arts and cultures that corporate advertisers took notice – they soon began copying the mural style and erecting advertisements on street walls in order to reach consumers. Ultimately, the booming mural movement of the 90's came to a halt when the city enacted a ban on signage – including murals – in 2002. This ban was the result of the late 1990s outdoor advertising industry lawsuit against the city, arguing that the city was unconstitutionally privileging

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<sup>66</sup> Newall, Wendy. "Zender on Murals." *Boulevard Sentinel* [Los Angeles] 29 April 2018, <https://boulevardsentinel.com/zender-on-murals/#comments>. Accessed 12 July 2021

<sup>67</sup> Vargas, George. *Contemporary Chican@ Art Color and Culture for a New America*. University of Texas Press. 2020.

<sup>68</sup> "L.A. 's street murals disappearing." *Los Angeles Daily News* [Los Angeles] 21 October 2007, <https://www.dailynews.com/2007/10/21/las-street-murals-disappearing/>. Accessed 20 July 2021

one type of protected speech – murals – over another – advertising.<sup>69</sup> The struggle for street wall canvases between artists and outdoor advertising firms reveals another layer of imprint that 90s Chicano muralists had on the broader Los Angeles culture.

The moratorium on murals was lifted in 2012 but many of the murals from the 90s were lost. One of the contributing factors of whitewashing murals has been the gentrification of Chicano neighborhoods.<sup>70</sup> And with their disappearance, Los Angeles's complex and rich Chicano history is in danger of being lost and forgotten. *Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* is an integral part of Highland Park's diverse history down to its notable Highland Park resident funders: John Densmore of the 1960s band The Doors, and Zack de La Rocha.<sup>71</sup> Recognized as a cultural treasure, the mural has been mentioned in numerous books and L.A. tour guides, and is included in Jesús Salvador Treviño's Latinopia archive.

*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* represents Chicanos significant contributions to the cultural and social history of Los Angeles during the 90s and should be preserved for future generations. Its impact has been overlooked and minimized due to the exclusionary practices of Chicanos in major art institutions and also because Chicano murals are closely tied to the counterculture revolutions of the late 1960s and early

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<sup>69</sup> Berg, Nate. "The Convoluted Path to Ending Los Angeles's Mural Ban." *Bloomberg* 22 March 2012, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2012-03-22/the-convoluted-path-to-ending-los-angeles-s-mural-ban>. Accessed 2 September 2021

<sup>70</sup> Gumbel, Andrew. "Whitewashed: how gentrification continues to erase LA's bold murals". *The Guardian* 26 January 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jan/26/whitewashed-how-gentrification-continues-to-erase-las-bold-murals>. Accessed 12 February 2021

<sup>71</sup> Donath, Jessica. "Zack de la Rocha and The Doors' John Densmore Funded This Highland Park Mural - Now It Needs Help." *LA Weekly* [Los Angeles], 21 February 2017, <https://www.laweekly.com/zack-de-la-rocha-and-the-doors-john-densmore-funded-this-highland-park-mural-now-it-needs-help/>. Accessed 20 February 2021

1970s. These factors have led to the whitewashing of many 90s Chicano murals. The artists and murals of this era have not had their work properly documented, collected, or incorporated into the art history of Los Angeles or the nation. *Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* has proven its of vital importance to the community by having already survived the fate of being whitewashed like so many other murals from the 90s era.<sup>72</sup> Well maintained throughout the years, the mural continues to ignite the passion and support of the community as a symbol of cultural and civic pride. The mural stands as a reminder of Chicanos' historic contributions towards making Los Angeles a global cultural center. Losing *Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* to erasure will be losing another important part of Los Angeles Chicano history; a history that is vital towards inter-cultural understanding and creating a resilient Los Angeles. In times of crisis, Angelenos can gather at North Figueroa and North Avenue 61 to remember how even in the face of hardships and injustices, communities can unite in taking care of each other and their city.

### **Historic-Cultural Significance Criteria 2**

(for its association with the lives of historic personages important to national and state history)

*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* is also eligible for listing in the City of Los Angeles' Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) List under the Cultural Heritage Ordinance significance criteria for its association with the historical figure, Mexican-American child farmworker turned labor leader and union organizer César Estrada Chávez, who is important to national and state history.

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<sup>72</sup> Curtis, Erin M.; Hough, Jessica, Latorre, Guisela. *Murales Rebeldes!: L.A. Chicana/Chicano Murals under Siege*. Angel City Press, LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes and the California Historical Society. For more, see <https://www.latimes.com/books/la-ca-jc-murales-rebeldes-20170817-story.html>.

César Chávez's life and death on April 28, 1993 had a profound impact on Los Angeles Chicanos as evident in his prominent placement in *Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* mural. The mural depicts César Chávez cradling purple grapes; this is symbolic of the historic 1965 farmworkers movement "La Causa". A movement that started in Delano with the California Grape Strike of 1965, that led to César Chávez and Dolores Huerta bringing Mexican and Filipino workers together to form the United Farm Workers (UFW). On their 250 mile pilgrimage to Sacramento, the California state capital, the UFW issued "The Plan of Delano". This was a declaration of a peaceful fight for social justice that sought basic human rights for farm workers and a demand to be heard.<sup>73</sup> The strike swept through California and became immortalized as "La Huelga" (the struggle) and in 1968, the UFW began a nationwide boycott of table grapes and millions of Americans refused to buy them. This strike was the beginning of the unification between the farm workers' struggle and the Chicano/a Movement, symbolized by the UFW flag, which was adopted as the main symbol of the 70s Chicano/a Movement.<sup>74</sup>

The collective of artists behind *Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* understood the historical significance of including César Chávez in the mural and the influence "La Causa" had on Chicanismo in the 90s. César Chávez's image on the mural not only memorializes his plight for social justice, but also represents the numerous Los Angeles Chicano actions that were inspired by his legacy of non-violent protests and hunger strikes. For example, in 1993 a small group of UCLA Chicano students went on a

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<sup>73</sup> Valdez, Luis. *Aztlan An Anthology of Mexican American Literature*. Edited by Luis Valdez and Stan Steiner. First Edition. A Marc Corporation Book. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1972 (197,198,199, 200).

<sup>74</sup> Rosales, Francisco A. *Chicano! The History Of The Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*. Based on the four part television series of the same name. Arte Público Press,1996, Houston, Texas (130, 135,145, 151).

hunger strike – at stake was the Chicano/a studies at UCLA – the students efforts were successful in establishing the César E. Chávez Center for Interdisciplinary Instruction in Chicana and Chicano Studies, and securing resources for full time faculty, most notably Judith Baca, Alicia Gaspar de Alba and Otto Santa Ana who became tenured professors.<sup>75</sup> *Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks* serves as a significant teaching tool for the broader Los Angeles community on the legacy of César E. Chávez.

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<sup>75</sup> Pautler, Anne. "Starving for Justice" A 1993 hunger strike led to the creation of UCLA's César E. Chávez Center." *UCLA Magazine*, 14 March 2018, <http://magazine.ucla.edu/depts/hailhills/starving-for-justice/>. Accessed 12 December 2021

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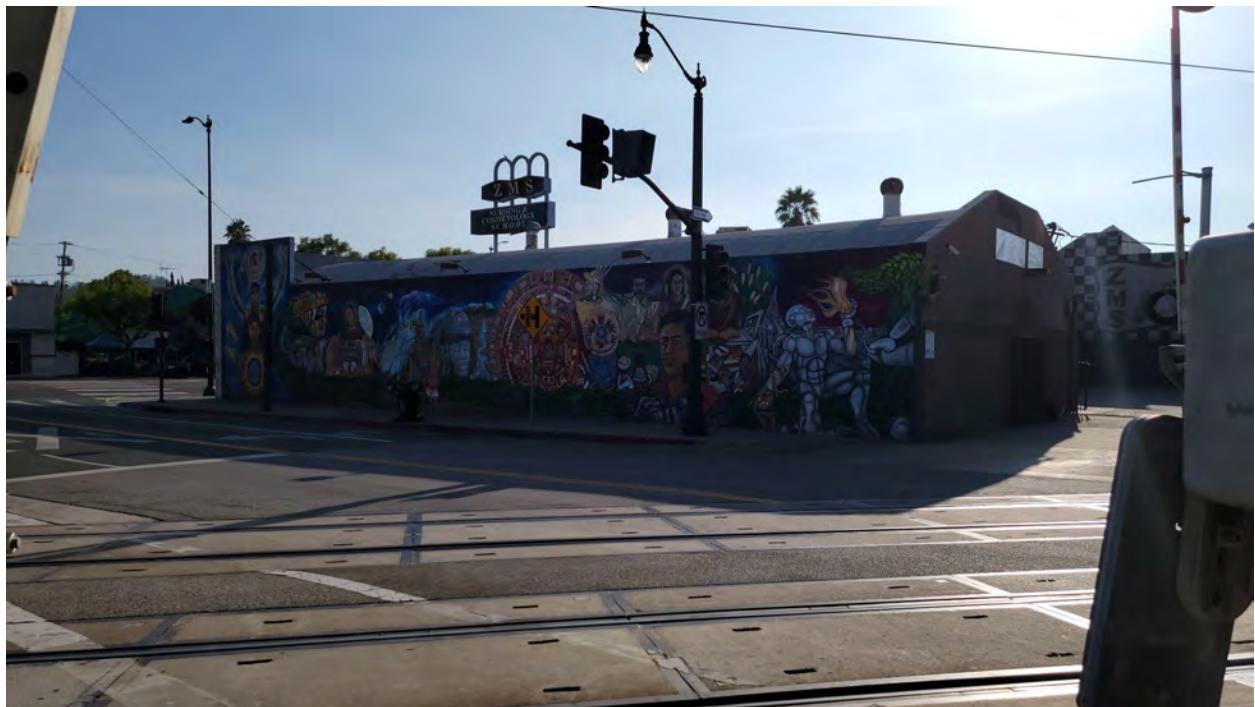
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# PRIMARY PHOTOS

By Richard Montes



## SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTS

# Andy Ledesma

## Biography

Andy Ledesma's art career has spanned over three decades. Throughout this time, Ledesma has firmly entrenched his artistic vision in the Chicano experience. Born in Texas but raised in Los Angeles, he was exposed early on to the emerging cultural phenomenon known as Chicano\la. It was as a young boy that he became fascinated with murals. Ledesma's first ventures as a muralist were as a youth through graffiti. As Ledesma pursued this new form of expression, he would encounter other, more established artist, who would encourage him to pursue his passion. In order to advance himself, he would pursue his education by enrolling at East Los Angeles College and Cal State Los Angeles. Ledesma's mural career began in 1986 with the artist Jerry Rodriguez; they would do a series of historical murals in the Lincoln Heights neighborhood. The vast majority of Ledesma's murals are in the Highland Park, northeast Los Angles area. In 1995 with Anthony Ortega, Ledesma assembled the team that would design the Mexico-Tenochtitlan mural. In 1992, Ledesma founded Charming Devil Studios and was one of the first Chicano to self-published his own comic book *Welcome to La-La Land*. He takes great pride in the fact that he would give many artists' exposure; they would have a booth at the 1996 San Diego comic Con. In 2005, Ledesma relocates to Port Arthur Texas, where he would be the director of the Texas Artist Museum; he was instrumental in reopening the museum following hurricane Katrina. He would also start a papier-mâché fabrication studio that specialized in Mardi Gras floats. In 2015, Ledesma once again relocated to Los Angeles to resume his art career.

# Anthony “Eagle” Ortega

## Biography

Anthony Ortega is a muralist, community organizer, writer, and an independent civil rights historian and researcher.

Born in East L.A. in 1971, Ortega was inspired by both his Roosevelt High School teacher, Chicano Movement activist, Miguel Roura, and by Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales’ now-classic poem, “Yo Soy Joaquin.”

Ortega’s first student cover story, reporting the experiences of a Japanese Chicano activist in the 1968 East Los Angeles High School walkouts, led to his journalism major at Cal State University, Northridge, and, in 1990, completion of a journalism program sponsored by the USC Annenberg School of Journalism’s California Chicano News Media Association (CCNMA).

In 1995, Ortega and artist Andy Ledesma co-founded the Quetzalcoatl Mural Project, a community-based mural arts collective that produced a 100-foot-long mural completed in the summer of 1996. In 2009, the mural was tagged with graffiti and became a national symbol for public art restoration when acclaimed author of *The Soloist*, Steve Lopez, wrote about it in his *Los Angeles Times* feature column.

From 1997-2012, in addition to his involvement in multiple art and humanitarian aid projects, Ortega worked as an independent researcher/historian specializing in the 1964-1984 Chicano Civil Rights Movement. Ortega is also writing a book based on his extensive research material about Chicano civil rights leader Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales.

His list of clients and funders include: Hollywood producer Moctezuma Esparza; university educator and writer, Dr. Roberto “Cintli” Rodriguez; legendary drummer of The Doors, John Densmore; lead singer for Rage Against the Machine, Zack de la Rocha; the Not Just Foundation, Seva Foundation, and the Los Angeles City Department of Cultural Affairs.

Ortega continues to write, research and conduct presentations on murals, Chicano art and political panel discussions based on the Chicano Movement. Ortega resides in Ontario, CA.

# **Isabel Martinez**

## **Biography**

Isabel Martinez, born in Alpoyeca, Guerrero, Mexico, currently resides in Los Angeles, California. She has both a Masters in Fine Arts and a Single Subject Art Credential from California State University Los Angeles, in addition to a Bachelors of Fine Arts from La Escuela Nacional de Artes Plasticas, Mexico City.

Isabel has been working as a professional artist for over twenty years. She specializes in painting, drawing, printmaking, and multi-cultural arts and crafts. Isabel has participated in more than 70 group and 7 solo exhibitions internationally. Her artwork has been featured in a number of publications, books, periodicals, and catalogues.

## **John Zender Estrada - Biography**

<http://www.johnzender.com/biography.html>



Born and raised in East Los Angeles, John Zender Estrada experienced a rich and diverse cultural environment drawing from the strong personalities of the Chicano youth around him. At fifteen he lived in Mexico City where he gained a love and respect for Los tres grandes, the famous Mexican muralists Diego Rivera, Jose Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros. While still in High School John won several competitions including an internship to California State University, Los Angeles (Ceramics) and at the Otis Art Institute of Parsons School of Design (fine art and life drawing). Upon graduation from Verdugo Hills High School, John continued his fine arts studies with the Otis Art Institute majoring in Fine Art and Illustration. While attending Otis, John was influenced by the New York art scene, primarily the abstract-graffiti-pop expressionists. Actively involved in establishing the Los Angeles style of graffiti art, John was one of the many early pioneers that created the graffiti movement in the early eighties. John recreated himself as Zender (the rising mountain) and had his first one-man show at Otis titled "Zender-Neo Expression" in 1987. Deeply committed to making public art, Zender has produced over 300 murals in Los Angeles and throughout the United States.

As founder of Creative Art Solutions he has devoted many hours nurturing young artists and making a difference in many communities. Zender has separated his public art from his personal paintings, his work has been exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Zero-1 Gallery, Pueblo Gallery, CSDI, ICU Gallery and many others. He has had several one man shows and many group shows, exhibiting with Chicano artists, Graffiti artists. His easel paintings have evolved from series to series. Most of his works from his earlier series now reside in private collections. In 1995 his work arrived at a spiritual turning point and began incorporating more intimate and personal ideas concerning spirituality into his artwork. Influenced by Roberto Matta, Kandinsky, Gorky, Lam, Basquiat and the Bible he began calling his painting theory *The Process of Change*.

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### **EXHIBITION HISTORY SOLO EXHIBITION**

<b>1988</b>	<b>"Neo-Expressionism"</b>	Otis Art Institute Gallery	Los Angeles CA
<b>1994</b>	<b>"Arte de mi Corazon"</b>	University of Southern California	Los Angeles, CA
<b>1995</b>	<b>"Twisted Tenderness"</b>	Arroyo Books Gallery	Highland Park, CA
<b>1996</b>	<b>"Revelations 1"</b>	Luna Sol Café Gallery	Los Angeles, CA
<b>1996</b>	<b>"The Grey Planet"</b>	Homeland Cultural Center	Long Beach, CA
<b>1997</b>	<b>"Derranged Aesthetics"</b>	Casa dela Raza	Santa Barbara, CA
<b>2002</b>	<b>"A Decade of Paint"</b>	Community Self Determination Institute	Los Angeles, CA
<b>2005</b>	<b>"Public Eye Private Heart"</b>	BlueBird Art House	Whittier, CA
<b>2006</b>	<b>"Blue Prints"</b>	Works on Paper Bluebird Art House	Whittier, CA
<b>2010</b>	<b>"Urban Chicano"</b>	Homegirl Cafe Gallery	Los Angeles, CA

## **SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

<b>1992</b>	<i>"Imagery in Motion"</i>	Traveling Exhibition LACE, SPARC, Self Help	Los Angeles, CA
<b>1993</b>	<i>"Next Step"</i>	Zero-One Gallery	Los Angeles, CA
<b>1994</b>	<i>"Dia de los Muertos"</i>	Otra Vez Gallery at Self Help Graphics	Los Angeles CA
<b>1994</b>	<i>"Urban Revisions"</i>	Museum of Contemporary Art	Los Angeles, CA
<b>1995</b>	<i>"Villa y Zapata"</i>	Homeland Cultural Center	Long Beach, CA
<b>1996</b>	<i>"Grito de Nuestras Almas"</i>	Al's Finger Print Gallery	Long Beach, CA
<b>1998</b>	<i>"Alma De La Raza"</i>	Alwun House	Phoenix, AZ
<b>1999</b>	<i>"Paintings from the other side"</i>	La Luz Gallery	Long Beach, CA
<b>2001</b>	<i>"Knowledge Acquired Wisdom Applied"</i>	Rock Rose Gallery	Los Angeles, CA
<b>2001</b>	<i>"LA City Giants"</i>	CSDI GALLERY	Los Angeles, CA
<b>2002</b>	<i>"Urban Art"</i>	ICU ART GALLERY	Los Angeles, CA
<b>2004</b>	<i>"The Prophet"</i>	Bluebird Art House Gallery	Whittier, CA
<b>2005</b>	<i>"Dia De Los Muertos"</i>	Casita Del Pueblo Gallery	Whittier, CA
<b>2005</b>	<i>"2 to the Dome"</i>	Crewest Gallery	Alhambra, CA
<b>2006</b>	<i>"City of LA Urban Cityscapes"</i>	Bluebird Art House Gallery	Whittier, CA
<b>2006</b>	<i>"Dawn to Dawn "</i>	Seeds Traveling Art Exhibition	California
<b>2007</b>	<i>"You Call this Art? "</i>	Buckwild Gallery	Venice, CA
<b>2010</b>	<i>"Sharpie Show"</i>	Crewest Gallery	Los Angeles, CA
<b>2012</b>	<i>"Dia de los Muertos Show?"</i>	ChimMaya Gallery	Los Angeles, CA
<b>2013</b>	<i>"Latino Heritage Exhibit?"</i>	ChiMaya Gallery	Los Angeles, CA
<b>2013</b>	<i>"Chicano Y Que "</i>	Plaza de la Raza BoatHouse Gallery	Los Angeles, CA
<b>2016</b>	<i>"Epitaph"</i>	Biola University	La Mirada, CA



# ANDY LEDESMA

## ARTIST & EDUCATOR

*Art should not merely be a mirror that reflects society, but a hammer that shapes it.* Art should not only be aesthetic or provocative, but should also serve as the voice of the public, and in doing so move the people.

## MY EXPERIENCE

### Facilitator at County of LA, Parks and Recreation

2017- Present

Facilitates paper mache classes, after school art classes and art sales at community centers, specifically working with senior citizens on seasonal projects and transitional aged youth.

### Board of Director for Art Studio, Inc.

2009 - 2014

Member of Executive Committee which made program decisions for the agency while overseeing current programs. Established Art SKhool afterschool Beaumont youth program serving community at-risk and minority youth. Established first Beaumont community mural project.

### Consultant Fabricator

2009 - 2012

Conceptualized, constructed and restored Mardi Gras parade floats for the City of Port Arthur, Texas.

### Museum Director

2006 - 2010

Texas Artist Museum & Society (TAMS) Duties included fundraising, curating and directing general museum activities, overseeing and maintaining the museum site and development, programming monthly art shows, recruiting for, planning and facilitating a three week youth art camp, spearheaded Lamar University Interns Project which continues to this day.

### Muralist

1995 - 2001

Cofounder and lead artist of the Quetzalcoatl Mural Project in Highland Park, Avenue 61.

### Self Help Graphics: Paper Mache Lead Instructor

1994 - 1997

Collaborated with Self Help Graphics Planning Committee to facilitate community workshops focused on creating Dia de los Muertos masks.

### Publisher, Managing Editor and Lead Artist of Zine "Welcome to La-La Land"

1992- 1996

Grassroots zine focused on the emerging arts of East and Northeast LA communities which highlighted art, poetry, satire and illustration from upcoming creatives. Collaborated with Arroyo Bookstore to facilitate high school art workshops to create featured zine art. Issue 2 was showcased in a LA Public Library underground zine symposium and is included in their Permanent Collection.

## EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Arts  
(In progress)**  
CalStateLA

**Associate of Art in Studio Art**  
East Los Angeles College

## MURAL PROJECTS

**Quetzalcoatl Mural Project**  
Highland Park

**Three Gospels Mural w/ Jerry Rodriguez**  
Lincoln Heights

**History, Cintennial, and Village of YANG/NA**  
Albion Elementary School

**Burbank Elementary School Mural**  
Highland Park

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**Portfolio**  
@charmingdevilstudios

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Los Angeles Times

## Highland Park : Youth Art at Street Festival

L.A. TIMES ARCHIVES

AUG. 13, 1992 12 AM PT



“Re-Wing the City of Angels,” a community youth arts project, will sponsor a free street festival from 2 to 7 p.m. Sunday on South Avenue 58 and Figueroa Street in Highland Park.

“We’re trying to make this a community celebration,” said volunteer Edward De Brava. The festival will feature works done by project participants, in addition to music, food and entertainment.

The project is a series of summer arts workshops for youths 8 to 18 sponsored by a coalition of Northeast Los Angeles community groups, including the Arroyo Arts Collective, the Graffiti Arts Coalition and the Highland Park Chamber of Commerce. Art in the Park of the Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department also was a sponsor.

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Quiz: 9 out of 10 People Can't Name These Actors

PAST FACTORY

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Los Angeles Times



## Spraying Away the Summer Doldrums : Artists Volunteer to Teach Workshops to Keep Young Hands and Minds Occupied

BY JESSICA GOODHEART

JULY 2, 1992 12 AM PT



SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

HIGHLAND PARK — About 80 young graffiti writers assembled in a parking lot Saturday to spray-paint old refrigerators, chairs and boards donated by the Salvation Army.

The day of spray-painting, rap music and dancing, titled "Hip-Hop Happ," kicked off a summer-long youth arts program put together by Los Angeles arts and community groups in response to the Los Angeles riots.

It includes six weeks of art workshops, an art exhibit and weekend theater performances in the Arroyo Outback Theatre, a refurbished former vaudeville house.

The program will conclude with a two-day street fair Aug. 15 and 16. Other sponsors are the Arroyo Arts Collective, the Highland Park Chamber of Commerce, Arroyo Seco Art in the Park and the Graffiti Arts Coalition.

ADVERTISING



A picture by a local artist of a city skyline with a call to "Re-Wing the City of Angels" has become the emblem of the summer program because "it's almost as though our wings had been clipped" by the riots, said Jude Lucas, artistic director of the Outback Theatre.

Although Northeast Los Angeles was not hit hard by the unrest, Lucas said that community groups wanted to give youths in the ethnically diverse area a constructive outlet for their energy this summer.

In the parking lot of the Outback Theatre, graffiti aficionados seemed pleased by the opportunity to doodle and draw with aerosol paint under approving eyes.

"It gives me a thrill," said Marcus Bryant, an 18-year-old from Highland Park. "I feel amazed by what I can do with a spray can."

Bryant had just put the finishing touches on a van that was donated for the day by a neighborhood artist.

The event also attracted some Jerry Brown for President enthusiasts who call themselves Broccoli Farmers for Democracy. Named for President Bush's aversion to the vegetable, the group chose "Hip-Hop Happ" as the launching point for a cross-country trip in a graffiti-painted school bus to the Democratic National Convention in New York City.

Although many people regard graffiti as a menacing sign of urban decay, event organizers stressed that merely painting over graffiti is not the solution.

"If you want to do something about graffiti, you have to transform it," said Luis Ituarte, program coordinator for Arroyo Seco Art in the Park, a division of the city of Los Angeles' Cultural Affairs Department.

Legitimizing graffiti is, nonetheless, "a big risk," Ituarte said. Illustrating the point, an overeager writer began spray-painting unsanctioned territory in the parking lot.

"Hey, hey, hey," said Ituarte, reacting too late to prevent squiggles of aerosol paint from taking shape on the pavement.

Inside the theater, Stephanie Sydney, coordinator of the visual arts workshops, showed a photo of a mural painted by youths the weekend after the riots--an effort by graffiti writers to join the healing process. She said one young artist, reaching for a form of expression he was unaccustomed to, asked her how to spell *educate*, a word he used in his painting.

"It broke my heart," she said.

The summer workshops begin Monday and will cover such topics as photography, comedy, painting, "the business of art" and hip-hop dancing. Class registration continues through Friday at the Arroyo Outback Theatre, 106 S. Ave. 58.

The program has yet to receive any grant money, so artists have volunteered their time to teach the workshops.

"I want to teach graffiti artists to print on a medium they own," said Gaetano Marino, who plans a class on producing and selling silk-screen T-shirts.

In addition, an ongoing exhibit at the Arroyo Outback Theatre combines graffiti art by young painters with street-inspired works of older, established artists. Most of the graffiti pieces come from previous Los Angeles exhibits, but some will be those produced Saturday in the parking lot.

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# 10,000 Students Protest Prop. 187 : Immigration: Walkouts around Los Angeles are largest yet showing campus opposition to initiative. The teen-agers are mostly peaceful, with only 12 arrests reported.

BY AMY PYLE AND BETH SHUSTER

NOV. 3, 1994 12 AM PT



TIMES STAFF WRITERS

Defying calls from campaign leaders and principals to stay in school and ignoring the unwelcoming weather, more than 10,000 young people walked off campuses around Los Angeles Wednesday in the largest showing yet of student opposition to Proposition 187.

From the lawn at the Federal Building in Westwood to a side street in South-Central and the steps of City Hall, the teen-agers were mostly peaceful as they marched in rivers of plaid, T-shirts and jeans under the watchful eyes of Los Angeles police, who called a citywide tactical alert.

There was only one report of significant unruliness--in Compton, where 12 arrests were made--and in many cases police asked school officials to furnish buses and successfully persuaded weary students to return to their campuses, often miles away. But sometimes the officers underestimated adolescent stamina and found themselves tracking roving bands of students through neighborhoods.

"Everything was fine until they . . . got unruly and started running in front of cars," Officer Matthew Klein said as he held curious neighbors back from a corralled group of middle-school students on East 48th Street in South-Central Los Angeles.

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bell. Most of the demonstrators were Latinos.

"It is not fair to take education away from the kids," said Henry Romero, a 10th-grade Belmont High student, in remarks to the City Council. He was invited to speak after Belmont students walked more than a mile to City Hall. "We could be the future leaders. We could be the ones sitting right where you are someday. You've got to give everyone a chance."

As with previous student protests, there was no indication that the widespread walkouts had been organized by the formal anti-187 campaigns. Most of the official groups had joined teachers and parents in urging students to stay in school and stage sit-ins or political forums.

Instead, Wednesday's walkout appeared to be the result of a variety of efforts to coordinate the sporadic school protests that have flared up in recent weeks.

On radio talk shows, activists with the One Stop Immigration and Educational Center, who organized a major Downtown march last month, had called for a countywide walkout on Nov. 2. At the behest of worried parents the center rescinded its call.

But, fueled by media reports and continued support for walkouts by a new statewide anti-187 student coalition, individual campus leaders pushed forward with their preparations.

"We felt that nobody else should speak for the students and tell us not to do it," said Angel Cervantes, organizer of the statewide student group and a Claremont Graduate School student.

Student organizers at San Pedro High School said Wednesday they lured 150 classmates out of school by passing out flyers earlier this week. They and other student leaders said they will ask fellow students to walk out again before Election Day on Tuesday in a bid to defeat Proposition 187, which would bar illegal immigrants from schools and other public services.

During Wednesday's protests it became clear that some officials and more established groups have jumped on the student-enthusiasm bandwagon:

\* At Los Angeles City Hall, council members Richard Alarcon and Jackie Goldberg left a meeting to address the students milling outside. At a protest rally in Long Beach, Dist. Atty. Gil Garcetti compared Proposition 187 to the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

\* When an estimated 700 University High School students reached the Federal Building around 10 a.m., the Peace and Freedom party candidate for governor, Gloria La Riva, greeted them with sound equipment and a speech.

\* Literature passed out at City Hall, where about 1,000 teen-agers from nearby Belmont High and the Downtown Business High School joined forces, included flyers from organized labor and from the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade encouraging walkouts.

given anti-187 signs produced by Californians United Against Prop. 187, and listing a 900 number for more information at a cost of \$5 a call. Grant student Felix Jimenez, 19, said he photocopied the signs on his own and handed them out.

\* Accompanying 200 Jordan High School students on their trek through Southeast Los Angeles were five members of the Latin American Truckers Assn., who passed out flyers demanding the right of the United Transport Workers Union of America to organize and bargain with the Santa Fe Railway Co.

The rowdiest and longest demonstration took place in Compton, where at least three groups from several schools--each containing 300 to 400 students and others--marched through the city beginning at 8 a.m., some of them throwing rocks, eggs and bottles at police officers.

During the six-hour march, the groups converged in the parking lot of a Vons supermarket and launched a sit-down demonstration that blocked store and parking lot entrances, according to Compton police Capt. Steven Roller.

Demonstrators broke store windows, frightened store employees, threw trash and vandalized police cars before 80 Compton officers, assisted by 50 sheriff's deputies, dispersed the crowd, Roller said.

Twelve people--all but one of them juveniles--were arrested and there was an unconfirmed report of one injury.

In response to the widespread student walkouts, the LAPD went on a tactical alert at 11 a.m. Wednesday, allowing commanders greater flexibility in keeping officers on duty beyond their shifts and redeploying police to areas where needed.

"Anytime you have large groups of people out--I don't care whether it's a protest like this or some kind of celebration on the beach--experience tells us the potential for some kind of a disturbance is always there, and we should be prepared for it," said Lt. John Dunkin, an LAPD spokesman.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina plans to go on Spanish-language television today to urge students to remain calm, an aide said Wednesday.

"Whichever way the vote on 187 goes, we want people to put their energies into more constructive types of things," said Robert Alaniz, spokesman for Molina.

The protests drew onlookers out to their porch stoops and office foyers and reactions were varied, as the opinion polls showing great disagreement among voters would predict.

In South-Central Los Angeles, several hundred youngsters from Carver Middle School walked out in mid-morning and refused to board buses provided by school officials to return to campus. Police followed as the students broke into smaller groups and ran down side streets. Most were fenced in near East 48th Street and Avalon Boulevard.

watching the students finally leave on buses. "We already had one riot down here. We don't need another,"

In suburban Santa Clarita, a late-morning march by about 200 William S. Hart High School students drew scorn from some residents who watched the mostly Latino group chant Spanish slogans and carry Mexican flags. Many of the onlookers said they had planned to vote for Proposition 187 anyway, but the demonstration strengthened their resolve.

"This is ridiculous to let a Mexican flag go down (the street)," said Marylee Silvius, 67. "It just makes me angry. I don't like protesters in the first place."

The Santa Clarita protesters did influence at least one person toward their way of thinking. Stacy Hobbs, 19, a community college student, said she had favored the proposition, but seeing the demonstration "makes me more sympathetic."

Protests also were reported Wednesday in Orange County, where more than 1,000 students from several schools peacefully demonstrated. There were no arrests. The largest and most organized protest took place at Fullerton College, where more than 500 students from at least nine high schools listened to speeches.

Meanwhile, both sides of the Proposition 187 campaign began throwing their limited financial resources into advertising.

Taxpayers Against 187, a coalition of statewide organizations opposed to the measure, hit the airwaves in Los Angeles on Wednesday with its first TV ad. The 30-second spot is running on seven TV stations.

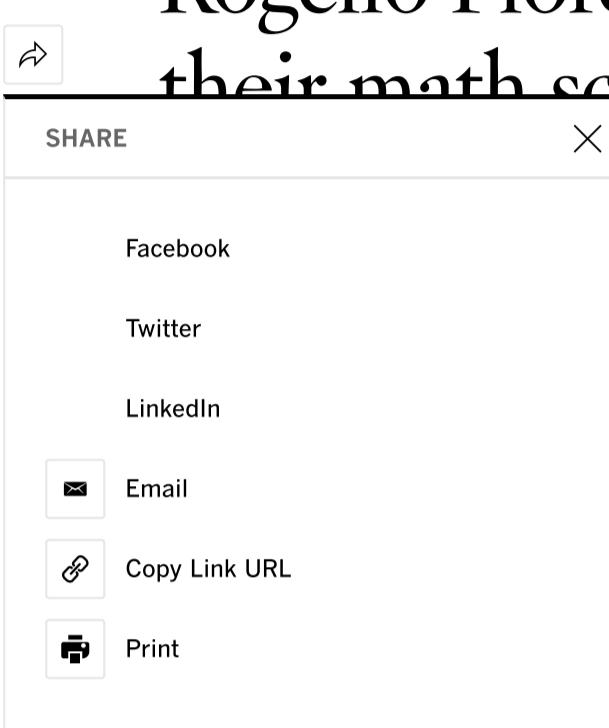
On the pro-187 side, two radio ad campaigns have started to supplement Gov. Pete Wilson's TV ads that urge a "yes" vote. Also, the Federation for American Immigration Reform, a Washington, D.C., lobbying group, has begun running radio spots statewide charging that special interest groups are seeking to defeat the measure.

In another development, U.S. Labor Secretary Robert Reich attacked the measure as "the wrong remedy." He said illegal immigration could be halted more effectively by going after employers who hire undocumented workers.

Contributing to this story were Times staff writers Yvette Cabrera, Aaron Curtiss, Tina Daunt, Paul Feldman, John Glionna, Greg Hernandez, Mimi Ko, Jon D. Markman, Patrick J. McDonnell, Jean Merl, Julio Moran, Richard C. Paddock and Timothy Williams, and special correspondents Maki Becker, Leslie Berestein, Jon Garcia, Mary Moore, Psyche Pascual, Simon Romero, Mark Sabbatini and Eric Slater.

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# Education Is Youth's Legacy to a Community : Education: The Rogelio Flores Foundation helps Boyle Heights students' improve their math scores.

BY IAN JAMES  
AUG. 6, 1995 12 AM PT

TIMES STAFF WRITER

A group of friends were sitting in the bed of a pickup on a Boyle Heights street corner one night in April when a car with tinted windows rolled by. A passenger opened fire, and the teen-agers fled.

All escaped the bullets, except 17-year-old Rogelio Flores. He was shot from behind as he jumped from the open tailgate. As he bled, members of his "party crew" heard him say: "Don't let me die."

Later that night he died at White Memorial Hospital. But if it's true that people who are remembered live on, then in a way the plea of Rogelio Flores was answered.

His brother Martin Flores has established a foundation in his name to try to reverse the cycle that leads too many Eastside boys to drop out of school, become involved in gangs and perhaps even pull the trigger on someone else's little brother.

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"To this day, we don't know who did that shooting," Flores said. But if the shooter had received a little more attention at home and school, Flores said, maybe he wouldn't have dropped out and become a killer. "He might not have understood something as simple as math."

That's why the Rogelio Flores Foundation is tutoring 80 elementary school students in mathematics this summer. Participants gather at Sunrise Elementary School four afternoons a week for the Si Se Puede! Tutorial Program, which gives personal guidance to second- through sixth-grade students who score below average in math on the California Test of Basic Skills. The program is unaffiliated with Sunrise Elementary, but the school provides two classrooms for the tutorials.

The children put their pencils to paper in clusters of four or five with high-school and college-age teachers who guide them with a small erasable board and a grease pen.

"They may need someone to just explain it differently," said Flores, looking out over a classroom of remarkably focused children.

The 22-year-old former varsity football nose guard at Roosevelt High School said about half of the young teachers knew Rogelio--or Roger, as they used to call him--and asked to help. The foundation's 20 staff members also receive \$800 for the six-week session this summer through a youth employment program of the city's Community Development Department.

whom go through a weeklong training program before the start of each session--will teach at least 120 students next fall at the Boyle Heights school.

After his brother's death last spring, Flores left UC Berkeley, where he was a premed and Chicano studies major. He returned to be with his parents and seven other siblings, to grieve and to find some way to respond to the tragedy. He has remained in Southern California as a student at UCLA this year to guide the group through its initial stages.

In the fall, Flores will return to Berkeley to finish his last semester, but he says his dedication will continue. He plans to start a similar program in Berkeley, and the foundation will continue its work under the direction of friends while he is away.

Flores now carries a mobile phone to organize and coordinate the group's activities, which also include community beautification and fund raising. Carwashes, breakfasts and local charities have supplied about \$11,000 during the foundation's first year. Most recently, Flores enlisted students to help raise money by selling candy apples.

The money is also used for a project Flores calls La Belleza Del Barrio, in which adult artists work with taggers recruited from Boyle Heights high schools to adorn stark walls and freeway overpasses with murals depicting figures ranging from the Aztec god Quetzalcoatl to the Virgin Mary. The group has completed seven murals, and Flores says the images do more than beautify the barrio.

"We want to educate people about our history, our culture," Flores said.

The foundation's staff members recently traveled to the Central Valley to learn about the struggles of migrant Latino fieldworkers and help build a plaza in memory of Cesar Chavez in La Paz.

Two pictures of Chavez hang on the walls of a bedroom in the Flores home, which has been converted into the foundation's command center. The room is stocked with computers and a fax machine that were purchased in January, as well as family photographs ranging from Rogelio's Little League portrait to his funeral procession.

Flores remembers the hundreds of people who walked together in the funeral procession from Garcia Park to Resurrection Catholic Church and the many friends who laid poems and letters in the open casket.

In memory of Rogelio, who used to be involved with his church youth group and liked to write streetwise poetry, Flores works constantly, even in baking-hot classrooms during the summer.

At the end of a recent school day, he sent one boy home with a pat on the head and a few Spanish words in remembrance of his brother: "Do your homework."

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# Gunfire Panics Campers; Gang Member Slain : Violence: Two other gang members are wounded in Angeles Forest melee. Visitors scramble into the woods for cover when shooting starts.

BY JOHN M. GLIONNA

JULY 4, 1995 12 AM PT



TIMES STAFF WRITER

One gang member was fatally shot and two others were wounded after gunfire erupted in a crowded Angeles National Forest campground, sending panicked holiday campers scrambling into the woods for cover, a Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department spokesman said Monday.

"There were a lot of scared, screaming people running in every direction--men, women and children," Sgt. Thomas Pavlich said of the shooting incident at the Heaton Flats campground on Sunday night. "There were a whole lot of shots fired, and people were just scattering and running into the woods. It was chaos for awhile."

Two of the victims were taken by sheriff's helicopter for treatment at County-USC Medical Center. Daniel Robles, 24, of Los Angeles, was shot at least once in the upper body and later died. Richard Samano, 19, also of Los Angeles, also was shot in the upper body and remained in critical condition in the intensive care unit Monday night, authorities said.

A third man was injured in the melee but escaped into the crowd, authorities said.

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Investigators on Monday arrested Raphael Lopez, 19, of Los Angeles along with two juveniles in the shooting. It was not clear whether any guns were found.

The trouble started about 7 p.m. Sunday at the isolated campground about 15 miles north of Azusa off California 39 when two rival gangs began trading verbal taunts and signals, investigators said. One gang member reportedly brandished a gun and a rival jumped him in an attempt to wrest the weapon from his grasp, said Diane Hecht, a sheriff's spokeswoman.

"Several gang members got involved in the struggle over the gun," Hecht said, and one gang member apparently then fired the gun into a group of rival members.

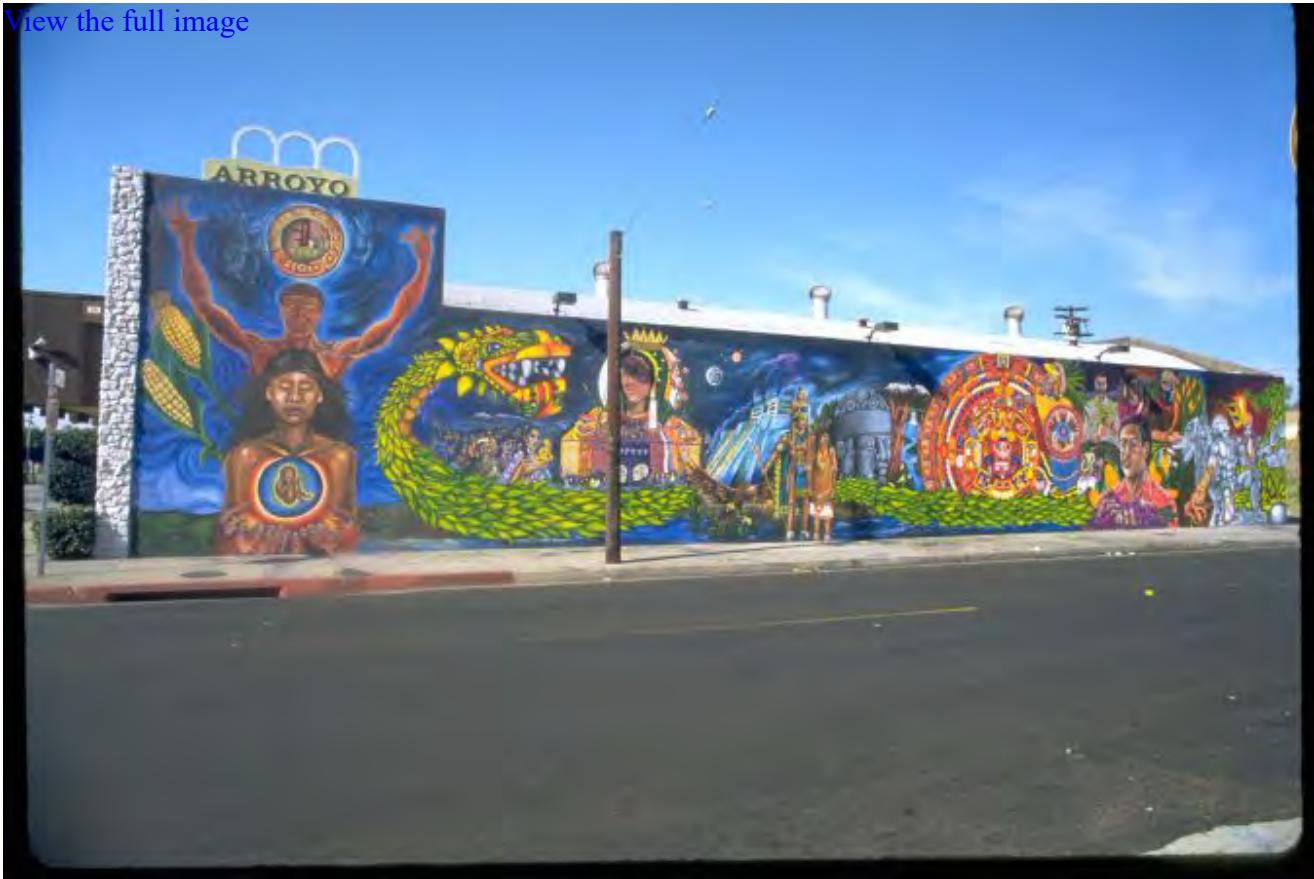
Officers said they were not surprised by the incident.

"Every time we get a holiday or a real warm weekend, huge crowds go into that canyon," Pavlich said. "And gang members are part of that crowd. Consequently, you get one group signing or insulting the other. And the fighting starts."



John M. Glionna

John M. Glionna is a former national reporter for the Los Angeles Times, based in Las Vegas. He covered a large swath of the American West, writing about everything from people to politics. He has also served as the Seoul bureau chief on the newspaper's foreign desk, where he covered the 2011 Japanese earthquake and tsunami and the subsequent death of North Korean strongman Kim Jong Il. He has also written extensively about California. He teaches a journalism course at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Glionna left The Times in 2015.

[Home](#)   [Murals](#)   [Contact Us](#)[View the full image](#)**Artist:** [John Zender Estrada](#)**Address:**6037 North Figueroa St., Los Angeles, CA 90042. ([click to view](#))**Size:** 12' X 75' ft**Medium:** Acrylic**Date:** 1996**Type:** Cultural**Description / Interpretation:**

A blending of Aztec, Mayan, Native American, African and other cultural iconography represents indigenous cultures in unity with each other. Quetzalcoatl, the ancient Mexican's mystical feathered serpent god, winds his way through the painting. The mural emphasizes the political significance of cultural self-definition for the Chicano. Artists: Andy Ledesma, John Zender Estrada, Rafael Corona, Jaime Ochoa, Dominic Ochoa, Isabel Martinez, Oscar De Leon, Mario Mancia, Jesse Silva, Anthony Ortega, and Jerry Ortega Photo: © Robin Dunitz

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16. Libraries Educate, Governments Make Cutbacks 1995  
Arroyo Seco Regional Public Library, exterior  
6145 North Figueroa Street  
Highland Park  
acrylic  
*Luis Becerra*, assisted by F. Nazarius-Almazol, Sabrina Sosa, Olivia Vargas  
Portraits of politically involved writers Ricardo Magon, Pablo Neruda, Maya Angelou, and James Baldwin. Library cutbacks are compared to the burning of books by the early Spanish conquistadors and the Nazis in Germany. A library building is blocked by politicians. An unbalanced scale shows government preference for military spending at the expense of funding for schools and libraries.
17. Commemoration to the 120,000 People Who Marched Against Proposition 187 1995 Plaza de la Raza  
Piedmont Avenue and Figueroa Street  
Highland Park  
*Raul Baltazar*  
Marchers demonstrating against the anti-immigrant California proposition that passed in 1995. (Photo on page 117)
18. Mexico-Tenochitlan-The Wall That Talks 1996 private  
Arroyo Furniture  
6037 North Figueroa Street (at Ave. 61)  
Highland Park  
acrylic, 12' x 75' (approximately)  
*Andy Ledesma, John Zender Estrada, Rafael Corona, Jaime Ochoa, Dominic Ochoa, Isabel Martinez, Oscar de Leon, Mario Mancia, Jesse Silva, Anthony Ortega, and Jerry Ortega*  
A blending of Aztec, Mayan, Native American, African and other cultural iconography represents indigenous cultures in unity with each other. Quetzlcoatl, the ancient Mexican's mystical feathered serpent god, winds his way through the painting. The mural emphasizes the political significance of cultural self-definition for the Chicano.
19. Puro Cypress 1996? MTA Metro Art  
MTA Division 3 Bus Maintenance Facility, exterior  
2630 Pepper Avenue (at West Ave. 27)  
Cypress Park  
acrylic  
*Margaret Garcia*  
Neighborhood flavor and botanical beauty of the Cypress Park area, as

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# Rogelio Flores Foundation Offers Summer Workshops

L.A. TIMES ARCHIVES

JULY 17, 1997 12 AM PT



Summer's in full swing, but classes are just getting started for some Eastside students.

The Rogelio Flores Foundation, a nonprofit group in Boyle Heights, kicked off its summer session Wednesday with free computer classes and tutoring for local children.

About 150 students will receive tutoring in math and reading, learn computer skills using CD-ROM games and participate in art workshops and cleanup projects around the community.

The foundation is named after teenager Rogelio Flores, who was killed in a drive-by shooting in April 1994. His brothers and friends founded the group to bring more resources to children in the community. During the year, the group tutors local students after school.

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"The youth took the initiative to make these improvements in the community," said Ramon Flores, 22, one of Rogelio's brothers. "The foundation is breaking a cycle of illness and bringing a cure to the community--we're educating ourselves."

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## NEWS

### L.A.'s street murals disappearing

By **DAILY NEWS** |

PUBLISHED: October 21, 2007 at 12:00 a.m. | UPDATED: August 29, 2017 at 2:21 a.m.

Tony Curtis' twinkling eyes have dimmed.

The Los Angeles Marathon runners have faded. And the faces of the Aztecs, the cowboys, the migrant workers and the neighborhood children are destined to be forgotten.

Los Angeles' iconic murals – the larger-than-life painted stories of society, politics and culture that placed the city in a special class alongside Mexico City, Berlin and Paris – are disappearing.

Once the mural capital of the world, Los Angeles has quietly surrendered that distinction to Philadelphia over the past five years. While the City of Brotherly Love spends \$4.5 million to paint, restore and maintain its 2,700 murals, the City of Angels has just \$20,000 to look after its documented murals, which once numbered 3,000.

Artists say 60 percent of them – about 1,800 – now are either gone for good or have been nearly obliterated by tagging and vandalism.

"We created the mural capital of the world," said Judy Baca, one of the nation's leading muralists, who designed and led the painting of the half-mile "Great Wall of Los Angeles" in the Tujunga Wash.

"Now the city is allowing these incredible works of diversity to disappear."

A growing number of taggers – mostly teenage spray painters who leave their initials and monikers in highly visible areas of the city and go pretty much unpunished – are to blame for the destruction, Baca and others say.

And artists – required under their contracts to maintain the murals – are not finding enough money to keep their treasures intact.

Baca and others say it's been five years since the city's Neighborhood Pride program, which commissioned murals, dissolved.



"It has endured a drawn-out and indignant death," said Kent Twitchell, some of whose 30 giant works of the city's celebrities and artists can be found in downtown Los Angeles, visible from the Hollywood Freeway.

"It could still be revived, I suppose, but I don't see the resolve necessary to do it," he said.

Twitchell has lost several of his works, including the Freeway Lady on Temple Street, Steve McQueen on Union Street, and the Ed Ruscha Monument mural on Hill Street.

And he is witnessing the gradual destruction of his Los Angeles Marathon mural. Completed in 1990, the 4,300-square-foot, photo-realist painting of 26 runners was installed along the San Diego Freeway near Manchester Boulevard, but was moved to the Golden State Freeway near Dodger Stadium last year.

Its move and restoration was part of a \$1.7 million grant received by Caltrans, then handed to the city's Cultural Affairs Department to help restore 17 freeway murals with protective coatings.

But parts of "L.A. Marathon" which was adopted by the Rotary Club of Vernon, already are covered in layers of spray paint. And although it's been coated in a protective wax, the spray paint has not been wiped off.

Other defaced murals such as Frank Romero's "Going to the Olympics," Willie Herron's "Luchas del Mundo," and Glenna Boltuch Avila's "L.A. Freeway Kids," have become so heavily tagged that they've simply been painted over.

But officials with the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs say that in recent years they have been unfairly portrayed as being lax for allowing the murals to decay.

They say funding for restoration has plunged in 10 years, from \$400,000 in the late 1990s to \$20,000 for 2007-08 – only enough to restore two murals.

"The department has continually worked for restoration and conservation," said Will Caperton y Montoya, the department's marketing director.

"What we're attempting to do now is create a mural task force to look at ways to create a strategic plan to look at those 400 murals that are in the most need."

Recently, department officials were notified a day after Caltrans painted over three badly damaged murals.

"I can't speak on Caltrans' behalf because our responsibility ended with the end of that project," said Pat Gomez, who oversees the Cultural Affairs' public art division.

"We were surprised and disappointed."

The murals were in such bad shape and so badly damaged, that the decision was made to paint over them, said Jeanne Bonfilio, Caltrans spokeswoman.

"We had received so many calls about this," said Bonfilio. "And the murals were not representing Los Angeles and the downtown area in a positive way."

When a mural is defaced, the artist who painted it is required, as part of a permit, to do touch-up work.

But many muralists say they're not being notified in time or just can't find the funding. As a result, tagging can linger on murals longer than if it was sprayed on street signs or traffic signals – which are city property and must be cleaned in two days, said Paul Racs, public works director of the office of community beautification.

In fact, taggers have realized that their work will stay on murals longer than on blank walls, so their canvas of choice is the mural.

"Murals used to be respected," said Racs. "Over time, the taggers have figured out that if they tag it, it's more time-consuming to remove the graffiti than just going out and painting over a wall."

Once restored, crews from the Department of Public Works slather on coats of protection over the older murals in case they are ever tagged again.

"Unfortunately, there are a lot more murals getting tagged now than there were four or five years ago," said Racs. "But there's a lot more of everything getting tagged."

With a \$1.7 million state grant, Caltrans worked with the city's Cultural Affairs Department to add protective coating to 17 murals on freeways, said Daniel Freeman, Caltrans deputy district director of maintenance.



The wax shield can also remove pieces of the art work – a lesson Caltrans workers, artists and city officials recently learned when three murals made for the 1984 Olympics on the Hollywood Freeway downtown were damaged during a cleanup.

As a result, Caltrans painted over the colorful murals near Broadway and Spring streets in a drab shade of gray to match the concrete freeway walls after they could not reach two of the artists to restore them.

Under city permits, Caltrans has the right to paint over the murals if artists don't maintain them.

"We don't have a good way of removing the graffiti without damaging the mural," Freeman said. "If we give a permit to artists ... part of the contract we require is for them to maintain it for just that reason."

But Freeman said the murals still lie beneath the gray paint and can be restored.

Los Angeles' mural movement dates back to the 1960s and '70s, when youths were being politicized by the civil-rights movement, anti-Vietnam War activism and Chicano- and black-pride movements.

Artists like Baca, Twitchell, David Botello and Wayne Healy, among others, emerged as the city's visual storytellers, recording Angelenos and their stories in a way that would send a positive message and beautify neighborhoods.

"It happened naturally during the hippie '60s and early '70s," Twitchell said. "We influenced the world."

For Latino artists, the murals depicted their history and their influence on the development of Los Angeles. Miles of bare concrete walls provided a place where they could express their struggles and successes.

Healy, along with Botello, co-founded what became the mural team known as East Los Streetscapers, which created dozens of murals including the "Chicano Time Trip" in Lincoln Heights.

Painted across five panels, the mural was completed in 1977 and depicts hundreds of years of Chicano history – from pre-Columbian society to colonialism to Mexican independence.

The idea of bringing art to the masses to share cultural history in public brings people together in unsuspecting ways, Baca said.

"We drive in cars, in metal boxes, down these concrete roads at massive speeds, but the murals are there for all of us," Baca said.

Those growing up and watching their histories emerge on concrete walls were inspired, said Los Angeles Councilman Ed Reyes, whose district features 151 murals, including "Chicano Time Trip."

"These were windows to history we otherwise weren't exposed to at the time," Reyes said. "It was a great source of pride."

Time and taggers, however, conquered the bottom half of "Chicano Time Trip." Reyes secured \$25,000 to restore it in 2005, but both Healy and Reyes are discouraged by the ongoing tagging.

"It's a very frustrating feeling," Healy said. "It's counteractive negative imagery. The first thing I want to do is blame these kids, but you have to step back and ask, why are they doing this?"

Police have said the increase in spray-paint vandalism is evidence of escalating rivalry among Los Angeles' tagging crews.

But Baca said there are deeper reasons.

"I'm not at all surprised by the destruction caused by youth," Baca said.

Every piece of public space in Los Angeles is now corporatized, leaving few places for young artists to express themselves, she said.

"We received an e-mail from one tagger who said: 'The only place that's left that's mine is a wall,'" Baca said.

Despite the losses, members of the Social and Public Art Resource Center are working to restore and even bring back muralism to Los Angeles.

Co-founded by Baca 30 years ago and housed in an old police station in Venice, SPARC produces, preserves and conducts educational programs about public art.

The organization recently submitted a proposal to Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa called Murals for a New Los Angeles. It also has a Web site – [www.savelamurals.org](http://www.savelamurals.org) – where residents can report damage or the disappearance of the works.

And next month, a forum called "Resistance and Respect" will include a panel of muralists, graffiti artists and taggers talking about how to stop the destruction of public art.



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#### Graffiti by the numbers

\$250 – Cost to clean graffiti from a mural protected with acrylic or wax surface

17,000 – Gallons of paint handed out to volunteers by the city to cover graffiti in a year

30.5 million – Square feet of space wiped clean of graffiti last year in the city of Los Angeles

\$5 million – Spent by Caltrans to clean up graffiti and tagging in Los Angeles and Ventura counties in 2006

\$1.5 million – Spent by Caltrans to clean up graffiti in the two counties in 2003

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# Drumming up support for art

BY STEVE LOPEZ

JULY 15, 2009 12 AM PT



It's nasty hot at the corner of Avenue 61 and Figueroa.

John Densmore, the drummer from the Doors, stands in the shade of his wide-brimmed hat, gazing at a damaged 120-foot mural with several other men. One of them is Luis Rodriguez, a local author who believes in his heart that L.A. and its lost boys can be saved by art.

It was Densmore, a Santa Monica resident, who initiated this little confab in Highland Park. When we first spoke by phone, he told me about how he had helped fund the mural project more than 10 years ago, so naturally, he was disappointed by its recent desecration.

Local artists had worked several months to complete the colorful tribute to their history, going all the way back to the Aztecs. The mural was dedicated to their friend Daniel Robles, a victim of gang violence in 1995, and in a neighborhood awash in graffiti, it had been sacred ground, respected and untouched by taggers all these years.

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Until about two months ago.



“It was like a whole bomb” of graffiti, said Ochoa.

The markings appeared to be the work of taggers rather than gang members, the men said. It was probably kids who either didn’t understand their own history or didn’t care. Ortega, Ochoa and others weren’t about to surrender the wall to young vandals, though. They immediately went to work restoring the original mural and are about halfway done.

“Diego Rivera would be proud,” Densmore said of the original work, still clearly visible though washed out in some areas.

Densmore has given quietly to local arts and culture over the years, telling me that he was inspired in part by hearing John Lennon talk about tithing.

“But I’m not going to give it to religious organizations,” he said, saying he could think of no better charity than those that help build a stronger sense of community.

The drummer, you may remember, is the Doors member who resisted use of the legendary band’s music in commercials, saying it “was not for rent.” When he heard about the vandalism of the mural, Densmore saw an opportunity, so he invited Rodriguez to join us and share the outline of an ambitious plan to steer youngsters, like those taggers, into something constructive.

The Densmore-Rodriguez connection?

Rodriguez runs Tia Chucha’s, a Sylmar bookstore and cultural center, and one of his biggest supporters and funders is Densmore. Rodriguez’s most celebrated book, “Always Running,” was the compelling tale of his descent into gang life and his escape from it, so he speaks with authority on the subject of wayward youth and how to rein them in.

At the mural, Rodriguez handed me his five-page proposal for a Comprehensive Neighborhood Arts Project. It calls for artists to band together, and for politicians and community leaders to use

new funding sources, such as a tax on tourism and billboard revenues, to support citywide art, music and cultural projects.

Sponsors and participants would include colleges, businesses, nonprofits and good citizens. Public and private spaces would become art centers, the Summer Lights program at rec centers would take undisciplined taggers and try to turn them into real artists with a little more respect for both art and their neighborhood.

The initiative raises a fair, if inconvenient, question:

How can a global entertainment and arts center like Los Angeles offer so little in the way of creative opportunities to its people?



initiative reads.

"There are now whole communities without bookstores, art galleries or movie houses. We have to expand our imagination about the arts and how it can cultivate, renew and regenerate our economically and culturally strapped communities."

Rodriguez and several others are spending the summer rounding up supporters and tinkering with the specifics of the proposal, trying to convince leaders that although times are tough, an all-out embrace of cultural education and arts enrichment can better the quality of life and help prevent crime. One politician who's already on board is Rodriguez's brother-in-law, L.A. City Councilman Tony Cardenas.

"Arts programs and extracurricular activities are being decimated more in this year than in any year I remember," said Cardenas, referring primarily to school district cutbacks that include the elimination of summer school.

Cardenas recently introduced an ordinance that would put a 1% tax on billboard revenues to help pay for new arts programs, and it would also make some digital and traditional billboards available for public art.

If we're stuck with an explosion of billboards and digital conversions, Cardenas said, can't we at least squeeze some public benefit out of it?

We'd all be better off, he said, if instead of tagging walls, storefronts and murals, kids had a chance to learn more skills and put them to better use, and to compete for prominent display of their work.

"Everybody jumps and wants to make it happen" when someone like Eli Broad speaks about the need for an art-focused high school like the new one on Sunset Boulevard downtown, Cardenas said. "Then you have these other guys who don't look like and don't talk like Eli Broad, but they probably have more to offer in the arts . . . and they can't get people to take them seriously."

That's only because there's no room for creativity in a bureaucracy, and little political courage or risk-taking, especially under the last couple of mayors.

But Rodriguez, Densmore and I were talking about how with the right leadership, L.A. could be re-created as a place where not just community art, but gardens and food co-ops are given enough support to spring up organically and help sustain neighborhoods, change our horrible eating habits and give kids something constructive to do.

After we'd met, Densmore sent me an e-mail to explain once more why he cares about any of this.

Fate, he said, first led him to the mural at Avenue 61 and Fig. "But I'm a native Angeleno and what better ecological effort can one make than to stay where you were born and try to make it more beautiful?"

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Steve Lopez

[Twitter](#) [Instagram](#) [Email](#) [Facebook](#)

California native Steve Lopez has been a journalist for 45 years. His work has won numerous national awards for newspaper and magazine writing. He is the author of several books, including the best-selling "The Soloist," a story that began on the pages of the Los Angeles Times, where he has been a columnist since 2001.

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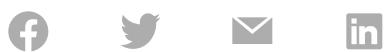


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# Regeneración: Public Resource Center

November 14, 2011



Youth Democracy

Local Politics

November 14, 2011

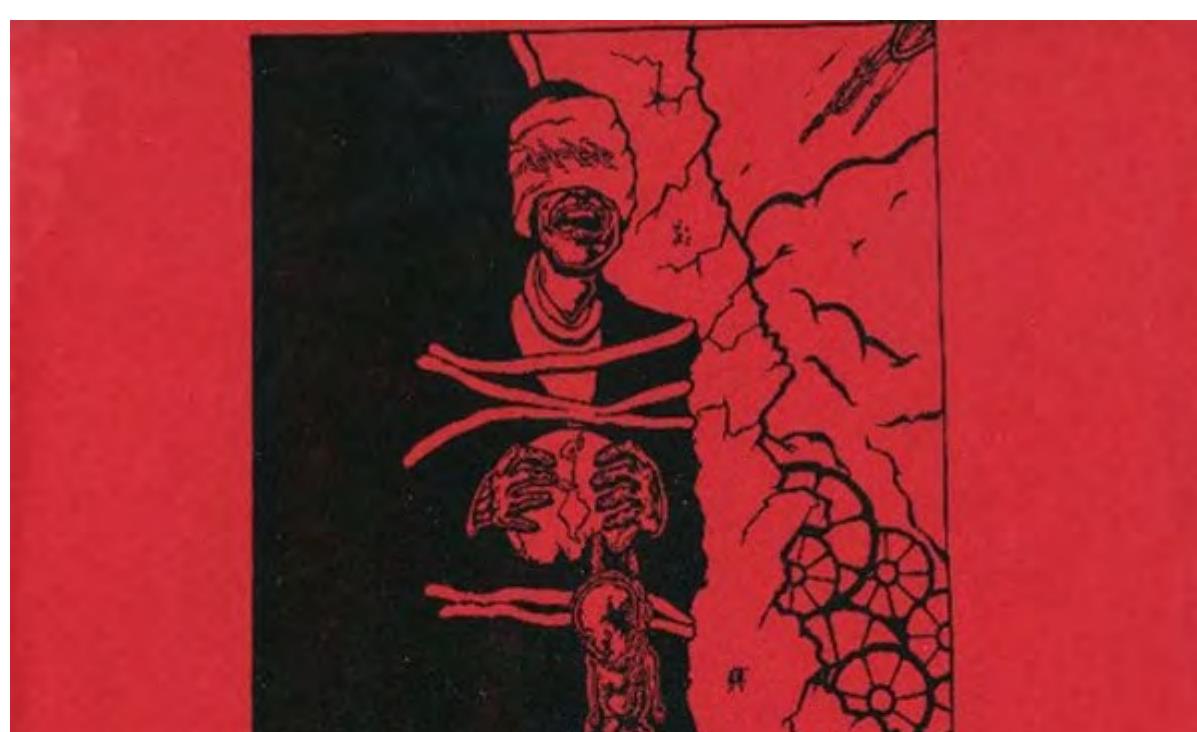


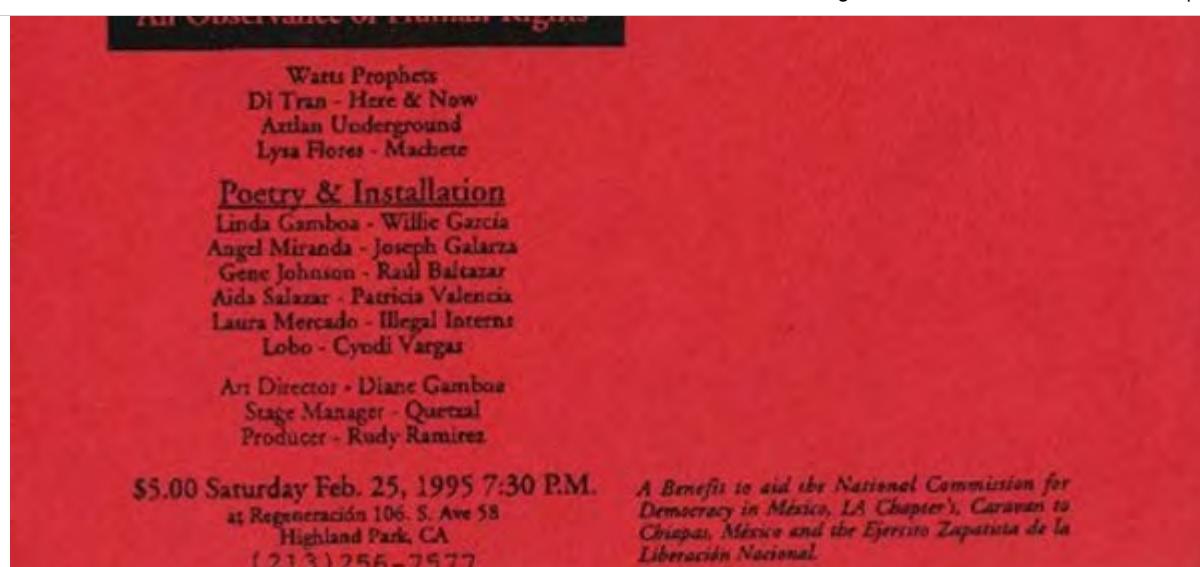
Youth Democracy

Local Politics

Chicano youths in Los Angeles experienced displacement issues in the city's urban overgrowth embedded with social, political, and economic injustices. Some found a new identity and an outlet to voice their frustrations in punk rock music. Neither feeling American or Mexican, they felt the music spoke to the soul of the Chicano community, appealing to their dual cultural identities. There had been bands in the 1970s and 1980s that sparked rebellion within the Latino youth community, notably The Bratz, Los Illegals and the Plugz, but few survived the recording industry's marketing restrictions, limiting the Chicano punk scene to not much more than local clubs and house parties.

Socially conscious Latino-led bands like Ozomatli, Aztlan Underground, Blues Experiment, Ollin, and Slowrider boomed throughout the Northeast corridor in the 1990s. But one would galvanize contemporary cultural politics with art in Highland Park - Rage Against the Machine, led by vocalist Zack de la Rocha.





Flyer announcing In the Red, "An Observance of Human Rights" held at Regeneracion in February 25, 1995. Image courtesy of Antonio Garcia.



Mesmerized crowd at In the Red at Regeneracion, 1995. Photo courtesy of Antonio Garcia.



Performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña, known for addressing border, race and gender issues. Photo courtesy of Antonio Garcia.



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Mario Jimenez (vocals), Mark Fraser (guitar) and Davey Latter (drums) of Stanford Prison Experiment. Photo courtesy of Antonio Garcia.



Yeska with David Urquidi (left) and Ulises Bella (right) on sax. Photo courtesy of Antonio Garcia.

De la Rocha grew up between Lincoln Heights, his original home, and Irvine after his parents divorced. His grandfather, an agricultural laborer in the United States, was a Sinaloan revolutionary who fought in the Mexican Revolution of 1910. His father Roberto "Beto" de la Rocha was a member of the artist collective Los Four as an active Chicano artist/muralist in the 1970s. Zack de la Rocha founded the Public Resource Center/Centro de Regeneración in Highland Park in the 1990s. The name is derived from the anarchist journal that served as the voice of the Mexican Liberal Party in the early 1900s.

Regeneración encompassed a library of political literature, featuring artwork by local artist and co-founder Aida Salazar. With this space de la Rocha sought to inform and create an on-going mobilization of the working poor, avoiding the accumulated social frustration that limited political action during presidential elections. It was a space where art, community, and politics merged in Highland Park, just as art collectives had done a generation before, but with an invested interest in global politics.

In 1994 the Zapatistas, a revolutionary leftist group based in Chiapas, Mexico, declared war against the Mexican state and brought attention to their cause on the then-emerginng platform of the internet. De la Rocha, inspired and re-politicized, joined their efforts, using his celebrity to fundraise for the Zapatistas through Regeneración.



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You are here: Home / Art / LATINOPIA ART AVENUE 61 MURAL

# LATINOPIA ART AVENUE 61 MURAL

May 15, 2016 by **Tia Tenopia**[Latinopia Art Ave 61 Mural](#) from [Latinopia.com](#) on [Vimeo](#).

In 1996, Anthony "Eagle" Ortega, Andy Ledesma and other muralists painted "Quetzalcoatl Mural Project - A Sequence of Time & Culture." The Avenue 61 Mural is located at Avenue 61 and Figueroa Street in the Highland Park section of Los Angeles. After twenty years, the mural has become a work in progress, as each year new images are added.

Filed Under: [Art](#), [LATINOPIA ART](#)Tagged With: [Andy Ledesma](#), [Anthony "Eagle" Ortega](#), [Avenue 61 Mural](#), [Quetzalcoatl A Sequence of Time and Culture](#)

**RICARDO ROMO'S  
TEJANO REPORT  
"RICHARD  
ARMENDARIZ"**

January 21, 2022 By **Tia**



# Quetzalcoatl Mural Project

Presents

"Mexico-Tenochtitlan: A Sequence of Time and Culture"

Mural Re-Dedication Ceremony/Block Party

Celebrating 20 years of one of LA's Best Known Murals

Speakers, Poets and Music!!!

Saturday, March 19, 2016 –Time: 12:00– 4PM

6037 N. Figueroa St. & Ave. 61 (Rear Parking Lot)

Aztec/Mexica Ceremonial Blessing of the Mural BY XIPE TOLTEC - 1:00PM- 1:30

1:30PM Opening Remarks By Community Muralists

Charlie Fisher, Historian and Member of the Highland Park Heritage Trust

Includes other Guest Speakers

Author and LA Poet Dennis Cruz

&

Poet Laureate of Los Angeles & Award-Winning Author of *Always Running*

Luis J. Rodriguez

John Densmore, Author & Legendary Drummer from The Doors – Spoken Word

Music Entertainment –

ZERO (Original Member of Quinto Sol & El Vuh)

Lysa Flores (Multitalented Musician & Actress)

Tommy Trujillo (Former Guitarist- Legendary band "Mandrill")

Dr. Elliott Caine, Trumpet Player & Other's

DJ – VienArriba

Sound By: MenoMan Sound & DJ Services

Invite your family, friends, and members of the community – Join us on March 19<sup>th</sup>...

Generous support by John Densmore, Miguel Mendoza Color,

Rogelio Flores (RIP), Manny Lopez Jr. (RIP)

We need volunteers the day of the event, need art supplies, acrylic & Nova Color paints, bushes, tarps, scaffolding, & monetary donations to help restore & preserve this 20 year old mural. We're going to need experience & well-skilled artists & members of the Highland Park community to join the original team of muralists who painted it 20 years ago. Join us to paint & help restore this iconic mural on Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup> & Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup>. For more information please contact us @ 909.232.7050-Anthony, or 323.507.5183 –Andy.

Thank you, Quetzalcoatl Mural Project



**"Quetzalcoatl, The Wall that Speaks" is created in part by artists John Zender Estrada, Rafael Corona, Oscar Deleon, Isabel Martinez, Dominic Ochoa, Jaime Ochoa, Anthony Ortega, and Rene Andy Ledesma.**

## Mexico-Tenochtitlan Mural

The mural titled: "Mexico-Tenochtitlan: A Sequence of Time and Culture" is located at 6037 N. Figueroa Street and Avenue 61, Los Angeles, California, 90042.

### Mural Description of Mexico Tenochtitlan: A Sequence of Time and Culture

The mural, "Mexico-Tenochtitlan: A Sequence of Time and Culture," radiantly highlights people, places, and Mother Earth. On the left side, the mural begins with the creation of life and humanity showing a man and woman with open arms and a woman carefully holding a fetus in the womb. The fetus has emerged with the Hunab Ku, the Mayan symbol for the Creator or Giver of Life. This symbol pre-dates the Chinese Ying and Yang by 1,000 years. A circular symbol is surrounded by two spirited warriors a man and woman are moving in rotation of the symbol. The symbol includes Aztec, Mayan, Native American, African and others in unity with each other, in their origins, and cultural importance.

From creationism to spirituality a group of Mexican indigenous people are celebrating "el Dia de los Muertos," and are walking in a procession and praying to La Virgin de Guadalupe. Her aurora and rays are surrounded by the moon, a perfect halo, and a mist of roses gracefully adorns her. To the Aztec people, she represents Mother Earth, the Aztec Goddess Tonantzin. Dia de los Muerto is celebrated as a day to remember your love one's or friend's who have passed on to the spirit world. It's a traditional Aztec ceremony practiced for centuries but in the United States the celebration is remembered as "Day of The Dead." Quetzalcoatl (the Feathered-Serpent) winds throughout the mural from past, present and future.

A rendering of an Eagle perched on a cactus plant symbolized the founding of the old city of Tenochtitlan in what today is Mexico City. An Aztec emperor named Moctezuma and his family is united; the concept of la familia (the family) is deeply embedded in the Mexican culture. The Aztec civilization is next to the tropical scenery where the great Olmec civilization built these huge colossal heads. Mexico's majestic volcanoes, Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl, tower over a waterfall where Huitzilopochtli appears. Huitzilopochtli, the Aztec god of the Sun and War returns as a hummingbird.

Then an enormous Aztec calendar in bright shades of reds, oranges, and yellows takes center stage. Some of the heroic persons are Cuauhtémoc, the last Aztec emperor; General Emiliano Zapata and La Adelita, two revolutionaries who fought during the Mexican Revolution in the early 1900s against the exploitation of the poor. They are followed by Subcomandante Marcos, the ski-masked revolutionary who leads the struggle for indigenous people's rights in the Mexican state of Chiapas, typing the words "YA BASTA" (enough now) in his laptop computer.

Right beneath that trio are two young children a boy and a girl; both of them are looking out into the sunset as the warm air sets in and enjoys what nature has to offer. Cesar Chavez, the late California union leader is portrayed in this mural as a civil rights icon. He is holding purple grapes embedded with skulls, the people poisoned by the pesticides. At the end of the mural there is a man "half human, half machine" that represents a modern-day man who is consumed by the technological gi-

ant called progress. With one hand, the man is grabbing the roots of a tree symbolizing humanity's desire to cultivate the land; the other hand he is breaking the chains of technology.

The photographs were taken by Charles J. Fisher, a local Highland Park resident. Mr. Fisher is a well known preservationist, author and historian for the Highland Park Heritage Trust. The Trust has gained recognition in both the City of Los Angeles and the State of California as one of the most consistently effective and productive preservation organizations in Southern California.

A partial list of funding resources for the mural restoration includes: Not Just Us Foundation, John Densmore, former drummer of the legendary rock band "The Doors," John Cataldo, Manuel Lopez, The Robles Family, Attorney Danilo Bercerra and citizens of the Northeast community.

## HISTORY:

Quetzalcoatl (Feathered Serpent) Mural Project (QMP) is a community based mural arts collective which began nineteen years ago in one of Los Angeles historic art districts. Anthony Ortega, Founding Director of the mural arts collective lost his childhood friend Daniel Robles, who was killed by unnecessary street violence on July 2, 1995. Daniel was a young talented artist and musician born and raised in Boyle Heights. He never knew it would be his last day on earth or would ever express an idea artistically or say another word to anyone ever again. Daniel was an intelligent man; an honor student at Roosevelt High School and graduated at the top of his high school class. He once told his close friend that he wanted to paint a series of murals and educate others about their cultural heritage and historical contributions made by Mexican-Americans in the areas of art, science and humanities. The plan was to organize a series of panel murals that would be developed and displayed in selected locations throughout the City of Los Angeles.

QMP received permission from Lee Lodes; former building owner of the Arroyo Furniture Store, to paint a 100-foot long mural that offers a look into the cultural history of Mexican-American heritage. In 1995, when Daniel Robles was brutally killed, the mural arts collective gained generous support within a year's time from various non-profit organizations, philanthropists, individuals, and local politicians who funded the completion of this mural. We managed to complete the mural project within four months. Several students, artists, and community participants contributed their talents and energy to its final unveiling on December 20, 1996. The mural titled; "Mexico-Tenochtitlan: A Sequence of Time and Culture," is a result of a collaborative multi-disciplinary project facilitated by artists Anthony Ortega and Andy Ledesma.

The original mural design was completed by four artists: Andy Ledesma, Eloy Torrez, Anthony Ortega and Daniel Marquez. The mural design was presented to Adolfo V. Nodal, a longtime cultural arts administrator and former General Manager of the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department. CAD board members were also present during the mural slide presentation. Our timeline highlights a sequence of time and culture; a rose and planet comes to life and takes center-stage during the mural presentation. It's followed by a rendering of two-spirited warriors, a man and woman descending from Earth are surrounded by an array of stars and planets like Venus and Saturn. Relationships built between humans and the cosmos reminds us of our interconnectedness with nature and the universe; much of this ancestral knowledge and cultural understanding is rooted in Aztec cosmology. It's the story of Flor y Canto which means "Flower and Song" in Spanish. This originated from ancient knowledge and teachings of Aztec thought and culture. Great visionaries, poets, philosophers, and no-

te philosophical and poetic prose about creationism and native spirituality.

The Tree of Life is a universal symbol found in many cultures arrives at the center during the mural slide presentation; on both sides of the rooted tree are a nude man and a nude woman symbolizing the birth and creation of humanity. At the end, a crying man in a checkered shirt symbolizes the late UFW leader Cesar Chavez, who surrounded by nine candles. Chavez is honored because of his contributions to the farm workers movement. The original design was denied by the Cultural Affairs Department (CAD) based on the nudity content used in the Tree of Life scene.

Artist Eloy Torrez re-designed the centerpiece; a realistic image of a contemporary Chicana woman wearing an Aztec head-dress comes to life, a symbol of a "Day of The Dead" sugar skull appears in the colorful headdress. The Cultural Affairs Department (CAD) accepted our newly developed mural design. By this time, Quetzalcoatl Mural Project recruited several artists and developed a new mural team and design that consolidated old-elements with the newly approved design from the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department.

The original mural team who completed the mural, "Mexico-Tenochtitlan: A Sequence of Time and Culture" includes the following: Andy Ledesma, John "Zender" Estrada, Anthony Ortega, Isabel Martinez, Oscar De Leon, Jesse Silva, Jerry Ortega, Ralph Corona, Jaime and Dominic Ochoa. Community artists include: Asylum, Fernando Bustos, John Duran, and Mario Mencias.

*We acknowledge the generous support from the following sponsors that made this project possible: Not Just Us Foundation, Arroyo Arts Collective, Highland Park Heritage Trust, La Tierra De La Culebra, Lead singer from Rage Against The Machine Zack De La Rocha, Attorney Jorge Gonzalez, The Montes Family, El Arco Iris Restaurant, Adolfo V. Nodal, Sam Baray, City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, LA Councilman Mike Hernandez Office, C/S Literary Group, Arroyo Furniture Store, Self-Help Graphics & Art Inc., Lee Lodes, Sister Karen Borccalero, Attorney Danilo Becerra, Art in The Park Advisory Council, Frank Sifuentes c/s, Dr. David Diaz, Arroyo Books, Anthony Gonzalez, Grace Sanchez, John & Ileana Cataldo, and "The Doors" legendary drummer John Densmore.*

## **OUR MISSION STATEMENT:**

Quetzalcoatl Mural Project (QMP) Primary mission is to provide inner-city youth an opportunity to showcase their artistic talents by creating an awareness campaign through public art projects in underserved Los Angeles neighborhoods. It's well documented that arts education in Los Angeles public schools has been on the decline since the early 1980's and in recent years, a crippled economy and state budget cuts have terminated these programs. There are few activities to engage children in their after school hours, and involvement in the arts has been shown to increase performance skills in all levels of their education, not just in art.

QMP goals are to educate and foster leadership skills to young artists in the participation of public art projects as a means to develop future "cultural arts ambassadors" that would bring new heights of social transformation and developmental process responsible for social change. We can aspire to learn from great contributions made in social science; and how art can be used to awaken people to the problems of society, specifically to the struggles faced by youth. We are founded on the principle that art and culture are teaching and healing tools that cultivate a level of fusion and balance with shared awareness. It is the main source of abundance and transformation in a person's life.

We believe in giving young people a chance to nurture their creativity and contribute positively to their community. Mentoring youth during these difficult times provided us a deep look into the individual hardships and experiences they endured early in life. The youth made a tremendous impact on this mural by contributing their artistic talents and creativity to the project; especially in addressing their concerns and aspirations. A dream and inspiration of Daniel Robles is the sole purpose for the creation of Quetzalcoatl Mural Project. QMP dedicated its first mural in memory of Daniel Robles, including UFW leader Cesar Estrada Chavez and to those who fought for social justice during the 1960's and 1970's Chicano civil rights movement. We are committed to bring a sense of community and cultural identity to a lost and silenced history.

## **WHEN IS YOUR PROJECT GOING TO BE COMPLETED? AND WHERE IS THE PROJECT AT DURING THIS PHASE OF THE OPERATION?**

Since the inception in 1995, this December 20th will mark the 19th anniversary when the muralists group unveiled a 100-foot long mural. Quetzalcoatl Mural Project plans to re-dedicate the mural. Our goal is to complete the mural restoration with some minor revisions made before July of 2014. Minor revisions include replacing the yellow corn, with New Mexico corn-known to Indigenous people in the Southwest as Four Direction corn; it's very colorful. La Virgin de Guadalupe-Tonantzin will lose her Spanish Crown and replace her face with the face of a contemporary Chicana woman. She would look directly at the person, not at a tilted angle like how La Virgin de Guadalupe is portrayed in most murals in California. She would represent the same message and the same beauty.

Several rays would emanate from La Virgin de Guadalupe. Near Mexico City-Tenochtitlan by the deep blue skies next to the full moon; an image appears of the Aztec Moon Goddess, Coyolxauhqui painted in a monochromatic and ghost-like form descending from the moon. In the book area next to Cesar Chavez, titles of various books would be named with social themes that deal with race relations, history, and cultural understanding. The restoration process originally began in July of 2009, and a recent attempt in January of 2014. Several repairs are needed to fix the exterior wall, including paint materials to complete the restoration project. Emergency financial assistance is presently needed.

## **WHY THE NEED TO FUND THIS PUBLIC ART PROJECT?**

The City of Los Angeles is a global leader in art, creativity, and entertainment. The arts community contributes billions a year to the local economy. Over the past five years, the city has lost resources, cultural spaces, independent bookstores and murals in extremely diverse and far-flung neighborhoods. We have to expand our imagination about the arts and how it can cultivate, renew and regenerate our economically and culturally strapped communities. We need to establish a new neighborhood arts initiative that would focus on safeguarding, sustaining and expanding all arts in every Los Angeles community by action of the Los Angeles City Council. With the right leadership, L.A. could be recreated as a place where not just community art, but gardens and food co-ops are given enough financial support to spring up organically and help sustain neighborhoods that were once considered underserved communities. The City of Los Angeles must be a pioneer in establishing real and widespread neighborhood arts initiatives.

The history of the mural provides valuable insight into the cultural, social, political, and historical contributions made by Mexican-Americans. Today, this mural has become one of Los Angeles true cultural landmarks and has gained national publicity on TV commercials, books, local and national news coverage. Tagging on public murals has been a major problem in the inner-city neighborhoods for years, Los Angeles is one of the most known mural capitals in the world but lacks the funding resources to restore and maintain public murals. Over the past ten years the mural has fallen victim to graffiti vandalism. The surface wall needs additional repairs done to it before the mural returns to its original vibrancy. From small to large cracks have fractured the structural wall and currently needs immediate attention. In the past ten years the mural has lost its original color and vibrancy; it's important for the mural team to preserve and restore the art work to its original condition with vibrant colors and sharp details. The first order of business is to reach a large audience and gain grassroots support for this incredible undertaking.

In 2009, Los Angeles Times Columnist and award winning author of "The Soloists" Steve Lopez wrote a national story on the mural titled "Drumming up Support for Community Arts." Artists Jaime Ochoa and Anthony Ortega the original muralists who worked on the mural located on Avenue 61 met with Mr. Lopez and John Densmore, the former drummer of the legendary rock band "The Doors" and the award-winning author of "Always Running" Luis Rodriguez. Densmore is a longtime Santa Monica resident; a philanthropist who gives generously to humanitarian causes and to local arts and culture over the years. He and Lead singer from Rage Against The Machine's Zak de la Rocha partially funded the mural project since its inception in 1995. Densmore and Ortega "initiated this little cab" in Highland Park. They convened at the mural and engaged in a dialogue about the need to restore the mural on Avenue 61 and the importance to preserve, maintain, and rescue public art projects that continue to face graffiti vandalism in underserved Los Angeles neighborhoods. The national publicity that the mural received did not generate the required funds to help restore this public art piece.

Quetzalcoatl Mural Project (QMP) is urgently asking members of the Highland Park community including local businesses, politicians, Southern California non-profit organizations, and charitable based foundations to fund and publicly support the preservation and restoration of this iconic mural. We are seeking funding opportunities from city officials and community organizations: City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, Highland Park Heritage Trust, Highland Park Neighborhood Council, the Latino/a Roundtable, California Council for the Humanities, the Arroyo Arts Collective, Los Angeles City Councilmember Gilbert Cedillo-CD 1 and Los Angeles City Councilmember Jose Huizar-CD 14.

"Save Our Mural" is a project of Quetzalcoatl Mural Project. Ave. 50 Studio Inc. will serve as our fiscal agent to receive the funding support for this project. Ave. 50 Studio Inc, is a 501c (3) non-profit arts presentation organization grounded in Latina/o culture, visual arts, and the Northeast Los Angeles community that seeks to bridge cultures through artistic expressions, using content-driven art to educate and to stimulate intercultural understanding. Our goal is to raise public awareness on the mural restoration of Mexico-Tenochtitlan: A Sequence of Time and Culture.

Those who donate will receive a tax-deductible receipt for their in-kind gift or donation to Quetzalcoatl Mural Project. Each sponsor would be acknowledged on a list of individuals and non-profit organizations that made this project possible. Mostly, it's an important part of Chicano history that needs to be saved and preserved for future generations of young and talented artists.

We trust you will recognize the worthy nature of this project and what your support would mean to the members of our community.

Sincerely Yours,  
Anthony Ortega

[Translate »](#)

**WE NEED TO PRESERVE THE PAST IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE. PLEASE HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE TODAY!**

**Funds are still needed.**

**Please click one of the icons below to donate:**

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FROM LOS ANGELES MAYOR

**ERIC GARCETTI**

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the City of Los Angeles, it is my pleasure to welcome you to Angels Walk, Highland Park.

Thousands of Angelenos and visitors alike have taken Angels Walks in Downtown, Chinatown, the Wilshire Corridor, and Hollywood to enhance their knowledge and appreciation of the diverse architecture, culture, and heritage of Los Angeles. Now it's time to celebrate Highland Park.

There is no better way to come to know and love our great city than by exploring its culturally rich neighborhoods by foot. Through this informative guidebook, both visitors and locals alike will come to know many of Highland Park's treasures, such as the Highland Theater, the Southwest Museum, and Occidental College. Best of all, Angels Walk takes full advantage of North East LA's expansive public transit network, so walkers can move freely about the neighborhood without needing a car.

Enjoy your walk, and thank you for celebrating the unique spirit of Los Angeles.

Very truly yours,

Eric Garcetti  
Mayor of Los Angeles

Welcome .....	2-3
Getting There .....	4
Using This Guidebook .....	5

**ANGELS WALK HIGHLAND PARK**

Introduction to Highland Park .....	6-7
<b>SECTION 1</b>	
Highland Park Metro Station • York Blvd. ....	8-15
<b>SECTION 2</b>	
York Blvd. • S Avenue 57 .....	16-21
<b>SECTION 3</b>	
S Avenue 57 • N Avenue 50 .....	22-27
<b>SECTION 4</b>	
N Avenue 50 • SW Museum Metro Station .....	28-31

**FARTHER AFIELD .....** 32-35

Restaurants + More .....	36-38
Streetscape Mosaics .....	39
Walk Map + Sites .....	inside back cover



# WELCOME

## FROM COUNCILMEMBER, GIL CEDILLO



Highland Park is a historic community rich in history, culture, art, and activism. I am honored to represent the people of this vibrant community on the Los Angeles City Council. I am so happy that the Angels Walk LA historic walking trail is coming to Highland Park; it is a great way to see and celebrate this neighborhood.

The Highland Park Angels Walk guidebook will take you through historic Highland Park. It features the Southwest Museum that opened in 1907, the Charles Lummis House, built by Charles Fletcher Lummis in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Arroyo Seco, and the beautiful stretch of North Figueroa Street that has been featured in countless films.

After enjoying the Highland Park Angels Walk LA tour, I hope you will take the time to have a meal at one of the area's many great restaurants that celebrate the richness and diversity of this neighborhood.

The Gold Line Station is in the center of the burgeoning commercial district with many long time businesses, restaurants, coffeehouses, and the Highland Theatre. Once you have explored Highland Park, you can hop on the Gold Line to enjoy other Angels Walk LA tours in Chinatown or Union Station, both of which are just a few stations away in this wonderful City of Angels.

Thank you for getting to know and enjoy this wonderful neighborhood.

Sincerely,

*Gilbert Cedillo*

Gilbert Cedillo  
Councilmember, 1st Council District

## WELCOME TO ANGELS WALK HIGHLAND PARK

This is the eighth self-guided walking tour that Angels Walk has completed in the City of Los Angeles, and we are so proud of it. It beautifully embodies the founding premise of our program: to highlight and celebrate the wonderful, but often under appreciated history of Los Angeles and its diverse communities. The walk consists of two elements: this user-friendly guidebook, and the on-street stanchions, which highlight the area's most notable historical people, places, and events.

Highland Park is uniquely distinguished from its neighbors, Pasadena and Downtown Los Angeles. Historically, it's been connected to these neighbors by way of the Pacific Electric Red Cars, world-famous Route 66, the Arroyo Seco Parkway, and the Metro Gold Line, all of which have become a part of Highland Park's rich history.

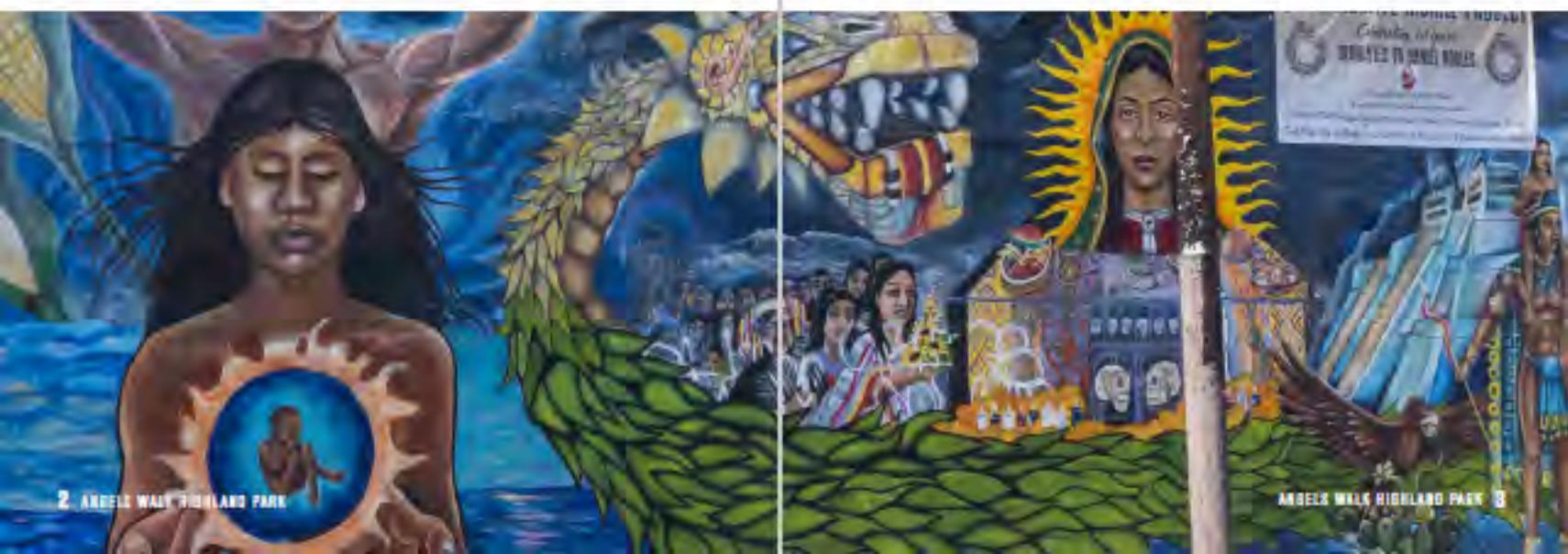
Learn about Charles Lummis, Occidental College, North Figueroa Street's commercial core, and the Chicano arts movement, all of which have helped to make Highland Park such a distinct neighborhood.

As you're enjoying the walk, grab a bite to eat at one of the neighborhood's excellent restaurants, and consider exploring the adjacent residential streets, where you'll find architectural gems in every style.

Highland Park, like many L.A. neighborhoods, endeavors to preserve its heritage as time progresses. Our walk demonstrates that this vibrant neighborhood possesses the rich history and active community necessary to distinguish it as a regarded chapter in the Los Angeles story!

*Deanna Molloy*

Deanna Spector Molloy  
Founder, Angels Walk LA





# INTRODUCTION



Sheep grazing near the Church of Angels in Garvanza, c. 1886.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF HIGHLAND PARK

What is now Highland Park began at least 13,000 years ago, when the ancestors of the Chumash settled in the area before consolidating along the coast and Channel Islands. Some 3,500 years ago, the Tongva arrived from the east and, discovering the interior mostly abandoned, founded numerous villages in the area. The Spanish came from the south, claiming all of Alta California in 1542, although their colonization didn't begin until the 1770s. Highland Park was granted to José María Verdugo as part of Rancho San Rafael in 1784. The lands remained in the hands of the Verdugos until lawyers Andrew Glassell Jr. and Albert Beck Chapman took possession of a portion in 1869. The attorneys leased the land to shepherds until 1885, when they sold a section to George W. Morgan and Albert H. Judson, who subdivided it as the Highland Park Tract in 1886.

Highland Park's location, between Pasadena and Los Angeles—and its connection to both by rail—made it an attractive suburb for well-to-do home buyers. However, the undependability of the Arroyo Seco as a water source, and the perceived undesirability of neighboring Sycamore Grove motivated its residents to vote for annexation by Los Angeles in 1895. The neighboring town of Garvanza followed their lead in 1899. The communities of Hermon, York Valley, and part of Annandale were likewise annexed in 1912. In 1922, all of the so-called "five friendly valleys" united as Greater Highland Park, believing that a united front would achieve more success. Despite their new shared identity, all of these communities strived for some distinction and individuality.



The first bridge across the Arroyo Seco, c. 1886.

Highland Park's reputation as an arts community dates almost to its inception. Artists and artisans inspired by the Southern California Arts and Crafts movement joined *plein air* painters, poets, and intellectuals, in the newly settled highlands around the turn of the century. Highland Park was also the home to Los Angeles' oldest liberal arts college, Occidental College, and its first established museum, Charles Lummis' Southwest Museum. The 1970s brought the emergence of a dynamic and active Chicano arts movement whose legacy remains in organizations like Avenue 50 Studio and the Arroyo Arts Collective.



Through the years, Highland Park has welcomed members of every faith, as well as progressive activists who have championed various causes for the community. Today, Highland Park boasts a diverse population, and an ever-growing reputation as a place where the new and the old seamlessly coexist. And regardless of the changes that have taken place, Highland Park locals are dedicated to retaining a strong sense of history, community involvement, cultural diversity, and artistic expression.



Centro de Arte Público studio space, c. 1978.



An early view of central Highland Park and Figueroa Street (then Pasadena Avenue).



Charles Lummis

# 1 HP METRO STATION • YORK



## 1 Highland Park Metro Station

151 N AVENUE 57 | 10 BIKE RACK SPACES | 16 BIKE LOCKERS

The Highland Park Metro Station, which opened on July 27, 2003, sits upon the site of a previous Santa Fe railroad station that was in use from the 1920s until it was closed around 1958. It later served as a meeting location for local Boy Scouts and was demolished in 1965. The foundation of the old station was still at the site when ground was broken for the current station. The artwork for the current station was done by artist Jud Fine, including the Stone Tree Inverted Post (Copper Bound Water Light) that dominates the plaza area at the front of the station along Marmion Way.

## 2 Old L.A. Certified Farmers Market

TUESDAYS 3-8 PM (3-7 PM IN WINTER)

ADJACENT TO THE HIGHLAND PARK METRO GOLD LINE STATION ON MARMION WAY & N AVENUE 58

This weekly, outdoor market has been running every Tuesday for years. It is a popular destination for local and organic produce and groceries, as well as a variety of artisan foods and goods.



### WHERE TO GO FROM HERE:

Exit the station and start at Stanchion #1: Highland Park Transit, located near the corner of Marmion Way and N Avenue 57. Continue the walk by heading one block south on Marmion Way, past residences, then turn left at N Avenue 56 towards Figueroa...

## 3 Masonic Temple

104 N AVENUE 58

This Commercial Renaissance building was designed in 1923 by Elmore Robinson Jeffrey of the firm Jeffrey and Schaffer as the home for Highland Park Masonic Lodge No. 382, which was originally chartered in 1907. Jeffrey donated the plans to the Lodge and served as its Worshipful

Master in 1927. Due to declining membership, Highland Park Lodge merged with Eastgate Lodge No. 290 in 1982 and became Fellowship No. 290. The building was sold in 1983 due to the need for costly seismic retrofitting, which was then done by the new owners. Fellowship Lodge consolidated with Garvanza Lodge No. 492, which also met in the

building in 1983, and finally with South Pasadena Lodge No. 367 in 1992. It was listed as Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument No. 282 on August 29, 1984 and was added to the National Register of Historic Places on January 18, 1990.



### WHERE TO GO FROM HERE:

When you get to the corner of N Avenue 56 and Figueroa, turn right and take a quick stroll about a half-block south for a view across the street of the famous Chicken Boy statue atop the Future Studio building, then return back up Figueroa to continue the walk...

## 4 Security Trust and Savings Bank Building

5601 N FIGUEROA STREET



Built in 1922 as the Highland Park branch of the growing Security Trust and Savings Bank, this Classical Revival building was designed by the father and son architectural team of John and Donald B.

Parkinson. It was one of the earliest of the Parkinson and Parkinson buildings to institute the concept of branch banking using buildings of similar design to advertise the various locations to inter-branch bank. Later named Security First National Bank and eventually Security Pacific National Bank, the branch closed after Security merged with Bank of America. The building was declared Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument No. 575 on February 9, 1993. The building is now owned by the City of Los Angeles.

### WHERE TO GO FROM HERE:

Proceed towards Stanchion #2: Highland Theatre. Take note of the theater, which is located across the street, then continue heading north up Figueroa...

# 1 HP METRO STATION » YORK

## 10 S.H. Kress / Frank's Camera

5715 N FIGUEROA STREET (PERMANENTLY CLOSED)



This 1928 vintage building was the local outlet for the S.H. Kress department store from its opening until the early 1970s. With stores stretching from the East Coast to Hawaii, the emporium-style business used the smell of buttered popcorn to lure customers in and keep

them shopping. The Highland Park store consisted of two stories and a full basement, all used for open merchandising and stock. You can still see the painted wall sign for Kress at the top side of the building (from N Avenue 57). The building was later home to beloved Frank's Camera. Vera and Frank Vacek owned and ran the store for over three decades, from 1978 to 2015. It was the largest mail order camera business in America.

### WHERE TO GO FROM HERE:

Continue north on Figueroa stopping to read Stanchion #3: The Commercial District...

## 11 Ivers Department Store (former site)

5801 N FIGUEROA STREET

A portion of the current mini-mall was once part of the largest and most memorable department store in Highland Park, Ivers. The family-run store, established in the 1920s, utilized several buildings, with the last one constructed in 1955. During its heyday, which lasted into the early 1970s, the store sold more merchandise per square foot of floor space than any other department store in Los Angeles. However, changing shopping trends and the reluctance of the new generation to carry on the business led to its closure in 1981.

## 12 Fire Station No. 12

5921 N FIGUEROA STREET

The current Streamline Moderne fire station was built in 1949 on the site of the original 1903 Fire Station No. 12, a two-story Gothic design that was set up for horse-drawn equipment until the horses were phased out around 1915. The original horse collar hooks were to remain in the old building until it was demolished in 1948. Station No. 12 is believed to be the earliest active fire company still operating at its original site in Los Angeles.

### WHERE TO GO FROM HERE:

Continue north on Figueroa, cross N Avenue 60 stopping to read Stanchion #4: The Arroyo Seco. When you get to the corner of N Avenue 61, look left to see...

## 13 Mexico-Tenochtitlan "The Wall That Talks" Mural

SW CORNER N AVE 61 AND FIGUEROA

*Mexico-Tenochtitlan "The Wall That Talks"* is a large, acrylic mural, painted in 1996 by John Zender Estrada with the assistance of ten other artists. The subject matter concerns solidarity amongst the world's indigenous peoples and conveys its message through a design that incorporates imagery from Aztec, Maya, and Olmec cultures, and depicts revolutionaries from different eras.



## 14 La Estrella Restaurant & "Life" Mural

6103 N FIGUEROA STREET



La Estrella is a small, family-operated chain of Mexican restaurants. The original location was founded by Mario Ramirez in Pasadena. The menu varies at each, as do the precise names.

The Highland Park location (La Estrella #3) occupies a Mid Century food stand built in 1962 and features a colorful mural titled *Life*. The mural was painted in 1999 by Raul Baltazar, whose imagery was inspired by Buddhism, peyote ceremonies, and the artist's personal relationships.

### WHERE TO GO FROM HERE:

Continue north on Figueroa. Approach the train tracks cautiously, looking both ways before crossing...

## 15 Highland Park Recreation Center

6150 PIEDMONT AVENUE

The original Community Clubhouse building on Piedmont Avenue was the pride of the area, with a gymnasium, auditorium, bowling alleys, billiard rooms, nurseries, and rooms



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# LA WEEKLY

Anthony Ortega; Credit: Jessica Donath

**ZACK DE LA ROCHA AND THE DOORS' JOHN DENSMORE FUNDED THIS HIGHLAND PARK MURAL — NOW IT NEEDS HELP**



JESSICA DONATH (HTTPS://WWW.LAWEKKLY.COM/GUEST-AUTHOR/JESSICA-DONATH/), X FEBRUARY 21, 2017 ()

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<u>DE-LA-ROCHA-</u>	<u>DE-LA-ROCHA-</u>	<u>DE-LA-ROCHA-</u>
<u>AND-THE-</u>	<u>AND-THE-</u>	<u>AND-THE-</u>
<u>DOORS-JOHN-</u>	<u>DOORS-JOHN-</u>	<u>DOORS-JOHN-</u>
<u>DENSMORE-</u>	<u>DENSMORE-</u>	<u>DENSMORE-</u>
<u>FUNDED-THIS-</u>	<u>FUNDED-THIS-</u>	<u>FUNDED-THIS-</u>
<u>HIGHLAND-</u>	<u>HIGHLAND-</u>	<u>HIGHLAND-</u>
<u>PARK-MURAL-</u>	<u>PARK-MURAL-</u>	<u>PARK-MURAL-</u>
<u>NOW-IT-</u>	<u>NOW-IT-</u>	<u>NOW-IT-</u>
<u>NEEDS-HELP/)</u>	<u>NEEDS-HELP/)</u>	<u>NEEDS-HELP/)</u>

Once a week, muralist Anthony Ortega takes the train from the Inland Empire to L.A. to check on his mural in Highland Park. "You gotta have pride in what you do," he said.

Ortega, 45, is co-founder of Quetzalcoatl Mural Project (QMP), the Chicano artist collective that completed the mural at the end of 1996. QMP dedicated it to Daniel Robles, Ortega's best friend, who had become a collateral casualty of gang violence. He had the idea to paint a mural that "talked about the progress we made here in America," Ortega says.

Shortly after his friend's murder, Ortega got to work on the mural, which is at the corner of Avenue 61 and Figueroa Street. For two months he hunkered down with fellow artists, reading books and studying historical texts. "It was important that we learned our history adequately," he said.

At approximately 100 by 20 feet, *Mexico Tenochtitlan: A Sequence of Time and Culture* is one of the largest murals in the area. Despite ongoing efforts to maintain it and keep up with weather damage and tagging — most recently in preparation for a rededication celebration to mark the 20th anniversary in March 2016 — the mural has seen better days.

"In the past two years this mural has been tagged something like 23 times," Ortega says. The worst yet happened in early October 2016. The vandals' writing spanned more than half the width of the mural — beginning at the creation scene, up to the altar of the Virgin and into the Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent, and the ocean. "It was respected for a long time — the community loves this mural. Every time they see us working on it, they think of us as superheroes," says Dominic Ochoa, 37, the youngest original artist.

But while the community and local businesses are supportive, the artists feel neglected by local officials. "We don't have time for politicians to procrastinate and put us on hold," Ortega says. The mural is in councilman Gil Cisneros' district, and Ortega says he worked with a field deputy for Cisneros in 2014 who promised to help secure a grant from the Department for Cultural Affairs (DCA). That field deputy is no longer with Cisneros' office, and Will Caperton y Montoya, DCA's director of marketing and development, wrote in an email that DCA does not currently have any application related to *Mexico Tenochtitlan* on file.

"It would be difficult to ascertain what discussions were had," Fredy Ceja, Cisneros' communications director, wrote in an email.

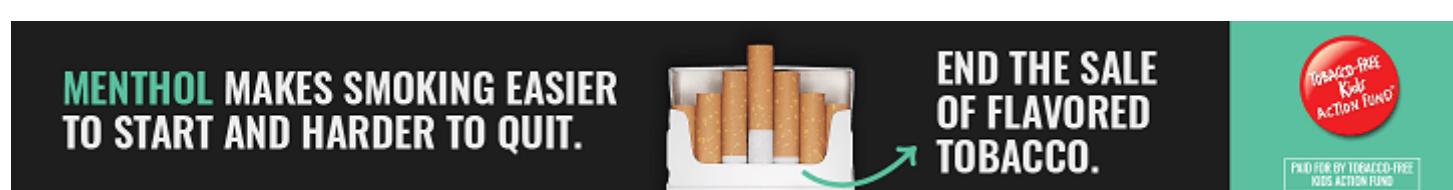
The artists have little experience securing public funds, but when they began planning the mural in 1995, Ortega secured two major supporters: John Densmore, former drummer of The Doors, and Zack de la Rocha, former vocalist of Rage Against the Machine. Densmore and Ortega met at Self Help Graphics, the Chicano artists space in Boyle Heights; De la Rocha was his neighbor on Avenue 58 in Highland Park. Together with other private donors, the two musicians provided most of the funding for the original mural.

Now Ortega says they need at least \$20,000 to bring the mural back to its original glory. Frustrated by his experience with obtaining public funds, he's resorting to what he knows works: networking. On a Sunday afternoon in November 2016, Louie Perez from the L.A.-based band Los Lobos drove by the wall and saw Ortega and others at work.

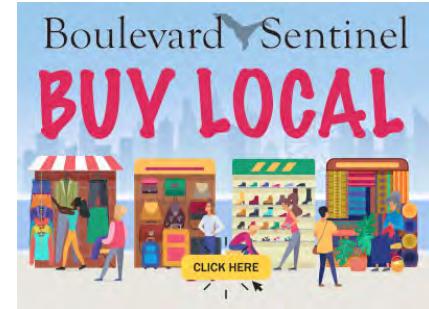
"I was really impressed. It was Sunday afternoon but here they were, working on the mural," he says. "That's quite the commitment." Perez plans to present the project to his bandmates to see if Los Lobos wants to support the restoration.

This time, Ortega and Ochoa don't want to merely spruce up the paint and add anti-graffiti glaze. They want to update the mural so it will continue to "speak to the core of the people," as Ortega puts it. Gentrification, war and environmental issues are on the table. Ochoa, whose eyes still sparkle when he talks about the mural, has another idea.

"You know what would be really cool? Since we're all so into our phones and technology, if there was a link someone could go to on their phone and it tells the whole story," he says, brimming with excitement. "There is so much detail."



# Boulevard Sentinel



≡



Zender on Murals

Several murals that were painted in Highland Park in the early 1990s were part of a public art initiative begun in the aftermath of the Rodney King riots. Sponsored by then Councilmember Mike Hernandez under the theme “Re-Wing the City of Angels,” they were intended to unify the community, in part by providing a creative outlet.

John “Zender” Estrada, an esteemed local artist, created one of the project’s best known murals — an Aztec warrior flanked by two eagles entitled “Resist Violence with Peace.” That mural, which was painted on private property, was removed sometime in 2015, when a new owner renovated the building. Its removal dismayed artists and mural supporters.

Zender told the Boulevard Sentinel that graffiti and other elements that change or destroy a mural are part of its natural lifespan, but he thinks there should be consultation before murals are removed. A process to deal with aging murals on public property is for the city’s Cultural Affairs department to reach out to the artist to assess the mural or – if the artist is not available – to reach out to a local muralist like Zender. That gives an artist a chance to restore the mural or let it remain exposed to graffiti and the elements until, due to extensive damage, it would be whitewashed.

Brenda Perez, the founder of Restorative Justice for the Arts, a group dedicated to cataloguing and protecting Highland Park’s murals, has started a grassroots effort to raise money to bring back some of the murals from the 1990s, including Zender’s “Resist Violence with Peace” and the three that were removed in 2017



*Wendy Newell*



# Oxy Arts Speaker Series: The Quetzalcoatl Mural Project

The Oxy Arts Speaker Series brings five multidisciplinary LA-based artists to Occidental College to engage our community in conversation about their art, their inspirations, and why they do what they do in Los Angeles today.

JAN  
29

7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

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**Location:** [Choi Auditorium \(<https://map.oxy.edu/?id=1103#!m/276705>\)](https://map.oxy.edu/?id=1103#!m/276705).

**Price:** Free and open to the public

**Event Date:** Monday, January 29, 2018

**The Quetzalcoatl** (Feathered-Serpent) **Mural Project** (QMP) is a community based mural arts collective which began twenty-one years ago in one of the Los Angeles historic art districts. QMP's primary mission is to provide inner city youth an opportunity to showcase their artistic talents by creating an awareness campaign through public art projects in underserved Los Angeles neighborhoods.



The original mural team who completed the mural, "Mexico-Tenochtitlan: A Sequence of Time and Culture" includes the following: **Andy Ledesma, John "Zender" Estrada, Anthony Ortega, Isabel Martinez, Oscar De Leon, Jesse Silva, Jerry Ortega, Ralph Corona, Jaime** and **Dominic Ochoa**. Community

artists include: **Asylum, Fernando Bustos, John Duran, and Mario Mencias**.

QMP collective members **Anthony Ortega, Andy Ledesma, and Dominic Ochoa** will participate in this event which will be moderated by muralist **Noni Olabisi**.

**Anthony Ortega** (Founding Director)

Anthony Ortega is a muralist, community organizer, writer, and an independent civil rights historian and researcher. Born in East L.A. in 1971, Ortega was inspired by both his Roosevelt High School teacher, Chicano Movement activist, Miguel Roura, and by Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales' now-classic poem, Yo Soy Joaquin/I am Joaquin." Ortega's first student cover story, reporting the experiences of a Japanese Chicano activist in the 1968 East Los Angeles High School walkouts, led to his journalism major at Cal State University,

Northridge, and, in 1990, completion of a journalism program sponsored by the **USC Annenberg School of Journalism's and California Chicano News Media Association** (CCNMA). In 1995, Ortega and artist Andy Ledesma co-founded the **Quetzalcoatl Mural Project**, a community-based mural arts collective that produced a 100-foot-long mural completed in the summer of 1996. In 2009, the mural was tagged with graffiti and became a national symbol for public art restoration when acclaimed author of **The Soloist**, Steve Lopez, wrote about it in his Los Angeles Times feature column. From 1997-2012, in addition to his involvement in multiple art and humanitarian aid projects, Ortega worked as an independent researcher/historian specializing in the 1964-1984 Chicano Civil Rights Movement. Ortega is also writing a book based on his extensive research material about Chicano civil rights leader Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales. His list of clients and funders include: Hollywood producer Moctezuma Esparza; university educator and writer, Dr. Roberto "Cintli" Rodriguez; legendary drummer of *The Doors*, John Densmore; lead singer for Rage Against the Machine, Zack de la Rocha; the Not Just Foundation, Seva Foundation, and the Los Angeles City Department of Cultural Affairs. Ortega continues to write, research and conduct presentations on murals, Chicano art and the social/political implications of the Chicano Movement. Ortega resides in Ontario, CA.

### **Andy Ledesma** (Artistic Director)

Andy Ledesma's art career has spanned over three decades. Through out this time, Ledesma has firmly entrenched his artistic vision in the Chicano experience. Born in Texas but raised in Los Angeles, he was exposed early on to the emerging cultural phenomenon known as Chicano\a. It was as a young boy that he became fascinated with murals. Ledesma's first ventures as a muralist were as a youth through graffiti. As Ledesma pursued this new form of expression, he would encounter other, more established artist, who would encourage him to pursue his passion. In order to advance himself, he would pursue his education by enrolling at East Los Angeles College and Cal State Los Angeles. Ledesma's mural career began in 1986 with the artist Jerry Rodriguez; they would do a series of historical murals in the Lincoln Heights neighborhood. The vast majority of Ledesma's murals are in the Highland Park, northeast Los Angles area. In 1995 with Anthony Ortega, Ledesma would assemble the team that would design the Mexico- Tenochtitlan mural. In 1992, Ledesma founded Charming Devil Studios and was one of the first Chicano to self-published his own comic book *Welcome to La-La Land*. He takes great pride in the fact that [REDACTED] he would give many artists' exposure; they would have a booth at the 1996 San Diego comic Con. In 2005, Ledesma relocates to Port Arthur Texas, where he would be the director of the Texas Artist Museum; he was instrumental in reopening the museum following

hurricane Katrina. He would also start a papier-mâché fabrication studio that specialized in Mardi Gras floats. In 2015, Ledesma once again relocated to Los Angeles to resume his art career.

### **Dominic Ochoa** (Artist)

Throughout his years growing up in Highland Park, Dominic Ochoa has been exhibiting in art galleries as a teenager, including art installation of numerous exhibitions around Los Angeles. As a young boy, Dominic spent many years by his mother's side assisting her as a gallery curator of *Self-Help Graphics* and also as an apprentice in the Silkscreen Workshop at Self-Help Graphics located in East Los Angeles.

Throughout his years at Franklin High School, he entered art competitions and got scholarships to Otis Parsons, Cal Arts and Arts Center. In his senior year, he had the pleasure to be a part of what would be the largest Chicano mural in North East Los Angeles. The Quetzalcoatl Mural Project began over 20 years ago opening doors to new horizons. After High School he landed a job at the Autry Museum of the American West, located in Griffith Park for 15 successful years. Ochoa built his knowledge as an exhibition designer, artifact handler, mount maker and Facilities Coordinator during his last years at the Museum. Ochoa began freelancing as a logo designer, which was his passion and lifelong career since he was a young teen. For the last 5 years Ochoa has been a logo designer and visual display Director at *Mi Vida* Boutique located in Highland Park on York Boulevard and Avenue 52. During those years at the boutique he was able to join a Union as a theme painter, landing a part-time job for more than a year at Universal Studios in Hollywood. Ochoa was one of two-dozen artists in Los Angeles to paint the entire interior and exterior Theme Park for Harry Potter. Currently, Dominic Ochoa is the Visual Director of *Mi Vida* Boutique and freelance silkscreen designer.

### **Noni Olabisi** (Panel Moderator)

Noni Olabisi is an artist/ muralist with over twenty-five years of experience as a muralist, receiving many awards for public art commissions. In 2010 she was awarded a California Foundation J. Paul Getty Individual Artist Fellowship to further her career as an artist. She recently was commissioned to mentor students from various High Schools in her community in the art of painting a mural. Olabisi's murals have appeared on television, in music videos, movies, on the cover of The LA Times Weekly, as well as in numerous newspapers, magazines and books. Her work reflects the need for perseverance for justice and equality, to educate and to promote transformation.

For more information about QMP's work, click [here](#)

(<http://avenue50studio.org/mural-restoration>).

### **Other artists in the Oxy Arts Speaker Series include:**

- September 25: [Will Power](#) (/events/oxy-arts-speaker-series-will-power) (Playwright, Performer and Educator)

- October 30: [Amitis Motevalli \(/events/oxy-arts-speaker-series-amitis-motevalli\)](#)(Visual Artist)
- November 27: [Zackary Drucker \(/events/oxy-arts-speaker-series-zackary-drucker\)](#)(Artist and Producer)
- February 26: [Justin Chon \(/events/oxy-arts-speaker-series-justin-chon\)](#)(Actor and Filmmaker)

**This event is free and open to the public.**

Choi Auditorium, Occidental College

1600 Campus Rd.

Los Angeles, CA 90041

Click [here](https://postimg.org/image/dq1di0gbx/) (<https://postimg.org/image/dq1di0gbx/>) for directions to Choi Auditorium

*The Oxy Arts Speaker Series is made possible by the Arts and Urban Experience Initiative, which is generously funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.*

\*Photo Credit: ©2017 Isabel Rojas-Williams

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## TENOCHTITLAN MURAL SPARKS COMMUNITY CONCERN, BUILDING OWNER DENIES CLAIM

By **Grace Garrett** - February 11, 2020

Brenda Perez speaks about mural preservation at Restorative Justice for the Arts' Mural Blessing in front of "Tenochtitlan — The Wall That Talks" at N Ave 61 & Figueroa St in Los Angeles. Sunday, Jan. 26, 2020. Grace Garrett/The Occidental

On the corner of North Avenue 61 and North Figueroa Street stands "Tenochtitlan — The Wall That Talks," a [75-foot-long](#) mural painted in 1996 by the [Quetzalcoatl Mural Project](#) (QMP). Following [unexpected mural whitewashings](#) in Highland Park in 2018, a rumored threat to the mural sparked controversy among Highland Park residents, according to Anthony "Eagle" Ortega, founder and director of QMP and one of the artists of "Tenochtitlan."

"Tenochtitlan," which features the designs and brushwork of at least ten muralists, is painted on the wall of 6039 North Figueroa St. in Highland Park. The building was purchased in August 2019 for \$5.8 million by Fig Crossing, LLC, its current owner, according to Brenda Perez, founder of [Restorative Justice for the Arts \(RJFTA\)](#). Perez said she first learned about the mural's potential erasure from John "Zender" Estrada, one of the artists of "Tenochtitlan."

Estrada said he received a call in mid-January from Warren Brand, [board member](#) of the [Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles \(MCLA\)](#), a nonprofit founded in 1987 that advocates for the restoration, preservation and documentation of Los Angeles murals. According to Estrada, Brand said there was a possibility that the mural's building would be sold and that its new owner might want to install windows in the mural wall. Estrada said this phone call was the only evidence he had to believe there was a threat to "Tenochtitlan," and that neither he nor any other artists have had any contact with Fig Crossing, LLC. Brand did not respond to requests for comment.

After Perez was told about the phone call by Estrada, Perez and RJFTA hosted a [mural blessing event](#) Jan. 26 to raise community awareness about the alleged erasure. RJFTA raised \$328 through a [GoFundMe page](#) to host the mural blessing. Estrada said he knew Perez had planned the event, but according to Ortega, neither himself nor any of the other artists were contacted about the potential threat, the mural blessing event or the fundraising effort. Ortega said he was concerned that Perez did not officially approach QMP before hosting the event.

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 statement from Fig Crossing, LLC, according to Ortega. Ortega said after the assurance from City Council District 1's office and reading the statement, he had no reason to believe "Tenochtitlan" was ever at any risk.

Warren J. "Skip" Kessler, attorney for Fig Crossing, LLC, has since confirmed that the company has no plans to alter the mural.

"Our client, Fig Crossing, LLC, recognizes and understands the importance of the rich culture, history and heritage of the Highland Park neighborhood," Kessler said via email. "Unfortunately, there have been several false and inflammatory statements recently surrounding our client's ownership of this building and our client's intentions regarding the Tenochtitlan Mural. Our client is very fond of the Tenochtitlan Mural and has no plans to erase, paint over, or alter the Mural or to demolish the wall."

*"Tenochtitlan — The Wall That Talks"  
at N Ave 61 & Figueroa St in Los Angeles. Sunday, Jan. 26, 2020. Grace Garrett/The Occidental*

Ortega said he attended the mural blessing event with another "Tenochtitlan" artist, Andy Ledesma, in order to speak in front of the mural's supporters and to confront Perez about worrying the community over nothing.

"Much of this confusion should have never surfaced," Ortega said. "If [the destruction of "Tenochtitlan"] was a concern, this should have been brought to us, and we would have diligently handled the situation as a collective group of muralists."

According to Perez, who has seen the statement issued by Fig Crossing, LLC, RJFTA still demands a legally binding document from Fig Crossing, LLC stating their intent not to erase the mural.

"Tenochtitlan," which is registered with the [LA Department of Cultural Affairs \(DCA\)](#) as a [Vintage Original Art Mural \(VAM\)](#), is protected under the federal [Visual Artists' Rights Act \(VARA\)](#), according to Perez and Ortega. Perez said that under these protections, all artists must be given a 90-day notice before a mural can be removed regardless of its registration status. According to Perez, individuals have ignored these protections in the past, such as in [the whitewashing of the Migrant Farmworkers mural](#) during Hispanic Heritage Month last year, and a legally binding document stating Fig Crossing, LLC's intention not to erase "Tenochtitlan" would better protect the mural.

According to Ortega, the QMP plans to seek the support of the Highland Park Heritage Trust to protect and preserve "Tenochtitlan" as a historic landmark to ensure that the community never has to worry about the mural again. Ortega said residents who want to support mural preservation should consider donating to fund restorations and new projects.

"[Murals] are a major undertaking," Ortega said. "To be frank, these public art projects need plenty of funding to continue the maintenance, the upkeep and the preservation efforts going on."

Estrada said laws and protections are not very effective in actually preserving murals. Building owners will find loopholes in the Department of Community Affairs if there is any reason for complaints about a mural, according to Estrada.

*"Tenochtitlan — The Wall That Talks"  
catches the eye of a passerby at N Ave 61 & Figueroa St in Los Angeles. Sunday, Jan. 26, 2020. Grace Garrett/The Occidental*

"They'll [whitewash] it in the night, you won't see it coming, and then it's too late," Estrada said. "Ninety percent of mural protection is not cultural affairs."

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News

# In this LA neighborhood, residents unite to bless one of its most sacred murals

*On a recent Sunday afternoon, more than 100 people gathered at a northeast Los Angeles intersection to honor what some refer to as the neighborhood's most sacred mural.*





A man holds an incense burner during a mural blessing on Jan. 26, 2020, in the Highland Park neighborhood of Los Angeles. RNS photo by Alejandra Molina

February 5, 2020

By [Alejandra Molina](#)

LOS ANGELES (RNS) — Aztec dancers knelt, swirled and stomped on the street. Others pounded drums and sounded shell trumpets. A woman held an incense burner above her, pointed it toward the sky and shook it in all directions around her.

On a recent Sunday afternoon, more than 100 people gathered in a northeast Los Angeles intersection to honor what some refer to as the neighborhood's most sacred mural.

Titled "Mexico-Tenochtitlan: The Wall That Talks," the [mural](#) fuses Aztec, Mayan and Native American images in unity with one another. Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent deity of Mesoamerican culture, winds his way through cultural icons like the Virgin Mary, the patron saint of Mexico; the Aztec calendar; and Cesar Chavez, who led the farmworker movement in the '60s.

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Brenda Perez created the Restorative Justice for the Arts project to help restore and preserve murals and sacred imagery around the area. RNS photo by Alejandra Molina

“These murals help us connect to our past and present,” said Brenda Perez, who grew up in this neighborhood of Highland Park.

That’s why Aztec dancers and healers assembled on Jan. 26 on Figueroa Street and Avenue 61, to bless and protect the mural after word spread about plans to build windows on that particular wall. The mural is on the outside of a building that, in August 2019, sold for \$5.8 million, property records show. The space is tied to a limited liability company, Fig Crossing LLC.

The ceremony, Perez said, was a way to invoke “ancestral protection” for the mural, despite a [statement](#) from Fig Crossing that said it had no plans to “erase, paint over, alter the mural or demolish the wall.”

In the statement, Fig Crossing said certain declarations surrounding the building and the company’s intentions with the mural have been “false and inflammatory.”

“We are committed to being thoughtful, transparent neighbors to this vibrant community,” the statement read.

Perez said the community will not be satisfied until the company signs a legally binding document that confirms its commitment to keep the mural intact. Fig Crossing could not be reached for comment about its plans for the building.





Titled “Mexico-Tenochtitlan: The Wall That Talks,” the mural fuses Aztec, Mayan and Native American images in the Highland Park neighborhood of Los Angeles. RNS photo by Alejandra Molina

Conrado TerrazasCross, a spokesperson for City Councilman Gil Cedillo, said murals in the neighborhood’s historical area cannot be removed without approval. “The Wall That Talks” is in an area covered by the Highland Park-Garvanza Historic Overlay Zone, he said. The city intervened after hearing of Fig Crossing’s rumored plans to build windows on the wall, TerrazasCross said.

To Perez, the whitewashing of murals is part of a larger problem in Highland Park, which has been described as one of the most [gentrifying](#) LA neighborhoods. She has seen murals completely painted over to cover graffiti, instead of having the artwork restored. Some murals, she said, have disappeared after new businesses occupy neighborhood buildings. Perez said artwork that’s registered to the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs has also been illegally removed.

Historically, murals and street art on the walls of Highland Park businesses have paid homage to the area’s Chicano identity and Latino culture. Images of the Virgin Mary, ice cream street vendors and lowrider cars have embellished storefronts across the neighborhood.





Women stand beside a mural in the Highland Park neighborhood of Los Angeles and watch a group blessing it on Jan. 26, 2020. RNS photo by Alejandra Molina

Perez created the [Restorative Justice for the Arts](#) project to help restore and preserve murals and sacred imagery around the area. The way Perez sees it, she and her neighbors look through murals as “windows into the spiritual landscape.”

As a doctoral candidate in psychology, Perez researches how sacred indigenous symbols and community art can help heal trauma and resist discrimination. She decided to focus on this topic when she realized how emotional she and other residents felt when certain community artwork disappeared.

She recalled a Virgin Mary image on a liquor store wall that was painted over.

“When murals with her image are whitewashed, it’s a sacrilegious act,” she said. “That’s something that everyone must respect because it’s a culture.”

Artist John Zender Estrada said some of his art has been removed.

One mural, “Resist Violence With Peace,” featured an Aztec warrior surrounded by eagles and was painted over a few years ago. He completed it in 1993, in the wake of the LA riots. Zender Estrada said he assumed his mural was protected under a [city ordinance](#) that considered artwork created before October 2013 as “vintage original art murals.”

He recalled real estate developers assuring him the mural would remain in place during construction of an art studio and restaurant. However, that was not the case. Terrazas Cross



did not immediately know how that mural was removed.

Zender Estrada is also one of the artists who created “The Wall That Talks” mural. He helped paint a brown-skinned Adam and Eve, with Adam opening up his arms as Eve holds a radiating sun with an image of a fetus. He said the artwork depicts “giving birth to creation.”

To Zender Estrada, the sacredness of these murals depends on the community.



Participants wear indigenous attire during a mural blessing on Jan. 26, 2020, in the Highland Park neighborhood of Los Angeles. RNS photo by Alejandra Molina

He said he expects his artwork to be removed in industrial areas because “there is no one to speak up for it.” But if residents of a neighborhood find their art important and sacred, they should “stand together” and bring “awareness of it,” he said.

Zender Estrada said it was a noble act for residents to unite in the mural blessing.



“If the community doesn’t speak up for the mural, it’s almost like leaving a child abandoned in the street,” he said.

“There should be more events like that, for every mural in the communities of Los Angeles,” Zender Estrada added.



LOS ANGELES • TRAVEL

## 9 Must-See Murals by Chicano Artists in East LA

Learn about LA's Chicano culture through street art.

By [Keisha Raines](#)

Published on 11/12/2020 at 4:32 PM



"Orale! Let's Cruise on Over to Progression, Aye!" | Photo by Sergio Robleto

While Los Angeles museums are currently closed for in-person visits, you can still get a taste of art and culture by exploring the city's outdoor murals. One of the best places to do this is in East



"Mexico-Tenochtitlan: A Sequence of Time and Culture" | Photo by Keisha Raines for Thrillist

## **Mexico-Tenochtitlan: A Sequence of Time and Culture**

*Artists: Andy Ledesma, John Zender Estrada, Rafael Corona, Jaime Ochoa, Dominic Ochoa, Isabel Martinez, Oscar De Leon, Mario Mancia, Jesse Silva, Anthony Ortega, and Jerry Ortega*

Also called, “The Wall that Talks,” this massive mural in Highland Park blends together symbols from Aztec, Mayan, Native American, African, and other cultural iconography all in unity with one another. On the left side of the mural we see the creation of life. Winding its way through a majority of the painting is Quetzalcoatl, the ancient Aztec feathered-serpent god who rules over wind, air, and learning.

**Location: 6037 N. Figueroa Street and Avenue 61, 90042**



The Prop 187 Moment: Post-187 and the Artistic Regeneración of a Community

187

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187

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# The Prop 187 Moment: Post-187 and the Artistic Regeneración of a Community

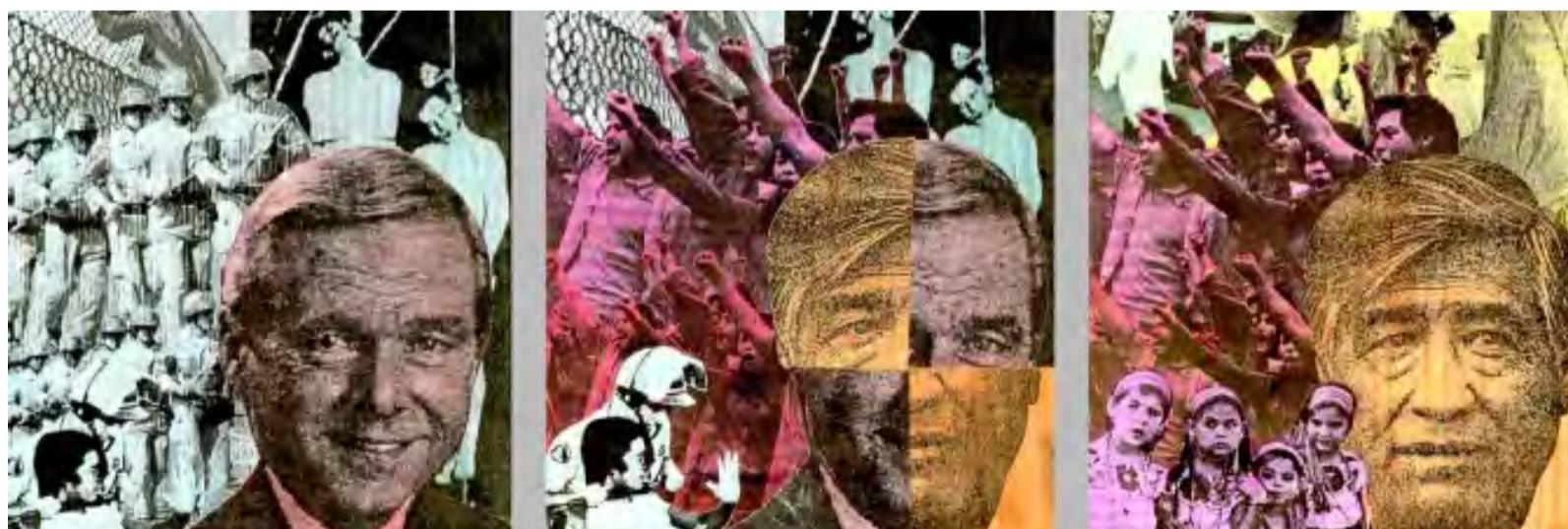
By Sybil Venegas

October 21, 2020



History &amp; Society

## Up Next

**Union Leaders Gather Their People Against 187****California is the United States of America, Just Sooner****Culture Clash Fights Back Through Satire and Political Comedy**

By Sybil Venegas

October 21, 2020



History &amp; Society

## The Prop 187 Moment: Post-187 and the Artistic Regeneración of a Community

[187](#)[News & Community](#)

Watch "187: The Rise of the Latino Vote" to explore how the failed prop 187 changed California forever.

In 1993, the CARA exhibition ended its three-year traveling run at the San Antonio Museum of Art. "CARA: Chicano Art Resistance and Affirmation" was the acclaimed Chicana/o art exhibition organized by UCLA's Wight Gallery and a large team of Chicano scholars, artists and curators. Opening in Los Angeles in 1990, the groundbreaking

exhibit featuring the work of over one hundred artists traveled across the country, marking a watershed moment for Chicano art, one of acceptance, inclusion and a national recognition of the genre. The moment however stood in stark contrast to the events of the following year when Proposition 187, the nativist California ballot measure that called for the denial of public services such as education and health care to undocumented immigrants, passed with almost 60% of Californians supporting the measure. While it seemed like Chicana/o artists had made some inroads into the nation's mainstream art world, the blatant racism inherent in the so-called Save Our State initiative (as Prop 187 was branded) suggested otherwise.



## The Prop 187 Moment: Post-187 and the Artistic Regeneración of a Community

187

News &amp; Community



"Hermana de Maiz: Portrait of Felicia Montez, 1998." Margaret Alarcón's artwork of Felicia Montes, one of the original co-founders of Mujeres de Maiz and is the daughter of Carlos Montes | Margaret "Quica" Alarcón

### More on Prop 187 and the movement it inspired



#### Organizing Against 187 and a Dreamer Dealing With Its Aftereffects

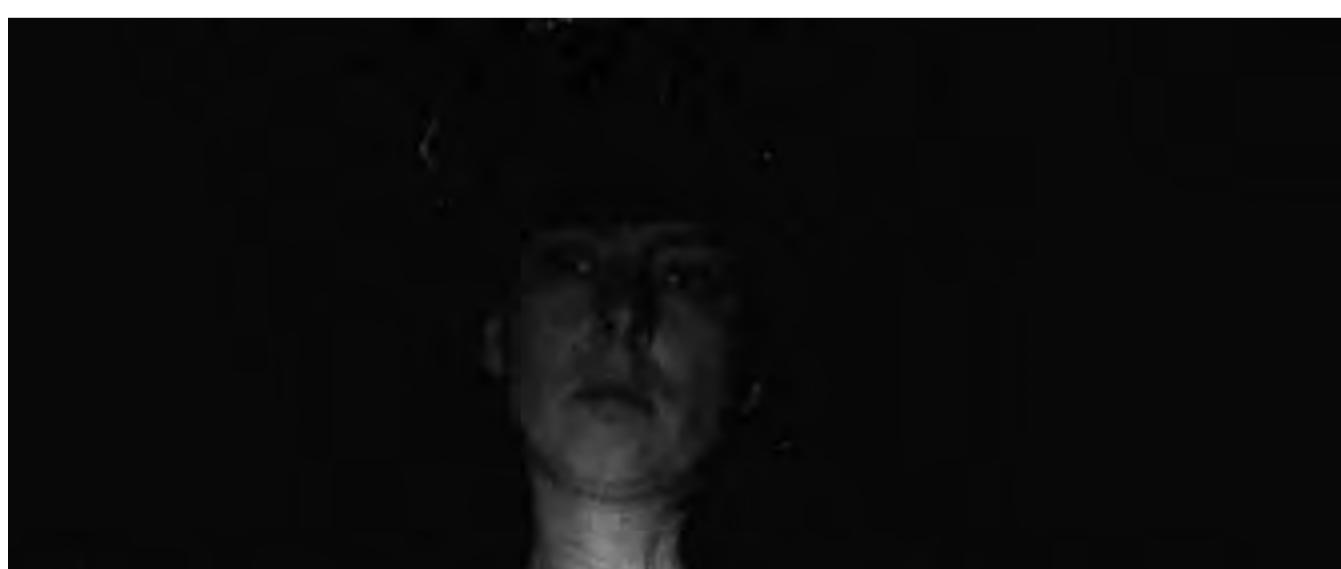


#### Raquel Cetz: A Dreamer Reeling From Post-187 Immigration Policies



#### California is the United States of America, Just Sooner

At the time of Prop 187, Chicana/o artists had, after struggling for decades to find a place within galleries, museums and universities, established a strong, if small, niche in the Los Angeles art world. Many of the artists who found themselves with invitations to show at private galleries, mount exhibitions, perform at universities and secure significant public art contracts, had for the most part been informed by and/or were active participants in the Mexican American social justice movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, now commonly referred to as The Chicano Movement. The movement's most crucial issues of the day revolved around the anti-Vietnam war movement, labor issues — particularly the United Farm Workers Union — and the struggle for equal education, inciting large protest rallies, marches and school walkouts. While issues relating to Mexican immigration to the United States were relevant and foundational to the Mexican American community, other issues were far more compelling to the generation of young Chicanos coming of age at this time. *Chicanismo* was the strategy employed to build a movement and inform a new visual culture and iconography. The concept of *Aztlan* emerged as a sacred landscape that grounded the movement with the notion of a spiritual homeland and culturally connected U.S.-born Chicanos to Mexico and its Indigenous past.



## The Prop 187 Moment: Post-187 and the Artistic Regeneración of a Community

187

News &amp; Community



"Re-Membering: Viva Zapata March" (1994), performative self portrait, black and white photo, 1999 | Sandra de la Loza

For the most part, *Chicanismo* and *Aztlan* informed the rich, visual language of Chicano art as well as its public and performative culture from its inception in the mid-1960s through the 1970s. Unfortunately, the slogans such as *La Causa* and *Viva La Raza* did not recognize, let alone remedy, the gender and sexual preference inequalities rampant in the movement and the genre. As such, Chicana and LGBTQ artists emerged with powerful and now iconic visual responses, while more progressive and conceptual urban collectives pushed the envelope on performance and iconography. Self Help Graphics, the most established art space on L.A.'s Eastside, showcased the work of progressive community artists. By the mid-1990s, it was internationally renowned for its printmaking ateliers, Day of the Dead altar making and exhibitions. As the millennium approached, a handful of artists who emerged out of the Chicano Movement found commercial success, while significant Chicana/o art collections were being built by private collectors, and murals influenced by Chicana/o artists could now be found around the world. But there were cracks in the walls. *Chicanismo* alone could not save the community from the growing onslaught of the Save Our State ideology in the final decade of the 20th century.



## The Prop 187 Moment: Post-187 and the Artistic Regeneración of a Community

187

News &amp; Community

**Transformation of Chicanx Visual and Performative Culture**

Felicia Montes and Liza Hita with Zapatista women in Oventic, Chiapas, August 1997 | Courtesy of Mujeres de Maiz

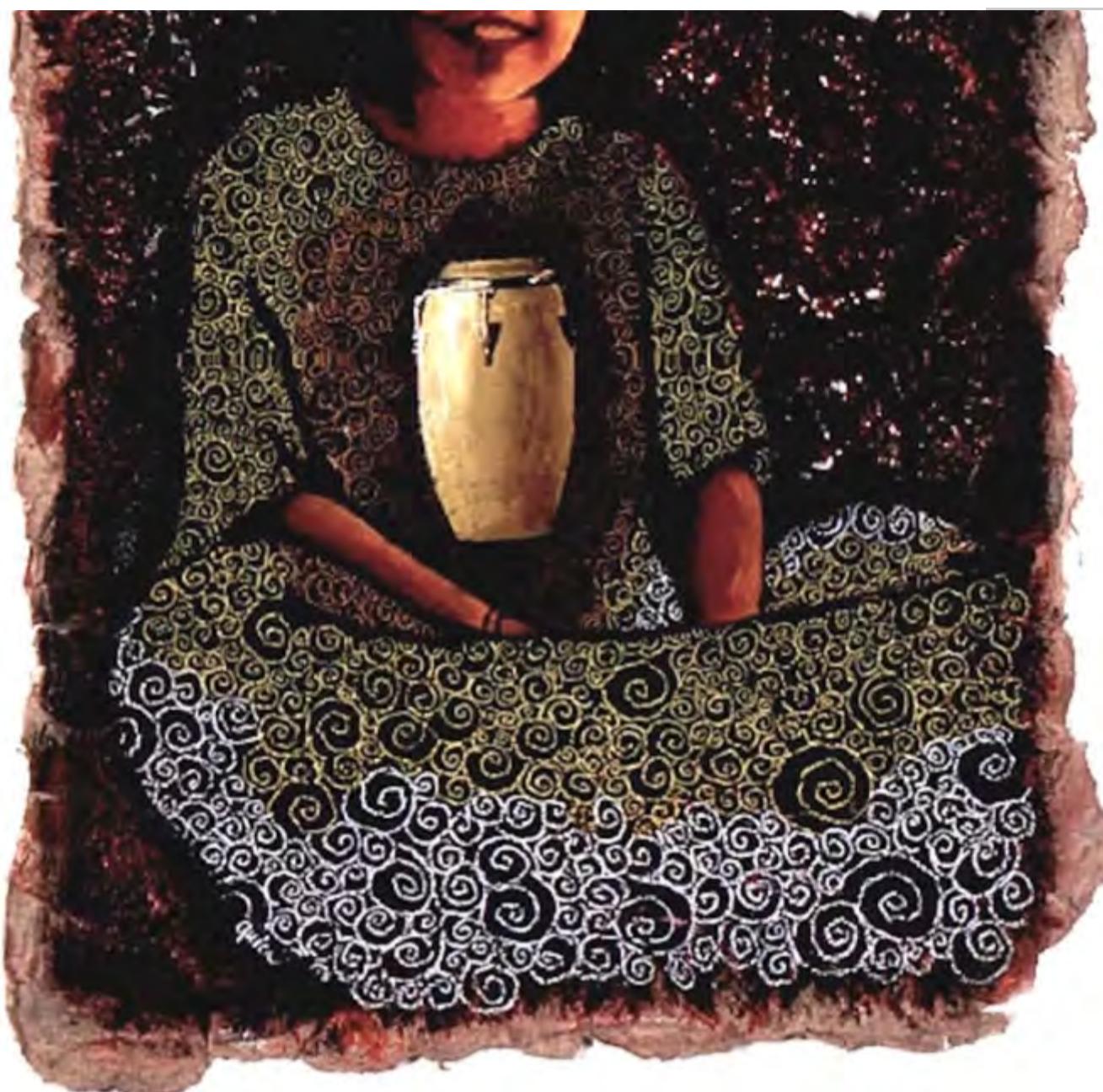
The rise of the Zapatista movement in Chiapas in response to the impact of global capitalism at the timely moment of the signing of NAFTA in January of 1994 provided an alternative vision for a new generation of artists. Just like the Chicano Movement, it would be the youth that would create a new model that would shape Chicano popular culture and identity in the coming millennium. This new era of globalization would launch a very different approach to artistic activism among Chicanx youth who had come of age with the burgeoning prison industrial system, which increasingly criminalized Black and Brown youth; the post-Rodney King verdict uprising and increasing marginalization, notwithstanding a strong consciousness and connection to Mexican immigrant communities and Indigenous groups. Immigration was not an abstract concept but a lived experience as emerging artists were often immigrants or children of immigrants. Prop 187 became the catalyst for a newfound activism against racist, anti-immigrant sentiment, while *Zapatismo* was embraced as the model for organizing. By the millennium, emerging artists and activists, now known as *artivists* explored online communication and mobilization, digital media, zines, pan-Latinx coalitions, feminism and open LGBTQ expression, transnational cultural aesthetics and employed fusions of theater, hip-hop, rap and Mexican traditional folk music as public, political platforms. In the meantime, first-generation Chicanx artists pushed forward the foundational concept of *Aztlan*, while embracing the principles of *Zapatismo* and engaging with younger artists as both mentors and comrades-in-arms.



## The Prop 187 Moment: Post-187 and the Artistic Regeneración of a Community

187

News &amp; Community



"Alma: Portrait of Martha Gonzalez, 1998." Alarcón's portrait of Martha Gonzalez dated 1988. Gonzalez is shown here with a conga, which she played often | Margaret "Quica" Alarcón

By the mid 1980s, the international worldview inherent in Chicana/o art would link the genre to struggles throughout Latin America, Africa and the Middle East. Chicana/o artists rose up in solidarity with the growing community of Central American refugees migrating to Los Angeles fleeing civil wars and unrest in their homelands. First-generation Chicana artist Yreina Cervántez, along with ESA/EastSide Artistas, including Gloria Alvarez, Frances Salome España, Marialice Jacob, Norma Alicia Pino and Kay Torres, organized the exhibition, "Alerta!" at Self Help Graphics in 1987. A passionate testimonial and critical response to the border policies of Howard Ezell, the INS commissioner for both Presidents Reagan and Bush in 1980s and '90s (he would later help write Prop 187), "Alerta!" displayed the intersectionality and solidarity with immigrants while foreshadowing the political struggles in the decades to come. Cervantez' work consistently draws upon *indigenismo* as a means to expose the mythologies and inaccuracies referencing Mexicano, Latino and *Indigena* populations in the United States as illegal aliens.

Click through below to see more works from 1987's "Alerta" at Self Help Graphics.



## The Prop 187 Moment: Post-187 and the Artistic Regeneración of a Community

187

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1/3 "Alerta" 1987 YDC design watercolor sewn on cloth. Collaboration with Marialice Jacob (stitching). | Courtesy of Yreina D. Cerváñez



Artist Sandra de la Loza recalls the cultural milieu of arts activism in Northeast L.A. at the time of Prop 187 as richly creative, with political struggles ranging from anti-Prop 187 protests, to support for Indigenous rights, to confronting environmental issues and police brutality. Her collaborations with the Aztlan Cultural Arts Foundation at the Old Los Angeles City Jail were foundational to the development of her political consciousness and helped her find her voice as a young artist within diverse, progressive art collectives. De la Loza's early photographs provide not only a glimpse into the activist community's response to the injustices of the time, but also reveal her early experimental approaches to documentary photography.

**Click through below to see more of Sandra de la Loza's work.**



**The Prop 187 Moment: Post-187 and the Artistic Regeneración of a Community**

187

News &amp; Community



2/4 "Love is the Only True Force" mural by Nuke, black and white photo, 1999 | Sandra de la Loza

Xicana artist and activist Felicia Montes was an undergraduate student in Los Angeles exploring her creativity in the post-187 years. She found inspiration at the People's Resource Center (PRC) founded by musician Zach de la Rocha in Highland Park. This experimental art space was ground zero in providing support for young artists on the Eastside and being a place to collectively develop their political consciousness and share their artistic expressions. Montes, along with a group of like-minded women artists, began meeting at the PRC and founded Mujeres de Maiz (women of the corn) in 1997.

Xicana artist and graphic designer for the organization, Margaret Alarcón, recalls the group as a powerful and necessary group of activist women, rooted indigenous consciousness as well as being feminist, multiracial, intersectional and intergenerational. In 1997, some of its members traveled to Chiapas with other politically active Chicanx artists and musicians for the *Encuentro Chicano Zapatista* in 1997 (this was a series of meetings in Chiapas with young Chicano artists and Zapatistas enabling dialog and exchange of ideas between them). Upon their return, they integrated Zapatista organizing principles and women's revolutionary laws into their organization, which sought to nurture women's creativity, wellness and accomplishments, with an unapologetic and revolutionary consciousness. Both Montes and Alarcón credit the post-187 political moment and the PRC in Highland Park as foundational, laying the groundwork in allowing Mujeres de Maiz to grow and evolve into the significant Los Angeles grassroots, multimedia arts organization it is today.

*Author's note: The changing identity labels used in this article such as Chicano, Chicana/o, Chicanx and Mexican American is an attempt to reflect the changing contexts and socio-political perspectives of this community through the decades.*

*Top Image: "Metamorphosis, 1995" by Margaret 'Quica' Alarcón is a photo collage triptych with pantone marker. | Margaret "Quica" Alarcón*

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187

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# 'Whitewashed': how gentrification continues to erase LA's bold murals

Tensions over  
disappearing artwork in  
one of LA's hottest  
neighborhoods reflect  
anxiety over rapid change  
and soaring property prices  
by [Andrew Gumbel](#)

Artist John 'Zender' Estrada painted the mural, Tenochtitlan - the Wall That Talks, that runs along North Avenue 61 in Los Angeles with nine other artists. Photograph: Allison Zaucha/The Guardian

Sun 26 Jan 2020 07.00 EST

**K**athy Gallegos remembers the first time she saw John "Zender" Estrada's [striking mural](#) of an Aztec warrior flanked by two eagles. She was parking behind a music venue in Highland Park, a heavily Latino working-class neighborhood northeast of downtown Los Angeles, and couldn't help noticing the bold imagery of a piece that Zender had painted in the wake of the 1992 riots to urge ordinary Angelenos to "resist violence with peace".

"I remember thinking, that's a really nice mural," Gallegos recalled. "Next thing I knew, the place was bought and it was gone."

It was the same pattern a couple of years later, when Gallegos - who owns a local gallery promoting Latino and Chicano art - stopped to admire a graffiti-strewn parking lot wall on the other side of Figueroa Boulevard, where for years young artists had been given free rein to practice and invent at will. She particularly liked a heart image reminiscent of a veteran LA muralist named Frank Romero and made a note to photograph it.

"Next thing I know," she said, "the whole wall was whitewashed."



A mural on the wall of the Highland Park Florist in Los Angeles was painted by Rodolfo Cardona in 2018. Photograph: Allison Zaucha/The Guardian

Urban murals are fragile artworks at the best of times, subject to the whims of taggers who may deface them, and of property owners who often want to paint over them or knock down the walls. But Gallegos and many others in Highland Park recognized that these new erasures were different: the result of dizzying change in one of the most rapidly gentrifying parts of LA and, it seemed, a failure by the newcomers to understand the culture of the neighborhood they were starting to call their own.

Now, the consternation that Gallegos and others once felt has degenerated into a full-blown conflict, with the murals of Highland Park acting as a proxy battleground for a variety of other tensions - over property prices, the pace of gentrification, tenant evictions, the integrity of once-venerated local artists, and the ability of local city officials to act as honest brokers between the competing interest groups.

## Mural wars

Old murals, even those protected under a 2013 citywide [ordinance](#), continue to disappear without warning, triggering noisy protests. Commissioning new artwork, meanwhile, often proves perilous, as muralists endure personal taunts and threats as they paint and never know when their work will get spray-bombed with loud slogans telling the hipsters and gentrifiers to go back where they came from.

The Highland Park mural war erupted in earnest in 2017, when two city-owned sites - including the wall with the Frank Romero-esque heart - were whitewashed, and a radical group calling itself [Restorative Justice for the Arts](#) started accusing local city officials of colluding with incoming property speculators to destroy the neighborhood.



A building on the corner of Figueroa Street and Avenue 58 is up for lease. Photograph: Allison Zaucha/The Guardian

It did not help the city's cause that a trail of [official emails](#) soon became public and showed that council employees had deemed the long-standing graffiti walls to be "illegal" and given their blessing to a local business owners' association to wipe them clean.

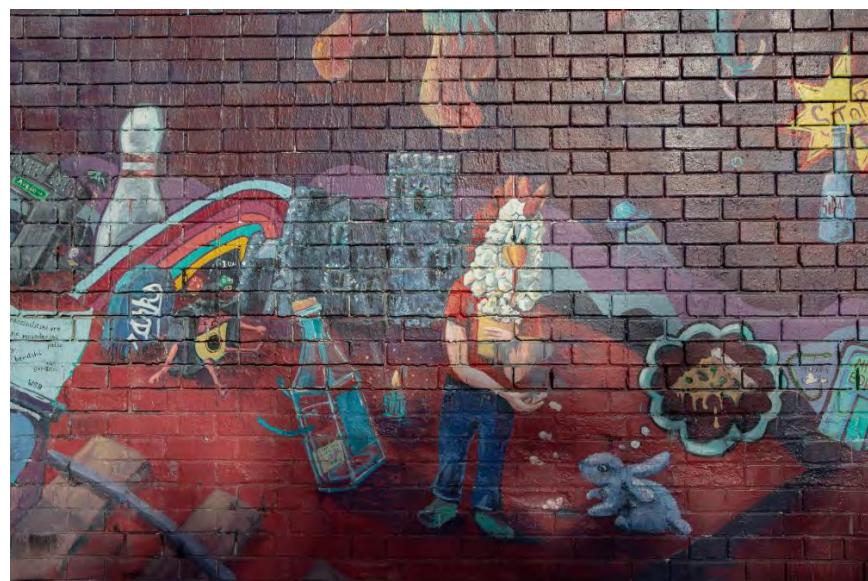
The city appeared to understand it had made a blunder and sought to make amends by asking Zender, the artist behind the destroyed Aztec warrior, to paint something new at the site of one of the erasures. The plan fell apart, though, after Zender complained that the offer came with too little money and too many conditions about who in the neighborhood Zender was allowed to associate with.

Plan B was to turn to the venerable Frank Romero - most famous for a mural he painted on the side of a [downtown freeway](#) for the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics - who accepted the commission but passed most of the work off to an assistant, since he lived most of the year outside the United States.

The new mural was attacked over and over, once with blue paint and the single word "Displacers" (in imitation of the Dodgers baseball team's logo), and another time with crude white spray paint that read: "Fuck hipsters." The anti-gentrification activists were incensed, first because a local real estate agency was sponsoring the mural, which made Romero a sellout in their eyes, and second because Romero's assistant was white. Pretty soon the wall was back to all white, too.

Next on the anti-gentrification taggers' list was a mural on the side of an upscale bar and deli called Tinfoil (since renamed Flask), where whisky connoisseurs can spend as much as \$1,200 on a single bottle. The city itself vetoed Tinfoil's first idea, which was to turn the mural into an advertisement for Johnny Walker. Instead, the bar

commissioned a local Latino artist, Sol Luongo, to produce a montage of Highland Park landmarks under the title Momentos Magicos Magic Moments.



Left: Flask, an upscale bar and deli, is one of the many new businesses in Highland Park. Right: A mural on the side of Flask includes an image of the controversial Chicken Boy. Photographs: Allison Zaucha/The Guardian

One of the features Luongo included was a piece of vernacular art that a graphic designer brought into the neighborhood just a few years ago: a giant statue of a man with a chicken head and a bucket of wings that once adorned a restaurant roof in downtown Los Angeles and now sits on its owner's roof on Figueroa Boulevard. It has proven a **powerful marketing tool** for the local business association - which is exactly why the anti-gentrification crowd hates it.

"We're not going to allow Chicken Boy to become the statue of Highland Park. It has nothing to do with Highland Park. That's some Christopher Columbus shit," said Brenda Perez, founder of Restorative Justice for the Arts.

The mural was tagged repeatedly as it went up, and Luongo became so afraid of one particular activist who hurled abuse at her from the sidewalk that she asked friends to stand by her while she worked. Her mural did get completed, and the bar paid to have it coated in an expensive graffiti-resistant varnish. But it continues to be attacked - regularly enough for the bar manager to have the city graffiti-cleaning service on his speed-dial.

The Chicken Boy statue has proven a powerful marketing tool for the local business association. Photograph: Allison Zaucha/The Guardian

## Erasing history

Many Highland Park residents and business owners claim the anti-gentrification taggers and protesters are a tiny minority who do not represent the views of a diverse and broadly happy community. On the other hand, many of

those same residents and business owners have been shocked by the aggressiveness of property speculators who have bought out apartment buildings and storefronts and either jacked up the rents - sometimes more than threefold overnight - or evicted the tenants on short notice.

Some of Highland Park's most revered muralists have themselves been priced out of the neighborhood. And there is a sense, among those who grew up with them in the 1990s and 2000s and are still hanging on - either because they own their own houses or continue to live in rent-controlled apartment buildings - that what's at stake is an essential piece of the city's soul. "Those of us born and raised in LA know the significance of murals, and those who aren't from here don't know," said Irene Narvaez, the principal of Highland Park High School who grew up locally and now encourages student mural-painting on her own schoolyard. "There's more about social justice and history in these murals than my students can learn about in books."

It's not that the newcomers are hostile to mural art, because most of them aren't. And while Perez and her allies point fingers at the city, the city says, with some justification, that it has only limited enforcement authority. "You have to have a culturally sensitive approach, but there's also a whole issue related to property ownership," Conrado Terrazas of the local council district office said. "It's very complicated."

Often, the problem is not ruthless property speculation, but a glaring *lack* of sensitivity among those, including public officials, who should know better. Last October - during National Hispanic Heritage Month no less - a Highland Park elementary school principal who did not grow up in the area whitewashed a much-loved mural depicting immigrant farmworkers, ostensibly because she was worried that it was attracting graffiti.



Right: A much-loved mural at Gervanza Elementary school depicting immigrant farmworkers was whitewashed last October. Left: "They want to erase the history of the walls we wanted to put up," said Daniel Cervantes, the artist of the Gervanza mural. Photographs: Allison Zaucha/The Guardian

After the principal felt the community's outrage - including a letter from the son of Cesar Chavez, the legendary Californian farmworkers' leader - she contacted the original artist and a second muralist and began planning for a replacement. What remains unclear, however, is whether she wants to restore the spirit of the original or - as the artist, Daniel Cervantes, told the Guardian - she wants to use the mural to promote Garvanza Elementary as a magnet school. (The principal, Sarah Gilman, would not comment beyond a brief statement saying how excited she was to move forward with community input.)

"First they push people out, and now they want to erase the history of the walls we wanted to put up," Cervantes said. "I want to keep the peace and try to make it right, but we have got to have an explanation. We've lost so much and have very little left."

Cervantes, who moved to the outer suburbs three years ago to raise his daughters and earns his living mostly as a tattoo artist, has gone through a similar agony over what is arguably his masterwork - a 170-ft frieze depicting indigenous peoples and myths from Canada down to Mexico that adorns the roadside perimeter of the Southwest Museum of the American Indian in LA.

For several years after he completed the mural in 2004, the museum took good care of it. But starting in 2013, Cervantes said, the museum started ignoring his maintenance recommendations, the paint was soon covered in graffiti, and eventually the whole thing was whitewashed. A consortium of interested parties - including Kathy Gallegos's Avenue 50 Studio and the city - raised \$20,000 to have it restored but somehow cut Cervantes out of their deliberations and ended up giving the job to another artist.

The mural looks stunning once more - the restoration is expected to be completed by early February - but there is no budget to maintain it and the museum property is up for sale, which could leave the mural without institutional support. Cervantes is fatalistic about a piece that has broken his heart many times already. "Que sera, sera," he said.

Pola Lopez helps to restore Daniel Cervantes' mural along the side of the Southwest Museum of the American Indian. Photograph: Allison Zaucha/The Guardian

## 'We need to preserve them'

There was a time, more than a decade ago, when the political leadership in [Los Angeles](#) pushed hard to preserve the mural art that, in many ways, has defined the popular culture of the city. Zender recalled how Ed Reyes, the city council member for Highland Park from 2001 to 2013, would not only visit his work sites but would dip a brush in the paint himself. Antonio Villaraigosa was a council member in the neighboring district from 2003 to 2005 and then LA mayor for the next eight years; he, too, was a champion of the muralists and helped create a register to preserve their work.

What has changed since is not so much the political outlook of the new leadership than the sheer pace of change as LA's economy has boomed and waves of young professionals have radiated out from downtown and Hollywood (themselves once depressed) into the next ring of neighborhoods. The rules protecting murals were never that strong to begin with, but in the swirl of gentrification they have often been overlooked or forgotten.

Graffiti mars a mural in a Highland Park parking lot. Photograph: Allison Zaucha/The Guardian

"Things can go out of whack when people don't follow protocol," Zender said. "What happened to the Aztec warrior mural is that people didn't follow protocol."

Now the protocol is about to be tested again with what is arguably Zender's masterwork - another big piece, painted with nine other muralists, that runs along the side of a commercial building on North Avenue 61 titled Tenochtitlan - the Wall That Talks, after the great Aztec city destroyed to make way for Mexico City. A consortium led by a Beverly Hills property developer bought the building last August, just as Zender and some of the other artists were putting the finishing touches to a comprehensive restoration. Now the owners have told Zender through an intermediary that they intend to install two windows along that wall.

Theoretically, the piece is protected, but it is far from clear that the city or anybody else has the power to stop the new owners from punching holes through the existing artwork. Zender said that if the choice was to cooperate with the owners to modify Tenochtitlan or to risk losing it altogether, he'd opt for what he called "the lesser evil".

The community, meanwhile, is awash with rumors of what exactly the owners intend. Restorative Justice for the Arts is organizing a "blessing" for the mural with native healers and Aztec dancers this Sunday. And Terrazas of the council district office was, for once, in sympathy with them. "We want to preserve that mural," he said. "We need to find a way to make that happen." He was skeptical that any plan to install windows would pass muster with the city's Department of Cultural Affairs.

The mural on North Avenue 61 was painted by John "Zender" Estrada and nine other muralists. Photograph: Allison Zaucha/The Guardian

The owners - identifying themselves only by the name of their limited company, Fig Crossing LLC, and communicating only via their lawyer - appear to have been stunned by the vehemence of the reaction to their plans. "Many reporters thrive on writing sensational articles that portray 'evil developers' who are destroying the community, but that is not what you have here," the lawyer, Skip Kessler, insisted in an email to the Guardian. He did not, however, deny that the plan was to punch window holes in the mural.

Kathy Gallegos, the art gallery owner, said she saw Highland Park as part of a sad pattern across Los Angeles' Latino communities where street art has often given way to commerce and a city-wide tendency to forget its own history. "In other countries they have more respect than we do here in LA," she said. "We have to get into people's minds that murals are monuments. They are historical and we have to preserve them."

"We were the mural capital of the world. And we're not any more."

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As 2022 begins, there's a new year resolution we'd like you to consider. We'd like to invite you to join more than 1.5 million people in 180 countries who have taken the step to support us financially - keeping us open to all, and fiercely independent.

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**REAL ESTATE****Conceptual Renderings Uncovered For Fig Crossing, Site of Highland Park Mural Central To Controversy**

'Tenochtitlan—The Wall That Talks' was rumored to be erased as part of incoming redevelopment leading to an influx of community backlash. Drawings show the mural in place.

🕒 POST BY: CALEB J. SPIVAK | 📅 AUGUST 30, 2020 | 💬 ONE COMMENT



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**Fig Crossing, LLC** this month unveiled renderings and details surrounding its in-progress redevelopment of a block of commercial buildings on the corner of North Avenue 61 and North Figueroa Street, in the Highland Park neighborhood.

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Aptly called **Fig Crossing**, plans call for two bow-truss buildings, contiguous at 6029 – 6039 N. Figueroa St., with exposed ceilings, an elongated breezeway allowing for open-air common spaces and multiple patios, according to recently-minted marketing materials published earlier this month by **Industry Partners**, the firm overseeing leasing for the project. The buildings are set to get new facades and storefronts with multiple points of entry and sidewalk dining.

Developers are proposing two floor plan options across the available **13,000 square feet** of space. Option one would include four restaurant tenants, two retailers, and two offices. Option two eliminates the offices and instead expands the footprint of the retail spaces. With either option, there would be a shared parking lot with 15 spaces.



adorns was redeveloped causing protests and community backlash. Fig Crossing, LLC, maintained that the mural would remain.

"Our client, Fig Crossing, LLC, recognizes and understands the importance of the rich culture, history, and heritage of the Highland Park neighborhood," **Warren J. "Skip" Kessler**, attorney for Fig Crossing, LLC, told [The Occidental at the time](#). "Unfortunately, there have been several false and inflammatory statements recently surrounding our client's ownership of this building and our client's intentions regarding the Tenochtitlan Mural. Our client is very fond of the Tenochtitlan Mural and has no plans to erase, paint over, or alter the Mural or to demolish the wall."

A rendering of the building shows a glimpse of the mural intact, including a bystander snapping a picture of the indigenous work. Reps for the project on Sunday did not immediately respond to a request for comment by What Now Los Angeles.



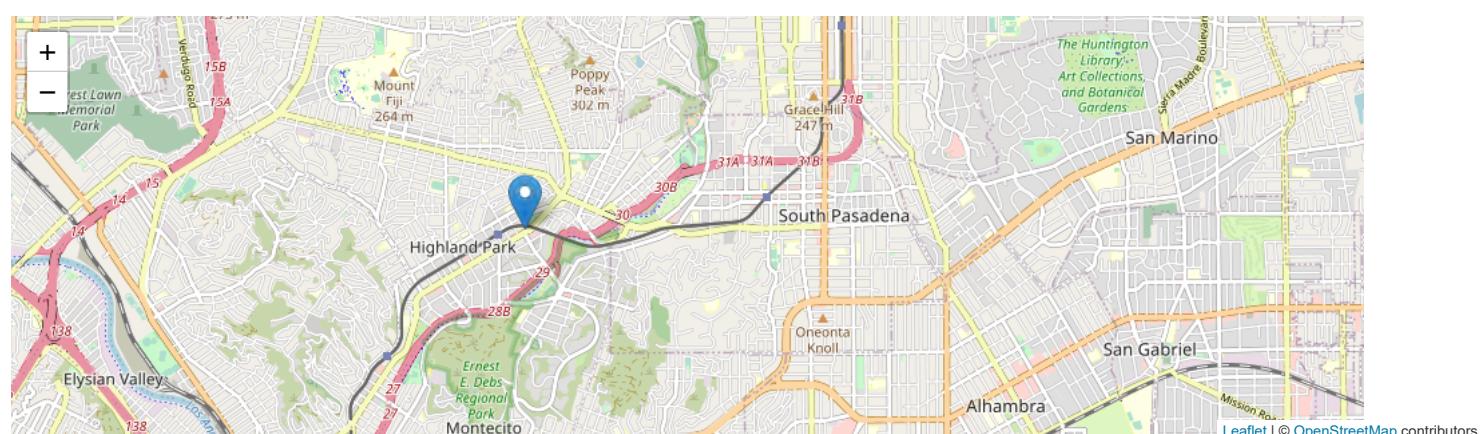
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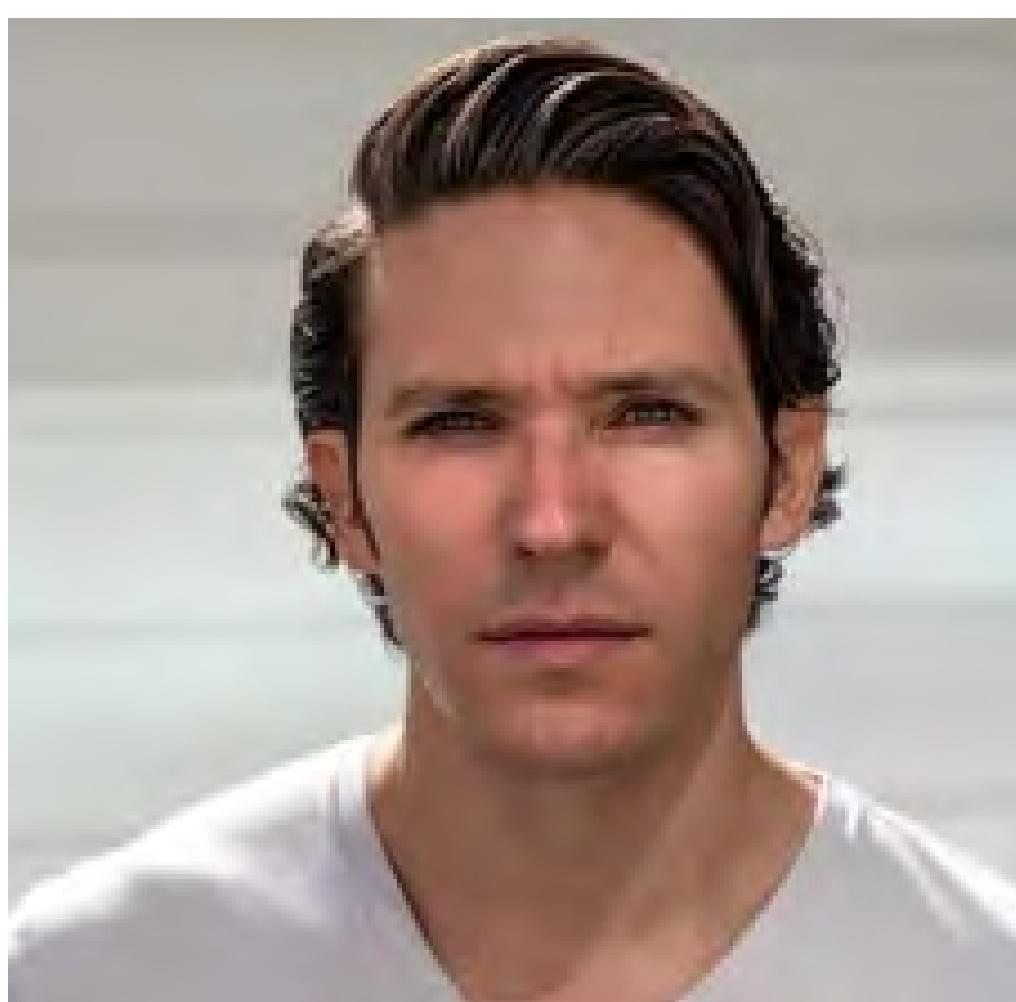
Rendering: Official



Rendering: Official



**6029-6039 N Figueroa St, Los Angeles, CA 90042**



ARTS

# L.A. Was The Mural Capital Of The World, What Happened?

• Javier Rojas • December 16, 2021 • 4 Min Read



The war on L.A.'s murals was intentional, and now the effects may be irreversible.

The walls that surround Ernesto De La Loza's work office in Echo Park look much different than they did 20 years ago. The vibrant mural of the Lady of Guadalupe is no longer there. Instead, there is a wall filled with graffiti and attempts to paint over the unrecognizable words.

He points across the street to show me the new upstart businesses that have come into rapidly changing neighborhood, that he says once "had a mural on every corner".

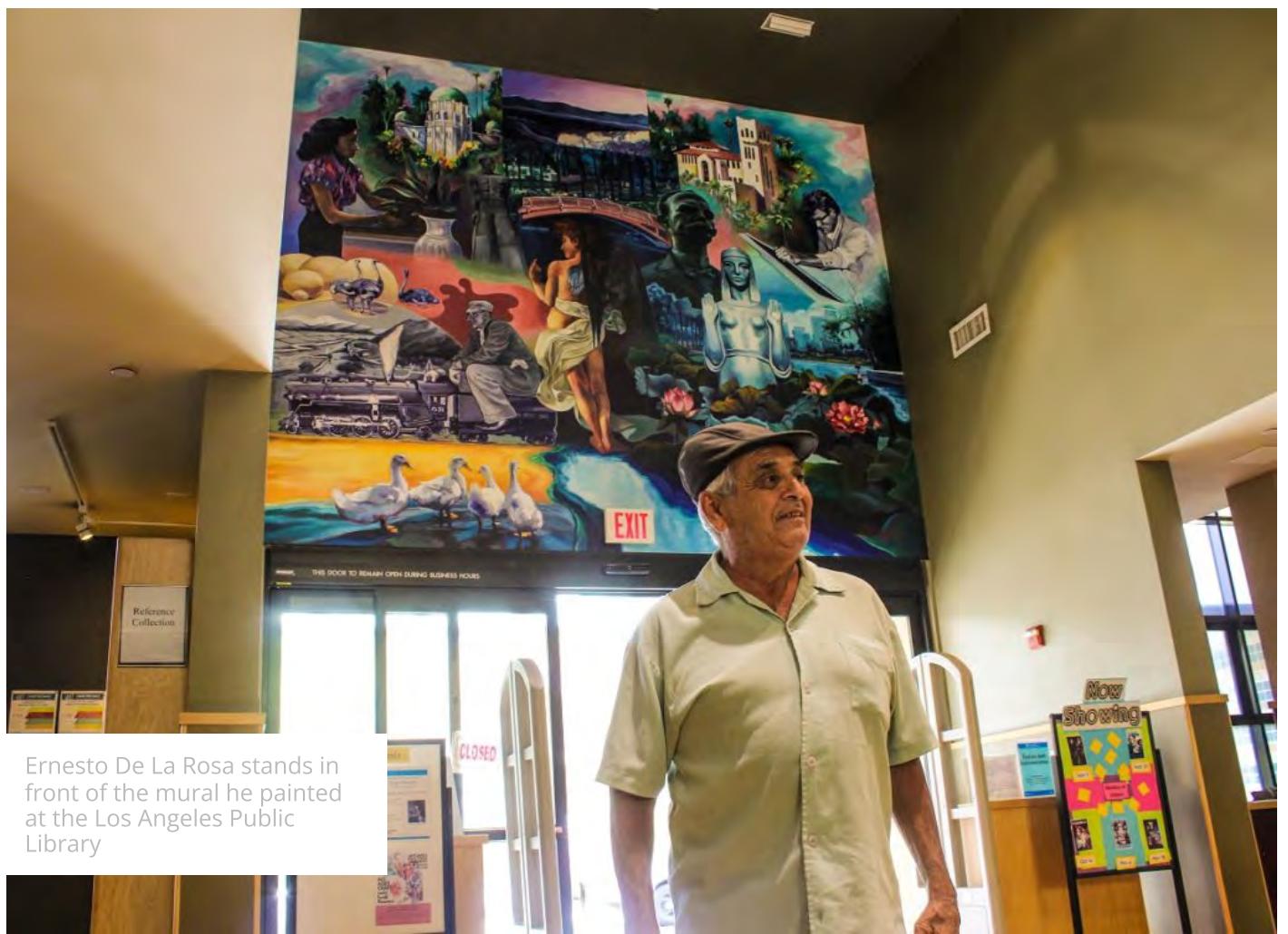
De La Loza, 71, knows his way around Los Angeles and he also knows how it used to look. That's because he was a muralist during the Chicano Pride movement in East L.A. in the 60's



"These murals represented our struggles and our stories that weren't being taught in history books," De La Loza says. "That's why I started painting, to express myself and for the past 50 years I've stood true to that."

In those 50 years, things in L.A. have certainly changed. Gentrification has hit the majority of Northeast L.A. and with that has come the erasure of some of those murals. But that all started back in the 90's when murals began to disappear due to tagging, damage due to weather and overall lack of maintenance.

"There was tagging all over them and that was painful to see because it was our own people behind it," De La Loza says as he takes a deep breath. "We killed the mural movement and that pains me."



Ernesto De La Rosa stands in front of the mural he painted at the Los Angeles Public Library

These murals became “eye sores” in the community due to the graffiti on them and neighbors followed with complaints about how they made their streets look. In 2002, the city

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2013 with the addition of a mural ordinance that would protect artists work if ever defaced or attempted to be painted over.

But the damage was done during that period. During the peak of the mural movement in L.A. there was an estimated 2,500 murals up on city walls. In that 11 year period, hundreds of murals were lost due to the [whitewashing from the city](#). An individual who wanted to put up a new mural also wasn’t allowed since they could be fined or even put in jail due to the moratorium.

“We lost more than just a piece of art, we lost our history, we lost years of hard work and more importantly we lost our presence in this city.”

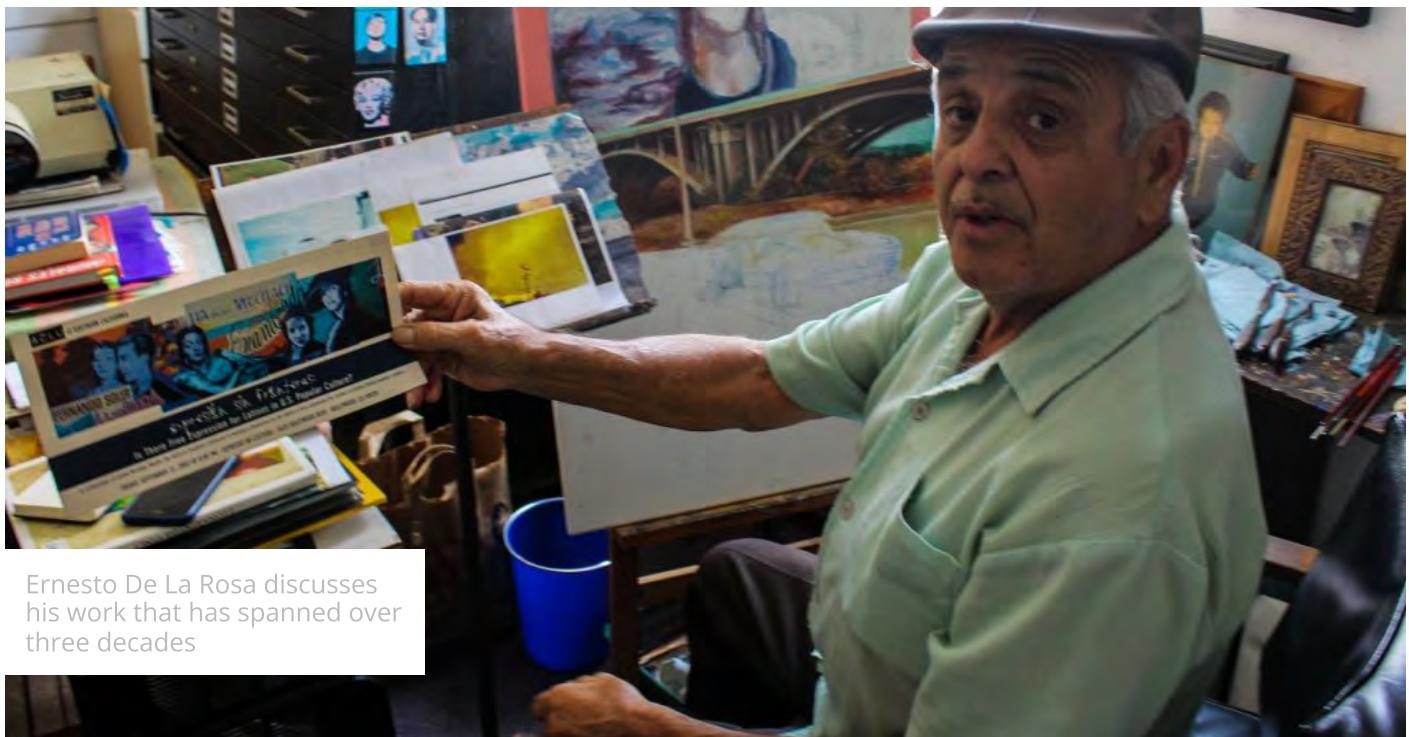
De La Loza says when the city lifted the moratorium it coincided with a new wave of change that came to L.A. around 2013. Highland Park and Echo Park, both Latino enclaves for decades, saw [gentrification](#) hit and a rise in new businesses take over the community. By then, more than half of the murals you recognized were gone.



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Ernesto De La Rosa discusses his work that has spanned over three decades

While the city of L.A. now allows the painting of murals, things aren't as easy as just simply choosing a wall and painting on it. There are multiple fees and permits that are required to paint a mural on a private property and business. The new mural ordinance had unintended consequences as many Latino muralists couldn't afford or have the time to acquire all these permits.

"The ordinance helped but in reality it helped the more affluent and outsider community that was coming into the city," De La Loza says. "It's obvious when you look around the neighborhood whose art is up. It's nice art but it's not ours."

De La Loza still has hope. He says there is a need for murals and a young generation that needs to know about the power of art. He points to other cities like New York and Philadelphia that have restored their own murals and have championed on painting new ones.

"These murals had a purpose back then and they have one now too. I'd hate to see our city deprived of our stories because that's what these murals were, stories into our lives, our struggles and our rise."

## About the author

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Javier Rojas is a contributor and reporter for the Daily Chela covering a wide gamut of areas including politics, immigration and the intersectionality of Latino and U.S. culture. He is an award-winning journalist for reporting and photography. Javier grew up in East Los Angeles and is still waiting for his Dodgers to finally break a 31-year-old title drought.

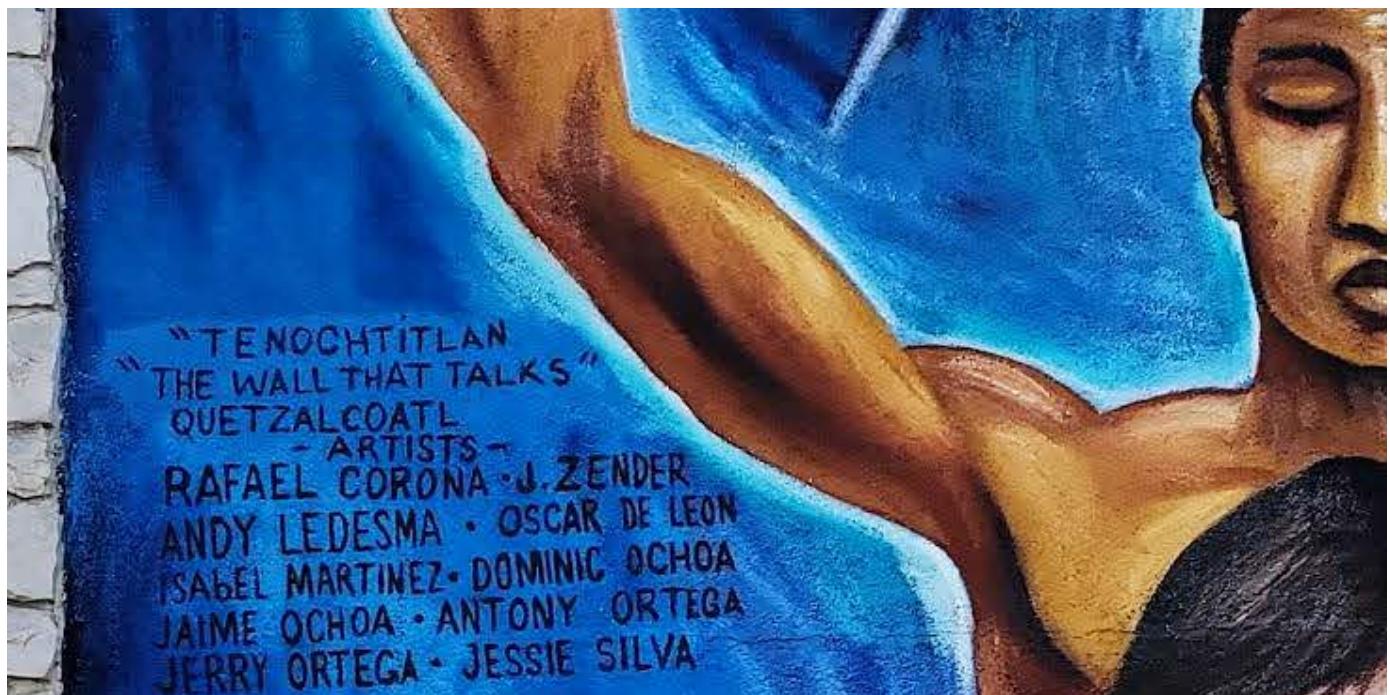
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## *Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks*

*Current Photographs*



*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks*, 6039 N. Figueroa Street (Corner of Figueroa & Avenue 61), November 9, 2021, Photo by Richard Montes.



*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks*, 6039 N. Figueroa Street (Corner of Figueroa & Avenue 61), November 9, 2021, Photo by Richard Montes.



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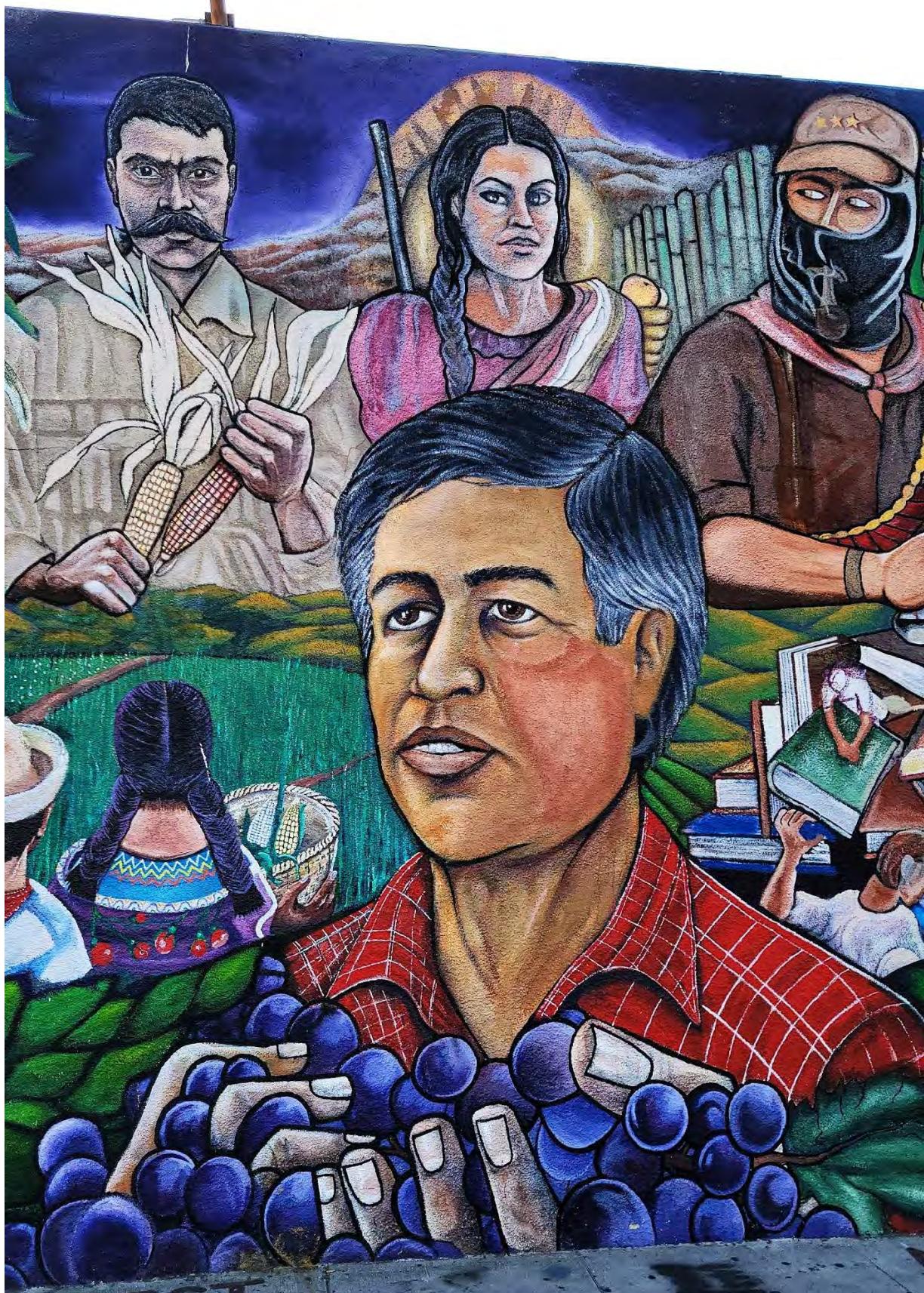
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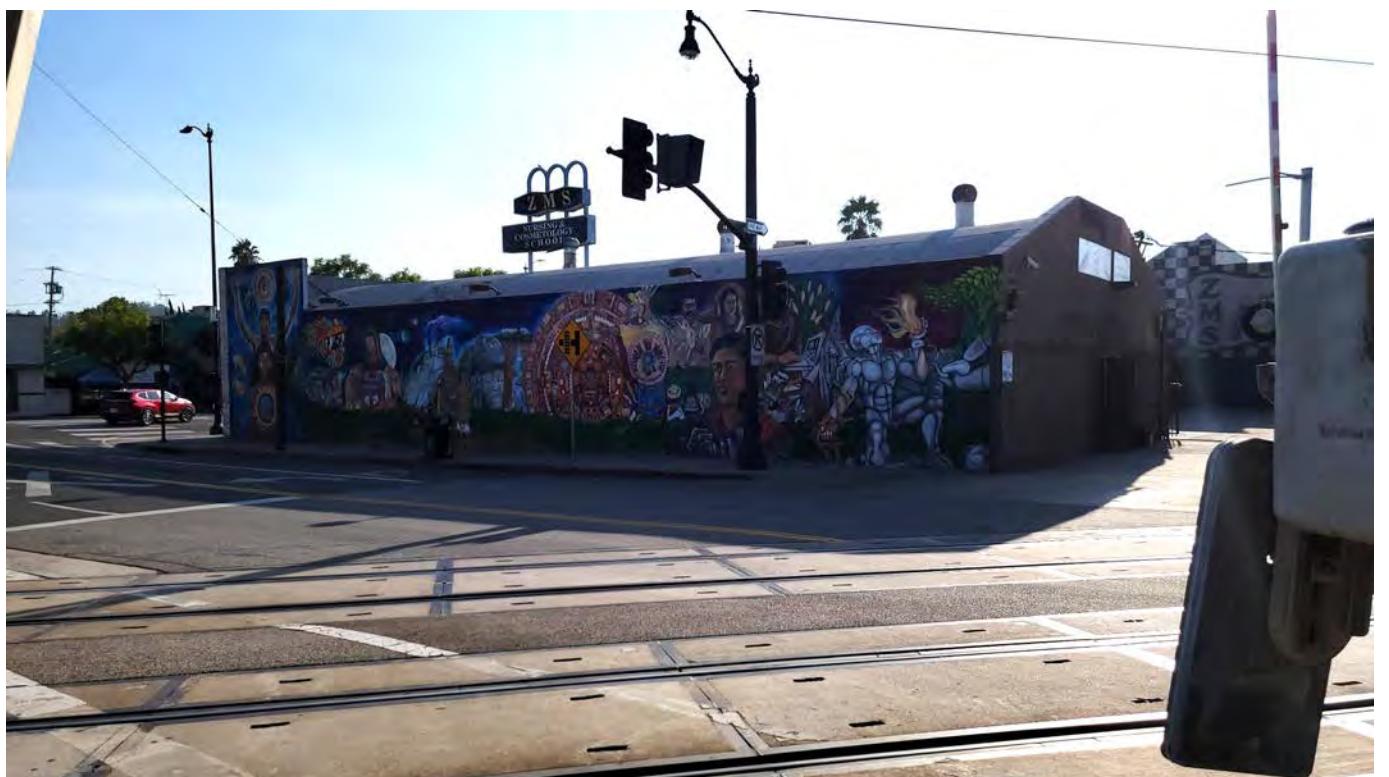
Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks, 6039 N. Figueroa Street (Corner of Figueroa & Avenue 61), November 9, 2021, Photo by Richard Montes.



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# **Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks**

HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS



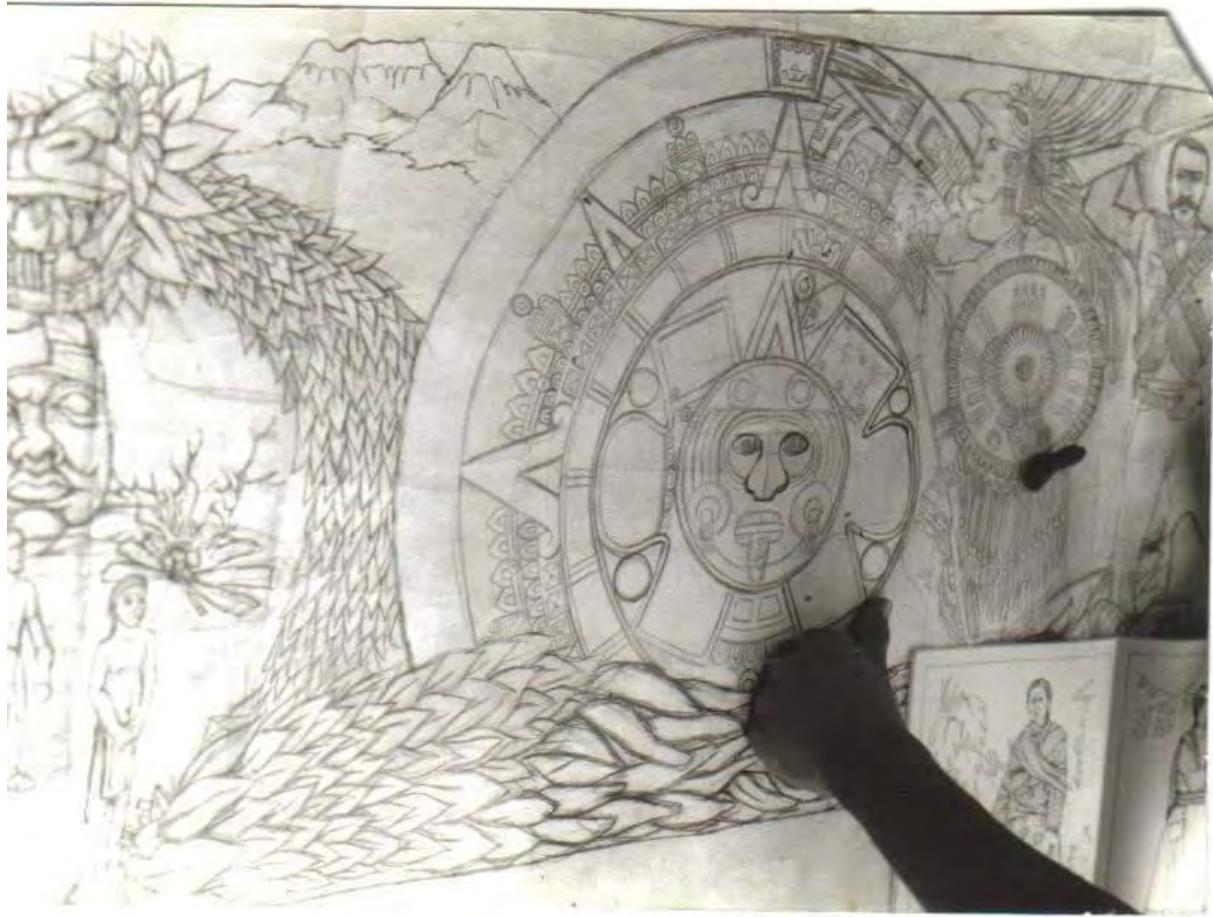
*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks, 6039 N. Figueroa Street (Corner of Figueroa & Avenue 61), 1996, Photo Provided by Anthony "Eagle" Ortega.*



Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks, 6039 N. Figueroa Street (Corner of Figueroa & Avenue 61), 1996, Photo Provided by Anthony "Eagle" Ortega.



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# **Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks**

HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS



*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks, 6039 N. Figueroa Street (Corner of Figueroa & Avenue 61), 1997, Photo by Robin Dunitz.*



*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks, 6039 N. Figueroa Street (Corner of Figueroa & Avenue 61), 2009, Photo by Charles Fischer.*



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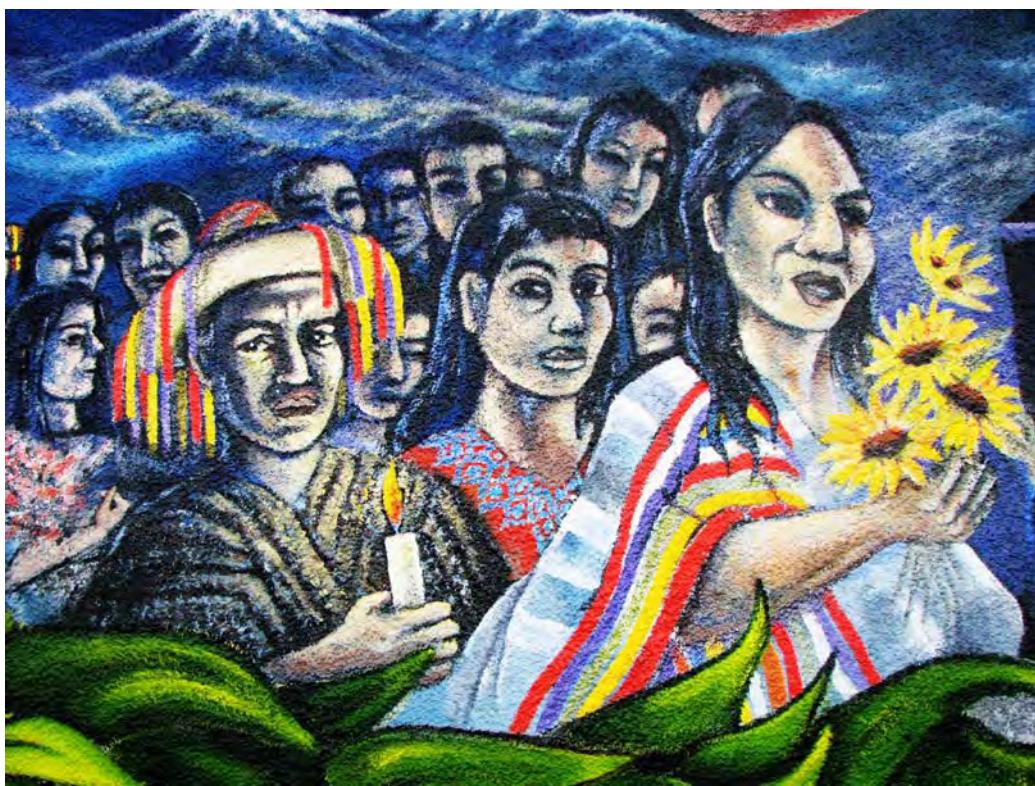
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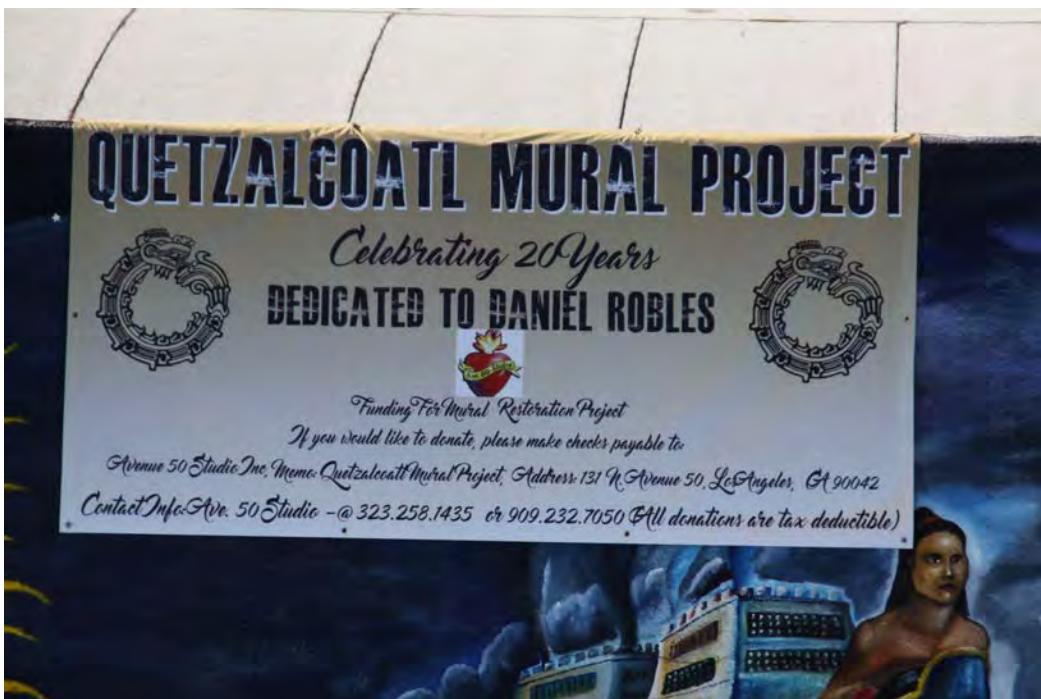
Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks, 6039 N. Figueroa Street (Corner of Figueroa & Avenue 61), 2009, Photo by Charles Fischer.

# **Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks**

2018 RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHS



*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks, 6039 N. Figueroa Street (Corner of Figueroa & Avenue 61), 2018, Photo by Al Strange.*



*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks, 6039 N. Figueroa Street (Corner of Figueroa & Avenue 61), 2018, Photo by Al Strange.*



*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks*, 6039 N. Figueroa Street (Corner of Figueroa & Avenue 61), 2018, Photo by Al Strange.





*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks, (L to R: Rafael Cardenas, Andy Ledesma, Dominic Ochoa, Anthony "Eagle" Ortega) 6039 N. Figueroa Street  
(Corner of Figueroa & Avenue 61), 2018, Photo by Al Strange.*



*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks*, Artist John "Zender" Estrada works on the mural,  
6039 N. Figueroa Street (Corner of Figueroa & Avenue 61), 2018, Photo by Kathleen Gallegos.



*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks, (L to R: Rafael Cardenas, Andy Ledesma, Dominic Ochoa, Anthony "Eagle" Ortega)*

6039 N. Figueroa Street (Corner of Figueroa & Avenue 61), 2018, Photo by Al Strange.



*Tenochtitlan: The Wall that Talks*, Artist Rafael Cardenas works on the mural restoration, 6039 N. Figueroa Street

(Corner of Figueroa & Avenue 61), 2018, Photo by Al Strange.



# City of Los Angeles

## Department of City Planning

8/17/2022  
**PARCEL PROFILE REPORT**

### PROPERTY ADDRESSES

6039 N FIGUEROA ST

### ZIP CODES

90042

### RECENT ACTIVITY

ENV-2022-5946-CE

DIR-2012-877-CWNC

CHC-2022-5945-CE

### CASE NUMBERS

CPC-2010-943-HPOZ

CPC-2010-2399-MSC

CPC-2003-1501-CA

CPC-2002-2774-HD-GPA

CPC-1999-524-SP

CPC-1999-523-CA

CPC-1992-283-HPO

CPC-1989-22490

CPC-1989-177

CPC-1986-826-GPC

ORD-175891

ORD-175088-SA4077

ORD-174665-SA4077

ORD-174663-SA3

ORD-172316

ORD-169776

ORD-165351-SA2118

ORD-129279

DIR-2008-1607-SPP

ENV-2013-3392-CE

ENV-2010-944-CE

ENV-2010-2400-CE

ENV-2008-1608-CE

ENV-1990-615-EIR

### Address/Legal Information

PIN Number	153A229 401
Lot/Parcel Area (Calculated)	5,722.1 (sq ft)
Thomas Brothers Grid	PAGE 595 - GRID D2
Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	5492014017
Tract	RALPH ROGERS SUBDIVISION OF A PART OF THE GARVANZA TRACT
Map Reference	M R 12-61
Block	H
Lot	PT 22
Arb (Lot Cut Reference)	1
Map Sheet	153A229

### Jurisdictional Information

Community Plan Area	Northeast Los Angeles
Area Planning Commission	East Los Angeles
Neighborhood Council	Historic Highland Park
Council District	CD 1 - Gilbert Cedillo
Census Tract #	1836.20
LADBS District Office	Los Angeles Metro

### Permitting and Zoning Compliance Information

Administrative Review	None
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### Planning and Zoning Information

Special Notes	None
Zoning	[Q]C4-2D-HPOZ
Zoning Information (ZI)	ZI-2310 Specific Plan: Avenue 57 Transit Oriented District ZI-2440 Historic Preservation Overlay Zone: Highland Park-Garvanza ZI-1117 MTA Right-of-Way (ROW) Project Area ZI-2452 Transit Priority Area in the City of Los Angeles ZI-2498 Local Emergency Temporary Regulations - Time Limits and Parking Relief - LAMC 16.02.1 ZI-2129 State Enterprise Zone: East Los Angeles
General Plan Land Use	Neighborhood Commercial
General Plan Note(s)	Yes
Hillside Area (Zoning Code)	No
Specific Plan Area	AVENUE 57 TRANSIT ORIENTED DISTRICT
Subarea	Mixed Use
Special Land Use / Zoning	None
Historic Preservation Review	Yes
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone	Highland Park - Garvanza
Other Historic Designations	None
Other Historic Survey Information	None
Mills Act Contract	None
CDO: Community Design Overlay	None
CPIO: Community Plan Imp. Overlay	None
Subarea	None
CUGU: Clean Up-Green Up	None
HCR: Hillside Construction Regulation	No
NSO: Neighborhood Stabilization Overlay	No

This report is subject to the terms and conditions as set forth on the website. For more details, please refer to the terms and conditions at [zimas.lacity.org](http://zimas.lacity.org)  
(\*) - APN Area is provided "as is" from the Los Angeles County's Public Works, Flood Control, Benefit Assessment.

POD: Pedestrian Oriented Districts	None
RBP: Restaurant Beverage Program Eligible Area	None
RFA: Residential Floor Area District	None
RIO: River Implementation Overlay	No
SN: Sign District	No
Streetscape	No
Adaptive Reuse Incentive Area	None
Affordable Housing Linkage Fee	
Residential Market Area	Medium
Non-Residential Market Area	Medium
Transit Oriented Communities (TOC)	Tier 3
RPA: Redevelopment Project Area	None
Central City Parking	No
Downtown Parking	No
Building Line	None
500 Ft School Zone	No
500 Ft Park Zone	Active: Highland Park Pool Active: Highland Park Recreation Center

#### Assessor Information

Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	5492014017
Ownership (Assessor)	
Owner1	FIG CROSSING LLC C/O C/O MANAGING PARTNER
Address	9440 S SANTA MONICA BLVD STE 700 BEVERLY HILLS CA 90210
Ownership (Bureau of Engineering, Land Records)	
Owner	FIG CROSSING LLC
Address	9440 SANTA MONICA BLVD STE 700 BEVERLY HILLS CA 90210
Owner	L & H CRESCENT LLC
Address	5314 LINDBERGH LN BELL CA 90201
Owner	LODES INC.
Address	6039 N FIGUEROA STREET LOS ANGELES CA 90042
APN Area (Co. Public Works)*	0.467 (ac)
Use Code	1100 - Commercial - Store - One Story
Assessed Land Val.	\$1,318,726
Assessed Improvement Val.	\$2,184,348
Last Owner Change	08/05/2019
Last Sale Amount	\$5,800,058
Tax Rate Area	4
Deed Ref No. (City Clerk)	773034 6-303 2536295 0774338
Building 1	
Year Built	1929
Building Class	C5B
Number of Units	0
Number of Bedrooms	0
Number of Bathrooms	0
Building Square Footage	5,000.0 (sq ft)
Building 2	
Year Built	1966
Building Class	C6A

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Number of Units	0
Number of Bedrooms	0
Number of Bathrooms	0
Building Square Footage	8,000.0 (sq ft)
Building 3	No data for building 3
Building 4	No data for building 4
Building 5	No data for building 5
Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO)	No [APN: 5492014017]

#### Additional Information

Airport Hazard	None
Coastal Zone	None
Farmland	Area Not Mapped
Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone	YES
Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone	No
Fire District No. 1	No
Flood Zone	Outside Flood Zone
Watercourse	No
Hazardous Waste / Border Zone Properties	No
Methane Hazard Site	None
High Wind Velocity Areas	No
Special Grading Area (BOE Basic Grid Map A-13372)	Yes
Wells	None

#### Seismic Hazards

Active Fault Near-Source Zone	
Nearest Fault (Distance in km)	0.75462384
Nearest Fault (Name)	Raymond Fault
Region	Transverse Ranges and Los Angeles Basin
Fault Type	B
Slip Rate (mm/year)	1.50000000
Slip Geometry	Left Lateral - Reverse - Oblique
Slip Type	Moderately Constrained
Down Dip Width (km)	13.00000000
Rupture Top	0.00000000
Rupture Bottom	13.00000000
Dip Angle (degrees)	-75.00000000
Maximum Magnitude	6.50000000
Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone	No
Landslide	No
Liquefaction	No
Preliminary Fault Rupture Study Area	No
Tsunami Inundation Zone	No

#### Economic Development Areas

Business Improvement District	HIGHLAND PARK
Hubzone	Redesignated until Dec 2021
Jobs and Economic Development Incentive Zone (JEDI)	None
Opportunity Zone	No
Promise Zone	None
State Enterprise Zone	EAST LOS ANGELES STATE ENTERPRISE ZONE

#### Housing

Direct all Inquiries to	Los Angeles Housing Department
Telephone	(866) 557-7368
Website	<a href="https://housing.lacity.org">https://housing.lacity.org</a>
Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO)	No [APN: 5492014017]

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(\*) - APN Area is provided "as is" from the Los Angeles County's Public Works, Flood Control, Benefit Assessment.

Ellis Act Property	No
AB 1482: Tenant Protection Act	No
<b>Public Safety</b>	
Police Information	
Bureau	Central
Division / Station	Northeast
Reporting District	1138
Fire Information	
Bureau	Central
Battallion	2
District / Fire Station	12
Red Flag Restricted Parking	No

## CASE SUMMARIES

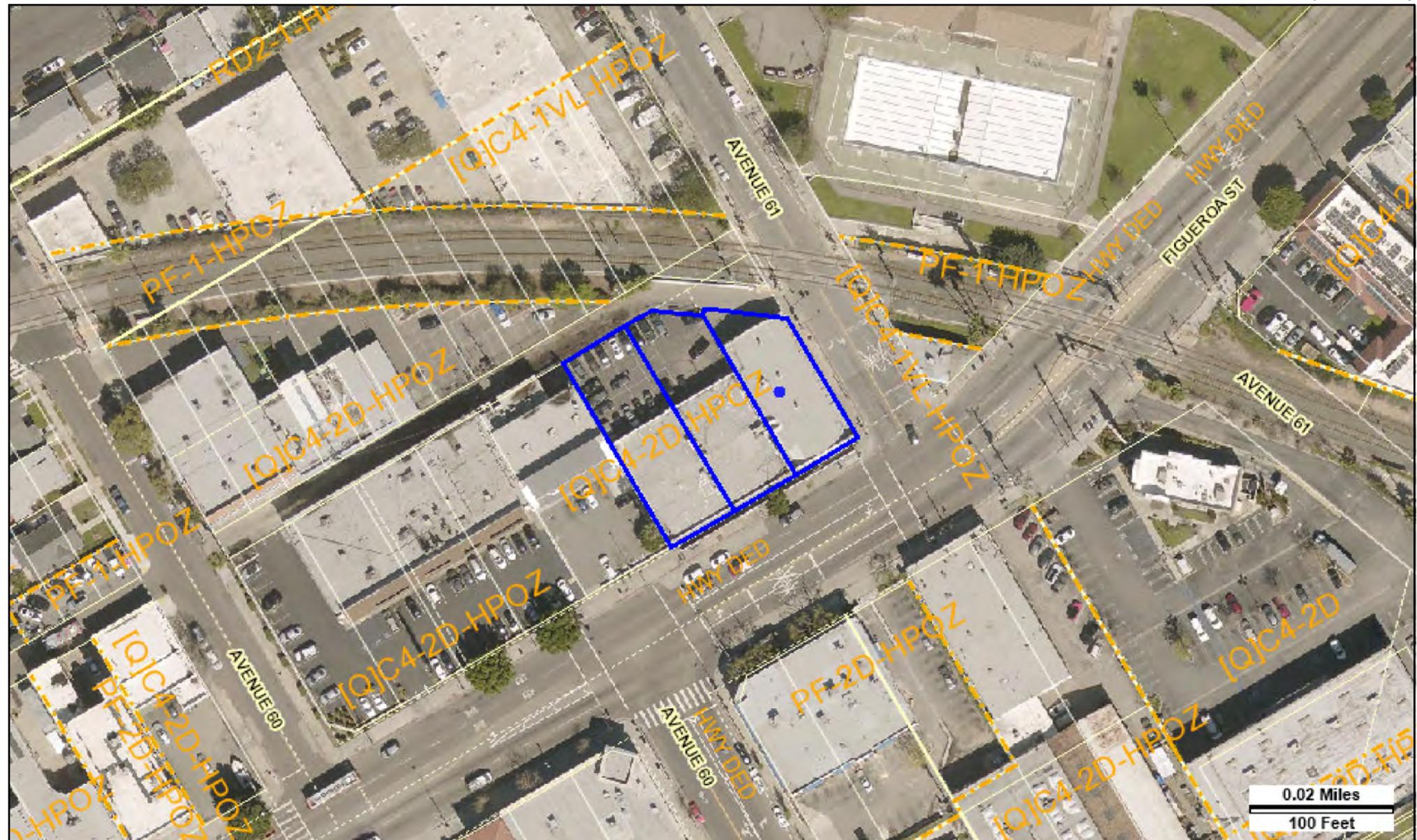
Note: Information for case summaries is retrieved from the Planning Department's Plan Case Tracking System (PCTS) database.

Case Number:	CPC-2010-943-HPOZ
Required Action(s):	HPOZ-HISTORIC PRESERVATION OVERLAY ZONE
Project Descriptions(s):	HIGHLAND PARK HPOZ EXPANSION - ADDITION OF PARCELS FROM THE GARVANZA ICO BOUNDARIES.
Case Number:	CPC-2010-2399-MSC
Required Action(s):	MSC-MISCELLANEOUS (POLICIES, GUIDELINES, RESOLUTIONS, ETC.)
Project Descriptions(s):	PURSUANT TO 12.20.3.E OF THE LOS ANGELES MUNICIPAL CODE, THE ADOPTION OF PRESERVATION PLANS FOR VARIOUS EXISTING HPOZS: ADAMS-NORMANDIE, BALBOA HIGHLANDS, BANNING PARK, CARTHAY CIRCLE, GREGORY AIN MAR VISTA TRACT, HARVARD HEIGHTS, HIGHLAND PARK, MIRACLE MILE NORTH, SOUTH CARTHAY ,SPAULDING SQUARE, STONEHURST, VAN NUYS, VINEGAR HILL, WEST ADAMS TERRACE, WESTERN HEIGHTS, AND WHITLEY HEIGHTS.
Case Number:	CPC-2003-1501-CA
Required Action(s):	CA-CODE AMENDMENT
Project Descriptions(s):	REVISIONS TO THE HPOZ ORDINANCE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PRESERVATION PLAN PROCESS
Case Number:	CPC-2002-2774-HD-GPA
Required Action(s):	HD-HEIGHT DISTRICT GPA-GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT
Project Descriptions(s):	
Case Number:	CPC-1999-524-SP
Required Action(s):	SP-SPECIFIC PLAN (INCLUDING AMENDMENTS)
Project Descriptions(s):	Data Not Available
Case Number:	CPC-1999-523-CA
Required Action(s):	CA-CODE AMENDMENT
Project Descriptions(s):	REQUEST AN AMENDMENT TO ZONING REGULATIONS THAT WOULD ONLY ALLOW LANDFILLS PURSUANT TO A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT. (CITYWIDE)
Case Number:	CPC-1992-283-HPO
Required Action(s):	Data Not Available
Project Descriptions(s):	ESTABLISH A HISTORIC PRESERVATION OVERLAY ZONE IN ORDER TO RETAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE ARCHITECTURAL STYLES THROUGH REVIEW OF PERMITS FOR ANY ALTERATIONS TO BUILDINGS CONTRIBUTING TO THE HISTORIC DISTRICT FOR SPECIFIC PROPERTIES WITHIN THE AREA GENERALLY BOUNDED BY YORK BOULEVARD, THE PASADENA FREEWAY, MARMION WAY AND AVENUE 50
Case Number:	CPC-1989-22490
Required Action(s):	Data Not Available
Project Descriptions(s):	
Case Number:	CPC-1989-177
Required Action(s):	Data Not Available
Project Descriptions(s):	INTERIM CONTROL ORDINANCE FOR THE ENTIRE NORTHEAST LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PLAN CONTINUATION OF CPC-89-0177. SEE GENERAL COMMENTS FOR CONTINUATION.
Case Number:	CPC-1986-826-GPC
Required Action(s):	GPC-GENERAL PLAN/ZONING CONSISTENCY (AB283)
Project Descriptions(s):	GENERAL PLAN/ZONING CONSISTENCY - ZONE CHANGES - HEIGHT DISTRICT CHANGES AND PLAN AMENDMENTS - VARIOUS LOCATIONS
Case Number:	DIR-2008-1607-SPP
Required Action(s):	SPP-SPECIFIC PLAN PROJECT PERMIT COMPLIANCE
Project Descriptions(s):	PROJECT PERMIT FOR AVE 57 SPECIFIC PLAN TO CHANGE OF USE FROM FURNITURE STORE TO BEAUTY SCHOOL.
Case Number:	ENV-2013-3392-CE
Required Action(s):	CE-CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION
Project Descriptions(s):	THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE MODIFIES SECTION 22.119 OF THE LOS ANGELES ADMINISTRATIVE CODE TO ALLOW ORIGINAL ART MURALS ON LOTS DEVELOPED WITH ONLY ONE SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE AND THAT ARE LOCATED WITHIN COUNCIL DISTRICTS 1, 9, AND 14.
Case Number:	ENV-2010-944-CE
Required Action(s):	CE-CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION
Project Descriptions(s):	HIGHLAND PARK HPOZ EXPANSION - ADDITION OF PARCELS FROM THE GARVANZA ICO BOUNDARIES.
Case Number:	ENV-2010-2400-CE
Required Action(s):	CE-CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION

Project Descriptions(s):	PURSUANT TO 12.20.3.E OF THE LOS ANGELES MUNICIPAL CODE, THE ADOPTION OF PRESERVATION PLANS FOR VARIOUS EXISTING HPOZS: ADAMS-NORMANDIE, BALBOA HIGHLANDS, BANNING PARK, CARTHAY CIRCLE, GREGORY AIN MAR VISTA TRACT, HARVARD HEIGHTS, HIGHLAND PARK, MIRACLE MILE NORTH, SOUTH CARTHAY ,SPAULDING SQUARE, STONEHURST, VAN NUYS, VINEGAR HILL, WEST ADAMS TERRACE, WESTERN HEIGHTS, AND WHITLEY HEIGHTS.
Case Number:	ENV-2008-1608-CE
Required Action(s):	CE-CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION
Project Descriptions(s):	PROJECT PERMIT FOR AVE 57 SPECIFIC PLAN TO CHANGE OF USE FROM FURNITURE STORE TO BEAUTY SCHOOL.
Case Number:	ENV-1990-615-EIR
Required Action(s):	EIR-ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
Project Descriptions(s):	Data Not Available

## DATA NOT AVAILABLE

ORD-175891  
 ORD-175088-SA4077  
 ORD-174665-SA4077  
 ORD-174663-SA3  
 ORD-172316  
 ORD-169776  
 ORD-165351-SA2118  
 ORD-129279



Address: 6039 N FIGUEROA ST

Tract: RALPH ROGERS SUBDIVISION Zoning: [Q]C4-2D-HPOZ  
OF A PART OF THE GARVANZA  
TRACT

APN: 5492014017

PIN #: 153A229 401

Block: H

Lot: PT 22

Arb: 1

## General Plan: Neighborhood Commercial

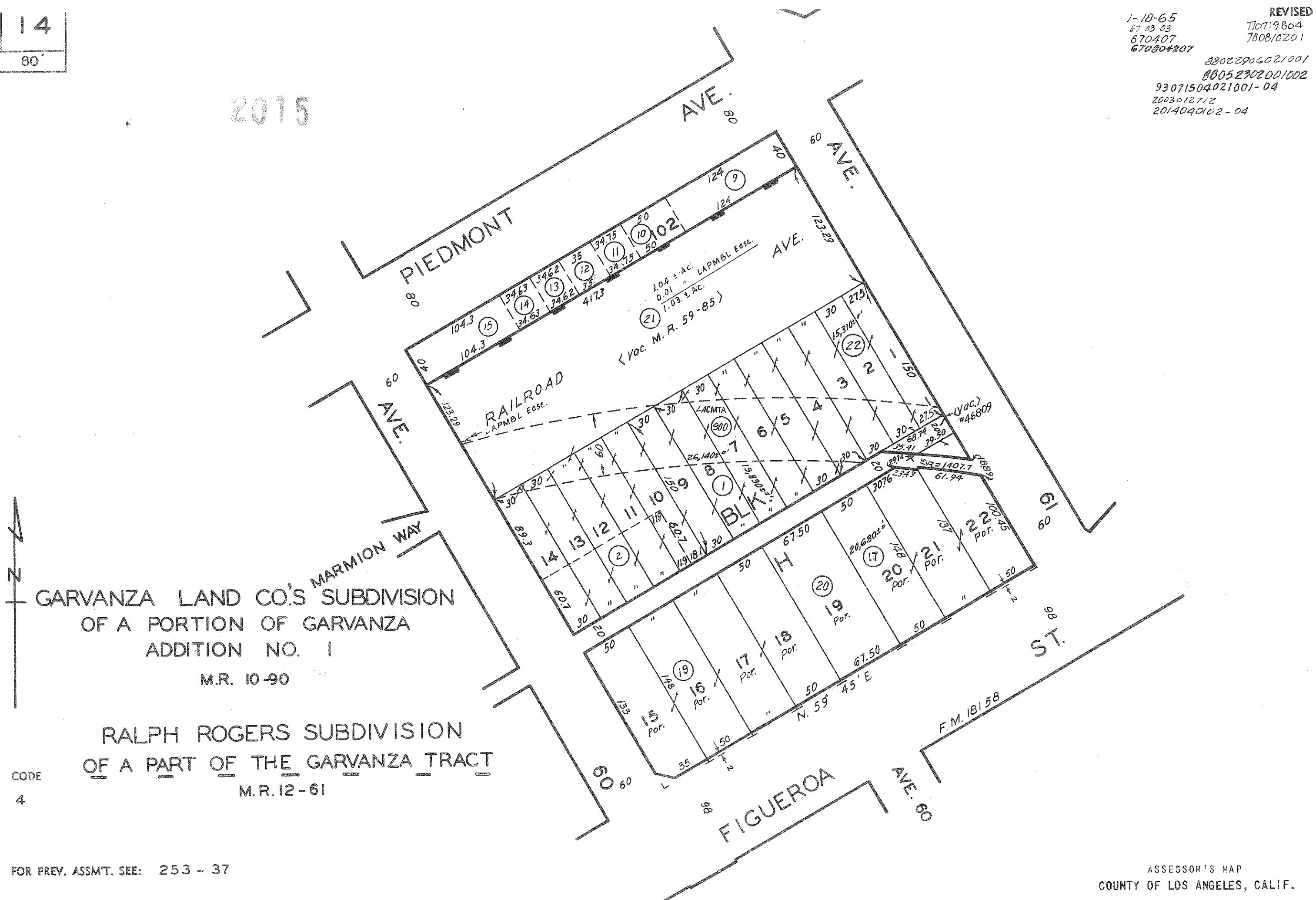


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**CALE 1" = 80**

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**REVISED**

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ASSESSOR'S MAP  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIF.