

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

1725 23rd Street, Suite 100
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March 6, 2017

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room B-50
Los Angeles, California 90012

**RE: National Register of Historic Places Nomination for Great Wall of Los Angeles
(Latinos in Twentieth Century California Multiple Property Submission)**

Dear Board of Supervisors:

Pursuant to Federal Regulations 36 CFR Part 60.6(c) I am notifying you that the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC) at its next meeting intends to consider and take action on the nomination of the above-named property to the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). Details on that meeting are on the enclosed notice. The National Register is the federal government's official list of historic buildings and other cultural resources worthy of preservation. Listing in the National Register provides recognition and assists in preserving California's cultural heritage. If the item is removed from the scheduled agenda, you will be notified by mail.

Local government comments regarding the National Register eligibility of this property are welcomed. Letters should be sent to California State Parks, Attn: Office of Historic Preservation, Julianne Polanco, State Historic Preservation Officer, 1725 23rd Street, Suite 100, Sacramento, California 95816. So that the SHRC will have adequate time to consider them, it is requested, but not required, that written comments be received by the Office of Historic Preservation fifteen (15) days before the SHRC meeting. Interested parties are encouraged to attend the SHRC meeting and present oral testimony.

As of January 1, 1993, all National Register properties are automatically included in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) and afforded consideration in accordance with state and local environmental review procedures.

The federal requirements covering the National Register program are to be found in the National Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and in Federal Regulations 36 CFR Part 60. State law regarding the California Register is in the Public Resources Code, Section 5024. Should you have questions regarding this nomination, or would like a copy of the nomination, please contact the Registration Unit at (916) 445-7009.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Julianne Polanco", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Julianne Polanco
State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosures: Meeting Notice

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MEETING NOTICE

FOR: State Historical Resources Commission Quarterly Meeting

DATE: Wednesday, May 10, 2017

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PLACE: Council Chamber
Pasadena City Hall
100 North Garfield Avenue, Room S249
Pasadena, California 91109

This room is accessible to people with disabilities. Questions regarding the meeting should be directed to the Registration Unit (916) 445-7008.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

DRAFT

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Great Wall of Los Angeles, The

Other names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing:
Latinos in Twentieth Century California

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: See Section 10

City or town: Los Angeles State: California County: Los Angeles

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

<p>_____</p> <p>Signature of certifying official/Title:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>Date</p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____</p> <p>Signature of commenting official:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Title :</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>Date</p> <p>_____</p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>1</u>	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/work of art

OTHER/Flood control channel

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/work of art

OTHER/Flood control channel

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE _____

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

CONCRETE, OTHER: acrylic mural paint and acrylic coating

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Great Wall of Los Angeles is a half-mile long mural depicting the history of California through images of significant figures and historic events from diverse and traditionally marginalized communities. The mural is painted on the west wall of the Tujunga Flood Control Channel in the North Hollywood area of the City of Los Angeles, California. The Great Wall of Los Angeles was completed between 1974 and 1984 by teams of young people and artist supervisors. Chicana muralist Judith F. Baca, working with the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC), was primarily responsible for the artistic vision and subject matter depicted in the mural. The flood control channel is owned by the Army Corps of Engineers and maintained by the Los Angeles County of Public Works. Baca and SPARC created the mural and own the copyright to it. The Great Wall of Los Angeles retains sufficient integrity as a mural to meet the eligibility requirements as outlined in the *Latinos in Twentieth Century California* Multiple Property Submission.

Narrative Description

The Great Wall of Los Angeles is one of the largest murals in the world, 13.5 feet high and 2,754 feet long, stretching over half a mile. The continuous mural (one contributing object) is painted

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in vibrant color directly onto the west wall of the concrete flood control channel, below grade. The west wall of the channel functions as a canvas for the mural. The channel itself is a noncontributing structure. At street level, the channel is flanked on both sides by the Tujunga Greenbelt, narrow strips of park space with walkways and a bike path. The Great Wall of Los Angeles is located in a section of the Tujunga Flood Control Channel bounded by Oxnard Street to the north, Coldwater Canyon Boulevard to the east, Burbank Boulevard to the south, and the Coldwater Canyon Extension road (sometimes called Lancer Lane) and a parking lot to the west.

The mural is arranged in connected chronological segments depicting eras of California's history from prehistoric times through the 1960s. The scenes emphasize the role played by Native Americans, Latinos (focusing on those with Mexican heritage, sometimes self-identified as Chicano/a),¹ African Americans, Asian Americans, and Jewish Americans in creating California's culture. The Great Wall imagery highlights themes such as immigration, exploitation of people and land, women's rights, class distinctions, racism and racial equality, and the struggle for gay rights. The artistic style of the mural reflects the Chicano/a mural movement of the 1970s, using colors, steep rescinding perspective, and symbols influenced by indigenous Mesoamerican art, traditional European figurative art, the Works Progress Administration, and Mexican muralists of the 1930s.

The Great Wall of Los Angeles is arranged in panels with compositions that blend into each other, comprising six sections with 86 titled segments. Sections are usually organized by decade. Segments within each decade-specific section depict discrete historical events or important figures from the decade. Sections are divided by mural maker panels with names of the project team for each summer. The composition of the earliest sections from 1976 was supervised by multiple artists. Later sections, completed between 1978 and 1984, have stronger visual coherence and were under the design supervision of a single artist, Judith F. Baca.² Segments are listed with titles as they appear on the mural. The mural was painted during summers between 1974 and 1984. No painting took place in the summers of 1979 and 1982.

Section 1, completed in 1976, comprises 35 segments. Segments were designed by multiple artists as specified, working with youth design teams.

1. Pre-Historic California: 20,000 BC (designed by Kristi Lucas)
2. The La Brea Tar Pits (designed by Kristi Lucas)
3. Chumash Village 1,000 AD (designed by Christina Schlesinger)

¹ The term Chicano/a was popularized in the 1960s as a term of self-identification for people with ethnic and cultural heritage tied to Mexico, both Mexico's modern boundaries and parts of the United States that were once Mexican territories. The term Latino generally refers to anyone of Latin American origin and includes places south of Mexico. It emerged in the twentieth century as immigration from Central and South America grew. Consistent with the related multiple property listing, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California*, the term Latino was used in this document instead of Hispanic to emphasize the shared history of people from the Americas rather than Europe. GPA Consulting, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California* Multiple Property Documentation Form, National Register of Historic Places, 2014, E1, E34.

² Social and Public Art Resource Center, "The Great Wall of Los Angeles: An Educational Toolkit for Teachers," Accessed May 10, 2016. <https://prezi.com/embed/flugbhwe5ac/?bgcolor=ffffff>.

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4. Indigenous Plants (designed by Kristi Lucas)
 5. Chumash Animal Spirits (designed by Christina Schlesinger)
 6. Portolá Expedition 1769 (designed by Judith F. Baca)
 7. Legend of Califa (designed by Judith F. Baca)
 8. Indigenous Perspective (designed by Judith F. Baca)
 9. Junipero Serra (designed by Judith F. Baca)
 10. Founders of Los Angeles 1781/ Mulatto & Metizo Descent (designed by Judith F. Baca)
 11. Mexican Rule 1822 (designed by Judith Hernandez)
 12. Missions (designed by Judith Hernandez)
 13. Californios (designed by Judith Hernandez)
 14. Mexican Hacienda (designed by Judith Hernandez)
 15. Mexican-American War (designed by Judith Hernandez)
 16. Sutter's Mill (designed by Ulysses Jenkins)
 17. Mifflin W. Gibbs (designed by Ulysses Jenkins)
 18. Mary Ellen Pleasant (designed by Ulysses Jenkins)
 19. William A. Leidesdorf (designed by Ulysses Jenkins)
 20. California Gold Rush (designed by Ulysses Jenkins)
 21. Bidy Mason/AME Church (designed by Ulysses Jenkins)
 22. Joaquin Murrieta (designed by Ulysses Jenkins)
 23. Sojourners 1868 (designed by Gary Takamoto)
 24. Chinese Build the Railroad (designed by Gary Takamoto)
 25. Chinese Massacre 1871 (designed by Gary Takamoto)
 26. Frontier California 1880 (designed by Arnold Ramirez)
 27. Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo 1848 (designed by Arnold Ramirez)
 28. California Citrus Industry (designed by Arnold Ramirez)
 29. Suffragettes (designed by Olga Muniz)
 30. LA Mountains to the Shore 1890 (designed by Olga Muniz)
 31. Red Car (designed by Olga Muniz)
 32. Youth Team at L.A. Harbor (designed by Charlie Brown and youth painting team)
 33. San Pedro Harbor 1900 (designed by Charlie Brown)
 34. Migrant California (designed by Isabel Castro)
 35. World War I (designed by Isabel Castro)
- [Mural makers panel, 1976]

Section 2, completed in 1978, comprises six segments. All segments were designed by Judith F. Baca with the support of SPARC design teams.

36. WWI Doughboys
 37. Women in the War Industry
 38. Charlie Chaplin
 39. Thomas Alva Edison
 40. The Great Train Robbery
 41. William S. Hart
- [Mural makers panel, 1978]

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Section 3, completed in 1980, comprises 12 segments. All segments were designed by Judith F. Baca with the support of SPARC design teams.

42. Illusion of Prosperity
 43. Prohibition
 44. Dunbar Hotel
 45. Market Crash
 46. Child Labor
 47. Great Depression
 48. Labor Strikes
 49. Long Beach Earthquake 1933
 50. Unsigned Indian Treaties
 51. 500,000 Mexican Americans Deported
 52. Dustbowl Refugees
 53. Japanese Internment – Manzanar
- [Mural makers panel, 1980]

Section 4, completed in 1981, comprises 14 segments. All segments were designed by Judith F. Baca with the support of SPARC design teams.

54. 442nd Infantry Division
 55. Jewish Americans
 56. California Aqueduct
 57. Jeanette Rankin
 58. World War II
 59. Rose the Riveter
 60. Dr. Charles Drew
 61. Mrs. Laws
 62. David Gonzales: Pacoima, CA
 63. Zoot Suit Riots/ L.A. 1943
 64. Luisa Moreno
 65. Bracero Program
 66. Jewish Refugees
 67. Baby Boom
- [Mural makers panel, 1981]

Section 5, completed in 1983, comprises 18 segments. All segments were designed by Judith F. Baca with the support of Matt Weurker, Jan Cook, and additional SPARC design team members.

[Mural makers panel, 1983]

68. Farewell to Rosie the Riveter
69. Development of Suburbia

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70. The Red Scare & McCarthyism
71. Division of the Barrios & Chavez Ravine
72. The Birth of Rock & Roll
73. Big Mama Thornton
74. Forebears of Civil Rights
75. Gay Rights
76. Daughters of Bilitis
77. Mattachine Society
78. Ginsberg & The Beats
79. Jewish Arts & Sciences
80. Indian Assimilation
81. Asians Gain Citizenship & Property
82. Vicki Manalo Draves
83. Sammy Lee
84. Wilma Rudolf
85. Billy Mills

Section 6, completed in 1984, comprises one segment and a panel describing the project.

86. Olympic Champions: Breaking Barriers 1964-1984
[The Great Wall Restoration Team, 2009-2011, dedication panel]

Integrity

The Great Wall of Los Angeles retains sufficient integrity as a mural to meet the eligibility requirements as outlined in the *Latinos in Twentieth Century California* Multiple Property Submission. It retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The mural has not been substantially altered since its completion in 1984. Restoration work was completed under the guidance of the original artist, Baca, between 2009 and 2011. The mural is in its original location. The mural retains integrity of design from its original conception and execution by SPARC between 1976 and 1984. The mural retains integrity of setting in a utilitarian flood control channel bounded by park space. The mural retains integrity of materials and workmanship; restoration work in 2009-2011 restored paint colors to the vibrancy of the original design and period of significance, and did not deviate from the historic materials or finish quality of the original mural. The mural retains integrity of feeling, reflecting a distinct period of the Chicano/a art movement from the late 1970s. The mural retains integrity of association, still reflecting the appropriation of a utilitarian space for art and social commentary.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE/HISPANIC

SOCIAL HISTORY

ART

Period of Significance

1974-1984

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Baca, Judith F.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Great Wall of Los Angeles is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the state level of significance under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage/Hispanic and Social History for its association with the Chicano/a mural movement of the 1970s, a major cultural component of the Chicano/a civil rights movement in California. The Great Wall of Los Angeles is also eligible for listing at the state level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Art for its significance as a monumental example of a 1970s Chicano/a mural that possesses high artistic value. The Great Wall of Los Angeles is an exceptionally significant work of public art and one of the best representations of California's Chicano/a Movement muralism. The period of significance is 1974 to 1984, encompassing the period when the mural was funded, designed, and painted. As a precedent-setting project in public practice—participatory art with a community, social, and public context and process of creation—whose content and creation represents a unique time and place that has become the subject of study and extensive scholarly research, The Great Wall of Los Angeles has the exceptional significance to satisfy Criteria Consideration G: Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years. For its association with the historic context Latinos in the Arts, and strongly associated with the Latino community in which it is located, the property meets the registration requirements of the *Latinos In Twentieth Century California* Multiple Property Submission.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criteria Consideration G

Murals were the primary artistic expression of the Chicano/a civil rights movement. The Great Wall of Los Angeles is widely recognized as one of the most significant extant murals of the Chicano/a mural movement of the 1970s. The Great Wall of Los Angeles depicts the history of many underrepresented people. Though several artists collaborated on the mural, it is primarily the vision of one particular artist, Judith F. Baca, who brought artists, scholars, and young people together to create a mural representative of the diversity and history of Los Angeles, the state of California, and the United States. While many of the artists and scholars associated with the creation of The Great Wall of Los Angeles are still living, its significance to the Chicano/a mural of movement, an important historic event, is widely recognized.³

The historic contexts of the Chicano/a civil rights movement in California (Criterion A) and the Chicano/a mural movement (Criterion C) have been the subject of significant scholarly evaluation by academic researchers in the fields of ethnic history and fine art. Scholars assert that the murals of this period are an essential reflection of the Los Angeles' heritage and an important expression of a significant historical period. American studies professor Raymond Paredes

³ For a complete list of interviews with and articles about Judith F. Baca, please see: "Judy Baca Annotated Bibliography." Judy Baca Resume, 2013. Accessed July 7, 2016. <https://judybacaresume.wordpress.com/annotated-bibliography/>.

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describes this period “as having the equivalent importance for the Latino community as the Harlem Renaissance held for the African-American community... Those murals were one of the most significant creations of that historical phenomenon.”⁴

In addition to scholarly recognition, the work of Judith F. Baca and SPARC has been recognized with awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, Guggenheim Foundation, National Hispanic Heritage Foundation, the State of California, AFL-CIO, Hispanic Caucus, National Association of Women of Color, and USA Artist Fellowship. Since its completion, the City of Los Angeles has showcased the mural as a representation of its distinct cultural achievements, sending muralists from the project around the world as part of goodwill cultural exchange programs.⁵

Public murals are also a fragile and short-lived resource. Though not intended to be ephemeral, many murals from the Chicano/a mural movement of the 1970s have been painted over by city workers or graffiti taggers. Weather and air pollution have also taken their toll on murals. Consequently, many of the significant murals of the Chicano/a mural movement are no longer extant. Baca’s first public mural, *Mi Abuelita*, was located on the concrete band shell of Hollenbeck Park in Boyle Heights. Like so many Chicano/o murals, it was painted over by city workers who did not realize its significance. Murals were intended to be a public art form; however, many of the most accessible murals have been destroyed and, consequently, the majority of extant murals from the Chicano/a mural movement of the 1970s are not located in publically accessible places. Of the 72 extant murals identified as significant in *Latino Los Angeles Historic Context Statement*, only 14 are accessible outside of the public housing complexes Estrada Courts and Ramona Gardens.⁶ The Great Wall of Los Angeles remains visible to the public and retains a high degree of integrity. Within the context of murals, The Great Wall of Los Angeles is considered rare, fragile, and old, and extraordinarily well maintained.

The Great Wall of Los Angeles established a new model of community engagement, called public practice, in the creation and content of public art and is a monumental example of a 1970s Chicano/a mural that was part of a watershed moment in the Chicano/a civil rights movement. The mural is not just a representation of historical events. The Great Wall of Los Angeles is recognized as a milestone in the movement to create an inclusive narrative of America’s history. The Great Wall of Los Angeles is also recognized as an important milestone in the evolution of Mexican muralism. Mexican muralism began as an artistic movement in the 1930s, but the model of production was adapted by Judith F. Baca, the creative director for The Great Wall of Los Angeles, to suit specific cultural and political needs of local communities. The model of mural production that developed with The Great Wall of Los Angeles had a profound impact on

⁴ Barbara Tannenbaum, “Where Miles of Murals Preach a People’s Gospel,” *New York Times*, May 26, 2002.

⁵ Ricardo Romo, “Borderland Murals: Chicano Artifacts in Transition,” *Aztlán: International Journal of Chicano Studies Research* 21 no. 1, 2 (1992-1996), 125-154.

⁶ GPA Consulting, *SurveyLA: Latino Los Angeles Historic Context Statement*, City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning Office of Historic Resources, 2015.

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the larger mural movement. The mural and its inclusive content and scale contributed to the widespread public impact of the Chicano/a arts movement in California and beyond.

Historical Background

The Chicano/a arts movement of the 1970s was part of a long tradition of visual arts in the southwestern United States with aesthetic roots in traditional Mesoamerican folk art, Aztec symbolism, and Pre-Columbian Mayan murals of Bonampak, Mexico and thematic roots in the political activism of the 1930s. Nationalism inspired by the Mexican Revolution of 1910 created an early appreciation for the folk art and Pre-Columbian art of Mexico, long overlooked by dominant Western European art traditions and scholarship.⁷ During the 1920s and 1930s, Mexican immigrant artists in Los Angeles began using the walls of restaurants as their canvases, imitating the practice of using rediscovered Mexican folk art motifs and Mayan and Aztec symbols to paint the walls of *pulquerías* or pulque bars in Mexico.⁸ Los Angeles eventually became home to one of the largest concentrations of mural art in the country. Early Latino murals in Los Angeles featured scenes that included depictions of daily life or Mexican film stars.⁹

Muralism proliferated as an art form and political platform across the United States and Mexico in the 1930s. The Federally sponsored Works Progress Administration commissioned murals throughout the United States. These New Deal murals would inspire an interest in creating community art among urban residents in later post-World War II decades.¹⁰ For the Latino community, murals became a public canvas for representing their artists and heritage. In the 1930s, artists David Alfaro Siqueiros, Jose Clemente Orozco, and Diego Rivera, known collectively as Los Tres Grandes of Mexico, converted the mural art form into a political force. Murals freed artists from the laborious process of creating frescoes while maintaining a large-scale canvas for telling a story. Los Tres Grandes composed murals in the United States and Mexico around revolutionary themes that criticized the existing capitalist social order and hierarchy.¹¹ These themes were sometimes so aggressive that the murals were whitewashed over or left unfinished. Los Tres Grandes also “saw the mural as a traditional Mexican art form and vehicle for the dissemination of a positive Mexican image.”¹² Siqueiros in particular believed in the power of art to bring people information about themselves, an idea that would resonate in later decades as Chicano/a muralists saw art as an opportunity to inform people about their own history that was often excluded from mainstream narratives.¹³

⁷ Romo, “Borderland Murals,” 128.

⁸ Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, “A Panorama of Latino Arts,” *American Latinos and the Making of the United States: A Theme Study* (Washington D.C.: National Park Service, 2013), 144.

⁹ GPA Consulting, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California* Multiple Property Documentation Form, National Register of Historic Places, 2014, E55; Alicia María González, “Murals: Fine, Popular, or Folk Art?” *Aztlán: International Journal of Chicano Studies Research* 13, no. 1, 2 (Spring-Fall 1982), 155.

¹⁰ Romo, “Borderland Murals,” 133.

¹¹ George Beronius, “The Murals of East Los Angeles,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 1976.

¹² GPA Consulting, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California*, E55; González, “Murals: Fine, Popular of Folk Art?” 155.

¹³ Denise Beirnes and Moira Roth, “Territories, Borders, and Crossings: A Narrative Chronology of the Life and Art of Judy Baca,” (1994), 7.

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World War II and the postwar period saw a shift in the consciousness of Latinos as a community in the southwestern United States that was reflected in visual arts, as well as other types of art. It was during this period that artists attempted to blend their dual and sometimes competing experiences of being Mexican and living in the United States. This generation of Latino artists was the first to be recognized by the mainstream arts community and included in mainstream galleries and art shows.¹⁴ The artists of the World War II and postwar periods would inspire and mentor the later artists of the 1960s and 1970s Chicano/a arts movement and emphasize that art was a way to shape and understand identity.¹⁵

The Chicano/a arts movement was part of the Chicano/a civil rights movement, *El Movimiento*, a larger Chicano/a cultural, political, student activist initiative that began in the late 1960s. During this time, Chicano/a, previously a derogatory term, was reclaimed by Mexican American youth as a unique identifier.¹⁶ The younger Chicano/a community rallied around the influential publication *El Plan Espiritual de Atzlán* (the spiritual plan of Atzlán), that emerged from the Chicano Youth Conference held in Denver in 1969.¹⁷ In addition to its political and anti-Vietnam War agenda, *El Plan* outlined a commitment “to develop meaningful expressions of Chicano/a cultural identity” through the visual, performing, and literary arts.¹⁸ Instead of creating art purely for art’s sake, leaders of the Chicano/a community encouraged the younger Chicano/a artists to focus on producing art with social relevance to the Chicano/a community that could foster cultural identity, empowerment, and affirmation.¹⁹ The cultural branch of the Chicano/a civil rights movement became the Chicano/a arts movement.²⁰ Though the Chicano/a arts movement

¹⁴ Two prominent Latino artists of this period were Alberto Valdés and Domingo Ulloa. Ybarra-Frausto, “A Panorama of Latino Arts,” 146.

¹⁵ GPA Consulting, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California*, E56.

¹⁶ GPA Consulting, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California*, E33.

¹⁷ Jose Luis Gamez, “Representing the City: The imagination and Critical Practice in East Los Angeles,” *Aztlán: International Journal of Chicano Studies Research* 27, no.1 (Spring 2002, 95-120), 98.

¹⁸ Organizational Goal number six was: “CULTURAL: values of our people strengthen our identity and the moral backbone of the movement. Our culture unites and educates the family of La Raza towards liberation with one heart and one mind. We must insure that our writers, poets, musicians, and artists produce literature and art that is appealing to our people and relates to our revolutionary culture. Our cultural values of life, family, and home will serve as a powerful weapon to defeat the gringo dollar value system and encourage the process of love and brotherhood.” Jose Luis Gamez, “Representing the City: The imagination and Critical Practice in East Los Angeles,” *Aztlán: International Journal of Chicano Studies Research* 27, no.1 (Spring 2002), 98.

¹⁹ Alicia Gaspar de Alba, “From CARA to CACA: The Multiple Anatomies of Chicano/a Art at the Turn of the New Century,” *Aztlán: International Journal of Chicano Studies Research* 26, no.1 (Spring 2001, 205-231), 206-207.

²⁰ A branch of the Chicano/a arts movement became *Rasquache* art, a descriptor that Tomás Ybarra-Frausto defines as “a witty, irreverent and impertinent posture that recodes and moves outside established boundaries.” *Rasquache* art is often fabricated from trash and is sometimes used to describe art created in spaces typically unassociated with beauty and art, such as freeway underpasses. As such, the term maintains derogatory connotations, though it is often applied to art from the Chicano/a movement with content and materials that create the impression of a resourceful, adaptable underdog is associated with a uniquely Latino working class visual sensibility. This important Chicano/a cultural sensibility has been particularly used to address, by means of a stance of resistance that is humorous and ironic rather than confrontational or hard-edged, the harassments of external authorities such as the police, the immigration service, government officials, social services bureaucrats, and others. Chicano/a art that is *rasquache* usually expresses an underdog, have-not sensibility that is also resourceful and adaptable and makes use of simple materials including found ones, such as Luján's cardboard, glue, and loose sand.

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included all art forms—films, poetry, and music—muralists in the visual arts and Teatro Campesino in the performing arts dominated the movement.²¹

At first, the Chicano/a murals were not commissioned, promoted, or sponsored by the government, companies or individuals; the Chicano/a artists instead painted on neighborhood buildings, schools, and churches. The work of Chicano/a muralists in the 1970s was located outside of typical art venues, claiming previously unadorned public spaces as places of culture and art by bringing the art and its message to places where the people lived and worked.²² Baca explained that, "...space was freely available and uncontested. If you had the paint and the time, the wall and the message were yours. In this environment, the movement flourished."²³ Murals were a way to claim space and make it serve as a visible and accessible form of mass art consumption.²⁴ The freedom with which the muralists claimed public space, wrestling with the territorial claims of gangs more than the oversight of the government, enabled the artists to create expressions of their non-conformist social ideologies more openly, and use their skills to represent political movements.²⁵ Many of the artists were the first generation with advanced degrees in their communities; however, they were tied to the conditions of the *barrios*, or Latino neighborhoods, regardless of their educational status.²⁶

Muralism in the Chicano/a arts movement first gained momentum in eastern Los Angeles during the early 1970s with the work of four artists. Judith F. Baca painted the band shell in Hollenbeck Park with *Mi Abuelita*, a portrait of her grandmother in 1970.²⁷ John and Joe Gonzales painted *The Birth of Our Art* on a storefront in 1971. Charles "Gato" Felix began painting murals in the predominantly Latino public housing complex Estrada Courts in 1973.²⁸ Within five years, 350

Alba, "From CARA to CACA," 207. Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, "Rasquachismo: A Chicano Sensibility," *Chicano Aesthetics: Rasquachismo*, (Phoenix: Movimiento Artístico del Río Salado, 1989), 5; Hispanic Research Center, Arizona State University, "Rasquache," *Rasquache*, 2001, accessed May 16, 2016.

<http://mati.eas.asu.edu/chicanarte/unit2/rasquache.html>.

²¹ Alba, "From CARA to CACA," 205.

²² "The Great Wall of Los Angeles," SPARCinLA, accessed April 19, 2016. <http://sparcinla.org/programs/the-great-wall-mural-los-angeles/#>.

²³ Judith Baca, "The Art of the Mural," *American Family*, 2004, Accessed July 07, 2016.

<http://www.pbs.org/americanfamily/mural.html>.

²⁴ Gamez, "Representing the City," 95.

²⁵ María Cardalliagué Gómez-Málaga, "The Mexican and Chicano Mural Movements," *Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute*, 2001, Accessed July 07, 2016. <http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/2006/2/06.02.01.x.html>.

²⁶ Judith Baca, "The Art of the Mural," *American Family*, 2004, Accessed July 07, 2016.

<http://www.pbs.org/americanfamily/mural.html>.

²⁷ *Mi Abuelita* was painted over by city workers at an unknown date.

²⁸ More female artists became involved in the mural movement as it progressed. Groups such as Las Mujeres Muralistas in San Francisco and individuals like Judith Baca in Los Angeles and Ester Hernández in San Francisco gained visibility as accomplished artists. Hernández works primarily in pastels and printmaking. Her art highlighted the daily lives and issues faced by Latinos, including civil rights and women's issues.

Max Benavidez and Kate Vozoff, "The Wall: Image and Boundary, Chicano Art in the 1970s," *Mexican Art of the 1970s: Images of Displacement*, edited by Leonard Folgarait (Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1984), 50; GPA Consulting, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California*, E58; "Artist Information – Ester Hernandez," *Galería de la Raza*, accessed February 28, 2014,

<http://www.galeriadelaraza.org/eng/exhibits2/archive/artists.php?op=view&id=19&media=info>.

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wall paintings were completed in eastern Los Angeles; over 80 were in the public housing complex Estrada Courts alone.²⁹

As the movement progressed, common design and production themes emerged. Aesthetic influences in these murals were rooted in daily life experience in the *barrios* and inner cities of Los Angeles, and visual references to Latino popular culture, religious iconography, Mexican calendars, tattoos, and street writing.³⁰ Designs favored layering, texturing, recycling, and use of intense color and multiple materials. Subject matter often focused on affirmation of identity and revolution.³¹ While Los Tres Grandes favored Mesoamerican design motifs, the Chicano/a muralists focused on the unique experience of the diaspora community of the southwestern United States.³²

Baca played a pivotal role in transforming Mexican mural painting methods by welcoming the participation of non-academically trained community members into the artistic process.³³ The method of public practice, or participatory art, became common as the 1970s progressed, but Baca was one of the first to use this method of fabrication on a massive scale. Participating in the creation of art became a means of self-expression for marginalized community members. Chicano/a muralists in particular "...recruited local residents from the area in which the mural is made to help with its completion, making this undertaking not only an act of artistic endeavor but also one of community development."³⁴ The murals of the 1970s, as led by Chicano/a artists including Baca, thus deviated from the Mexican mural movement of the 1930s by incorporating community as part of the design and painting process, empowering residents to define the art that surrounded them.³⁵

Baca was a Chicana artist who grew up in Los Angeles. She taught art at Alemany High School in Los Angeles after receiving her B.A. in 1969. Her first mural project was organized shortly afterwards and mural painting became her primary focus. She began working for the City of Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Department, organizing a mural team of twenty people from different neighborhoods. The diversity of the crew and geography encouraged her to explore the idea of uncovering the histories of ethnic communities in Los Angeles and depicting those histories across the racially segregated neighborhoods of Los Angeles.

²⁹ Beronius, "The Murals of east Los Angeles," *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 1976.

³⁰ Judith F. Baca, "Birth of a Movement: 30 Years in the Making of A Sites of Public Memory," Cesar Chavez Center of Interdisciplinary Studies of Chicano/A Studies and World Arts and Cultures Department, UCLA (Los Angeles, November 9, 2001), 5.

³¹ Alba, "From CARA to CACA," 209.

³² Judith Baca, "The Art of the Mural," *American Family*, 2004, Accessed July 07, 2016.
<http://www.pbs.org/americanfamily/mural.html>.

³³ Alba, "From CARA to CACA," 209.

³⁴ Guísela Latorre, "Latina Feminism and Visual Discourse: Yreina Cervántez's 'La Ofrenda'" *Discourse*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Fall 1999, 95-110), 102.

³⁵ Carlos N. Rogel, "Decolonial Arts Pedagogy and the Visual Metaphor: The Great Wall of Los Angeles Mural Project," PhD Dissertation (2015, UCLA), 23.

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Baca received the support of the Los Angeles City Council for a Citywide Mural Project in 1974.³⁶ The purpose of the project was to assist, coordinate, and encourage mural efforts already in progress across Los Angeles. The Mural Research Center was established at 3970 S. Menlo Avenue, but Baca hoped to expand the center and create a public arts workshop modeled on similar ones in Chicago and New York. The Citywide Mural Project became a part time job for aspiring artists and a focal point for the communities where new murals were located. The Citywide Mural Project eventually produced 250 murals across the city provided partial support in paint and equipment to an additional 150 citywide within its first two years of existence.

In 1974, the Army Corps of Engineers approached Baca for a commission to transform the Tujunga Wash, a concrete flood control channel, with a mural. Like the Mexican muralism movement of the 1930s, damming of the Los Angeles River and its tributaries, which often flooded, was a citywide initiative that traced its roots to the 1930s. Channelizing the Los Angeles River with concrete was completed in the 1960s. Using a concept developed through her work with gang members and street violence survivors in eastern Los Angeles, Baca described the beautification projects on the concrete channels that crossed the city as the creation of “a tattoo on the scar where the river once ran.”³⁷

To facilitate the organization and execution of the mural, Baca joined with artist Christina Schlesinger and filmmaker Donna Deitch to create the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) in 1976. SPARC was located in the former Venice city jail. Forming the organization was the first step towards creating the public arts workshop Baca envisioned at the beginning of the Citywide Mural Project. The group’s three female founders challenged the male domination of public art in Los Angeles at the time.³⁸ It was also a foundation and framework to manage the funding and designs of The Great Wall of Los Angeles. Most significantly, SPARC represented one of the broadest and one of the first multiethnic and interethnic community building programs in the city.³⁹

The stretch of Tujunga Wash that became The Great Wall of Los Angeles is in the North Hollywood area of the San Fernando Valley, a relatively neutral zone and unclaimed territory in the ethnically divided city.⁴⁰ The massive site is below ground and secluded from traffic and interactions normally associated with street mural production.⁴¹ To SPARC, which hoped to inspire and educate its young crew of at-risk youth, the neutrality of this space “proved an ideal

³⁶ The project was part of the Recreation and Parks Department’s Special and Subvented Programs unit. The unit existed from 1964 to 1975 with a budget of \$102,000. Josine Ianco-Starrels, “Art News: Rockefeller Grant For TV Editing,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 27, 1975.

³⁷ Baca, “Birth of a Movement,” 14.

³⁸ Chela Sandoval, and Guisela Latorre, “Chicana/o Artivism: Judy Baca’s Digital Work with Youth of Color,” *Learning Race and Ethnicity: Youth and Digital Media*, edited by Anna Everett. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2008), 83.

³⁹ Gamez, “Representing the City,” 101-102.

⁴⁰ Rogel, “Decolonial Arts Pedagogy and the Visual Metaphor,” 89.

⁴¹ Jeffrey J. Rangel, “Art and Activism in the Chicano Movement: Judith F. Baca, Youth, and the Politics of Cultural Work,” *Generations of Youth: Youth Cultures and History in Twentieth Century America*, edited by Joe Austin and Michael Nevin Willard (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 234.

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‘laboratory’ for engaging interethnic and intergenerational exchange and collaboration critical in the mural’s conception.”⁴² During the Citywide Mural Project, Baca had enlisted local community members to paint and collaborate on designs. The scale of the Great Wall project and site provided an opportunity to expand community member participation and engagement while the neutrality of the location provided the artists and gang-affiliated youth with a safe space to redress conflict.

Baca’s original content and design concept for the mural envisioned an alternative history of California that reflected the diversity of the state. Though the Army Corps of Engineers commissioned the mural, funding came from multiple organizations and agencies, creating a “...patchwork of funding from so many different sources that no one source could control the content of the piece,”⁴³ granting the artists a degree of freedom in the content of the mural. Instead of depicting the mainstream narrative dominated by figures from Europe and the eastern United States, the historical narrative of the Great Wall acknowledged the presence of ethnic people, racial and class conflict, sexism, and homophobia.⁴⁴ Much of this history was not yet documented in textbooks and over the years as the project progressed, the team would enlist help from scientists, historians, politicians, and members of local community groups to expand and document knowledge of untold history.

The content for the all of the Great Wall mural sections was developed using a four-step process the SPARC team called “Imaging of Content.”⁴⁵ Each section of the wall took a full year to research, organize, and execute. **Figures 1 through 7** show this process. Initially, the project struggled to connect pedagogical and artistic goals with the scale and breadth of subject matter in the mural. A methodology was refined each year as the project was underway.⁴⁶ As it evolved, the process emphasized gathering expert, non-expert, and first person perspectives to provide insight into biases of existing historical narratives and to uncover the untold history, linking historical events. As the first massive-scale project for SPARC, the process evolved with the project and would become systematic over the years as they created hundreds more murals.

To begin, historical periods were divided by decade and researched. Academic research included invitations to scholars and experts in the content area. The experts consulted for the segments were researchers focusing on areas of history traditionally underrepresented in mainstream narratives. Team members reviewed existing books on the periods and identified areas the group

⁴² Rangel, “Art and Activism in the Chicano Movement,” 234.

⁴³ Early funding came from Project HEAVY (Human Efforts at Vitalizing Youth). Later funding in 1981 and 1983 came from the Jewish Community Foundation. The Army Corps of Engineers provided 500 gallons of paint. Francis Pohl, “Judith F. Baca: Community and Culture in the United States,” *Women’s Studies* vol. 25 (1996, 215-237), 232; John L. Mitchell, “History Restarted with Mural Grant: Grant Restarts Mural Work,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 3, 1980.

⁴⁴ Pohl, “Judith F. Baca.”

⁴⁵ Judith F. Baca, “The Human Story at the Intersection of Ethics, Aesthetics and Social Justice,” *Journal of Moral Education*, vol. 34, no. 2 (June 2005, 153–169), 161.

⁴⁶ Philip Brookman, *The Great Wall of Los Angeles, Historical Narrative by Judy Baca. Califas: Chicano Art and Culture in California Collection*, Rec August 9, 1983. 6 Tapes of 6: 3/4" videocassette, Department of Special Collections, Donald C. Davidson Library, University of California, Santa Barbara, California, 1983.

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could analyze further. The group examined the popular culture of each era to dictate the look and feel of the period. In the next steps of research, the team interviewed people who lived during the era to get insights unavailable through traditional academic research. At the conclusion of this multi-layered research, the team created a timeline that included popular culture, political and social history, music, art, and movies. In a second phase, the team expanded their analysis of themes and root causes of historical events, diving deeper into the research. In the third step, the team outlined alternative ways of viewing the social issues that would become the content of the history depicted in the mural. The team emphasized linking causes and effects of events to show the narrative and progression of events. This informed the design of the mural by establishing a logical flow between periods and emphasizing that history is a progression of connected stories, not discrete and isolated events.

The final part of the Imaging of Content process developed designs and gathered feedback through people with different perspectives on historical events. First, ideas became thumbnail sketches contributed by everyone involved in the previous sessions. The team developed an idea called “prism perspectives” to describe their feedback process. The designs were reviewed by poets, writers, musicians, and people from the community to provide multiple perspectives called prisms. Prisms are the variety of perspectives and the lenses through which people view material; the prisms includes age, race, class, gender, sexuality, and immigration status. Drawings were developed and reviewed following a “talk through,” which used thumbnail drawings arranged like a storyboard for a film. Discussion among mural team members continued as the ideas evolved into small-scale color renderings. Final designs were made by Baca and a design team of professional artists and mural makers.

The painting process took five steps completed on site by teams of young people and artist supervisors. First, the wall was prepared with sandblasting, water blasting, and surface sealing. Next, gridlines were marked on the wall. Outlines were transferred onto the wall using blue prints and a projector. A transparent magenta undercoat was applied over the surface to harmonize the colors and cut the glare of the sunlight on the painter’s eyes. Painting colors and tones followed.⁴⁷ A clear acrylic sealer was applied over the mural as a final step.

The process of completing The Great Wall of Los Angeles occurred in two phases, beginning with the first summer of site work in 1976. The original name of the project was “History of California” and the original scope covered only prehistory through 1910. The first thousand feet of the mural were completed in nine weeks by a team of at-risk youth between 14 and 21 years old. See **Figure 5** for a photograph of the 1976 mural team. Different artists oversaw each segment completed during the initial summer. There was no initial methodology to create cohesion among the different artists.

The second phase of production began when the scope of the mural extended beyond 1910 and a growing sophistication in the composition of the mural increased the flow and coherence between segments by using techniques of prism perspective, imaging of content, and methods

⁴⁷ Rogel, “Decolonial Arts Pedagogy and the Visual Metaphor,” 91.

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Baca studied in Mexico. Baca traveled to Mexico to study mural painting of Siqueiros in 1977 and completed her Masters of Fine Art at Cal State University, Northridge in 1979. Baca's artistic development was demonstrated in the design of the segments depicting decades following 1910. These sections are distinguished by dramatic perspective shifts and segments linked by cross-cultural similarities.⁴⁸ The laundry lines connecting the Okies and the Nissei in the 1930s segments exemplify the later segment's emphasis on unifying features and steep perspective lines (**Figure 3**). Between 1978 and 1983, four additional decades were added to the mural, with a new decade added to the mural each summer: 1920s in 1978; 1930s in 1980; 1940s in 1981; and 1950s in 1983. By 1980, the mural was known as The Great Wall of Los Angeles after a documentary of the same title produced by SPARC co-founder Donna Deitch. At conclusion of the project in 1984, 35 artists and 400 young mural makers had participated in the process.

As the 1970s ended, there was an increasing international awareness of Chicano/a culture and murals as public beautification.⁴⁹ The coming of the Los Angeles bicentennial in 1981 and the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984 brought about greater recognition and encouraged financial and political support for the muralism movement to grow beyond eastern Los Angeles.⁵⁰ A remarkable aspect of Chicano/a muralism as spearheaded by Baca and SPARC's initiatives across Los Angeles through the 1970s was that the muralism movement and the mural media transcended major geographic and cultural barriers.⁵¹ The Great Wall of Los Angeles used the language and media of the Chicano/a civil rights movement to create a multi-cultural political statement and establish neutral ownership of urban space through beautification and multi-cultural cooperation. The Great Wall of Los Angeles was a milestone for Chicano/a muralism and public art in California.

Criterion A

The Great Wall of Los Angeles is a seminal work of public art created during the Chicano/a arts movement of the 1970s.⁵² The Great Wall of Los Angeles is eligible under Criterion A as an illustration of the development of the art of the Chicano/a civil rights movement in the twentieth century. For much of the twentieth century, murals provided Latinos in the southwestern United States with a means for public artistic expression, often in response to events or circumstances in the community. Latinos utilized murals to express opinions, political ideas, and emotions. Murals were once cultural markers, characteristic of ethnically divided neighborhoods. Murals as a populist art form became widespread in California during the Chicano/a civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The Great Wall of Los Angeles marked a significant departure from the isolation of mural art in ethnic neighborhoods and symbolized the broader appeal of Chicano/a murals across ethnic lines.⁵³ The history depicted in The Great Wall of Los Angeles was also a significant deviation from mainstream historical narratives of previous generations, which were

⁴⁸ Rogel, "Decolonial Arts Pedagogy and the Visual Metaphor," 26.

⁴⁹ Gamez, "Representing the City," 95.

⁵⁰ GPA Consulting, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California*, E58; Margaret Nieto, "Le Démon des Anges: A Brief History of the Chicano-Latino Artists of Los Angeles," *Le Démon Des Anges* (Nantes, France: Centre De Recherche Pour Le Développement Culturel, 1989), 220, 222.

⁵¹ Romo, "Borderland Murals," 125.

⁵² Tannenbaum, "Where Miles of Murals Preach a People's Gospel."

⁵³ Romo, "Borderland Murals," 136.

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often dominated by stories centered around Caucasian men, to focus on the history of minorities and underrepresented groups in a way that had not previously been the focus of monumental public art. The Great Wall provided a counter-narrative of California's history from a western perspective, documenting struggles, and highlighting the role of minorities in a revolutionary way for its time.⁵⁴ Beyond highlighting a singular ethnic identity, it expanded the narrative to show the rich ethnic and cultural diversity of California. The Great Wall of Los Angeles demonstrates an important moment when the content of stylistically Chicano/a murals moved beyond Chicano/a themes and presented a broader perspective of historical events that affected people living California.⁵⁵ The Great Wall is a monument to multi ethnic inclusiveness in the history it depicts and in the culturally diverse crew who created it. The Great Wall of Los Angeles is strongly associated with multiple minority communities in Los Angeles, but it is known primarily as the artistic achievement of the Chicano/a arts movement as it developed in Los Angeles. After its completion, the work of SPARC and Judith F. Baca immediately became a symbol of the city's artistic heritage.

Criterion C

The Great Wall of Los Angeles mural is eligible for listing on the National Register under Criterion C as a mural of high artistic value. According to the *Latinos in Twentieth Century California* Multiple Property Documentation Form, murals by important Latino artists or art collectives may be eligible under Criterion C for high artistic value if they are recognized as important achievements in Latino muralism. Despite the relatively recent period of significance (1974-1984), the mural has been extensively documented by art historians and social historians, reviewed by cultural resources professionals, and written about in works identifying the mural as a historically significant site associated with Chicano/a history.⁵⁶ The size and scale of The Great Wall of Los Angeles is unparalleled in California. Its segments depicting the history of underrepresented people and events in California history are noteworthy for their content as well as the creative process used to connect disparate stories into a continuous, decades-long narrative. The high artistic value of the mural comes from its aesthetic achievement in the Chicano/a arts movement; exemplifying the specific design language of Latino community art; and for its innovative synthesis of content and composition connecting events previously ignored or isolated by dominant historical narratives.

The Great Wall of Los Angeles is an exceptional example of a Chicano/a arts movement mural, the primary art form that developed in conjunction with the Chicano/a civil rights movement during the 1970s. The mural exemplifies the bold color and symbolism that characterizes the aesthetic qualities of the Chicano/a arts movement. The Chicano/a artists of the 1970s distinguished their murals form not just by aesthetic characteristics, but through a combination of distinctive style, populist production process, and subject matter. Murals often depicted historically oppressed or marginalized people. Their stories were told through indigenous or Mesoamerican-inspired symbolism and forms executed in bright colors. Aesthetically, bold

⁵⁴ Rangel, "Art and Activism in the Chicano Movement," 223-239.

⁵⁵ Romo, "Borderland Murals," 146.

⁵⁶ Shifra M. Goldman, *Dimensions of the America: Art and Social Change in Latin America and the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 202.

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colors and dramatic, steep perspective lines enhanced the grand scale of murals such as The Great Wall of Los Angeles. The aesthetics were influenced by designs found in Chicano/a popular culture, religious iconography, Mexican calendars, tattoos, and street writing.⁵⁷ This created a unique and specific style that reflected the place where the art was created and was deeply influenced by earlier artistic movements within the Latino community, such as Los Tres Grandes, Mexican muralists of 1930s. Baca's compositions for the Great Wall mirror Los Tres Grandes' use of volumetric and schematized form when depicting indigenous figures.⁵⁸

The Great Wall of Los Angeles is recognized as a monumental work of Chicano/a art, exemplifying the thematic qualities that celebrate an alternative narrative of history constructed to be inclusive of all ethnic groups in California. The mural emphasizes the perseverance and adaptability of underdogs in its messages and the resourcefulness of these communities by using informal and non-traditional production techniques and materials. Simple materials and media, including flood control channels, become art. Gang members and teenagers without formal training become artists.⁵⁹ The team behind the mural included over 400 young people, mostly Chicano/a and African American, who "felt themselves empowered by becoming agents in the process of writing history and by seeing themselves reflected in that history."⁶⁰ The Great Wall and the counter-narrative subject matter epitomized the creative process and empowerment of Chicano/a arts movement by using art as a process and visual means to overcome experiences of marginalization, exclusion, and invisibility.

California is widely recognized as the most active site of Chicano/a muralism during the height of the Chicano/a civil rights era in the 1970s. Muralism was one of the most widely known visual art forms that arose out of this era. While Los Angeles was one of the epicenters of muralism in California, it was not the only city in which Chicanos utilized murals as a major art form. Sacramento, the cities of the San Francisco Bay Area (San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, and San Jose), and San Diego developed art movements that used murals as a form of expression. Murals always reacted "geographically, politically and intellectually to their respective communities."⁶¹ Two widely cited collections of murals from the Chicano/a movement in California are in the Estrada Courts apartment complex in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles (completed between 1972 and 1978) and in Chicano Park in the Logan Heights district of San Diego (completed between 1973 and 1989). The Estrada Courts and Chicano Park collections both contain multiple, separate murals. The Estrada Courts murals are painted on the sides of residential buildings. The Chicano Park murals are painted on freeway support pillars and abutments. Both collections encompass the work of multiple artists. These mural collections represented an earlier phase of Chicano/a muralism than The Great Wall of Los Angeles.

⁵⁷ Baca, "Birth of a Movement," 5.

⁵⁸ Guisela Latorre, *Walls of Empowerment: Chicana/o Indigenist Murals of California*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 53.

⁵⁹ Hispanic Research Center, Arizona State University, "Rasquache," Rasquache, 2001, accessed May 16, 2016.

⁶⁰ Latorre, *Walls of Empowerment*, 192.

⁶¹ Nieto, "Le Démon des Anges: A Brief History of the Chicano-Latino Artists of Los Angeles," 221.

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The Great Wall of Los Angeles is one of the best representations of muralism in Chicano/a art in California. The Great Wall of Los Angeles is unique in that it is painted on a single wall, presenting a long narrative on a continuous plane rather than the statement of a single image. The flood control channel where the mural was painted was a neutral site, previously unaffiliated with any community. This contributed to the statewide influence of the mural. The Great Wall of Los Angeles represents a transition for Chicano/a muralism as it transformed into a more mainstream type of art, not only claiming and representing the history and places associated with Latino history, but telling the history and asserting the ownership of many communities in California to their state. After the completion of The Great Wall of Los Angeles, muralism was more widely accepted as mainstream art. In 1984, the City of Los Angeles commissioned various artists, including Judith Baca to paint murals to commemorate the Summer Olympics (the murals were covered by the California Department of Transportation in 2007). The Great Wall of Los Angeles had a significant impact statewide in the transition of muralism as an art form for the Latino community and beyond.

The Great Wall of Los Angeles is eligible for listing on the National Register under Criteria A and C at the state level of significance as a mural of high artistic value that utilized groundbreaking content, innovative community-sourced labor, and aesthetic achievement to communicate the ideals of the Chicano/a civil rights movement.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: The Smithsonian Institution (oral history) and Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington DC; Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC), Venice, California

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.87 (linear)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.179374 Longitude: -118.413869

2. Latitude: 34.172556 Longitude: -118.413643

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3. Latitude: 34.172349 Longitude: -118.413896

4. Latitude: 34.179388 Longitude: -118.414431

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Corresponds to assessor parcel number (APN) 2341-024-904, a section of the Tujunga Flood Control Channel bounded by Oxnard Street to the north, Coldwater Canyon Boulevard to the east, Burbank Boulevard to the south, and the Coldwater Canyon Extension road (also called Lancer Lane) and a parking lot to the west.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The APN comprising the boundary of the property contains a below-grade section of the Tujunga Flood Control Channel. The Great Wall of Los Angeles is painted on the west wall. At grade level within the parcel, the channel is flanked on both sides by the Tujunga Greenbelt, narrow strips of park space. The eastern strip of the greenbelt is the primary place for the public to view the mural. The boundary includes the Great Wall of Los Angeles and the platform for viewing the mural.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Allison M. Lyons, Associate Architectural Historian
organization: GPA Consulting, Inc.
street & number: 617 S. Olive Street, Suite 910
city or town: Los Angeles state: CA zip code: 90014
e-mail: allison@gpaconsulting-us.com
telephone: (310) 792-2690
date: August 2016

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to

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the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Great Wall of Los Angeles, The
City or Vicinity: Los Angeles
County: Los Angeles
State: California
Photographer: Amanda Yoder Duane
Date Photographed: February 9, 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 31 Section 1, Segments 1 and 2, camera facing southwest
- 2 of 31 Section 1, Segments 1 through 4, camera facing west
- 3 of 31 Section 1, multiple segments, camera facing northwest
- 4 of 31 Section 1, Segments 5 through 8, camera facing west
- 5 of 31 Section 1, Segments 8 through 13, camera facing west
- 6 of 31 Section 1, Segments 12 through 19, camera facing west
- 7 of 31 Section 1, Segments 16 through 23, camera facing west
- 8 of 31 Section 1, Segments 23 through 26, camera facing west
- 9 of 31 Section 1, Segments 26 through 29, camera facing west
- 10 of 31 Section 1, Segments 30 through 32, camera facing west
- 11 of 31 Section 1, Segments 32 through 35, camera facing west
- 12 of 31 Section 2, Segments 36 through 38, camera facing west
- 13 of 31 Section 2, Segments 38 through 41, camera facing west
- 14 of 31 Section 2, Segments 39 through 41, camera facing west

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- 15 of 31 Section 3, Segments 42 through 46, camera facing west
- 16 of 31 Section 3, Segments 46 through 51, camera facing west
- 17 of 31 Section 3, Segments 49 through 53, camera facing west
- 18 of 31 Section 3, Segment 53, camera facing west
- 19 of 31 Section 4, Segments 54 through 57, camera facing west
- 20 of 31 Section 4, Segments 56 through 62, camera facing west
- 21 of 31 Section 4, Segments 61 through 66, camera facing west
- 22 of 31 Section 4, Segments 66 and 67, camera facing west
- 23 of 31 Section 5, Segment 68, camera facing southwest
- 24 of 31 Section 5, multiple segments, camera facing northwest
- 25 of 31 Section 5, Segment 68 through 70, camera facing west
- 26 of 31 Section 5, Segment 69 through 71, camera facing west
- 27 of 31 Section 5, Segment 71 through 75, camera facing west
- 28 of 31 Section 5, Segment 74 through 78, camera facing west
- 29 of 31 Section 5, Segment 78 through 82, camera facing west
- 30 of 31 Section 5, Segment 82 and Section 6 Segment 86, camera facing west
- 31 of 31 Section 6, camera facing northwest

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

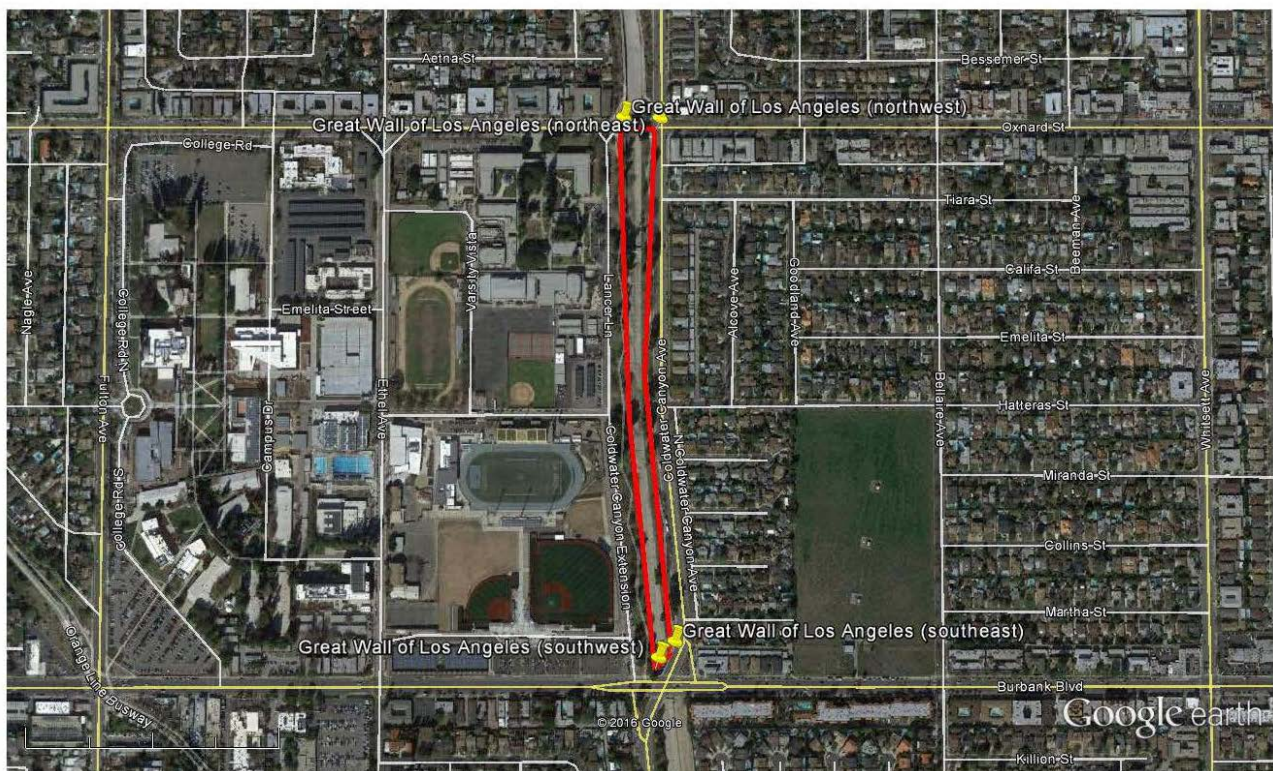
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Location Map

- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Latitude: 34.179374 | Longitude: -118.413869 | Northeast |
| 2. Latitude: 34.172556 | Longitude: -118.413643 | Southeast |
| 3. Latitude: 34.172349 | Longitude: -118.413896 | Southwest |
| 4. Latitude: 34.179388 | Longitude: -118.414431 | Northwest |

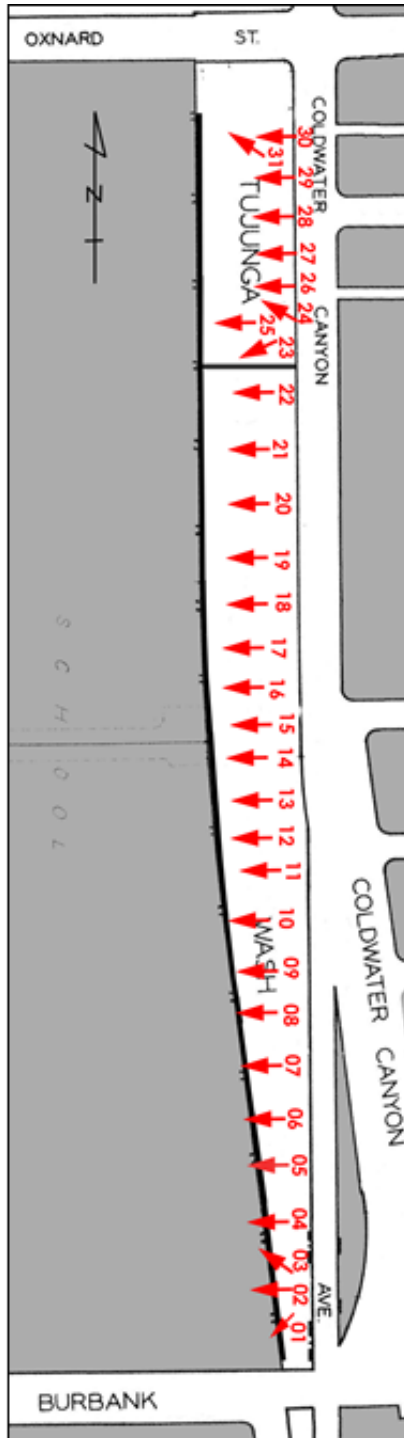
Property boundary outlined in red



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Sketch Map/Photo Key



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Figure 1 Meeting to discuss mural content, 1970s (Courtesy SPARC)



Figure 2 Meeting next to the Tujunga Flood Control panel, prior to painting, c. 1976 (Courtesy SPARC)



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Figure 3 Drawing for Section 2, segment 36 depicting *World War I Doughboys* with lines of steep perspective, 1977-1978 (Courtesy SPARC)

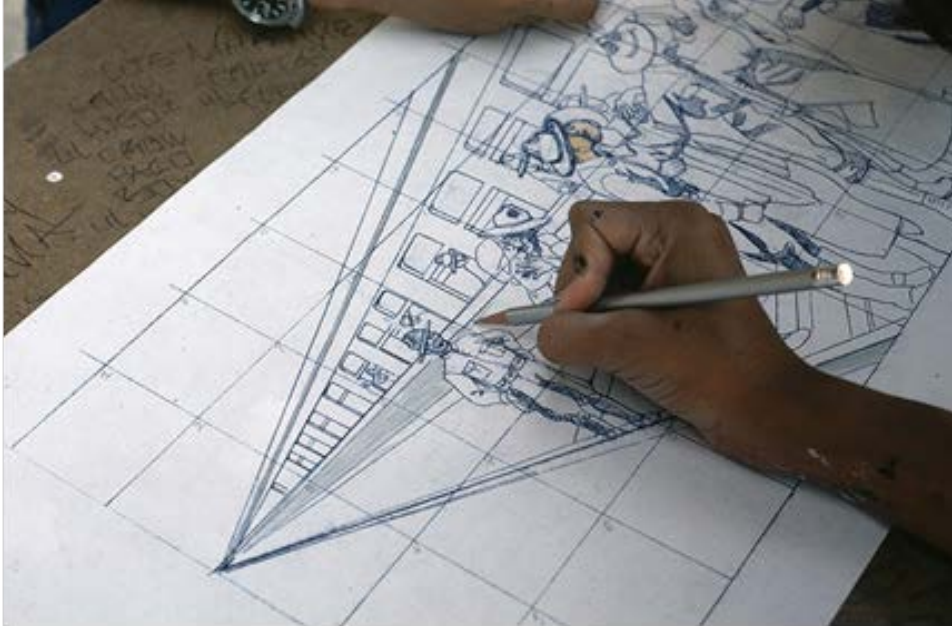


Figure 4 The mural teams prepares the concrete wash for painting, 1970s (Courtesy SPARC)



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Figure 5 Summer of 1976 mural team in front of Section 1, *Legend of Califa* and *Indigenous Perspective* segments, 1976 (Courtesy SPARC)



Figure 6 The mural team, including Judith Baca (far right), meet with officials in front of Section 5, *Indian Assimilation* segment, 1983 (Courtesy SPARC)



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Figure 7 Summer of 1983 mural team in front of Section 5, *Ginsberg & The Beats* and *Jewish Arts & Sciences* segments, 1983 (Courtesy SPARC)

