



Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC)  
Creating Sites of Public Memory Since 1976  
685 Venice Boulevard ♦ Venice, CA 90291

310/822-9560 ♦ 310/827-8717 (fax) [www.sparcmurals.org](http://www.sparcmurals.org)

UCLA Professor Judith F. Baca, Co-Founder/Artistic Director and Debra J.T. Padilla, Executive Director



August 14, 2013

Ms. June Lagmay  
City Clerk  
City of LA – City Hall  
200 N. Spring St. Room 360  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Ms. Lagmay,

Enclosed please find a document regarding CF#11-0923 – The Mural Ordinance.

I've enclosed two copies, one for your office and one for Council President Wesson.  
I've forwarded it to his staff, but I would like to make double sure he receives it.

With gratitude,

Debra J.T. Padilla  
Executive Director  
310/822-9560 x13 [debra@sparcmurals.org](mailto:debra@sparcmurals.org)



LA FREEWALLS

August 14, 2013

Los Angeles City Council  
City Hall | 200 N. Spring Street Rm. 360  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attn: Hon. Herb Wesson, Council President  
Ms. June Lagmay, City Clerk

Re: CF 11-0923 | Mural Ordinance  
Request passage of Version A with an overlay zone option

Dear President Wesson and all Los Angeles City Council Members:

We the undersigned as representatives of the mural arts community hereby request the passage of the mural ordinance on Tuesday, August 20th. After 10 years of a legislated ban on murals on private property, our organizations and the artists we represent have waited long enough.

For those council districts that want a mural free zone, we believe an overlay zone would be appropriate. The majority of communities that have supported murals in their districts for decades should not be penalized for those few districts that oppose murals. Our streets and neighborhoods are our museums. We owe the next generation an opportunity to contribute to and learn from the rich mural legacy that once made Los Angeles the Mural Capital of the World. Let's regain this title by passing an ordinance that sends a message that the City of Los Angeles is a mural friendly city once again. The murals as expressions of our communities are worthy of respect by our representatives in the city council.

The mural community has worked hard to help shape a mural policy that we all believe to be fair and just. When you have the majority of us who have made murals a key aspect of our artistic life, our voice should not be ignored.

**Today we give you a unified voice from our respective artistic communities, PASS THE MURAL ORDINANCE NOW.** Thank you for your consideration and we request that our letter be included in the record and filed in CF 11-0923.

Respectfully,

- Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC)
- Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles (MCLA)
- Venice Arts Council (VAC)
- Plaza de la Raza
- Mobile Mural Lab (MML)
- Self Help Graphics & Art (SHG)
- Art Share LA
- United Painters and Public Artists (UPPA)
- Mictlan Murals
- Siqueiros Foundation of the Arts
- Conservancy of Urban Art
- LA Freewalls



## Our vision has come of age. The ideas we propagated have gained credibility over the years:

- That art was for everyone regardless of their status in our society
- That the distinctions between high and low art, fine and folk were false
- That innovation is important only while nurturing the significant traditions in which various ethnic groups preserve their cultures
- That art should not dwell only in rarefied halls but in the places where people live and work
- That the process not only the product, is the measure of the value of an art work.
- That all Americans could be participants in the making of art and that collaborations work.
- And last...That the arts can have significant transformative impact on the most significant social problems of our time.

SPARC is a community-based non-profit arts organization founded in 1976 by muralist Judith F. Baca, filmmaker Donna Deitch and artist Christina Schlesinger. SPARC is dedicated to producing, presenting and preserving public artworks in Los Angeles neighborhoods. The organization is best known for its work in hundreds of Los Angeles neighborhoods at a grass roots level to produce the rich legacy of Los Angeles murals and the ethnic face of our city.

SPARC's intent is to examine what we choose to memorialize through public art, to devise and innovate excellent art pieces; and ultimately, to provide empowerment through participatory processes to local residents and communities excluded from civic debate. SPARC works are never simply individually authored endeavors, but rather a collaboration between artists and local residents, resulting in art which rises from within the community rather than being imposed upon it.

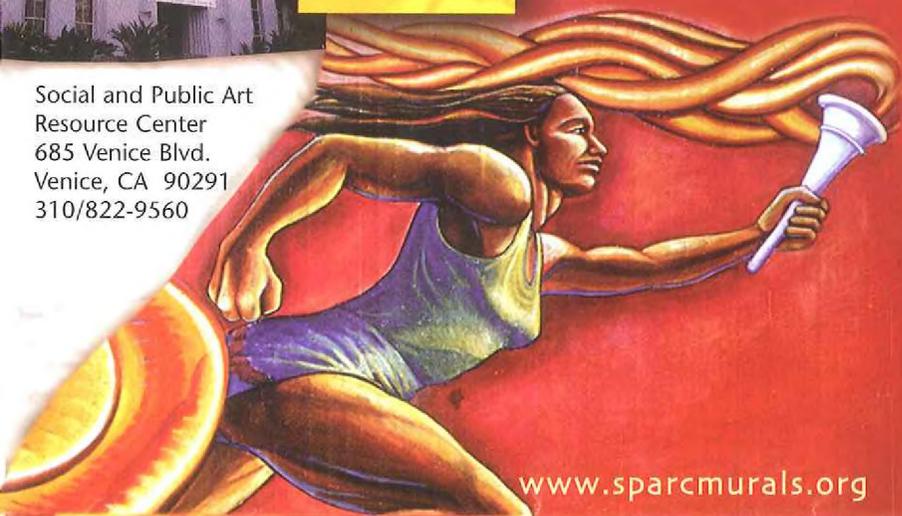
SPARC has remained committed to its values as socially responsible art makers. We remain committed to helping individual communities find their voice, giving it public expression, and having others hear it; to breaking down barriers, real and perceived, between communities; and remembering that what we do is as much about public good as it is about public art.

SPARC has called the historic Venice Police Station home since 1976.



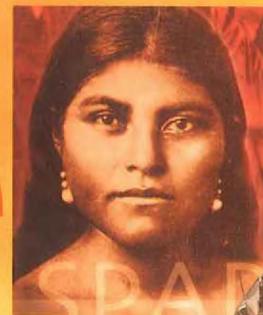
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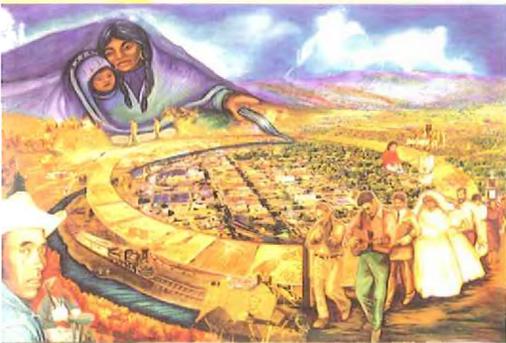


SPARC



Alfredo De Batuc-Neighborhood Pride Mural

## SPARC AND COMMUNITY



The Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) is a gift from the neighborhoods of Los Angeles to each other and the world. No other arts organization in this city serves the artistic and social function, day in

and day out, of bringing diverse peoples together to express themselves in a public and positive manner.

The seed of SPARC's vision is the Mexican social mural movement, especially as expressed by David Alfaro Siqueiros: "We repudiate so-called easel art and all such art which springs from ultra-intellectual circles, for it is essentially aristocratic. We hail the monumental expression of art because such art is public property." But SPARC has transcended this maxim and created a new standard for what is public art.

Art is a record of everyone's story, not just official party lines [The Great Wall of Los Angeles]. Art is not just the finished work visible to all, but the creative process is itself a community collaboration [Great Walls Unlimited: Neighborhood Pride]. No longer is the mural static, but it moves around the world allowing other peoples to see and to add their own vision to it [World Wall]. And public art funding is raised from the very communities that seek to make their monuments a part of the collective history

of a diverse city, rather than just from public agencies or private foundations and corporations.

SPARC has achieved all of this and much more. For it is in the process of community collaboration that SPARC's greatest contribution is made. That cannot be quantified, but the finished work is secondary to the coming together of peoples who have heretofore had no voice, no images, no monuments. Through this process they express their history, their frustrations, and their dreams.

The artistic vision that is SPARC belongs to one woman, Judith Francisca Baca. For all of SPARC's history, Baca has served as its artistic director, guiding the organization through adversity and triumph. Political and cultural elites have continually questioned SPARC's work — the former for not being politically right, the latter for not following the 'art for art's sake' dogma. Yet the neighborhoods SPARC has served have stood by SPARC and Baca, and have made her distant dream an ever-present reality.

The fruits of the struggle belong to the neighborhoods that have invited us in to help tell their stories, to the artists and their neighborhood assistants, and to the employees of SPARC. Together they have made the hundreds of public art works that SPARC has produced their legacy for all time.

**Armando Durón, Esq**  
**President Emeritus**



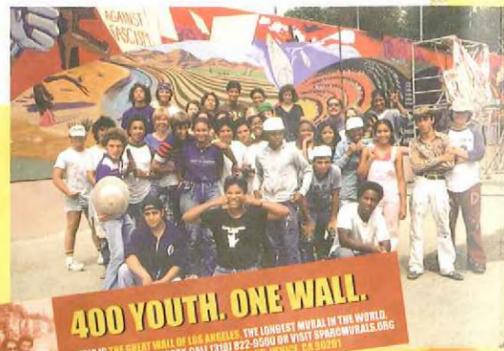
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## Great Wall of Los Angeles

*The Longest Mural In the World*

Conceived by Judith F. Baca, SPARC's first public art project and its true signature piece, the Great Wall is a landmark pictorial representation of the history of ethnic peoples of California from prehistoric times to the 1950's. Begun in 1974 and completed over six summers, the Great Wall engaged over 400 youngsters of diverse social and economic backgrounds working with countless artists, oral historians, ethnologists, scholars, and hundreds of community members, making it one of the most monumental projects in the country dealing with interracial relations. Its half-mile length in the Tujunga Flood Control Channel of the San Fernando Valley hosts thousands of visitors every year, providing a vibrant and lasting tribute to California and the people who have truly shaped its history. The world's longest mural will be a mile long as SPARC prepares to add the history of the 1960's through 1990's.



## THE WORLD WALL: A Vision of the Future Without Fear

The World Wall conceived in 1987 currently consists of eight 10ft x 30ft portable mural panels on canvas, (four created by the artist Judith F. Baca and four created by artists from

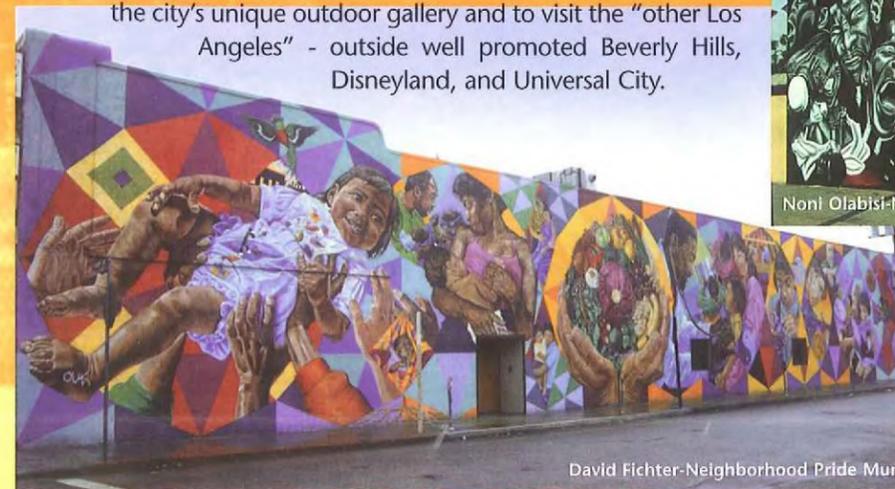
Finland, Russia, Israel/Palestine and Mexico). This 240-foot mural installation addresses contemporary issues of global importance: war, peace, cooperation, interdependence, and spiritual growth. As the World Wall tours the world, additional panels by artists from various countries will be added to complete this visual tribute to the "Global Village."



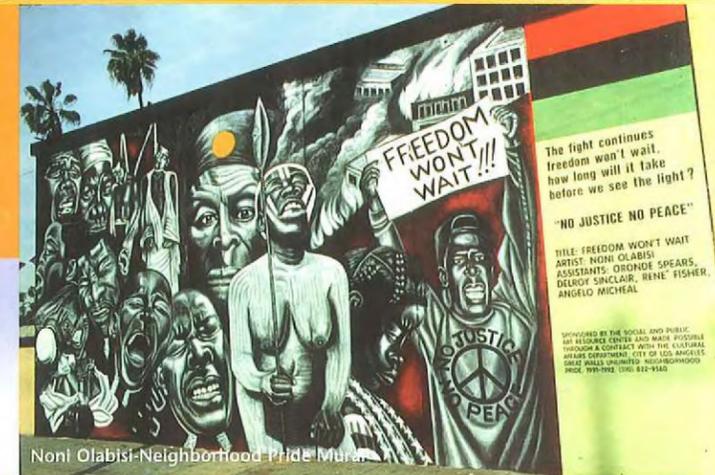
Mexico Panel by Martha Ramirez & Patricia Quijano

## PUBLIC MURAL TOURS

A taste of the "Other L.A." Since its inception, SPARC's guided mural tours have given thousands of Angelenos and visitors from around the world an opportunity to view the city's unique outdoor gallery and to visit the "other Los Angeles" - outside well promoted Beverly Hills, Disneyland, and Universal City.



David Fichter-Neighborhood Pride Mural



Noni Olabisi-Neighborhood Pride Mural

## SPARC'S ART GALLERY

Produces approximately 4-6 exhibitions per year. There are also 4 travelling exhibitions available for rental: Minna Agins retrospective, Judy Baca retrospective, World Wall, and Neighborhood Pride Murals of Los Angeles.

## SIGNS FROM THE HEART: CALIFORNIA CHICANO MURALS

A creation of the California Chicano Mural Documentation Project at SPARC, Signs From the Heart is a publication of the University of New Mexico Press. Now in its second printing, it is available in bookstores nationwide, and is used as a textbook for classes in public art and Chicano studies.



## SPARC'S MREC

(Mural Resource and Education Center) is one of the country's largest repositories of information about murals and other forms of public art. Its journals, magazines, newspaper articles, over 60,000 slides and artists' registry are visited by hundreds of students, educators, scholars, artists, and art historians every year. The MREC offers a series of educational slide sets, classroom visits and specialized mural tours. SPARC also monitors artist copyrights and collects and distributes user fees from publishers, film companies, and other entities desiring to reproduce mural images for commercial use.

## CONTACT:

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**310/827-8717 fax**  
**www.sparcmurals.org**

Below is a sampling of entities who have invested in SPARC's work

ARCO FOUNDATION • HITACHI FOUNDATION • RUTH MOTT FUND • ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION • ANDY WARHOL FOUNDATION FOR THE VISUAL ARTS • NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS • J. PAUL GETTY TRUST FOR THE VISUAL ARTS • CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL • CITY OF LOS ANGELES CULTURAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT • NATIONAL/COUNTY STATE PARTNERSHIP • BANKY LAROCHE FOUNDATION • ANHEUSER-BUSCH COMPANIES • LA OPINION • DURFEE FOUNDATION • AHMANSON FOUNDATION • MOYA, VILLANUEVA, INC. • LEON STRAUSS FOUNDATION • JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM • TARGET STORES INC. • DURAZO COMMUNICATIONS, INC. • DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES OF LOS ANGELES • WORLD CUP • UC MEXUS • COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF LOS ANGELES • CENTER THEATRE GROUP/AHMANSON AND MARK TAPER FORUM • WEINGART FOUNDATION • CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION • UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA /LOS ANGELES • NATHAN CUMMINGS FOUNDATION • FORD FOUNDATION'S Working Capital Fund for Minority Cultural Institutions • CITY OF LOS ANGELES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION • LA WOMEN'S FOUNDATION • GARY SALTZ FOUNDATION • LOS ANGELES OPERA • FORD FOUNDATION'S Animating Democracy Initiative • ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION'S PACT Program and US/MEXICO Fund for Culture • ORANGE COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION • JAMES IRVINE FOUNDATION • BANK OF AMERICA • VERIZON • ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY • OTIS COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN • DURFEE FOUNDATION • FORD FOUNDATION/Americans for the Arts: AD/WCF Exemplar Program



Founder/Artistic Director: Judith F. Baca  
 Executive Director: Debra J.T. Padilla



# Voice to Vision

SPARC invents a new concept in muralism:  
The Digital Mural

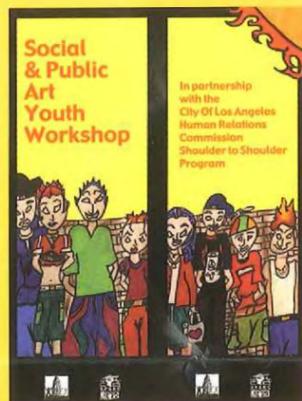
The UCLA/SPARC Cesar Chavez Digital/Mural Lab is a leading research, teaching and production facility devoted to the creation of large-scale digitally generated murals, educational DVD's, animations, community archives and digital art. The Digital/Mural Lab is a real-world proving ground for the creation of new methods and technological appli-

cations that allow artists and the communities they memorialize to reap the full benefits of digital imaging technology. This collaborative effort between UCLA's Cesar Chavez Center and World Arts and Cultures Departments and SPARC "Brings Together Communities, Through Art and Technology."

**WITNESSES TO LOS ANGELES HISTORY** Supported by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, students in UCLA's first Digital/Mural Lab Imaging workshop worked with Cornerstone Theater Company to digitally produce mural set pieces for "Birth of a Century," a play celebrating the history of Los Angeles. The murals were created through a dialogue process with members of Cornerstone's production to inform the themes and visual content of the work. Historical and personal photos were researched, scanned, hand and digitally-rendered to produce eight 20' x 31' digital murals printed on vinyl. Since its premier at California Plaza, "Witnesses to Los Angeles History" has appeared at several venues in the Southern California area, including a fundraising event at the Wadsworth and a UCLA exhibit at the Chancellor's Mansion. Other exhibitions include the Centro Cultural de la Raza in San Diego, the Wright Gallery, International Violence Prevention Conference and SPARC's Art Gallery. Also, PBS featured the murals in a nationwide public relations campaign to promote public TV.

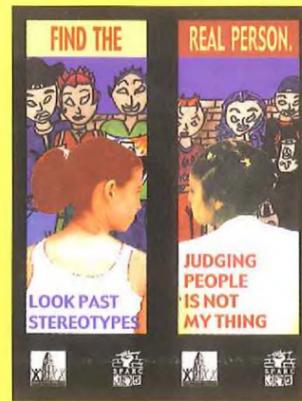


**WITNESSES TO LOS ANGELES HISTORY** The Los Angeles Public Housing Authority enlisted Professor Baca's digital/mural class for the production of a permanent public art piece for the Estrada Public Housing Project. Estrada Courts, one of East Los Angeles' oldest housing projects, is internationally recognized and respected for its collection of Chicano murals painted in the 1970's. Students conducted oral history interviews with 25 Estrada Courts families, researched U.S. Public Housing policy and archives, and collaborated to define the issues that are represented in the imagery. Photos collected from residents' photo albums were used to depict the complex stories of immigration, teenage pregnancy, poverty, and violence that embody the neighborhood's collective consciousness. This process resulted in the production of six 8' x 9' digital murals that were permanently installed within the resident initiated community center.



## SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

The Social and Public Arts Youth Workshop engaged 13 and 14-year-old public and private school youth from different ethnic and class backgrounds in conceptualizing art based solutions to social issues. The workshop facilitated dialogue between the participants about personal identity and community issues through visual art, writing, graphic art, and theater exercises. Students worked with computers to design their own images. Approximately 100 kids over the course of 10 weeks participated in the youth arts workshop and produced 250 banners which were displayed in all 15 Los Angeles council districts.



## HOTEL EMPLOYEES AND RESTAURANT EMPLOYEES

The digital mural SPARC created for Local 11, the union for Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE), celebrates the many workers who dedicate their lives to making Los Angeles' hotel industry successful. The mural showcases various hotel service workers in their working environments, while simultaneously relating their work to the Los Angeles landscape. The work seeks to honor the importance of the work, and the workers' identities. Local 11 members and administrators led by President Maria Elena Durazo, all participated in the development and approval of the design, theme, and content for the mural. Oral histories and archival photographs from Local 11 were provided as additional source material for the imagery and design.

**MARK TAPER FORUM / AHMANSON** SPARC received a commission from the Mark Taper Forum and Ahmanson Theatre in Los Angeles to create a 6' x 60' ft. digitized vinyl mural for its 30th anniversary. Staff and artists of the Mark Taper Forum and the Ahmanson Theatre took part in a series of workshops in which they shared history and experiences about the process of collaborating with community.



## Great Walls Unlimited: Neighborhood Pride Mural Program

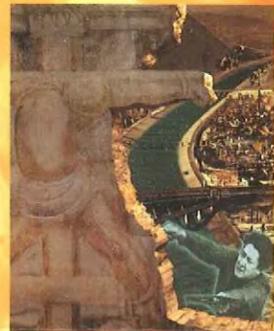
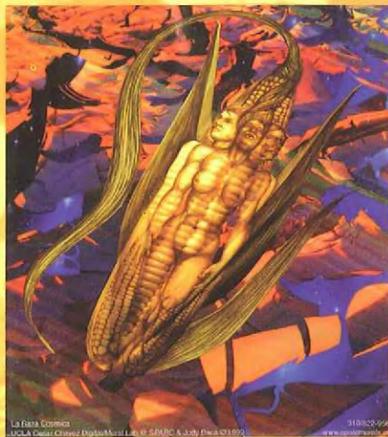
Since 1988, this program and its artists have created murals in almost every ethnic community of Los Angeles, employed established and emerging muralists, and trained hundreds of

youth apprentices, providing a veritable street gallery that beautifies the urban environment and imparts a sense of pride and place to Angelenos and visitors alike. One of the country's most respected model mural programs, it is funded by the City of Los Angeles through a contract with the Cultural Affairs Department.



**OLVERA STREET/SIQUEIROS** U.C.L.A. students worked collaboratively with at-risk Los Angeles youth to construct a series of painted and mixed-media murals for installation along the entrance to the Getty Museum's restoration of the controversial 1932 mural, "America Tropical," by legendary Mexican muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros at El Pueblo de Los Angeles/Olvera Street, the birthplace of LA. Using digital imaging, students created murals depicting historical comparisons between Siqueiros' vision of 1930s Los Angeles and the view modern youth have of the city at the end of the 20th century.

Siqueiros' "America Tropical," was completed amidst art world revivification, nativist Los Angeles politics (i.e. massive deportations), and following the Mexican Revolution, and then was immediately white-washed. In the 1970's the mural began to reappear through the whitewash in the midst of the Chicano/a mural movement. This sparked a renewed interest in the mural and its restoration.



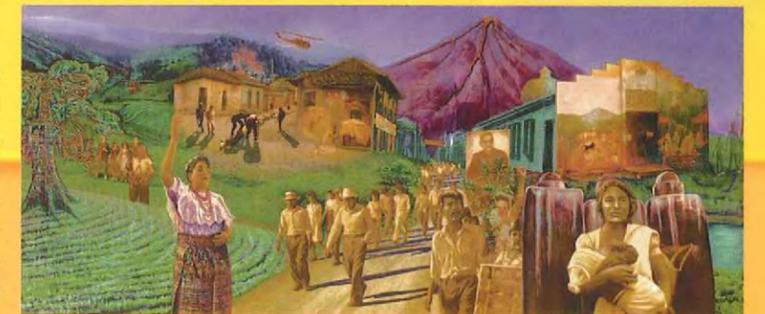
**MEMORIALS TO VENICE MURALS:  
Past and Present**

As part of the Venice Beach Ocean Front Walk Renovation Project, SPARC was commissioned by the City of Los Angeles to produce a visual history of Venice's most significant murals. SPARC researched and selected 15 murals that reflected the sentiment of Venice's unique community, and reproduced the images on tile for placement on podiums along a 750-ft. expanse of the Venice Boardwalk. Statements by the original artists and plaques commemorating SPARC's efforts to preserve our "public memories" also appear on the podiums.



**CARECEN: "Migration of the Golden People"  
ONE COMMUNITY'S TESTIMONY**

The impact of SPARC's work is best voiced in that of a community partner. Works such as the 14ft x 32ft digital and hand painted CARECEN mural, the first significant public work created in Los Angeles about the migration of Central Americans into the Pico Union district of Los Angeles represent the partnerships with community groups who wish to visualize the issues affecting their community. Regarding the experience at CARECEN Angela Sanbrano Executive Director of CARECEN writes, "SPARC's work parallels the organization's belief in art as a reflection of the lives of America's diverse ethnic communities. Especially heartening has been the organization's development of a community approach in the creation of art for the betterment of society. SPARC's work with CARECEN empowered participating youth, enabling them not only to play an active role in the decision process, but also to work with their parents, professional artists, ethnol-



ogists and scholars. This is an experience that has enriched their lives while creating meaningful change in the Central American community itself. By encouraging students to take responsibility for their community and their own individual development, SPARC has enabled them to grow in new and exciting ways."