

Los Angeles Trade Technical College

Course: Sign Graphics 201-Fundamentals of Mural Painting, Spring 2019

Time & Location: 8:00 am - 2:30 pm, Saturday, SA/H204

Professor: A. M. Mortimer

Student: Edward Locke

Assignment: Mural Visit Report

Completion Date: Friday, February 22, 2019

The Great Wall of Los Angeles

The Great Wall of Los Angeles (*Figures 1 through 13*) is a half mile long series of seamlessly connected murals on the history of California depicting prehistory to the 1980's, and is a work in progress. This series of mural paintings are located at the boundary of Los Angeles Valley College, on the western wall of the waterway along the Coldwater Canyon Avenue, and between the Burbank Boulevard and Oxnard Street, beneath the Tujunga Greenbelt (*Figure 14*). The height of the mural varies from approximately 13.5 feet on the left end close to the Burbank Boulevard, to approximately 16 feet on the right end close to Oxnard Street; and this measurement includes the caption at the bottom of the mural, which is approximately 3.5 feet. The measurement has been made by (1) attaching a heavy-duty pad lock to a string, (2) dropping the whole setup through the protective fence on top of the waterway to the bottom until the lock reach the floor basin, and marking the point on the string where it touches of ground, (3) pulling the string and lock setup up to the ground and measuring the total length of the setup. The mural has been started in 1976, and completed under the Social and Public Art Resource Center (abbreviation: SPARC; telephone: 310-822-9560; address: 685 Venice Blvd., Venice, CA 90291; website: <http://sparcinla.org/>; email: info@sparcinla.org), which is established since 1978, by the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Art Professor Judith Baca, who served as a Co-Founder and the Artistic Director. It employed 400 youth and their families from diverse social economic and cultural backgrounds. The themes have been determined by artists, historians, ethnologists, scholars, and members of the communities. Aimed at promoting inter-racial harmony through civil dialogue, fostering cross-cultural understanding, and addressing critical social issues, it has attracted political and financial support from various government agencies in the Greater Los Angeles Area and throughout the United States, such as the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs and the United States Army Corps of Engineers, as well as from many prestigious private-sector civic and corporate non-profit organizations, such as the National Endowments for the Arts, the California Cultural Historical Endowment, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, Prudential Social Investments, California Community Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Annenberg Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, the Jewish Community Foundation, the Disney Foundation, the California Council for the Humanities, among others. The mural has been restored in the years 2009 to 2011 under the leadership of Professor Judith Baca (Artistic Director and Project Director) and Carlos Rogel (Project Manager), by a team of 15 artists and 19 assistants.

Professor Judith Baca once said that “the purpose of any monument is to bring the past into the present and to inspire the future.” Art works sponsored by non-profit organizations might carry strong messages based on the organizations’ social, cultural, political and economic values and beliefs, which are unique of the particular organizations and might not be shared by individuals associated with parallel or competing organizations. The Great Wall of Los Angeles mural project is dedicated to a study of California’s history, from Colonial times to Civil Rights Movement and beyond; and is clearly loaded with social and political messages, which are apparently “liberal,”

“progressive” and “environmentalist.” The murals depict the achievement of the people of California in science, technology, industrial and agricultural production, plus social and political events such as World War I and II, the Great Depression and the New Deal, racial conflicts and Civil Rights Movement, Prohibition and other events that are still “controversial” to some; and thus, do not fit into “arts-for-art’s own sake” of “pure art” model. In addition of the celebration of the great achievements of the Californian people of all social classes and ethnic groups, the murals also exhibits some dark sides in the modern history of the United States and of California, such as the Chinese Massacre of 1871, the Great Train Robbery, the Red Scare or McCarthyism and the deportation of 500,000 Mexican-Americans, the Japanese Internment, among others.

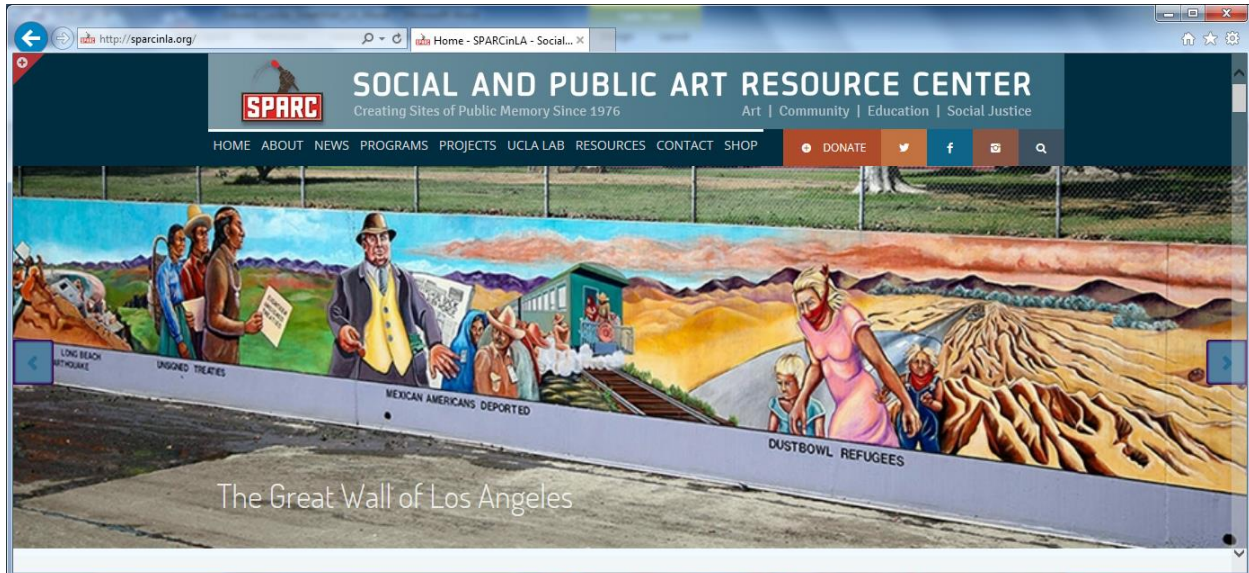


Figure 1. The website of the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) at <http://sparcinla.org/>.



Figure 2. Pre-historic animals in California.

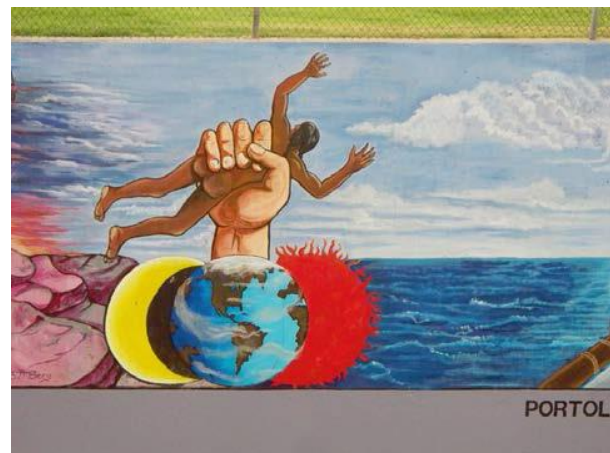


Figure 3. Colonial history with racial oppression.

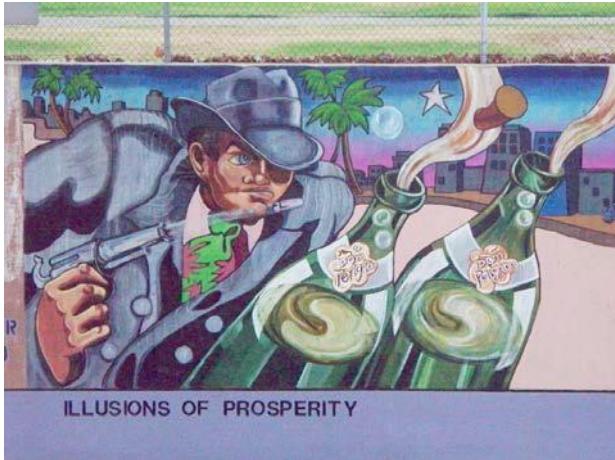


Figure 4. The illusion of prosperity with desire for abundant consumption right before the outbreak of the Great Depression.



Figure 5. The suffering of the poor during the Great Depression.



Figure 6. One of the murals depicting political life during the New Deal, especially labor organizing and strikes.



Figure 7. Progress in transportation.

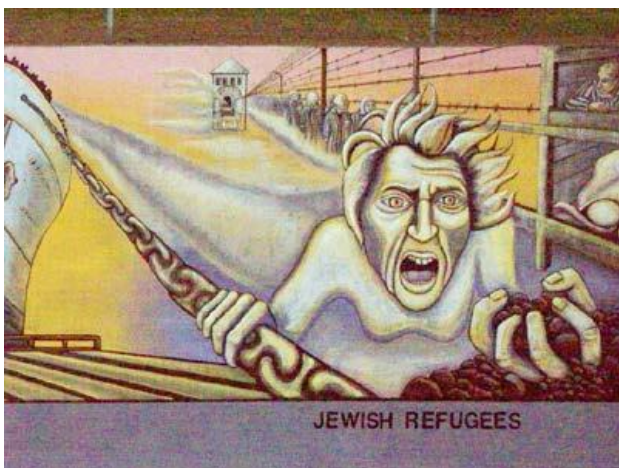


Figure 8. Several murals depict Jewish suffering during World War II under Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime and struggle for social change.



Figure 9. Another mural dealing with Civil Rights Movement.

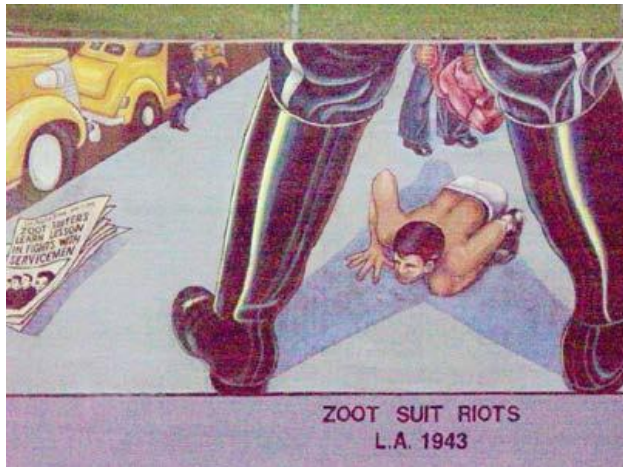


Figure 10. One of the murals dealing with racial tensions in the cities.

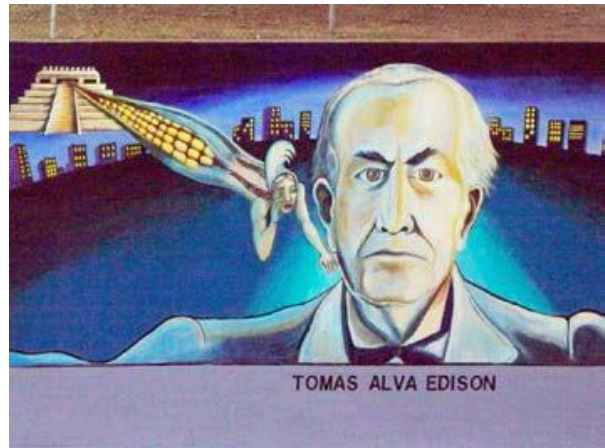


Figure 11. Scientific achievements such as the invention of light bulbs and others are described in many pieces of murals.

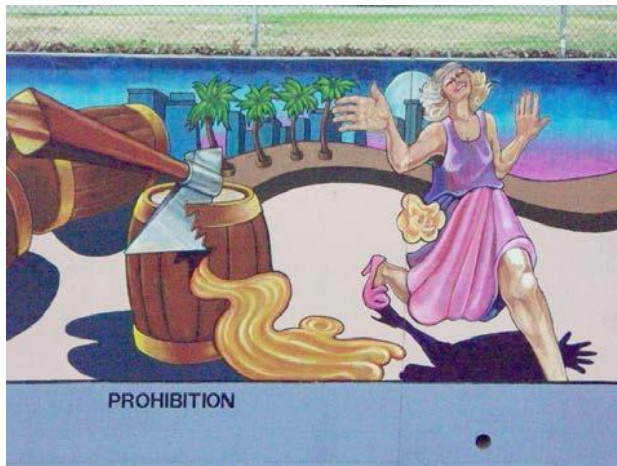


Figure 12. Prohibition and its end represented by the barrel-breaking ax.

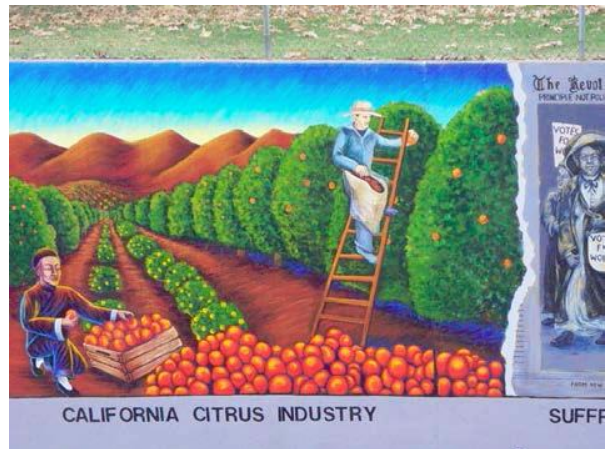


Figure 13. Fruit production.

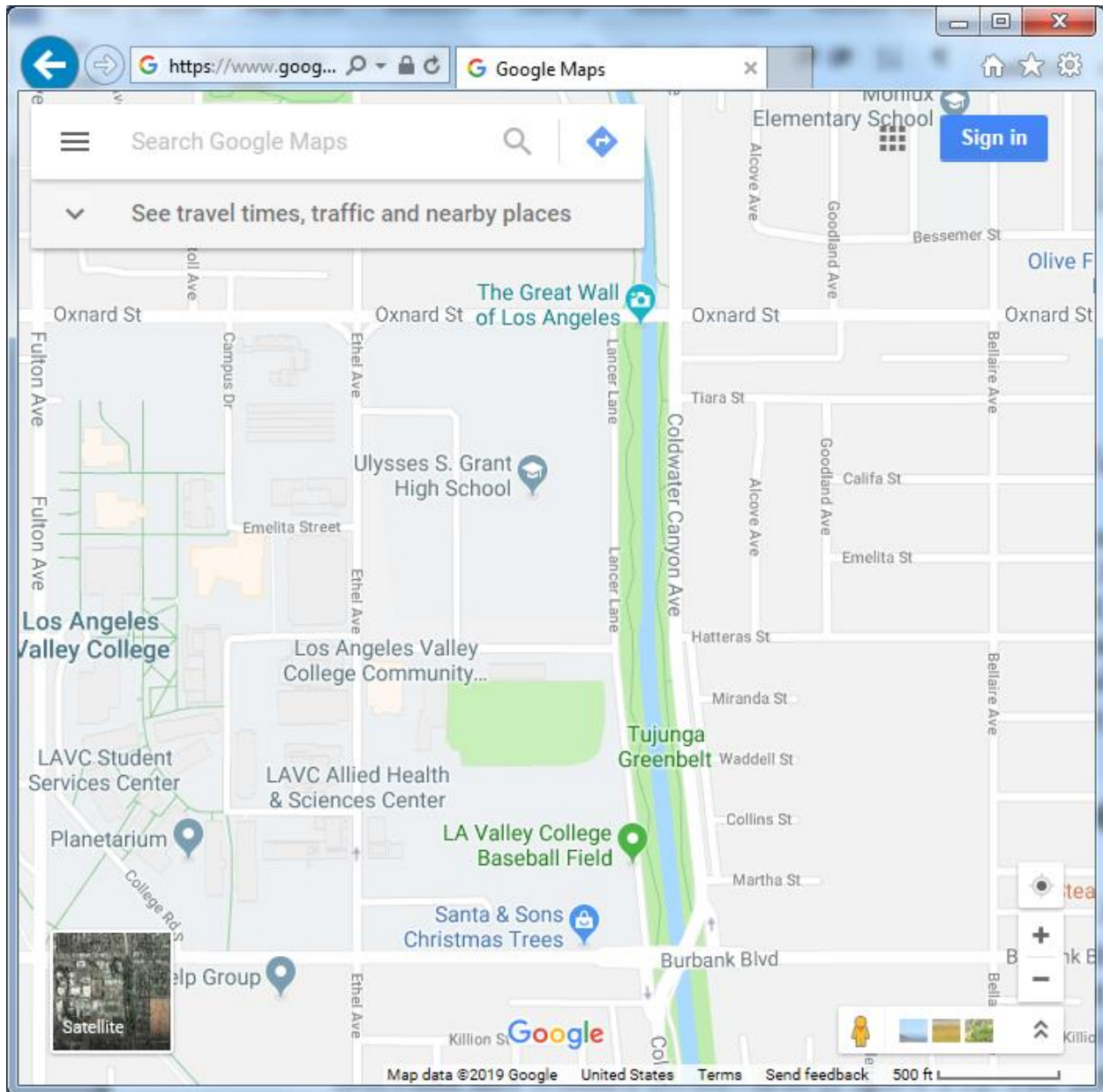


Figure 14. Google Map of Los Angeles Valley College, Coldwater Canyon Avenue, Oxnard Street, and Burbank Boulevard.

The mural is divided into five parts, and includes 85 themes, as shown in the list below.

Part One: Prehistory through Colonial Period to Modern Times

1. Pre Historic California 20,000 B.C.,
2. The L.A. Tar Pits,
3. Chumash Village 1,000 A.D.,
4. Indigenous Plants,
5. Chumash Animal Spirits,
6. Portola Expedition 1769,
7. Legend of Califa,

8. Indigenous Perspective,
9. Junipero Serra,
10. Founders of Los Angeles 1781 Mulatto & Mestizo Descent,
11. Mexican Rule 1822,
12. Missions,
13. Californios,
14. Mexican Hacienda,
15. Mexican-American War,
16. Sutter's Mill,
17. Mifflin W. Gibbs,
18. Mary Ellen Pleasant,
19. William A. Leidesdorf,
20. California Gold Rush,
21. Diddy Mason AME Church,
22. Joaquin Murrieta,
23. Sojourners 1868,
24. Chinese Build the Railroad,
25. Chinese Massacre 1871,
26. Frontier California 1880,
27. Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo 1848,
28. California Citrus Industry,
29. Suffragettes,
30. L.A. Mountains to the Shore 1890,
31. Red Car,
32. Youth Team at L.A. Harbor,
33. San Pedro Harbor 1900,
34. Migrant California,
35. World War I.

Part Two: World War One Period

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.

Part Three: Great Depression and the New Deal

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

Part Four: World War Two

53. 442nd Infantry Division,
54. Jewish Americans,
55. California Aqueduct,
56. Jeanette Rankin,
57. World War Two,
58. Rosie the Riveter,
59. Dr. Charles Drew,
60. Mrs. Law,
61. David Gonzales Pacoima, CA,
62. Zoot Suit Riots L.A. 1943,
63. Luisa Moreno,
64. Bracero Program,
65. Jewish Refugees,
66. Baby Boom.

Part Five: Post-War through Civil Right Movement to Summer Olympic in Los Angeles (1984)

67. Farewell to Rosie the Riveter,
68. Development of Suburbia,
69. The Red Scare & McCarthyism,
70. Division of the Barrios & Chavez Ravine,
71. The Birth of Rock & Roll,
72. Big Mama Thornton,
73. Forebears of Civil Rights,
74. Gay Rights,
75. Daughters of Bilitis,
76. Mattachine Society,
77. Ginsberg & the Beats,
78. Jewish Arts & Sciences,
79. Indian Assimilation,
80. Asians Gain Citizenship & Prosperity,
81. Vicki Manalo Draves,
82. Sammy Lee,
83. Wilma Rudolf,
84. Billy Mills,
85. Olympic Champions Breaking Barriers 1964-1984.