



HARRY GAMBOA JR.
Black and White Mural
(Detail) by Gronk and
Willie Herrón, 1979
Color photograph

La Raza Cósmica

An Investigation into the Space of Chicana/o Muralism

Sandra de la Loza

YOU LOOK DOWN OLYMPIC BOULEVARD LONG ENOUGH AND EVERYTHING STARTS LOOKING THE SAME COLOR AS SMOG.

—Charles “Cat” Felix, artist and manager of the Estrada Courts mural project¹

BY THE 1970s, LOS ANGELES WAS ON THE TAIL END OF AN ECONOMIC BOOM that began in World War II. A burgeoning defense and aerospace industry and a growing manufacturing economy had helped pave the landscape with concrete and asphalt into a sprawling modern megalopolis. Just south of East Los Angeles, in the unincorporated cities of Commerce and Vernon, large factories, rendering plants, and the Southern California Railroad hungrily took in labor from adjoining residential areas. In 1965, 37 percent of men and 40 percent of women in East L.A., where the largest concentration of Mexican Americans resided, worked in manufacturing, and Latina/os made up 21 percent of all factory workers in the city.² Despite the relative availability of jobs, however, almost 25 percent of East L.A. residents lived below the poverty level.

The booming wartime economy created a housing shortage, and public housing developments were built across the city to house low-income workers. One was Estrada Courts, built during the war just east of downtown Los Angeles and north of the railroads and factories of Vernon and Commerce. Estrada Courts would become the epicenter of 1970s Chicana/o muralism. Young artists and residents of the apartments, most of them with no artistic training, painted more than eighty-two murals there from 1973 to 1978.

Just as the urban landscape reflected the aesthetics of an economy based on war and manufacturing, so did Estrada Courts, where generic one-, two-, and three-bedroom units resembling barracks were built in a gridlike pattern. Located on East Olympic Boulevard in Boyle Heights, Estrada Courts

embodied the concepts of the functional city, in which work, leisure (in the form of planned green space), and living quarters were rationally designed into the urban fabric. The meandering Los Angeles river, its banks and bed paved, broke the monotony of the concrete and asphalt grid that sprawled eastward toward the desert.

New social and industrial topographies were built into the city in the postwar era. The freeway system helped solidify long-standing race and class divisions, particularly on the east side, by segmenting the city into industrial and residential areas, middle-class and working-class neighborhoods, and black, white, Asian, or Latino neighborhoods that were easy to bypass on the highway. The freeway system’s impact on the social landscape would be a recurring theme in the lives and work of many artists, who satirically commented on the carving up of East Los Angeles by the proliferation of highways. “Division of the Barrios and Chavez Ravine,” a section of Judy Baca’s mural *The Great Wall*, depicts the freeway as a monstrous octopus whose strangling arms separate a family. Although scholars noted the freeway’s role in whisking people away from the center city to the suburbs, the Goetz gallery’s map of murals in East L.A. turned this narrative around, playfully proclaiming, “In Europe all roads lead to Rome. In Southern California all freeways lead to East Los Angeles” (fig. 1; see page 00 for the entire map).

The horizontal layout of the city favored a car culture, and public works projects from the 1930s through the 1960s carved massive concrete lines into the landscape.³ This built environment, and the competing interests and power politics materialized in it, led Chicana/o artists to the medium most associated with their art in the 1970s, the mural. The social tensions embedded in the design and layout of the city come to the surface in the process of producing the mural.

SPACE BATTLES IN THE METROPOLIS

Artists and organizers negotiated to secure mural sites and maintain control of the murals' sociocultural and political content. The struggles to mediate between multiple interests influenced the shape, scope, and content of murals before, during, and after production. Charles "Cat" Felix, the main organizer of the mural program at Estrada Courts, eventually had to erase a grim reaper from his own mural, *Give Me Life* (1973), the very first mural produced at Estrada Courts. He made the erasure two years after completing the piece, having received various complaints from the Housing Authority and residents that his mural was "too negative."⁴

In 1974 Carlos Callejo began work on *The Wonderful World of Corruption* (fig. 2), also located at Estrada Courts. Its title was a spoof on the long-running Walt Disney anthology television series, which was called *Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color* from 1961 to 1969. The mural addressed the CIA's role in the heroin trade, an issue made public in 1971 with *New York Times* reporting on the Pentagon Papers. It went through multiple transformations as Callejo negotiated with the mural organizing committee. The design, which featured a dancing Mickey Mouse looking nervously toward a spotlight, originally included a military helicopter flying across a background of bleeding red and white stripes, but the helicopter was later erased. Also removed were flying planes in the form of hypodermic needles with the letters AAA, referencing Air America airlines, a CIA front that was used for, among other things, smuggling heroin into the United States. Other erased images included a nuclear explosion in the form of a giant mushroom cloud and a conveyor belt with what appeared to be twisted bodies. By the time Callejo left the project, most of the overt references to the government's complicity in the drug economy had been erased. The red stripes bleeding into white stripes, which he had intended as a background motif, had become the foreground of the mural as subject matter was censored and removed. Ironically, "production" continued at the site as locals filled in space with their own *placas*. It became known as "Tecatos Wall" in reference to the junkies who began hanging out there after Callejo left.⁵

Judy Baca likewise battled over the content of a mural commission with the University of Southern California. Her sketch for the proposed mural became the site for a written debate between the artist and the school's president and administrators. "Couldn't the Sleeping Giant be happier?" asked a university representative in a note along the margin. Baca's response: "She is not Barbie. Besides someone has just hammered the steel blade of the border into her back" (fig. 3).



From its inception, the mural was a contested art form that chipped away at lines, boundaries, and definitions, challenging the use of space and giving shape, color, and form to invisible ideological currents just below the surface.

THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE

While Chicana/o artists battled over the integrity of their murals' content, the wall itself proved to be an interesting choice of surface, allowing artists to address social tensions embedded in the larger landscape of the city. As an art form that superimposes explosions of color and counterhegemonic cultural iconography on the walls of businesses, garages, alleyways, government institutions, and residential complexes, murals visually occupy public space. They physically transform urban landscapes in which one's socioeconomic location appears to be designed and predetermined. Muralists activate the wall, a dead space, a physical threshold that separates the internal from the external. By adopting such surfaces as the site of their art, Chicana/o muralists subverted the physical structures that sought to divide and define them and reshaped their environs to reflect their own identities and enact ideas for social change.

The themes of some murals were a deliberate response to the physical landscape that framed the work. At Estrada Courts, nature-themed murals transformed a narrow interior passageway into an organic environment dubbed "nature row." Mural organizer Charles "Cat" Felix explained the rationale:

There's so much tension with families so close together, that man, you've got hassles and stuff all the time. No you don't need all the hassles and all that. Yeah, because inside we call it nature row. We didn't want no political trips and what-not. We just wanted it nice and serene. Nothing but nature.⁶

In describing the reasoning for creating "nature row" in Estrada Courts, Felix alludes to the challenges he confronted while managing the project (fig. 4). How could murals transform the fixed and predefined space and entrenched social relations

Figure 1
DON JUAN/JOHNNY D. GONZALEZ (concept and layout), DAVID BOTELLO (design and drawing), and ROBERT ARENIVAR (story illustrations)
The Goetz Map Guide to the Murals of East Los Angeles (detail) (first edition, Early California Series), Goetz Publishing, 1975



Figure 2
CARLOS CALLEJO'S
The Wonderful World of Corruption, ca. 1973
 This photo from Nancy Tovar's archive shows the Estrada Courts mural, after Callejo had removed elements mentioned in the essay.

Figure 4
OSCAR CASTILLO
 Charles "Cat" Felix at Estrada Courts Murals, ca. 1970
 Color photograph

Figure 3
JUDITH F. BACA
USC Mural Commission in Progress, 1995
 Digital print on paper with pencil
 32 x 60 inches (framed)

The mural, *La Memoira de Nuestra Tierra*, which was commissioned for the University of Southern California and installed in the Topping Student Center in 1996, is now located in the Ronald Tutor Campus Center. The penciled additions are comments on the design from USC administrators.



of the communities they were created in?

In Ernesto de la Loza's mural *Organic Stimulus*, painted at Estrada Courts in 1975, the organic shapes and vibrant colors stand in sharp contrast to the linear, angular, monochrome, geometric block structures of the housing projects themselves (fig. 5). The muralist absorbs the hedges at the base of the wall into his composition of a mountain range that emerges from the shrubbery with tectonic force. As the eye travels around the space of the mural, the viewer can easily lose herself and forget that she is viewing a representation of a mountain. Instead the eye follows curves that give way to organic forms rendered in rich earth tones. The bottom ridge of the smaller mountain form on the left transfigures into a brown arm with yellow flame-like patterns cradling something small and embryonic within the suggested deep ochre shadow space. The form morphs into another. The wall destabilizes. There is no fixed reading of this mural; the more one looks, the more the forms change and transfigure. The walls, which serve to divide and enclose, dissipate and open into portals of time, space, and the imaginary. Walls become doorways into fantastic worlds filled with a blend of organic, futuristic, historic, contemporary, and mythological landscapes and references. The muralist finds space within. The mural becomes an exercise in perception, shifting, opening up what "is" through space, color, and form. Fixed materials and established lexicons give way to pure color, space, and form. Muralism, here, has its parallels with Light and Space, an art movement that explored human perception through a play with form and use of minimalist tactics. Chicana/o muralism diverges from the Light and Space movement, however, in that it uses history and cultural signage and iconography as tools for expanding social consciousness.

THE MURAL AS EVENT

The fact that murals are painted on outdoor walls and street corners over periods of time ranging from a few days to months allows—indeed, demands—that the artists incorporate themselves into the everyday life of the community. From the inception of Chicana/o muralism in the 1970s, youth and local residents often participated in the process, sometimes facilitated by funds made available through programs such as the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA).⁷ Perhaps more than any other art form, the mural opens itself up to, and becomes informed by, the context in which it is created. Not only the physical but also the social space it occupies becomes part of the work itself. The mural transcends the artist's intention and takes on a life of its own.

In 1976 a west side community planned to repaint the



Figure 5
ERNESTO DE LA LOZA'S
Organic Stimulus, 1975
The mural is located at Estrada Courts.

Stoner Recreation Center at Sawtelle Park, which had been "graffitied from floor to ceiling." They invited artist Judithe Hernández to work with the neighborhood "gang" to create a mural in hopes that the local youth would become invested in the mural and would not re-graffiti the building.⁸ Hernández, acting as mediator, negotiated the very different desires of the mostly white community residents and the local Chicana/o youth. She recalled having to convince the white residents that they should allow imagery with which the youth could identify, or else the project would be "a waste of time."⁹ In the end, youths were allowed to participate in the conception, design, and execution of the piece. The experience proved to be rich and transformative. Hernández recalls meeting up with these youths years later:

Those kids, I've seen a couple of them since.... They've told me...that experience was a turning point in their lives. They've become nice upright young men who have families now. They said, "That was an amazing experience for us. It bonded us. Seeing that there was a world that we could be a part of, we didn't have to do this crazy gang stuff." It transformed a whole group of human beings, including people who were not necessarily supportive. It was an amazing experience and I'm not the only artist who has a story like that. There are many artists who have stories like that.¹⁰

These murals, created in days, weeks, or months, not only activated the architecture of the walls and buildings they were painted on, they also created a situation for social interactions to "happen" (fig. 6). Youth, parents, and other residents would stop by to share their comments, critiques, and stories. It was not unusual for people to bring out their own sketchbooks or stop and pick up a paintbrush and join in for an hour. Murals became sites for existing social dynamics to surface, new relations to emerge, and new subjectivities to form. The process of painting a mural became a catalyst, the finished "painting" an artifact of the event.

Figure 6
Assistants working on
JUDITHE HERNÁNDEZ'S
El Mundo de Barrio Sotel, 1976
The mural, located at Stoner Recreation Center, West Los Angeles, was destroyed in 2002.

Figure 7
NORMA MONTOYA'S
Innocence, 1973
The mural is located at Estrada Courts.

Figure 8
Mural by an unknown artist on Avenue 20 in Lincoln Heights, n.d.
The work was created for the Citywide Mural Program.



FROM VISIONS TO HALLUCINATIONS: CONSCIOUSNESS, THE COUNTERCULTURE, AND PSYCHEDELIA

Although dominant discourse on Chicana/o art of the 1970s tends to focus on overt examples of Chicana/o iconography and political imagery, there is no denying the aesthetic and ideological impacts of psychedelia and the countercultural impulse of the time. Nancy Tovar’s archive of hundreds of Chicana/o murals from the 1970s, now housed at the Chicano Studies Research Center at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), offers a trove of examples in which decidedly Chicana/o imagery merges with psychedelic references.¹¹ Nonetheless, Chicana/o muralists participated in countercultural production in their own distinctive fashion.

Muralism emerged in Los Angeles in the fertile cultural and political milieu of the 1970s, a decade strongly influenced by currents from the mid- to late 1960s. Third World liberation movements, student strikes, antiwar demonstrations, and experimentation with music, drugs, sexuality, and lifestyles all contributed to a visual language that became popular in the larger culture and surfaced in Chicana/o murals as well. Cosmic landscapes, rock-’n-roll iconography, mushroom-filled landscapes, as well as “third eyes” and other references culled from Eastern mysticism combined with flat graphic styles, fractal patterning, and bold color. One example is Norma Montoya’s *Innocence* (1973), in which a background with a dripping lightning bolt, the phases of an orange moon, and a radial sun made up of flat rays of color frames a mountain range filled with nonuniform patterning (fig. 7). Montoya’s cosmic and organic landscape nearly overwhelms her central figure, a brown-skinned woman wearing traditional indigenous clothing, a trope commonly associated with Chicana/o murals of this time. Her background merges with if not overtakes the foreground.

A mural by an unknown artist features flat black and white portraits of Emiliano Zapata, Che Guevara, and Benito Juárez painted above a desert landscape where a large snake figure slithers. The serpent is surrounded by bands of primary colors—a graphic style prevalent in psychedelic posters of the era—with a cluster of flowers and ladybugs emerging from its tail (fig. 8). The juxtaposition of Mexican and Latin American revolutionary heroes with a psychedelic vision on a desert landscape gives some insight into the idiosyncrasies of a Chicana/o psychedelic style.

The concept of land, a central concern of liberation struggles in the Americas, was used to fuse desires for political change with spiritual regeneration. Both “land” and “history” became rich reserves that Chicana/os tapped in developing



Figure 9
Mural segment by **JOSE A. GALLEGOS**, 1975
The work was created for the Citywide Mural Program and may have been located on Avenue 20 in Lincoln Heights.

narratives to counter dominant but degrading views of “the Mexican” that many Chicana/os themselves had internalized. When this perspective is fused with the quest to expand consciousness through experimentation with LSD, peyote, mescaline, and other psychedelics, a Chicana/o decolonialist psychedelic sensibility emerges.¹² Working on the plane of the wall, Chicana/o muralists drew on multiple sources to find the “outside” their white hippie counterparts sought. Reconnecting with their own indigenous roots, myths, and icons drawn from pre-Conquest indigenous civilizations helped Chicana/os redefine themselves as well. Myth, memory, and liberationist impulses allowed Chicana/o muralists to create mind-altering visions of a decolonized self, liberated from a colonial legacy and the traps of modernity. Artist Judithe Hernández reflects, “While white kids were doing it in a different way, we certainly did our own eternal search without looking outside for the inspiration, but finding how far back the trail went.”¹³

A panel by Jose A. Gallegos that was part of a long wall mural funded by the Citywide Mural Program, for example, displays indigenous themes, landscapes, and mythologies in a mind-bending context. A Chicana hippie wearing a headband, a *huipil*, and red lipstick stands over a long-haired man who lies on his back in a barren desert landscape (fig. 9).¹⁴ His blue action-figure suit and peace sign shield give him the appearance of a character from a sci-fi movie. He seems to be on a hallucinatory “trip,” as suggested by the depiction of a vision in the form of a thought bubble filled with free-floating images of organic matter, maize, a mathematical equation, the sun, and a “primitive” man dancing with a tool. Both central figures are mirrored in what seems to be a lake, transforming the “material” landscape into a parallel but alternate reality. In the counter image, a dove becomes a coin with wings. The equation $2 + 2 = 4$ becomes $2 + 2 = 5$. The sun is reflected as a skull, and a stone turns into a frog with a felt hat. Murals became mediums for memory, time travel, self-understanding, and the metaphysical: spaces where artists renamed their subjects beyond the limits of “real” space and time.

Chicana/o murals of the 1970s reflected a process of rupture as a new generation of artists created a “space” dramatically different than that experienced by their parents.

A radical process of dissolution began. On one level, muralism literally destabilizes the “concrete materialism” of space with paint. But on another level, murals produced during this era should be seen as visual manifestations of a transforming consciousness, a radical dismantling of dominant cultural values, both American and Mexican, in which past myths, self-images, and beliefs melt down and transmute (fig. 10).

Muralist David Botello states that he “wanted to grow spiritually in a non-Christian way.” While reflecting on artistic influences, Patssi Valdez, a member of the art collective ASCO, asserts, “I didn’t look at any of it. I wanted to invent my own art.”¹⁵ Tactics varied from artist to artist, but the impulse to disturb the structure of “what is” remained constant. The “what is” could be superseded.

THE MURAL AS EDGE

Ecologists use the term the “edge effect” to describe the tendency for fertile habitats to occupy the space where two ecosystems meet. Practicing their craft at the edge of architectural space, muralists create a new context in that liminal space where the material merges with the social (fig. 11). Within this new space a social architecture emerges that allows for cultural recognition and regeneration, the resurfacing of suppressed imagery and knowledge, and the imagining of new subjectivities. Space is transformed into place.

Mexican American muralists played a critical role in forging a countercultural Chicana/o identity from the late 1960s through the 1970s. But muralists were not the first to use walls to resist the invisibility and subvert the dehumanizing representations institutionalized by “Americanization” programs in the public schools and reinforced by official versions of history. Chicana/o-style graffiti predates muralism by forty years, according to artist Chaz Bojórquez, who identifies examples of Chicana/o graffiti, with its telltale Old English lettering, dating back to the 1930s.¹⁶ He argues that the *placa* was indigenous to Los Angeles and quickly became an established tradition that occupied and transformed walls through such design templates as the “roll call,” a list of stylized youth “gang” names such as Sleepy, Joker, Bird, Puppet, Spooky, Lil Indian, and Smiley.

The mural marked a shift from lettering to representational imagery. Willie Herrón’s initial works were among those to breach the gap. Herrón, whose work is frequently cited in the discourse on Chicana/o muralism, went through a period in the early 1970s in which he sketched portraits on walls with aerosol paint. Neither mural nor graffiti, his representational figures merged with the surface of the wall (fig. 12). He used the



Figure 10
NORMA MONTOYA'S
Sleeping Woman's Dream,
 1997
 The mural is located
 at Estrada Courts.

Figure 11
 Charlie "Cat" Felix
 (foreground) and unknown
 artists painting a mural at
 Estrada Courts, early 1970s



short quick strokes typical of graffiti to render portraits that anthropomorphize the wall. Disembodied faces emerge from the raw surface like floating specters, somewhat materialized yet still ethereal. Herrón's aerosol portraits, surfacing yet not fully fleshed out, occupy a liminal space between wall and canvas, graffiti and mural, gesture and form. They record an effort to name, shape, and define a collective subjectivity.

THE SOCIAL SUBLIME

It is this effort to define a collective subjectivity that Judithe Hernández recalls as "terrifying and wonderful at the same time." Near the completion of the mural at Sawtelle Park, as the mural team placed the final touches, a policeman walked past the crew to enter the center. Upon leaving, the policeman grabbed a twelve-year-old working on the mural, raising the youth about four feet off the ground, while Hernández and the rest of her crew looked on in shock. Within seconds, six or seven police cars rolled up, and Hernández and her small crew of painters were confronted with officers running toward them with guns drawn. Over the next ten minutes, a mini-riot ensued, resulting in the arrest of several of the youth assistants and a white homeowner who had supported the mural project. Hernández reflects: "They did it to harass these kids. They didn't like what they had done, and they were determined to ruin their moment."¹⁷

How could an artist and a group of Mexican American teens, painting a mural, provoke such a strong reaction on the part of police? Why did this activity prove so threatening? Perhaps the answer lies in extending our understanding of the mural as not solely an aesthetic practice but one that is also performative, spatial, and social. The "social sublime" is a term I use to describe a transformative and transcendental impetus that affects both the social actors involved in the



Figure 13
Youth volunteers
standing in front of
JUDITHE HERNÁNDEZ's
El Mundo de Barrio
Sotel, 1976

production of the mural (the artist and community volunteers) and the larger society within which the mural is located.¹⁸

Chicana/o artists during the 1970s created social situations through the design, research, and painting of murals that encouraged Mexican American youth to act outside of the social roles allotted to them. These situations allowed a subject denigrated in the popular consciousness to become an actor, a creator of language, and a shaper of space. The platform of the mural provided a physical space in which to materialize counternarratives that questioned and reimagined existing political and social structures. It allowed members of a community to walk to the edge of the known and the unknown and directly experience the possibility of another self, one outside the frame or language of their existing worlds. Within the act, a subliminal space could be reached that was capable of provoking "terror and wonder," as the frame of reference allotted to the "other" dissolved and gave shape and form to a new subject. In the multifaceted processes of mural making, Mexican Americans became Chicana/os (fig. 13).

NOTES

This essay is dedicated to those who did not make it out of the rabbit hole. My heartfelt thanks to Chon Noriega, David Diaz, C. Ondine Chavoya, and Camille Taiara for their critical insights and editorial input.

1 Frank del Olmo, "Murals Changing Face of East L.A.," *Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 1973, OC A1.

2 Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 47.

3 For a history of Los Angeles urbanism, see Mike Davis, "How Eden Lost Its Garden," *Perspecta: The Yale Architectural Journal* 30 (1999): 64-75; and Edward Soja, Rebecca Morales, and Goetz Wolff, "Urban Restructuring: An Analysis of Social and Spatial Change in Los Angeles," in "Restructuring in the Age of Global Capital," special issue, *Economic Geography* 59, no. 2 (1983): 195-230. For a more focused discussion of Chicana/o urbanism, see David R. Diaz, *Barrio Urbanism: Chicanos, Planning, and American Cities* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

4 See Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino, "Mi Casa No Es Su Casa: Chicano Murals and Barrio Calligraphy as Systems of Signification at Estrada Courts, 1972-1978" (master's thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1991).

5 Carlos Callejo, interview by Sandra de la Loza, July 27, 2010. A tecato is a hard-drug user.

6 Quoted in Sanchez-Tranquilino, "Mi Casa No Es Su Casa."

7 CETA was a federally funded program begun in 1973 to provide employment to the structurally unemployed. Many unemployed artists and arts programs were funded through CETA. From 1974 to 1979, CETA allocations for the arts exceeded \$200 million, over 40 percent of the amount granted by the National Endowment for the Arts. In 1983 the program was replaced by the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), which did not have components for the arts or for public service employment. See Mirasol Riojas, *The Accidental Arts Supporter: An Assessment of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) and the Emergence of Minority Arts*, CSRC Research Report 8 (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, 2006).

8 Judithe Hernández, interview by Sandra de la Loza, Los Angeles, July 16, 2010.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Nancy Tovar, an art graduate of UCLA in the 1960s, was fascinated by the mural movement and photographed as many murals as she could find during the 1970s. She donated her collection of over 500 slides to the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Library a few years before her passing in 2010.

12 I use the phrase "Chicana/o decolonialist psychedelic sensibility" as a way of beginning to explore countercultural and psychedelic influences surfacing in Los Angeles murals during the 1970s. To date, little scholarship has been produced about these influences on Chicana/o cultural production. While numerous documentaries and studies place white youth at the center of the emerging counterculture of the era, I argue that the unique countercultural sensibility, at times merging with the mainstream current but also apart from it, marked the Chicana/o experience. This phenomenon was fueled by thousands of anonymous individuals, many of whom used popular cultural forms (music, poetry, fashion, day-to-day performative actions) to transform cultural values and lifestyles for their generation and subsequent ones. For literary examples, see works by Oscar Zeta Acosta (especially *Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo*), Juan Felipe Herrera, and Alurista. Examples of music groups include Thee Midnites, Los Lobos, Malo, and Santana.

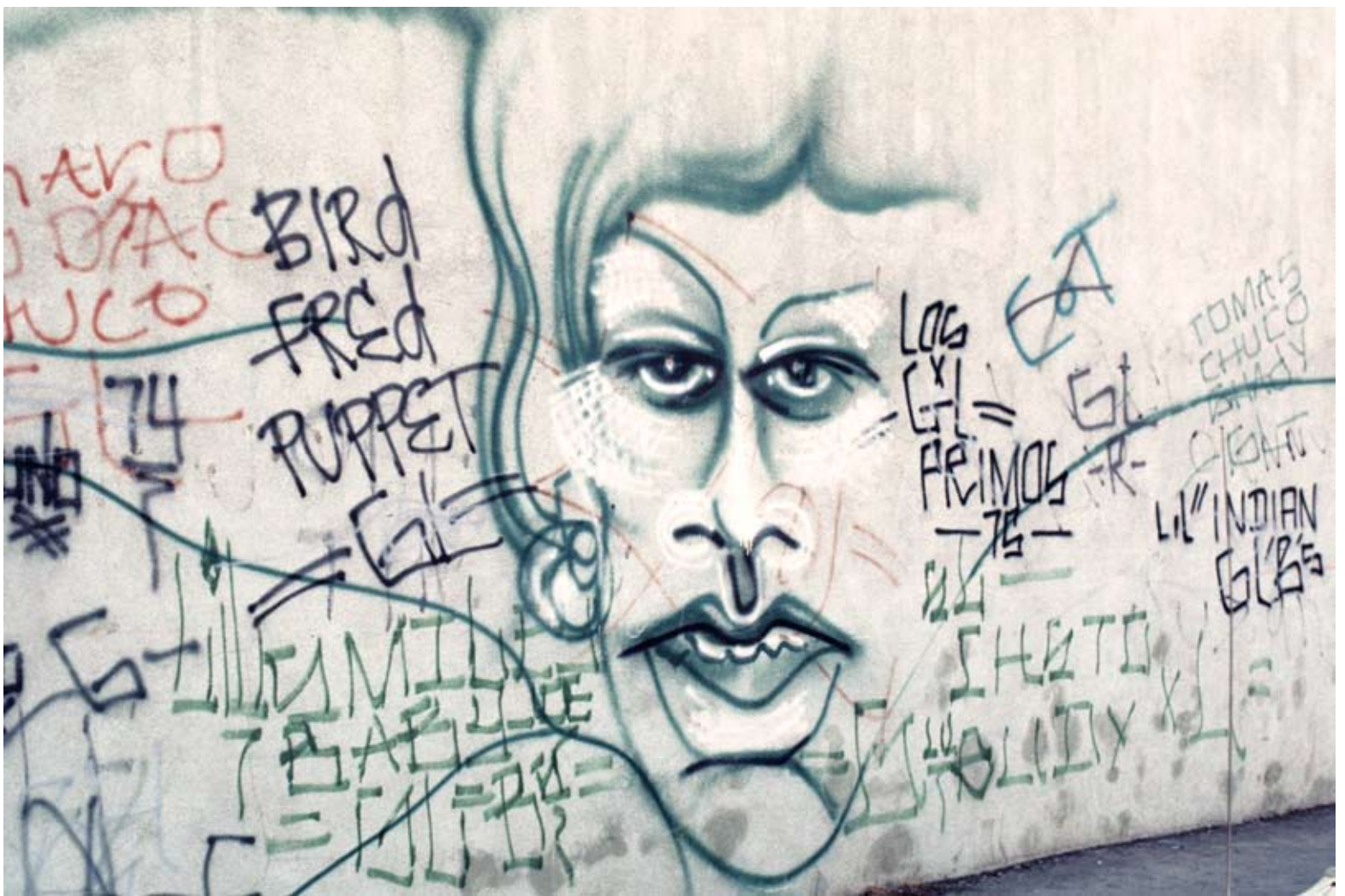


Figure 12
Wall at City Terrace
with graffiti and
portraits in aerosol
paint by **WILLIE
HERRÓN**, 1971

13 Judithe Hernández, interview by Sandra de la Loza, July 16, 2010.

14 The authorship of this panel has not been confirmed. The name Jose A. Gallegos is signed in the upper cloud. In the bottom right corner is a credit to the Citywide Mural Program and the date 1975. The Los Angeles Citywide Mural Program, directed by artist Judith F. Baca, was a city-funded program with a \$150,000 annual budget. From 1974 to 1977 it helped produce 250 murals and employed over 1,000 artists and youth workers.

15 Botello and Valdez made these statements in a public panel discussion, "The Raza's Edge: The Chicano Presence in L.A. Art History," Los Angeles County Museum of Art, April 3, 2010.

16 Charles "Chaz" Bojórquez, "Los Angeles 'Cholo' Style Graffiti Art," June 2010, on the Graffiti Verité website, <http://www.graffitiverite.com/cb-cholowriting.htm>.

17 Judithe Hernández, interview by Sandra de la Loza, July 16, 2010.

18 While "the sublime" is a historical and still-evolving term, it has mostly been used in relation to object-based and conceptual art. See Simon Morley, ed., *The Sublime*, Documents of Contemporary Art (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2010). I locate the social sublime of Chicana/o muralism in the complex merging of representational, aesthetic, and social practices that constitute the collective production of murals by the community.

