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Decolonial Arts Pedagogy and the Visual Metaphor:

The Great Wall of Los Angeles Mural Project

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in Chicana and Chicano Studies

by

Carlos N Rogel

2015

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2015

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Decolonial Arts Pedagogy and the Visual Metaphor:

The Great Wall of Los Angeles Mural Project

by

Carlos N Rogel

Master of Arts in Chicana and Chicano Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor Judith F. Baca, Chair

This thesis examines the methodology used to create the subject matter and pedagogy of The Great Wall of Los Angeles mural created by Chicana artist, Judy Baca. The analysis explores the visual metaphors present in the half-mile public art project through decolonial theory and visual metaphor analysis, and examines the artwork's aesthetic characteristics using cultural analytics techniques. The mural's social justice outcomes are considered for its ability to achieve youth empowerment through community cultural development. I further the concept of decolonial arts pedagogy to encapsulate a framework for producing and evaluating social justice artwork. I analyze the design and production aspects of the Prehistoric segment painted in 1976, and 1950s segment produced in 1983. The analysis considers youth recidivism programs and the concreting of the Los Angeles River through the program's artistic vision. The findings suggest

that decolonial metaphors integrate the subject matter and youth pedagogy in the design and production phase of the mural. The findings have implications for the study of Chicano and Chicana mural arts movements, creative placemaking initiatives, urban environmental revitalization efforts, social practice training, and arts education.

The thesis of Carlos N Rogel is approved.

Rosina Becerra

Otto Santa Ana

Judith F. Baca, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2015

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS	II
LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES	VI
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	VII
DECOLONIAL ARTS PEDAGOGY AND THE VISUAL METAPHOR	1
ARTIST, LAND, AND MEMORY: MURALISM AND <i>THE GREAT WALL OF LOS ANGELES</i>	9
METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY	27
AN ANALYSIS OF THE MURAL'S PROCESS OF DESIGN AND PRODUCTION	35
SECTION ONE: <i>THE GREAT WALL OF LOS ANGELES</i> DESIGN PROCESS	37
SECTION TWO: <i>THE GREAT WALL OF LOS ANGELES</i> PRODUCTION PHASE	69
SECTION THREE: PAINTING INSIDE THE LOS ANGELES RIVER	74
SECTION FOUR: EXERCISES, WORKSHOPS, AND DEVELOPING AN ENSEMBLE	79
SECTION FIVE: ANALYSIS OF THE AESTHETIC OUTCOMES	94
CONCLUSIONS: DECOLONIAL ARTS PEDAGOGY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ART	107
BIBLIOGRAPHY	116

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Prehistory section of the Great Wall of Los Angeles, painted in 1976. The mural segment is approximately 1000ft long by 10ft high.....	22
Figure 2: 1950's segment of the Great Wall of Los Angeles. This segment is approximately 350ft wide by 10ft high.	28
Figure 3: Model of the Great Wall design process.....	32
Figure 4: Archival analysis network graph	34
Figure 5: Model for studying linguistic metaphors based on Sternberg (et al., 1993).	39
Figure 6: Train as Iron Horse metaphor	40
Figure 7: Train as incinerator of Chinese railroad workers.....	41
Figure 8: Train as transporter of an endless bounty	42
Figure 9: Prehistoric Segment; Discovery of California, Section 1 of 6.....	44
Figure 10: Prehistoric Segment; Discovery of California, Section 2 of 6.....	45
Figure 11: Prehistoric Segment; Discovery of California, Section 3 of 6.....	46
Figure 12: Prehistoric Segment; Discovery of California, Section 4 of 6.....	47
Figure 13: Prehistoric Segment; Discovery of California, Section 5 of 6.....	47
Figure 14: Prehistoric Segment; Discovery of California, Section 6 of 6.....	48
Figure 15: Discovery of California above the Prehistory to 1900s segment of The Great Wall of Los Angeles. Sections below depict the location of other visual metaphors in the Prehistoric segment.	50
Figure 16: Studio photograph of 1950s design process. <i>Back</i> --Timeline of historical events; <i>Middle</i> --Books and archival images; <i>Slightly below of middle</i> --Verbal talk-through; <i>Bottom</i> --Draft sketches of visual metaphors.	60
Figure 17: Visual Metaphors 1 – 5 of the 1950s segment of the Great Wall of Los Angeles. Visual metaphors are isolated for clarity.....	63
Figure 18: Visual Metaphors 6 - 10 of the 1950s segment of the Great Wall of Los Angeles. Visual Metaphors are isolated for clarity.	64
Figure 19: Table of visual metaphors by visual domains.....	65
Figure 20: Applying Sternberg's model for analyzing visual metaphors in the Great Wall of Los Angeles; Detail of "Division of the Barrios and Chavez Ravine," from the 1950s section of <i>The Great Wall of Los Angeles</i> , 1976-1983.....	66
Figure 21: Network visualization of Great Wall participants from 1976 to 1978; <i>Top-Counter Clockwise</i> : Participants from 1976 to 1978; Participants from 1978 to 1980; Participants from 1980 to 1981; Participants from 1981 to 1983.	82
Figure 22: Comparison of median brightness and median saturation; Left: Prehistory to 1900s segment, Right: 1950s segment; x-axis: median brightness, y-axis: median saturation.	97
Figure 23: Comparison of color management; Left: Prehistory to 1900s segment, Right: 1950s segment; x-axis: median hue, y-axis: median saturation.....	99
Figure 24: Compositional comparison between 1900s segment and 1950s segment. X-axis: mural location by width; y-axis: sobel score.....	100
Figure 25: Analysis of the Edge Density across the Length of the Prehistoric Segment.....	101
Figure 26: Analysis of Edge Density across the Length of the 1950s Segment.....	102
Figure 27: Frequency of Sobel Scores for the Prehistoric Segment (Total tiles sampled: 5520).....	103
Figure 28: Frequency of Sobel Scores for the 1950s Segment (Total tiles sampled: 1984).....	103
Figure 29: Comparison of Frequencies for the 1950s and Prehistoric Segments.....	104

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All images of The Great Wall of Los Angeles, including photographs from the MREC archives are © 1976 Judy Baca and SPARC and may not be reproduced or distributed without written consent.

Decolonial Arts Pedagogy and the Visual Metaphor

Visual arts practices that incorporate community participation as a pillar of mural design and production remain an understudied field. Artists who can sustain a public practice centered on community wellbeing are rare, and even more so are practitioners who have continued to refine these methods over time. Currently in Los Angeles, there are limited resources available to emerging practitioners who wish to produce works of public art that address the experiences and wellbeing of local neighborhoods. Visual arts practices within the field of Community Cultural Development (CCD) have remained vulnerable to the political climate of a given time; such practices are often tied to shrinking public dollars, or limited to private or foundation resources. Typically, funding for these forms of creative and cultural initiatives are inaccessible to communities in economically disadvantaged areas. Despite these challenges, visual arts practitioners concerned with CCD continue to create opportunities for exploring group creativity and imagination. While accomplished institutions that advocate for the inclusion of vulnerable communities in creative community development initiatives are scarce, the ones that are in operation hold valuable repositories of methodological experimentation and innovation.

Since 1976, the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) has persistently advocated for innovative public art programming throughout Los Angeles. It has supported emerging artists and interfaced with diverse institutions while also advancing CCD arts practices and methodologies. Without the advocacy of institutions like SPARC, visual arts practices concerned with community wellbeing would remain out of reach for emerging artists of color and be less likely to benefit neighborhoods with limited access to cultural resources. SPARC has demonstrated astonishing resiliency during the demise of public funding for community arts programming. It has faced limited resources alongside an increasingly anti-expressive and anti-

creative political environment. In this thesis, I will examine the methodologies of SPARC's first program, *The Great Wall of Los Angeles* mural, through the precursors that led to the program's creation, and the artistic vision, which generated the pedagogy, and subject matter of the mural.

The foundation for many of SPARC's cultural contributions stem from the artistic vision of co-founder Judith F. Baca and The Great Wall of Los Angeles mural project. Beginning in 1976, Baca sought to develop a multidisciplinary arts program that would create a mile-long mural with the goal of monumentalizing the contributions of ethnic minorities to the building of California. To this day, the accomplishments and longevity of The Great Wall of Los Angeles mural remains an anomaly to the field of CCD. Many of the methodologies Baca developed during this initial program have advanced through a myriad of projects and experimental arts programming. Much of this methodology has gone on to impact countless communities, emerging artists, and municipalities nationally and internationally. I investigate the precursors that led to SPARC's first program and its development over seven years—the artistic process that created the Great Wall's subject matter and its methodologies for working across diverse people will be the focus of this thesis.

As an arts practitioner and CCD scholar, I recognize how research on the Great Wall methodologies helps shape our understanding of how the project emerged as a response to the social climate and political need of its time, and how it became a reproducible model as seen through the program's longevity and adaptation in later projects. At the time of writing this thesis, my 9-year involvement with SPARC as an artist has evolved. Baca's mentorship has greatly informed my research and muralist practice. My interest in exploring the scholarship surrounding community cultural development methodologies and SPARC's mural programs was stirred while being the project manager of The Great Wall of Los Angeles half-mile restoration.

The challenging work of revitalizing 2640 feet of meticulously rendered paint provided plenty of time to reflect on the relationships the original participants built over those many summers. I often thought back to the many hundreds of photographs taken of the youth during the productions, covered in paint and sweat, working to correct a figure, or instigating a water fight.

The most invaluable gift has been to work as an artist alongside the SPARC team. They have provided both a space to theorize about, and design through, community-centered practices. The development of the Richmond Identities: Extraordinary Lives, Ordinary People murals in Richmond, CA, the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Arches—Seeing Through Others Eyes, and Tiny Ripples of Hope—at the Paul Schrade Library in the Robert F. Kennedy Community Schools, and the Gente del Maiz mural at the Miguel Contreras Learning Complex, both in Los Angeles, mark some of the most transformative achievements of my mentorship with Baca. I continue to refine concepts of creative placemaking and community development from the position of an artist invested in supporting social justice causes and activism. To begin from the core of a community of people, and then draw concentric circles of knowledge out towards the generation of an artistic action is the most valuable paradigm for any public practice artist to follow. This is the overarching methodology reiterated across all of SPARC's programs.

Through the UCLA@SPARC Digital/Mural Lab, art commissions have provided opportunities to advance technologically sophisticated techniques for mural making, and generated workflows that can accommodate team collaborations with digital media. We are currently undergoing a historical investigation to inform the next mural segments of The Great Wall of Los Angeles, mainly the 1960s decade. This research has provided insight into Baca's lifetime of honing an artistic practice that has remained committed to serving vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.

Revisiting the Great Wall's methodology will provide a better understanding of how the project participants were served and expand on existing interpretations of the program's outcomes. An analysis of how the methodology responded to the participants' needs illuminates the types of investments made in the youth, and how it contributed to their overall sense of identity. Furthermore, studying the development of the mural's methodologies will lend insight into how enhancements to the community's involvement complimented the advances made in the mural's aesthetics and artistic outcomes. I accomplish this by applying a framework of decoloniality to the community art pedagogy and the use of visual metaphors in the Great Wall program.

Chicano arts historians have noted the depiction of colonial and modernist experiences in artistic and cultural expression as a foundation for political action. Guisela Latorre, for example, observes the use of indigenism as alternative narratives in early Chicana/o murals also contributed to the development of a decolonial consciousness. She states that, "though many artists outside the Chicana/o community also practiced community muralism, and despite the fact that indigenous imagery was part of a larger whole that defined Chicana/o decolonial consciousness, Indigenism contributed significantly to the politicizing process of Chicano and Chicana mural production" (Latorre 2009, Kindle Loc 164). By engaging in the recovery of Mesoamerican images through mural productions, "Chicana/o artists were underscoring a historical continuity previously ignored or undermined by prevailing narratives" (Latorre 2009, Kindle Loc 544). The Great Wall of Los Angeles is the best example of the application of decolonial concepts in a monumental scale that also incorporates youth and community processes in the design and production of the artwork. The quality of the resultant murals created with methodologies over eight years speak to their reproducibility and effectiveness at translating

colonial and modernist experiences from multiple historical frames. What emerges from analyzing the methodologies of the Great Wall program is not only an artistic intervention on how knowledge is made, but also a process of restoring dignity for those who embody this knowledge, and youth who come to transform their lived experiences into platforms for theorizing and creative expression. Within decolonial arts pedagogy, collective artistic creation becomes a group's analytical tool for interrogating the effects of power and recovering diverse knowledges.

Analyzing The Great Wall of Los Angeles' content indicates that in the later mural segments, particularly the 1940s and 1950s decades, visual metaphors played an increasingly important role in interpreting historical events. Baca recruits decoloniality by privileging multiple ways of knowing to create an immersive and creative environment that marginalized youth found liberating. Her privileging of a community's embodied knowledge accompanies the cognitive work of generating novel visual metaphors, as well as the experiences of the project's youth. After the 1976 project, the underlying visual metaphors that depict critical interpretations of historical moments also become the subject matter of the production's pedagogical modules. Combined, the methodological processes used in the Great Wall project forms what I call a decolonial arts pedagogy. My intention with introducing decolonization is to bridge Baca's methodology with the image-making process. The interrogations of colonial and modern historical narratives occur alongside the project's artistic contributions, which creates an environment where multiple knowledges are featured. To better understand how the artistic process utilized multiple knowledges in its design process and subject matter, I employ decoloniality and the conceptualization of global hierarchies as explored in Ramón Grosfoguel's "The Epistemic Decolonial Turn."

Decolonial arts pedagogy is an application of decoloniality, defined by Walter Mignolo as being “ both the analytical task of unveiling the logic of coloniality and the prospective task of contributing to build a world in which many worlds will coexist” (2011, Kindle Loc 1859) through artistic and aesthetic intervention, where coloniality is understood as “a colonial matrix of power through which world order has been created and managed” (2011, Kindle Loc 3909). Decolonial arts pedagogy is defined as an artistic instructional process by which a group's knowledge is invoked in arts making to challenge normalized knowledge, experiences of injustice, inequality, and the misuse of power.

Imagining compositional possibilities as part of the artistic design process is privileged over other forms of knowledge representation that are commonly seen as “objective” or strictly empirical because it does not entirely depend on the physical realities of the environment in which it is created, as in the case of the Great Wall in the San Fernando Valley’s historically segregated and lower-income neighborhoods. The Great Wall creates a training ground that reinforces embodied ways of knowledge-making in order to question the status quo. Canonical knowledge is questioned through the generation of highly persuasive murals. Specifically, the Great Walls’ artistic practice interrogates the historic treatment of immigrant groups and the xenophobic relationship to their presence and contributions. What unfolds is a visual genealogy of how the embodied knowledge of diverse communities was subjugated by divisive and violent means. The extraordinary effort to find and visually represent historical instances where resistance and victories occurred for equality and coexistence was an accomplishment during mid-seventies and early eighties when scholarship on minority people was scarce and few ethnic studies programs existed.

While others have noted how the Great Wall's methodology did not only pertain to the creation of visual imagery, none have analyzed the relationship of the visual metaphors in the mural to the youth and community design processes and production activities. The range of activities in the Great Wall methodology will be explored below.

Examining the methodologies developed in the Great Wall program has important implications for vulnerable and alienated communities with limited access to cultural resources that enhance artistic expression. As resources for arts programs in Los Angeles public schools shrink, youth of color continue to be disproportionately affected. LAUSD schools continue to have the longest period of contact with Los Angeles youth. With the loss of arts engagement at the school level, communities in middle and low-income neighborhoods face additional challenges accessing cultural opportunities and resources. Shrinking resources for fostering creative and collaborative expression creates greater needs on already tenuous community artists, private organizations, and non-profits. Without access to funding, training, and integration into neighborhood challenges, artists interested in addressing a community's wellbeing face extraordinary challenges in developing and sustaining a community-generated arts practice.

The lack of access to space and resources for creating cultural cohesion in Los Angeles makes it one of the most challenging cities for creative communities to express themselves in public ways. The loss of a public's sense of entitlement to public space for cultural expression is in part due to the privileging of outdoor advertisements and corporate branding (Klein 2010). The proliferation of branding campaigns and billboards, which include the appropriation of muralism by subverting art as ad to bifurcate city regulations and appeal to diverse audiences, are quickly becoming the dominant source of cultural imagery in urban centers. Corporate coverage and the commodification of urban spaces are influencing street art practices in unusual ways.

The adoption of coverage strategies by some street artists and graffiti artists mimics corporate branding and logo blight. The incursion of commercial advertisement practices onto urban and neighborhood spaces must be considered for its antithetical relationship to community arts programming and influence on public arts practices. Commercial advertisements drive the homogenization of imagery in urban spaces through their overwhelming obligation to sell products. Along with youth who engage in subversive public arts practices, little room is left for cultural engagement and cooperative learning through arts making. There is great need for intervention at multiple sites if we wish to create livable arts-minded spaces that cultivate creativity and imagination in communal ways.

The methodologies used to engage youth in the interrogation of historical injustices from the position of decoloniality is important for understanding how diverse teams ideate concepts and develop meaningful experiences through the arts. Cultural programming that supports civic engagement and arts-oriented community development has far reaching impact beyond those who participate in its making; the aesthetic and artistic outcomes of decolonial arts pedagogies has implications for adult learning in urban and neighborhood environments. Encountering representations like those depicted in *The Great Wall of Los Angeles* can contribute to a public's sense of belonging and an awareness of historical forces that shape human relationships. Murals and public art can enable a public to disconnect from ordinary experience. Comprehending the process of taking a decolonial concept into a visual metaphor that further articulates these complex experiences stands to inform future arts practitioners and support neighborhood initiatives in integrating meaningful participatory arts practices. What follows is a comparative analysis of *The Great Wall of Los Angeles'* methodologies, from the early Prehistoric segment developed in 1976, to the 1950s segment painted in 1983.

Artist, Land, and Memory: Muralism and *The Great Wall of Los Angeles*

The Great Wall of Los Angeles has garnered the interest of art historians and researchers from diverse fields since the project first began. Baca's projects and SPARC's programs have been the subject of many publications that have explored their artistic, cultural, and social significance. The Great Wall segments are often presented as part of case studies, as visual representations of social or historical events, or through art historical accounts. This analysis is based on three main sources, which together make it possible to study the methodologies of The Great Wall of Los Angeles. The sources are media and administrative documents created during the project, writings by the artistic director, and academic text that has looked at various facets of the project from their respected fields. For this review, I have selected literature on The Great Wall that provide either an interpretation of the program's design and production phases or historical account of the process. I then expand my body of literature to include works that cover subjects on Baca's artistic development, the Los Angeles River, and youth programs.

A meta-analysis of the subject matter discussed in the body of literature about The Great Wall of Los Angeles is composed of two major groups. The first group provides an overview of the concepts explored in the literature regarding The Great Wall of Los Angeles. The first group provides an overview of the methodological concepts explored in existing Great Wall literature. The text analyzed in this group stems from multiple research disciplines. It is composed of published books, articles, and peer reviewed dissertations. I have reviewed a total of fifteen publications and three dissertations, which focus on historical accounts or interpretive analyses of The Great Wall mural. My review also include two oral histories by the artist and three articles written by her.

The body of literature comprises of both historical accounts and interpretations of the Great Wall methodologies. I have analyzed the content on the Great Wall project through its design and production phases. This analysis has informed the formulation of coding categories used in organizing the project's collection of media documentation. I used these categories to annotate media containing visual records of the methodologies and pedagogy from the Great Wall digital archive. Most of the media in this archive is composed of media taken between 1975 and 1984 during the Great Wall program. The archive was previously organized with descriptive metadata of the program's phase and the image's content. Appending the pre-existing metadata with methodological annotations enables me to bridge the literary analysis with the digital media archive.

Many have pointed to the aesthetic distinctions between the Prehistoric mural painted in 1976 and the 1978 design of the 1920s segment (for example, Rickey 1981; Bond 1982; Doss 1995; Rangel 1998; Latorre 2009). These changes are the result of Baca's methodological and artistic development that are based in experiences obtained during her early work with East Los Angeles neighborhoods, the Citywide Mural Program (Rickey 1981; Rangel 1998), and her work at the Taller Siqueiros in Cuernavaca (Latorre 2009; Bond 1982). Few have articulated how the Great Wall's methodology bridges the mural's youth programming with its aesthetic outcomes. This review traces the development of the Great Wall methodology and analyzes three antecedents: Baca's artistic vision as an extension of the Mexican mural tradition and the Chicano movement, the concreting of the Los Angeles River, and adolescent identity and self-esteem of vulnerable populations that were affected by changes in the juvenile justice system and the creation of youth redirection programs. This section concludes with an analysis of the

intersection of these three areas of inquiry to provide context to the development of the methodologies that constitute decolonial arts pedagogy.

At a fundamental level, a mural is an image that is designed to have a personal, architectural, and spatial relationship to a place (Cockcroft, Weber and Cockcroft 1998; Stein 1994; Goldman 1995). Murals are often large-scale plastic images that are constituted by representational aesthetics or recognizable forms (Siqueiros 1998). Murals as an artistic practice are not tied to a given aesthetic or conceptual concern. However, a recounting of the development of mural methodologies would be contextualized by subversive actions, communal experiences, nationalism and political struggle, and motivated by a desire to restore dignity, recover history and justice through the medium (Indych-López 2009). Artistic practices that incorporate methodologies for neighborhood participation in both design and execution varies greatly by artist.

Mural methodologies that integrate local participants in its design and creation can become vehicles for community development. Methodologies that incorporate local residents in creative design and production can enhance community development when they stimulate or support interactions that promote “a common understanding of an issue. [Participants] leave with a fundamentally different interpretation of the situation; they have contributed to reframing the issues, and they have also reframed it for themselves” (Aprill and Townsell 2007). Participants from The Great Wall of Los Angeles engaged in the program under different circumstances and, to varying degrees, contributed knowledge derived from experiences, insights, and intuition. The principles of effective collaborative community development work, for Aprill, reveal the learner’s knowledge to the learner and the learner’s knowledge to others. She finds that “the arts, as especially rich and varied media for revealing experience, knowledge, intuition, and insight,

have special power for accelerating the reflective dialogue at the heart of collective adult learning” (2007, 53). The reflective dialogue cultivated through the Great Wall’s methodologies worked both to restore dignity and justice to minority and marginalized communities.

Cumulatively, the program reconciled the identity and belonging of youth labeled as juvenile delinquents through changing how they were perceived by their neighborhoods and among themselves.

Cockcroft, in *Toward a People’s Art*, explains how the long-term presence of a mural “becomes a symbol of a neighborhood, defining its character in the eyes of both its residents and outsiders...murals become landmarks, part of the oral geography of an area” (Cockcroft, Weber and Cockcroft 1998, 86). Artistic collaborations and mentorships can trigger a transition from individualistic expression to an “expression of community, [where] the young painters are able to identify personal liberation with community struggles. The participants are thus enabled to redefine themselves in a larger context” (Cockcroft, Weber and Cockcroft 1998, 116). A muralist’s proximity to a community establishes an assessment method, which may drive further artistic development and neighborhood investment. Funding resources might deter mural artists from utilizing methodologies that involve youth or adult learners. Yet, gaining their investment in the creation of a work of public art can transform the way cultural expression is valued by the larger community. Obtaining the backing of community stakeholders can create further artistic opportunities that include additional resources. The Great Wall of Los Angeles as a program is an excellent example of cross disciplinary collaboration, in which city officials, scholars, public health workers and social workers served a vulnerable population identified through the process of developing the half-mile mural. Mural artists who collaborate with practitioners from fields like public health, for example, can potentially identify additional resources that would bring in

much needed services into neighborhoods or the population being served in addition to sustaining a meaningful arts program.

Being able to identify neighborhood spaces as potential opportunities for cultural enactment, whether on public or private areas, is an important indicator of a community's wellbeing and empowerment. Gaye Johnson defines the concept of spatial entitlement as "a way in which marginalized communities have created new collectives based not just upon eviction and exclusion from physical places, but also on new and imaginative uses of technology, creativity, and spaces" (Johnson 2013). Having a sense of entitlement to one's surroundings is an essential factor for a community to envision new possibilities in their physical environment and reclaim a commons for creative, cultural, and political expression. The process of obtaining space for creative expression, such as "the successful procurement of the space for [a] mural [can signify] for the artists and their communities an empowering victory over the marginalizing politics of federal urban initiatives" (Latorre 2009, Kindle Loc 2761). Sensing one's neighborhood as being accessible for cultural expression is to have an empowered relationship to place. Likewise, relating to a place as inaccessible due to policing, extreme privatization, or gentrification can create alienating conditions that can further isolate marginalized communities. Hence, understanding a community's existing relationship to a place is critical in focusing an artist's methods for conceptual design and engagement.

A public art practice does not imply that an artist's process incorporates community sentiment or their participation in artistic design and implementation. Doss observes how "in many instances, art uses beauty as a false promise of inclusion. Beauty ameliorates the erasure of ethnic presence, serving the transformation into a homogenized visual culture: give them something beautiful to stand in for the loss of their right to a public presence" (Doss 1995, 133).

Imposing mural imagery onto a community without their inclusion in its design may obstruct their creative wellbeing or provoke conflict. Mural artists must participate in addressing community experiences and needs or else the intervention may stifle existing creative or artistic efforts. Murals are a form of spatial reclamation, which provide opportunities for marginalized communities to assert a form of cultural and social citizenship. They can also mask conditions or alienate individuals when an adequate community development plan fails to address existing conflicts or struggles or acknowledge previous victories.

Artists who activate marginalized communities through public forms of creative expression can benefit from existing knowledge and community engagement methodologies. Latorre describes how in “the process of developing an individual and collective creative expression, which can also be regarded as a form of empowerment and emancipation, artist and community alike begin to shed the mechanisms of a colonial system that has invaded their bodies, minds, and souls” (Latorre 2009, Kindle Loc 298). Access to creative expression alone is unsustainable when encountering cultural or commercial forces that appropriate the cultural capital of minority communities. Creative expression without a methodology that links it to a community or attends to the current enactments of a place can eventually detract from a community’s struggles. According to Cockcroft, a mural, which is created individually or through a collective and that presents only an aesthetic quality of beauty, is not alone effective at supporting the transformation of a community. She suggests that, “a mural’s effectiveness may depend on factors relatively extrinsic to traditional aesthetic criteria but more closely related to the coincidence of the mural with community struggle... Since murals are public acts, what they say and how they affect existing social situations are highly relevant to any aesthetic evaluation” (Cockcroft, Weber and Cockcroft 1998, 268). Murals must be understood for both their aesthetic

value and their social relevance within a community context. Cockcroft suggests a balance of community engagement and technical sophistication. Cockcroft states that, “A formally excellent mural, showing great virtuosity and skill in the solution of technical problems yet without deep meaning for its audience, falls short of the mark, just as would a thematically powerful mural that ignores the plastic problems involved in mural design” (Cockcroft, Weber and Cockcroft 1998). Both technical and conceptual sophistication must be present for a mural to address a community’s struggle towards decolonization.

While Latorre states that “if artists had the responsibility of creating art that served objectives leading toward social justice, then art automatically [becomes] a form of decolonialization” (Latorre 2009), Doss also finds that “the notion that we can impose ideas of beauty in neighborhoods, for example, could be as ‘colonizing’ as any previous conquest of our ancestors” (Doss 1995, 185). The decolonial arts pedagogy developed through the Great Wall program incorporates the conceptual and aesthetic capacities of participants by incorporating their experiences of power, resource and network inequalities through collaborative artistic processes. According to Rangel, “Baca’s work with youth during the movement reveals that she, in effect, acted as the channel through which various constituencies involved in the process of cultural production negotiated their interactions and concomitant struggles for power” (Rangel 1998, 224). The methodology’s ability to mediate youth conflict is also effective because the project’s activities took place in what was considered a neutral zone by the participants (Bond 1982). The concrete river bottom and college classrooms provided neutral spaces where project leaders could resolve territorial differences and conflict among youth from rival neighborhoods. The Los Angeles River becomes a site that is acknowledged as having a dimension of the historic conflict being depicted, but also as a place to negotiate and resolve it on a monumental

scale. The mural itself incorporates an interrogation of urban renewal programs that exacerbated barrio division and conflict. It provides a visual representation of the social consequences redevelopment programs had on communities of color and the environment.

The concreting of the Los Angeles River in the 1930s was done by the Army Corps as a means to prevent massive floods by controlling its drainage and flow (Davos 2009). It was one of the largest and most expensive urban renewal projects of its time. The completion of the concreted river enabled industrial development along the river's banks and spurred rapid urbanization across Los Angeles (City of Los Angeles). Pollutants, agricultural chemicals, and industrial waste from local runoff became efficiently shuttled into the Pacific Ocean and created an ecological disaster along Southern California's coast. The riverbanks became earth-stripped dirt belts, with trees replaced by chain-link fence and concrete. The river's inability to absorb water dried the aquifer and the slick concrete beneath it transformed the stream into a treacherous rapid moving current. Baca described the site as "seeing the death of the River, a 'concretized scar' which no longer could restore water to the water table but instead sent debris and pollutants to the ocean bay" (Davos 2009). The river's concreting can be seen as a symbol of colonial domination and erasure. The concreted river became a monument to Western expansionism, with little regard for the neighborhoods that were bifurcated through its construction. For Baca, "the concreting of the river represented the hardening of the arteries of the land. I dreamed of a tattoo on the scar where the river once ran as a metaphor for healing our cities divisions of race and class and proposed The Great Wall of Los Angeles" (Baca 1995). Finding this overarching metaphor empowered Baca to develop a critical narrative to intervene on Los Angeles' colonial past. The metaphor provides an evaluative lens for determining the project's aesthetic and pedagogical goals, and profoundly informed the design concepts, while

the appropriation of the segment of concreted river created a healing space for the program's participants.

In 1970, Baca's early organizing of East Los Angeles youth and during the Citywide Mural Program in 1974, made visible to her how Los Angeles neighborhoods lacked economic resources and operated along racial divisions. Furthermore, youth in marginalized communities experienced displacement through redevelopment programs and further isolation through enforced gang territories and injunctions. Baca realized that youth engaged in inter-communal collaboration during the mural projects she oversaw, where typically they rarely experienced interracial communication because of the degree of neighborhood segregation.

A methodological concern of the project is conceptualizing place as inscribed by many meanings, and charging participants with a heightened awareness of their relationship to each other and their physical being. Latorre recalls a conversation with the artist, where she describes how "knowledge about the physical and metaphysical power contained within a particular space, Baca argues, leads to the creation of a mural that has a more organic and sensitive relationship to its environment" (2009, Kindle Loc 2743). Creative engagement in space can exacerbate conflict among rival gangs, for example, if those conflicts are not adequately reconciled. She goes on to say that, "murals must not only reflect the energy of their location; they must also have the power to positively transform it" (2009). Baca describes how "without the focus of the wall, these individuals—mostly teens—would have remained isolated in their geographically separate communities, unaware of the wealth of cultural variety that surrounds them. In this sense, the Great Wall is far more than a series of murals in the flood control channel. It is a tool for multicultural co-operation" (Levick and Young 1988, 87). The Great Wall pedagogy incorporates a process of mediating conflict among youth to purposefully integrate groups across

race, class, and gender differences, and then to relate the historical presence of marginalized groups with a present-day awareness of conflict through their collaboration.

For participants, becoming aware of the history of cross-racial cooperation, and the achievements by individuals they could relate to, connected their own struggles to a long continuity of predecessors that have pursued social justice. The Great Wall of Los Angeles aesthetically augments this continuity of struggle by weaving together seemingly disparate events. For example, the placement of Black and Native American struggles alongside each other in the mural creates profound meaning for the youth participants, even if the placement is a transition from one event to another. At the most fundamental level, it artistically states, "these belong together." Furthermore, decoloniality tells us the spaces between historical events should not be interpreted as juxtapositions. They are a continual composition, tied together by a golden ratio and metaphoric representations, that creates a lens for reimagining contemporary challenges by its participants and audiences. In reference to the visual transitions linking historical depictions on the Great Wall mural, Baca reflects on how:

“The spaces in between have to do with our incorporation of each other. The Great Wall is a pretty good example of this process. It was important for me when I got the group together to represent each of the ethnic groups and then put them into a whole, and to move them between learning about each other’s cultures so that Chicano kids were not encouraged to work only on Chicano history” (Pohl 1996, 230).

In *Art and Activism*, Rangel presents The Great Wall as a cultural studies project that aims to affect power dynamics through culture. Rangel describes how “culture is a site where power

relations are mutually shaped, expressed, and contested.” He characterizes Baca as a cultural worker in order to link “the melding of art and politics during the Chicano movement by acknowledging the role artists played in leading the movement’s rank and file,” while also envisioning “new notions of identity and reinvigorated notions of community” (Rangel 1998, 227).

Baca finds that encouraging young people to work as a team is an important aspect of growing their emotional and professional capacities. She finds that incorporating young people into design and painting teams contributed to the “leadership development aspect of the program, giving kids more and more power to meet and enhance their growth” (Neumaier 1990, 267). While there is a process of creating visual metaphors of critical historical accounts and a recovery of oral accounts from individuals in the community who lived through seminal moments, there is also a concern for establishing lifelong solidarity among the diverse participants. Mesa-Bains quotes Baca describing how parallel to the making of decolonial imagery, the program is also “about the interrelationship between ethnic and racial groups, [and] the development of interracial harmony. The product—there are really two products—the mural and another product which is invisible, the interracial harmony between the people who have been involved” (Mesa-Bains 1993, 81). As the artists’ capacities for improving participant solidarity increased, so did the awareness of the full range of their youth’s social and personal experiences. The need to integrate health and social resources in addition to the mural methodologies quickly became an added priority for Baca and her team. Rangel reflects on the services being offered to youth and explains that by 1983 “Baca’s efforts with SPARC on The Great Wall generated a network of social services including counseling services, shelters for

runaway and battered kids, incest awareness and support, and suicide-prevention hotlines to serve the needs of those who worked on the mural” (Rangel 1998, 233).

The Great Wall of Los Angeles program, beginning in 1976, marks a shift in the philosophy, services, and financial resources for the care of adjudicated and at-risk youth. Before 1976, pseudo-medical models justified psychiatric treatment of juvenile youth up until the late 1960s. This view identified delinquents as having emotional problems that required extreme forms of psychiatric treatment and that, “their acting out behavior was symptomatic of those problems” (Peoples 2012, Kindle Loc 732). Chavez-Garcia tracks the creation of the Juvenile Justice system in California. In her book, she traces the experiences of nonwhite youth within the juvenile justice system to its ideological origins to understand the ways in which youth of color have been criminalized, racialized, and pathologized in history (Chavez-Garcia 2012). Police, up until 1975, utilized juvenile delinquent laws to criminalize minors whom they deemed were “in danger of leading an idle, dissolute, lewd or immoral life.” Juvenile delinquent laws disproportionately targeted the communal gathering spaces of youth of color in urban communities (Peoples 2012). Legal cases such as *Gonzales v. Mailliard*, 1971, challenged the constitutionality of California’s welfare and institutions code section 601 by arguing for the vagueness of the law’s phrasing, and that the law was used by police in a manner which denied them the First Amendment freedom of assembly (Peoples 2012). The California Supreme Court declared that portion of section 601 unconstitutional, and by 1975, the California legislature deleted the phrasing.

Federal reforms such as the Dixon bill of 1976 provided grants and policy changes after many controversies over the treatment of juvenile youth became widely known in the media. Reports of suicides, physical and sexual abuse, long-term solitary confinement, and substandard

facilities led to the closure of several facilities across Los Angeles county (Chavez-Garcia 2012). These reforms also led to the distribution of financial resources for organizations practicing innovative approaches to youth rehabilitation. It was through Project HEAVY (Human Efforts at Vitalizing Youth) that financial resources were made available to hire the first 90 youth for The Great Wall of Los Angeles. It was initially funded by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration through the Los Angeles Regional Criminal Justice Planning Board and the City of Los Angeles Office of Criminal Justice Planning (Michael Zimmerman, Deputy Director of Project HEAVY/SFV, NH, CA). Its primary objectives were to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate a network of youth and family service programs to divert delinquent and crime-prone youth, ages 13-18, out of the traditional juvenile justice system and into community-based, non-judicial alternative systems.

The Great Wall process also redefined the artistic direction as someone who advances an idea that emerges from situations where people engage creatively. The facilitation of this creative engagement informs the objectives of an artistic vision, rather than an artistic vision that is imposed upon a group of people. Baca describes her function as both a motivator and refiner of creative ideas—“it’s my job to push things forward to set up a situation where people can be creative” and once all conceptualization is complete, she “[approves] every image idea before it goes to thumbnail” (Neumaier 1990, 268) to reassure the design team and maintain the collective’s progress. Initially, Baca understood her leadership role as artistic director as “the person who created an environment in which other people could be creative...Now, leadership means trusting my intuition, which I think is fairly highly developed, about how to deal with people” (Neumaier 1990). While paralleling the advancement of the Great Wall methodology, Baca had to constantly broker her leadership role as a Chicana by developing skills that diverged



Figure 1: Prehistory section of the Great Wall of Los Angeles, painted in 1976. The mural segment is approximately 1000ft long by 10ft high.

from patriarchal forms of authority. Her own artistic direction contests gendered expectations of women leadership in acquiring effective coalition building skills.

Latorre describes how the Mexican mural movement resonated with the artist's leadership development. She finds that, "it would not be until 1972 that [Baca] read the Mexican Muralists' Manifesto," which would go on to influence her production of the first Great Wall segment in 1976 (Figure 1). Incorporating community as part of the design and painting process, Baca found, greatly contrasted with the artistic approach of the Mexican muralist movement, and was a uniquely Chicana innovation. Her initial methodology embodied an egalitarian philosophy, where each artist would be responsible for their own section of the mural. Each artist was responsible for the design and management of their own crew of ten youth. The aesthetic disharmony that emerged from this approach reflected the inconsistent youth experiences and outcomes. The irregularities in the program provided insight into how she would improve the methodology and the leadership she would need to provide. Latorre states that it is "not until 1977 that she would travel to Mexico and participate in the Taller Siqueiros in Cuernavaca." Baca's return from the Taller Siqueiros in Cuernavaca radically changes the design process of the mural; all subsequent segments would be created with a new methodology and aesthetic approach. Her experience of sexism and patriarchal leadership in male dominated art spaces on both sides of the border prompted deep introspection and a redefining of the Great Wall's leadership structure. Baca would find that she could control many more aspects of the design process while still providing a dynamic collaborative environment through incorporating scholars, youth, and select artists. After her trip in 1977, the design shifts towards creating "defining metaphors" to carry the mural's content. The qualities of the design also advanced by having a single artistic director refine the drawings into a cohesive narrative before finalizing the

blueprints. Another great influence on Baca's composition would be Siqueiros dynamic puntos system that utilizes golden ratios in non-symmetrical relationships as the fundamental structure of all volumetric forms and depths of field in the mural. The use of a musical harmony in each mural section would greatly advance the aesthetics by integrating their compositions internally and across each other.

For Baca, developing a sense of other's embodied knowledge came through introspection and lived experience. Latorre finds that elements from Baca's personal life framed an understanding of a collective consciousness, during a time where most Chicano murals avoided references to personal narratives out of fear that they would be interpreted as self-centered and individualistic, concepts that went against the collectivistic notion of the Chicano Movement (Latorre 2009). Baca often references her grandmother's indigenous sensibilities as grounding her exploration of the environment and people's relationship to land and memory (Institution 1986; Davalos 2011). Her collaborators during the Taller Siqueiros also met her with resistance when she used her embodied knowledge as a platform for developing mural concepts. Nonetheless, Baca continued her pursuit of interrogating embodied knowledge and creating artwork that was both accessible and uplifting to marginalized communities.

The artistic methodology that coalesces people and their environment into critical engagement marks a unique approach to community cultural development. According to Baca:

“I see myself as an urban artist, using the entire environment that I work in, which includes the people in the environment. If I'm talking about transforming an environment—changing, enhancing, making it more beautiful—then I am also talking about changing the people who live in that environment as well. Accepting the whole

reality of the space means working with who populates the area and seeing what I can do to better the whole situation” (Neumaier 1990, 270).

Latorre’s use of James Bau Graves concept of participation in culture, as a process through which community artists place “community interests at the center of the project’s purpose and [to rely] on community members’ knowledge of their own heritage in the development of the most relevant programs” (Latorre 2009, Kindle Loc 724) captures Baca’s intentions for forming coalitions and generating knowledge through the process. Parallel to these advancements are also improvements to the aesthetic and material concerns of the program, which incorporate the use of technologies and better administrative models for all to meet the artistic vision.

Beyond accomplishing the artistic intentions of the Great Wall mural is a larger concern for envisioning a decolonial future through a recovery of the past. Rangel points to the early stages of decolonial projects that emerged through the youth Chicana/o movement that were carried out through the arts and cultures. The influence of “artistic and cultural production both marked and directed the endeavor of cultural reclamation and, to this end, artists made deliberate attempts at recovering and refashioning certain aesthetic principles” (Rangel 1998, 226). Rosette also finds that the “mural’s core content provides a prime example of elements of postcolonial and subaltern theories. The Great Wall utilizes one of the ways that oppressed people resist domination: re-writing histories from their own perspective and rejecting the labels and perspectives imposed by the oppressor” (Rosette 2009, 60).

The Great Wall of Los Angeles program occurred at the intersection of three critical historical moments that made the optimal conditions for its initiation and sustainability. They are the 1970’s reforms made to the juvenile justice system for the rehabilitation of at risk youth, the

completion of the concreting of the Los Angeles River in the 1960s, and the artistic development of the program's director. The methodologies of the Great Wall lend a framework for initiating discussions that explore the embodied knowledge and lived experiences of people. The creation of imagery and sophisticated visual metaphors challenge the normalization of history and restores dignity to marginalized communities excluded from acknowledgement. The 400 youth participants incorporated in the Great Wall program stood to gain from reevaluating their identities in contrast to historical depictions of images that looked familiar and who struggled to improve their wellbeing. The Great Wall team's ability to address multiple needs while advancing their methods for collaboration offers important insight to practitioners, educators, and policy makers. By better understanding the accomplishments of The Great Wall of Los Angeles as its methodologies improved, we stand to gain a perspective on how providing opportunities for collective creativity can be used to transform the lives of youth and mend relationships between communities.

Methodology of the Study

To conduct a meta-analysis of The Great Wall of Los Angeles methodologies, I used a variety of tools and approaches to examine multimedia archives of the project and archival data of youth participants. I extracted information from these diverse sources to draw comparisons between the methodologies used in the Prehistory to 1900s segment, which spans the first 1000 linear feet of the mural, and the most recent 350ft long 1950s segment (Figure 2). My description of the mural takes special care to refer to a mural decade as a segment, i.e. the 1950s segment, whereas discrete historical events depicted within a decade are referred to as sections. I consistently reference the Prehistory to 1900s segment as the Prehistoric segment when comparing it to other decades. Refinements to the methodology between these two project instances will be the focus of my analysis. I will examine the methodologies used to engage the public, city and private agencies, and vulnerable populations in determining the artistic subject matter and program structure through a decolonial arts pedagogy.

Given that the program had a vast array of sponsors, each year interfacing with institutions in unique ways and meeting changing expectations, the materials available to me varied substantially, from attendance data, to raw recorded audio/video footage, and field notes of weekly workshops. I began by gathering all available media, documents, and existing interviews of the artists, youth and SPARC administration from the SPARC archive. I used a combination of archival research methods to digitize, sort, and codify SPARC's image archive and project documents using Exif metadata editors (Manovich 2010; Manovich 2012; for a description of Exif metadata, see Tesic 2005). Pre-existing metadata in SPARC's digital collection helped expedite this process.

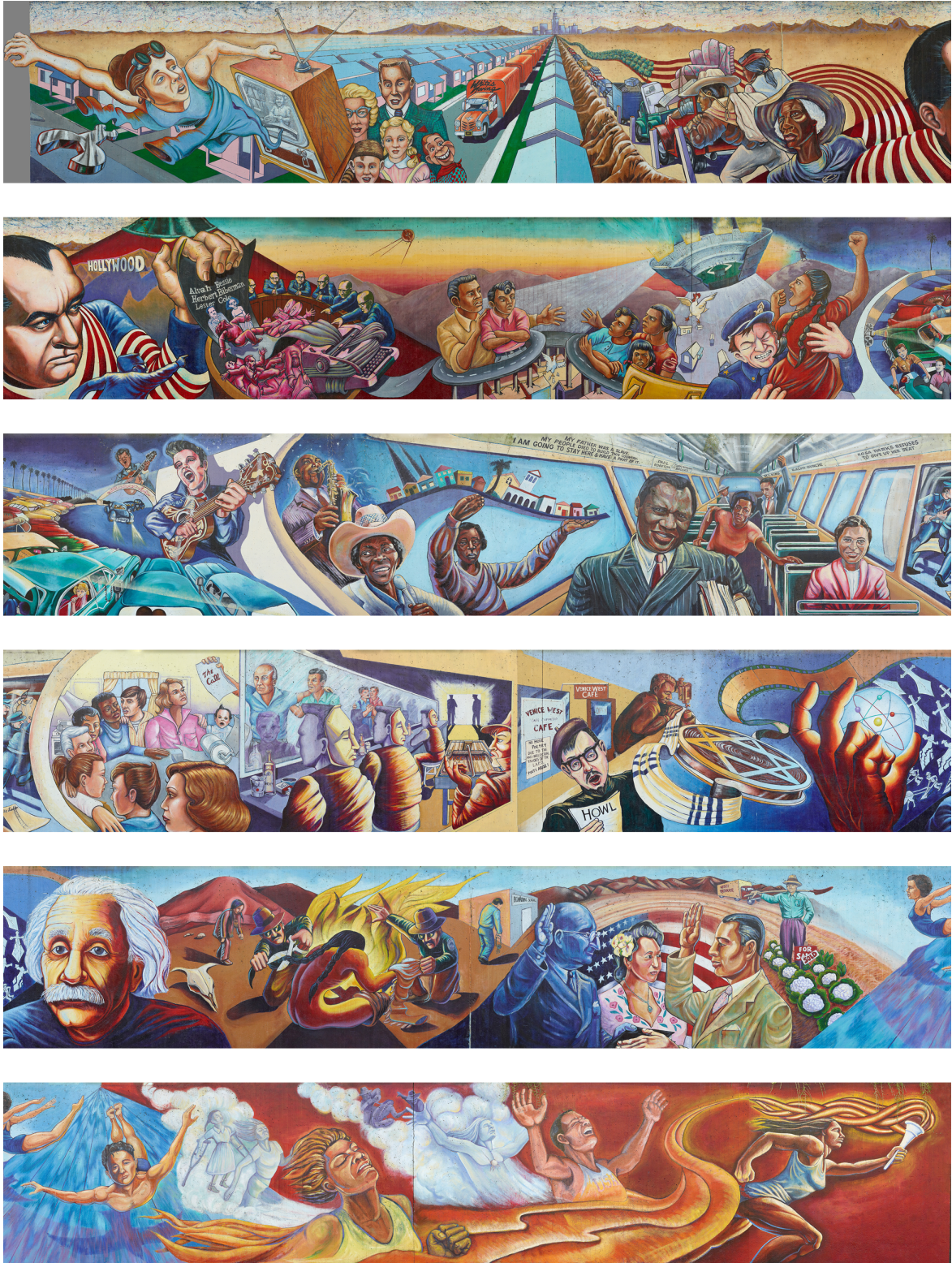


Figure 2: 1950's segment of the Great Wall of Los Angeles. This segment is approximately 350ft wide by 10ft high.

The Great Wall of Los Angeles has also been the subject of study from a variety of scholarly fields. Some of these studies included interviews of the artists and youth. I included these interviews into my corpus of data. Some publications incorporated data and interviews taken during or shortly after the mural production. These publications documented changes in the methodologies over time. Other scholars conducted interviews of youth many years after their involvement in the project. Baca also produced publications and interviews during and after the mural production. Both inform the methodological development and the outcomes relating to changes in the artist's approach to painting the artwork. These texts were organized according to their discussion of the mural's methodologies, their sources, and date of publication. The textual analysis played an important role in informing the media analysis of the SPARC archives and added additional insights into how the methodology changed between the Prehistory to 1900s segment, to the most recent 1950s segment.

The process of analyzing the data was also informed by regular interviews with the original artistic director of the Great Wall. Baca illuminated obscure photographs of workshops and youth exercises. Our discussions over archival documents triggered memories of the processes and ideas she had during her work on different project years. These conversations helped steer my research and privilege certain indicators in the collection that would have otherwise been overlooked.

My analysis is not centered on with whether or not a visual metaphor is more effective at depicting the meaning of the subject matter to a public. Rather, I am interested in how the subject matter informs the methods used by the artist to develop youth participants into successful mural crews. The use of the term decoloniality clarifies how the methodology of the Great Wall focused in on historical events of injustice and resistance and conceptualizes them through

creating visual metaphors and arts pedagogy. I utilize visual metaphor analysis to explore the widespread use of visual metaphors in the Great Wall segments and their function in the development of a decolonial arts pedagogy.

SPARC has also maintained administrative documents on the many projects and programming since the nonprofit's opening. SPARC's digital archive has preserved a robust collection of photographs taken during The Great Wall of Los Angeles program. A majority of the youth involved in the mural production was affiliated with city-funded programs that often required SPARC administration to track and generate documentation on each participant's work and behavior. I entered a portion of the youth documentation into a relational database for analysis. I utilized SPARC's administration files containing, among others, artist documents, youth testimonies, and Project HEAVY reports to gain a deeper understanding of the mural production. The administrative papers provide a wider picture of the project's scope and scale. These documents contained both qualitative and quantitative data on the ways the artistic director and SPARC worked with the youth, communities, and institutions.

I recorded instances of when methodologies were discussed in the textual analysis of scholarship and archival documents. These became my code categories. I organized these instances into two categories according to the mural's design phase and production phase. While the first segment produced in 1976 was designed in situ, the later segments were designed in a studio before the production phase. The artists who worked on the first Prehistory to 1900s segment began at the production phase without predetermined designs. Refinements to the artwork and transitions between each of the individually designed sections were made during the painting of the mural. I organized subcategories to accommodate differences in both mural

productions, while making sure the sequence of events in each phase coincided with each production year.

The design phase category is broken into subcategories of mural sketch and concept design, studio design process, group research, image archive research, sketch ideation, artistic direction, consensus building, talk-throughs, scholar and historian engagement, scholar lectures and symposiums, and public review of design and mural concepts (Figure 3). This subcategory contains mural design processes that take place before painting the mural for the four decades produced in 1978 to 1983. Rather than design concepts and integrate the aesthetics of 14 different artists in situ, mural productions after the 1976 segment involved selecting youth, and inviting artists, community members, and oral historians to collaborate on designing a whole segment with a single artistic director before painting in the Los Angeles River. The outcome of this process is a fully refined and predetermined design with to-scale blueprints and full colorations.

The production phase category comprises several subcategories. The mural skills development subcategory pertains to both artist and youth participant skills development. It includes river water management, wall preparation, gridding and design transfers, blue lining, and under painting. Youth skills development also includes color theory and management, fundraising, reference interpretation skills, equipment management and maintenance training, and drawing workshops. These skills are learned through the artistic direction, as well as daily group check-in meetings, evening progress reviews, cross-generational mentorships with artists and crew leaders, and peer-to-peer teaching. Extramural activities include field trips, theater production, classroom workshops, group cohesion exercises, family-oriented activities, and public events such as tours, media interviews, dedications, and public recognition. Youth also

Model of Great Wall Design Methodology

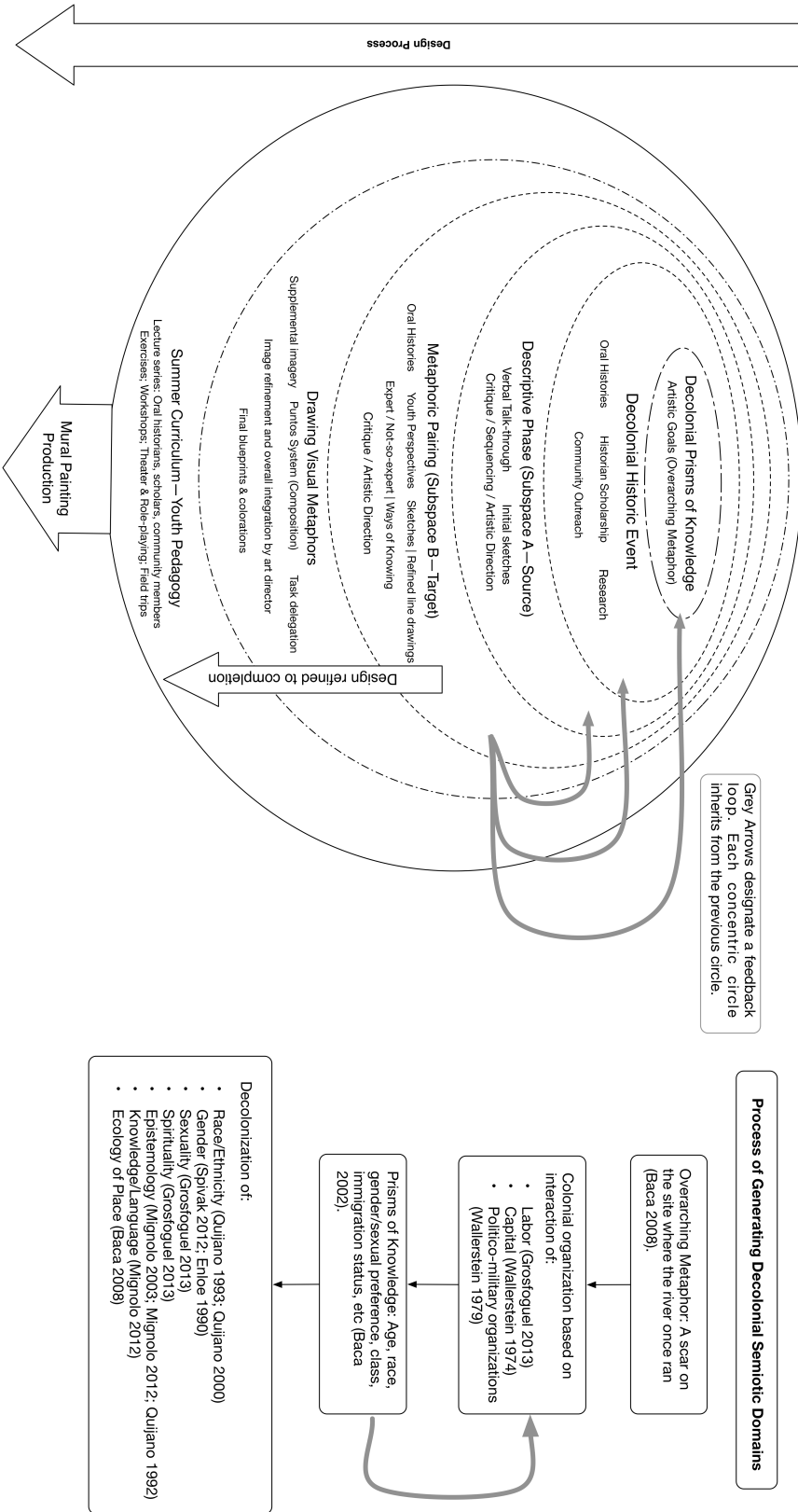


Figure 3: Model of the Great Wall design process.

participated in historian lectures and scholarly discussions about the content being depicted in the mural. Additional youth services include life-skills training, such as financial management, health and hygiene, one-to-one and group counseling, and other interventions.

The subcategories extracted from the textual analysis became the metadata labels used to analyze the SPARC archives of the Great Wall production. I appended this metadata to pre-existing SPARC metadata. Fortunately, mostly all of the images in the SPARC archive were already sequenced according to the production years so no additional coding was required to chronologically organize them. I then created a visualization of the SPARC archive of all five decades of the Great Wall images, namely the Prehistory to 1900s segment and the 1950s segment, according to their coded categories. By organizing the archive according to the mural's methodologies, I was able to understand how the program's elements interfaced with each other and analyze the artistic team's introduction of new methodologies (Figure 4).

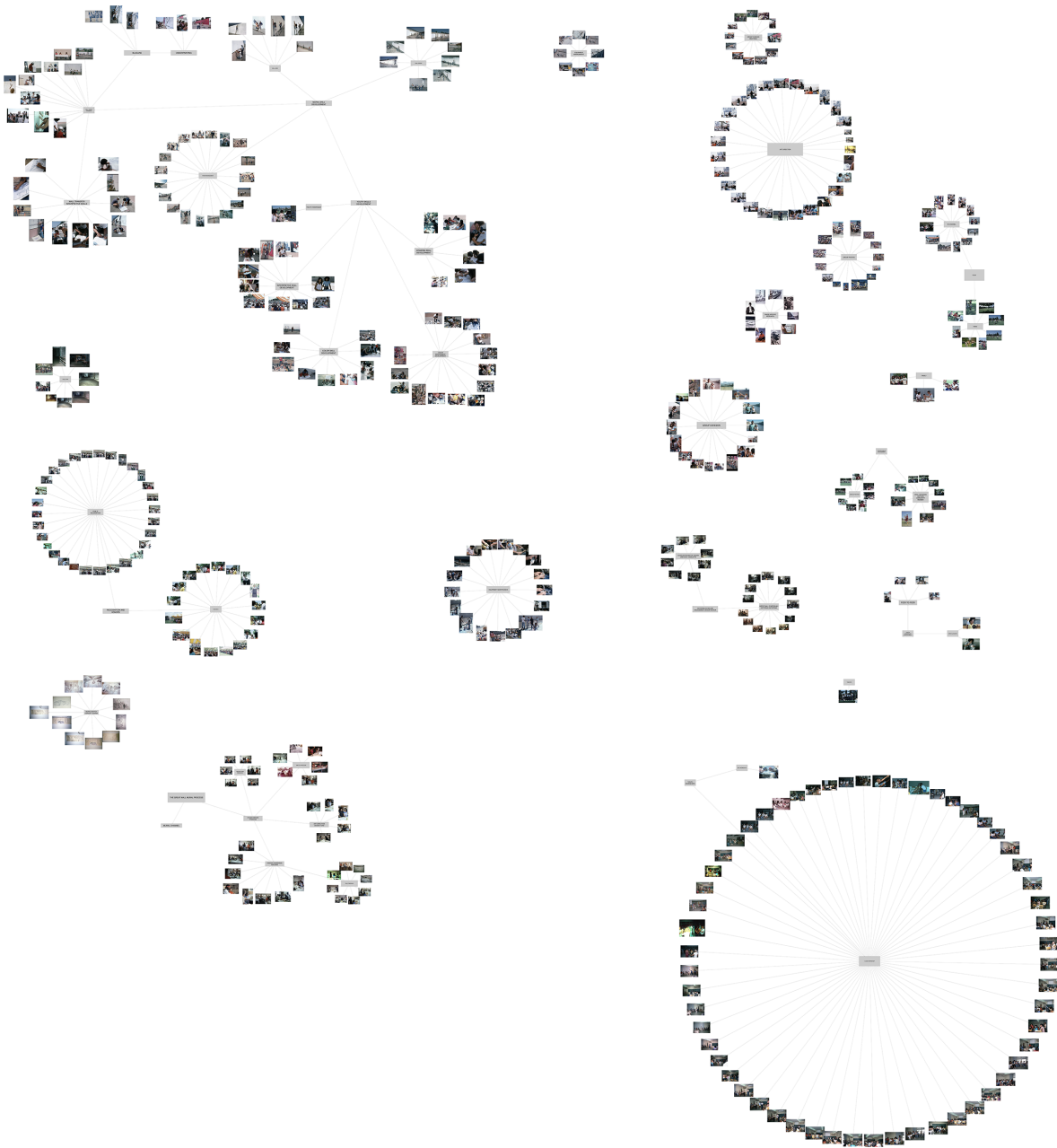


Figure 4: Archival analysis network graph

An Analysis of the Mural's Process of Design and Production

The process of designing and creating The Great Wall of Los Angeles greatly changed over time in response to the youth needs and the artist's changing aesthetic goals. While some of these changes occurred at an organizational level to address the challenges of working in the concreted river, other modifications were aimed at addressing the youth's wellbeing beyond the mural site. This analysis will look at the project's methods of design and youth participation and the creation of the mural's subject matter as a response to historical and contemporary experiences of colonial and modernist forces.

I will focus on two years of the Great Wall program: the 1974-1976 project that yielded the Prehistory to the 1900s mural segment and the 1982-1983 project that produced the 1950s segment. I have divided my analysis into two sections, based on the mural's design and production phases. The design phase is distinguished by the development of the mural's content, whereas the production phase pertains to the pedagogy and painting methods used during the youths' residency at the Los Angeles River site. The first section of my analysis uses decolonial theory to analyze the process of design and use of visual metaphors in the Great Wall's subject matter. Decoloniality provides a framework for understanding the intersection of the mural's subject matter, youth experiences, and pedagogical approach. The second section provides a descriptive overview of the Great Wall methodologies that took place during the mural's painting with information gathered from archival image, video, and textual data.

The first section provides an analysis of the Great Wall's decolonial arts pedagogy and the use of visual metaphors to depict decoloniality through critical historical events. This section compares the aesthetics and content of visual metaphors in the mural to the artistic goals, which I argue, can be understood through decoloniality as both reframing historical criterion and praxis. I

look at how this relationship compares between the first and last segment of the mural during the mural's design phases. I study the mural's visual metaphors in terms of decolonial theory to explore their pedagogical and aesthetic role in the designing and organization of the youth curriculum. The analysis examines similarities and differences between the Prehistoric and 1950s segments to further understand how the program's advancement related to the youth programming during the mural's production, and how the subject matter integrated with workshops and exercises to impart decolonial thinking.

The second section extends the comparative analysis of the methodologies used to develop the participant's capacities during the production phases of the mural. This analysis compares and contrasts methodological and aesthetic advancements made between the first and last mural segment. In comparing both segments, I describe the various aspects of the methodology's changes, paying particular attention to the design process, exercise and workshops, demonstrations, lectures, games, theatrical presentations, and artistic direction found in the corpus of media analyzed. This section also presents an analysis of youth data collected during the project, which sheds light on their continuity across multiple years and their promotions to crew leaders and supervisors. I describe how despite the changes in the mural's methodology, decolonial arts pedagogy and the visual metaphor remain central to the artist's fundamental mission. Her endurance and the institutionalization of the program's pedagogical practices advanced a decolonial arts framework. This section concludes with a review of the aesthetic outcomes, which describe the specialized artistic strategies that emerged from working with diversely skilled painters.

Section One: *The Great Wall of Los Angeles* Design Process

“History, as nearly no one seems to know, is not merely something to be read. And it does not refer merely, or even principally, to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all we do.”

James Baldwin (1985: 410)

In this section, I approach the development of the Great Wall methodology by looking at the function of visual metaphors used to depict the historical subject matter in the mural. I analyze the process of selecting the subject matter by enlisting decolonial theory. By examining the relationship between a methodological application of decoloniality to the logic and conceptual focus of the mural’s visual metaphors, we can understand how the Great Wall team integrated the subject matter and youth programming from both artistic and pedagogical perspectives.

While the presence of visual metaphors in Chicana/o cultural production has been noted by scholars (Mesa-Bains 1993; Cockcroft, Barnet-Sánchez and SPARC 1993; Latorre 2009; Cockcroft, Weber and Cockcroft 1998), none have analyzed their artistic use as holding methodological value in invoking community participation and implementing critical pedagogy. Mural practitioners allude to their value and role in visually representing a community’s expression. For example, Adele Seronde, a muralist and director of Boston’s Summerthing mural program of 1968 describes the function of the murals within the Black community. She states, “The murals have been particularly valuable to the Black community as a kind of forum. As propaganda they’re instructive, they make a sociological statement, but perhaps more

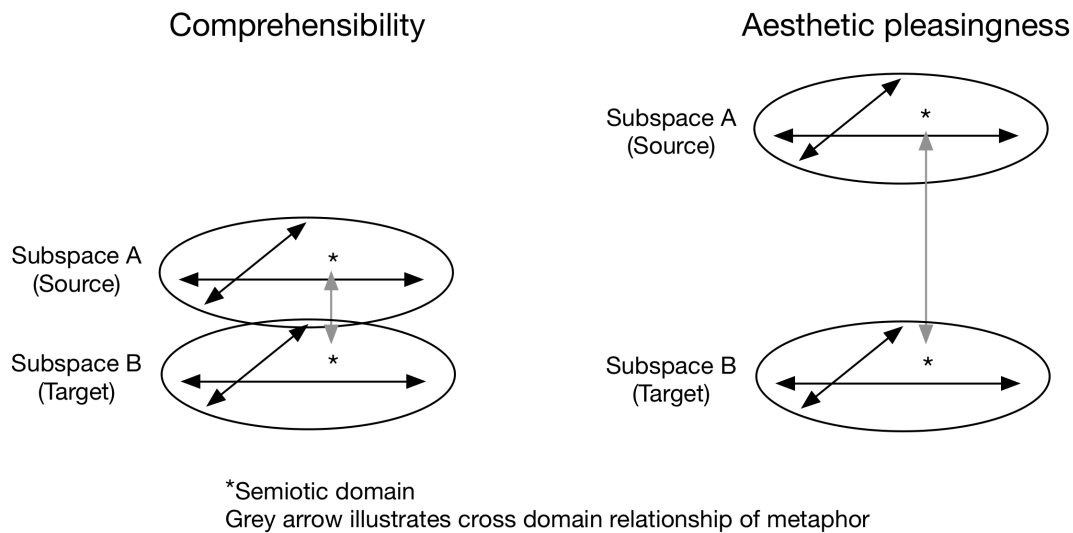
importantly, they're yards and yards of metaphor [sic] for people who lack a real channel of expression" (Cockcroft, Weber and Cockcroft 1998, 50).

Serig's work on visual metaphors in *Visual Metaphor and the Contemporary Artist* emphasizes that, "understanding if and how visual metaphors enable artists to make meaning may help substantiate artistic practices as a site and source of knowledge construction as well as a form of research. This, then, could impact art education on many levels including curricular and pedagogical" (Serig 2008). The abundant use of visual metaphors that convey critical history in The Great Wall of Los Angeles mural requires serious consideration for their role in the overall methodology and for their pedagogical value.

Santa Ana finds that metaphors frame everyday discourse, and "by this means it shapes how people discern and enact the everyday" (2002). Metaphors function such that they often, but not always, connect our somatic and physical understanding of the human world to more conceptual ideas. According to Santa Ana, "people borrow the conceptual structure of the familiar to 'get a handle on' [the abstract]" (2002). Metaphors can be composed of implicit comparisons that may present one concept while leaving the relationship of another to be inferred (Tourangeau and Sternberg 1982). Together, the conceptual structure functions as a bypass, or shortcut, for more efficiently utilizing, or communicating, the abstract or complex.

The terminology of a metaphor's constituent parts is composed of a *target*, or the principle subject of the metaphor, the *source*, which is the secondary subject used to characterize the *target*, and the ground of the metaphor, which refers to the analogous features that are central to its interpretation (Tourangeau and Rips 1991). According to Tourangeau and Sternberg, producing a metaphorical reading "must identify or infer the two systems of concepts involved (i.e. the [target] and [source]) and the [semantic] domains from which they are drawn" and they

propose, “that metaphors are analogies that include both [target] and [source] and their different [semantic] domains as terms” (1982) (Figure 5). He goes on to say, “whether or not a term must be inferred, the final interpretation of a metaphor will take into account [target], [source], and the [semantic] domain from which each is drawn” (Tourangeau and Sternberg 1982). The structure mapping model of Lakoff and Johnson, and the domains-interaction view of Tourangeau and Sternberg share the assumption that metaphors involve projecting a structure from one semantic domain onto a second semantic domain (Tourangeau and Rips 1991)(Figure 5).



Model for studying linguistic metaphors based on Sternberg (et al., 1993).

Figure 5: Model for studying linguistic metaphors based on Sternberg (et al., 1993).

The features of a metaphor are conceptually multifaceted when applied to visual representations. Artists can integrate aspects of both semantic domains when articulating the aesthetics of an image. For example, in the Prehistoric segment we see how the artists developed a visual sub-narrative of the evolution of mobility from the perspectives of colonial expansion and decolonial resistance. In the first mural segment, the artists depict land migrations, sailing ships, mules, horse drawn wagons, horseback riders and cavalries, steam ships, several renditions

of the expansion of the railroad system, red trolley cars, a bicycle, automobiles, and biplanes. Of particular interest is the use of trains to carry three distinct metaphors. The first metaphor depicts the train as a rearing iron horse (Figure 6), while the second metaphor presents the train as an incinerator of Chinese railroad workers (Figure 7), and the third metaphor interprets the train as a transporter of an endless agricultural bounty (Figure 8).



Figure 6: Train as Iron Horse metaphor

The zoomorphic device, train as iron horse, became a common linguistic metaphor during the Victorian era to refer to steam locomotion (Figure 6). The metaphor continues on in popular cultural references, and in admirers of locomotives who jokingly refer to themselves as ferroequinologists. In this example, the semantic source domain references the industrial association of horses, whereas the target is a mechanical train. The linguistic metaphor, train as iron horse, invokes a wide range of mechanical and animalistic imagery. For an artist, the visual interpretation of an iron horse can draw from both domain qualities, which can result in a broad range of aesthetic outcomes. Thus, the differences in aesthetic interpretations of a visual metaphor will emerge based on how each semantic domain is incorporated by an artist.



Figure 7: Train as incinerator of Chinese railroad workers

Similarly, a linguistic metaphoric representation of the dangers of being a railroad worker will have very different aesthetic outcomes from one artist to the next. Still, the linguistic metaphor is a device for its visual interpretation. The creation of a visual metaphor, thus, is not entirely dependent on the aesthetic abilities of an artist. This is seen through the depiction of an anthropomorphized cloud of ash containing two portraits of hollering Chinese railroad workers, which stands for the thousands of lives who died during the expansion of the railroad system (Figure 7). Visual metaphors de-link from objectivity because they are not dependent on empirical relationships. This opens up the possibility for many people to participate in the creation of metaphoric relationships and their visual representations.



Figure 8: Train as transporter of an endless bounty

Finally, the visual metaphor of the train as a transporter of an endless agricultural bounty exemplifies how visual metaphors can de-link from reality and accommodate a wide range of ideas (Figure 8). Several urban historians have referenced the roll the citrus industry played in the expansion of Southern California (Starr 1986; Klein 1997; Avila 2004). In this visual metaphor, the artists utilize magical realism to capture the sense of agricultural abundance and environmental appeal. This visual metaphor depicts the train originating from beyond the horizon, no longer confined to the railroad tracks. It floats across the California landscape pulling an endless bounty of oranges, while in front of it, a postcard depicts an orange on the windowsill of a Mexican style home. Behind the orange, we see a mission alongside vast orange groves. Each train visual metaphor articulates a different aspect of colonial expansion and the role technology played in the displacement of immigrant workers and indigenous populations. Each of these visual metaphors utilize various qualities of both semantic domains to create an aesthetic representation of a historical event. All three visual metaphors have semantic relationships, enabling for artists and non-artists to participate in their creation. Lastly, the visual metaphors can draw from a wide range of embodied knowledge and do not entirely depend on empirical or objective relationships to communicate the impression of a historic event.

Viewing the function of a metaphor through Sternberg and Tourangeau's cross-domain mapping theory enables us to fasten together disparate artistic, aesthetic, and pedagogical elements. Moreover, the relationships conveyed through visual metaphors are not limited by the artistic medium in which they are made. Throughout The Great Wall of Los Angeles mural, metaphors reinterpret space, history, and human dynamics as seen through the appropriation of the Los Angeles River, the advancement of decolonial historical perspectives, and the conflict mediation processes developed to create affinities across diverse youth. The activities that support the youth's development are based on the metaphoric relationships of a mural decade, e.g. The 1950s, and they combine a mixture of artistic disciplines that were taught in a multimodal fashion. A visual metaphor's work of cross-domain mapping becomes the bridge for decolonial thinking by incorporating aesthetic representations across a variety of artistic mediums. Combining artistic mediums, such as performance and visual arts, is in itself a decolonial practice. This contributes to the creation of an immersive experience for participants. It encourages mindfulness, and provides youth with a space to reimagine and theorize about their past, present, and future selves.

We will next consider the function of metaphors in The Great Wall of Los Angeles' design process in determining the mural's subject matter. The use of visual metaphors as the articulation of historical sections is a gradual development that is best seen through a comparison of the first Prehistoric segment, with the most recent segment, 1950s. We see the primary function of visual metaphors in the Prehistoric segment as being transitional points between aesthetic elements or historical imagery, and as features that compare historical events through critical perspectives. This contrasts with later segments, which rely on visual metaphors to transmit the historical narrative and mediate the mural's compositional flow. The visual



Figure 9: Prehistoric Segment; Discovery of California, Section 1 of 6



Figure 10: Prehistoric Segment; Discovery of California, Section 2 of 6



Figure 11: Prehistoric Segment; Discovery of California, Section 3 of 6



Figure 12: Prehistoric Segment; Discovery of California, Section 4 of 6



Figure 13: Prehistoric Segment; Discovery of California, Section 5 of 6



Figure 14: Prehistoric Segment; Discovery of California, Section 6 of 6

metaphors in the Prehistoric segment are often self-contained and conceptually isolated from the overall composition, whereas the imagery in the 1950s segment is highly integrated and delineated by their metaphoric relationships. The Prehistoric segment’s visual metaphor that functions most effectively as a visual narrative is the section, the Spanish arrival of 1769.

The section begins with a large light skin hand protruding from a globe while also grasping an indigenous body off the ground (Figure 9). We then come to an ocean view on board

a Spanish vessel. A rendering of an explorer, presumably Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, stands on the ship's crow's nest gazing onto a coast (Figure 10). Small figures in the far distance burn a signal fire, but from the ship's perspective, we see Cabrillo's imagination of what he thinks will be Queen Calafia—a fictional warrior queen from the mythical island of California first articulated in a novel by Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo—and her warriors rendered in the smoke (Cockcroft and Pierson 1983). In the next portion of the mural, we find ourselves looking back on the same ship from the perspective of the native Chumash or Tongva people (Figure 11). The section transitions into the colonization of California with an image of Junípero Serra becoming a mule as he gallops towards us and away from the Mission San Fernando (Figure 12), while mulatto and mestizos, the founders of California approach the viewer (Figure 13). The section concludes with a horse drawn wagon that signals the colonial expansion of the west (Figure 14).

The section depicting the Spanish colonization of the California coast is the most compelling use of visual metaphors to depict a narrative in the first 1000 feet. It is physically the longest of eight identifiable visual metaphors, and it is the only one to prominently use nested metaphors to create a smooth transition between historical concepts (Figure 15). The section presents a depiction of a first encounter from two simultaneous perspectives. The mural presents a colonial imaginary that projects a European mythology of women warriors onto the unknown and the unexplored California. If we were to transcribe the depicted visual metaphor into linguistic terms, it would not be enough to say that the unknown or the undiscovered is perceived through the Calafia myth. Doing this would miss the emergent narrative quality of the composition: the dual perspectives. By applying decoloniality as the grounding of both perspectives, we find that in fact the metaphor at play is the *discovery of California as myth*.



Figure 15: Discovery of California above the Prehistory to 1900s segment of The Great Wall of Los Angeles. Sections below depict the location of other visual metaphors in the Prehistoric segment.

Eurocentric perspectives that convey the exploits of explorers like Christopher Columbus often undermine the advanced civilizations present across the Americas before the colonial period. Being critical of the colonial frame of reference places into question the global organization of power and knowledge. Decoloniality can serve as a reminder that it was not the navigational prowess of a Spanish explorer that discovered and colonized an inhabited landscape. By viewing Columbus' discovery as myth, one can analyze the same event through the perspective of the native inhabitants, which found a doomed explorer lost at sea. The collision was not between a civilization and a landmass, nor was it a collision between an explorer and a tribe, but a collision of a multitude of civilizations and their worldview—in the Great Wall's depiction of the Spanish/Indigenous encounter, both are engaged in perceiving each other and acting with their perceptions. The notion that California was discovered and that somehow, the western gaze validated its existence from obscurity, is deconstructed through the Native American gaze. The Eurocentric claim of the Americas is countered by an indigenous resistance that is embodied through their physical and spiritual presence across the continent long before the Spanish arrival. Through the activation of an indigenous perspective and the implementation of a critical decolonial lens, the team is able to debase the discovery of California by revealing its mythological origins. In doing so, the project implicates America's founding within a genocidal paradigm—as well as one of resistance—by visualizing the injustice suffered by natives during the Spanish occupation. The conquest of the California coast and the expansion of the Mission caste system is a narrative that continues to be obscured by the Columbian discovery myth. The incorporation of an indigenous perspective makes visible the critical falseness of the discovery myth.

The Spanish/Indigenous encounter section is a harbinger of the methodologies to come that will bridge aesthetic visualizations of decolonial perspectives and experiences within a historical and contemporary context. The use of visual metaphors also foreshadows the pedagogical advances that will take place in the next segment. Before continuing the analysis of the Great Wall's pedagogical model and its visual development, it is important to understand how decolonial theory illuminates the conceptual framing of the Great Wall's subject matter. I will now explore the function of decoloniality as a methodological praxis that unfolds through the artist's use of civic and social engagement.

When I use decoloniality as a guiding principle, I am able to focus the power of visual metaphors onto a recovery of historical narratives not present or emphasized within popular knowledge. I bring attention to the structure of metaphor domains to interpret the process of composing a mural section. I have previously presented Baca's artistic vision and overarching conceptualization of the Los Angeles River as being a physical manifestation of coloniality. This concept extends the metaphor of the concreted arteries onto the process of undoing the obscured contributions of native and marginalized people. In essence, land has memory, and when it is concealed by concrete, so are the memories held within it. Concrete becomes analogous with the processes of coloniality, while the Great Wall's river metaphor attempts to disrupt the concealment of a pluralistic history. The overarching river metaphor establishes a relationship between people and land. In doing so, it informs the initial program structure and articulates the artistic objectives within a decolonial paradigm.

Decoloniality is a critique of eurocentrism and westernization from subaltern and subdued knowledges (Grosfoguel 2013). Decolonial theory reveals how master paradigms and abstract universals fit within a continuity of imperial desires (Mignolo 2013). Mignolo defines a

feature of decolonial options as being “the analytic of the construction, transformation, and sustenance of racism and patriarchy that created the conditions to build and control a structure of knowledge, either grounded on the word of God or the word of Reason and Truth” (Mignolo 2011). Decoloniality attempts to restrain the use of objectivity, because of its use an exclusionary device that undermines the epistemologies of marginalized and subaltern beings. He finds that the use of objectivity as a criterion for validating knowledge made it possible to eliminate or silence antithetic paradigms, in order to “build a totality in which everybody would be included, but not everybody would also have the right to [be included]” (Mignolo 2011). By analyzing the experiences of the excluded, namely the indigenous Californians and alienated immigrant populations, and understanding the composition of racism and patriarchy, decolonial theory is able to give definition to the methods that coloniality uses to manage and reorganize power.

The analysis of coloniality produced by Quijano in the seminal article, “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality” reveals the colonial sites in which power is configured and disseminated. He applies decolonial theory to define coloniality through four interrelated domains that make up a colonial matrix of power. He describes these four interrelated domains as being: the control of economy (land appropriation, exploitation of labor, control of natural resources); the control of authority (institution, army); the control of gender and sexuality (family, education) and the control of subjectivity and knowledge (epistemology, education and formation of subjectivity) (Mignolo 2013).

Grosfoguel advances our knowledge of how the colonial matrix of power operates by shifting the structure of what is considered knowledge in order to understand the experiences of the “colonized from and within the colonized experience,” and to expose “a dense and infinite space of oppression, struggle and resistance” (2013, 135). Grosfoguel explores the system of

coloniality from a decolonial epistemic perspective by proposing to shift “the locus of enunciation from the European man to an Indigenous woman in the Americas, [such as] Rigoberta Menchu in Guatemala or to Domitila in Bolivia” (Grosfoguel 2013). By doing so, he develops a more complex world-system than what a western political economy or world-system paradigms portray (Grosfoguel 2013). His analysis advances our understanding of the functioning of the colonial matrix of power by revealing its determinate forms. Grosfoguel presents nine dimensions of colonial experience from the consciousness of the colonized (Vallega 2014):

1. A particular global class formation where diversity of forms of labor (slavery, semi-serfdom, wage labor, petty-commodity production, etc.) are going to co-exist and be organized by capital as a source of production of surplus value through the selling of commodities for a profit in the world market;
2. An international division of labor [into] core and periphery where capital organized labor in the periphery around coerced and authoritarian forms (Wallerstein 1974);
3. An inter-state system of politico-military organizations [that are] controlled by European males and institutionalized in colonial administrations (Wallerstein 1979);
4. A global racial/ethnic hierarchy that privileges European people over non-European people (Quijano 1993; Quijano 2000);

5. A global gender hierarchy that privileges males over females and European patriarchy over other forms of gender relations (Spivak 2012; Enloe 1990);
6. A sexual hierarchy that privileges heterosexuals over homosexuals and lesbians (it is important to remember that most indigenous peoples in the Americas did not consider sexuality among males a pathological behavior and had no homophobic ideology);
7. A spiritual hierarchy that privileges Christians over non-Christian/non-Western spiritualities institutionalized in the globalization of the Christian (Catholic and later Protestant) church;
8. An epistemic hierarchy that privileges Western knowledge and cosmology over non-Western knowledge and cosmologies, and institutionalized in the global university system (Mignolo 2003; Mignolo 2012; Quijano 1992);
9. A linguistic hierarchy between European languages and non-European languages that privileges communication and knowledge/theoretical production in the former and subalternize the latter as sole producers of folklore or culture but not of knowledge/theory (Mignolo 2012).

According to Vallega, recognizing the distinct experiences of people undergoing suppression exposes “distinct loci of enunciation by the lives of the excluded in their specific situations and articulations” (Vallega 2014, 136). Establishing perspectives situated in other

ways of knowing allows for distinct issues, limits, and possibilities to appear. Arts practices can advance aesthetic and conceptual projects by deconstructing the colonial subjectivity of people and the power structures that silence or oppress their causes. Grosfoguel's outlining of the ways in which coloniality orders the world from a possible indigenous woman's perspective is a beginning towards an arts methodology that can build upon embodied knowledge of a people's own experiences. The sensibility to acknowledge the embodied knowledge of a people experiencing coloniality are in line with the methodologies developed during The Great Wall of Los Angeles program—both in the conceptualization of the overarching river metaphor and in its programmatic structure that excavated and reclaimed silenced or less prominent stories of the contributions of disenfranchised people. The Great Wall of Los Angeles visualized a new critique of coloniality and provided scholars and youth participants new possibilities of de-linking from western and modernist conventions of historical privileging.

The first three levels of experiences outlined by Grosfoguel pertain to the interaction of a global labor class, which is organized by capital, enforced, and administered by politico-military organizations. The remaining six levels provide us with the organizing structure of coloniality through hierarchies of race and ethnicity, gender, sexuality, spirituality, epistemology and linguistics. The Great Wall adds a decolonial critique of the material hierarchy that privileges certain environments over others, which depends on a culture of exploiting the land and the people who live on it (Baca 2008). Re-appropriating the Los Angeles River through artistic means exposes a culture of erasure and extraction that transcends both body and landscape. We gain through the Great Wall methodology a decoloniality of the environment, in which people and memory are integral to land, rather than isolating our relationship to land, such as viewing

the destruction of the Los Angeles River through a paradigm of ecological dominion or stewardship.

The methodology acknowledges an ecology of place that is inclusive of memory, whether forgotten or inherent, and through this model, the work restores dignity to those who contributed their decolonial subjectivity. The young mural makers who participate in the making of the half-mile mural engage in a process that makes historical experiences relevant to present conditions as the means of transforming spaces. I stress that the process of restoring dignity to the youth participants is tied to the transference of knowledge and the entitlement to space. The youth's artistic labor, as a tribute to amending this past and a means of reconciling with their own history, contributes to an undoing of stigmatization and trauma. The enacted artistic intervention transforms the physical place and appropriates its colonial vestiges so that it can present the embodied histories and knowledge of marginalized people. The use of embodied decoloniality and an ecology of place, as a methodology for art making and imagination, has youth reflect on how the histories of action and resistance are already present and operating within a space, community, or associated group. It also gives participants a new sense of possibilities within their own lives and identities (Bond 1982). Hence, the process of decolonization is both visualized in subject matter and in action as a rehearsal for addressing injustice in the youth's own lives. While this process may not resonate for every participant, the Great Wall environment still cultivates imagination and theorizing as a means of attaining daily artistic objectives.

Epiphanies range from a mural maker comparing the treatment of Zoot Suit youth by police to their own experience of police violence, to the realization that a figure's rich brown skin tone—liken to their own—is a mixture of many vibrant colors. Such revelations shift the youth's frame of reference that leads them to see something familiar in a new light (Estrella

2007). Teaching youth through visual metaphors that depict decolonial concepts, and the reinforcement of decolonial thinking through mentoring, friendships, theatrical and visual arts, lectures, and play all contribute to the Great Wall's transformative capacity. Even concrete skills like managing equipment, or understanding scale by using a ruler to accomplish a task, contributes to a sense of success and possibility (Bond 1982). Together, the production methods and visual metaphor aesthetics constitute the program's decolonial arts pedagogy.

In footage taken from the 1981 Great Wall production, a young Matthew Wuerker, an assistant on the design team, stands in the concreted river surrounded by hundreds of gallons of paint with the 1940s colorations spread across a worktable. Mutual friends introduced Baca to Wuerker, who at the time was working as an emerging freelance political illustrator for newspapers and magazines. Wuerker describes the design process as being an “ensemble mode of working with a group of people,” in which the artists “were given a body of ethnic history and we were trying to find visual metaphors for communicating that” (Brookman *Great Wall of Los Angeles with Artists Working: Eva Cockcroft, Patssi Valdez, Matthew Wuerker* 1983). He reflects on the summer's extensive dialogue process with historians and community members as being “a real pluralistic art” that involved a twelve-person design team, in addition to Great Wall youth, researchers, and help from dozens more (Brookman *Great Wall of Los Angeles with Artists Working: Eva Cockcroft, Patssi Valdez, Matthew Wuerker* 1983). After numerous distillations and refinements, the design team creates meticulously rendered blueprints, colorations of 350 feet of mural, and a summer plan for the youth.

The conceptual relationships depicted in the visual metaphors become the pedagogical modules for the mural production and inform the youth development exercises. This holds true for the mural decades after the Prehistoric segment. Decolonial concepts inform the overall youth

pedagogy for the production phase, while specific subject matter, such as the experiences of segregation by historical figures, are incorporated into weekly oral presentations and lectures. Visual metaphors facilitate the integration of decoloniality into a diverse array of artistic mediums, which make up the pedagogy's workshops and exercises. Decoloniality serves as a research method for scholars and functions as a way of guiding the ideation of a design team's metaphors. Since the semantic source domain of each visual metaphor is rooted in a historical event, the method of evaluating which historic event is privileged over another is achieved through a decolonial lens. The process of designing a mural segment begins with creating a historical timeline. Decoloniality guides the design team's research through what Baca calls "prisms of knowledge" (Baca 2002). Baca describes the prisms as being embodied knowledge, ranging from, but not limited to, age, race, gender/sexual preference, class, and immigration status. The embodied knowledge of people who have lived through a decade informs the prisms and metaphoric concepts. Advanced youth who participate in the design process also help determine the cross-domain relationships of the visual metaphors through their own experiences. The artistic design team overcomes Eurocentric biases by applying prisms of knowledge to uncover the obscured contributions of people and decolonial histories. Parallel to this process, the artistic design team learns through the decolonial subjectivities of individuals who have lived through the critical historical events of a decade. They gain an awareness of the differences among themselves as they become active participants in the decolonization of their own subjectivities.

Baca's prisms of knowledge closely resemble Grosfoguel's analysis of colonial subjection of an indigenous woman. The Great Wall design process shifts our focus away from colonial forms of knowledge towards those of the colonized to uncover the sites of oppression,

struggle, and resistance. The design process incorporates the distinct experiences of people to approach a collectively constituted decolonial subjectivity. Immersing themselves in the lives of the excluded, through conducting interviews and inviting oral presentations, enables the design team to explore metaphoric possibilities that can intertwine the distinct experiences of people and events. The initial ideation phase is unbridled as it searches for distinct issues and concepts through sketching, taking research notes, and collecting historical media.



Figure 16: Studio photograph of 1950s design process. *Back*--Timeline of historical events; *Middle*--Books and archival images; *Slightly below of middle*--Verbal talk-through; *Bottom*--Draft sketches of visual metaphors.

Once the design team forms a historical timeline, they use decoloniality to evaluate and emphasize certain historical moments over others. The design team and researchers use constructs of race and ethnicity, gender, sexuality, spirituality, environment, and accrued knowledge from previous research to evaluate the historical sites of interest (Figure 16).

Research coordinators aided the project by finding historians and community members willing to contribute oral accounts or archival materials to further their understanding of an event of interest. Gradually, the timeline became a verbal talk-through, which is a written description of the mural segment. The verbal talk-through contains general metaphors and aesthetic describers that help guide the team's research. Once discrete sections form, events are explored in depth and divided up amongst the design team members to advance sketches of visual metaphors.

Research coordinators locate scholars and community members who can contribute oral histories of their lived experiences to the design team. The 1950's segment of the Great Wall program, for example, received a grant from the California Council for the Humanities to engage humanities scholars in several symposiums and critiques throughout the mural design. Harry Hay, who contributed his experiences as one of the original organizers of the Mattachine Society, and William Mervin "Billy" Mills, also known as Makata Taka Hela, the second Native American Olympian to receive a gold medal, spoke about his experiences having been separated from his family to attend a boarding school for assimilating Native American youth, were some of the many influential contributors to the 1950s segment. Baca's use of prisms to determine the decolonial subjectivities of people and events being visualized helped guide the interviews. Metaphors naturally occur in language, yet, Baca and her design team developed interview techniques to help contributors get to a key metaphor that was both profound and visually interesting.

Ten major visual metaphors delineate the historical subject matter of the 1950s mural segment. Each visual metaphor contains several more visual metaphors nested within them. Compositional elements, such as color fields, landscapes, or structures help create transitions between the metaphor sections. Earlier, I describe the structure-mapping model proposed by

Tourangeau and Sternberg to explain how metaphor domains interact to create meaning. The source domain of the visual metaphors presented in the 1950's segment are rooted in a historical event, while the target domains tend to refer to popular culture imagery, or representations of corporeality. Popular culture references are not confined to their own period. The design team refers to Close Encounters of the Third Kind to convey the sense of displacement through the descent of Dodger Stadium upon Chavez Ravine as an alien invasion. They also make homages to period artists like Jackson Pollock and Elizabeth Catlett in the development of suburbia section, M. C. Escher behind Albert Einstein, and Georgia O'Keeffe in the Bureau of Indian Affairs Boarding School section.

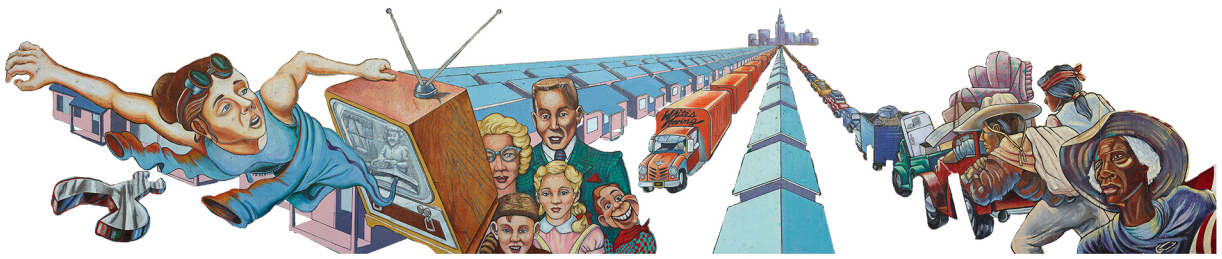


Figure 17: Visual Metaphors 1 – 5 of the 1950s segment of the Great Wall of Los Angeles. Visual metaphors are isolated for clarity.



Figure 18: Visual Metaphors 6 - 10 of the 1950s segment of the Great Wall of Los Angeles. Visual Metaphors are isolated for clarity.

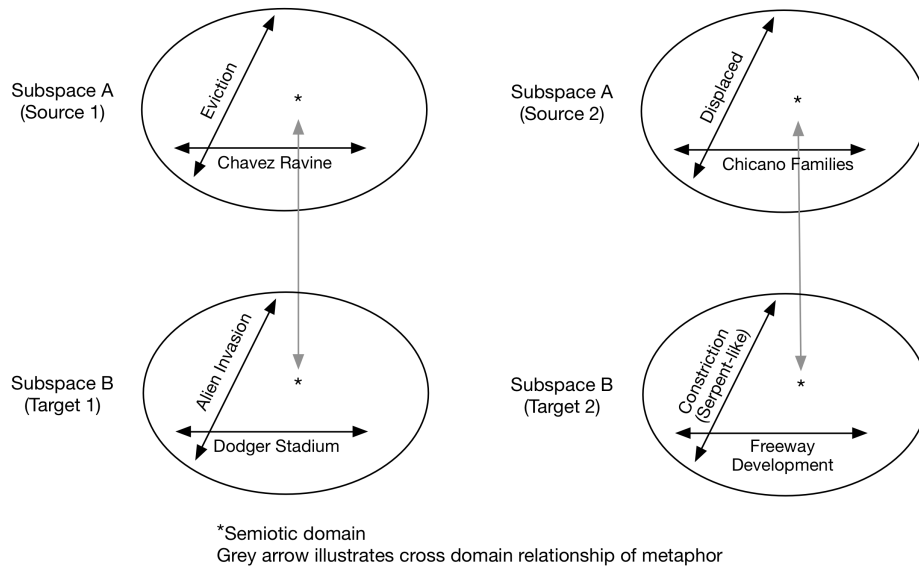
Mural Section Hist. Depicted	Tenor Domain	Vehicle Domain	Visual Metaphor(s)
A. Urban Migration and White Flight	Segregation and movement	Migration and White flight	Chocolate cities vanilla suburbs
1. Regression of Women's Roles	Women's roles	TV Moms	Rosie is vacuumed into a television set into the role of TV mom.
B. McCarthyism and the Blacklisting of Hollywood Creatives	Hollywood Creatives	Garbage blacklist	Blacklisted Hollywood is disposed of in a trashcan.
C. Eviction of Chavez Ravine Residents	Chavez Ravine	Alien Invasion	Dodger Stadium descending upon Chavez Ravine like an Alien Invasion
2. Division of Ethnic and Working Class Communities	Chicano Families	Constricted by serpent-like freeway	Chicano family torn apart by a serpentine freeway
D. Youth Culture and the Segregation of Music	Appropriation of black arts	Limelight and obscurity	Limelight highlights Elvis Presley, obscures Chuck Berry and Big Mama Thornton
E. Forebears of Civil Rights and the Freedom Bus	Civil rights progress	Movement towards Front of the bus back of the bus	Civil Rights progress depicted by Forebears moving toward the front of the bus
F. Women in the Los Angeles Community Service Organization / Poverty Programs	African American women activists	Hold up Watts	Women hold up the community of Watts
G. Clandestine Organizing by the Daughters of Bilitis & Mattachine Society.	Hopes for the future	Reflected in mirror	Longing for freedom to love is reflected in a bar mirror
1. LAPD Vice Entrapment	Closeted sexuality	Vice entrapment mouse trap	LAPD entrapment as a mouse trap
H. Jewish Contributions Arts and Sciences	Jewish entrepreneurship and venture capital	Sewing of cloth into film industries	Jewish rags into riches; venture capital for Hollywood films
1. Weaponization of the Harnessing of an Atom	Einstein contribution to atomic energy; Dangers of technology	Holding of an atom; M.C. Escher Swords into Plowshares pattern	The harnessing of the atom as being held in Einstein's hand; Swords into plowshare background.
I. BIA Relocation Program and Native American Boarding School Movement	Forced assimilation	Removal of clothing make generic	Movement in three's; BIA Relocation Program's forced assimilation as a stripping of culture and land
J. Asian American Citizenship, Property Rights, and the CA Alien Land Laws	Asian American Citizenship	Soaring civil rights	Swearing in by figment of Truman as gaining Asian American Citizenship, enabling diaspora to soar
K. Athletic Achievements and the Torch of Civil Rights	Olympians	Transcend adversity as fire	Crossing the fiery finish line as transcending adversity; echoing of the BIA Relocation Program

Figure 19: Table of visual metaphors by visual domains



Visual Metaphor(s): *Dodger Stadium* descended upon *Chavez Ravine* like an *Alien Invasion*; *Chicano family* torn apart by a *serpentine freeway*.

Image References: *Close Encounters of the 3rd Kind*; *Eviction of Arechiga Family*; *Freeway Development*.



Sternberg model used to analyze visual metaphors in the Great Wall of Los Angeles (et al., 1993). Judith F. Baca, "Division of the Barrios and Chavez Ravine," detail from the 1950s section of *The Great Wall of Los Angeles*, 1976-1983.

Figure 20: Applying Sternberg's model for analyzing visual metaphors in the Great Wall of Los Angeles; Detail of "Division of the Barrios and Chavez Ravine," from the 1950s section of *The Great Wall of Los Angeles*, 1976-1983.

Each visual metaphor is a construction of two or more semantic domains (Figures 17–19). The absorption of an empowered Rosie the Riveter back into the role of a homemaker is nested alongside suburban pink ghettos, while migrants flood into the urban core of Los Angeles. The metaphor presents white flight and suburban sprawl, which is cleverly articulated in Eric

Avila's *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight*. He makes reference to George Clinton's lyrics, "chocolate city and vanilla suburbs," to describe the social and racial disconnect between suburban whites and people of color (Avila 2004). Alongside the depiction of urban migration, Senator Joseph McCarthy overlooks the House Committee on Un-American Activities with a blacklist in his hand of artist names. The list turns into red-painted figures being disposed of in a trashcan to represent the many actors, directors and producers, who were exiled because of accusations of having communist affiliations.

We see the descent of Dodger Stadium upon Chavez Ravine as an alien invasion, while families become constricted by the construction of the federal highway system (Figure 20). The following visual metaphor depicts the segregated music industry where white performers overshadow the contributions of black artists, who are often the originators of musical cultural production. In this section, Elvis Presley has the limelight on him, while Chuck Berry, arguably the innovator of Rock and Roll, is cast into the shadows. Big Mama Thornton, the original composer of "You Ain't Nothin' but a Hound Dog" is depicted on the other side of a concrete wall behind Presley. The forebears of civil rights, including Paul Robeson and Rosa Parks, approach the front of the bus to allude to the gains in desegregation, but also in anticipation of the nonviolent movements of the 1960s. The Daughters of Bilitis and the Mattachine Society gather in clandestine, while a "vice trap" solicits bar patrons with the risk of being imprisoned and ostracized. Outside, a tailor sews a tallit prayer shawl into a can of film to represent the venture capital from the textile industry that went on to establish the predominantly Jewish Hollywood film industry.

An allusion to Escher depicts swords being beaten into plowshares backgrounds Albert Einstein harnessing the atom. Behind him, a Dakota Sioux—presumably Billy Mills—is stripped

of his clothing and sent to a boarding school by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The following section depicts President Truman alongside an Asian American couple gaining citizenship, while a Nisei Produce truck behind them represents a farmer finally being able to own land. A soaring Sammy Lee dives into an Olympic pool as he projects a silhouette of a bird beneath him to represent the newfound freedoms of Asian Americans. The section concludes with a fire barrier, likening a finish line, being crossed by Wilma Rudolph and Billy Mills, while an Olympic runner, carrying a torch forward, alludes to the next anticipated mural segment.

Each of the ten sections implements a visual metaphor to drive forward a weaving of historical narratives. The decolonial relationships established in the design process is an extension of embodied knowledge gathered during the artistic research. Both the research materials and established relationships with those who lived through the decade go on to benefit the youth participants in the following summer mural production. The domain relationships conveyed in the visual metaphors inform the pedagogical exercises used to develop a sense of cohesion among the participants. In the following section, I describe the use of the metaphor concepts in workshops, theater exercises, and role-playing to develop a sense of content immersion for the mural-makers.

Section Two: *The Great Wall of Los Angeles* Production Phase

The convergence of the artist's developing practice, reforms in the juvenile justice system and the Army Corp of Engineer's desire to correct the disastrous effect of having concreted the Los Angeles River are critical events that set the stage for the methodological advancements of the Great Wall project. In *Social Works*, Baca states "the selection of the site and the development of the [Great Wall's] objectives were very closely allied" (Whitten and Buchanan 1979). Her familiarity with the site provided insights into how she would incorporate the participation of neighboring stakeholders. Having spent most of her adolescence in the San Fernando Valley, the artist "knew intimately its racial and cultural isolation. Within a very small geographic distance, Blacks, Chicanos and Anglos led very separate types of lives" (Whitten and Buchanan 1979). Research into the region's history during her preliminary site assessment yielded redlining documents created by Los Angeles City planners that designated neighborhoods like her own as low income, minority communities, which were excluded from cultural and economic resources. To address the systemic isolation of racial groups, the Great Wall project, would have to mitigate historical discrimination and the institutionalized racism that prohibited resources to these neighborhoods.

A comparative analysis of how the Great Wall methodology changed between the first Prehistoric segment and the last 1950s segment reveals how the artist and her team gradually incorporated diverse pedagogical strategies and youth services. It is important to understand how the artistic direction shifted the program structure and administrative support to better address youth needs while also advancing a collective aesthetic. While each year's advancement included improving administrative and artists' training to better work with youth team members, the artist's vision and program objectives remained consistent.

In 1974, Baca's artistic practice already included a wide range of community organizing and mural production experience in East Los Angeles as the director of the Eastside Mural Program for the Department of Recreation and Parks. Through a direct appeal to the City Council of Los Angeles for a citywide program that would provide hiring opportunities for youth and artists to work in any community in the painting of new murals, she was appointed the Director of the Los Angeles Citywide Mural Program under the auspices of the Department of Recreation and Parks. Community demand for the Citywide Mural Program grew parallel to political constraint. Baca realized that to ensure free expression for artists and neighborhood participants and to garner additional support, she would need to create a private, independent organization. In 1976, she co-founded SPARC with painter Christina Schlesinger and filmmaker Donna Deitch. It was also during this time that she was approached by the Army Corp of Engineers with the possibility of designing a mural in the San Fernando Valley. The Great Wall of Los Angeles program spanned from 1976 to 1983.

Initially, the Citywide Mural Program had no training mechanisms in place to standardize how the murals were made or documented. Artists or interested parties could show up to a distribution site with their mural design, borrow scaffolding, and pick out gallons of colors. Artists required no permits or bureaucratic processes to evaluate designs or site placement. The laissez faire approach to supporting mural productions across neighborhoods proved effective at beautifying blighted neighborhoods that had received little or no development monies since the 1965 Watts uprising. The murals became markers for cultural spaces and ethnic communities, while others experimented with identities of Black, Asian, and Chicano power.

The methodologies employed in designing murals during the Citywide Mural Program varied by artist. While murals were understood as a mobilization tool through inspiring

revolutionary thoughts by observing and extracting their meaning, few artists were utilizing the form as an organizing and empowering tool for engaging residents and youth through the design and creation. Artists were encouraged but not required to develop relationships with neighborhoods. Aside from collecting petitions to prove neighborhood support, a reporting method established by Baca, no formal system existed to ensure that the artists were doing adequate outreach. Projects run by Baca and her trained artists were the exception to the norm; they incorporated local youth and residents in the production of their murals.

Not all spaces were accessible to emerging artists. Men were often the directors of mural projects, leaving little room for women muralists to obtain commissions. Sanctioned wall spaces like Estrada Courts, a low-income housing project in Boyle Heights, were regulated by sexist politics, while other spaces became racially exclusive. Despite the program's sponsorship creating a wellspring of creativity across Los Angeles neighborhoods, Baca observed that few or no collaborations across gender, race, and class was taking place. Baca's practice was well aware of how the inclusion of communities in arts making could facilitate communication across diverse neighborhoods (Whitten and Buchanan 1979).

An analysis of the first mural proposal, drafted in early 1975 by Baca while she was the director of the Citywide Mural Program, reveals the project's initial scope and scale. The concept was developed to coincide with the nation's bicentennial with the intention to create a space for Angelinos to express their history and diverse heritage as a recorded visual statement. To Baca, the agencies coordinating the bicentennial commemorations were preparing to spend millions of dollars, yet little of these resources were aimed at honoring multi-ethnic and immigrant contributions. The proposal called for a convening of multiple government agencies, including the US Army Corps of Engineers, the County Board of Supervisors, the Mayor's office, and

members of the Los Angeles City Council. The advocacy made to commemorate the contributions of these populations anticipated their exclusion from the larger narratives of the United State's historical formation in Los Angeles's celebrations.

The organizing experience Baca had accumulated by the time the proposal was drafted gave her insight into the cultural and economic conditions of Los Angeles's barrios and neighborhoods. The denial of cultural resources to communities of color, and the lack of cultural institutions to support their expression, contributed to the value and importance of the Chicana/o mural movement. Baca describes the murals as being a bridge for minority artists and distinguishes "the struggle of individual artists to integrate their art with the social and political issues they live with in their communities, and the dreariness and over abundance of concrete in our urban environments" (Baca 1976). The success of minority artists to advocate for city investment in murals attributed to the movement's initial effectiveness at conveying neighborhood pride and cultural expression on urban structures. Yet, despite new murals being produced through informal collaborations between local artists and community members, few artists were concerned with creating partnerships across ethnic and racial lines.

The early success of the Citywide Mural Program under Baca's direction informed her objectives for the Great Wall project beyond just an aesthetic transformation of the Tujunga Wash section of the Los Angeles River. Baca understood that a community mural methodology could become a "process by which the artist and their community are guided into communication" (Baca 1976). Bringing artists and neighborhoods together to a single site could better improve this process and build relationships across ethnic and racial divisions. The first concept presented the Great Wall project as an opportunity to convene artists in a collaboration that would take them outside of their neighborhoods to work alongside each other to produce a

mile-long multi-ethnic mural with approximately 120 student helpers. Even in its early stages, the decolonial objective of representing multi-ethnic interpretations of history was on the forefront of Baca's thinking. Yet, her instinct towards working with artists in the first thousand feet of mural would challenge her leadership approach and artistic vision.

Section Three: Painting Inside the Los Angeles River

Before beginning The Great Wall of Los Angeles in 1976, Baca adapted her original proposal to match the available resources from her established partnerships. Baca and her team managed to secure partnerships with the City of Los Angeles, Project HEAVY, the Army Corp of Engineers, the County Flood Control District, and Councilman Ernani Bernardi. SPARC was incorporated in 1976 to serve as the administrative backbone of the Great Wall project. The original vision of working with 200 summer employed youth, 400 afterschool high school youth, and 400 elementary students had narrowed to working with 90 adolescent youth and 15 artists for the first summer of 1976. In addition to the logistical preparations, the project encountered a few setbacks concerning access to the channel floor. A previously proposed access ramp that would provide crews with easy access to the river bottom turned out to be too costly to manufacture off site, transport, and install. The site had no access to clean water, bathrooms, or electrical services. All logistical equipment needed to house the massive crew for 9-weeks would need to be driven into the channel from an access ramp three miles away.

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) provided employment opportunities for low income, long term unemployed workers and summer jobs for high school youth. Artists from marginalized communities benefited from the program through full-time jobs that spanned from 12-24 months in public and non-profit organizations. Several of the first cohorts of artists and administrators to work at SPARC were CETA-sponsored employees. At the same time, reforms in the juvenile justice system that came about with the passing of the Dixon Bill deinstitutionalized status offenders and created the need for non-profit organizations that would provide youth with counseling services and temporary shelters (Peoples 2012). Project HEAVY (Human Efforts Aimed at Vitalizing Youth) in Los Angeles County provided

community resources to youth and their families as a response to the federal reforms. Project HEAVY experimented with various types of diversion programs that invested in youth's skills and emotional development.

The first cohort of youth to work on The Great Wall of Los Angeles were mostly from Project HEAVY and referrals from the juvenile justice system. At the recommendation of Mayor Bradley, Baca applied for the program and gained additional incomes for youth participants. Monies for youth employment required that the participants have at least one contact with juvenile authorities. Baca's target population drew mostly from the San Fernando Valley area. Youth had to meet a poverty-level criterion of less than \$10,760 for a family of six (Whitten and Buchanan 1979). Baca developed an interview guide and evaluated a pool of 300 potential participants. The questions evaluated a youth's ability to handle additional responsibilities and emergencies, their familiarity with art and mural painting, and their comfort level with working with others. The artistic director weighted the interview data to create neighborhood, racial, and gender balanced crews.

The Great Wall program became one of the few summer employment opportunities for youth through city-sponsored initiatives that had the additional resources and infrastructure in place to put the participants to work. Baca notes that much of the resources coming to marginalized communities stemmed from a fear of another uprising similar to the 1965-Watts Riots. Programs like Project HEAVY and SPDY (Summer Programs for Disadvantaged Youth) used city funding to offer minimum wage jobs to neighboring youth without providing consistent jobs, training, or infrastructure for their communities (Davalos 2011, 124). With little accountability, programs in marginalized neighborhoods operated on the premise that distributing minimum wage incomes without providing actual work opportunities for youth was

a substantial deterrent. Baca advocated for using these monies to establish the Great Wall program by making the rationale that artists could be supervisors, train youth, and manage administrative recidivism tracking documents. The successful redirection of funds provided the program with much needed resources for the hiring of youth and artist supervisors. While funding requirements burdened the project's artists and administrative support with generating a substantial amount of youth data tracking, this information today offers insight into the project's methodological development and effectiveness that is uncommon for visual arts-based community cultural development projects.

The painting of the first segment of The Great Wall of Los Angeles began in June 28, 1976. Project HEAVY and SPDY referred youth to the Great Wall program over the course of a month. By the fourth week, a total of 82 youth from Project HEAVY and 11 youth from SPDY joined the program. During the production, one youth was terminated due to behavioral conduct and two youth withdrew. Ninety youth received \$2.32 an hour for 5 hours a day, five days a week for the duration of the 9-week project. The total investment in the youth's contributions was approximately \$40,000.00 for the first segment. These wages were a significant economic contribution to their homes. One youth's wages could supplement their family's total annual reported earnings by as much as a 10%. Their participation also offset their family's food costs, at approximately 45 meals per youth, which cumulatively reduced each participant's economic dependence on their family's limited wages over the summer. These are just two examples in which the Great Wall program delivered economic relief to low-income families in addition to employing youth and developing their vocational skills.

Baca relied on 13 additional artist supervisors to coordinate the first segment of mural. The artist supervisors came from diverse ethnic backgrounds and experiences. Some artists and

project assistants, like Bernardo Muñoz, Gary Tokumoto, and Arnold Ramirez, had experience working with Baca through the Citywide Mural Program. Donna Deitch and Christina Schlesinger, also supervisors on the project, were co-founders of SPARC with Baca. Charles Brown and Ulysses Jenkins had also been involved in SPARC's opening. The rest of the team was comprised of organizers and emerging artists like Isabel Castro, Christy Lucas, Olga Muñiz, Linda Eber, Judithe Hernandez, and Luis Lopez.

Bringing forth the decolonial objectives to the project's pedagogy first took form in giving each of the 14 artist-teams agency over the mural's design and concept development. Each crew was responsible for conducting research on California history that was most significant to them (Whitten and Buchanan 1979). Field trips to local sites of historical significance, libraries, and archives supported the design process. However, time constraints and limited resources placed stress on the artistic team's pedagogical approach. They struggled to integrate their design ideas and negotiate individual artistic styles into a cohesive mural. Determining the aesthetic transitions between each panel was negotiated between crews during the mural's painting. Each crew was led by muralists of different skill levels, which resulted in inconsistent painting strategies. Some of the artists had little experience facilitating arts programming or working with diverse teams. Artists needed to be included in mentoring and training prior to attempting a methodology, otherwise they struggled to include youth in the artistic process or with meeting the artistic goals. This led to several challenges in implementing the program's pedagogy. Despite these challenges, Baca and her team were able to develop the initial methodology for conducting research, organizing communities, and creating partnerships with service organizations and city agencies. The experience of working in the first summer, for Baca, provided the foundation for resetting her decolonial objectives and artistic practice. She

would continue to develop her methodologies, inclusive of diversely skilled artists, community members, and youth, to improve the Great Wall's pedagogical and artistic outcomes.

Section Four: Exercises, Workshops, and Developing an Ensemble

In “Art and Activism in the Chicano Movement”, Rangel points to the early stages of decolonial projects that emerged through the youth Chicana/o movement that were carried out through arts and cultural practices. The influence of “artistic and cultural production both marked and directed the endeavor of cultural reclamation and, to this end, artists made deliberate attempts at recovering and refashioning certain aesthetic principles” (Rangel 1998, 226). During the production of the Prehistoric segment painted in the summer of 1976, much of the youth development curriculum is driven by the historic events depicted in the mural. The lack of visual metaphors in the Prehistoric segment was due in part to the ordinary role scholars had in the youth’s development, and the independence each of the 14 artists had in developing their own section and pedagogy. Each artist had a different approach and varying aesthetic capacity to depict the historical subject matter; rarely did they use Baca’s pedagogy for working with youth.

Much of the decolonizing curriculum concerned with the youth’s sense of historic continuity would not emerge until later segments after Baca had realized that her leadership as artistic director would play a critical role in advancing the methodology. Continuing the development of a methodology for creating metaphors that engaged historical events in decolonial processes required her to take a more active role in directing the design process and the educational programming. By managing the output of each artist and integrating decolonial concepts through visual metaphors, Baca was able to create a rich immersive environment that informed youth activities, workshops, presentations, and aesthetic outcomes. This is most evident in the later decades following the Prehistoric segment, where the subject matter relies more on visual metaphors and achieved a compositional consistency.

There was no initial methodology to create cohesion among the different artists. The project struggled to connect the pedagogical and artistic goals because no one prior had attempted such an ambitious project. The methodology grew out of an organic process that aimed to bridge aesthetic outcomes with the artistic director's pedagogical goals. According to Baca, once the project was underway, she realized that, “there is no model for doing this at this scale. Each year, the model has been more refined” (Brookman *The Great Wall of Los Angeles, Historical Narrative by Judy Baca* 1983). There was little time for preparation once funding became available; much of the designs were composed on site as the wall was being prepared, and many of the activities that would later go on to become critical to the Great Wall’s methodology were invented over time by contributing artists and administrators as it was required. Much of the curriculum in the Prehistoric segment alternated between arts and skills training. Despite the disjunction between the artistic and pedagogical goals, the project excelled at providing hands-on training with site equipment, as well as developing the youth’s sense of responsibility, providing basic skills for mitigating conflict through mentorships, and having them experience constant and gradual achievements through collaboration.

In subsequent productions after the summer of 1976, Baca advanced the program’s methodology through careful observation and documentation over the following years. The changes improved the way the mural was designed and painted, while also improving the services that were available for the youth. To improve the quality of the artwork and the youth’s involvement, Baca reduced the youth to artist ratio, standardized the training of her crew leaders, developed leadership positions for returning youth, reduced the length of each segment, and developed additional workshops and exercises to mediate conflict.

One innovation was a Friday lecture series, which provided learning opportunities for participants that were led by historians, scholars, and community members. These sessions helped articulate the historical narratives for the youth participants. By reducing the size of each crew, Baca was able to alleviate the amount of supervision needed by each artist. The artistic teams were able to provide individual attention to their youth mural makers and increase their overall productivity. Increasing the communication between her crews and youth enabled Baca and her administrators to better advocate for their needs to city agencies and private organizers. The project gradually obtained additional resources to address health wellbeing issues, counseling services, and life skills training.

The Great Wall program established a method of interfacing with federal and state officials. SPARC served as a conduit for facilitating communication down through the County bureaucracy, and into local service groups, organization, and churches. At each intersection, the program cultivated the interest of officials and workers at the federal, state, county, and municipal level through the program's artistic objectives and the youth outcomes. The artists and program organizers also focused their energy on developing a relationship amongst the youth and their family. They created events and activities that functioned to reconcile the youth's relationship to their neighborhood and community.

As we examine how many youth remained engaged with the Great Wall program over multiple summers, an important aspect to understand is how a continuity of knowledge that was created and shared between cohorts of youth added to the success of the methodology. The abundance of data makes The Great Wall of Los Angeles unique among other similar youth-arts initiatives for studying direct and indirect long-term outcomes (Jackson 2009). Today we can review the documentation of artist and youth's participation in the Great Wall program, which

included funding requirements and Project HEAVY’s recidivism tracking forms. Artists and administrators were charged with keeping recidivism data, generating individual youth reports, tracking attendance, and contributing to emotional-behavioral reports of all participants who were sponsored by Project HEAVY.

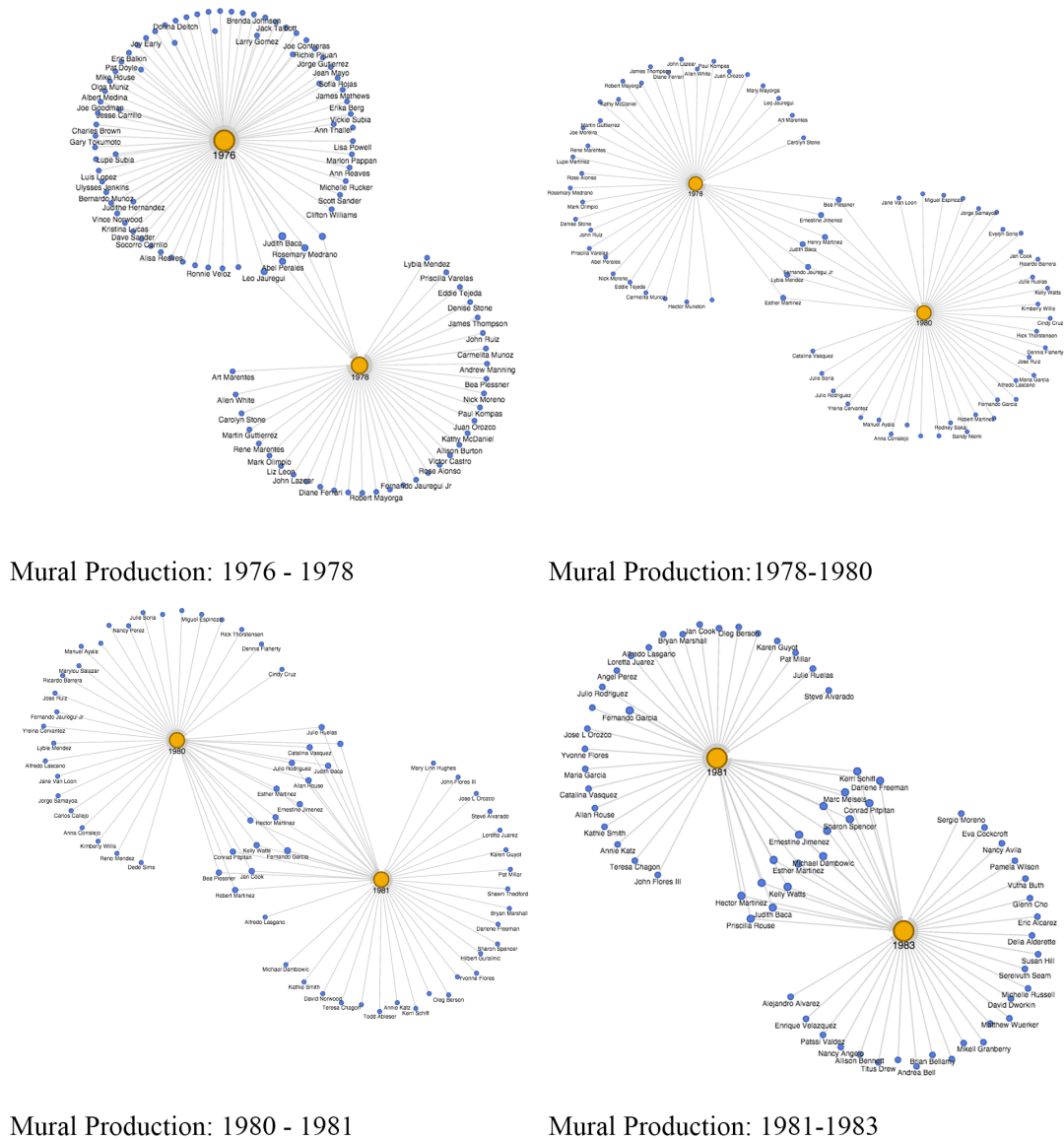


Figure 21: Network visualization of Great Wall participants from 1976 to 1978; *Top-Counter Clockwise*: Participants from 1976 to 1978; Participants from 1978 to 1980; Participants from 1980 to 1981; Participants from 1981 to 1983.

A visualization of youth attendance compares each year's involvement in the project. By depicting these relationships as a network graph, we see how many participants came back the following year, and which youth went on to be promoted to supervisors and crew leaders. Based on the network graphs, we can see a substantial population of participants. The visualization depicts a growth in the population of youth who returned for an additional summer, starting with four in the Prehistory to 1900s segment, and six in the 1920s to 1930s segment. The largest population of returning youth happens between the 1930s to 1940s and 1940s to 1950s segments, with both having fifteen youth across each summer (Figure 21). Other records show that while not all youth went on to work in a subsequent painting summer, many more did go on to join the design teams as researchers and designers for subsequent mural segments. Several of the artists and youth who severed on multiple crews also went on to participate in other SPARC programming, while some even pursued creative or social service based professions.

While the degree of immersion experienced by the 1976 crew was unlike any previous mural program in the country, a comparison of the artistic direction and pedagogical structure to later years demonstrate a significant advancement. The participant's role in the Great Wall program shifts after the artistic director takes on a more central leadership position in the artwork's aesthetics and use of visual metaphors. This leads to the largest change in the program's pedagogical structure, mostly the expansion of mentorships, workshops, and exercises to address youth's individual and cooperative behavior, self-esteem, historical knowledge, and vocational skills. Despite there being little carryover of youth participants over multiple summers in earlier segments, the core crew of artists and youth who remained engaged built on top of their previous achievements. After the 1976 production, the artists and crew leaders used previous segments to teach the Great Wall methodology and the history depicted as relating to the new

participant's own sense of identity. The acclimation phase of the program took place between the first and second week of the summer and involved tours and lectures of the previous summer's segments.

Documentation of the previous productions would serve as adjunct material for incoming youth. Film screenings of the Great Wall program, and previously recorded lectures were also resources that crew leaders pulled to acclimate the new youth. Workshops during the introductory period focused on valuing embodied knowledge, questioning what official history was, and why it was important to recover the narratives of women, people of color, first nation people, and others who were excluded from being recognized for their contributions. This period also served as opportunities for experienced crew members to develop peer-to-peer teaching skills. Youth like Ernestine Jimenez and Lybia Mendez, a four-summer and two-summer participant, respectively, in the 1981 production led the teaching of the Great Wall methodologies and the mural making process to new crew members using films and slide shows.

Experienced participants held important responsibilities when it came to teaching mural techniques and site management skills to new crew members. Veteran youth became so familiar with working in the Los Angeles River that their ability to manage the project often surpassed the adult supervisors. Since the standardization of the mural painting process, many of the intricate steps needed to prepare the site could be distributed to smaller crews led by senior youth and supervisors. These instances offered senior youth opportunities to apply their conflict mediation skills and develop their mentorship abilities. The artistic director mediated the ethnic and gender makeup of the crews to ensure that cooperation would occur across differences. Crews were also composed of divergent individual capacities so that every team could achieve their assignment. According to Baca, forming diverse crews at first seemed counterintuitive to

maintaining a level of progress. Crews had to overcome their preconceived notions of each other, while also negotiating conflict and completing their responsibilities. At the risk of stalling the artistic progress, Baca and her team developed exercises to resolve conflict amongst crew members. Without the diversification of the crews and a conscious effort to resolve differences amongst them, transformative mentorships and the admiration that formed between each youth may have not been achievable. Pairing teams by acknowledging their individual capacities, gender, and racial differences ensured the formation of meaningful and lasting mentorships.

Returning youth provided important managerial and pedagogical support to the project. Crew leaders or youth participants who had demonstrated exceptional leadership skills in previous summers were given additional responsibilities and provided another level of supervision. Crew leaders who returned over multiple summers became project veterans. Their project experiences accrued deep knowledge about the mural methodology and historical content. They managed diverse teams, resolved conflict between difficult youth, and took on critical roles supervising the program's daily operations. Encouraging cross-generational learning and teaching enabled for the transmission of skills and procedures that developed over the course of previous mural segments. This also allowed for further refinement of the mural's painting techniques despite each year's participants having diverse skills and abilities.

Each summer provided youth from low-income families with 9 weeks of employment. In later years, project administrators integrated youth from middle-class backgrounds by obtaining sponsorship from local foundations and through private donations. By the end of 1983, the Great Wall program trained over 386 youth and 40 artists in the methodologies and mural-making techniques. In total, the program employed youth with over 90,000 hours of work and skills training, with wages totaling approximately \$350,000.00 over five summers. The program

provided economic relief to struggling families by redirecting monies from mundane city-sponsored manual labor jobs. Providing nourishment to the youth during their work on the project further reduced the economic pressure on their families during the summer months. Life skills training introduced participants to checking accounts and taught them how to manage and save their earnings.

A practical orientation to the project defined the crew's expectations of the youth. During their introductory period, daily duties and responsibilities were clearly outlined and assigned to new crew members. Youth received several lectures that covered topics like the use of protective clothing, dress and safety codes, the use of first aid kits for treating heat stroke, how to manage falls and minor injuries, and the use skin protective materials to prevent exposure to toxic chemicals. Crew leaders demonstrated emergency evacuation procedure out of the wash in the event of a flash flood and ran drills to maintain an awareness of the dangers in working at the site. The youth also learned proper lifting methods for preventing back injury, proper climbing, and setup procedures for scaffolding, and those with vocational skills received special training on how to use and maintain site equipment. The training youth received supported their kinetic learning through setting up scaffolding and managing the immense worksite. The physicality of working across scale lent to a more profound awareness of their abilities.

The painting process elevates the traditional roles of adolescent youth in a mediated and structured environment. In addition to imparting vocational capacities and a sense of responsibility, the Great Wall also integrated health and psychological services to provide counseling for youth in crises. Rangel acknowledges how Baca and her assistants underwent a process of improving the available services to support the diverse needs of at-risk youth. While it took "a number of years to generate and perfect, they provided important spaces for developing

the mural's themes of interracial relationships and community solidarity" (Rangel 1998, 233). In the creation of a methodology that would support cross cultural collaboration, crisis-oriented services were also accompanied by "a team of artists, teachers, historians, oral historians, and other cultural workers who worked with the youth to further solidify the content of the murals" (Rangel 1998).

SPARC staff advocated for the integration of youth services into the program to address issues of domestic violence, incest, suicide prevention, and substance abuse counseling.

According to Baca, the program created "a support system for kids who [wanted] to deal with the draft, for kids who [wanted] to deal with their sexuality, for kids who [wanted] to deal with drug and incest problems" which gradually emerged from the process of "solving one problem after the next" (Brookman *The Great Wall of Los Angeles, Historical Narrative by Judy Baca* 1983).

Youth received counseling twice a week by on-site counselors from the Jack Child Guidance Clinic. Counselors taught intense human relations classes to arbitrate differences among team members and integrated concepts from of the overall mural program in their teaching (Brookman *The Great Wall of Los Angeles, Historical Narrative by Judy Baca* 1983). The Great Wall program challenged the administrative structure of SPARC. The creation of SPARC, states Rangel, "was initially conceived as a means of circumventing city control over The Great Wall project" but "by 1977 [SPARC] had grown to a full-scale nonprofit community arts institution" (Rangel 1998, 233). Administrative leadership had to coincide with the artistic vision and articulate the program's vision to very diverse institutions. Much of the success that the program had in expanding its services for youth came from strong administrative support that complemented, but also made deference to the Great Wall's artistic direction. SPARC administration leveraged limited resources to raise additional funds for materials, artist wages,

and special events. Articulating the program goals to foundations attracted additional funds for sponsoring extended scholarly engagement, special events and field trips for youth, and the mounting of a mobile multimedia theater performance by some of the youth.

Decoloniality informs the program structure and pedagogy by being responsive to the needs and embodied knowledge of its participants. Exercises aimed at improving the cohesion amongst participants focused on shaping their preexisting perceptions of each other. This approach integrates elements of play, such as roleplaying, and performance, as a way of introducing youth to each other. Part of Baca's artist training involved having her artist supervisors take turns leading workshops. Artists like Jane Van Loon in 1981 utilized socializing games, such as a wheel-interview exercise, to improve the sense of solidarity among the youth crew members. In this exercise, youth form an inner and outer circle. They are asked to interview five people using a prepared script. After each interview, the inner circle shifts so that each participant meets someone new. On the last interview, each participant is asked to introduce the last person spoken to. In *Lessons from the Wall: Muralism and the Art of Empowerment*, Estrella finds that the exercise encourages interactions while creating a comfortable space for participants to meet. She describes that by the end of the exercise, "everyone gets introduced to the group by someone else, saving the person from having to talk about himself or herself, a task which some young people find difficult to do" (Estrella 2007, 84).

Roleplaying and the use of imagination in the program's methodologies externalized preconceived notions about difference and race while also distinguishing decolonial knowledge. Exercises meant to undo stereotypes incorporated the participant's preconceived notions of each other. In one exercise, students divided themselves according to their self-identified race. The groups are then asked to recall all of the negative stereotypes associated with another group.

Estrella describes the stereotype exercise as being effective at revealing the range of prejudices each person encounters (Estrella 2007). Estrella quotes Baca to depict how the exercise illuminated the composition of prejudices because what emerged "was that stereotypes were the same across groups, it's just that the language shifts" (Estrella 2007). According to Estrella, this exercise contributes to the cohesion of a group by creating solidarity in analyzing exclusion. Being able to unfold the genealogy of stereotypes provided youth with an additional approach to resolving conflict derived from prejudices while working on the mural production.

Lived experiences played an important role in depicting the power of embodied knowledge to the youth participants. For example, during the 1950s production of 1983, youth learned about the history of LGBT rights from oral presentations by Harry Hay, an organizer of the Mattachine Society that advocated for gay rights (Hurewitz 2007), scholarly lectures on the Daughters of Bilitis, another organization that advocated for lesbian civil and political rights (Gallo 2006), and participated in a theater workshop on California's Proposition 6, more commonly known as the Briggs Initiative. During another intimate event, the mural makers met LGBT youth of similar age who were survivors of abuse and sex trafficking. Several of the participants had also survived domestic abuse or were currently living in abusive households. The expansion of each youth's worldview occurred through inheriting various aspects of these lived experiences. These special workshops functioned to deepen the youth's ability to empathize and intensified the importance of their artistic contributions.

The physical site of The Great Wall of Los Angeles provided the artists and gang-affiliated youth with a safe space to redress conflict. Baca took advantage of the site for being neutral and unclaimed by local gangs. The physical structure of the channel advantaged crews composed of rival gangs by limiting their exposure to dangerous encounters. Despite creating a

safer space for bridging youth, the program's participants were still policed and perceived as a threat to local residents. Gradual buy-in by the local high school and Valley College provided the youth with classrooms and lecture halls for presentations, theatrical workshops, and group exercises. The Great Wall program gradually expanded the safe spaces accessible to the youth despite being in a racially exclusionary region of the valley (Institution 1986; Davalos 2011). As the program progressed, the youth's daily exertion gained the admiration and respect of local residents. Community organizers took note of the shift in sentiment. They incorporated events for local residents and family members to participate in, such as youth guided tours and special performances. Incorporating family members and local residents augmented the sense of community around the creation of the mural. By the end of the summer, the project team garnered community investment and steadily developed a contingency of local stakeholders and family supporters.

Daily achievements are composites of micro-achievements made by individuals in crews, which provide many opportunities for encouragement and reinforcement. Setting daily goals in the morning through artistic direction and reviewing what was achieved in the evening provides the crew leaders, supervisors and the lead artist feedback and insight into each participant's progress. This feedback becomes increasingly important in structuring group exercises to increase a participant's sense of worth. A teacher's oversight of each participant's decisions is impractical because of the scale of the mural. The conditions for a cohesive and diversely skilled team have to be cultivated so that peer-to-peer teaching supports the overall progress. The model gives youth the space to become increasingly independent as they acquire new skills. The organization of each phase in painting the Great Wall built upon previous knowledge. Youth gain an understanding of materials and processes through the different phases of the production.

Initially, they prepare the site, which requires the movement of logistical equipment, restrooms, sandbagging the river bottom, and washing the wall and grounds. Participants become accustomed to thinking and acting procedurally because each achievement is organized against a systematic painting process. Baca calls this the five-step painting process, which breaks down the procedures of making a Great Wall mural segment into five phases: site preparation, line transfer, blue-line and under-painting, the blocking in of tones, and a final refinement of the whole mural.

Daily meetings support the development of procedural intelligence by providing youth with an awareness of how their individual contribution corresponds to the larger artistic goals. Repetition and demonstrations are two techniques that enable youth to improve their skills while also being aware of how their task contributes to moving the overall project forward. The scale of the mural uniquely contributes to a participants need to repeat a task until it is perfected or corrected. Crew leaders assist in guiding youth through the tasks of each phase of the painting process. According to Baca, “as the skills of the youths became apparent, people were selected to work on various painting techniques—dry brush areas, lettering, detailing, modeling, and finishing” (Bond 1982). If someone has recurring trouble achieving their assignment, supervisors can choose to reassign that participant to a different task. Each phase requires a wide range of skill sets, which provides flexible options for youth who might find a task difficult.

Youth engage in concrete operational thinking, or the ability to see a task through from conceptualization to completion. The physical, logistical, and artistic techniques learned through apprentice modeling and sequencing improves a participants concrete operational thinking skills. Being capable of cognitively modeling the steps required to complete a task is a lifelong skill that is not necessarily tied to a specific vocational ability. Hence, the skills that participants

acquire on the project does not necessarily mean they are being prepared to work in artistic jobs; their training has a range of applications that is pertinent to different fields. The impact of assessing this kind of training on participants, whether it is through employment or daily life, can have important implications on how we measure the success of the participatory experience and sustainability of the creative placemaking initiative.

The Great Wall program provided youth with an immersive environment where they could learn about the historical contributions of marginalized people and then take action to honor those historical events in the mural. Teaching critical history through visual metaphors composed of decolonial concepts encourages youth to engage in dialogical thinking, which is defined as being the ability to shift perspectives and assess a concept or event from opposing points of view by integrating critical insight and distinct knowledge. Decolonial visual metaphors supports the way youth frame their own experiences of violence and institutions. The transformative quality of the Great Wall program lies at the intersection of decolonial thinking, imagination, and physical creation. Games that encourage cohesiveness, theater that further immerses youth in the subject matter, and meeting the people who have lived through the experiences being painted all coalesce through the imaging of dignity. Public dedication events at the completion of each decade recognized the achievements of each youth, which provided admiration to the participants from the local neighborhood, media, and their families (Bond 1982).

The Great Wall program provided revitalizing opportunities for struggling youth. Dialogical thinking through decolonial visual metaphors can influence participants worldview into their adulthood. As Baca has often encountered, so many of the youth remained close friends; they have celebrated milestones together, they have helped each other find jobs, and

mourned together—even decades later. Their responsibilities reaffirmed their sense of belonging while providing them with attainable goals as they contributed to the extension of the mural. Along the way, the artists and administrators imparted valuable skills that served participants throughout their life. Youth became visible to the media, scholars, and artists for their achievements on the Great Wall program. These contributions remain present in everyday interactions, and visible to others who visit the mural in the concrete channel.

Section Five: Analysis of the Aesthetic Outcomes

Conducting a comparative aesthetic analysis of a half-mile mural has unique challenges. A single mural segment can contain a wide variation of compositional elements. One aspect that makes conducting a comparative aesthetic analysis of a mural is the possible variation in style attributed to multiple assistants or artist teams. Various painting strategies, designs, and styles can be contained within one composition. To take this variance into consideration, a mural's aesthetic characteristics has to be understood in terms of smaller units that make up a larger whole. An aesthetic analysis of a mural segment thus represents the information about a specific region, and that region's relationship to the overall design.

Literature on the Great Wall's production describes clear methodological differences between the first segment painted in 1976 and the rest of the mural painted from 1978 to 1983. The first segment is a composite of 14 artistic styles conforming to a consensus, which produced various aesthetic styles. The lead artist's desire to refine the project's outcomes led to methodological experimentation that dramatically improved the later segments' aesthetic qualities. The restructuring of the artistic direction and production sequence that takes place in 1978 addresses an important challenge encountered in Baca's program design. By taking an active role in the program's methodological execution and separating the design and production phases, Baca was able to maintain aesthetic consistency while continuing to create mural teams consisting predominantly of novice participants. The Great Wall's ability to incorporate new participants while also achieving its aesthetic unity is a valuable development of the program's methodologies. To better understand how changes in the Great Wall methodology affected the aesthetic quality of the mural, I will now compare the aesthetic qualities of the Prehistoric segment painted in 1976 with the most recent 1950s segment painted in 1983.

While a desired outcome of mural painting may be the creation of an artwork that matches its design plan, it would be incomplete to solely determine a methodology's success by a team's technical ability to follow a design's blueprints and replicate its coloration. The degree of pre-planning and design refinement that a Great Wall artist team does is unlike other muralist practices. Except for the first segment, a Great Wall decade is fully realized at the design phase before any work is done on-site. This means to accommodate a large population of participants with little or no mural painting experience. The high degree of refinement seen in the Great Wall's designs is uncommon among most muralist practices. But this achievement did not come about immediately. The Great Wall's design-to-painting methodologies have evolved through multiple revisions. The following analysis examines the Prehistoric and 1950s mural segments in terms of their visual properties to better understand the relationship between the methodological changes and aesthetic outcomes.

I have adapted data visualization techniques developed by Lev Manovich at UC San Diego's Software Studies Initiative to conduct the aesthetic comparison of two segments, the Prehistoric to 1900s segment and the 1950s decade. My sample set is composed of a high-resolution composite image of the mural collected in summer of 2011. The photographs are non-distorted panoramic scans of the Great Wall mural. This data was collected using a Phase One scanning back mounted to a Hasselblad medium format body with a 120 mm prime lens to ensure a flat image plane. The composites were generated from images of the mural after the restoration. A comparison of archival images of the mural and the composites shows that there were few modifications made to the original appearance of the Prehistoric segment during the restoration. These modifications are limited to small areas and are not substantial enough to bias an aesthetic comparison between both segments. All composite photographs of the mural were

collected in multiple sessions within a small timeframe to achieve similar lighting conditions. Since a single photograph of the half-mile mural cannot be taken in one frame, the final image has to be composited from hundreds of photographs to create the illusion of a single continuous shot. The images must be taken at different times across a half-mile wall, which also captures changes in the ambient light caused by the changing position of the sun. To isolate changes in the environment, we utilized light meters and extensive color measurements to compensate for inconsistencies. We photographed the mural over the course of several days within a similar period to further reduce light changes due to the position of the sun. The lighting data helped correct for these color anomalies that would have otherwise hindered a comparison across the entire mural.

The aesthetic comparison uses Cultural Analytic techniques developed by Manovich and his team to create scatterplot visualizations (Manovich 2010; Manovich 2012). I generate mathematical descriptions of tiles taken from both mural segments to create visualizations that compare aesthetic qualities, such as the saturation, hue, and edge complexity. I first scaled the Prehistoric and 1950s segments so that they could be easily divided into 100 x 100 pixel squares. This produced 7,504 regions for analysis. The Prehistoric and 1950s segments were sliced into 5520 and 1984 tiles, respectively. The full scale length of the Prehistoric to 1900s segment is approximately 1000 linear feet, while the 1950s segment measures 350 linear feet. Since the Prehistory to 1900s segment is nearly three times longer than the 1950s segment, the scaled and sliced document of the segment results in 3536 more tiles than the 1950s segment. I then generated a mathematical description of each mural tile, composing of the central tendency and variance in the image's brightness, hue, and saturation, and extracted shape, line and pattern information (Manovich 2012). I then created an image plot visualization to two characteristics of

the mural tiles by organizing them on a graph according to their numerical values. I accomplish this by utilizing image.js and the macros, imageplot. This enables patterns to emerge that would have otherwise been invisible to annotative content analysis methodologies.

I created separate visualizations for the Prehistoric and 1950s segments using the same numerical value comparisons. The following image plot graphs compare the aesthetic changes and strategies used by Baca and her artistic team to advance the quality of the half-mile mural.

Prehistoric to 1900s segment, painted 1976.

1950s segment, painted in 1983.

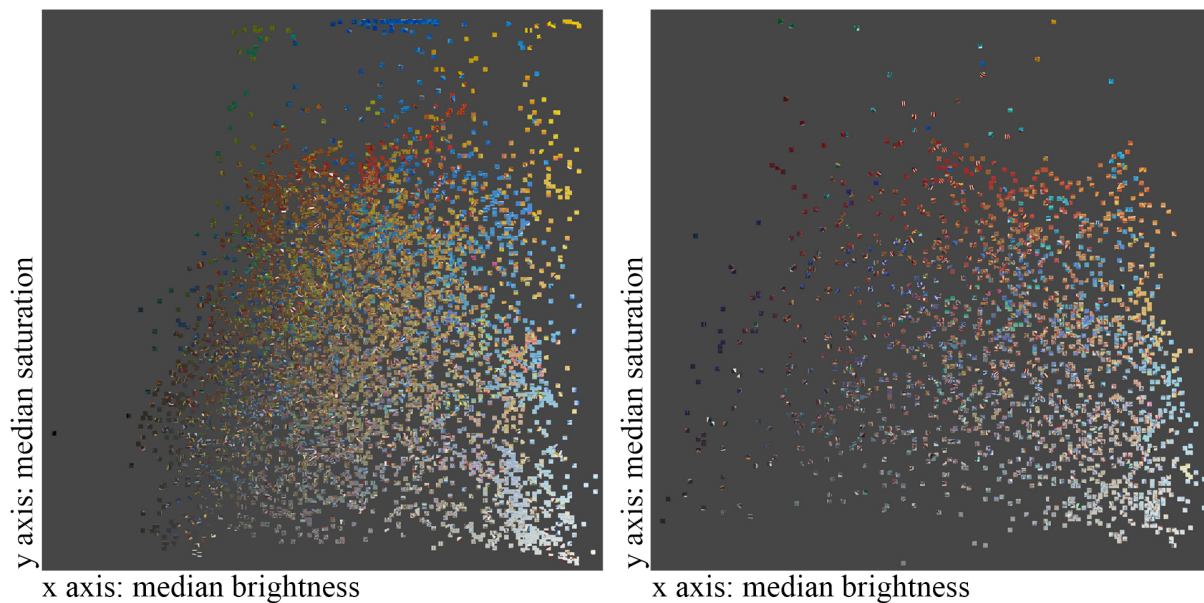


Figure 22: Comparison of median brightness and median saturation; Left: Prehistory to 1900s segment, Right: 1950s segment; x-axis: median brightness, y-axis: median saturation.

The first analysis compares the median brightness to the median saturation of the Prehistoric to 1900s segment and the 1950s segment of the Great Wall mural. By plotting both segment's median saturation and median brightness, patterns of the way the artist teams created and managed the aesthetic qualities of the mural emerge (Figure 22). A total of 14 artists and 90 youth painted the Prehistoric segment. In comparison, 10 artists, and 50 youth painted the 1950s segment. The Prehistoric segment was amalgamation of 14 different artist styles. Since there was

little aesthetic oversight integrating the different artistic styles, we find different techniques and compositional strategies. A comparison of the median brightness and saturation of the Prehistoric segment results in a cluster that concentrates right-of-center. There is more use of darker-toned and less saturated colors in the Prehistoric segment than the 1950s segment, even though the cluster is generally spread across the upper 70% of the median saturation range. There is generally more use of fully saturated, non-mixed colors in the Prehistoric segment than the 1950s segment. The median saturation for the 1950s segment is mostly concentrated on the lower 60% of the range. The 1950s segment is generally brighter than the prehistoric segment. The cluster is slightly more focused on the upper 50% of the range of brightness. There is less use of dark tones and low saturated colors in the 1950s segment than the Prehistoric segment. Tones remain richer in the 1950s segment than the Prehistoric segment, indicating that the management of color mixing has reduced the use of complementary colors. Mixing complementary colors together leads to less saturated, less bright harmonies. The 1950s segment expresses a management of color temperature to establish harmonies, rather than desaturation or tone darkening.

To better understand how the Great Wall team managed color harmonies across a diverse group of painters, I analyzed the Prehistoric and 1950s segment's use of hues and their median saturation (Figure 23). An effective technique of creating depth and vibrancy found in many Chicana/o visual artworks is the use of cool and warm hues. Audiences generally perceive cool tones as being further away than warm tones. When used together, temperature can enhance the perception of depth and volume without compromising the saturation or vibrancy of an image. The comparison of the use of hues and median saturation in the Prehistoric and 1950s segments

finds that in both instances color temperature was closely managed. The Prehistoric segment is highly clustered along warm and cool colors. The majority of the warm color harmonies fall

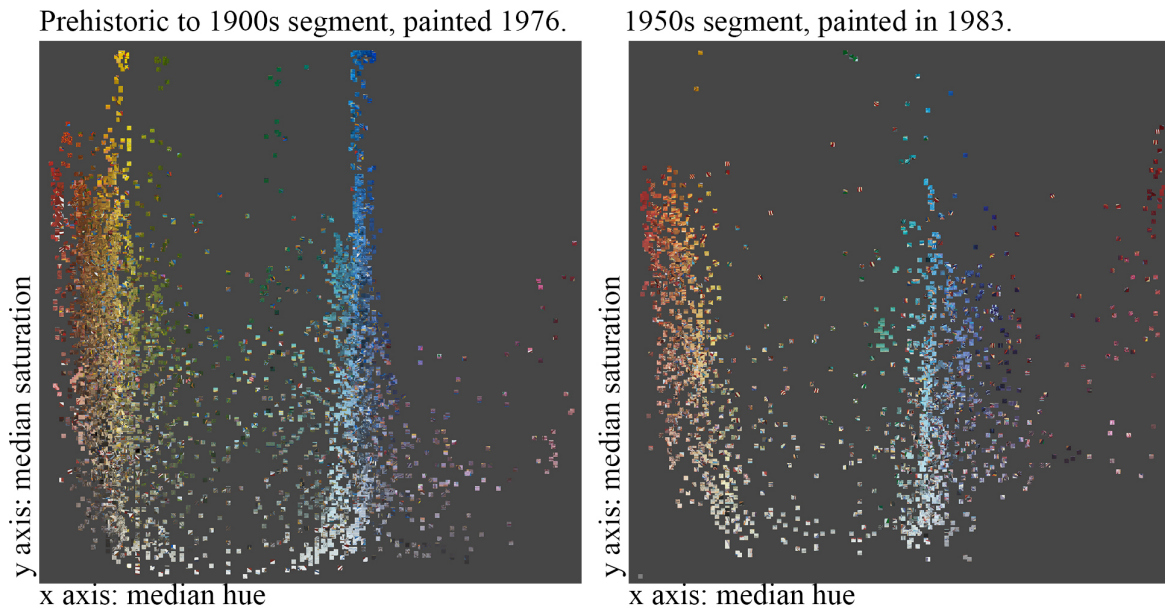


Figure 23: Comparison of color management; Left: Prehistory to 1900s segment, Right: 1950s segment; x-axis: median hue, y-axis: median saturation.

between earthy and yellow hues, whereas the cool harmonies fall within an ultramarine to phthalocyanine blue range. There is a higher concentration of low saturated colors on the warmer spectrum of the Prehistoric segment. There is also little use of greens and nearly no use of violets. In contrast, the 1950s segment begins to form a third cluster of violet to magenta hues. The warm tones are located mostly between an orange and warm yellow range, whereas the cool tones cluster between a light phthalocyanine blue and deep dioxazine purples. The color harmonies in both mural segments are managed by their temperature, which enabled the artists to keep youth from desaturating their palettes. Color harmonies in both the Prehistoric segment than the 1950s segment indicate the use of color temperature to manage the group’s depiction of depth and vibrancy. The ranges of colors not present in the clusters are areas of harmonies that are yet to be aesthetically explored.

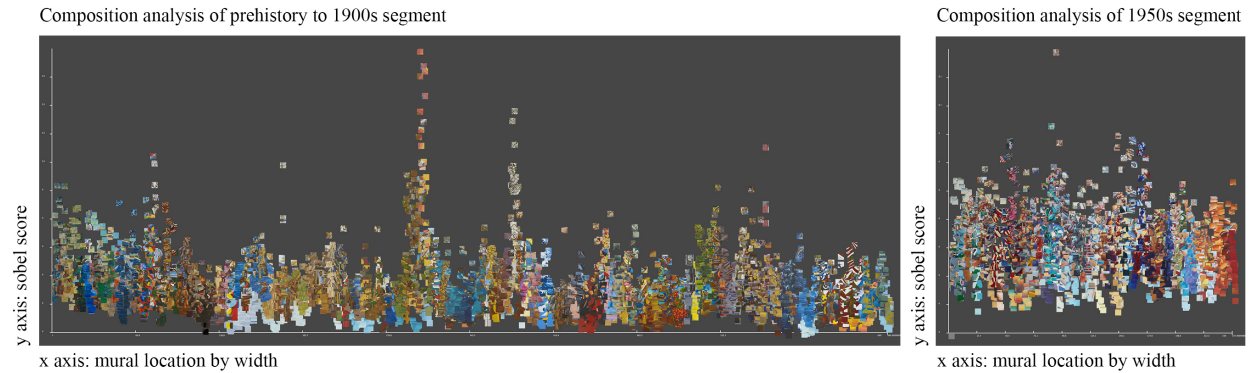


Figure 24: Compositional comparison between 1900s segment and 1950s segment. X-axis: mural location by width; y-axis: sobel score.

The final aesthetic analysis I made between the two segments was a comparison of the artwork's linear complexity and location (Figure 24). I extracted a sobel score by applying a Sobel Filter to detect the interior edges of each tile. The higher the sobel score, the more edges present within the location of a mural segment. Edges are defined as regions where two distinct tones meet. I plotted these tiles along their respected x-axis to find what regions of the mural contained more or less intricate regions. The axes in both visualizations are scaled according to their respected lengths. The visualization depicts regions of high and low complexity in both mural segments. As expected, both murals reflect a varying degree of edge complexity, with the Prehistoric segment reflecting more stylistic variance than the 1950s segment. By taking the minimum and maximum sobel values of every horizontal location in both segments, and visualizing them as a band charts, we can see where the fluctuations in the compositional complexity happen. In the Prehistoric segment, for example, these spikes and dips can be compared to the different regions designed by each of the 14 artists (Figure 25). The fluctuation of the complexity of each region coincides with the distinct aesthetic qualities of each artist's style. The 1950s segment, in contrast, expresses a far more consistent use of edge complexity.

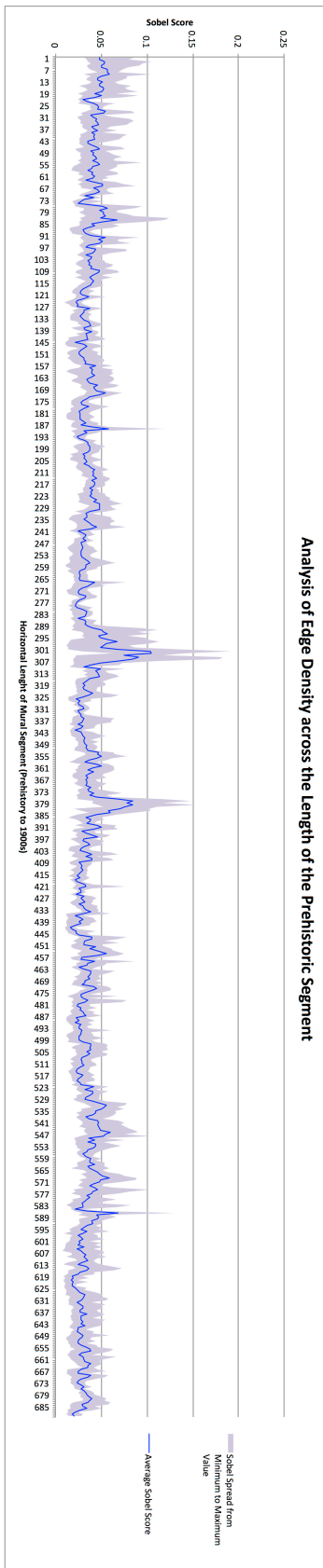


Figure 25: Analysis of the Edge Density across the Length of the Prehistoric Segment

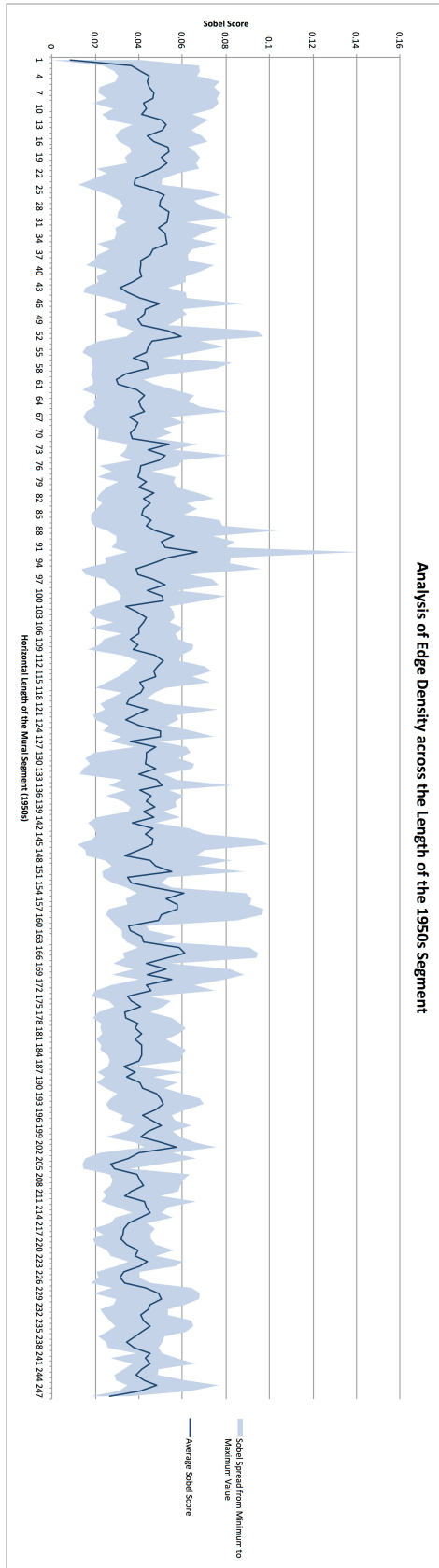


Figure 26: Analysis of Edge Density across the Length of the 1950s Segment

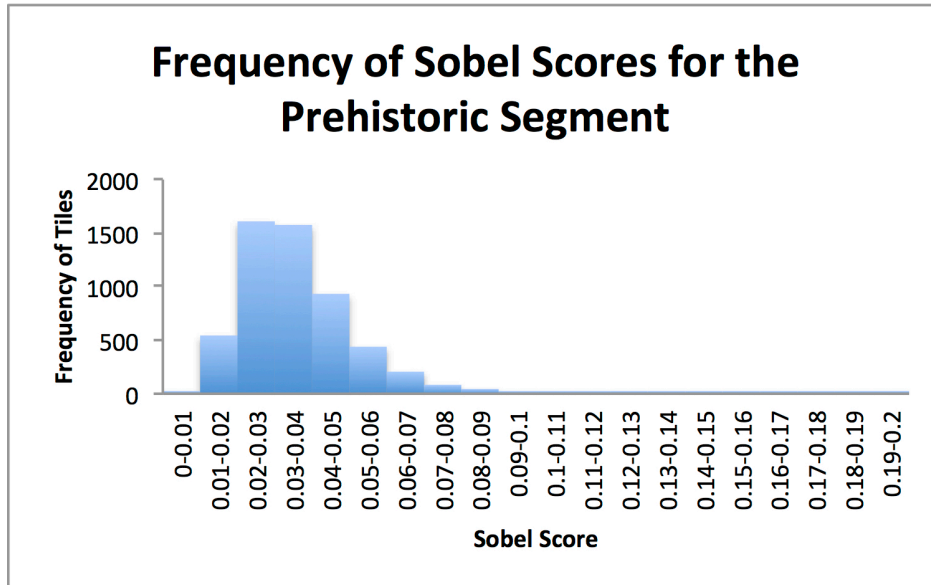


Figure 27: Frequency of Sobel Scores for the Prehistoric Segment (Total tiles sampled: 5520)

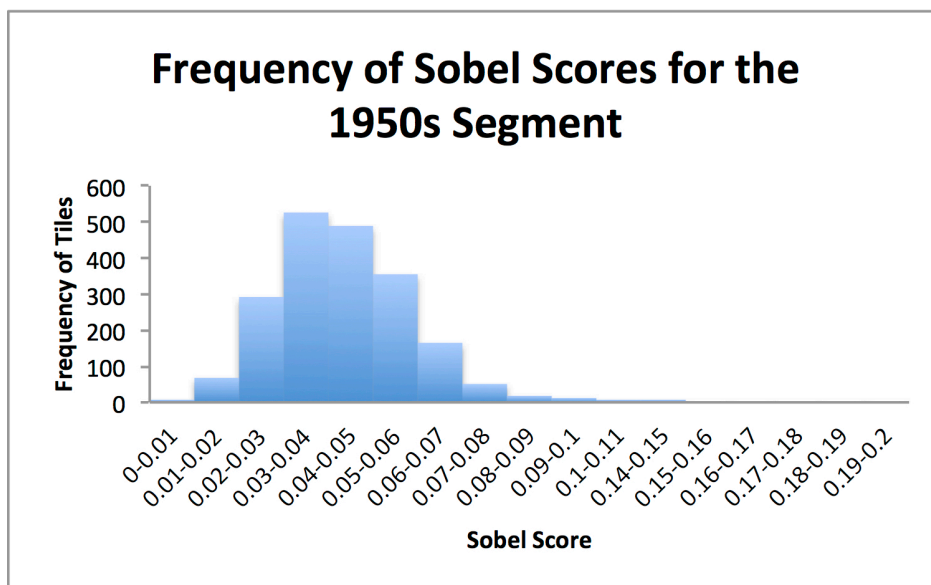


Figure 28: Frequency of Sobel Scores for the 1950s Segment (Total tiles sampled: 1984)

An analysis of the data's frequency finds that over 57% of the Prehistoric segment's edge complexity lies between a sobel score of 0.02-0.04 (Figure 25), whereas in the 1950s segment, 51% of the edge complexity lies between 0.03-0.05 (Figure 26). The overall edge complexity of the 1950s segment is generally higher than the Prehistoric segment, despite the difference in the mural segments' lengths. The higher edge complexity in the 1950s segment indicates the use of color modulation to depict geometric planes. These color modulations depict shadows and

highlights over large color fields. The lower sobel scores in the Prehistoric segment, in comparison, indicates more use of un-modulated flat color fields, which also varies by each of the 14 different stylistic regions. The frequency of tiles that have a score between 0.01-0.03, which accounts for 39% of the Prehistoric segment's total sobel score, outnumber the total amount of tiles analyzed in the 1950s segment. This difference accounts for the apparent simplicity in the

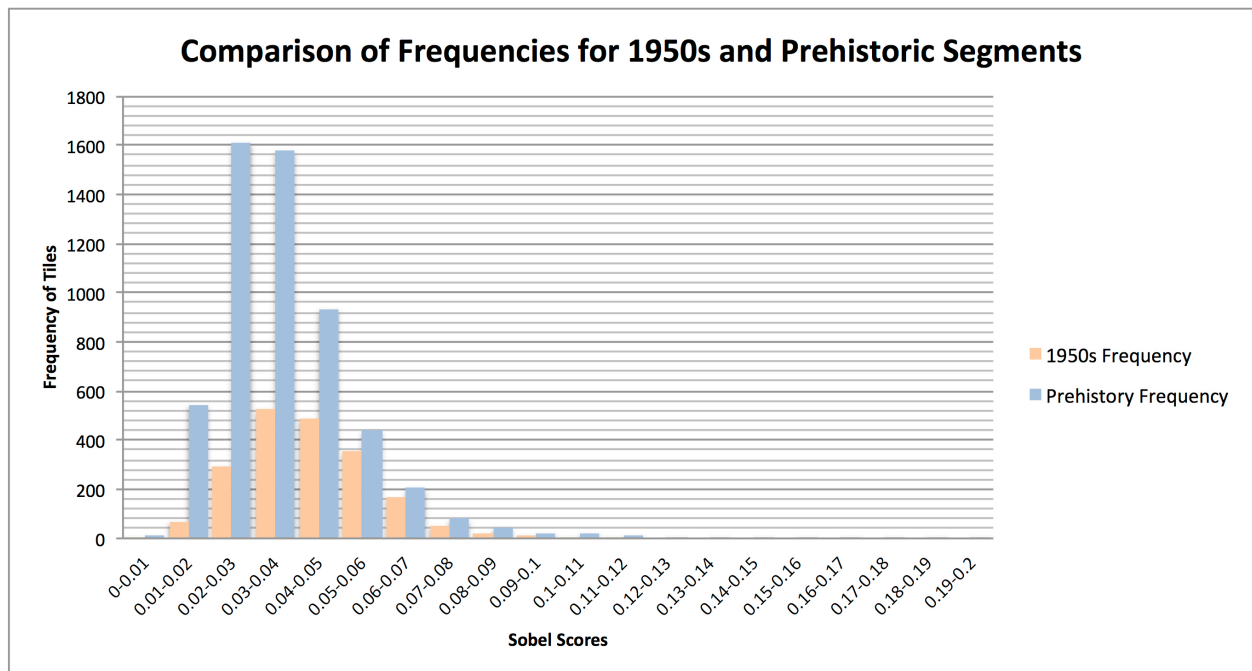


Figure 29: Comparison of Frequencies for the 1950s and Prehistoric Segments

Prehistoric segment's aesthetics. Despite the more simplistic aesthetic approach, it also contains a larger amount of tiles with higher sobel scores. A cross comparison of tiles scoring a sobel value higher than 0.06 finds that the Prehistoric segment has almost twice as many complex tiles than the 1950s segment, even though the 1950s segment's complexity comprises of 12.5% of its total frequency, versus the Prehistoric segment's 7% frequency (Figure 27). The complexity comes down to being relative to the overall area of the segment. While we may see more regions

with higher sobel scores in the Prehistoric segment, it generally has less edge complexity than the 1950s segment.

The vertical cluster in the 1950s segment is generally more cohesive than the Prehistoric segment, which is likely due to the shift in the artistic director's compositional and aesthetic oversight after the 1976 production. There is also a normalization of complexity in the 1950s segment (Figure 26). Very few regions render details below a sobel score of 0.02 or higher than a sobel score of 0.06. This is a visual strategy that takes into account the 80 foot distance from which audiences view the mural. Certain details past a certain density become invisible across long distances. Designing without high density details becomes a strategy for avoiding time consuming painting that can delay the mural's progress. Compositional elements, like skies or planar surfaces, are modulated in tone to maintain a sense of depth. The 1950s segment presents a compositionally more consistent and sophisticated use of edges to depict the subject matter. By analyzing the compositional complexity of the two segments, we can see how the use of edges has changed over the course of the project. The aesthetic advancements are tied to the more central role taken by the artistic director in designing the final mural composition.

This section has described the cultural analytics technique used to visualize changes in the Great Wall mural's aesthetics. Comparing the two mural segments in terms of their visual properties produces patterns that reveal the aesthetic strategies used to create a cohesive mural. The aesthetic methodologies that govern the artistic consistency throughout the 1/2-mile mural can be analyzed by making cross comparisons between the mural's physical characteristics. Baca's artistic direction is only as effective as her ability to disseminate artistic decisions to her teams of mural-makers who are predominantly of non-artistic backgrounds. This aesthetic analysis demonstrates that the decisions to manage the quality of the work improved the artistic

outcomes of the mural without limiting the youth's painterly contributions. The aesthetic achievements found on the mural have an intrinsic relationship to how Baca responded to her team's needs and artistic goals. The reproducibility of the program and its aesthetic improvement are indicators of the methodology's success. By drawing a comparison between the design and production phase, and the aesthetic outcomes of the mural, we can better understand how the methodology accomplished its artistic goals.

Conclusions: Decolonial Arts Pedagogy and Social Justice Art

Decoloniality provides an important framework for understanding the methodologies of The Great Wall of Los Angeles. This study has analyzed the development of the Great Wall's methodology from its design and production phases, to its aesthetic outcomes. I have presented a model for how the artists determined the Great Wall's subject matter, and how it influenced their work with youth. This thesis has described the extensive work the artists did to address the experiences of vulnerable communities, while also restoring dignity to their struggles by means of artistic expression. I describe how visual metaphors become the medium for transferring these critical stories into a cohesive narrative mural. This analysis also reveals how previous art historical and popular cultural reviews of the artwork have missed its transformative elements.

Visual metaphors bridge the pedagogical processes with the content and aesthetic outcomes of each mural segment. The concepts depicted in the visual metaphors provide inspiration for developing arts pedagogy for incorporation into a wide range of activities, and events. Decoloniality and the overarching metaphor of land and memory underpin all arts activities and program goals. Decoloniality, thus is both achieved through an aesthetic representation of alternative and embodied knowledge, and as action in the transformation of its participants' lives and spatial surroundings.

My analysis of the Great Wall methodologies informs the development of the mural's subject matter by applying a decolonial framework. Through decolonial design and action, the concepts developed by the artist and her institution create an environment that incorporates art, critical pedagogy, and social justice. The Great Wall, thus should not only be considered for its aesthetic achievements or as a participatory arts model, but for the ability to address the criminalization of youth and marginalization of ethnic communities. The program produced an

effective model for catalyzing changes to the perceptions of “at-risk” youth by recovering an alternative self-empowering narrative. At the same time, Rangel acknowledges that an artist’s commitment to working with youth often overshadows the fact that, “such work would have been much more difficult, if not impossible, had the youth not deemed it viable or interesting” (Rangel 1998). Youth gained decolonial concepts through visual metaphors, and physical abilities through the management of the mural production, which together supported the re-evaluation of their own life experiences and possible futures; through this process, they also achieved a new sense of social and cultural wealth. This approach creates a culturally responsive pedagogy that improves youth experiences of education through formal and informal means.

Social justice literature on arts educational pedagogy often cites the need to overturn deficit models that negatively frame the context from which youth of color learn, theorize, and act. What is generally overlooked is how the arts can reframe its own preconceptions of the role of the artist, so that the social and cultural capital already in existence within marginalized communities is not undermined by an artistic imposition, but rather serves as the central catalyst for imagining and creativity. The Great Wall methodology bridges of critical concepts with pedagogical and aesthetic goals, a combination that many artists find challenging. This framework provides a means of critical reflection and consideration from outside the knowledge of the artist. It is driven by the community’s needs, and reinvigorated through the artistic accomplishments and cultivated by the making of a creative environment. This method expands upon what an artwork will do for a community. An artist or institution must be ready to advocate for those needs through partnerships with other organizations, or the acquisition of additional resources.

The Great Wall methodologies operate from a paradigm that recognizes youth and marginalized communities as continually theorizing their experiences, and that these are important sites for situating transformative art making. Transformations that are both internal and extrinsic to the process of design are recognized by decolonial theory as the uplifting of embodied knowledge to challenge and change formal institutional structures. A social justice outcome of the Great Wall program was the ability to alter the perceptions of youth held by regional institutions and the general public. When institutions stop acting upon youth and communities through deficit models, and instead validate their contributions, the contributors become visible for their making of a more just and humane future.

Future scholars of the Chicana/o Arts movement need to interpret the activist and social justice outcomes of cultural development projects like The Great Wall of Los Angeles, Chicano Park in Barrio Logan of San Diego, and MaestraPeace on the Woman's Building in San Francisco, through a framework of decolonial theory. They must also take into account the constitutive role participants in those projects had in shaping the activist methodologies and the overall aesthetic characteristics of Chicana/o culture. My analysis of visual metaphors in The Great Wall of Los Angeles has wider implications for future studies of Chicana/o art. Analyzing the use of visual metaphors by Chicana/o artists can improve our understanding of how their cultural production interfaces with activism, decolonial subjects, and lived experiences.

My aesthetic analysis reveals that even though the Great Wall project engaged hundreds of participants with varying art making abilities, the artistic direction retained influence over the mural's aesthetics, leading to an evolution of color management and specialized mural techniques. I describe how the painting techniques and management strategies employed in the design and painting of the Great Wall developed specifically to accommodate the abilities of its

participants. The management of color harmonies and compositions found in the analysis have implications for visual arts mediums, such as street art, aerosol and graffiti muralist practices, that might incorporate participatory engagement in its art-making.

Using decoloniality to frame the subject matter of an artwork makes important contributions to visual arts practices that situate its aesthetic outcomes in public spaces. Street art, and aerosol art should consider an integration of decoloniality in both subject matter and practice. Aerosol and street art employ relatively effective methods for marking and reclaiming space. Decoloniality can advance the reclaiming of space towards the support of a community's social justice goals by any means of aesthetic expression available.

The original mural production elevated the embodied knowledge of immigrant and marginalized communities. The diverse immigrant populations in Los Angeles bring with them contemporary experiences of coloniality and modernism. These populations have experienced vast structural changes to the organization of power since the program began. Their stigmatization continues in xenophobic policies that criminalize their vulnerabilities and anti-immigrant organizations that target them, often times with violence. As the presence of diverse knowledge grows, coalescing it becomes ever more important for furthering the project of decoloniality to envision radical new ways of coexisting. Their presence makes Los Angeles an important space for visualizing and engaging alternative epistemologies that challenge the structural and social inequalities that disproportionately affect vulnerable communities. Should there be a continuation of the program, decoloniality can provide a framework for evaluating these changes and proposing new designs.

The engagement with youth across many decades is not necessarily a desired outcome for most social practice artists. Current social and public art practice programs fail to address the

realities of a social justice artwork. Today, many claims are made for social justice art, but little analysis is carried out toward the understanding of works that achieve this goal. Art history must revise its methods to examine the process and intentionality of an artist if it is to compliment the training of new generations of artists. It must attempt to model the process of a public artwork to assess the social justice outcomes of an artwork. While social practice programs are facilitating the conversation on arts engagement methodologies and theories, issues around the artist's intentions, and their full investment in a community must be critically addressed.

Resurging interest in artistic discourses that are concerned with community wellbeing have contributed to recent scholarship that explores the value of public art. Private foundations and federal granting programs have invested in research that explores the development of a creative community. While this research has yielded a diverse array of metrics for analysis and interpreting project outcomes, resources that assist the circulation and advancement of artistic methodologies have trailed behind. Efforts to correct this imbalance are being led at newly established public practice programs in US colleges and universities.

The recent trend in funding creative placemaking projects tend to favor the seemingly novel. Revitalization is not comprehensive without the support of local social justice initiatives. Similarly, environmental initiatives, such as the current multi-million dollar Los Angeles River Revitalization program led by the City of Los Angeles (City of Los Angeles 2015), need to incorporate the experiences and knowledge of local communities of color, who continue to be disproportionately affected by ecological injustices. Thinking about environmental reforms that comes from an ecology of place that is inclusive of the memory and capacities of communities of color must be advanced at both institutional and policy levels. Both environmental and creative placemaking initiatives can have extraordinary effects on the everyday lives of marginalized

communities. These initiatives need to support the process of obtaining social justice through the acquisition of spaces for enacting and improving struggle.

Proposals to extend the Great Wall decades have ample space to explore new aesthetic and conceptual possibilities. Examining contemporary decolonial subjectivities through the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s decades will yield powerful metaphors about the challenges and successes achieved by marginalized people and communities of color. Youth of color remain vulnerable to criminalization and violence. Spaces where youth can address conflict and participate in an interrogation of identity remain scarce. Initiating a new program that involves youth continues to be highly relevant for vulnerable populations. Artists on the Great Wall originally experienced a wide range of limitations imposed upon them by the site's environmental factors. New technological methods stand to facilitate logistical challenges, while also improving research capacities, documentation, and the creation of new arts pedagogy. Aesthetically, there are few uses of green, aqua, and violet color harmonies. These can be further explored to enhance the appearance of future visual metaphors. The rhythm of compositional density, as seen in previous segments, should also be closely considered in future designs. Future designers can benefit from digital tools to explore new color harmonies and compositional studies. Future iterations of the Great Wall program should attempt to institutionalize its methodologies so that the work can continue to serve Los Angeles youth for many more generations. Revisiting the Great Wall project as an institute can provide artists of diverse backgrounds opportunities for improving their public practice capacities by being part of demographically diverse ensembles.

Artistic projects initiated by long-standing and experienced organizations that have advanced over time, despite inconsistent funding, appear extraneous through current

placemaking rubrics. Evaluative measures need a decolonial framework to better assess the intentionality and potential outcomes of social justice art initiatives. The methodologies of early community cultural development programs produced during pro-artist climates remain to be examined by artist practitioners and scholars. If funding sources drive the creation of new programs without reexamining previous success, artists may face difficulties when refining their methodologies. Reflecting upon past project outcomes, including those made by other practitioners, can improve their ability to advocate for resources that will better serve the cultural needs of marginalized communities.

While this analysis does not assess the funding strategies of the Great Wall program, what does become apparent is the growth in resources and services provided by foundations and organizations in later years. These supporters become stakeholders in the project's pedagogical outcomes. The Great Wall is rarely described as a multi-year program, which is perhaps due to the uncertainties faced by administrators at financing each segment. A lack of multi-year funding suggests that arts and social service foundations overlooked the Great Wall program's model for serving youth and marginalized communities in a sustainable way. Certainly, arts or social justice foundations should have considered a multi-year funding strategy given the program's performance outcomes. Not investing in the program as a multi-year initiative to stabilize its funding was a missed opportunity by arts foundations. Revisiting the Great Wall program through a multi-year lens would support the development of new methodologies and program enhancements.

The Great Wall of Los Angeles incorporates an immersive methodology of community engagement that developed to better serve a public's creative and cultural needs. While novel methodologies does not always suggest successful, in order to develop an understanding of

community transformation, an art initiative must endure; community-driven artistic initiatives require investment in observation and engagement, as well as experimentation and a carry-over of knowledge—the elements that supports the advancement of a methodology.

The power of visualizing decoloniality lies in the mural team's engrossed imagination and creativity. Imagination can de-link from the overwhelming experience of oppression so that new possibilities can appear. Decolonial imagination can provide a direction for overturning oppression, when oppression is so overbearing that it distorts reality beyond the point to which justice and freedom seem remote and any chances of obtaining it disappear from daily life.

Communities can reclaim space to enact social justice by using murals to assert their cultural and social citizenship. The Great Wall program demonstrates that creativity and imagination, when materialized through arts practices, can become powerful tools for achieving social justice and reclaiming space. Creating secure spaces for vulnerable youth populations to experience attainment and enjoy their childhood is perhaps one of the most powerful outcomes of the mural process. The accomplishments experienced by the youth became a lifelong method of mitigating the trauma of being targeted by social institutions. The Great Wall program provides artists with a functional model for mitigating the resentment and anger felt by marginalized youth, and to transform it into the motivation for achieving empowerment.

Decolonial arts pedagogy provides a framework for producing social justice artwork. Reconsidering metaphors as being a central feature of dialogical thinking through art making has implications for public practice artists and art educators. Immersion in a creative environment, as participants in the Great Wall experienced, are rarely cultivated in today's creative placemaking initiatives. A strong emphasis on economic development has overwhelmed the expected outcomes of social justice public artworks. Placing a parenthetical limit on the economic

outcomes of creative placemaking and community development, and a refocusing on cultivating the creativity of communities, can support their transformative goals in the long term and achieve a sustainable pursuit of social justice.

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