

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

CHICANO PARK

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Chicano Park

Other Name/Site Number: Chicano Park Monumental Murals

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: Vicinity of National Avenue, Logan Avenue, and Dewey Street

Not for publication:

City/Town: Barrio Logan City of San Diego

Vicinity:

State: California

County: San Diego

Code: 067

Zip Code: 92113

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private:
Public-Local:
Public-State: X
Public-Federal:

Category of Property

Building(s): X
District: X
Site: X
Structure: X
Object: X

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

Buildings	
Sites	1
Structures	2
Objects	49
Total	52

Noncontributing

Buildings	1
Sites	4
Structures	3
Objects	25
Total	33

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 52

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

Designated a National Historic Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior December 23, 2016.

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

<p>Historic:</p> <p>Recreation and Culture</p> <p>Landscape</p> <p>Transportation</p>	<p>Sub:</p> <p>Outdoor Recreation</p> <p>Work of Art</p> <p>Plaza</p> <p>Park</p> <p>Garden</p> <p>Road—Related (vehicular)</p>
<p>Current:</p> <p>Recreation and Culture</p> <p>Landscape</p>	<p>Sub:</p> <p>Outdoor Recreation</p> <p>Work of Art</p> <p>Plaza</p> <p>Park</p> <p>Garden</p>

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Chicana/o Urbanism and Mesoamerican Revival

MATERIALS:

Foundation:	Concrete
Walls:	
Roof:	Concrete
Other:	Metal

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.**Summary**

Chicano Park, located in the neighborhood of Barrio Logan in the City of San Diego, California, is nationally significant not only for the park's association with the Chicano Civil Rights Movement but, also, as one of the most widely known sites of public art devoted to the story of Chicana/os and American Latina/os in the United States. During the height of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement, the land that became Chicano Park was the site of a community demonstration to prevent the construction of a California Highway Patrol substation on the property where the City of San Diego had promised the residents of Barrio Logan a community park. Through a twelve-day occupation of the property, Barrio Logan residents and Chicana/o students, in a struggle to improve the social and environmental conditions of their neighborhood, founded Chicano Park on April 22, 1970—coincidentally the first National Earth Day. The 7.4-acre urban park is located underneath the Coronado Bay Bridge's (CA-75) approach ramps to the Interstate-Five Freeway. As an urban park, Chicano Park is not only a recreational space for public sport and leisure activities but, also, it serves as an outdoor museum and cultural center, as the pillars, which hold up the Coronado Bay Bridge's approach ramps to the Interstate-Five Freeway, serve as cement canvases where master mural artists have been actively painting since 1973. Given the park's social history and its assemblage of public artwork, Chicano Park's Monumental Murals are a significant and unique example of public Chicana/o master mural artwork in the United States.

Describe Physical and Historic Appearance

The park was founded on April 22, 1970 after residents of Barrio Logan participated in a "takeover" of land that was being prepared for a California Highway Patrol substation. Such a substation in Barrio Logan would have increased police surveillance in an already highly militarized area, as the Thirty-Second-Street U.S. Naval Military Base is located directly south of Barrio Logan. The area is the first neighborhood both south of downtown San Diego and east of the San Diego Bay. To the east of Barrio Logan is the community of Logan Heights. However, the Interstate-Five Freeway's infrastructure has reduced mobility between both communities. If it were not for Interstate-Five Freeway bisecting the communities, Barrio Logan would remain an unobstructed section of Logan Heights. Southeast of Barrio Logan and Logan Heights is the neighborhood of Shelltown that shares the 92113 zip code with the aforementioned neighborhoods. All three neighborhoods constitute the historic Mexican-American San Diego Barrios, and according to the 2010 U.S. Census continue to be numerically Latina/o dominant with 68.8% of the population being of Mexican descent.

Chicano Park is a 7.4-acre park located within an assemblage of murals painted on the support pillars of five approach bridges from the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge to the Interstate-Five Freeway. Around the pillars are statues, gardens, performance spaces, and recreational areas bounded by the approach bridge structures and nearby street and highway infrastructure. The Interstate-Five Freeway bounds the park's main section to the east and National Avenue to the west. The Interstate-Five Freeway serves as the eastern border of the park, with a lawn that extends approximately 90 feet to the west and is then intersected by Logan Avenue. This section of the park houses the multi-use sports courts, a pedestrian freeway overpass bridge, the Logan Heights Veterans Memorial monument, and Chicano Park's Cactus Garden. The Logan Avenue southbound freeway on-ramp to Interstate-Five intersects this area. The park continues across Logan Avenue, and stretches west to National Avenue. On the northwestern side of the park, National Avenue intersects a small panhandle section of the park, which extends west towards a California Department of Transportation supply yard and is flanked to the south by Dewey Street.¹ This section of the park is known as *La Placita*, it is a concrete area that contains a fountain and a small skate-park. The on-ramp from Logan Avenue to the Coronado Bay Bridge creates the northern

¹ Rosen, Martin D., and James Fisher. "Chicano Park and the Chicano Park Murals: Barrio Logan, City of San Diego, California." *The Public Historian* 23, no. 4 (Fall 2001): 91-112.

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boundary of the park. The southern boundary is created by the Coronado Bay Bridge's off-ramp to National Avenue.

Since the founding of Chicano Park, the Chicano community of San Diego has utilized the park as a place for cultural and political events. The central focus of the park's cultural and political events is a performance pavilion known as the *Kiosko*, which resembles a pre-Colombian Mesoamerican temple. Among the park's facilities are children's playgrounds, restrooms, the aforementioned *Kiosko* performance pavilion, picnic areas, multi-purpose sports courts, open lawns, a raised plaza, community tended rose and cactus gardens, sculptures, a fountain, and two small parking areas accessed from Logan Avenue and National Avenue. The Coronado Bay Bridge's approach ramps to the Interstate-Five Freeway tower over the park creating a concrete canopy that provides shaded areas in the park. The vehicles using the freeway and the bridge approach ramps created an array of disorienting noises that compete with the sounds generated by the cultural activities at Chicano Park. The hawking of seagulls and collective flapping of pigeon wings also contribute to the park's "soundscape" causing a multitude of competing and overlapping sounds that have found a permanent place at Chicano Park.

Chicano Park Monumental Murals

The Chicano Park Monumental Murals consist of an assemblage of multiple vibrantly colored paintings on concrete "T and Y-shaped" pillars and two abutments—flanking Logan Avenue near Interstate-Five—that support the San Diego-end of the San Diego Coronado Bay Bridge. Forty-nine of these murals are painted on twenty-four pillars, abutments, and ramps and one sculpture was constructed during the height of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement. The foundational period of Chicana/o muralism was "dynamically interrelated with the movement for civil and labor rights and social justice."² For that reason, many of the formative murals at Chicano Park display themes of Latin American revolutionary heroes and Mexican and Mexican-American cultural life. The Chicano Park murals and their iconography depict images of Mexican pre-Columbian gods, myths and legendary icons, botanical elements, animal imagery, the Mexican colonial experience, revolutionary struggles, cultural and spiritual reaffirmation through the arts, Chicano achievements, identity and bicultural duality as symbolized in the search for the "indigenous self," Mexican and Chicano cultural heroes and heroines such as La Adelita, Cesar Chavez, Father Miguel Hidalgo, Che Guevara, Pancho Villa, Emiliano Zapata, and scenes based on contemporary Chicano Civil Rights history. Master Mural artist, Victor Ochoa explains, "Chicana/o muralists had the responsibility to appropriately portray Chicana/o history in their art work" due to the important pedagogical role early Chicana/o murals played in barrio communities; "often they were the only thing in the neighborhoods that expressed Chicana/o history and identity." Newer murals by master Chicana/o and non-Chicana/o master mural artists have been painted on the pillars of the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge, yet major Chicana/o artists from California and from around the United States painted the bulk of the murals between 1973 and 1989. Therefore, the period of significance is from 1970-1989.

The Barrio Logan community has a strong associative attachment and commitment to preserve the Chicano Park Monumental Murals. Unlike the creation of the majority of the murals in the 1970s, those painted between 1989 and the first decade of the twenty-first century were completed under a set criterion of need, ability, subject matter, and the availability of funding. By early 1984, a group of artists led by Salvador Torres, Gloria Torres and Mario Torero and members of the Chicano Park Arts Committee began the work of touching up the murals. Due to the fact that the life of a mural is about ten years, maintenance is important. In 1991, the California Department of Transportation trained numerous artists in repair techniques. Torres expressed a desire to use natural clay unearthed in the park to make tiles that, along with sculpture, would enhance the beauty of the park.³ In 2002, the California Department of Transportation sought and obtained Intermodal Surface

² Zamudio-Taylor, Victor. "Inventing Tradition, Negotiating Modernism." In *The Road to Aztlán: Art from a Mythic Homeland*, edited by Virginia M. Fields and Victor Zamudio-Taylor, 342-57. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2001.

³ *San Diego Tribune*, March 28, 1984; Salvador Torres and Gloria Torres, interviewed by Dr. Jim Fisher February 29, 1996.

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Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 funding to restore the identified historic murals in Chicano Park. Chicano Park and the Chicano Park Monumental Murals were eligible for ISTEA funding due to the role the park and its murals play in beautifying the highway infrastructure and its surrounding landscape. The funding provided a total of \$1,613,000 to restore 18 selected historic murals painted during the Chicano Park mural making phases one (1973-1974), two (1974-1975), and three (1977-1980). Known as the 2012 Chicano Park Mural Restoration Project, Chicano Park mural artists and California Department of Transportation engineers collaborated to develop advanced technological approaches to restore the Chicano Park Monumental Murals. The greatest challenge the engineers and artists faced was developing a restoration approach that simultaneously protected the longevity of both the freeway infrastructure and the murals. Their collaborative work resulted in the creation of the "Chicano Park Mural Restoration Technical Manual," which provides detailed instructions, guidelines, and the proper techniques for restoring the Chicano Park Monumental Murals. Due to the diligence and collaborative approach of the artists and engineers, the 18 restored murals are expected to maintain their vibrancy for more than 80 years. This is remarkable, as the environmental conditions in Barrio Logan, such as vehicular air pollution, airborne salinity from the San Diego Bay, and seabird excrement, are detrimental to the life span of the Chicano Park Monumental Murals. The guidelines for mural restoration, as stipulated in the "Chicano Park Mural Restoration Technical Manual," are being applied to all mural projects painted after 2012 at Chicano Park, and there are plans, when funding becomes available, to restore all murals under the "Chicano Park Mural Restoration Technical Manual" guidelines. This will ensure that future generations will enjoy the scenic and historic integrity of the Chicano Park Monumental Murals for years to come.

Contributing and Noncontributing Elements

The bridge and freeway infrastructure, consisting of the support pillars of the Coronado Bay Bridge and the abutments flanking the Interstate 5 Freeway, are considered contributing structures only in as much as they are the canvases for the murals described in this nomination. The portion of the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge south of Newton Avenue is outside of the nominated area.

The overall Chicano Park is a contributing site distinguished by its assemblage of sculptures and monumental murals painted by master muralists on the pillars, abutments, and ramps of the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge. Fifty murals (objects), one "Kiosko" (structure) and one statue (structure) are considered contributing. The property includes four noncontributing sites within the overall boundary (picnic areas, multipurpose court, children's playgrounds, and a cactus garden); one noncontributing building (restroom); and three noncontributing objects (a fountain, a memorial monument, and a bronze sculpture of Emiliano Zapata). The following list describes each contributing and noncontributing element of Chicano Park, specifying property name, artist name (in the case of murals and sculptures), year of creation, year of restoration (if applicable), and its status as a contributing or noncontributing resource. The identifying numbers for the five bridge approach structures are listed below. The murals and objects beneath each bridge (both those on bridge support pillars and free-standing structures or nearby objects) are grouped numerically after the bridge name.

- Westbound Approach Ramp (Bridge #57 -939H)- resources 1-8
- Northwest Connector Overcrossing (Bridge # 57-912G)- resources 9-30
- Logan Avenue Undercrossing (Bridge #57-847G)- resources 31-51
- Southwest Connector Overcrossing (Bridge #57 -846G)- resources 52-64
- Dewey Street Pedestrian Overcrossing (Bridge # 57-856)- resources 65-77

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Westbound Approach Ramp (Bridge #57 -939H)- resources 1-8

1. Object (Mural)
Name: *Revolución Mexicana*
Artist: Victor Ochoa
Year: 1981 Restored: 2012 by Victor Ochoa & team
Contributing
*Note: This mural continues on both sides of the pillar.
2. Object (Mural)
Name: *Jose Gomez Mural*
Artist: Tony de Vargas, Mario Torero & Team
Year: 1986
Contributing
3. Object (Mural)
Name: *Mi Raza Primero*
Artist: Mario Torero & Team
Year: 1993
Noncontributing
4. Object (Mural)
Name: *The Bridge People*
Artist: Victor Ochoa & Lowell School
Year: 1978 & 1983
Contributing
5. Object (Mural)
Name: *Nacimiento Del Parque Chicano*
Artist: Dolores Serrano
Year: 1978
Contributing
6. Object (Mural)
Name: **O.G. Mural**
Artist: Octavio Gonzalez
Year: 1978
Contributing
7. Object (Mural)
Name: *Chicanas/Escuelas*
Artist: Yolanda Lopez & Mujeres Muralistas
Year: 1978
Contributing
8. Object (Mural)
Name: **Izcalli Mural**
Artist: Victor Ochoa & Izcalli
Year: 1996
Noncontributing

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Northwest Connector Overcrossing (Bridge # 57 -912G)- resources 9-30

9. Object (Mural)
Name: *Save Barrio Logan*
Artist: Mario Torero & Fuerza
Year: 1996
Noncontributing
10. Object (Mural)
Name: *La Adelita*
Artist: Felipe Adame
Year: 1976, restored: 2011 by Felipe Adame & Guillermo Rosette
Contributing
11. Object (Mural)
Name: *Chicano Park Takeover*
Artist: Guillermo Rosette, Felipe Adame, and Octavio Gonzalez
Year: 1976, restored: 2011 by Guillermo Rosette & Linda Velarde
Contributing
12. Object (Mural)
Name: *Mexican Artists-"Los Grandes"*
Artist: Rupert Garcia, Victor Ochoa & Barrio Renovation Team
Year: 1978, restored 2011
Contributing
13. Object (Mural)
Name: *Chicano Pinto Union*
Artist: Tony de Vargas
Year: 1978
Contributing
14. Object (Mural)
Name: *Coatlicue*
Artist: Susan Yamagata & Michael Schnorr
Year: 1978
Contributing
15. Object (Mural)
Name: *Virgen de Guadalupe*
Artist: Mario Torero & The Lomas Youth Crew
Year: 1978
Contributing
16. Object (Mural)
Name: *Death of a Farm Worker*
Artist: Susan Yamagata & Michael Schnorr
Year: 1979
Contributing

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17. Object (Mural)
Name: *¡Varrío Sí- Yonkes No!*
Artist: Raul Jose Jaquez & Team
Year: 1977
Contributing
18. Object (Mural)
Name: *San Diego Lowrider Council Mural*
Artist: Victor Cordero, Jari Alvarez and Isaias Crow
Year: 1978, restored 2011
Contributing
19. Object (Mural)
Name: *Hand Ball Court Mural*
Artist: Alvaro Milan & Team
Year: 1996
Noncontributing
*Note: This mural is located on the side panel of the handball court
20. Object (Mural)
Name: *Hand Ball Court Mural*
Artist: Alvaro Milan & Team
Year: 1996
Noncontributing
*Note: This mural is located on the front panel of the handball court
21. Object (Mural)
Name: *The Ball Player*
Artist: Vidal Aguirre
Year: 1981-82
Contributing
22. Object (Mural)
Name: *We Saved the Mural*
Artist: Mario Torero, Victor Ochoa & Armando Nunez and Students
Year: 1997
Noncontributing
23. Object (Mural)
Name: *Dedicated to the people that died during Operation Gatekeeper*
Artist: Carmen Kala
Year: 2000, restored: 2014 by Carmen Kala
Noncontributing
24. Object (Mural)
Name: *No Retrofitting*
Artist: Mario Torero & Carmen Kala
Year: 1995
Noncontributing

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25. Object (Mural)
Name: *Tribute Mural for Laura Rodriguez & Florencio Yescas*
Artist: Mario Torero, Carmen Kala & Youth Team
Year: 1995
Noncontributing

26. Object (Mural)
Name: *Marcha*
Artist: Mario Torero, Victor Ochoa & Team
Year: 1996
Noncontributing

27. Object (Mural)
Name: *Paradise Senior Center*
Artist: Mona Mills
Year: 1999
Noncontributing

28. Object (Mural)
Name: *Tierra-Liberación*
Artist: Mario Torero, Victor Ochoa & Team
Year: 2000
Noncontributing

29. Object (Mural)
Name: *Elders Mural*
Artist: Mario Torero & Team
Year: 1999
Noncontributing

Logan Avenue Undercrossing (Bridge #57-847G)- resources 31-51

30. Object (Mural)
Name: *La Flecha*
Artist: Mario Torero & InSite97
Year: 1997
Noncontributing

31. Object (Mural)
Name: *La Trinidad Es Amor*
Artist: Raul Jose Jaquez & Team
Year: 1997
Noncontributing

32. Object (Mural)
Name: *¿Porqué Nosotros?*
Artist: Mario Torero & Fuerza
Year: 1996, restored: 2012 by Victor Ochoa, Mario Chacón and Team
Noncontributing

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33. Object (Mural)
Name: *Hasta La Bahia (“All The Way to the Bay”)*
Artist: Victor Ochoa
Year: 1978, restored: 2012 by Victor Ochoa, Mario Chacón and team
Contributing
34. Object (Mural)
Name: *Cuauhtemoc*
Artist: Felipe Adame
Year: 1978, restored: 2012 by Felipe Adame and Team
Contributing
35. Object (Mural)
Name: *Sueño Serpentino*
Artist: Socorro Gamboa
Year: 1978
Contributing
36. Structure with Object (Mural)
Name: *Kiosko—Tenochtitlan*
Artist: Alfredo Larrin (architect) Vidal Aguirre & Felipe Adame (painters/muralists)
Year: 1978, mural restored: 2012 by Felipe Adame and Team
Contributing

Representatives of the City of San Diego originally wanted this public gazebo designed in a Mission Revival style but members of the community advocated strongly for a design that reflected an Indigenous Mesoamerican style. The *Kiosko* was the product of a public process and was designed by architect Alfredo Larrin. The *Kiosko* is a concrete structure sitting atop a square elevated platform of concrete, with broad concrete steps in each cardinal direction. Four rectangular pillars, each battered inward, support an architrave topped by a cornice. The structure has steps on all sides leading to a central wood floor performance platform. The pillars and architrave are inset with angular designs representative of ancient Mesoamerican architecture. The structure is designed to resemble the top of a Mayan or Aztec pyramid. Felipe Adame and Vidal Aguirre painted the exterior of the structure in black, red, white, and green. They, also, painted the *Kiosko's* ceiling with the mural “*Tenochtitlan*,” which depicts the Mexica (Aztec) legend of the founding of their capital city Tenochtitlan (modern day Mexico City). The structure is a hybrid of Chicana/o and ancient Mesoamerican elements that are not associated with any individual culture or design; therefore, the design is most closely identified as Mesoamerican Revival. The structure resembles Art Deco Mayan Revival styles, yet the *Kiosko* is a synthesis of pre-Columbian architectural styles and Chicana/o-Utopian urban design (Chicano Urbanism), a style which emerged during the Chicano Civil Rights Movement in cities such as San Diego and Los Angeles.⁴

37. Object (Mural)
Name: *Mexican History*
Artist: Victor Ochoa and Students
Year: 1978
Contributing

⁴ Rojas, James. “The Enacted Environment.” In *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies after J*, edited by Chris Wilson and Paul Erling Groth, 275-88. Online-Ausg. ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

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38. Object (Mural)
Name: *Huelga Eagle*
Artist: Raul Espinoza & Michael Schnorr
Year: 1978
Contributing
39. Object (Mural)
Name: *Che*
Artist: Victor Ochoa
Year: 1978
Contributing
40. Object (Mural)
Name: *Aztec Archer*
Artist: Vidal Aguirre
Year: 1977, restored: 2011 by Felipe Adame, Guillermo Rosette and Team
Contributing
41. Object (Mural)
Name: *Varrío Logan*
Artist: Victor Ochoa & Team
Year: 1978, restored: 2011 by Victor Ochoa & Team
Contributing
42. Object (Mural)
Name: *Liberación*
Artist: Maricela Romo Ibarra
Year: 1997
Noncontributing
43. Object (Sculpture)
Name: *Águila en Aztlán: "Through love you gain strength-through strength you regenerate"*
Artist: Raul Jose Jaquez
Year: 1986
Contributing
*Note: this sculpture is located in the cactus garden
44. Object (Mural)
Name: *Sombras Nada Mas*
Artist: Raul Jose Jaquez
Year: 1997
Noncontributing
*Note: This mural is located on three different pillars.
45. Object (Mural)
Name: *Soy Oanzante*
Artist: Cathy Espitia Puente
Year: 1995
Noncontributing

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46. Object (Mural)
Name: *Restroom Mural*
Artist: Victor Ochoa, Mario Torero, & FUERZA
Year: 1997
Noncontributing
47. Object (Mural)
Name: *Mural in Chicana Park*
Artist: Berenice Badillo
Year: 1997
Noncontributing
48. Object (Mural)
Name: *Undocumented Worker*
Artist: Michael Schnorr & Team
Year: 1980 Restored: 2011 by Michael Schnorr
Contributing
49. Object (Mural)
Name: *Voz Libre: P.H. Gonzalez*
Artist: Michael Schnorr, Victor Ochoa, Guillermo Rosette, Yasue Doudera & Carlos Esparza
Year: 1984
Contributing
50. Object (Mural)
Name: *Insight*
Artist: Cheryl Lindley, Scott Kessler & Team
Year: 1997
Noncontributing
51. Object (Mural)
Name: *Hecho en Atzlán*
Artist: Victor Ochoa & Talent Search Students
Year: 2000
Noncontributing

Southwest Connector Overcrossing (Bridge #57 -846G)- resources 52-64

52. Object (Sculpture)
Name: *Zapata Statue*
Artist: Arturo Singh
Year: 2004
Noncontributing
53. Object (Mural)
Name: *Mujer Cós mica*
Artist: Esteban Villa & Ricardo Favela
Year: 1975 Restored: 2011 by Esteban Villa, Carlos Lopez and Juan Carrillo
Contributing

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54. Object (Mural)
Name: *In La Kesh aka Mandala Mural*
Artist: Juanishi Orosco & Royal Chicano Air Force
Year: 1975, restored: 2012 by Juanishi Orosco and Team
Contributing
55. Object (Mural)
Name: *Cosmic Clowns*
Artist: Congreso de Artistas Chicanos en Aztlán (CACA)
Year: 1974
Contributing
56. Object (Mural)
Name: *The Rage of La Raza aka La Raza Cósmica*
Artist: Congreso de Artistas Chicanos en Aztlán (CACA), Mario Torero & Tomas “Coyote” Castaneda
Year: 1974
Contributing
57. Object (Mural)
Name: *¡Chicano Park! La Tierra Mia Logo*
Artist: Carlotta Hernandez & designed by Rico Bueno
Year: 1974
Contributing
58. Object (Mural)
Name: *Allende*
Artist: Smiley Benavides & Team from Los Angeles
Year: 1974, restored: 2012 by Guillermo Rosette, Norma Montoya, and Mario Torero
Contributing
59. Object (Mural)
Name: *Los Toltecas*
Artist: Rosa Olga Navarro, Carlos Garcia, Alvaro Milan, Fernando Palomo, & Team
Year: 1988, restored: 2012 by David Mena, Rosa Olga Navarro and Community
Contributing
60. Object (Mural)
Name: *Mother Earth*
Artist: Salvador “Queso” Torres
Year: 1988 Restored: 2012 by Salvador “Queso” Torres
Contributing
*Note: This mural is below Los Toltecas mural (#59 on this list), they share the same pillar.
61. Object (Mural)
Name: *Yokohama*
Artist: Mario Torero, Ruben Seja, Rocco Satochi
Year: 1990
Noncontributing

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62. Object (Mural)
Name: *Chicano Park Danzante*
Artist: Mario Torero, Isaias Crow, & Team
Year: 1990, restored: 2012 by Isaias Crow
Noncontributing
*Note: This mural was originally part of “Yokohama” mural (#61 on this list) and was recently redesigned; thus, the year of work for National Register eligibility purposes is 2012.
63. Object (Mural)
Name: *Corazón de Aztlán*
Artist: Tomas “Coyote” Castaneda & Congreso de Artistas Chicanos en Aztlán (CACA)
Year: 1988
Contributing
64. Object (Mural)
Name: *Quetzalcoatl*
Artist: Los Toltecas en Aztlán
Year: 1973
Contributing
- Dewey Street Pedestrian Overcrossing (Bridge # 57-856)- resources 65-77**
65. Object (Mural)
Name: *M.E.Ch.A*
Artist: Jose Olague
Year: Began in 2003, not yet completed
Noncontributing
66. Object (Mural)
Name: *Women Hold Up Half of Heaven aka Women Hold Up Half the Sky*
Artist: Celia Rodriguez and Royal Chicano Air Force Mujeres
Year: 1975
Contributing
67. Object (Mural)
Name: *Woman with Flag*
Artist: Arturo Singh
Year: 1975
Contributing
68. Object (Mural)
Name: *“Leyes”-La Familia*
Artist: Jose Montoya & Royal Chicano Air Force
Year: 1975 Restored: 2011 by Jose Montoya, Tomas Montoya & Maceo Montoya
Contributing

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69. Object (Mural)
Name: *I am Somebody-Poem by Joan Little*
Artist: Sal Barajas
Year: 1975
Contributing
70. Object (Mural)
Name: *Tree of Life*
Artist: Felipe Adame, Guillermo Aranda & Arturo Roman
Year: 1974, restored: 1992 by Guillermo Aranda, Guillermo Rosette, Felipe Adame, and Vidal Aguirre
Contributing
71. Object (Mural)
Name: *Danzante*
Artist: Felipe Adame
Year: 1992
Noncontributing
72. Object (Mural)
Name: *Renacimiento-Birth of La Raza*
Artist: Grupo de Santana
Year: 1974 Restored: 1992 by Guillermo Aranda, Guillermo Rosette, Felipe Adame, & Vidal Aguirre
Contributing
73. Object (Mural)
Name: *Chuco/Homeboy*
Artist: Felipe Adame
Year: 1975
Contributing
74. Object (Mural)
Name: *Colossus*
Artist: Mario Torero & CACA
Year: 1975
Contributing
75. Object (Mural)
Name: *Decades of Chicano Movement*
Artist: Manuel Parsons
Year: 1992
Noncontributing
76. Object (Mural)
Name: *Children's Mural*
Artist: Victor Ochoa & Lowell School
Year: 1973
Contributing

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77. Object (Mural)

Name: *Historical Mural*

Artist: Toltecas en Aztlán: Salvador Barajas, Guillermo Aranda, Arturo Roman, Victor Ochoa, Jose Cervantes, Gilbert "Magu" Lujan, Daniel de Los Reyes, and M.E.Ch.A, University of California Irvine
Year: 1973, restored in 2011 by member of Toltecas en Aztlán and restoration team

Contributing

78. Site (Multi-Purpose Sports Court)

Noncontributing

This multi-purpose sports court with basketball hoops was constructed after the founding of Chicano Park. It is not a resource associated with the historic contexts of the Chicano Park or the murals and artwork on the site.

79. Site (Children's Playgrounds)

Noncontributing

There are **two** playgrounds at Chicano Park that were constructed after the period of significance. They are of standardized playground equipment and are not associated with the historic contexts of the Chicano Park or the murals and artwork on the site.

80. Site (Cactus Garden)

Noncontributing

The cactus garden incorporates elements of landscape design and creates a setting for a contributing object, "Águila en Aztlán," but is not directly associated with the historic contexts of the Chicano Park or the murals and artwork on the site.

81. Site (Picnic Area)

Noncontributing

This is a collection of picnic tables near the northern edge of the park. It is part of the overall park site but it is not directly associated with the historic contexts of the Chicano Park or the murals and artwork on the site.

82. Building (Restroom)

Noncontributing

The restroom is the "canvas" for an eligible mural but the restroom building itself is not contributing. In 2015, Chicano Park has been awarded a grant to improve the quality of the restrooms. The mural that is eligible for NHL designation will be preserved in the new design and renovation.

83. Structure (Fountain)

Noncontributing

This fountain was constructed after the period of significance.

84. Object (Memorial Monument)

Name: *Logan Heights Veterans Memorial*

Year: 2012

Noncontributing

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The Logan Heights Veterans Memorial pays tribute to the contributions of American Latinos to the United States Military and war efforts. The memorial is constructed of red granite; it has engravings of all the military branches and includes the English and Spanish phrases: “*Que Dios Bendiga Nuestro Veteranos*” (May God Bless Our Veterans) and “Honor Them by Remembering.” This memorial was constructed in 2012 and unveiled on May 18, 2013. Therefore, it is outside the period of significance.

The San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge

The San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge has been recognized as one of San Diego’s symbols of dynamic growth and engineering achievements due to its impressive mid-bay 90-degree curve. The bridge was the first structure to cross the San Diego Bay when completed in 1969. In 1970, the American Institute of Steel Construction acknowledged the Coronado Bay Bridge with the “Most Beautiful Bridge Merit Award” for its sleek 23 distinctive towers and graceful curves. Its orthotropic design feature not only saved steel during its construction, but also gives the structure’s exterior the appearance of smoothness. The orthotropic design feature, developed in Europe, was first applied on a major scale in the United States by the award-winning San Mateo-Hayward Bridge and is characterized by the placement of the bridge stiffeners and braces within the box-like girders. Despite its engineering and architectural distinctions, it does not appear to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, as it does not meet the necessary criteria of exceptional significance. Other than its separate approach ramps to the Interstate-Five Freeway, the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge is outside the boundary of the nominated property. The San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge piers and supports that are grounded in Chicano Park are the “canvas” for the murals; the approach bridges must also be considered a contributing element of the Chicano Park district, as they are the canvas of the murals, but the bridge itself is not being nominated.

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**Summary**

Chicano Park and the Chicano Park Monumental Murals, located in the Barrio Logan neighborhood of San Diego, California are nationally significant under NHL Criteria 1, as the park is an outstanding representation of the cultural and political legacies of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement and the social history of American Latina/os in their struggle for political and social inclusion. Chicano Park was the site of a community demonstration to prevent the construction of a California Highway Patrol substation on the property where the City of San Diego had promised the residents of the Barrio Logan neighborhood a community park. On April 22, 1970, community residents occupied the land and were victorious in their efforts to rededicate the site, beneath the approach ramps to the Coronado Bay Bridge from the Interstate-Five Freeway, as Chicano Park. Since 1970, the park has become a cultural and recreational gathering place for San Diego and California's Chicano community. Today, visitors from across the nation and abroad visit the park and partake in the annual Chicano Park Day celebration, which commemorates the founding of the park, and to view Chicano Park's Monumental Murals.

The property is also eligible under NHL Criterion 5 at the national level of significance as an assemblage of murals known as the Chicano Park Monumental Murals that represent an exceptional assemblage of master mural artwork painted on the freeway bridge supports. The Chicano Park Monumental Murals represent exceptionally significant works of public art that transformed gray and cold concrete bridge support pillars into colorful canvases with imagery that reinforces community identity and pride. Under NHL Criterion 5 eligibility is based on Chicano Park and the Chicano Park Monumental murals being components of a significant and distinguishable entity whose elements may not be individually eligible but collectively they form a nationally significant entity. The murals were created by a large group of Chicano artist's collectives, including Los Toltecas en Aztlán, the Royal Chicano Air Force, el Congreso de Artistas Chicanos de Aztlán, Mujeres Muralistas, and many more Chicana/o non-Chicana/o mural masters. The Chicano Park Monumental Murals were painted with the intention to commemorate the struggle to reclaim a property as an urban park for a marginalized neighborhood, and, subsequently, have become elements of an important community landmark due to their high artistic value and the park's social history.

The period of significance is 1970-1989, and while Chicano Park is less than 50-years old, and the Chicano Park Monumental Murals are even younger, the park and the murals are of extraordinary national importance.⁵ Art and social historians, alongside cultural resources professionals and experts have written about Chicano Park and the Chicano Park Monumental Murals as one-of-the most historically and culturally significant sites associated with Chicana/o and Mexican-American history. Therefore, Chicano Park and The Chicano Park Monumental Murals are eligible for designation under NHL Exception 8.

Criteria Exception 8

Although both the park and the murals are less than fifty years old they meet the requirements for Exception 8, as Chicano Park's importance has been well established in the context of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement and its development in San Diego. The history of Chicano muralism parallels the history of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement, and the murals at Chicano Park represent an exceptional example of this art form. The historic contexts of the Chicano Movement in San Diego (Criterion 1) and the Chicano Muralism artistic movement (Criterion 5) have already been the subject of significant scholarly evaluation by academic

⁵ Rosen, Martin D., and James Fisher. "Chicano Park and the Chicano Park Murals: Barrio Logan, City of San Diego, California." *The Public Historian* 23, no. 4 (Fall 2001): 91-112.

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researchers in the fields of ethnic urban history and fine art.⁶ While some of the Chicano Park muralists are still living, the significance of the Chicano Park Monumental Murals does not derive from the work of any particular master mural artist; the assemblage of murals by artists from across California and the Southwest constitute a unique resource, representing a unique time and place, that has become the subject of intensive study and scholarly research. The Chicano political activism that occurred in the 1960s through the 1980s, dictated the specific social and economic issues of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement, which also coincided with the most productive period of Chicano muralism. California was the epicenter of Chicano mural activities and Chicano Park was one of the major sites where this art form was expressed. By the 1980s nearly every major Chicano muralist in California and the Southwest, by invitation and inclination, had participated in the making of Chicano Park Monumental Murals. The painting of the Chicano Park Monumental Murals began in 1973 and moved through several phases of production in the decade of the 1970s. By end of the 1980s, over forty-nine murals and one sculpture were completed. The period of significance, therefore, extends to 1989.

The importance of the Chicano Park Monumental Murals has been underscored by local, national, and international recognition of their artistic and social value. Local recognition came in February 1980, when the San Diego Public Arts Advisory Board (PAAB) voted to recognize the Chicano Park Monumental Murals as meritorious public arts works. The City of San Diego recognized the park's significance as early as 1980, only ten years after founding of Chicano Park, when the San Diego Historic Site Board designated Chicano Park as a city historic site. The Board's report noted: "Chicano Park is a significant representation of an era in the development of San Diego. It is also associated and identified with important events in the main currents of local history. It exemplifies the broad cultural, political, economic and social history of the community. It is an urban park with recreational facilities, a kiosk in the shape of an Aztec/Mayan temple, and bridge supports painted by Mexican American/Chicano artists from the community and from across the Southwestern United States. The artistic representation depicts the thinking, the background, the neighborhood, the Mexican/Chicano people and their struggles."⁷ In June 1992, the San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture described the murals as "the largest, most important collection of outdoor muralism in the county." In 1996, Cheryl W. Widell, California State Historic Preservation Officer, concurred with the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) 1996 *State Historic Research Education Report for the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge* that Chicano Park and the Chicano Park Monumental Murals, although not yet 50 years old, met the exceptional importance criterion for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources.

The Chicano Park Monumental Murals have received widespread recognition by scholars and city officials and have become a tourist stopping point in San Diego.⁸ Yet, public murals are a fragile and short-lived resource, as they are subjected to weathering and other elements. In the case of the Chicano Park Monumental Murals the

⁶ See: Avila, Eric. *The Folklore of the Freeway: Race and Revolt in the Modernist City*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014; Diaz, David R. "Barrios and Planning Ideology: The Failures of Suburbia and the Dialectics of New Urbanism." In *Latino Urbanism: The Politics of Planning, Policy, and Redevelopment*, edited by David R. Diaz and Rodolfo D. Torres, 21-46. New York: New York University Press, 2012; Diaz, David R. *Barrio Urbanism: Chicanos, Planning, and American Cities*. New York: Routledge, 2005; Le Texier, Emmanuelle. "The Struggle against Gentrification in Barrio Logan." In *Chicano San Diego: Cultural Space and the Struggle for Justice*, edited by Richard Griswold del Castillo, 202-21. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007; Rosen, Martin D., and James Fisher. "Chicano Park and the Chicano Park Murals: Barrio Logan, City of San Diego, California." *The Public Historian* 23, no. 4 (Fall 2001): 91-112; Villa, Raúl. *Barrio-Logos: Space and Place in Urban Chicano Literature and Culture*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000; and Zamudio-Taylor, Victor. "Inventing Tradition, Negotiating Modernism." In *The Road to Aztlán: Art from a Mythic Homeland*, edited by Virginia M. Fields and Victor Zamudio-Taylor, 342-57. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2001.

⁷ *San Diego Union-Tribune*, May 13, 1973; Ron Buckley, *City of San Diego Historical Site Board*, #143 (San Diego: February 1, 1980).

⁸ <https://www.sandiego.org/articles/parks-gardens/chicano-park.aspx>. <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/politics/sd-me-chicano-historic-20170111-story.html>

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high content of airborne salinity from the San Diego Bay and the excrement from seabirds has posed a threat to the longevity of the murals. Within their context of study, the Chicano Park murals are already considered old, and were, therefore, the recipients of a federally funded mural restoration program in 2012, which was based on a prior determination of National Register eligibility. In 2000, Caltrans applied for and was awarded \$1.6 million in funding from the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) for the restoration of San Diego's Chicano Park Monumental Murals. The project was completed in August 2012 and has since set design and engineering standards for new mural artwork projects at the park and across the nation, as the project resulted in the drafting of the "Chicano Park Mural Restoration Technical Manual," which provides detailed instructions, guidelines, and the proper techniques for restoring outdoor murals. On May 29th of 2012, many of the Chicano Park mural artists were awarded a San Diego Historic Preservation Award by the San Diego Historic Resources Board in the category of Cultural Landscapes. On April 28, 2015 the California State Historical Resource Commission presented the Chicano Park Steering Committee with a Resolution of Recognition.

The Chicano Park Monumental Murals have deep transcendent values and constitute important cultural resources for the nation. University of Paris professor Dr. Annick Trequer underscored the significance of the Chicano Park Monumental Murals: "The Chicano Park paintings are very different in the sense that they have a special place in the history of the district where they were produced. They represent some of the finest examples of popular mural art, directly inheriting the great Mexican tradition of the 1920s and the 1930s." Jim Prigoff, photojournalist and co-author of *Spraycan Art* (1987), found that: "Chicano Park Monumental Murals constitute one of five major mural sites in California." His studies concluded that the Chicano Park Monumental Murals are "recognized as such all over the world," and compare favorably with other major mural sites such as Tujunga Wash, Estrada Courts (Boyle Heights), and Ramona Gardens in Los Angeles and San Francisco's Balmy Alley murals. With the passage of time, mural sites in other areas may also be found eligible, but the large collection of murals in Chicano Park remains historically significant within the local and state contexts and among the most significant within a national context.

Barrio Logan and Chicano Park

Prior to the "Historic Takeover" of the land that became Chicano Park in 1970, racism and cultural isolation was a prevalent phenomenon in Logan Heights. As San Diego began to grow, an increased use of restrictive racial covenants in housing contracts began to emerge relegating ethnic minority populations to be isolated in the Logan Heights/Barrio Logan area of the city.⁹ The neighborhood derives its name from Congressman John A. Logan, who wrote legislation to provide federal land grants and subsidies for a transcontinental railroad ending in San Diego. In San Diego, a street laid in 1881 was named after him; later the name was applied to the neighborhood. After 1910, an influx of Mexican refugees escaping the Mexican Revolution came into the area and by the 1920s Barrio Logan began to transform into a predominantly Mexican-American community, as Mexican immigrants fled north from revolution and a poor Mexican economy.¹⁰ By the 1920's, commerce and industry began developing along the San Diego Bay and Barrio Logan's residential growth continued to increase, as the area provided low cost housing for fish cannery, lumber, shipbuilding, and railroad industry workers. Mexican-Americans and Blacks, having lived in the area since the turn of the 20th century, had no other housing alternatives but to remain in the Logan Heights neighborhood. By the 1920s Logan Heights was considered "the residential section of the Negroes, Mexicans" and Asian Americans.¹¹

⁹ Leroy E. Harris, *The Other Side of the Freeway: A Study of Settlement Patterns of Negroes and Mexican Americans in San Diego, California* (Doctor of Arts dissertation, Carnegie-Mellon University, 1974), pp. 165-180.

¹⁰ Frank Norris, "Logan Heights: Growth and Change in the Old 'East End'," *Journal of San Diego History* 26 (Winter 1983): 32.

¹¹ Alvena Suhl, *The Historical Geography of San Diego County* (M.A. Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1927), 70.

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The Logan Heights Neighborhood House was an Americanization settlement organization with the aim to help the poor immigrant community of Barrio Logan. Except for community-wide events, most of the Neighborhood House programs were segregated by race and gender. This included conducting separate workshops and classes for African Americans, Mexicans, and Anglos, including the separation of girls and boys. While the primary goal of many settlement houses was the desire to “Americanize” immigrants through the teaching of English and “American” customs and values, the Logan Heights Neighborhood House emphasized public health, education, and sociocultural activities. While the Neighborhood House agency served most of the Chicano residents of San Diego in the 1920s and 1930s, the city and county social service agencies almost completely ignored the economic and public health problems of Mexican immigrants. During the 1930s, the United States government was attempting to deport and repatriate Mexican immigrants and was openly hostile towards their economic and social plight. Despite the sometimes heavy-handed efforts at “Americanization” and the administrator’s lack of interest in promoting and encouraging Mexican culture, the Neighborhood House became recognized as an important barrio institution. This all changed, however, during the 1960s when the Neighborhood House’s administrators revised their policies and adopted a more bureaucratic public agency administrative model, rather than the community center it had been. The Neighborhood House no longer served the community with social and youth services during the most-needed hours of the day, but rather it incorporated a 9:00-5:00 schedule, which had detrimental effects on after-work and after-school programs. Because the agency no longer provided relevant social services to the community, it came under attack by Chicano activists in 1970.¹² Subsequently, this led to the establishment of the Chicano Free Clinic on the site of the Neighborhood House. The Chicano Free Clinic served the residents by providing low cost medical and dental services. The name and administration of the Chicano Free Clinic has changed and is now the Logan Heights Community Health Center, a clinic that continues to provide free and inexpensive health services to the area’s residents.

The construction of the support pillars for the approach ramps to the Interstate-Five Freeway from the Coronado Bay Bridge required the partial demolition of the Barrio Logan neighborhood. Many residents in Barrio Logan believed that they would have access to land beneath the approach ramps via a public park. On April 22, 1970, after community members learned that a California Highway Patrol (CHP) station was scheduled to be built under the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge and Interstate-Five Freeway approach ramps, between 250 and 500 people disrupted grading work that was already in progress. The formal struggle for a park in Barrio Logan began when Jose Gomez, a long-time resident of the neighborhood, alongside students, families, elders, and children occupied the land under the approach ramps. “Our neighborhood had already been invaded by the junkyards, the factories and a bridge ... in essence, they viewed the people of Logan Heights as people who hadn’t gotten out of the way of industry as the junkyards, factories, etc....were coming to claim this Barrio,” community activist Jose Gomez declared; moreover, he stated “some of us decided that it was time to put a stop to the destruction and begin to make this place more livable.”¹³

In a community that already had grievances against local police actions, the establishment of a CHP station under the new bridge was viewed as an affront to Barrio Logan residents. The proposed CHP station was to be of impressive size, as it would employ some 195 uniformed personnel and 15 civilian employees, and it would provide parking spaces for 115 cars. A CHP station in Barrio Logan would have increased police surveillance in an already highly militarized area, as the neighborhood experienced a growth in military activity during both World Wars I and II.

Activists, community members, and students from nearby colleges and universities occupied the site for twelve days. Their rallying cry was the demand for a park to be created immediately on the land under the Coronado

¹² Richard Griswold del Castillo, Isidro Ortiz & Rosalinda Gonzalez; Mexican and Chicano History, *La Lucha: The Beginnings of the Struggle, 1920-1930s-What was the Neighborhood House?* <https://chicanohistory.sdsu.edu/chapter07/c07.html>.

¹³ Marilyn Mulford, Producer; Mario Barrera & Marilyn Mulford Directors, *Chicano Park* film (Berkeley: 1988).

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Bay Bridge and Interstate-Five Freeway approach ramps. To emphasize their point, the community took matters into their own hands, and began the work of creating their own park by using shovels, pickaxes, hoes and rakes they prepared the ground for the planting of grass, shrubs, cactuses, and flowers.¹⁴ By the third day of the land occupation the Cacho family, prominent landowning Mexican-American farmers from the Otay Mesa area of San Diego and local cultural preservationists, lent tractors, bulldozers, and other essential farming tools to assist in the building of the park.¹⁵

Forming the Chicano Park Steering Committee, the activists demanded of the city that the property be donated to the Chicano community as a park in which Chicano culture could be expressed through art. "We are ready to die (to gain the park)," Salvador Roberto "Queso" Torres, a community artist, shouted to a gathering of city and state officials while supporters stamped their feet in rhythm and shouted "*Viva La Raza*-long live the race." Twenty-eight year old Jose Gomez echoed this sentiment when he shouted: "The only way anybody is going to take the park away from us is through our blood." Gomez later recalled: "The students and the others said, 'If you won't build a park here, we'll do it ourselves'... that's when the state officials knew we were serious. And the city entered into negotiations."¹⁶ The community activists withdrew from the property only after city officials promised negotiations regarding the use of the land in question. San Diego City Councilman Leon Williams, whose district included Barrio Logan, assured the neighborhood residents that they would have a city park under the Coronado Bay Bridge.

The City of San Diego, through the efforts of community spokeswoman Angie Avila and others negotiated a settlement with the Chicano Federation, a consortium of various community groups, and the Chicano Park Steering Committee. The settlement required the City of San Diego to exchange city owned land for the disputed state land. The city would then build a 4.5-acre public park (eventually expanded to a total of 7.4 acres) on the acquired land bounded by Logan Avenue and National Avenue¹⁷. The creation of "the park" was a major defining moment in the history of the Barrio Logan community. Victor Ochoa, mural coordinator for Chicano Park from 1974 to 1979, recalled: "What I still remember is that there were bulldozers out there. And women and children made human chains around the bulldozers and they stopped the construction work. And they began to work the land and they started planting *nopales* (cactus) and magueys and flowers. And there was a telephone pole there, where the Chicano flag, referred to as the flag of *Aztlán*¹⁸ was raised."¹⁹ One of the park's original muralists, Mario Torero, linked the park to Chicano identity: "We can't think of Chicanos in San Diego without thinking of Chicano Park. It is the main evidence, the open book of our culture, energy and determination as a people. One of the main proofs of our existence."²⁰ Josie S. Talamantez remembers the "take-over" of Chicano Park as defining her identity²¹ providing her the incentive to charge forward with total certainty. Ramon "Chunky" Sanchez, composer and singer of "Chicano Park Samba," said, "There was an energy that's hard to describe—when you see your people struggling for something positive, and it's very

¹⁴ Los Angeles Times, June 4, 1989; San Diego Tribune, April 23, 1970, April 24, 1970; May 5, 1970, March 4, 1971 and March 28, 1984; May 1, 1970; November 12, 1971; San Diego Union-Tribune, July 24, 1969; November 9, 1969; May 5, 1970; July 1, 1970; July 3, 1970; Brookman, Philip and Guillermo Gomez-Pena, *Made in Aztlán: Centro Cultural De La Raza Fifteenth Anniversary*. (San Diego: Tolteca Publications, 1986) p 20; Brookman, Philip, "Looking for Alternatives: Notes on Chicano Art, 1960-90", in Richard Griswold del Castillo, Teresa McKenna and Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, eds. *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-1985*. (Los Angeles: Wight Art Gallery and UCLA, 1991) 185-186.

¹⁵ Delia Cacho Talamantez, interviewed by Josie S. Talamantez, (January 2005, San Diego, California).

¹⁶ Los Angeles Times, June 4, 1989; San Diego Tribune, April 23, 1970, April 24, 1970; May 5, 1970, March 4, 1971 and March 28, 1984; May 1, 1970; November 12, 1971; San Diego Union-Tribune, July 24, 1969; November 9, 1969; May 5, 1970; July 1, 1970; July 3, 1970.

¹⁷ San Diego Union, April 23, 1988; Angie Avila interviewed by Dr. Jim Fisher (Sacramento; 3/13/1996).

¹⁸ Explanatory Note: The Chicano Flag is Red, White, & Green with the Mestizo figure in the center. The Mestizo figure is a brown forward facing face with the profiles of an Indian and Spaniard on either side of the face.

¹⁹ Victor Ochoa interview by Dr. Jim Fisher (San Diego: 3/10/1996).

²⁰ Mario "Torero" Acevedo interview by Dr. Jim Fisher (San Diego: 3/10/1996).

²¹ Mulford, Producer; Mario Barrera & Marilyn Mulford Directors, *Chicano Park* film (Berkeley: 1988).

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inspiring. We have to show our youth the value of what we did. The park was brought about by sacrifice and it demonstrates what a community can do when they stick together and make it happen.” Another artist, Raul Jaquez stated: “The Park is our pearl, and the community is our oyster. A pearl is not born in a comfortable zone. An oyster creates a pearl through great irritation. That’s how our pearl was born.” For those involved in its establishment, Chicano Park had a decidedly revelatory effect and their commitment to its “place” in the community of Barrio Logan should not be underestimated.²²

The San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge

The San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge has been recognized as one of San Diego’s symbols of dynamic growth and engineering achievements because of its impressive mid-bay 90-degree curve. The bridge was the first structure to cross the San Diego Bay when completed in 1969. In 1970, the American Institute of Steel Construction acknowledged the Coronado Bay Bridge with the “Most Beautiful Bridge Merit Award” for its sleek 23 distinctive towers and graceful curves. Its orthotropic design feature not only saved steel during its construction, but also gives the structure’s exterior the appearance of smoothness. The orthotropic design feature, developed in Europe, was first applied on a major scale in the United States by the award-winning San Mateo-Hayward Bridge and is characterized by the placement of the bridge stiffeners and braces within the box-like girders. Despite its engineering and architectural distinctions, it does not appear to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, as it does not meet the necessary criteria of exceptional significance. Other than its separate approach ramps to the Interstate 5 Freeway, the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge is outside the boundary of the nominated property. The San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge piers and supports that are grounded in Chicano Park are the “canvas” for the murals; the approach ramps must also be considered a contributing element of the Chicano Park district, as they are the canvas of the murals, but the bridge itself is not being nominated.

Chicano Park Monumental Murals and the Chicano Civil Rights Movement in a Historical Perspective

To understand forces operating within the Chicano Civil Rights Movement at that time is not only to “read” the icons and themes of Chicano muralism but also to understand the broader social context underlying Barrio

²² Los Angeles Times, June 4, 1989; San Diego Tribune, April 23, 1970, April 24, 1970; May 5, 1970, March 4, 1971 and March 28, 1984; May 1, 1970; November 12, 1971; San Diego Union-Tribune, July 24, 1969; November 9, 1969; May 5, 1970; July 1, 1970; July 3, 1970; March 3, 1971; Brookman, Philip and Guillermo Gomez-Pena, *Made in Aztlán: Centro Cultural De La Raza Fifteenth Anniversary*. (San Diego: Tolteca Publications, 1986), 20; Brookman, Philip, "Looking for Alternatives: Notes on Chicano Art, 1960-90" in Richard Griswold del Castillo, Teresa McKenna and Yvonne Yarbro Bejarano, eds. *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-1985*. (Los Angeles: Wight Art Gallery and UCLA, 1991) 185-186. Larry Weigel interview by Dr. Jim Fisher (January 23 & 24, 1996). Explanatory Note: Jose Gomez died in January 1985. On the occasion of the 15th Chicano Park celebration, Laura Rodriguez said of Gomez: “We have to honor Jose Gomez today because he said he would never leave this barrio. We must not think of his death, but of his life. He wanted a good quality life for all of us. And he is still alive today in all of our lives ... He was a complex person-quiet, humble, yet very proud.” San Diego Union, April 21, 1985. Gomez himself explained his deep commitment to the barrio this way: “My grandmother came here in 1900. My mother was born here, and so was I. Everyone knows me here. I can walk into any store, without any ID, and get a check cashed. There aren’t too many places in San Diego where you can do that. Despite all of the junk, it’s [Barrio Logan] my home and I’m comfortable in it. A lot of people feel like I do.” Doubtless, people like Laura Rodriguez. In September 1994, Laura Rodriguez died. She too experienced the park profoundly. At 84 years of age, in the last year of her life, she insisted on going to Chicano Park every night in her wheelchair to commune with the bridge and its murals, absorbing their power and conviction. Ms. Rodriguez, who had placed her body in front of a bulldozer during the park takeover in April 1970, served as inspiration for the building of what is now the Laura Rodriguez Family Health Center-the Old Neighborhood House (initially an Americanization Settlement House established in the 1920s) located at 1801 National Avenue, taken over by the Chicano community activist fall 1970. In 1991, President George Bush named her “Point of Light” for her community service. To her barrio, she was known as “the woman who was always wearing a scarf, always preparing tamales for clinic fund-raisers, always fighting for her people.” Today a new elementary school is named in her honor and a mural on a bridge column near Crosby Street and Logan Avenue also honors Ms. Rodriguez’s image. “Laura is the fruit of our land... [and] this is her shine,” stated Mario Torero, the designer and painter of Ms. Rodriguez’s mural-“Chicano Park” video: 1988; *San Diego Union-Tribune*, April 20, 1995; Pitti 1988: 245.

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Logan's Chicano Park Monumental Murals.²³ The revitalization of Barrio Logan's cultural heritage did not develop in a vacuum, and of necessity must be viewed in its historical and social context. The context is informed by and includes a perspective relative to the Chicano Civil Rights Movement, which arose from the turbulent 1960s.²⁴ The Chicano Civil Rights Movement drew on the century long foundation of the experiences of *La Raza* (the Chicano people) in the United States since the conclusion of the United States-Mexican War and the signing of the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo—a circumstance that transferred the ownership of the present southwest from Mexico to the United States. The years after 1848 witnessed the transformation of a proud people (*La Gente*) of Mexican, Indian, Black, and Spanish ancestry into a marginal and impoverished social class. In essence, the Chicano Civil Rights Movement was an attempt to address such conditions and grew to be a dynamic force for social change within the cultural and political beginnings of the concept of *Aztlán*, the legendary origins of the Aztec civilization.

The Chicano artists linked their people's struggle for civil rights and social justice with a reevaluation of their cultural identity during the 1960s, not unlike what was developing in the African-American Civil Rights Movement.²⁵ Chicano historian Joe Pitti expressed the following: "It (the Chicano Civil Rights Movement) is an amalgam of individuals and organizations who share a sense of pride in their cultural heritage, a dedication to the enhancement of Chicano culture, mutual identification, a desire to improve the Chicano socio-economic position and a commitment to making constructive changes in United States society."²⁶ The constructive change of objective conditions that Pitti expresses was embodied in labor leader Cesar Chavez and the United Farmworkers' Delano grape strike of 1962, the efforts of student-led M.E.C.H.A. (*Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano en Aztlán*) in 1969, Rudolpho "Corky" Gonzalez's Crusade for Justice (Denver, Colorado) in 1966, the Chicano Youth Liberation Conferences (Denver, Colorado) one (1969) and two (1970), and the Los Angeles National Moratorium in 1970, which identified with Chicano Resistance to the Vietnam War and the murder of *Los Angeles Times* reporter Ruben Salazar. The Chicano Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s inspired and was in turn inspired by a flourishing of art and culture throughout the southwest, the northeast, and the urban areas of the United States. The activism of Chicano people to unionize farm laborers, to regain ownership of land grants, to acquire adequate bilingual and bicultural education, to improve housing and achieve political power commensurate with their numbers in the population revitalized, enhanced, and added a contemporary iconography to the long tradition of Mexican art. Murals became the artistic vehicle of choice of Chicana/os for educating a large illiterate populace about the ideals of a new society and the virtues and evils of the past. Murals have the advantage of making direct appeals, as they provide a near-perfect organizing tool that have specific cultural antecedents and precedence in the cultural and revolutionary tradition of Mexico. Therefore, such activism emphasized the graphics-poster making, silk-screening and mural painting-to disseminate information and to communicate demands to the masses, literate and non-literate.

As early as April 1970, Salvador Torres, an artist whose childhood home was destroyed by the building of the bridge, and who had been deeply influenced by Mexican muralist, David Siqueiros and the growing mural movement of the 1970s now identified with the Chicano Civil Rights Movement, had vowed that Chicano artists and sculptors of the community would turn the gloomy gray columns of the bridge into things of beauty, "an outdoor museum," reflecting the Mexican-American culture.²⁷ In keeping with a long tradition of Mexican

²³ Ferree 1994:1-10; García 1981: 12; Cockcroft 1990:8-9; Shorris 1992:383-385; Juanishi Orosco, interviewed by Dr. Jim Fisher, February 14, 1996; "Viva La Causa! 500 Years of Chicano History" video: 1995.

²⁴ (Buckley 1980: 1: *San Diego Union-Tribune*, April, 1995: Juan Gomez-Quinones, *Chicano Politics, Reality and Promise 1940-1990* (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press: 1990) p 104-105. Marilyn Mulford, Mario Barrera, *Chicano Park* Video: 1988.

²⁵ Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), *The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones* (New York: Freudlich Books, 1984).

²⁶ Joe Pitti, Antonia Castaneda and Carlos Cortes, "A History of Mexican Americans in California," in Office of Historic Preservation, *Five Views: An Ethnic Sites Survey for California*. (Sacramento: Department of Parks and Recreation, 1988), 219; Gilbert Gonzales and Raul Fernandez, "Chicano History: Transcending Cultural Models" *pacific Historical Review*, LXIII, (November 1994) p 469-473.

²⁷ *San Diego Union-Tribune*, April 24, 1970; *San Diego Union*, April 23, 1972.

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art as cultural icons of resistance, murals became the artistic medium of choice for Chicana/os due to their silent sentiments and creative yearnings that are vivid and eye-catching, explosions of lights that vanquished the shadows while merging the past and the future with the present. Murals speak to the ever-increasing social consciousness of the barrio and Chicano sensibilities reflecting issues and symbols that ranged from Aztec (Mexica) icons to the United Farmworkers' black eagle, combining both Spanish and Indigenous Latina/o heritage—a significant source of California's history.

The murals at Chicano Park were painted collectively through the efforts of volunteers, artists as well as non-artists, and were executed over an extended period of time and in multiple phases—a process that continues to this day. The first phase of mural making, 1973-1974, involved two Chicano art collectives, Los Toltecas en Aztlán from the Centro Cultural de la Raza, a cultural arts center located in Balboa Park, and El Congreso de Artistas Chicanos en Aztlán, an artist collective from San Diego. Their work, as well as their organization's names, emphasized pre-Columbian motifs and the "dominance of Chicano nationalism and spontaneity in the imagery portrayed." For example, the first phase murals painted at Chicano Park include "Quetzalcoatl" (1973), "Historical Mural" (1973), and "Children's Mural" (1974), which all reference pre-Columbian Mesoamerican, Mexican, and Mexican-American heritage. Author of the article "The Story of Chicano Park," Eva Cockcroft notes that essentially this first phase of mural painting at Chicano Park represented the "possessing (of) the park, marking it with the place or logo, of the community."²⁸ The second phase in 1974-1975 included invited artists from communities throughout California, most notably Los Angeles and Sacramento. An infusion of new ideas resulted from this period. These second phase murals include: "Chicano Park Logo" (1974), "Rage of La Raza" (1974), "Cosmic Clowns" (1974), "Tree of Life" (1974), "Allende Mural" (1974), "Quetzalcoatl" (1974), "Birth of La Raza" (1974), "Chuco/Homeboy" (1974), "Colossus" (1974), "Farmworker Family" (1975), "Mandala" (1975), "La Mujer Cosmica" (1975), and "Female Inteligencia" (1975). The third mural phase, 1977 through the mid-1980s, celebrated resurgence in community pride by, for example, questioning the inordinate number of junkyards in the barrio and their visual and audio impacts on the quality of life. Marked by a 20-day Mural Marathon organized by Victor Ochoa in 1978, this third phase utilized the skills of some non-Chicana/o artists and placed emphasis on educational and historical themes. Ron Buckley, of the San Diego Historical Site Board, described this phase of the park murals as "art forms that represent the past history and culture of the Mexican-American community of the Barrio." Examples of the third phase murals include: "Varrío Si, Yonkes No!" (1977), "Preserve Our Heritage" (1977), "Varrío Logan" (1977), "Founding of Mexico" (1978), "Coatlicue" (1978), "Virgin of Guadalupe" (1978), "Tres Grandes y Frida" (1978), "Huelga Eagle" (1978) "Che" (1978), "Chicano Pinto Union Mural" (1978), "Death of a Farmworker" (1979), "Aztec Archer" (1981), "Revolution Mexicana" (1981), "Jose Gomez" (1986), "Aguila en Aztlán" (1986) "Mother Earth" (1988), "Corazon de Aztlán" (1988), "Los Toltecas" (1988), and the development of the sculpture garden in 1988. The fourth phase, 1990-to the present, continues to document history through visual iconography, with murals such as "Danzante" (1992), "Decades of Chicano Movement" (1992), "Mi Raza Primero" (1993), "No Retrofitting" (1995), "Marcha" (1996), "Porqué Nosotros" (1996), "We Saved the Murals" (1997), Tribute Mural for Laura Rodriguez and Florencio Yescas, and "Liberación" (1997). Though these murals possess high artistic value and continue the tradition of Chicana/o muralism at Chicano Park, they were painted after the period of significance, so they are not contributing for the purposes of this nomination.

On March 23, 1973, mural making in Chicano Park began in earnest. Two teams of Chicano artists, Los Toltecas en Aztlán, from the Centro Cultural de la Raza, a cultural arts center located in Balboa Park, and el Congreso de Artistas Chicanos en Aztlán, an artist collective from San Diego, began to apply paint to the concrete abutments of the bridge's off-ramps flanking the east and west sides of Logan Avenue. On May 13,

²⁸ Young *San Diego Union-Tribune*, (January 13, 1996; Ferree 1994:39-40; Cockcroft 1984: 85-86; Salvador Torres, interviewed by Dr. Jim Fisher, February 29, 2006. Raul Homero Villa, *Barrio Logos: Space and Place in Urban Chicano Literature and Culture* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press: 2000), 172-184.

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1973, the *San Diego Union-Tribune* took notice of the Chicano Park art project: “Their names are Mexican, so is their art. They paint on concrete. Work began on the bridge columns a month ago and many may not be completed for years. The City has granted artists permission to paint the concrete walls and pillars under the Coronado Bridge from southwest San Diego to the Coronado Bay. The walls are washed, and then treated with an acid and primer. When dry, charcoal sketches are made and then filled with acrylic paints...They said their work reflects, ‘our thinking, our background, the barrio, the struggle, la Raza (the Mexican people)’”²⁹ It was the vision of individual artists such as Salvador “Queso” Torres, Victor Ochoa, Mario Torero Acevedo, Guillermo Aranda, Tomas “Coyote” Castaneda, Raul Jaquez, Yolanda Lopez, Guillermo Rosete, Salvador Barajas, Armando Nunez, Abran Quevedo, Jose Cervantes, Michael Schnorr; Felipe Barbosa, Mano Lina, Felipe Adame, Pablo de’ la Rosa, Louie Manzano, Tony de Vargas, Socorro Gamboa, Charles “Cat” Felix, Jr., Dolores Serrano-Velez, and many others that initiated the painting of murals on the huge, sterile columns that dominated the park site. The artists envisioned “a seemingly endless canvas, stretching to the waters of the bay four blocks away” and an opportunity to transform and “personalize” the dreary gray concrete landscape.

By the late 1970s nearly every major Chicano muralist in California and the Southwest, by invitation and inclination, had participated in the creation of the Chicano Park Monumental Murals. An internationally known painter from Stockton and San Francisco, Rupert García, for example, designed a tribute mural at Chicano Park dedicated to the great Mexican artists Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Frida Kahlo. The internationally recognized Royal Chicano Air Force from Sacramento, led by Jose Montoya, Esteban Villa, Ricardo Favela, Juanishi Orosco, Irma Lerma Barbosa, and Celia Rodriguez, placed its grand contributions on the park’s columns. The daring Charles “Cat” Felix, Jr., the driving force behind the acclaimed Estrada Courts murals in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles in 1973, also contributed to creating the Chicano Park Monumental Murals.³⁰

Residents of Barrio Logan had long held intense grievances against the nearly 50 junkyards that had “invaded” their neighborhood, as a result of city led rezoning policies. The implications of so many junkyards and auto wrecking operations concentrated in one neighborhood seemed to translate into official neglect and lack of concern by the city government for the well-being of Chicano residents in San Diego. In 1977, the intersection of the muralism movement and community engagement was clearly illustrated with the mural “*Varríos Si! Yonkes No!*” The mural depicted picketers standing in front of a cyclone fence that protects a secondhand auto-parts store, a utilities plant belching thick black smoke, the dockyards, and a Bank of America branch building. In the background the sky looms over the ever-present San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge and the signs carried by the picketers read in Spanish and English: “More Houses, Less Junkyards” and “Unity Is Power.” The message was clear that the community of Barrio Logan did not favor the junkyards in the area, which filled the neighborhood with constant clanging sounds and air pollution. Alan W. Barnett wrote that it was only while the artists were at work that they realized that the caption on the column, also, sounded like “Yankees Go Home.” (“*Varrío*” is a variant of the word *barrio* or neighborhood and *Yonkes* is a reference to the colloquial Mexican Spanish word for junkyards.) Moreover, the painters of the “*Varríos Si! Yonkes No!*” mural, Victor Ochoa and Raul Jaquez, recruited a number of young men who regularly attended the park to assist in the mural painting project. Ochoa was successful in organizing the young men into an artists collective called the Barrio Renovation Team, whose goal was to aid in repairing and repainting homes of the community’s elderly and impoverished residents. With city funding, the team increased its volunteer membership and continued to work in helping improve the social and environmental condition of Barrio Logan and other poor areas of San Diego.³¹

²⁹ *San Diego Union-Tribune*, May 13, 1973; Ron Buckley, *City of San Diego Historical Site Board Register*, #143 (San Diego: February 1, 1980), 39.

³⁰ Note: See below for a complete listing of the artists who have participated in the painting of the murals in Chicano Park.

³¹ Alan W. Barnett, *Community Murals: The People’s Art* (Philadelphia: The Art Alliance Press: 1984), 293. Los Angeles Times, August 2, 1989.

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The Kiosko, a performance structure or pavilion, at the center of the park was constructed in 1977. It was designed by architect Alfredo Larin, with input from the Chicano Park Steering Committee, and brilliantly painted by the muralists Vidal Aguirre and Felipe Adame. True to the “team approach” of mural making, the Kiosko was completed only after Larin solicited design ideas from the Barrio Logan community. Such solicitation resulted in a design that is reminiscent of a pre-Columbian Mesoamerican temple.³² To this day the Kiosko continues to be an impressive structure at the park, as it simultaneously is architecturally appealing to Chicana/os and it serves the function of an outdoor performance space with a beautiful mural that depicts the Mexica’s founding of Tenochtitlan (current Mexico City).

The development of Chicano Park and its murals is an ongoing process (“a work in progress,” in the words of Salvador Torres). Moreover, the murals serve as a reminder to the people in the community that they can change their environment. Victor Ochoa emphasized, “The community needs the murals to speak up on certain issues.”³³ Larry Baza, former Executive Director of Centro Cultural de La Raza in Balboa Park, suggested that murals are illustrated sentiments designed to overcome the limitations of physical conditions and non-literacy. Since 1973, the murals have become the icons they depict. Their maintenance involves the city, the people of the barrio, and especially the artists who are continuing their work on the pillars of the bridge. The murals that adorn the columns of the San Diego Coronado Bay Bridge have received widespread recognition by scholars and city officials and have become a tourist stopping point in San Diego.

As early as 1971, Barrio Logan residents began to celebrate the anniversary of the founding of Chicano Park. Every year since 1970, on the Saturday nearest to April 22, the Chicano Park Steering Committee, along with local residents and visitors from around the United States, celebrate the anniversary of the founding of Chicano Park. In 2015 the 45th anniversary celebration of Chicano Park took place on Saturday, April 25, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in historic Chicano Park. The theme for the 45th celebration was “*El Movimiento Continues: 45 years of Protest, Cultura, y 40 years of Danza Azteca*” (The Movement Continues: 45 years of Protest, Culture, and 40 years of Aztec Dancing). The theme is written in both Spanish and English, reflecting linguistic characteristics of Chicana/o identity. Furthermore, the 45th anniversary’s theme focused on the resiliency of social justice and the cultural elements found at Chicano Park. The 2015 celebration included traditional Mexican and Mexican-American music and dance performances, a lowrider-car show, vendor and food booths, a children’s arts workshop, and speeches by prominent community leaders, including a keynote address by the founder of the Committee on Chicano Rights, Herman Baca.

The bulk of the murals in Chicano Park were painted between 1973 and 1989,³⁴ yet many new murals continue to be added to the park annually. Although the period of significance, and thus the contributing resources, ends in 1989, in the future the Chicano Park Steering Committee may want to document the post-1989 murals and other artwork associated with Chicano Park. This new information can then be added to an updated National Historic Landmark nomination for Chicano Park.

The Barrio Logan community has a strong associative attachment and commitment to preserve the Chicano Park Monumental Murals. Unlike the creation of the majority of the murals in the 1970s, those painted between

³² Alan W. Barnett, *Community Murals: The People’s Art* (Philadelphia: The Art Alliance Press: 1984), 293. Sacramento Bee, January 8, 1990; *Los Angeles Times*, June 4, 1989; Rupert García, interview by Jim Fisher, March 23, 1996; Shifra Goldman, “How, Why, Where, and When It All Happened: Chicano Murals in California”: “*Signs From the Heart: California Chicano Murals*” (Venice, California: Social and Public Art Resource Center, 1990), p 52 Philip Brookman and Guillermo Gomez-PeFia, eds. *Made in Aztlán: Centro Cultural Raza Fifteenth Anniversary*. (San Diego: Tolteca Publications, 1986), 18. Siqueiros 1975:18, see especially Siqueiros’ “How To Paint a Mural” (1951), 102-137; “Pilots of Aztlán,” viCieo: 1994.

³³ *San Diego Tribune* August 29, 1991.

³⁴ Raul Jaquez, interview by Jim Fisher, March 1, 1996. Ron Buckley, *City of San Diego Historical Site Board Register*, #143, (San Diego: February 1, 1980), 2. Salvador Torres, interview by Jim Fisher, February 29, 1996; Jose Montoya, interview by Jim Fisher, March 10, 1996.

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1989 and the first decade of the twenty-first century were accomplished under a set criterion of need, ability, subject matter, and the availability of funding. By early 1984, a group of artists led by Salvador Torres, Gloria Torres, Mario Torero, and members of the Chicano Park Arts Committee began the work of touching up the murals. Because mural life is about 10 years, maintenance is important. In 1991, the California Department of Transportation trained numerous artists in repair techniques. Torres expressed a desire to use natural clay unearthed in the park to make tiles that, along with sculpture, would enhance the beauty of the park.³⁵

In 2002, the California Department of Transportation sought and obtained Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (Public Law 102-240; ISTEA, pronounced Ice-Tea) funding to restore the identified historic murals in Chicano Park. Chicano Park and the Chicano Park Monumental Murals were eligible for ISTEA funding due to the role the park and its murals play in beautifying the highway infrastructure and its surrounding landscape. It took close to nine years to release the award and contract, which provided a total of \$1,613,000 to restore 18 selected historic murals painted during the Chicano Park mural making phases one (1973-1974), two (1974-1975), and three (1977-1980). Known as the 2012 Chicano Park Mural Restoration Project, Chicano Park mural artists and California Department of Transportation engineers collaborated to develop advanced technological approaches in restoring the Chicano Park Monumental Murals. The greatest challenge the engineers and artists faced was developing a restoration approach that simultaneously protected the longevity of both the freeway infrastructure and the murals. Their collaborative work resulted in the creation of the "Chicano Park Mural Restoration Technical Manual," which provides detailed instructions, guidelines, and the proper techniques for restoring the Chicano Park Monumental Murals. Due to the diligence and collaborative approach of the artists and engineers, the 18 restored murals are expected to maintain their vibrancy for over 80 years. This is remarkable, as the environmental conditions in Barrio Logan, such as vehicular air pollution, airborne salinity from the San Diego Bay, and seabird excrement, are detrimental to the life span of the Chicano Park Monumental Murals. The guidelines for mural restoration, as stipulated in the "Chicano Park Mural Restoration Technical Manual," are being applied to all mural projects painted after 2012 at Chicano Park, and there are plans, when funding becomes available, to restore all murals under these guidelines. This will ensure that future generations will enjoy the scenic and historic integrity of the Chicano Park Monumental Murals for years to come and may be helpful in the preservation of other outdoor murals.

Selected Biographies of Muralists at Chicano Park

Salvador Roberto "Queso" Torres, born in 1936, has dedicated his life to the creation of *incredible* mural art, the transformation of Chicano Park, and Barrio Logan. Torres describes his work as Chicano art that is "based upon the creative Chicano lifestyle, whose Mexican and American interrelationships and cultural influences form its ideologies and themes." Torres, a lifelong artist, *muralist*, arts administrator and arts educator in California, is best known as the "architect of the dream" for his crucial role in the creation of San Diego's Chicano Park, the largest collection of Chicano murals in the world, and for being a founder of the *Centro Cultural de la Raza*, a multidisciplinary community based arts center devoted to producing and preserving Indian, Mexican and Chicano art and culture located in San Diego. He became the first director of the Centro Cultural de la Raza, and later helped form *Las Toltecas en Aztlán*, a Chicano artists' collective. He has been described as "the most important *Mexican* American artist and Chicano Activist of his generation" by Jorge Mariscal, Professor of Literature at the University of California San Diego. Torres' track record includes picketing and marching for farm worker's rights and teaching art and mural art to children. His 1969 oil on canvas painting, "Viva La Raza" is of one of the most recognized symbols of the Chicano/Chicana Civil Rights Movement, as it depicts the United Farm Workers of America eagle transforming into a red phoenix rising. Torres attended San Diego City College where he earned a statewide art scholarship to the California College of Arts & Crafts in Oakland, California. In 1964 Torres earned the B.A. Ed. in art from the California College of

³⁵ *San Diego Tribune*, March 28, 1984; Salvador Torres and Gloria Torres, interviewed by Dr. Jim Fisher February 29, 1996.

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Arts and Crafts. In 1973 he earned an M.A. in painting and drawing from San Diego State University. Torres has constructed 6 major murals in San Diego, including “The Kelco Historical Community Mural”, that is located in San Diego’s Barrio Logan on Harbor Drive and Cesar Chavez Boulevard. The mural is one of the longest murals in San Diego, and it is an evocative historical account of the contributions of the people of Logan Heights to the United States and provides a glimpse of the future of the children of that community. In 2000, Torres was commissioned to design and create murals on simulated pillars for the NBC television pilot “Fortunate Son” (Stu Segall Productions, San Diego). He was, also, commissioned by the La Jolla Playhouse to create backdrops for the production “The Birth of Corn” a play based on a Mayan legend.

Guillermo “Yermo” Aranda originally from San Diego, California currently resides in the Salinas Valley, California. Yermo comes from a family of musicians, painters and craftsman. He studied art at San Diego City College (1967), San Diego State University (1968) and Cabrillo Community College (1986-89). He is cofounder of *Toltecas en Aztlán* (1969), *El Centro Cultural de La Raza* (1970), and one of the initial artists of the Chicano Park Murals (1971). Yermo became a muralist in 1969, and, although, he states that he has developed a refinement of his skills through a practice of multiple mediums, such as intaglio print making, lithography, monotypes, pastels, acrylic on canvas, watercolor, silversmithing, pottery, and sculpture, mural artwork continues to be his main focus to this day. His work defined as contemporary traditional art, reflects an imagery of indigenous ancestry in the modern world with the timelessness of natural forms, juxtaposed against contemporary images, bold, vibrant and alive. The images in his art reflect old myths and legends, making a full circle to the present. Yermo is a gifted and prolific artist, well known and celebrated in his community for his enormous contributions in mural painting.

Mario “Torero” Acevedo was born in Lima, Peru in 1947. He is an internationally known artist that learned to paint and draw from his Father Guillermo Acevedo who was an accomplished artist living and working in Peru. When Mario was twelve, his family immigrated to the United States in search of art, freedom, and opportunity. From the very beginning, art and the artist’s life permeated through Mario’s upbringing. Mario has been intimately involved with the Chicano Civil Rights movement, and is an instrumental figure in the protests, activism, and ensuing creation of the famous Chicano Park. He found his true calling as an “Artist-activist”. Mario’s murals in Chicano Park are known worldwide and are a major attraction in the area. By 1977 his gallery, the Community Arts Building, that he opened with his father became the first multicultural art center in San Diego. In 1978, Mario painted a 15’ x 50’ iconic mural titled “Eye’s of Picasso” on the Gallery’s fourth floor exterior wall, which immediately became a focal point of reference to the Downtown San Diego Art District. Mario was a member of the founding board of the San Diego Commission of Arts and Culture, in which he served from 1988 to 1993. For ten years Mario's sculptures of “*Los Voladores*” welcomed visitors to the San Diego Airport. Known locally as *El Maestro* (The Teacher), Mario believes in teaching youth about art and how art can create community. Mario spends countless hours with no monetary compensation, teaching the young and old how to paint at his “Kosmic School of Art,” where he aims to demonstrate to his students the great gifts painting can bring. He gives college students tours of Chicano Park and has an ongoing exchange program with Bowling Green University in Ohio. He has made several pilgrimages back to Peru. He has traveled to Paris, Japan, Prague, Barcelona, and more recently to China to share his art and vision. There is no slowing down this “artist” with so much talent and compassion for the arts, in 2011, he worked with artisans in China to create a glass mosaic mural project on the University of California, San Diego campus. He has also opened a new cultural exchange program with Chinese artists. He was involved in the 2012 Chicano Park Mural Restoration Project where he was able to restore many of the original murals that he helped to create.

Victor Ochoa, born 1948 in Los Angeles is an internationally recognized Chicano painter/muralist and one of the pioneers of San Diego’s Chicano art movement. He is a multi-dimensional artist, muralist, art educator and an arts administrator. He is a co-founder of the *Centro Cultural de La Raza* in Balboa Park where he served as its director from 1970-1973. Ochoa was co-initiator of the Chicano Park Monumental Murals. He was also co-

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founder of the Border Art Workshop/*Taller de Arte Fronterizo* arts collective (1984-1993). Ochoa lives and works on both sides of the San Diego/Tijuana border and has painted murals in Ireland and Cuba.³⁶

Esteban Villa, born 1930 in Tulare, California is an internationally recognized artist, muralist, musician, and arts educator. He is Professor Emeritus at California State University, Sacramento. He began his teaching career in 1962 at the high school level, and has held professor appointments at Washington State University, D-Q University, and the University of California, Davis. He has served as an art consultant to schools and organizations, including Centro de Artistas Chicanos, and has coordinated art programs in the California Prison System. He is a founding member of the Royal Chicano Air Force (RCAF), a collective of artists, professors and students, which was formed amid the Chicano Movements push for social and political rights. He has an extensive exhibition record that includes numerous lecture and slide presentations, art exhibits, and mural projects at Universities throughout California. The "Sacramento Bee" spoke of him as "an extraordinary man: a mural artist, musician, teacher and community leader who is known for his barrio art, which played a role in the Chicano movement of the late 1960s and 70s." In addition, Villa was involved in the production of the Channel 6 (PBS) documentary "Pilots of Aztlán", a film about the RCAF. He continues to paint and to exhibit his artwork in California.

Guillermo Rosette is an artist and visionary of the Tolteca Anahuaca Tradition. As a historian and an art teacher, his work on community art projects in San Diego and Los Angeles contributed towards the Chicano Indigenous traditions at Chicano Park, Los Angeles, Taos, and Santa Fe, New Mexico. He studied art in Mexico City at the National School of Art, San Diego City College, San Diego State University Summer Mural Art Program at the Centro Cultural de la Raza, The American Indian Arts Institute, Santa Fe, and Oglala Lakota College, Kile South Dakota.

As a Tolteca artist he has completed many murals throughout the San Diego area, as well as in Los Angeles at the Plaza de la Raza in Lincoln Park. He has also created a commemorative mural at the Guadalupe Posadas, Residence in Mexico City in 1979. In addition to being a visual artist he is a Sun Dancer and a Traditional *Azteca-Tolteca-Chichimeca* dancer and musician. He has been actively painting for a living for the past twenty years. Painting is his life project with inspirations from the world of mysticism and spiritual interconnectedness.

Juanishi Orosco is a founding member of the international recognized artist cultural collective known as the Royal Chicano Air Force (aka Rebel Chicano Art Front, or RCAF). Orosco is known for his vivid murals depicting his Mexican, Chicano and Indigenous cultural roots. Orosco is also an arts educator providing outreach and training to hundreds of young artists throughout Northern California. He is a Chicano artist and activist living in Sacramento, California. Orosco's murals dominate the Sacramento regional area.

The late **Jose Montoya**, born 1932 in New Mexico, was an internationally known painter, muralist, poet, musician and activist. He was Professor Emeritus at California State University, Sacramento. In 2007, Montoya was named poet laureate of the city of Sacramento. In the early 1960s, Montoya began working for the movement to unionize local farm workers. He also realized that his art could be a vehicle for social change. With Esteban Villa, Malaquias Montoya, Manuel Hernandez, and others, he formed the Mexican American Liberation Art Front (MALAF) in the San Francisco Bay Area. At Sacramento State University, where Montoya was teaching after having earned an M.F.A. in 1971, he helped Esteban Villa and a group of students create the Rebel Chicano Art Front (RCAF). Using art and creativity as an organizing tool for the movement, the group adopted the motto *la locura lo cura* (craziness is its own cure). The concept showed its emphasis on humor and activism. Soon people began to notice that the group's acronym was identical to that of the Royal Canadian Air Force. The group then renamed itself the Royal Chicano Air Force or the RCAF. The group became internationally known as a California arts collective renowned for its political murals and community

³⁶ <http://cemaweb.librarv.ucsb.edu/ochoa.html>.

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projects. They were the first performance artists group prior to the genre being established, they enjoyed a military image. They dressed as World War II bomber pilots and drove around in an old army jeep that a fan had donated. Yet art remained at the center of the collective's work. The RCAF engaged in activist art, creating posters for migrant workers, the United Farmworkers Union, cannery workers, and other community groups. The RCAF also founded the "Arts in the Barrio" program, which offered community art classes to Chicano students and senior citizens in Sacramento. One of the most impressive achievements of the RCAF was its involvement with the Chicano Park Monumental Murals project at Barrio Logan in San Diego. Among Montoya's artistic influences were Mexican engraver Jose Guadalupe Posado, whose work combined the political and the surreal. Muralists Diego Rivera, Jose Clemente Orozco, and David Alfara Siqueiros were also major influences. In 1973 Montoya's work was included in one of the first national exhibitions of Chicano art at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. Among his most notable works is his *Pachuco Series* of 1977, which depict the Chicano street gangs of his youth. Montoya's paintings, drawings, and prints have been exhibited across the United States and in Cuba, Mexico, and Paris. In 1977 he was named to the National Task Force on Hispanic Arts. Jose Montoya passed in Sacramento, California on September 25, 2013.

Felipe Adame, is a Chicano/Yaqui artist, a master muralist, and a community cultural worker. He has painted murals in San Diego, El Paso, and in Los Angeles. He states that Mexican artists have heavily influenced him and his artwork and that the images he painted at Chicano Park are deeply romantic illustrations of Aztec history and reflects the influence of Mexican artist Jesus Helguera. Felipe states, "I have been studying Helguera for thirty years." He further discusses his work in terms of his spirituality and activism. "We were reactivating, giving life to the culture," he explained. He believes in giving back to the community and he has a history of working closely with students. This is exemplified in his commitment to include students during his painting of murals at Chicano Park where for over 40 years he has continued to paint and continues the tradition of passing on his skills to students. He is one of the first counselors to organize a drug detoxification program in Logan Heights, he states that he was concerned with the power of culture to transform a "*cholo*" (youth) into an "*Azteca Warrior*" conducting healing and spiritual cleansing."

The late **Charles "Gato" Felix** was a master artist, Chicano activist and the architect of the historic Estrada Courts Housing Project Murals in the Boyle Heights, a neighborhood of Los Angeles. His artwork lives-on and can be seen at Estrada Courts Housing Project and at Chicano Park in San Diego, California.

Norma Montoya recalls when her late artist husband, Charles "Gato" Felix enlisted local youth to paint Los Angeles' Estrada Courts Murals (1973-1979) and recruited her to work with the girls. "The girls," Norma clarifies and "wondered why the painting was a guy thing, they felt just as able," as any guy. She met artists from Chicano Park in an artistic exchange, and she noted social similarities between the Los Angeles and San Diego artists. Most notably, she noticed that both groups were willing to paint for free and to use art to tackle the "horrible conditions" in their communities. "There was so much talent," she remembers, "and no programs for kids in East LA." Not surprisingly, her mural at Chicano Park, *Los Niños del Mundo* (1975) symbolizes the "future of the new generation." Giant mushrooms, metaphors for imagination, spring from the ground while arrows carry their energy up through children holding books and palettes, finally reaching the feathered serpent of learning, beauty and knowledge, Quetzalcoatl, whose two heads represent imagination and reason of the right and left side of the brain. Norma has been painting murals for close to 40 years and continues to be a force to be reckoned with.

The late **Michael Schnorr** transformed watercolor drawings into the *Undocumented Worker* mural at Chicano Park in 1979. He used the same watercolor drawings to help guide the 2012 restoration of his mural. He made the watercolor drawings after watching an Afghan immigrant in Italy cleaning the windshields of cars stopped in traffic, a ritual he had often seen at the San Diego/Tijuana border. He realized that global migration had made for "a small world" and he was determined to "paint a mural dedicated to immigrant laborers everywhere."

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Michael taught art at Southwest College in Chula Vista, California for over 39 years. Michael cofounded the Border Art Workshop/*Taller de Arte Fronterizo* (BAW/TAF) in 1984, a border region art collaborative whose works have been exhibited at venues including San Diego's Centro Cultural de la Raza, San Francisco's Galería de la Raza, New York's Artists Space, at various national museums of contemporary art, and internationally at Venice's Biennale and Sydney's Biennial. Michael and BAW/TAF's efforts continued into the 21st Century. He and BAW/TAF worked with Tijuana's Maclovio Rojas neighborhood residents to build a community center that offers art classes, tutoring, and hosted art project residencies for local and international artists. They were, also, instrumental in developing the Maclovio Rojas community cemetery.

Michael participated in the Cross Project's art installations at the U.S.-Mexico border fence, which memorialized thousands of border crossers whose deaths had resulted from the federal government's 1994 Operation Gatekeeper. Michael believed that "barriers, walls and fences must be moved, must be broken down; between countries, between people, between neighborhoods."

Yolanda Lopez was born 1942 in San Diego, California's Logan Heights neighborhood. She graduated from San Diego State University in 1975 with a B.A. in painting and drawing and in 1970 earned a M.F.A in Visual Arts from the University of California, San Diego. She is known as a great American muralist, painter, educator, film producer, and printmaker. Her work focuses on the experience of Mexican-American women and challenges the ethnic and gender stereotypes that are often associated with them. Lopez is best recognized for her Virgin of Guadalupe series, which illustrates the Virgin of Guadalupe in both personal and political terms. While there were many critics—mainly religious individuals—that objected to the Virgin of Guadalupe series due to the re-envisioning of the iconic Virgin of Guadalupe, Lopez's series attracted the admiration of many because the images "sanctify" average Mexican migrant women in the United States. Another famous work by Lopez is her political poster, *Who's the Illegal/Alien, Pilgrim?* Which highlights an angry man in Aztec attire holding a crumpled-up paper titled "Immigration Plans." This political poster was made in 1978 during a period of national debate, which resulted in the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of 1978. In this poster, Lopez illustrates that modern descendants of the Aztecs and their neighbors have the right to immigrate as they please in the contemporary United States and Canada. Lopez has also produced two films: *Images of Mexicans in the Media* and *When you Think of Mexico*, which challenged how the national media portrays Mexican and Latin Americans. She has also curated exhibitions that have toured nationwide featuring works concerning immigration to the United States, and she has taught art at prestigious universities, most notably at the University of California, San Diego and the University of California, Berkeley.

Irma Barbosa, Chicana/Yaqui has been exhibiting her work for over 40 years. She was a member of the internationally known Royal Chicano Air Force (RCAF) and is a co-founder of *Las Comadres*, a women artist collective in Sacramento, California. Her work stems from the oral stories, which are the spirit threads passed on from generation to generation—they are the means of learning. She states, "the stories passed on by our elders were meant to guide and develop morals and values" and that her "art takes you on a pilgrimage to mythical places and tells you stories of innocence, beauty, and pure passion." The universality of the Earth Mother theme is utilized within much of her work to communicate that every individual is responsible for his words, that each person is a walking story, and that we are all connected.

Celia Herrera Rodriguez, (Xicana/O'dami) is a two-spirit visual and performing artist and educator. Her work reflects a full generation dialogue with Xicana/o, Indigenous Mexican and North American Native thought, spirituality, and politics. She teaches in the Chicano Studies program at the University of California, Berkeley, and is an Adjunct Professor in the Diversity Studies Program at California College for the Arts in the San Francisco Bay Area. She holds an M.F.A. in painting from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. Herrera's work has been exhibited internationally. Celia has also collaborated as the conceptual, scenic and costume designer for Cherrie Moraga's theater works including: *The Hungry Woman* (2005), *Digging Up the*

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Dirt (2010), and *La Semilla Caminante/The Traveling Seed* (2010). In 2011, her drawings—a series of contemporary Xicana codices—appear in Moraga’s new collection of writings, *A Xicana Codex of Changing Consciousness* published by Duke University Press.

The late **Gilbert “Magu” Lujan** was a sculptor, muralist and painter. “Magu”, along with Carlos Almaraz, Beto de la Rocha, and Frank Romero, was a founding member of “Los Four”, a Chicano art collective in Los Angeles. He was born in Stockton, California in 1940. His parents were Mexican and Native American. As a toddler, he lived in migrant worker camp. At the start of World War II, his family moved to Los Angeles, and it was in that city where he spent his childhood and adolescence. Magu’s work is nationally and internationally known and can be found in major collections around the United States including the Smithsonian’s American Art Museum.

Jari “Werc” Alvarez was born in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico, and grew-up in El Paso, Texas. His artwork addresses topics pertaining to border culture, labor, commercial logos, symbols, duality, and identity politics, architecture, street vendors, urbanization, and the nostalgic humor of immigrant cultures. Werc explores what it means to be a consumer and how advertising affects everyday life. Werc’s murals can be seen around southern California, throughout the United States, and in Mexico. His studio-based works have been exhibited in numerous galleries and museums, including the Snite Museum, Museum of Monterrey, and in Chicano actor, Cheech Marin’s personal Art Collection. Werc has been published in *Mural Art Magazine*, *Artillery Magazine*, and *Graffiti Planet*. He states, “I paint, collage, install, sculpt and use video to translate my concepts into experiences. In my paintings, I use the language of globalization and create responses made with the cardboard logos of multinational import/export commodities used today. In the silkscreen works on paper, the art exists installed in public spaces as interventions of the conditionings we have in a culture of marketing, where we are constantly being sold something. The pieces just give without asking for a return and become challenges for the viewer’s set beliefs.”

Jose De Jesus Cervantes studied at one of the world’s most prestigious art institutes, Chouinard (now Cal Arts) in Los Angeles where he polished his thinking skills and perfected his own individual abstract style. His large canvas designs rendered sparkling edges of diamond segments and full of rich colors. The shapes in Cervantes’s paintings truly revealed his evolved gift in abstract art. During the 1970s he was intimately involved with the Mechicano Art Center in East Los Angeles where he became recognized as the Artist in Residence assisting any and all who needed any type of artistic assistance. He was committed to keeping the Chicano Art movement alive and in the awareness of everyone. He eventually became involved with *El Centro Cultural de La Raza* in Balboa Park, San Diego and worked on mural projects with many of the other Chicano artists at the *Centro Cultural de La Raza*. He recalls painting murals at Chicano Park, “from my brush strokes emerged steps climbing up to the top of a pyramid where the sun stood still while we revolved around it.” Cervantes continues his professional artistic career by exhibiting and collaborating with other artists.

Isaias Crow draws inspiration from people and their surrounding environment. This can include a variety of sources from textures of old buildings with weathered down walls to mountains and other shapes and colors surrounding daily life. Inspired by Heavy Metal, Crow, also known as Crol, branched off from traditional illustration to graffiti at thirteen years old. After years of painting on the streets in New Mexico, Crow obtained a B.A. in Media arts and Animation from the Art Institute in San Diego in 2009. He attended college while simultaneously creating a strong portfolio of public art, fine art, and digital paintings. Crow’s portfolio includes projects that require close collaborations with architects and designers. In 2008, he bridged some of his closest associates to create The Prism Process, an organization that exists to provide programs and services in the public realm, through the arts, culture and civic engagement. His mural artwork can be found nation-wide from Miami, Florida, Houston, Texas, to Los Angeles, California. Internationally he has painted murals in various Central American countries, Mexico, and many European countries.

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Mario A. Chacon recognizes art as a powerful healing force. He is an artist of deep spiritual and cultural orientation. His Native American ceremonial life provides the underpinnings for much of his work, and the rich milieu of events that comprised the Chicano Movement of the late sixties and seventies factor prominently in his artistic development. Nearly 40 years later his evolution as an artist has led him to explore many relevant themes all the while maintaining a solid foundation rooted deeply in his earlier experiences. Born in the East Los Angeles Barrio of Boyle Heights with roots in El Paso, Texas and the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Chacon views the world through the ironic prism of a barrio street urchin, professional educator, and indigenous spiritual seeker. Chacon strives to weave a balance of street wisdom, Native American spirituality, and a healthy sense of humor into his artistic endeavors. Chacon's acclaimed work has toured throughout California and the Southwest and has been published as book covers, musical CD jacket artwork, theatre program art, and a variety of art and academic publications. Chacon completed his undergraduate work in History at the University of California, Los Angeles, and California State University, Los Angeles. In 1982 received a Master of Science Degree in Education from San Diego State University. Prior to his retirement from higher education administration, Chacon served as San Diego Community College District Dean of Student Affairs.

Rupert García, born in French Camp, California, studied painting and received numerous student honors from Stockton Junior College. He was influenced by photorealism at San Francisco State University. As one of the leading artists of the Chicano movement in the Bay area during the late-1960s and early 1970s, García participated in the formation of several seminal West Coast civil rights movement art oriented workshops and collectives, including Galería de la Raza and the San Francisco Poster Workshop, which had been forced off the San Francisco State University campus during the Vietnam War.

After graduating from San Francisco State University, García produced his signature work, a portrait of Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara above the slogan "Right On!" García has received numerous awards and honors, including an individual artist fellowship grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, President's Scholar Award from San Jose State University, where he has taught in the School of Art and Design since 1988, and College Art Association's Distinguished Award for Lifetime Achievement. In 1995, he received the National Hispanic Academy of Media Arts and Sciences' Lifetime Achievement Award in Art. The bulk of García's work is housed in the National Archives of American Art at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. In 1983, García wrote the first major study of Mexican painter Frida Kahlo entitled *Frida Kahlo: A Bibliography and Biographical Introduction*.

Salvador Barajas was born in Nio, Sinaloa, Mexico. He spent his youth living in Tijuana and at 18 years of age, he and his family moved to San Diego. As a result, he joined the U.S. Air Force where he worked as a technical illustrator. After successfully completing his military service, Sal graduated from Los Angeles Trade-Technical College as an advertising designer. His art training was enhanced by attending The Academy of Arts in San Francisco and San Diego State University. For the following 30 years, Sal worked as a designer/art director for several design studios, in-house art departments, and advertising agencies in Los Angeles and San Diego. Sal has shared his skills with his San Diego community by contributing artwork or mural painting for the *Centro Cultural De La Raza*, Chicano Park Steering Committee, Chicano Park, Jacobs Foundation, San Diego County Office of Education, Urban Corps of San Diego County and many other community institutions. Sal has owned Motivational Designs since 1996, a business that produces illustrated messages that assist teachers with promoting education and give students an appreciation of their heritage.

Susan Yamagata was born in National City, California in 1958 and was raised in Chula Vista, California. Yamagata attended Southwestern Community College (1976-78) and received a B.A. in Applied Arts and Sciences at San Diego State University (1982). She earned an M.F.A. in printmaking from the University of California, Santa Barbara (1984). Much of her past work has been collaborative in nature and includes murals at Chicano Park and in Los Angeles. She is, also, the first non-Mexican-American to paint a mural at Chicano

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Park. Her artwork revolves around community-based projects relating to “the U.S.-Mexico, border”, racism, prejudice, and self-identity. As a member of the Border Art Workshop (1990-95), she designed art pieces that continue to be used as media tools for a coalition of migrant rights groups on both sides of the border.

Antonia Perez was born in New York City, 1951, and is currently living and working in New York City. She earned a Master of Fine Arts from Queens College, City University of New York. She resided in San Diego from 1973-1977 and was one of the muralists that painted the exterior murals at the *Centro Cultural de La Raza*’s building. She organized and secured funding and materials for the Chicano Park mural, “Women Hold up Half the Sky,” which was originally painted by Chicana artists from Sacramento, California in 1975. She, along with Salvador R. Torres and Sal Barajas, primed the wall for the mural, and she, also, painted some of the figures at the top of the mural.

Barbara Desmangles-Simpson currently resides in Gold River, California. Barbara is a retired educator of the Twin Rivers Unified School District and a celebrated California State Teacher-of-the-Year and California (C.S.U.S.) Fulbright Scholar. She is the loving mother of two daughters, Cynne and Chaquira. She attended Highlands High School (Class of 1967). Barbara was elected as the first Black Student Body President at Highlands High School. She attended Oregon State University where she became involved with the Black Power Movement. In 1970, Barbara assisted in the painting of “Women Hold Up Half the Sky” (RCAF Women’s Mural) at Chicano Park.

Glory Galindo Sanchez is a multi-disciplinary artist specializing in traditional folkloric dances of Mexico. She was a board member of the *Centro Cultural de la Raza* and has been participating in the annual celebrations of Chicano Park since the park’s inception. As a visual artist she is self-taught and has contributed as an assistant artist in the painting of many of the Chicano Park Monumental Murals. She has worked closely with Norma Montoya on the restoration of many of “Gato Felix’s” murals, as well as the “Women Hold Up Half The Sky” mural.

Eddie Galindo is a self-taught artist and has contributed to the development of many of the murals at Chicano Park. He is a resident of the community and takes pride in Chicano Park. His artistic talent is a great contribution towards enhancing all aspects of Chicano Park and the Monumental Chicano Park Murals, particularly during the 2012 Chicano Park Mural Restoration Project. In 2014, his watercolor motorcycle portraits were exhibited at the Bodega Art Gallery in Barrio Logan, California.

Hector Villegas was raised and, currently, lives in Barrio Logan. He is a community leader, artist, and educator. He was an instrumental figure during the 2012 Chicano Park Mural Restoration Project, as he is an expert on properly clear coating murals—a necessary skill that will ensure the longevity of the Chicano Park Monumental Murals for future generations to enjoy.

Comparable Properties

Many ethnic and immigrant neighborhoods in the United States share similar social histories of urban marginalization as Barrio Logan, but few have experienced a culminating event that transformed their urban environmental condition into a place that provides inroads for the advancement of the arts and environmental social justice. The community of Barrio Logan achieved these goals via the creation of Chicano Park, an urban public recreational park that encourages creative political and cultural expression through the medium of visual artwork. Currently, there are two National Historic Landmarks that highlight the work of master mural artists Diego Rivera and Jose Clemente Orozco. Unlike the murals at Chicano Park, both Diego Rivera’s *Detroit Industry Murals* at the Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan, and Jose Clemente Orozco’s *The Epic of American Civilization Murals* at the Baker Library, Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, are located inside architecturally-important buildings and were formally commissioned murals by established internationally-

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known artists. The Chicano Park Monumental Murals, however, are unique as they stem from a grassroots community effort to not only beautify an urban park but to also tell the story of American Latinos as they struggle to find a place in the United States.

The following properties are comparable to Chicano Park's social history and current functions: Columbus (La Raza) Park in Denver, Colorado and Lincoln Park in El Paso, Texas. Given Chicano Park's uniqueness as being simultaneously a cultural and recreational area with what is, perhaps, the nation's largest public Chicano art collection, it has been difficult to find comparable properties. The few properties that are comparable to Chicano Park and the Chicano Park Monumental Murals are either directly tied to the Chicano Civil Rights Movement, or Chicano Park and the Chicano Park Monumental Murals directly influenced the creation of these sites. Lincoln Park in El Paso, Texas and Columbus (La Raza) Park in Denver, Colorado, for example, are both comparable properties to Chicano Park but under different circumstances, as the Chicano Park Monumental Murals influenced the former and the latter is directly tied with an important leader of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement.

Lincoln Park, El Paso, Texas

Located under the Interstate-Ten (I-10) and U.S.-54 Highway overpasses (or the Spaghetti Bowl, as it is known colloquially), Lincoln Park in El Paso, Texas is a comparable property to Chicano Park, as Lincoln Park's cultural landscape includes mural artwork on the pillars that support the highway overpasses. The murals reflect themes of the legacies and resiliency of the Chicana/o Civil Rights Movement in Texas. While Lincoln Park is reflective of the broader goals of community building that the founders and original mural artists of Chicano Park envisioned for Chicana/o communities in the United States, the founding of Lincoln Park does not include a major transformative event in its social history, such as the community takeover of the land that ultimately culminated into Barrio Logan's Chicano Park. In recent years, California and Texas artists have painted murals at Lincoln Park, a tradition that began in 1983 when San Diego based master mural artist Felipe Andamé painted the first mural at Lincoln Park.³⁷ However, it was not until after 1999 that mural artwork began to become prevalent at Lincoln Park. Despite the lack of a transformative event, Lincoln Park is a testament of the inroads that the Latina/o, Chicana/o, and Mexican-American people have made to improve the social quality of their community via the beautification of the built environment. Today, Lincoln Park is the host of many Chicana/o cultural community events, such as lowrider car-shows, the Cesar Chavez Day Celebration, and a *Día de Los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) event. The tradition of murals at Lincoln Park are testimony to the influence of Chicano Park.

Columbus (La Raza) Park, Denver, Colorado

Located in Denver, Colorado's Highland neighborhood, Columbus (La Raza) Park is considered by Chicano Scholars as an important site of Mexican-American history, because prominent leader of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement, Rodolfo (Corky) Gonzalez provided the impetus for grounding the cultural and political aspects of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement in Denver and at the park.³⁸ During the Chicano Civil Rights Movement, the Columbus (La Raza) Park was the epicenter of Denver's social justice rallies and Mexican-American cultural life, a tradition that continues to this day.

Changes in city demographics incited conflicts that caused visible transformations on the Columbus (La Raza) Park grounds. The park was initially founded as the North Side Playground in 1912. The playground/park served Denver's Eastern European immigrant community, which settled in the area during the 1890s. By 1916,

³⁷ Lincoln Park Conservation Committee, "History," <http://lincolnparkcc.org/history/>.

³⁸ Langegger, Sig. "Viva la Raza! A Park, a Riot, and Neighbourhood Change in North Denver," *Urban Studies* 50, no.16 (December 2013): 3360-77.

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the city government installed a pool facility at the park, and in 1935 the name of the park changed from North Side Playground to Columbus Park. Denver's Mexican population increased during the 1920s, as Mexican immigrants were settling in north Denver. By the late 1960s, Denver, Colorado had become an important geographical setting for the Chicano Civil Rights Movement due to Rodolfo (Corky) Gonzalez's Crusade for Justice hosting the National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference. At this meeting, in 1969, poet, activist, and professor from San Diego Alberto Baltazar Urista Heredia (Alurista) introduced the preamble to *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán* (The Spiritual Plan of Aztlán). *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán* became the founding document of the *Movimiento Estudiantil Chicana/o de Aztlán* (The Chicana/o Student Movement of Aztlán, M.E.Ch.A), and "called for Chicano self-determination and ethnic pride."³⁹

To this day, city officials recognize the park as Columbus Park, but to the Chicana/o and Latina/o community in Denver the park is known colloquially as "La Raza" Park. In 1971, after "splash-in"⁴⁰ protests at the park's pool facility, Chicano community activists gained control of the pool and the park. Their goal was to push-out the suburban lifeguards on-duty, and by doing so, the activists aimed to initiate an incentive for the city to hire local lifeguards from the community. Gonzalez's Crusade for Justice had been training local youth to be lifeguards and, therefore, the "splash-in" was successful in actualizing the goal of community self-determination at a grassroots level as outlined in *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán*. The civil rights struggle in this park is comparable to the efforts to establish Chicano Park.

On Sunday June 28, 1981, during the 11th annual "La Raza Park" anniversary celebration of the park's 1971 "splash-in" demonstration, a Denver SWAT team was ordered by city officials to end the celebration, as no event permit had been submitted to the city.⁴¹ The police ordered over 2000 event attendees to vacate the premises in five-minutes or they would tear-gas the park. In a moment of panic and chaotic confusion, the event attendees attempted to vacate the site but were not successful. When the SWAT team launched tear-gas canisters into the park, some event attendees reacted by propelling rocks at the officers and in doing so set off a riot. The Columbus (La Raza) Park riot incited city officials to cut funding to the only pool that served the Denver Mexican-American community and resulted in the permanent closure of the Columbus (La Raza) Park pool facilities. In 1982, the pool was filled in with concrete, and today it is the location of the Columbus (La Raza) Park's Aztec performance pavilion.⁴²

The demolition of the pool was a devastating loss to the community, but its closure encouraged the construction of the Aztec Pavilion, which now serves as a physical marker of Chicana/o pre-Colombian Indigenous Mesoamerican heritage on the landscape. Similar to Chicano Park's *Kiosko*, the Aztec Pavilion is a towering structure shaped as a Mesoamerican pyramid that serves as a performance arena for Chicanas/os, such as hip-hop performers, Aztec dancers, Mexican folkloric dancers, and poets. During 2015, the concrete pyramid structure is undergoing a \$30,000 mural artwork project commissioned by the Denver Art & Venues Public Arts Program.

³⁹ DeSipio, Louis. "Demanding Equal Political Voice...And Accepting Nothing Less: The Quest for Latino Political Inclusion." In *American Latinos and the Making of the United States: A Theme Study*, 273-88. Washington, DC: A Publication of the National Park System Advisory American Latino Expert Panel, 2013.

⁴⁰ The "Splash-in" demonstrations were creative measures taken by Denver Chicana/o community members to protest the lack of diversity of the Columbus Park Pool lifeguards. The acts resulted in participants actively jumping into the pool and taunting the lifeguards.

⁴¹ Langegger, Sig. "Viva la Raza! A Park, a Riot, and Neighbourhood Change in North Denver." *Urban Studies* 50, no.16 (December 2013): 3360-77.

⁴² *Ibid.*

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Conclusion

At Chicano Park, the “Y” and “T” shaped pillars that hold-up the Coronado Bay Bridge have been (re)appropriated from structural support pillars to Chicana/o cultural monuments of recognition and resistance. It is important to recognize that the urban landscape of Barrio Logan includes military facilities, shipyards, the Interstate-Five Freeway, the Coronado Bay Bridge, and a downtown civic center that surrounds Barrio Logan in all its trajectories, including its horizontal, vertical, and audible dimensions. By contextualizing historical sociocultural, political, and economic cases that have shaped Logan Height’s built environment and created Chicano Park, one can see the on-the-ground consequences caused by “public” works infrastructure development projects in this Mexican-American neighborhood. The freeway infrastructure, not the freeway, was, indeed, built for—and later (re)imagined by—the San Diego Chicana/o community. Today, the infrastructure of the Interstate Five Freeway is culturally significant to the Chicana/o community of San Diego because of Chicano Park and its Monumental Murals. Chicano Park serves as an open recreational, cultural, and political space that has perpetuated and commemorated contemporary social and environmental justice movements in San Diego, California and throughout the United States.

The park is centered amongst urbanized industrial commerce and highway overpasses. Therefore, Chicano Park spatially reshaped the political and cultural capital of the community of Barrio Logan and for Chicana/os across the nation. Cultural Geographer Don Mitchell explains that “[s]pace, place, and location are not just the stage upon which rights are contested but are actively produced by—and in turn serve to structure—struggles over rights.”⁴³ Thus, the creation of Chicano Park served as an ecological, cultural, and political victory for Barrio Logan residents and American Latina/os in their struggle for political and cultural inclusion into U.S. society.

⁴³ Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (New York: Guilford Press, 2003).

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
 Previously Listed in the National Register. NR#12001192, Listed January 23, 2013
 Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
 Designated a National Historic Landmark.
 Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
 Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State Agency
 Federal Agency
 Local Government
 University
 Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 7.4 acres

Point	Latitude	Longitude
1	32.702469	-117.144846
2	32.699872	-117.141061
3	32.698773	-117.142261
4	32.698629	-117.144150
5	-117.144150	-117.144665

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary runs south of the right-of-way of Interstate-Five-Freeway from a point halfway between Beardsley Street and Cesar Chavez Parkway on the northwest, to the point where the eastbound Coronado Bay Bridge exits connect to Interstate-Five and National Avenue, South along Dewey Street to Newton Avenue, and returning to Interstate-Five along the Coronado Bay Bridge approaches via Logan Avenue and southbound Interstate-Five, in an approximately triangular shape.

Boundary Justification: The boundary is based on the location of the Chicano Park Monumental Murals and the historic spaces that are part of Chicano Park, a city park managed by the City of San Diego's Parks and Recreation Department in collaboration with the Chicano Park Steering Committee, which is the steward of Chicano Park.

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11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Manuel Guadalupe Galaviz and Josie S. Talamantez

Address: 3409 Lyons Road
Austin, Texas 78702

Telephone: 760-532-4948

Date: August 7, 2015

Edited by: Roger Reed and Patty Henry
National Park Service
National Historic Landmarks Program
1201 Eye St. NW (2280), 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Telephone: (202) 354-2278 and (202) 354-2216

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS PROGRAM

CHICANO PARK

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Datum: NAD83

Imagery ©2016 Google, Map data ©2016 Google

200 ft

Point	Latitude	Longitude
1	32.702469	-117.144846
2	32.699872	-117.141061
3	32.698773	-117.142261
4	32.698629	-117.144150
5	-117.144150	-117.144665

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Chicano Park
San Diego, California
“Virgen de Guadalupe”
Photo by J.S. Talamantez, 2012

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Chicano Park
San Diego, California
"Adelita"
Photo by Todd Stands, 2011

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Chicano Park
San Diego, California
“Águila en Aztlán” in Cactus Garden
Photo by J.S. Talamantez, 2012

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Chicano Park
San Diego, California
"All the Way to the Bay"
Photo by Todd Stands, 2012

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Chicano Park
San Diego, California
"Aztec Archer"
Photo by Todd Stands, 2012

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Chicano Park
San Diego, California
“Chicano Park Takeover”
Photo by Todd Stands, 2012

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Chicano Park
San Diego, California
“Corazon de Aztlán” with Ceremonial Site in foreground
Photo by J.S. Talamantez, 2012

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Chicano Park
San Diego, California
“Cuauhtemoc”
Photo by Todd Stands, 2012

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Chicano Park
San Diego, California
"Kiosk" by Alfredo Larin
Photo by J.S. Talamantez, 2012

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Chicano Park
San Diego, California
"La Revolución Mexicana"
Photo by Todd Stands, 2011

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Chicano Park
San Diego, California
“Los Niños del Mundo”
Photo by Todd Stands, 2012

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Chicano Park
San Diego, California
"Mexican History"
Photo by J.S. Talamantez, 2012

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Chicano Park
San Diego, California
"Mother Earth"
Photo by J.S. Talamantez, 2012

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Chicano Park
San Diego, California
"Parque Chicano"
Photo by J.S. Talamantez, 2012