



SPARC Receives \$5 Million Dollar Grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Grant Supports Activation & Expansion of The Great Wall of Los Angeles Mural

Los Angeles, California (February 12, 2021) The Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) today announced it has been awarded a \$5 million dollar grant over three years from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to support the preservation, activation, and expansion of one of the country's largest monuments to interracial harmony through civic engagement and muralist training. The grant will also support muralist Judy Baca's The Great Wall of Los Angeles and advance the work on the mural while also developing digital techniques and resources for future artists and enhance community engagement.

The mural, a National Historic Site, is a dynamic artistic expression of Los Angeles' history and ethnic identity located along the Tujunga Wash in the San Fernando Valley. The first half-mile of The Great Wall was designed by muralist and SPARC Co-Founder Judy Baca and painted by artists, community members, and over 400 youth between 1976 and 1983. SPARC is extending the mural to reflect the current histories of California's marginalized communities from the 1960s to 2020.

"When you disappear the River, you disappear the stories of the People" said Judith F. Baca, Artistic Director and Co-Founder of SPARC. The Great Wall described by Baca, as "a tattoo on the scar where the river once ran" - depicts the narrative history of underrepresented communities from pre-colonial times through to the 1950s. With the expansion of one of the country's largest monuments to interracial harmony, the new design and mural content will represent critical histories of six additional decades (1960-2020), while also developing digital techniques for mural making, providing resources for future artists and enhancing community engagement. "The Great Wall serves to educate us on the often forgotten history and legacy of marginalized groups. This funding is another step in fulfilling the vision for The Great Wall and SPARC's mission of the public's engagement through art." (Judith F. Baca)

"Our goal is to provide the community, visitors, and tourists with the opportunity to learn about California's indigenous and minority histories" said Carlos Rogel, Executive Director of SPARC. "This funding allows us to increase accessibility and attention to The Great Wall of Los Angeles, which recognized communities of color as holders of knowledge and that their history is valued and part of the story of California central to the United States."

Along with continuing the mural itself, expansion plans include an Interpretive Green Bridge to serve as an instructional and viewing platform, six interpretive stations that will provide a narrative for understanding the imagery and context, and lighting for the entirety of the mural.

Funding will be provided over three years to support the preservation, activation, and expansion of The Great Wall of Los Angeles.

About the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC):

SPARC was born in a time of change – the 1970s. Since it was founded in 1976, SPARC has been a catalyst for social change through the arts and a home for artistic innovation. Being a catalyst has often meant handling the many currents that flow through historical events at the moment they are occurring and working outside of typical art venues in the places where people live and work. SPARC endeavors to communicate to the larger public – the means of communication may take many forms, from built architectural monuments and murals to galleries and digital spaces.

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