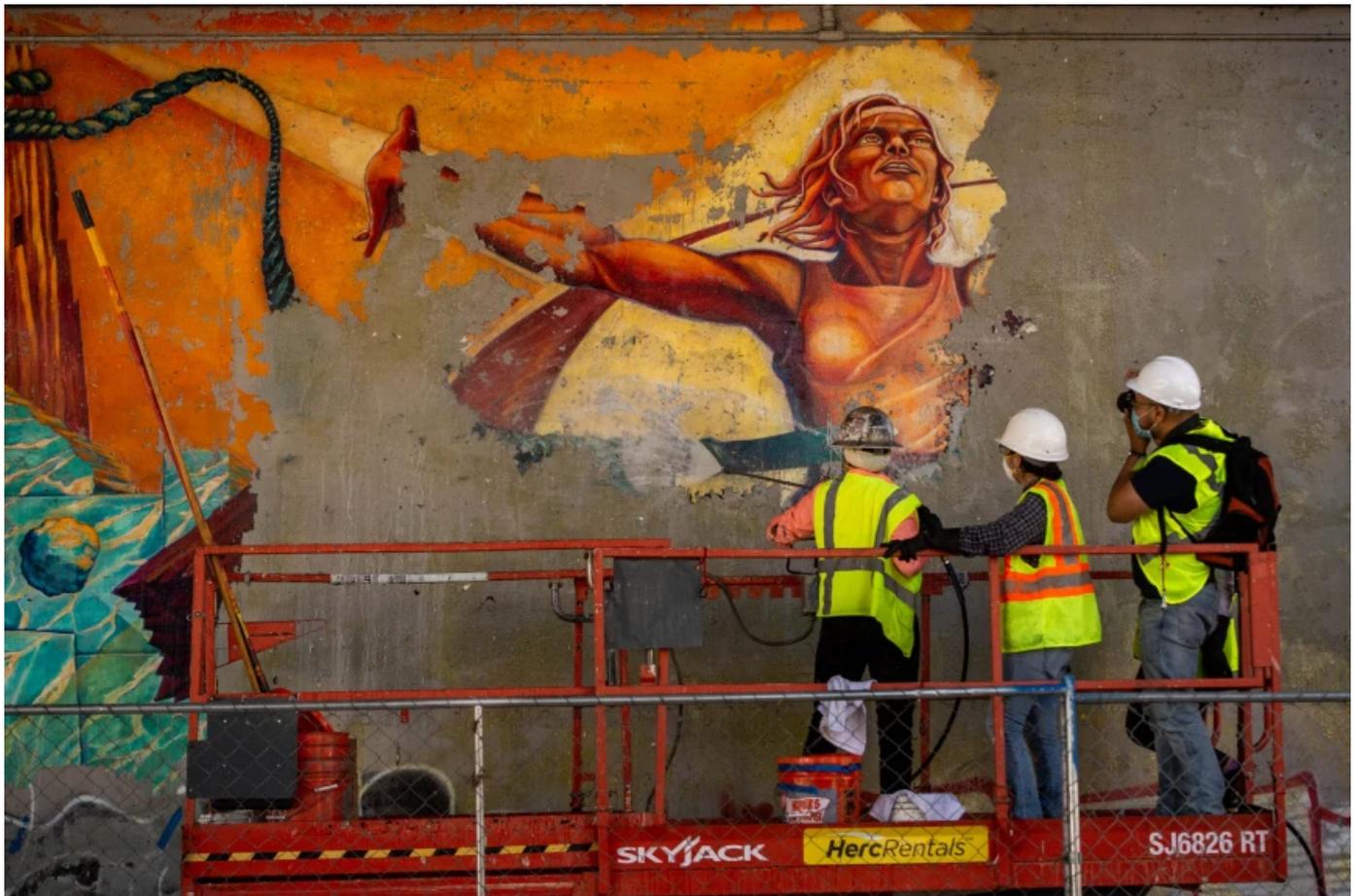


# LA Olympics-era mural reborn: Restoration team brings landmark freeway artwork back to life

A team from the Social and Public Art Resource Center worked on Friday, June 25, to power wash away grey paint rolled over the mural “Hitting the Wall,” by artist Judy Baca, created for the the 1984 Olympics in L.A.

[Sarah Reingewirtz](#) June 25, 2021 at 9:55 p.m.



The mural “Hitting the Wall,” by artist Judy Baca which was painted over by a graffiti abatement contractor is being

unveiled again as Social and Public Art Resource Center's mural rescue crew power washes the nearly 10 coats of paint covering the mural along the 110 Freeway in Los Angeles on Friday, June 25, 2021. "We've lost 60 percent of the legacy murals in LA," says Baca, who sued LA Metro and Caltrans for covering the mural painted for the 1984 Olympics and featuring a female runner breaking through barriers. (Photo by Sarah Reingewirtz, Los Angeles Daily News/SCNG)





Artist Myisha Arellano, of Social and Public Art Resource Center, takes a break from power washing the mural “Hitting the Wall,” by artist Judy Baca which is along the 110 Freeway in Los Angeles on Friday, June 25, 2021. “We’ve lost 60 percent of the legacy murals in LA,” says Baca, who sued LA Metro and Caltrans for covering the mural painted for the 1984 Olympics and featuring a female runner breaking through barriers. “Caltrans should of hired us to remove the graffiti instead of sending their contractors to paint over the mural,” said Carlos Rogel, ex. dir. of SPARC. (Photo by Sarah Reingewirtz, Los Angeles Daily News/SCNG)

The figure of an orange-hued female athlete burst vibrantly from the grey-drab wall on Los Angeles’ 4th Street exit of the 110-freeway going northbound.

A team from the Social and Public Art Resource Center worked on Friday, June 25, to power-wash away grey paint rolled over the mural “Hitting the Wall.”

The towering painting, by artist Judy Baca, was created for the the 1984 Olympics in L.A., one of 10 murals commissioned by the International Olympic Committee in tribute to the historic games’ return to the City of the Angels.

“We’ve lost 60 percent of the legacy murals in LA,” said Baca, who sued LA Metro and Caltrans for covering the mural.

SPARC, LA Metro, Caltrans and a graffiti abatement contractor reached a historic, amicable settlement to restore the mural, officials said. LA Metro’s and Caltrans are paying for the restoration.

The mural, aptly, features a female runner breaking through barriers, a tribute to the power of women, Baca said.

The artwork was whitewashed in March 2019 by a graffiti abatement crew after the mural was vandalized.

“Caltrans should have hired us to remove the graffiti instead of sending their contractors to paint over the mural,” said Carlos Rogel, executive director of SPARC and leader of the restoration effort, as she worked with the team to bring the artwork back to life on Friday

Baca said she created the mural specifically in celebration of the first women’s Olympic marathon, staged that year at the L.A. games.

Fifty female competitors came from 28 countries to compete on Aug. 5, 1984, with the 26-mile race concluding in the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum.

American Joan Benoit won the gold medal, with the silver going to Grete Waitz of Norway, and the bronze to Rosa Mota of Portugal.

That first Olympic marathon remains among the best-known. Benoit, the world record holder at the time, made a bold move to the front early in the race, despite the summer heat, and defeated hearty rival Waitz by a wide distance.

The Olympics will return to L.A. in 2028.