

Talking Walls

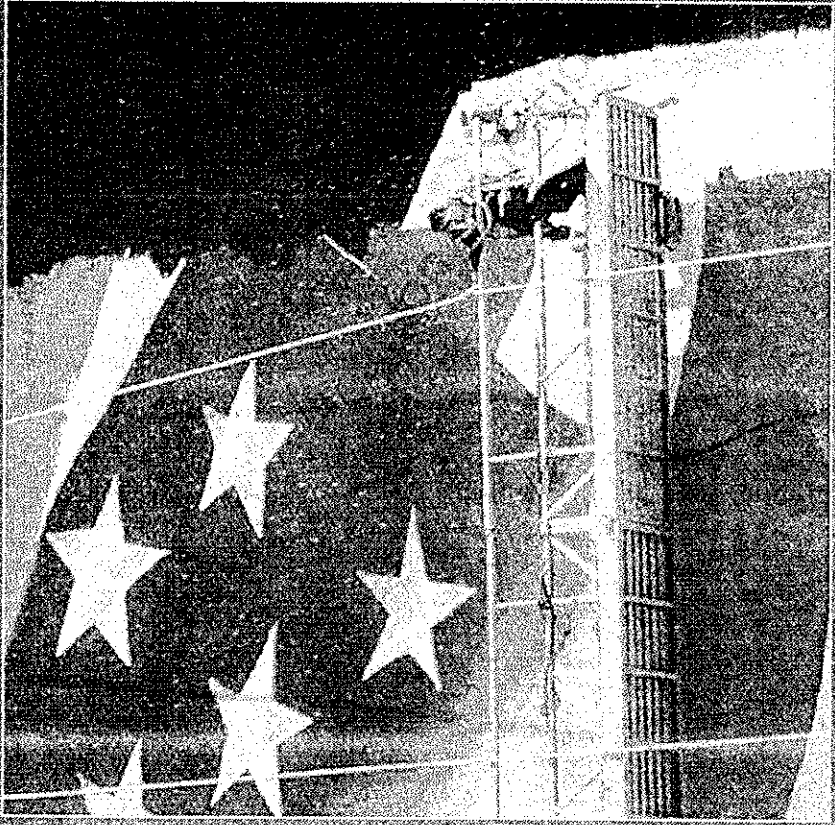
Art for the People

by Katarzyna Diaz

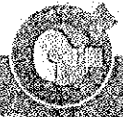
Genre

A photo essay about the artist's work in the community.

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Question of the Week
Why is freedom of expression important?



Immigrants travel to America from all over the world. They leave behind homes and villages in their native countries for the promise of a better life and for the freedom this country has to offer.

The people in America enjoy many different kinds of freedom, including the freedom of artistic expression. Writers, musicians, dancers, and artists are free to speak their minds through their art—in any way they choose. Do you know that some painters use walls as their canvas? These painted walls are called murals and are often painted in public places for all the people of the community to see.

Muralists are asked by a town, school, or business to create a work of art on a wall. Muralists paint many different kinds of murals. Some are inside, some are outside. Some tell the history of a town and everyday life of the people who settled there. Others show special celebrations and community festivals. Still others depict symbols of American freedom and democracy at work. All are great examples of artistic expression at its best.

Community of Music, Long Beach, California



Immigrant

On the walls of a meat market in Los Angeles is a mural about immigrants painted by Hector Ponce. It tells the history of the people who live in the Pico and Hoover neighborhood. This mural, titled "Immigrant," shows the Statue of Liberty just beyond reach and Latin American immigrants working hard to provide for their families. Do you see a woman with young children, a man selling bags of oranges, a seamstress, and a man looking for cans to recycle?

Hector Ponce, the artist, came from El Salvador more than 15 years ago. He says, "My mural shows what's in the hearts of many people who come to this country looking for a better life."



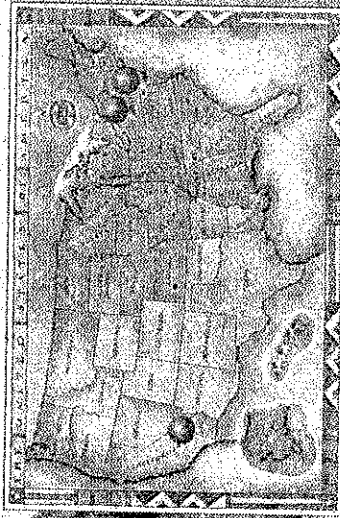
▲ "Immigrant," Los Angeles, California ▶



Reach High and You Will Go Far

Before artist Joshua Sarantitis creates a mural, he talks with the people of the community. He listens to their stories about the neighborhood. He interprets their stories by making sketches, and then he makes plans for the painting of the mural.

Over the years, Sarantitis has created many public murals across America, including "Reach High and You Will Go Far." This mural honors the hopes and dreams of the many children who live in a downtown neighborhood in Philadelphia. The painting is beautiful. It shows a young girl with her arms held high. Her hands and fingers become a tree rising over the building. The artist fashioned the top of the tree as a billboard extending above the roof to show how people can grow and change. The mural encourages children to reach for the future through education.



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Illustration by: Maribou Corbin



Reach High and You Will Go Far
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

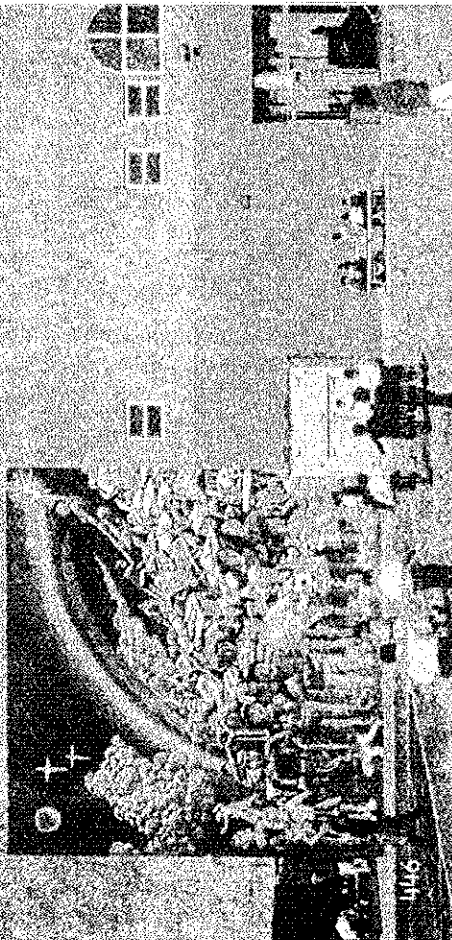
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A Shared Hope

Paul Botello was 8 years old when he began helping his older brother David paint murals. Paul loved painting murals and was inspired to become an artist like his brother. When Paul graduated from high school, he went on to college to study art. Today he creates and paints murals and he teaches art too!

Paul painted a special mural called "A Shared Hope" for an elementary school in Los Angeles, California. Most of the students are Hispanic. School life is important to him and he wanted the mural to speak to all of them. Paul says that the mural is about hope and that it is about the future.

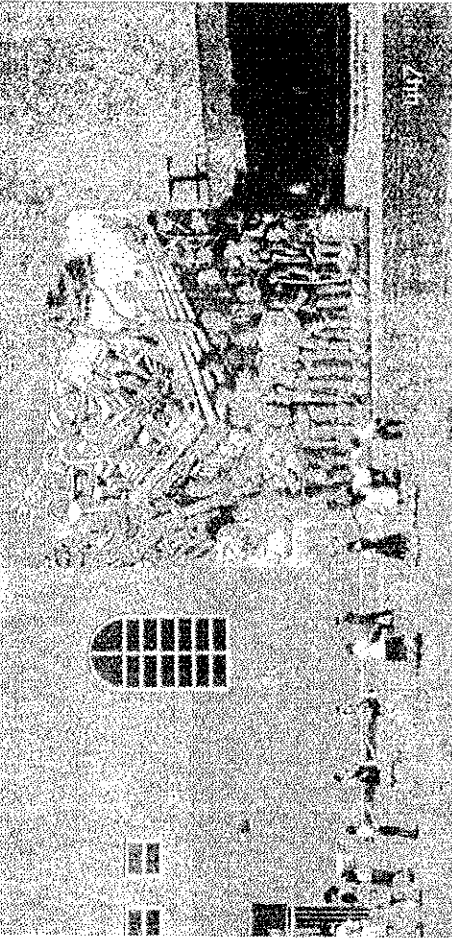


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At the top of the mural, a teacher helps guide her students over the building blocks of life. Students are standing at the bottom of the painting holding objects that symbolize their future. Their parents stand behind to help guide and support them.

Teachers, students and parents from the school posed for the artist and his assistants as they created the mural.

Education, hope, and immigration are my themes, says Paul Botello. People immigrate to the United States because they hope for a better life. Through education, we can help our children and ourselves. Paul Botello is a student at the University of California, Los Angeles.



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Dreams of Flight

David Botello—the older brother of Paul—loved to paint and dreamed of becoming an artist. When he was in the third grade, he and his art partner, Wayne Healy, painted a mural of a dinosaur in art class.

Little did David know that that dinosaur mural was the first of many murals he would paint with Wayne.

Years later, the childhood friends, now both artists, decided to go into business together painting murals. David and Wayne often create and paint murals together, but not always.

David painted a large mural called "Dreams of Flight" at Estrada Courts, a public housing project in Los Angeles. He says, "I've always wanted this mural to speak to the children who see it, and to say, 'Your dreams can come true.'"

ARTIST	LOCATION	TITLE
Hector Ponce	Los Angeles, California	"Immigrant"
Joafina Sarantidis	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	"Reach High and You Will Go Far"
Paul Botello	Los Angeles, California	"A Shared Hope"
Allyrie Cox	U.S. Capitol, Washington, D.C.	"Declaration of Independence, 1776"

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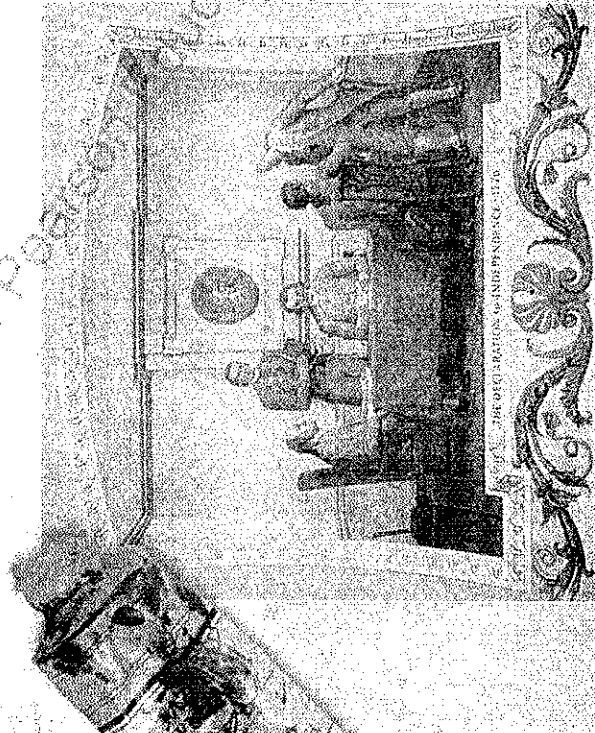
It's interesting to note that when the artist repainted the mural seventeen years after it was originally completed, he changed one of the children from a boy to a girl. Much had changed over the years, and the artist wanted all children to know that girls can dream of flying model airplanes, too. It is the artists' hope that over time the mural will inspire many of the children who see it to work hard and follow their dreams.

"Dreams of Flight," Los Angeles, California



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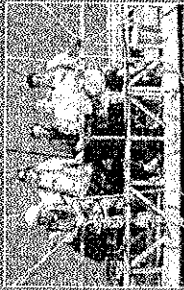
Cities, large and small, invite artists to paint special murals in public places for everyone to see. Murals are talking walls; they speak to the people. Community murals tell stories of personal, political, and social beliefs of the local residents. Some murals inspire or amuse us, while others stir our hearts.



"Declaration of Independence, 1776" was painted by Allyn Cox in the United States Capitol, Washington, D.C.

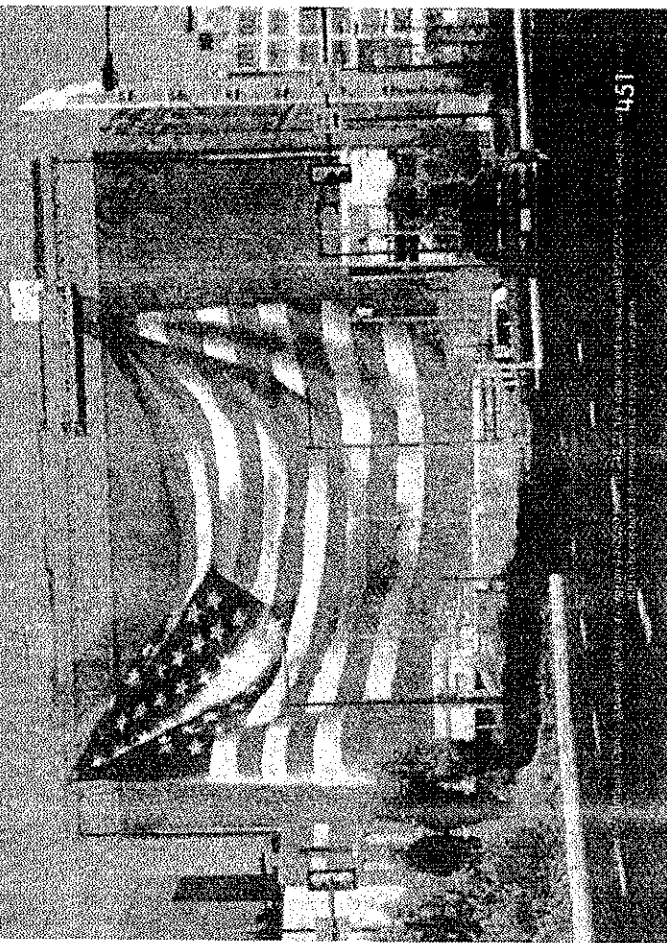
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From sea to shining sea, the artists who create art for the people are instrumental in reminding Americans everywhere of the freedoms that help our democracy work.



Artists are working to create more murals.

The American flag mural was painted by May Sargent in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



Think Critically

1. The author uses a map to illustrate several mural locations in the United States. See if there is a mural in your city. If you were a muralist, where might you paint a mural? What would you paint a mural to celebrate? *Text to Self*
2. The subtitle of this selection is *Art for the People*. Why do you think the author used this subtitle? What topics does the author write about and why? Read "Meet the Author" on page 453 to find out. *Think Like an Author*
3. Look back at pages 448–449. What are the graphic sources on these pages? What information do they convey to the reader? *Graphic Sources*
4. What are the three most important ideas in the story? Explain your answers using evidence from the story. *Important Ideas*
5. **Look Back and Write** Look back at each artist and mural in the selection. Think about the reasons why the artists painted the murals. What do the murals represent, or stand for? Provide evidence to support your answer. *Key Ideas and Details • Text Evidence*

Common Core State Standards
Informational Text 1. Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
Also Informational Text 2, 6, Writing 8.

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