Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Judy Baca at LMNA

Elisa Leonelli · Monday, October 12th, 2026

It was a welcome surprise to be able to sit down on the top floor galleries of the Lucas Museum of Narrative art (LMNA), and watch a continuous new video of the Great Wall of Los Angeles, a project created by Judy Baca in 1978, with many collaborators, illustrating significant moments of the history of California.



Rock & Roll, Big Mama Thornton

Elvis Presley representing the Birth of Rock & Roll, Big Mama Thornton who first recorded "Hound Dog " in 1952.



At the Museum's grand opening, I saw Judy Baca in front of her drawings of the 1950s decade that was painted and joined the other canvas panels already installed on the actual wall, which is in the San Fernando Valley.



Judy Baca (c) LMNA

I was reminded of when I visited the Judy Baca retrospective at MOOLA, Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach five years ago. An entire room was devoted to the Great Wall, and floor to ceiling photos of the panels were rotating around you in an immersive experience. You may read my article here.



LMNA Reception. Photo by Elisa Leonelli 2026

When I first visited LMNA at a preview, I zipped immediately to the fifth floor on those glass elevators, and I suggest you do the same. Start from there, work your way down these two large connected buildings filled with art. There is no second or third floor, but a very high ground floor, separated into two sections.



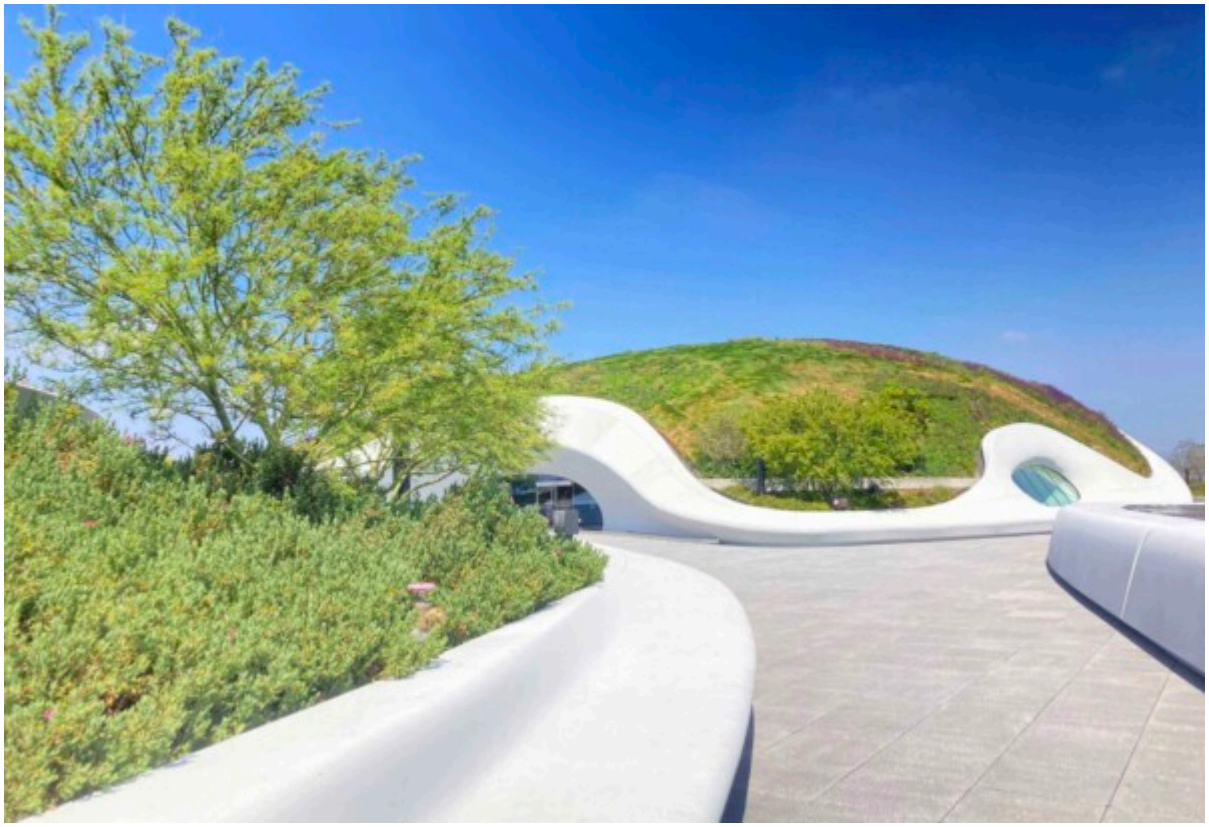
Movie Posters. LMNA. Photo by Elisa Leonelli 2026

I stumbled upon a reception for civic leaders, such as Los Angeles mayor Karen Bass. On the walls I admired several international movie posters of classics film like *Metropolis* (1927) by Fritz Lang, *King Kong* (1933), *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951).



Movie Posters LMNA. Photo by Elisa Leonelli 2026

I then stepped out on to the roof, and what miraculous views of the city you see from above, as you are surrounded by native plants.


Garden roof LMNA. Photo by Elisa Leonelli 2026

At the entrance to the galleries a massive mural painting by Diego Rivera fills a wall. *Man Controller of the Universe*, 1934. The original is in Mexico City.



Diego Rivera, LMNA. Photo by Elisa Leonelli 2026

In a separate space you find several art pieces by Bansky. *No Ball Games*, 2009.



Bansky (c) LMNA

Then you may finally sit on a bench and enjoy the unfolding of the Great Wall of Los Angeles, learn some lesser known aspects of the multi-cultural history of California, from prehistory to the 1950s.



Section 1, Indigenous California, features the La Brea Tar Pits, Chumash Animal Spirits.



See it all unfold here with descriptions.



Section 1, The Myth of Discovery, covers the Portola Expedition to Alta California, Legend of Califia Queen of California.



Indigenous Perspective of Spanish colonizers.

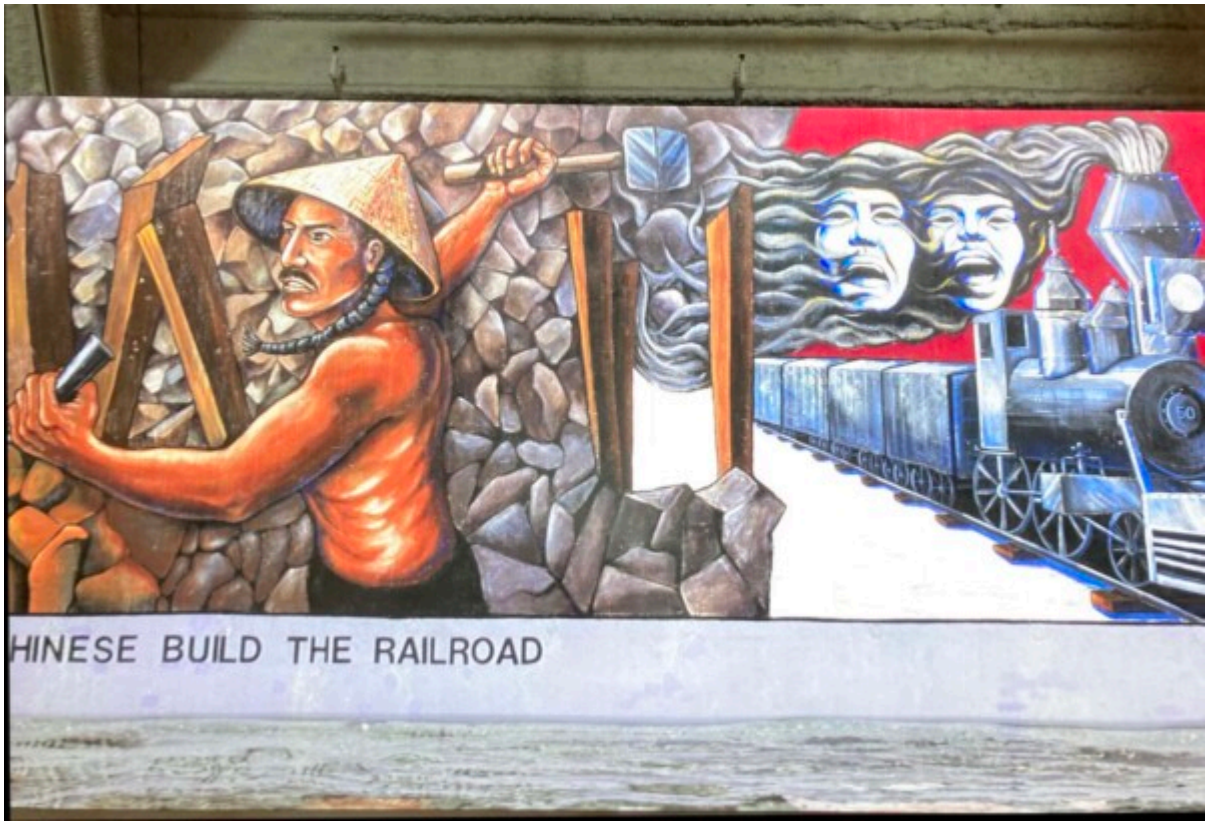


Junipero Serra, Founders of Los Angeles.



Mexican-American War

Click here to see all the panels of Station 3: Immigrant and Indigenous people build California



Chinese immigrants build the Transcontinental Railroad.



California Citrus Industry

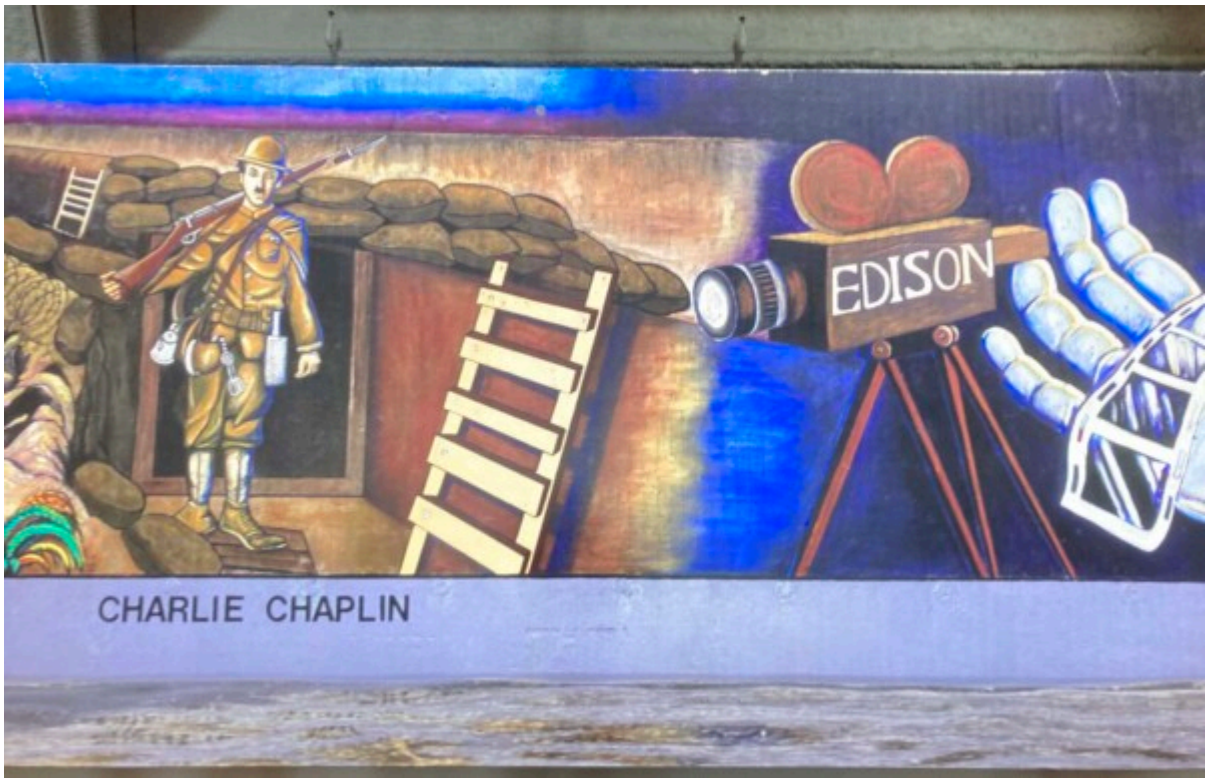


Suffrage in California.



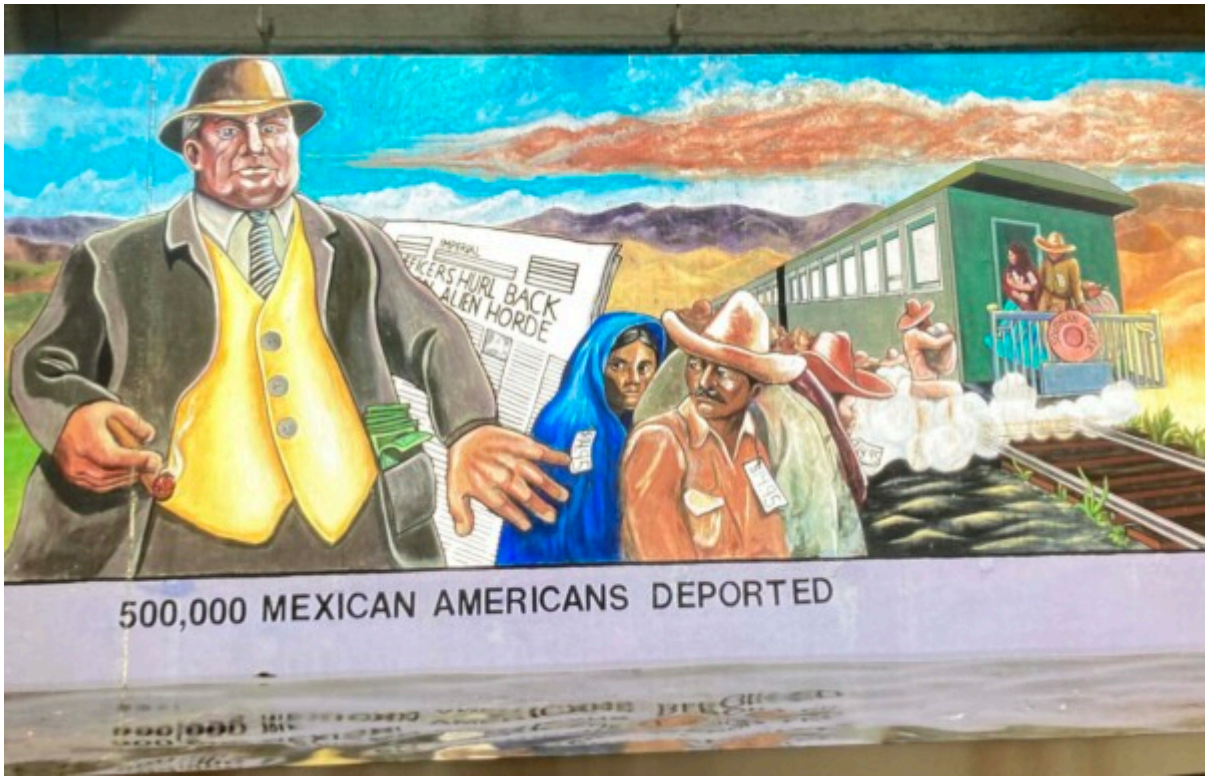
California Immigrants.

See here Station 4, titled “Edison Lights Up the World.”



Charlie Chaplin, Thomas Edison. The birth of Cinema.

See here Station 5: Illusions of Prosperity



Mexican Americans deported during the Great Depression.



Japanese Americans incarcerated at Manzanar during World War II.

See Section 6: Fascism abroad and at home.



Jewish Americans listen on the radio about the rise of Hitler in Germany.

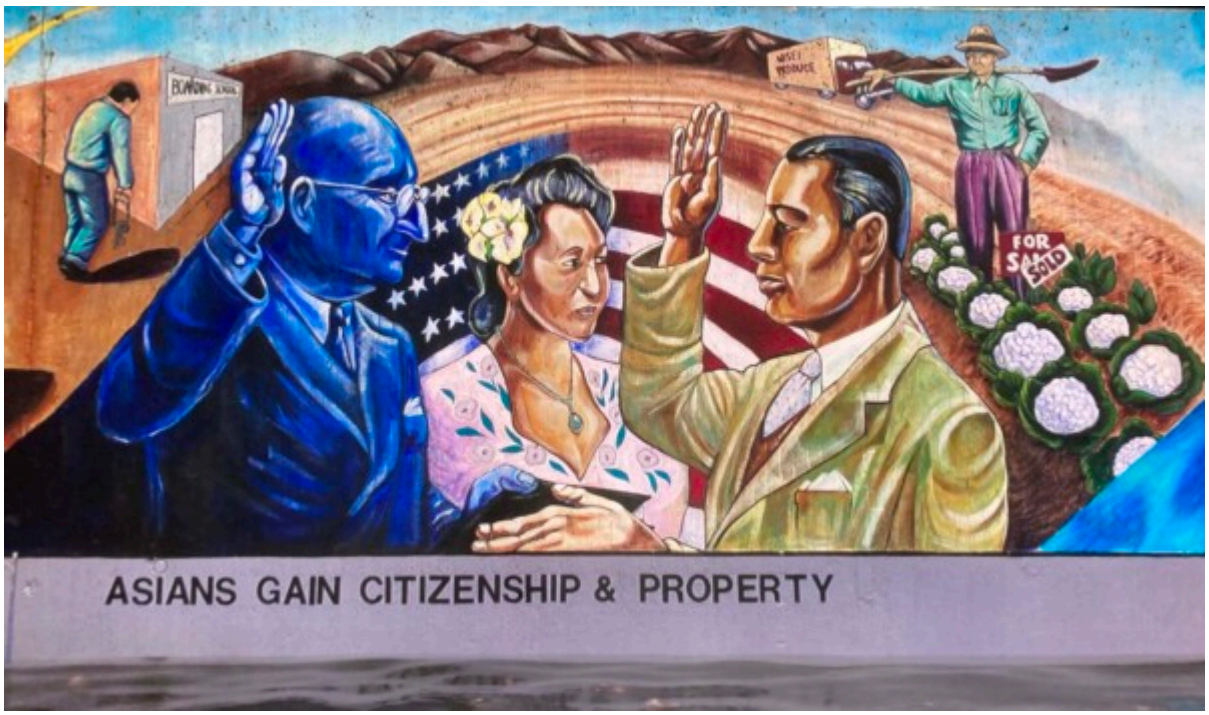


Jewish Refugees from Nazi concentration camps.

See Station 7: Civil Rights Forebearers.



Red Scare and Joseph McCarthy.



Asians gained the right to become U.S. citizens in 1952.



Albert Einstein in the same panel as Allen Ginsberg, for Jewish Achievements in Arts and Sciences



Some of the 1960s panels were painted live at LACMA by Baca and artists from SPARC (Social and Public Art Resource Center) from October 2023 (read here) to July 2024 (read here).

Some of the 1970s panels were displayed at the Jeffrey Deitch gallery earlier this year. Read here.



A small 1940 self portrait by Frida Kahlo is NOT on display on the fifth floor, but on the fourth.

You may read here my first article about the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art.

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