

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Judy Baca's Great Wall

Elisa Leonelli · Saturday, March 14th, 2026



As a longtime admirer of Judy Baca's work, I had to go see the exhibit of twelve 1970s panels of the Great Wall of Los Angeles mural, that opened at the Jeffrey Deitch gallery on February 22 and will close on April 4.

JUDITH F. BACA THE GREAT WALL OF LOS ANGELES

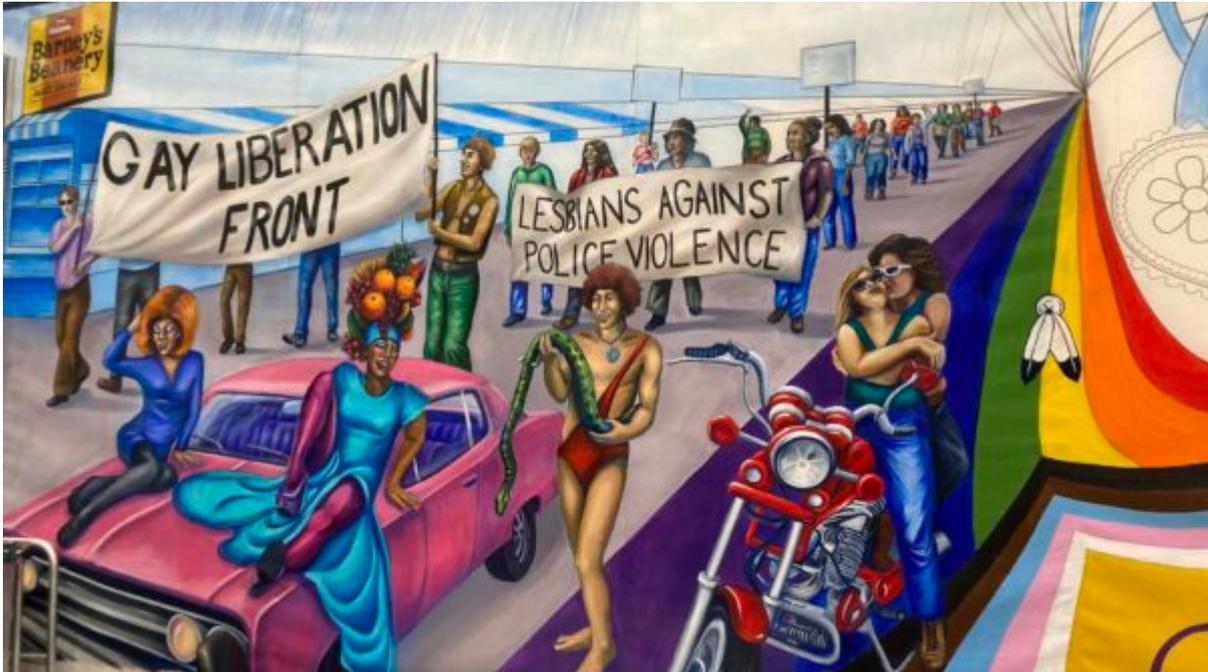
THE 1970s: A DECADE OF DEFIANCE AND DREAMS



FEBRUARY 21 – APRIL 4, 2026 OPENING RECEPTION: FEBRUARY 21, 6-8PM
JEFFREY DEITCH 925 N. ORANGE DR LOS ANGELES

In October 2023, I attended the press opening of the LACMA exhibit “Painting in the River of Los Angeles: Judy Baca and the Great Wall” ([read here](#) my Cultural Daily article) and the closing in July 2024 when the panels were completed ([read here](#) my Village article).

Those panels were completing the 1960s, and the public was able to watch Baca and the other muralists paint them in real time. Then the large murals on canvas would be rolled up and placed in the [Great Wall](#) physical location, on the concrete banks of Tujunga Wash in the San Fernando Valley.



The painting of the 1970s panels continued at the SPARC location in Santa Monica's [Bergamot Station](#), but I did not go watch it there, so it was a delight to see the finished murals at the gallery. And there are quite a few more in the works, the goal being to complete the decade before the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

SPARC (Social and Public Art Resource Center) was founded in 1976, so this year marks their 50th anniversary.

In 1978, [Judy Baca](#) conceived of this public work to depict the history of California from prehistoric times to the present, and painted the mural with help from hundreds of youth volunteers and other muralists.

One theme runs into another in these very long panels, 12 feet high by 36 feet wide, as they depict significant events of the 1970s, "a decade of defiance and dreams," from various political activists' perspectives.

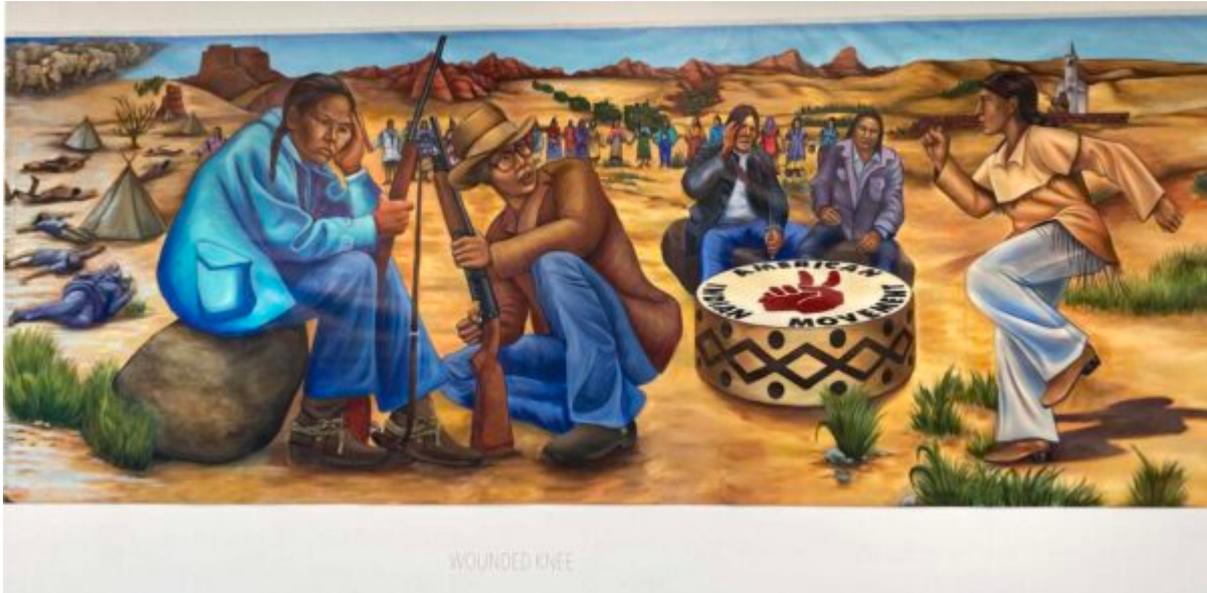
Some issues I was familiar with, others I had to learn about. Click on words underlined in orange for more info.



You are on Indian land

Native American occupation of Alcatraz

The quote by Chief Red Cloud says: “ They made us many promises that I can remember. But they kept but one. They promised to take our land and they took it.”



Wounded Knee. American Indian Movement

Read here my article “Indigenous People in the US.”



Angela Davis

And other activists Wanted by the FBI, like Leonard Peltier.

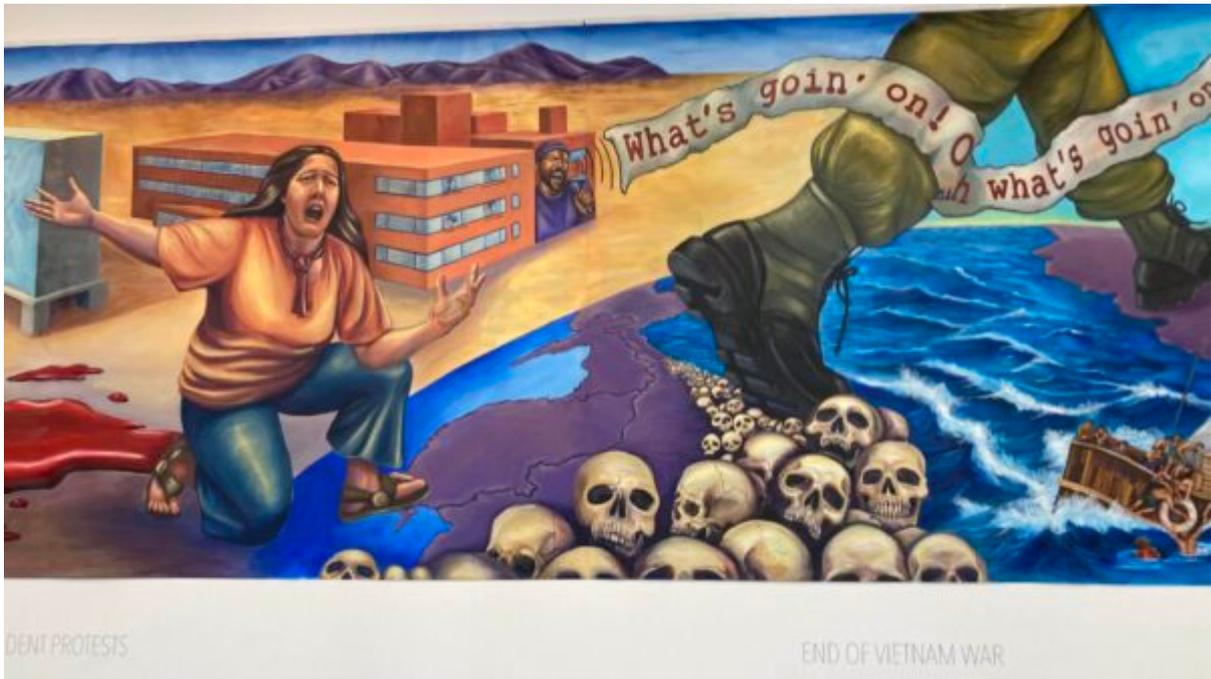


George Jackson at San Quentin prison



Chicano Moratorium

University students protests against the Vietnam War



End of Vietnam War
 “What’s Going On” 1971 song by Marvin Gaye



South East Asian Refugees

See here my photo essay on Vietnamese Refugees



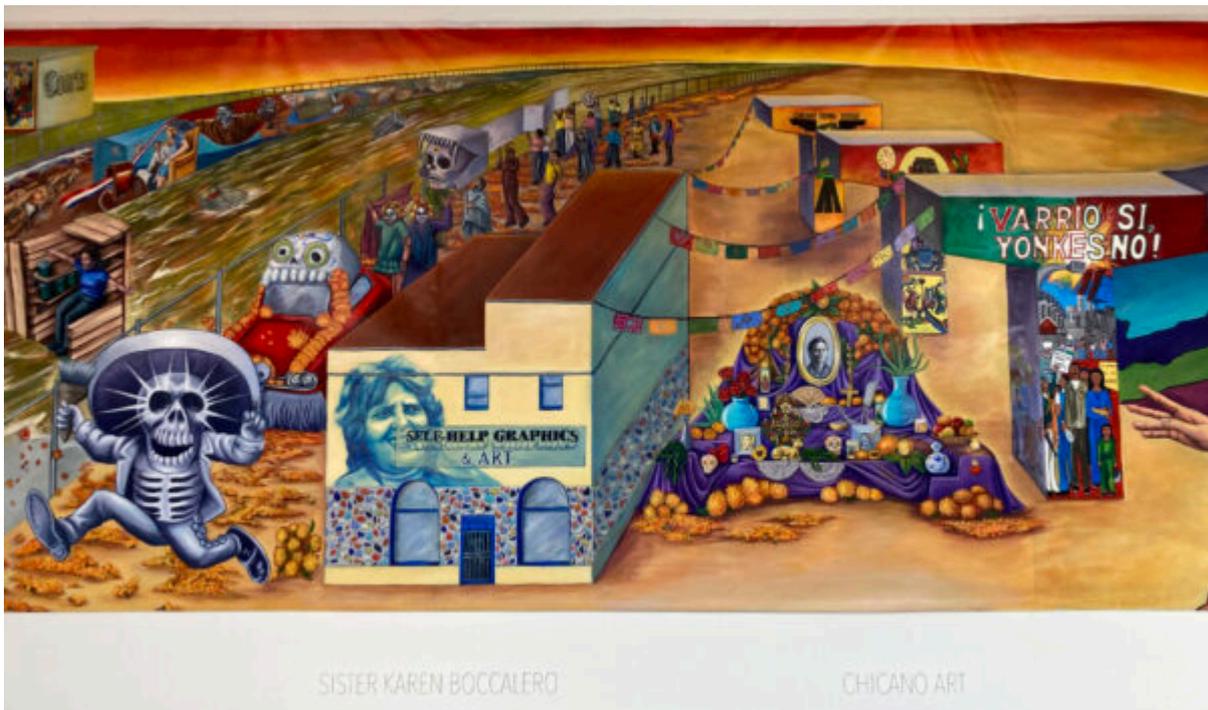
ylmar Earthquake, 1971
 Santa Barbara oil spill

Notice the 1962 environmental science book *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carlson



Tom Bradley, elected in 1973 as first Black mayor of Los Angeles. I met him in 1984 while covering the 1984 Olympics, read [here](#).

Integration of schools and white flight



Chicano Art

Sister Karen Bocalero, founder of Self-Help Graphics & Art



David Siqueiros, Mexican muralist

[See here](#) my article "Olympic Murals at Hammer"

Above the sign RIGHT TO CHOOSE

Supreme Court Justices: Sonia Sotomayor, Ketanji Brown Jackson, Elena Kagan



Reproductive Justice

Panel continues with KEEP ABORTION LEGAL, Equal justice under the law, on the T-shirt: my body my choice, a pink and red vagina.



This panel ends with the Janes (read my article) and San Francisco first openly gay mayor Harvey Milk.

If you can't visit Great Wall of Los Angeles in person, SPARC created a virtual tour on their website.

Click on links for murals and descriptions



Indigenous California



The myth of discovery



3 Immigrant & indigenous people build California



Thomas Edison lights up the world



Illusions of prosperity



6

Fascism abroad...and at home



7

Civil rights forebearers

This time I will go visit SPARC at Bergamot Station. Maybe I will get to see young muralists paint.

This entry was posted on Saturday, March 14th, 2026 at 7:45 am and is filed under [Fine Art](#), [Visual Art](#)

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