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Conservators Susanne Friend and Alyson Souza of ConservArt Associates, Inc. work on the landmark mural by Richard Wyatt in the East Portal of Union Station. The preservation work will help protect the mural from future damage by contaminants and ultraviolet rays.



PHOTO: ANGELENE CAMPUZANO

## Restoration Effort Brightens Faces on East Portal Mural

- Mural depicts LA basin's diverse settlers

By SHANTAY IOSIA

(Oct. 19, 2004) Little remains unchanged throughout Los Angeles history, but artist Richard Wyatt is a veteran at capturing memorable historic moments through his work.

One of his large-scale murals, "City of Dreams/River of History," is incorporated into the wall of the East Portal of Union Station. Metro has recently completed preserving one of the lasting images of Los Angeles culture.

The mural depicts images of Native Americans and members of other ethnic groups who have settled the LA basin over the past 200 years.

"It's a major mural at a landmark site and it's very important that we take care of it in the most professional manner," says Jorge Pardo, Metro art and design manager.

To preserve the mural, Metro Art issued a call to the conservator community. The department also worked closely with Catellus Development Corporation, the owners of the property and the company that originally commissioned the artwork. Metro Real Estate provided \$57,000 to implement the project.

## **Comprehensive conservation**

ConservArt Associates, Inc., a company specializing in mural painting, has a successful track record of restoring significant works. The firm produced a detailed assessment of existing conditions and completed a comprehensive conservation effort.

ConservArt personnel first removed layers of dirt that had built up over the past nine years since the mural was completed in 1995. Contaminants included particles from buses and cars, pigeon droppings and damaging ultraviolet rays from the large glass skylight.

After the cleaning, a protective varnishing coat was applied to ensure the life of the mural. The actual cleaning and varnishing took about a month but preparation, research and special scaffolding requirements dates back to April.

A native of Los Angeles, Wyatt is a well-recognized muralist. His work can be seen at the Capitol Records Building, Watts Tower Art Center, Long Beach City Hall and numerous other cities throughout California. He also completed a pair of tile murals at the Wilshire/Western station.

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