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Works of Three Local Muralists to Honor Boyle Heights, East LA

- Murals will be seen on Eastside Extension construction fences

(Nov. 9, 2005) Metro Art has commissioned three local artists to paint murals on large-scale construction fences at key intersections of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension project.

The original artworks will depict various aspects of the community, turning a functional and mundane neighborhood barrier into a neighborhood-specific artwork. The visuals, painted on wood walls more than 20 feet high and hundreds of feet long, will be completed by the end of 2006.

Metro Art sent a Call to Artists to 5,000 artists and art organizations. A panel of mural experts reviewed 22 applications and chose three artists – Charles Freeman (Brother Boko), Man One and Paul Botello.

Freeman's two-wall design, entitled "Know Thy Self," is located at First Street and Lorena Avenue. It includes images of the Native American Chumash, Tongva and Kumeyay peoples. Additional images include Mother Earth, Mayan and Aztec cultural icons, and a girl who is discovering them through reading.

"With the idea that if you know where you came from you'll know where you are going, I wanted to create a work that was about site specificity and learning," says Freeman.

Family, faith, work and history

The "Four Pillars," by Man One, will be located at First and Soto streets. The artist chose four elements: family, faith, work, and history, to represent the spirit of the East Los Angeles community.

Two walls in English (faith and history) and two in Spanish (trabajo and familia) reflect the area's spoken languages. The lettering, in bold and colorful urban art style, makes it relevant to the youth who will view the walls on a daily basis.

Of the four elements he illustrates, Man One says, "Work is the most vital because it literally creates the house you live in and creates pride in the members of the community as well as the commerce that drives everyday life."

Paul Botello's "Global Los Angeles, A & B" will be seen on two construction walls located at First Street and Boyle Avenue.

The central image of both murals is an abstract version of the City of Los Angeles. It is also a geometric sunburst. The mural images are based on historical information about Boyle Heights.

"These spheres are symbols that represent individual worlds, globes of culture and history," says Botello. "These worlds also represent the different people and ethnicities that make up this specific Boyle Heights community."