



Armando Bencomo &lt;armando.bencomo@lacity.org&gt;

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## Public Comments Not Uploaded Nomination of Historic Cultural Monuments 21-0140 and 21-0136

1 message

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**Duncan Gregory** <duncan.gregory@highlandparknc.com>

Mon, Aug 16, 2021 at 11:53 AM

Reply-To: clerk.plumcommittee@lacity.org

To: clerk.plumcommittee@lacity.org

Hello members of PLUM,

My name is Duncan Gregory, I am the new President of the Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council. Last term, our board approved two letters that voiced the support of the historical designation of the buildings being discussed tomorrow for 21-0140 Mechicano and 21-0136 Centro. I am attaching these letters to this email just in case they fell through the cracks somewhere between now and when we voted. Do let me know if you need anything else from me, thanks so much for your consideration.

Best regards,  
Duncan Gregory  
President, HHPNC  
Zip 90042

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### 2 attachments

**Mechicano Arts.docx.pdf**

260K

**Centro de Arte Publico.docx.pdf**

273K

HISTORIC HIGHLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL  
Post Office Box 50791 Los Angeles, CA 90050  
www.highlandparknc.com  
Certified as NC #33 May 28, 2002

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## HISTORIC HIGHLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020

Cultural Heritage Commission  
200 North Spring Street, Room 272  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Re: Support for HCM Nominations of Proposed Monument – Centro de Arte Publico,  
CHC-2020-5209-HCM;**

Honorable members of the Cultural Heritage Commission.

We are writing to express our strong support for the designation of the building proposed by Highland Park Heritage Trust as a Historic Cultural Monument: the Centro de Arte Publico located at 5605-5607 North Figueroa Street;

The building that housed the Centro de Arte Publico serves as an important reminder of the history of the Chicano Movement in Highland Park and the artists who contributed to it with their creativity. The Centro de Arte Publico also housed ChismeArte that featured Chicano writers and was a driving force for Chicana feminism. It is essential that this history not be erased. The stories of these artists and of their contributions must not disappear. Latinx cultural contributions and stories must be preserved. Throughout the City of Los Angeles buildings and murals that were important to the Chicano Movement are under threat of demolition or defacement. The designation of the Centro de Arte Publico will preserve it for future generations.

Many important Chicano and Chicana artists called the Centro de Arte Publico home. The Centro was founded here in Highland Park by Carlos Almaraz, Guillermo Bejarano and Richard

Durado. John Valadez, Barbara Carrasco, Dolores Cruz, Judithe Hernandez, Beto De La Rocha, Carlos Almaraz, Frank Romero, Richard Durado and Guillermo Bejarano were some of the artists associated with the Centro de Arte Publico.

ChismeArte became an important vehicle for Chicana feminism. Chicana feminists saw that the sexism within the Chicano Movement walked hand in hand with the racism perpetrated on people of color and insisted that both racism and sexism be addressed at the same time. Sybil Venegas a Chicano Studies Instructor at East Los Angeles College and artist wrote "[Conditions for Producing Chicana Art](#)" which was published in a 1977 special "la mujer" edition of Chisme Arte.

The late 1960's through the 1970's was a turbulent time in the Eastside of Los Angeles. With the Vietnam war raging, Chicano youth in Los Angeles began demonstrating against the inferior education that they were receiving and drop-out rates from 37 to 57 percent at area schools. Chicano youth were dying in Vietnam at rates twice their population percentages. It was a turbulent time and a creative time. The United Farm Workers began their grape boycott. The Teatro Campesino was born on flatbed trucks performing political art. Chicano Art exploded. With thousands of murals painted throughout Los Angeles, Los Angeles became the mural capital of the world. The Centro de Arte Publico was an important part of that explosion.

The Centro de Arte Publico is an important part of Chicano history in Highland Park. Chicano history has been a story of struggle against discrimination and the activism that it motivated. Centro De Arte Publico was a part of the Chicano Movement that told that story and inspired future artists. The Centro de Arte Publico was a center for Highland Park artists who involved youth - some who were gang members - in their projects creating a new generation of artists and activists. Much of this art was political. It aimed to educate and tell the story of the Chicano from their own perspective. It was a history and a narrative that had long been ignored. In a recent interview, artist Ernesto De La Loza now 71, stated, ""These murals represented our struggles and our stories that weren't being taught in history books." (<https://www.dailychela.com/la-murals/>). Some of these murals still remain today inspiring a new generation of youth and artists and telling a story from the Chicano perspective. The designation of the Centro de Arte Publico as a Historic Cultural Monument will recognize the importance of this contribution to the Chicano movement and will act for the preservation of their works.

With increasing gentrification throughout the historic Chicano communities in Boyle Heights, Lincoln Heights and Highland Park it is essential that these contributions do not disappear. Over the years, many murals have been painted over and are now lost. The designation of the building that housed the Centro de Arte Publico will ensure that their contributions and their history are not lost. It will help in the cause for preservation of those murals that are not yet lost. It will serve as a reminder of the creativity of a generation of artists and the contribution

that they made to the Chicano movement. It will serve as a reminder to future generations of Chicanos of what is possible.

This building that housed Centro de Arte Publico is a part of the Historic Highland Park – Garvanza Historic Preservation Overlay Zone HPOZ. The building is a contributor.

We hope that you will vote in favor of designating the building which housed the Centro de Arte Publico as a Historic Cultural Monument. We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council