

Leo Tanguma painted "The Rebirth of Our Nationality" in 1973 with spare house paint. Over time, the East End mural at 5900 Canal Street faded. In 2018, under the direction of Tanguma, the mural was repainted by Mario Figueroa, Jr., also known as "Gonzo247." Photo by Tom Flaherty.



LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES TODAY IS RIFE WITH INJUSTICE, UNCERTAINTY, AND CHAOS. IT IS FOR THIS REASON ALONE THAT IT BECOMES IMPORTANT TO FIND MORE CONNECTIONS WITH ONE ANOTHER, TO CREATE A GREATER SENSE OF COMMUNITY, AND IT IS THROUGH ART AND DESIGN THAT WE CAN ACHIEVE THIS GOAL.

In the caves that early humans painted tens of thousands of years ago, our earliest form of lasting self-expression was born. Our prehistoric ancestors marked the spaces they inhabited with art and transformed them into places with a unique resonance. When art is situated in the world, it can transform a space into what might be considered a “marked site.” When we inhabit such a place, we feel a sense of belonging, because we have created a connection not just to the place but to the people around us. When we feel those bonds of community, we get a sense of our own self-worth: I matter to others, I am important, I matter to myself. When we feel this self-worth, we begin to create the meaning in our lives. We are shaped by the people and places all around us. In this light, we can see art and design as a poetics, a “harmonic reason” that guides our hands, to achieve a suitable and specific praxis of art, of building. As we create, we seek to “let-dwell” the conscious ideals, identity, and culture of a place. Plato understood poesis as a process that makes visible or brings into existence what is otherwise invisible or non-existing—it is a revealing. Aristotle describes poesis as a productive activity that has an end or value beyond itself—a transcendence. Through this process of revelation and transcendence, the meaning in our lives emerges. This is why art and design is not just important, but necessary. The articles in this issue are about why and how we can incorporate art into our lives, into our places, into our communities and why this is necessary: so we can continue to grow, thrive, evolve. Life in the United States today is rife with injustice, uncertainty, and chaos. Negative aspects of individualism are rampant. It is for this reason alone that it becomes important to find more connections with one another, to create a greater sense of community, and it is through art and design that we can achieve this goal. This issue of *Cite* is about Creative Placemaking, a term which is culturally complicated, but which, in the end, simply tries to talk about how we can integrate art into the fabric of our lives in a meaningful way, with joy and pride that allows for greater, better connections with one another.

—Ernesto Alfaro and Marie Rodriguez,
Guest Editors, *Cite 101: Be Here*