PRESERVATION WITHOUT POLICY:
MAINTAINING MANHATTAN’S COMMUNITY MURALS

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary community mural movement has played a critical role in allowing residents of cities to reflect upon particular historic, cultural or political climates publicly, and can be traced back to the 1967 mural *Wall of Respect*, painted along a Southside Chicago building to advocate for the grassroots civil rights movement. As noted by Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, “murals are the people’s blackboards”, through which they are able to beautify, educate, celebrate, protest and motivate their communities to action. However, despite the powerful role the murals have played in communities, many are deteriorating or face demolition for a variety of reasons, from a deteriorating wall on which they are painted, lack of basic maintenance, shifting demographics within the community that render the mural irrelevant, and evolving aesthetic tastes. With the loss of community murals, neighborhoods are at risk of losing not only their public art, but also the often-contentious history that caused their creation. This thesis aims to address the preservation of community murals in Harlem and East Harlem in New York City. Through a study of the changing demographics of the study area and the role that community murals have played, documentation of the existing community murals, and the role that they have played in giving minority communities a public voice, this thesis will take a critical approach to the policy void that
exists in New York City and how non-profit public art programs have advocated and can advocate for our city’s murals continued existence.
CHAPTER ONE: HISTORY OF COMMUNITY MURAL MOVEMENT

The painting of murals on architectural surfaces has been a continuing practice for thousands of years; from the early Minoan palaces to the monumental works of the Renaissance, such as Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel. In the twentieth century, however, mural painting took on a new role, when minority communities adopted this public, egalitarian form of art as a way to express themselves artistically while simultaneously addressing various social, cultural and political concerns.

The community mural movement of the second half of the twentieth century in the United States can be traced back to the art created in Mexico during the years of the Mexican Revolution. Prior to the Revolution in 1910, Mexican art had suffered, as art critic Mackinley Helm notes: “nowhere else in the world, not even in Victorian England, had bad taste in art and decoration been ever so carefully nurtured as in Mexico during the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz.”  

program. In 1910 in Mexico, the artist known as Dr. Atl, born Gerardo Murillo, painted the first modern mural, beginning a movement that would be known as “muralism,” through which artists would promote social and political messages with their murals in efforts to reunify the country following the Revolution and educate the mostly illiterate masses about Mexico’s revolutionary past and pre-Columbian history.

Figure 1. Prometheus, José Clemente Orozco (1930)

In Mexico following the Revolution, three students of Dr. Atl, known as Los Tres Grandes, José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, and David Alfaro Siqueiros, would bring mural painting and muralism in Mexico to new heights. They would all also work in the United States. In 1930, José Clemente Orozco

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3 "The Mexican Muralists Movement."
completed his first work in the United States at Pomona College in Claremont, California. Entitled *Prometheus*, the work depicts the Greek titan who stole fire from the gods to give it to humankind, and as written by scholar David Scott, “in at least one fundamental sense, the *Prometheus* was the first major ‘modern’ fresco in this country… It revealed a new concept of mural painting, a greatly heightened direct and personal expression. It challenged accepted conventions which decreed that wall decoration should be flat and graceful, pleasant, decorous and impersonal. In the *Prometheus*, Expressionism achieved a monumental scale”\(^4\) (Figure 1). Orozco continued to paint murals in cities such as San Francisco and New York, before returning to Mexico in 1943. In 1932, two years after Orozco’s *Prometheus*, David Alfaro Siqueiros was exiled from Mexico for radical political militancy and moved to Los Angeles, where he painted three murals: *Street Meeting* at the Chouinard Art Institute (Figure 2), *América Tropical* at El Pueblo and

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Arguably the most famous of the Los Tres Grandes, Diego Rivera moved to the United States in 1931, where he first painted murals in the City Club at the San Francisco Stock Exchange and the California School of Fine Art. By 1932, he had moved east to Detroit, where he executed twenty-seven fresco panels entitled *Detroit Industry* at the Detroit Institute of Arts. A year later, Rivera travelled to New York City to begin his most controversial work in the United States, *Man at the Crossroads*, at Rockefeller Center (Figure 3). The mural, which depicted the Russian revolutionary leader Vladimir Lenin, caused much concern to Nelson Rockefeller. Rivera was unwilling to remove the figure of Lenin, and

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Rockefeller had the mural destroyed; in 1933, Rivera returned to Mexico.\(^6\)

Although *Los Tres Grandes* were working in the United States for less than fifteen years, the time they spent here had a significant impact on the role of public art in cities and for citizens of the United States that would continue in the future.

In 1934, partly influenced by the political and social messages of muralism popularized in the United States through *Los Tres Grandes*, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Public Works of Art Project, under the Works Progress Administration, in order to create employment opportunities for Americans during the Great Depression, while also increasing civic pride. During its first four months, the Public Works of Art Project hired 3,749 artists and produced 15,663 paintings, murals, prints, crafts and sculptures for government buildings throughout the country.\(^7\)

During this transition from Mexico to the United States, the traditional technique of mural painting, *buon fresco*, a time consuming process where colored pigments are applied directly to the wet plaster of a wall, had been


replaced by more practical mediums, with muralist using tempera paints that resembled fresco, or other more readily-available options.\(^8\)

With this acceptance of alternative mediums, a third wave of mural painting developed in the United States whereby the general public took on a larger a role in their creation, as opposed to commissioned, professional artists. The catalyst for the burgeoning community mural movement in the United States can be traced back to the spring of 1967, when in Chicago, a group of black artists, associated with the Organization for Black American Culture,

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decided “to organize and coordinate an artistic cadre in support of the 1960’s bare-bones struggle for freedom, justice and equality of opportunity for African Americans in the United States.”

With this goal in mind, the group began painting a mural on a semi-abandoned two story building on the southeast corner of Forty-Third and Langley Streets, called Wall of Respect (Figure 4).

Unlike the murals previously created in the United States, portions of Wall of Respect were painted directly onto the bricks of the wall, while others were on panels that could be removed and replaced. Here, strict criteria were used to determine if a person was to be considered a “black hero,” and therefore painted on the wall. Following the criteria, they must “honestly reflect the beauty of Black life and genius in his or her life style,” “not forget his Black brothers and sisters who are less fortunate,” and do “what he does in such outstanding manner that he or she cannot be imitated or replaced.”

With these criteria, sections depicted a range of images, from grouped rows of portraits organized by fields of accomplishments (including athletics, music, literature, religion, etc.), to fully developed compositions, including controversial figures such as Marcus Garvey, Elijah Muhammad and Malcom X.

With the creation of Wall of Respect, the artists’ intent were rooted in both

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10 Ibid.
personal artistic expression, as well an alignment with the Mexican muralism tradition, aiming to provide a public work of art that would express the community’s own past, present, and future within the political and social context of the time. As written in the Organization for Black American Culture’s Artists’ Statement:

Our murals will continue to speak of the liberation struggles of Black and Third World peoples; they will record history, speak of today, and project toward the future. They will speak of an end to war, racism, and repression; of love, of beauty, of life. We want to restore an image of full humanity to the people, to place art into its true context- into life.  

Because of the mural’s depiction of controversial black figures, it increased already intense racial tensions in Chicago, provoking retaliations from the white community in the form of violent threats to the artists and defacement of the wall. Consequently, the black community rallied at the site, arguing for their right to the Wall of Respect, in the name of larger civil rights issues. As a result of these rallies in 1969 and 1970, the mural and the value of publicly created art gained national attention, as the city was unable to move forward with its urban renewal plans and demolish the building on which Wall

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of Respect was painted.Shortly after this, black communities in other cities such as Boston, Saint Louis and Philadelphia began painting their own versions of Wall of Respect to honor their own history.¹²

Through the creation of Wall of Respect, the community mural movement was born, through which murals would be painted to create aesthetically pleasing streetscapes within minority neighborhoods, while also providing a platform through which residents of an area expressed social and political messages, using art as a form of communication of and for the local community.

CHAPTER TWO: HISTORY OF HARLEM & EAST HARLEM

Located in the northern portion of Manhattan, the neighborhoods of Central Harlem and East Harlem, which serve as the study area for this thesis, contain a variety of community murals that work to express the aesthetic and social desires of the people who live there.

CENTRAL HARLEM

On the land that today can be described as north of 110th Street and west of Fifth Avenue, the Dutch settlement of Nieuw Haarlem, named after the Dutch city of Haarlem in the Netherlands, was officially founded in 1658, under the leadership of Peter Stuyvesant. The New Netherland colony remained under Dutch control until 1664, when the English took over, and anglicized the village’s name to Harlem. During the eighteenth century, the area served an important role in the American Revolution, with George Washington fortifying the land around present day 125th Street in opposition to the British troops, who were based in southern Manhattan. On September 16, 1776 in what has become known as the Battle of Harlem Heights, the American troops, outnumbered 5,000 to 2,000 and under equipped, managed to defeat the

British, forcing them to retreat. Despite Washington’s first victory, a year later, the British would avenge their loss and burn Central Harlem to the ground.\textsuperscript{15}

In 1811, the Commissioner’s Plan called for a grid system of streets, lots and blocks to guide construction on the island of Manhattan, as far north as 155\textsuperscript{th} Street. Despite this fact, the rebuilding of Central Harlem following the American Revolution occurred slowly. At this time, the village served primarily as an escape for middle- and upper-class New Yorkers from the busy city to the south, and had become synonymous with “elegant living through a good part of the nineteenth century” with numerous farmland estates scattered throughout the land.\textsuperscript{16} By early decades of the nineteenth century, much of the farmland of Harlem was deteriorating and abandoned, with the area remaining largely rural until the 1837. At this time, in order to better link New York City proper to Harlem and Westchester County, the New York and Harlem Railroad was constructed, starting at 23\textsuperscript{rd} Street, and, by 1851, had been extended 127 miles, running north through Harlem to upstate New York. As a result of this increase in transportation availability, infrastructure was soon built to support a growing community of residents; gas lines, sewer lines, piers, and factories, allowed Harlem to become an industrial suburb that would serve New York City to the

\textsuperscript{15} Gill, \textit{Harlem: The Four Hundred Year History}. 61.
south.\textsuperscript{17} Two of the largest factories of this time in the neighborhood were the Harlem Gas Works (later consolidated Gas Works) and Wolff Wire Company (later Washburn Wire).\textsuperscript{18} By the end of the nineteenth century, Harlem continued to experience an urban revolution, with improvements made in sanitation, water supply, transportation, communication and lighting. With this growth, the built fabric of the neighborhood inevitably began to grow, with the construction of row houses and apartment buildings that still make up much of the building stock in the neighborhood. With these newly built apartments, many of which included servant’s quarters and elevators, wealthy New Yorkers claimed their dominion over the neighborhood. As noted by a local newspaper in 1890, “business grows, blocks and flats go up with apparently so little effort, that the average Harlemit is in a continuous swim of development and prosperity.”\textsuperscript{19} Most of the building constructed during this period were designed by little-known architects specialized in speculative rowhouse design, although more prestigious architects, including Francis Kimball, McKim, Mead & White, Bruce Price and James Brown Lord, also designed residential buildings in the neighborhood.\textsuperscript{20} Along with the growth of residential buildings, the construction of churches also proliferated in the neighborhood.

\textsuperscript{17} Gill. \textit{Harlem: The Four Hundred Year History}. 75.  
\textsuperscript{18} “East Harlem: Preserving the Working Man’s Manhattan.” Columbia University Historic Preservation Studio II, Spring 2011.  
\textsuperscript{20} Dolkart and Sorin. \textit{Touring Historic Harlem}. 10.
during this period, with the construction of churches, reflecting the fact that most of the first wave of residents were affluent white Protestants. Finally, institutions such as the YMCA, Harlem Philharmonic Opera, the Harlem Yacht Club and the Harlem Literary Society all constructed buildings in which to operate and serve the growing population.\(^{21}\) The rapid growth of Harlem during this period was halted between the years of 1893 and 1895, with a nation-wide economic depression ending new investment and construction. Following the stabilization of the economy in 1895, most of the newly constructed residential buildings were five-story walkup tenements, catering to the newly present minority populations in the neighborhood.\(^{22}\) Between 1901 and 1907, over four hundred fifty tenements were built between 135\(^{th}\) and 155\(^{th}\) Streets in Central Harlem.\(^{21}\)

Today, Central Harlem is known as the center of black cultural, political and social history in New York City, as well as the United States. The influx of a black population in Central Harlem can be traced back to 1904, as a result of a real estate crash, the worsening treatment of blacks in other parts of the city, and the presence of black real estate entrepreneurs. By 1910, the Great Migration of African Americans from the southern to northern states had begun, with over six million people fleeing the constant threats of violence in


hopes of finding better jobs, education and the promise of safety. As written in an article published in *The New York World* in 1917, the massive number of African Americans moving to the north “threatened the very existence of some of the leading industries in Georgia, Florida, Tennessee and Alabama.”²⁴ In addition to the movement of African Americans to Harlem during this time, there was a mass influx of black immigrants from the West Indies, in search of similar promises of improved life. In 1910, the population of Central Harlem was 10% black, while in 1920 it had tripled to 32.4% and by 1930, over 70% of the neighborhood population was black.²⁵

Following World War I, the Harlem Renaissance was in full swing in Central Harlem, with the writing of poetry, novels and plays and the creation of visual arts by black artists predominately for the black community. However, this cultural renaissance did not last past the decade, with the Great Depression resulting in the loss of jobs for 25% of Harlem residents during the early 1930’s, with much of the industry that had been established in New York City during the mid-nineteenth century moving out of the city by the 1950s.²⁶

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²⁶ Gill. *Harlem: The Four Hundred Year History*. 75.
The second half of the twentieth century can be seen as Harlem’s darkest period, with little opportunity for employment, education and safety for the residents who lived there. By 1990, the population of Central Harlem had decreased by 57% from its peak of 237,468 in 1950 to 101,026 residents.\(^{27}\) As noted in a 1991 New York Times article, “in a community with one of the highest crime rates in the city, garbage-strewn vacant lots and tumbledown tenements, many of them abandoned and sealed, contribute to the sense of danger and desolation that pervades much of the area.”\(^{28}\) Today, Central Harlem is experiencing revitalization, as the population increased 16.9% between 2000 and 2006, as a result of increased federal and city policies to fight crime, as well as an effort to revamp the retail corridor of 125th Street and vacant buildings.\(^{29}\) Through this increase in population and commercial spaces, the presence of community murals has grown significantly during the last decade in Central Harlem, with community murals being painted in community gardens, on schools, playgrounds and commercial and privately owned buildings.

\(^{27}\) Beveridge. "Harlem’s Shifting Population."
\(^{29}\) Beveridge. "Harlem’s Shifting Population."
The neighborhood known today as East Harlem, which stretches north from East 96th Street and east of Fifth Avenue, first began to experience real estate development following the Commissioner’s Plan of 1811. After this, in 1832, a double track for horse-drawn streetcars was built, which became the New York and Harlem Railroad, and worked to connect downtown Manhattan to the northern part of the island. By the middle of the nineteenth century, East Harlem had a population of 1,500, remaining a primarily rural neighborhood until 1880, when rapid urbanization of the area occurred, as a result of the construction of elevated railroads, reducing commuting time from East Harlem to downtown jobs. This new form of transportation was followed by an influx of

Figure 5. Southwest corner of 116th Street and Fourth Avenue, 1895
new buildings, especially tenements, as well as commercial buildings that would serve the growing population (Figure 5).\textsuperscript{30} By the year 1885, nearly fifty percent of East Harlem below 125\textsuperscript{th} Street was developed, primarily with the construction of tenement buildings.\textsuperscript{31}

European Jews were the first to move to East Harlem, with their population increasing from 12 to almost 200,000 residents from 1869 to 1915, followed soon after by Italians, who numbered 150,000 by 1900.\textsuperscript{32} After this mass influx of European Jews, their population quickly dwindled during the first half of the twentieth century, and by 1930, only 5,000 Jews remained in East Harlem.\textsuperscript{33}

European Jewish immigrants in East Harlem were replaced by Italian-Americans following the First World War. By 1930, Italian-Americans in East Harlem accounted for 81\% of the population, with over 100,000 residents.\textsuperscript{34} However as the decade moved on, Italian-American residents had begun to move out of Manhattan to the outer-boroughs. As of the 2000 census, only 1,130 Italian-Americans lived in East Harlem.\textsuperscript{35} In addition to the influx of Italian-American immigrants during the first half of the twentieth century,

\textsuperscript{30} Gill. \textit{Harlem: The Four Hundred Year History}. 102.
\textsuperscript{32} Gill. \textit{Harlem: The Four Hundred Year History}. 114.
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Ibid}. 210.
\textsuperscript{34} Kenneth T. Jackson, ed. \textit{The Encyclopedia of New York City}. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press. 605.
Puerto Ricans and Latin Americans moved to the area, dubbing it *El Barrio*, or “the neighborhood.” This increase in the Puerto Rican population can be attributed to President Woodrow Wilson, who, in 1917, signed the Jones-Shafroth Act, granting Puerto Ricans United States citizenship. With their presence, East Harlem took on a new identity, and by 1950, the Puerto Rican population had reached 63,000. Today, East Harlem continues to be a primarily Hispanic neighborhood, with, according to the 2000 US census, 52.1% of residents describing themselves as Hispanic. Culturally, the neighborhood remains predominately Puerto Rican, as evident in many of the community murals that can be seen on the streets of East Harlem, often depicting the images such as the Puerto Rican flag or Puerto Rican individuals of significance, despite the fact that Puerto Ricans currently make up only about 35.3% of the neighborhood’s population, down from 39.4 percent in 1990.

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CHAPTER THREE: THREATS

Outdoor murals painted on architectural surfaces are presented with a number of challenges that threaten their longevity and influence their conservation needs. While the main obstacles that preservationists, artists and conservators face with outdoor murals focus on their physical condition and maintenance, there are additional factors outside of the works themselves that may result in their loss, including legal ownership, urban development or the lack of relevancy of a mural in a community as its demographics change through gentrification.

Outdoor murals are composed of three distinct parts that together allow for their existence: the architectural structure itself, the surface of the exterior wall on which the mural is painted, known as the substrate, and the materials, such as paint or mosaics, that make up the image. All three parts play a role in the continued existence of a mural and with the loss of any of them, the mural’s future is threatened.

Masonry walls, which provide the substrate for a majority of community murals on domestic, religious and commercial buildings, face a variety of factors that threaten their longevity. One of the most serious problems is water damage and freeze/thaw cycles that threaten the paint of a mural as it goes through a process of saturation and desaturation. A second threat faced through exposure to water is efflorescence, which results from the presence of
salts in a masonry wall as it is infiltrated with water. Through efflorescence, the ability of paint to adhere effectively to the wall can be compromised.\textsuperscript{40} Finally, the architecture of the building on which a mural is painted can influence the extent to which the mural is protected from environmental threats. With the lack of an overhang over a mural, a leaking roof, or structural problems, a mural’s future can become threatened.

In addition to these conservation issues, the paint that is used to create a mural plays a large role in its potential longevity or loss in the outdoor environment. Since the 1960’s, the types of paints that have been used to create outdoor murals range from household and commercial architectural paints to fine art paints including acrylics and oils. In addition to these paints, different coatings are often applied over a mural to help protect it from environmental factors. Despite the potential presence of a protective coating, the exposure to extreme temperature ranges and UV light, rain and wind can all result in the damage or detachment of paint from the substrate and the alteration of the original colors of the paints used.\textsuperscript{41} When selecting a coating to cover a mural, there are a number of factors that should be taken into consideration. In order to have the most effective coating, it is often best to find a coating that is made


\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
my the same manufacturer of the paint that was used to create the mural, in order to insure that the two products are compatible. A second important issue is that a coating should be removable without damaging the paint underneath it, through the use of solvents or other chemical removers. When applying a coating, it is best to wait one to two weeks after the initial painting of the mural, in order to allow the paint to fully dry and set against the substrate. Finally, the most effective coatings often include ultraviolet inhibitors, which can protect the murals color and vibrancy as it is exposed to sunlight. By taking these precautions when painting a mural, physical deterioration and conservation issues can be more easily mitigated.

An example of a community mural that faced physical deterioration that has been rectified is the Philadelphia mural Common Threads (Figure 6), Painted in 1998 by Meg Saligman, 1998

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artist Meg Saligman on an eight-story building downtown at the corner of Broad and Spring Garden Streets, the mural depicts fifteen antique statuettes and sixteen contemporary local teenagers, reflecting the common threads that link us together across time and culture. Combining historical figures with members of the community, Saligman met with over one hundred students from the Benjamin Franklin High School and the School for Creative and Performing Arts, producing nearly three hundred photographs of them before selecting the final sixteen who would be incorporated into the total thirty-one figures in the mural. With the figures painted at different scales, the design of the mural is reminiscent of an altarpiece, incorporating the distinct architecture of the building into its design with trompe l’oeil balconies, ornamental tile work, alcoves, and columns that work to organize the figures. Financed and commissioned by Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, the work was at the time of its creation their largest and most expensive mural. It was described by Jane Golden, the Executive Director of the organization, as representing “everything that is wonderful about murals. [Here] we see Meg’s uncanny ability to create a mural that is evocative, that stirs our senses, and that brings alive contemporary issues in a way that is both aesthetically appealing and compelling.”

Since its creation in 1998, the mural, which is located on a west facing wall and receives a considerable amount of sunlight, began to experience fading and cracking of the paint. Of this inevitable deterioration, in 2009 Saligman noted, “it was so sad that Common Threads had lost its pop and was fading so fast.” Following a condition assessment by conservators Carole Abercauph and Barbara Ventresco and consultations with University of Delaware Art Conservation professors Dr. Joyce Hill Stoner and Richard Wolbers and their students, a restoration plan was drawn up in collaboration with Saligman. With the condition assessment, it was understood that through a careful cleaning of the surface and the application of a varnish to improve the quality of the color, a significant amount of money could be saved, as an entire repainting of the 75 by 100 foot work would be very costly.\(^{45}\) That year, the Mural Arts Program and the Saligman Charitable Foundation received $20,000 to restore the mural. The re-glazing of the entire work began in the fall of 2010 on the top half of the mural, while the bottom half was re-glazed in the spring of 2011. The work was undertaken by Saligman, members from her firm, MLS Studios, and volunteer

The process called first for the mural to be cleaned of any surface grime, allowing the varnish to adhere to it well. Then, a layer of Golden Artist Color’s MSA Varnish was applied, allowing the original layer of paint to remain intact. Following this, two topcoats of varnish with an ultraviolet ray prohibiter were applied, protecting the mural from inevitable future sun damage.

Discussing the effort to preserve the mural, Saligman stated “when we first painted this piece, we did not have the technology that we do today for exterior paint. Now we can extend their life by decades if they’re properly taken care of. It’s very important to work together to preserve our catalogue of beautiful art that we have in this city... The wall has been very good to us, the image has been good, it has become a landmark and that’s a very special thing to share with the city. It was my thrill to have the opportunity, with the Mural Arts Program, to restore this piece.”

A third potential threat to outdoor murals is damage as a direct result of human interaction, ranging from unintentional damage resulting from pollution to vandalism. As murals are vandalized with acts such as graffiti, the

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process of removing the tagging is a much more time consuming, expensive and exacting process than removing a tag from a blank wall. Because of this difficulty, when a mural falls victim to graffiti, it often remains for a longer period of time than if on a blank wall, allowing the tagger’s work to remain and be seen for longer, therefore incentivizing the trend. More recently painted murals are generally coated with an anti-graffiti coating, however older murals often do not have this. As a result, it is more difficult to remove graffiti effectively from an older mural without sacrificing it, while more recent murals with an anti-graffiti coating often yellow over time, leading to the delamination of the paint as the coating breaks it down.  

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In February 2015, four murals located at the Seattle School District’s Wilson-Pacific Building, which houses the American Indian Heritage Middle College High School, were vandalized with white spray paint. Painted by artist Andrew Morrison, the first of the set of the twenty-five foot high mural depicting Native Americans including Chief Joseph, Chief Sealth, Geronimo and Sitting Bull was created in 2001 in conjunction with community members and volunteers, while painting of the additional three murals continued until 2013 (Figure 7).\textsuperscript{50} The tagging of the murals, which reads DAPKIL0, has been attributed to a group of graffiti artists who call themselves DAP, standing for Down Around Pike, a street name in Seattle, while KILO is the name of one of

their artists. Following the tagging of the murals, members of the community were outraged, telling a local news source “we don’t have very much as a Native community to be proud of in this city, and this was one thing that gave us pride and comfort,” and that “it’s total vandalism and people should be charged to the full extent of the law.” Morrison called it a “hate crime rooted in primitive ignorance” and “a really sick act,” and along with a team of conservators, graffiti experts and the Seattle police efforts have been made to restore the murals to the full extent of the law.

Figure 7. Wilson-Pacific Building Murals, Andrew Morrison (2001)

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their original condition and punish those responsible.\textsuperscript{53} Fortunately, Morrison used an oil based paint for his murals, while the graffiti is composed of water based spray paint, which allowed some of the paint that had not yet dried by the time the tagging was discovered to be washed off. For the paint that had dried, a combination of brushes and high-pressure hoses was used to scrub the tagging from the wall.\textsuperscript{54}

While conservation issues are often the most discussed and visible factors that influence a mural’s longevity, issues of ownership and legal protection also challenge their long-term presence. When discussing these issues, it is necessary to take into account three parties: the artist or artists who created the mural, the person or agency that commissioned the work, if any, and the owner of the wall on which it is painted.

With murals, there are three categories of rights that may be claimed to the work, which include the legal title, the copyright, and the moral rights.\textsuperscript{55} Within the context of murals, legal title refers to the legal ownership of the mural. Copyright can be divided into five distinct rights that allow the holder of the copyright to reproduce, distribute, display, perform and prepare alternative

\textsuperscript{53} Linda Brill. "Vandalized Native American Murals To Be Restored."
\textsuperscript{54} "Seattle’s Famous Native American Murals Vandalized: Artist Leads Cleanup." \textit{Indian Country Today Media Network}.
versions of the copyrighted material. These five rights can be distributed across different parties, if an agreement is made with the artist. In 1990, the Visual Artists Rights Act (VARA), granting artists “moral rights” that consist of, first, the right to attribution, which grants artists the right to be identified with their works, and second, the right to integrity, granting artists the right to protect their works from modification or destruction, particularly if it may result in the damaging of their reputation, as well as to protect them from intentional gross negligence or destruction of the work. With the passing of VARA, a legal liability is imposed upon those who destroy, alter or mutilate a mural, and conservators are required to preserve the artistic intent of the original artist.

Under normal circumstances, when artists create their work, they are entitled to all three of these categories of rights.56 Issues of ownership and copyright become more complicated when murals are commissioned by a formal agency and building owner, versus those without consent from the owner. If an artists paints on a wall without permission or a commission, they maintain legal ownership of the artwork. In the United States, when a mural is commissioned and the artist is paid, it is considered a “work for hire,” meaning that the artist retains no proprietary interest in the work, with the owner of the building or the commissioning body holding all the ownership rights.57 Depending on the

contract drawn up, artists may also relinquish their copyright and VARA rights. For murals created before 1991, if the title of the mural was signed over by the artist there is no legal action that can be taken for its protection, while for murals created after 1991, if the title, copyright, or both are relinquished and the moral rights retained, the artist is able to take legal action if the work is threatened with destruction or alteration under VARA. \(^{58}\) There are a number of issues that arise in terms of the preservation of community murals and the legal issues surrounding them. For example, if a commissioning organization that held the title to a mural no longer exists or if a building owner who holds the title to a mural later sells the building, it is unclear who owns the title, leaving the future of the mural in an uncertain situation. An issue surrounding VARA is that the rights are only effective during the life of the artist, and therefore the legal actions that can be taken to preserve a mural once the artist has died are unclear.

In New York City, issues surrounding VARA came to the attention of the public in 2013 when a judge refused to issue an injunction to prevent the destruction of a building that was an active space for graffiti artists to paint upon, with the informal permission of the owner, which was called “5 Pointz” (Figure 8). Uninterested in actively managing the wall, the owner called upon the Americas symposium sponsored by the Getty Research Institute and the Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, CA, May 16-17 2003). The J. Paul Getty Trust, 2003.

\(^{58}\) Sharon Forscher. *The Artists Visual Rights Act of 1990*
one of the graffiti artists to curate the graffiti and select about a dozen works would be permanent, versus those that could be painted over by other artists. When the building was slated for demolition, a group of graffiti artists who had created these permanent works sued the building owner in hopes of protecting their works under VARA. However, according to VARA, works are only protected if they are of “recognized stature,” a term that does not have any formal definition, making it difficult to know if a work meets this standard. With this case, the court failed to acknowledge the “recognized stature” of 5 Pointz and stated that VARA’s protection must apply only to individual works, not a collection by different artists. In addition, the court stated that the plaintiffs had not shown an that the destruction of 5 Pointz would cause
irreparable harm warranting a preliminary injunction, and that money given to the artists could compensate for the loss of works and that the works could live on in other media, such as photographs. In November 2013, the walls on which the graffiti was painted was whitewashed in anticipation of the buildings demolition for the construction of luxury condos, causing much criticism from the local community, who felt that the court did not give adequate consideration as to whether or not 5 Pointz was a formal “work” under VARA.\(^9\)

In addition to conservation and legal issues, urban development and the changing relevancy of community murals often serves as a large threat to their longevity. As neighborhoods experience redevelopment and gentrification occurs, the buildings on which murals are painted often fail to align with development goals, while the murals also may be seen to lose their social relevance. As noted by John Pitman Weber at the Getty Conservation Institute’s 2003 symposium Mural Painting and Conservation in the Americas, “Despite the relative impermanence of paint exposed to sun, despite the North American winters and acidic urban atmospheres, the ultimate danger is that a mural outlasts the community consensus that it originally reflected and helped shape.”\(^{60}\) Because the public often play a crucial role in the creation of


community murals, and become invested in the works during the process, they are necessary in the effort to maintain and preserve them. Often, the determining factor in a mural's longevity is its relevance and reflection of a neighborhood or group of people, and if they are no longer living there, the mural may lose some of the significance it once held. Despite this fact, it is important to work to preserve a community's murals even as that community is displaced, in order to preserve the marginalized histories that are significant to the future direction of society as a whole.

An example of a mural that embodies the issues of what happens to a work when a building on which it is painted changes owners, as well as evolving issues of relevancy of a specific work can be seen in the mural Towards Freedom: Our History Moves from Slavery Towards Freedom (Figure 9). Created in Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, CA, May 16-17 2003. The J. Paul Getty Trust, 2004. http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/public_programs/conferences/mural.html
1993 in conjunction with Los Angeles’ Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC), the mural painted on the side of a building owned by the Valley Cities Jewish Community Center in Sherman Oaks, California, was the vision of artist John Pitman Weber and depicts the oppression, struggles and unity of slaves marching towards freedom that is memorialized in the Passover haggadah. Here, panels referencing the ten plagues and the Exodus from Egypt are painted, along with portraits of slain civil rights activists including James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner and phrases including “let all who hunger,” “abolish child slavery” and “tikvah,” the Hebrew word for
“hope.” Weber described the work as “the most important thing I’ve done in my career. It’s my best mural. It treats the scenes in a very universalizing way.”

In the summer of 2008, the building was sold to The Help Group, a non-profit learning center for children with special needs, as the Valley Cities Jewish Community Center moved to a new location in Van Nuys. With the purchase of the building, John Farrimond, a spokesperson for The Help Group stated “unfortunately, the mural is not consistent with our mission and our plans for the building. And as such, we have notified the artist that these plans do not include the use of his mural. There is no disrespect intended by our decision. It is a decision that is based on our mission to serve a greater number of children affected by autism and their families.” On July 16 2008, The Help Group issued Weber the 90-day notice required by law under the Visual Artists Rights Act before they could legally remove the mural from the building. In response, Lesley Paley, who was involved in the original commission of the work, stated “it’s a nonsectarian mural on the theme of freedom. It has been seen by people all over Los Angeles. It doesn’t make any sense why children who are autistic or developmentally disabled shouldn’t be able to see it,” while Judith Baca noted “while it is a story that is specifically a Jewish story, it is also

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62 Ibid.

63 Rachel Heller. "Picture Looks Bleak for Mural Adorning Former JCC."
a universal story. I am a Latina; the story of immigration relates to all of us.” Of the removal of the mural, Weber explained that he was “dumbfounded. I think the mission of supporting and aiding autistic children is wonderful. But I don’t see how the mural can possibly be in contradiction with a desire to support and educate children.”⁶⁴ Despite efforts to save the mural by Judith Baca of SPARC the work was painted over following the 90-day notice given to Weber.

With *Towards Freedom: Our History Moves From Slavery Towards Freedom*, it can be seen how quickly the changing owners of a building can result in the loss of a mural, as they interpret its value to be less than that of the original owners. Through this judgment call, not only did the Valley Cities Jewish Community Center lose a part of its fifty-year history, but the neighborhood and artistic community of Los Angeles lost an invaluable work of art that worked to reflect larger issues of community and identity outside of the Jewish faith.

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⁶⁴ Rachel Heller. "Picture Looks Bleak for Mural Adorning Former JCC."
Aside from the conservation of community murals, a larger and often more pressing issue that arises is determining which murals are worthy of preservation and protection within a community, versus those that are not. In order to have a successful community mural preservation project, it is first necessary to organize a collaboration between conservators, artists, and most importantly, the community. As noted by Timothy W. Drescher in his essay “Priorities in Conserving Community Murals,” presented at the Getty Conservation Institute’s 2003 symposium Mural Painting and Conservation in the Americas, the preservation of a community mural “must conserve the social, creative process of the original work as well as the painting itself.” With this in mind, Drescher creates a new word, “sociocreative,” to describe the process of community mural creation and argues that it is necessary to preserve the sociocreative process as a whole when conserving a community mural through the inclusion of the community for whom it was painted. However, what is not noted by Drescher’s discussion of the sociocreative process is what to do when a mural exists, but the community for whom it was painted no longer lives there. In this case, is it more important to include community

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members from the past, or to collaborate with people who are living there now who may not have as much connection to the work?

In determining what murals to preserve, it is first important to understand that their value is generally not rooted in monetary or physical terms, but in their artistic qualities that work to liven the city and the role and relationship that it has with the community in which it is located. In the early 1990’s, the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) in Los Angeles developed a Mural Maintenance and Inventory Program, which outlines an approach to inventorying and choosing which murals are worthy of preservation. The criteria they propose to determine the significance of a mural, therefore deeming it worthy of preservation, include (in no particular order): neighborhood and community desires, mural art history, aesthetics, and the artist’s canon. In order to have the most successful preservation project and determine the significance of a mural, it is necessary to assemble a team of people with different types of knowledge and skills. This panel of people should include individuals with extensive knowledge of the history of the neighborhood and its relationship with the community mural, individuals with relevant art history knowledge, conservators, the property owner, and the organization or non-profit responsible for financing or commissioning the

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original work and its restoration. The most important issue that must be maintained during this process is the voice of the community, and the silencing of any influence that would reduce it.\textsuperscript{67} With this in mind, it is important to recognize the different stake-holders who place importance upon community murals, from the artists who created them, to the people who commissioned them or own the buildings on which they are painted, to the members of the community, and even people from outside the community who visit it in order to see the murals for themselves. From this, it is important to look at the values that these stake-holders base this importance on, which can range from the aesthetic and artistic qualities of a work, to less tangible ideas of social and historical importance.

\textsuperscript{67} Timothy W. Drescher. “Priorities in Conserving Community Murals”.
For this thesis, an inventory was undertaken of the community murals in Harlem and East Harlem, documenting the existing murals, their conditions, and the issues they work to express, allowing for an argument of their significance and future preservation. Unlike the goal of SPARC’s Mural Maintenance and Inventory Program, this survey does not aim to be a collaborative effort with the community, artists and conservators, but rather, lays the groundwork for potential future preservation projects. Within the study area, which stretches east from Frederick Douglass Boulevard to the East River and north from East 96th Street to 145th Street, there are approximately 104 community murals. These works can be distinguished from each other by their themes, which can be divided into five categories: community pride, political activism, social activism, commemoration and religion. It should be noted that a number of

Figure 10. Harlem Harvest

Figure 11. Know Your Rights
murals exist that do not fit into these categories, but in arguing for the preservation of these community murals, these categories appear to be the most common and most at risk. Murals that work to express community pride in the neighborhoods of Harlem and East Harlem generally depict, on privately owned buildings and in community gardens, images of important historical figures, along with quotes promoting the community, such as *Harlem Harvest*, at West 139th Street and Malcolm X Boulevard (Figure 10). Political murals, generally painted on privately owned buildings, aim to reflect different political events and rights that are seen to be important to members of the community, such as the mural *Know Your Rights*, located on the corner of West 138th Street.

![Figure 12. Zulu Nation](image)
and Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard, which encourages people to understand their rights in regards to the police, with texts including “You have the right to observe, photograph, record and film police activity,” among others rights citizens are afforded (Figure 11). Often overlapping in the themes and ideas presented in politically active murals are murals that express ideas of social activism, also primarily painted on privately owned buildings. An example of a socially active community mural in East Harlem is Zulu Nation, located at West 126th Street and Fifth Avenue, which addresses issues of police violence and honors those who have recently been victims of it, including Trayvon Martin (Figure 12). Commemorative murals in the study area are also painted on privately owned buildings, in order to remember a member of the community who has died, usually unexpectedly at a young age, as seen with the mural at West 143rd Street and Malcolm X Boulevard of rapper Andre Huddy Hudson, who died in 2010 in a car crash on the George Washington Bridge (Figure 13).68 Religious murals, primarily painted on the side of churches.

Figure 13. Andre Huddy Hudson, 2011

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serve as both advertisements for the congregation as well as an expression of the religious ideas and pride of the community (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Todos son Bienvenidos
COMMUNITY PRIDE: THE SPIRIT OF EAST HARLEM

East Harlem, commonly known to residents of the neighborhood as *El Barrio*, was the center of Puerto Rican life in New York City from the mid 1940s to the 1970’s, as nearly one million Puerto Ricans moved to the United States during the mid-twentieth century, with two-thirds of them establishing themselves in New York. With this influx of Puerto Ricans, the neighborhood took on a distinct character, with the founding of organizations including *El Museo de Barrio* in 1969 and *Taller Boricua* in 1970 which gave a voice to the new residents of East Harlem through the production of community murals celebrating pride in their Puerto Rican heritage and local community.

In the summer of 1973, a Pratt Institute architecture student named Hank Prussing was introduced to the murals of New York City as he surveyed the city’s public art for a course assignment. It was during this research that he was introduced to Reverend George Calvert, the pastor of the Church of the Living Hope on East 104th Street and one of the founders of Hope Communities Inc., a non-profit organization that provides affordable housing, commercial space and social services to low-income East Harlem residents. Reverend Calvert offered Prussing the opportunity to paint a mural on the

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north-facing wall of a four-story building in East Harlem, at the southeast corner of Lexington Avenue and 104th Street. Of the offer, Prussing stated that he was hesitant, as “I wasn’t the best person because I didn’t know the neighborhood, I wasn’t part of the ethnic group that predominated it.”

Despite this, through Reverend Calvert, Prussing was soon introduced to members of the Puerto Rican community, whom he began photographing, and who made him feel like he was “part of the family after a while.” It was out of these photographs that, according to Janet Braun-Reinitz, muralist and author of *On The Wall: Four Decades of Community Murals in New York City*, “one of the great landmark murals of New York City” was created as an homage to East Harlem residents of the early 1970’s, entitled *The Spirit of East Harlem* (Figure 15).

Based on his photographs, Prussing’s mural depicts different people living in the community at the time, including a woman named Carmelita who owned a bodega on 104th Street, a man named Joe playing dominos with five friends, local toy store owner Morris Wittenberg, singer George Espada and his children, children playing basketball and riding bikes, and Reverend Calvert.

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70 Phone Interview with Hank Prussing, March 20, 2015.
71 Elizabeth Harball. "How a Mural Captured a Community: "The Spirit of East Harlem" Remembered."
With no financial backer or commissioner of the mural, Prussing at first relied solely on donations to paint his mural, “passing the hat out,” as he describes it, and involving local businesses, including a hardware store owner who donated the paint, and Hope Communities Inc., which provided the

scaffolding and other equipment. In the early days of preparing for the mural, Prussing was able to allow local residents and businesses to invest their time and money in something that would represent them and their pride in their community, despite the fact that it was created by an outsider, but whom they later “rallied around and made an honorary member.”

The mural was created in three sections, with the left third and center third painted during the summers of 1974 and 1975, respectively. In painting the mural, Prussing used a potassium silicate paint that bonds to the brick rather than just sitting on top of it, as it is a mineral based pigment. Through this, the paint created a sort of “tattoo” on the wall, in order for it to weather less rapidly.

Following the painting of the second section, the building caught fire and burned, with the interior being gutted. In hopes of saving the mural, Hope Communities Inc. was able to raise enough money to buy the building and prevent its demolition, allowing the final phase of the painting to be undertaken. At this time, the mural was so well known and liked in the neighborhood that Prussing applied for funding and received a grant from the New York State Council of the Arts. In 1978, with the future of the building

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74 Phone Interview with Hank Prussing, March 20, 2015.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
secure and financial backing for his mural, Prussing was able to complete the third and final section.

The mural remained a fixture in the community throughout the next two decades, but by 1998, it had begun to deteriorate. Living in Connecticut, Prussing was unable to restore the mural himself, and called upon New York City based artists Manny Vega, who had served as Prussing’s assistant during the third phase, to restore the mural. With a $35,000 grant from Hope Community Inc., Vega added his own embellishments and color palette to the painted figures, giving it a vibrant new face.

During the first two decades of the mural’s existence, it remained relatively untouched by graffiti and vandalism; however, following its 1998 restoration, people soon began tagging the bottom of the mural. This did not upset Prussing as much as it the local community. According to Manny Vega, “there was a sense of permanence about this mural. In 30 years, nothing that severe had ever happened to it. The community felt violated.”77 In contrast, recollecting his design for the mural, Prussing noted that he “designed the bottom for this, the bottom is very graphic and I was hoping that it would be part of the graphic look if graffiti was added. When someone finally did, people were up in arms about it, asking ‘how could you deface this mural?’ I didn’t feel

77 Chine Labbe. "Saving The Spirit of East Harlem."
that way myself.” There are two possible responses to the tagging of *The Spirit of East Harlem*. The first, that it was a violation against the work and the community, and the second, that through the tagging of the work, the members of the community were able to engage with the work in the way that Prussing had intended with his original design, allowing the work to be a changing piece of art that reflects different ideas at different times as new graffiti is added.

Prussing’s opinion on graffiti reflected his overall approach to the role that the mural plays in the community in which it is painted. Since the mural’s original painting, parts have been changed, as the windows were made smaller in the building and brick was filled in, or as the entrance and some windows were moved during a renovation, inevitably changing parts of the mural. For Prussing, “things change, that’s part of the organic nature of it. I love watching things change over time, I don’t have any problems with things changing on a work of art like that, it’s more part of the environment. I started it, but it’s not mine. I wouldn’t mind if they ran edits by with me, but I think its great that people want to take it over. It’s an honor.”

A month after the mural was defaced, Hope Communities Inc. held a public forum titled “Street Art is Not a Battle” in order to discuss the future of public art, inviting local muralists and graffiti artists. Thanks to a single private

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78 Phone Interview with Hank Prussing, March 20, 2015.
79 Ibid.
donation, Vega was able to repaint the vandalized mural within days of the tagging.\footnote{Chine Labbe. "Saving The Spirit of East Harlem."}

In arguing for the preservation of \textit{The Spirit of East Harlem}, it is important to understand that its value is twofold, both through its role in representing the local community, as well as its artistic significance. Through depicting local members of the neighborhood, the mural serves to commemorate not only the people who are painted on the wall, but all members of the community who made East Harlem a vibrant Puerto Rican community. In addition, the monumental mural recalls imagery used decades before in Mexican muralism, with its oversized and overlapping groups of figures, dramatic colors and representation of every-day people, providing an artistic significance that balances its social and historic value.

Today, \textit{The Spirit of East Harlem} does not face any threats from human intervention, as the building on which it is painted and the copyright of the mural are owned by Hope Communities Inc., an organization that has commissioned a number of murals throughout the neighborhood. Despite this fact, it is important that the mural be restored again, as since its 1998 restoration, it has experienced natural fading, deterioration and chipping of paint (Figures 16 & 17). These issues need to be addressed in order to maintain the original quality and vibrancy of the work, which for over forty years has
played a major role representing the community and the pride community members have in their neighborhood. In addition, a decision should be made by Hope Communities Inc. in terms of how they want to approach tagging of the mural, which Prussing designed the work to incorporate, but which the local community and current owners do not accept.

Figure 16. The Spirit of East Harlem (Detail)  
Figure 17. The Spirit of East Harlem (Detail)
POLITICAL ACTIVISM: FREE OSCAR & AVELINO!!!

On September 12, 2010, the National Boricua Human Rights Network’s New York City Chapter hosted an event unveiling their newly painted mural *Free Oscar and Avelino!!!*, located on East 107th Street between Lexington and Third Avenues (Figure 17). Painted by a group of volunteers, the mural depicts Oscar López Rivera and Avelino González-Claudio in front of a Puerto Rican Flag with a text below that reads “Free Oscar and Avelino!!!”. Representing the contentious history of the Puerto Rican fight for independence, this mural serves as a reminder to all who see it of the colonial system that many people believe oppresses Puerto Rico to this day.

Figure 17. Free Oscar & Avelino!!!, Boricua Human Rights Volunteers, 2010

According to Nobel Peace Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, “one prisoner remains, now a vivid reminder of the ongoing inequality that colonialism and empire building inevitably bring forth. After more than thirty years, Oscar López Rivera is imprisoned for the ‘crime’ of seditious conspiracy: conspiracy to free his people from the shackles of imperial justice.”

Oscar López Rivera was born in 1943, and at the age of 11, moved to Chicago as part of “Operation Bootstrap,” a mass immigration of Puerto Ricans to the United States. After being drafted into the army and later fighting in Vietnam and being decorated with a Bronze star, he returned to the United States and began his fight against the plight of Puerto Ricans in Chicago. During this period, he worked to implement bilingual education in schools, integrate universities, offer educational programs in prisons and create health and drug rehabilitation clinics, among other efforts. It was not until he joined the Puerto Rican Independence Movement that his efforts were questioned by U.S. officials, as he fought, along the Armed Forces of National Liberation (Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional Puertorriqueña), for the release of five Puerto Rican Nationalist Party prisoners who were serving the equivalent of life sentences in U.S. prisons for their effort to gain Puerto Rican independence. Along with the Armed Forces of National Liberation, he claimed responsibility for over one

http://www.democracynow.org/2013/5/31/oscar_lopez_rivera_after_32_years
hundred bombings of military, government and economic sites in Chicago and New York City in order to bring attention to the colonial status of Puerto Rico and demand the freedom of Nationalist prisoners fighting for independence.\(^{83}\)

In 1981, he was convicted of seditious conspiracy and sentenced to fifty-five years in prison for his association with Armed Forces of National Liberation, although he was never accused or convicted of causing harm or taking a life. With this conviction, he was sentenced to fifty-five years in prison. In 1986, Rivera was sentenced to an additional fifteen years following a government sting operation where he and other prisoners were accused of conspiring to escape from prison. Using this sting operation as justification, he was placed in isolation under torturous conditions for twelve years. In 1999, President Clinton commuted the sentences of the eleven other individuals charged with the same crimes, determining that the sentences were disproportionately long. Rivera, however, did not accept the offer, as it did not include all Puerto Rican political prisoners, and he remains in prison today.\(^{84}\)

For Puerto Ricans living both in the United States and in Puerto Rico, the story of Rivera plays an important role in representing the larger issues that the country faces as a result of the colonization by the United States. In November


2013, tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans gathered in San Juan, demanding the release of Lopez from prison.\textsuperscript{85}

Avelino Gonzalez-Claudio was born in 1942 in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico. While attending the university of Puerto Rico, he became a member and then vice-President of the Pro-Independence University Federation. During the next twenty years, he spent time living in New York, working as a part of the Vito Marcantonio Mission of the Movimiento Pro-Indepenencia organization, and later in Puerto Rico, where he continued to work for the independence movement, administering the political journal \textit{Pensamiento Crítico} (Critical Thought).\textsuperscript{86}

In August 1985, González-Claudio was accused of being involved in the planning of an effort to steal $7,117,000 from a Wells Fargo armored truck in Hartford, Connecticut two years earlier in September 1983. The operation was carried out by a secret organization fighting for Puerto Rico’s independence, the PRTP-Macheteros. Following the arrest of members of this organization in 1985, Gonzalez-Claudio went into hiding, assuming the name Jose Ortega. On February 7, 2008, the FBI tracked him down in Manati, Puerto Rico, where he

\textsuperscript{85} Matt Meyer. “Oscar López Rivera.”
pleaded guilty to conspiracy for robbery, and in 2010 was sentenced to seven years in prison. However, he was released early, on February 5, 2013.87

While the validity of the actions of Oscar López Rivera and Avelino González-Claudio may be debated, their stories offer a larger narrative of the political efforts made by a portion of the Puerto Rican population to free their country from United States governance. Through the creation of the mural *Free Oscar and Avelino!!!*, the stories of these two men, as well as the larger issues that they bring up, are able to be spread throughout the public consciousness, working to instill a sense of community pride and knowledge of the history of political activists fighting for the community. For these reasons, this mural holds relevance not only within the community in which it has been painted, but also for all Puerto Ricans throughout the United States and Puerto Rico who are in favor of Puerto Rican independence. With this in mind, it is important to preserve this controversial work as a reminder of this continuing fight.

Today, *Free Oscar and Avelino!!!*, has experienced deterioration, most notably on the left eyes of each figures, where large area of paint have peeled away, revealing the cement block on which the work is painted. In addition, the work has been tagged with small graffiti, most noticeable in the white star of the Puerto Rican flag. Although relatively small, it is important that this graffiti

87 “Who Is Avelino Gonzales Claudio?”
be removed, as its presence on murals often invites other taggers to do the same. Because of these condition issues, as well as *Free Oscar and Avelino!!!’s* importance in telling a specific aspect of the political history of Puerto Ricans, this mural has a significant role in the community and should be restored soon to avoid greater deterioration and vandalism.
SOCIAL ACTIVISM: CRACK IS WACK

During the 1980’s, the nation watched in shock as the crack epidemic rapidly took its toll on communities throughout the United States. The first mention of crystallized cocaine was in a 1970’s guide to illegal drug use entitled *The Gourmet Cookbook*, and again in 1981 in another underground publication entitled *Cocaine Handbook*, by David Lee. The presence of crack in the United States can be attributed to the immense amount of cocaine brought into the country during the late 1970s, causing the price to drop by 80%. With these low prices, dealers converted the cocaine into “crack”, a solid form of cocaine that could be sold in smaller quantities and at less expensive prices, for a higher profit. By the middle of the decade, the drug had begun to appear in media publications, such as *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times* and *Newsweek*, which in 1986 declared crack “an authentic national crisis.” In September that year, President Ronald Reagan announced his unsuccessful “War on Drugs,” a response that focused on the eradication of the drug supply, versus treatment, education and prevention. During this period, the drug had a strong effect on the communities of Harlem and East Harlem in New York City,

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90 Watkins and Fullilove. "Crack Cocaine and Harlem’s Health."
when by 1987, 72% of the all New York Police Department Narcotics Division arrests were for the sale or use of crack in the first seven months of that year.91

With the use of the drug in New York City, discussion of its social effects appeared in the work of artists, most notably in the work of New York City based artist Keith Haring, for whom public art played a pivotal role, from his early chalk drawings on unused advertising spaces in the subway, to his culmination in his large-scale, outdoor murals. Haring’s earliest outdoor mural in the United States, entitled Crack is Wack is located within what is now called the Crack is Wack Playground at 127th Street and Second Avenue in East Harlem; it was created in response to the crack epidemic, and Haring’s personal experience with the drug, as one of his studio assistants, Benny, became increasingly dependent on it. According to Haring, he was “inspired by Benny, and appalled by what was happening in the country, but especially in New York, and seeing the slow reaction, as usual, of the government to respond, I decided I had to do an anti-crack painting.”92 While driving along the Harlem River Drive, Haring spotted a handball court located within a small abandoned

91 Beverly Xaviera Watkins and Mindy Thompson Fullilove. "Crack Cocaine and Harlem’s Health."
playground, and chose this as the location for his mural, as it would be seen by the largest number of people in the shortest amount of time, serving as a mix of highway billboard, art and social activism.

In the summer of 1986, Haring rented a van that he filled with ladders and newly acquired fluorescent orange paint that would be highly visible to cars passing the handball court on the drive. Completing the work in a single day and painting with his signature graphic black lines and figures, Haring depicted a large smoke cloud, within which he wrote in block letters the now famous phrase “Crack is Wack,” surrounding the text with images of skulls, burning money and a monster being fed a dead figure who is held upside down.

Figure 18. Crack is Wack (First Version), Keith Haring, 1986
by its feet (Figure 18). As Haring finished painting the mural that day, he was approached by a policeman who had asked if he had permission to paint on the wall from the owner, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, which he did not. As a result, he was arrested and given a court date, facing a potential fine and jail time. Over the course of the following few weeks, the mural received much attention from the media in response to President Reagan’s “War on Drugs,” with Haring later stating that “every time the news did a story on crack, they would flash to the mural as a visual. NBC even did a public service announcement using it as a background.”

As Haring’s court date approached, he was contacted by The New York Post, which wanted to conduct an interview with him regarding the creation of the mural. During the interview, he explained that he was potentially facing up to a year in jail for “vandalizing” the wall. The public soon came to Haring’s defense, while New York City Mayor Edward Koch countered, stating, “We have to find somewhere else for Haring to paint.” Following Haring’s court date, he was only fined $100, and after, wrote to the Parks Commissioner Henry Stern, apologizing for painting on the wall without permission. Later that summer, the mural was vandalized, with someone turning it into a pro-crack mural. In response, according to Haring, “some busy bee in the Parks

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93 Matthew Israel. "Keith Haring's 'Crack Is Wack': NYC's Most Famous Mural?"
94 Ibid.
Department” painted over the entire work with gray paint without the permission of their supervisors. Upon hearing this news, the Parks Commissioner Stern contacted Haring and asked if he would be willing to repaint the work with the assistance of the department. Haring agreed, and repainted *Crack is Wack*, although in a slightly different form. In the second interpretation of the mural, Haring maintained the large cloud of smoke that held the words “Crack is Wack”, while underneath he adopted new imagery, which included a number of his signature figures writhing about a large

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95 Matthew Israel. "Keith Haring’s 'Crack Is Wack': NYC's Most Famous Mural?"
skeleton, which in one hand holds burning money and in the other, a crack pipe (Figure 19). On the opposite side of the handball court wall, Haring created a second mural, consisting of a central fluorescent orange section holding the words “Crack is Wack!” while above, a snake chases a running figure with an X on its chest, and below seven more dancing figures are depicted (Figure 20).

Of the future of his work, Keith Haring stated, “All of the things that you make are a kind of quest for immortality. Because you’re making these things that you know have a different kind of life. They don’t depend on breathing, so...
they’ll last longer than any of us will. Which is sort of an interesting idea, that it’s sort of extending your life to some degree.”

In determining the value of *Crack is Wack* and arguing for its continued existence, it is important to first understand that this mural’s audience is not exclusively the neighborhood or city in which it was created, but an international audience that values the mural because it is a work by a very famous and successful artist who managed to bridge the gap between fine art and art for the public. For this reason, the significance of this mural lies equally in its value to the art community who actively work to support Haring, as well as the local community it was painted for, who value it for its artistic qualities, as well as its social significance, as it was created in protest to the wide-spread use of crack in New York City and the United States.

Since its original painting, *Crack is Wack* has been repainted once, in 2007 by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. The mural has continued to face deterioration with cracking and peeling of the paint following this repainting, revealing underneath Haring’s original, vandalized version of *Crack is Wack* (Figures 21 & 22). The deterioration of the mural can primarily be attributed to it being painted on a concrete handball court, facing potential damage as the wall is used to play on, as well as the normal wear of weather and the environment in which it is painted. In order to properly address the value

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of this work, which lies both in its artistry as well as its message, these issues should be addressed to allow the work to continue to speak in the future.

Figure 21. Crack is Wack (Detail)

Figure 22. Crack is Wack (Detail)
COMMEMORATION: LA CALLE DE PEDRO PIETRI

The presence of commemorative community murals in neighborhoods such as Harlem and East Harlem plays an important role in allowing the community to publicly honor and remember individuals who played an important role in the formation of the neighborhood, or in the broader trends of social, artistic, religious and political history that relate to the residents of an area. In East Harlem, one of the most prominently located of these murals is dedicated to Reverend Pedro Pietri, and entitled La Calle de Pedro Pietri. Painted on a building on the northeast corner of East 104th Street and Lexington Avenue, the mural was created by artist James de la Vega in 1999 and is one of four located in the neighborhood that Hope Communities Inc., the owners of The Spirit of East Harlem, commissioned in a series entitled “Various Portraits of Latino Cultural Leaders” (Figure 23).

Figure 23. La Calle de Pedro Pietri, Manny de la Vega, 1999

97 Mural Plaque
Reverend Pedro Pietri was born in 1944 in Puerto Rico, and moved to the United States as a child during the mass Puerto Rican migration to the country during the middle of the twentieth century. Pietri’s work as a poet was greatly inspired by his time serving in the Vietnam War, when he was exposed to the struggles of Puerto Ricans and the impact of U.S. policies on their lives. Following his time in the army, Pietri became affiliated with the Puerto Rican Civil Rights activist group, the Young Lords, and in the 1970’s, co-founded the Nuyorican Poets Café, located on the Lower East Side in Manhattan. According to Pietri’s \textit{New York Times} obituary, his first poem, \textit{Puerto Rican Obituary} “sketched the lives of five Puerto Ricans who came to the United States with dreams that remained unfulfilled. By turns angry, heartbreaking and hopeful, it was embraced by young Puerto Ricans, who were imbued with a sense of pride and nationalism.”

Today, the mural of Reverend Pietri serves as a reminder to the East Harlem community, who are the primary stakeholders of the work, of his literary, artistic and political accomplishments. Because of this, the value of the work can be seen in its ability to display the success of Reverend Pietri and the Puerto Rican artistic community in the United States. Since its original


painting, the work was restored once in 2004, yet its condition has deteriorated over the past eleven years, with the paint chipping off in parts and fading from sun exposure. In addition, the brick wall that serves as a substrate for the work has been repointed, removing horizontal lines of color from the mural and lessening its overall presence on the wall. Because of Reverend Pietri’s valued work in the Puerto Rican community, commemorated through the mural, as well as its condition issues, it is important that the work be restored, in order to return its overall quality to the original intent of the artist and Hope Communities Inc.
Located on 134th Street between Malcom X and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevards in Central Harlem is St. John African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E) Church. The church, according to its mission statement, “actively works to reject the negative theological interpretations that render persons of African descent as second-class citizens,” and focuses on “ministering emotional, intellectual, spiritual, environmental and physical needs of all people by spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ through both words and actions.”

Painted on an eastern facing brick wall covered in stucco, the St. John A.M.E. mural works as an invitation to all who pass by to join the church, as well as a source of pride for the congregation itself (Figure 24). Despite this fact, since the mural’s

Figure 24. St. John A.M.E. Church Mural

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original painting, it has not been maintained well, as the wall on which it was painted continues to deteriorate. The mural depicts two open doors of a church against a painted blue backdrop, decorated with crosses and a stained-glass transom, through which an illuminated interior can be seen. Walking towards the door and up steps that lead to the entrance, the backs of six black figures can be seen, while between them, the words “The Open Door,” have been painted in dark blue. Underneath this, the text continues, but has been lost to deterioration. Finally, above the entire work, the words “St. John A.M.E. Church Praise The Lord” have been painted in red.

As this mural is painted on the side of St. John A.M.E. Church, the stakeholders can be seen to be primarily the congregation of the church, along with the owners of the building and people who manage the parish. Because this is such a small community, the preservation of the work brings up important issues regarding how to effectively advocate for the preservation of a mural that does not have as wide of a public audience as some of the other murals located within Central Harlem and East Harlem. In order to advocate for the St. John A.M.E. mural to be restored, it is necessary to understand that the value of the work does not lie in it’s ability to reach many people, but rather the opposite. Representing a small group of people for whom the work plays a critical role in both advertising for their congregation, as well as being a source of communal pride, this is an important community mural in the neighborhood
of Central Harlem as it allows for a limited number of people to publically express their religious devotion publicly.

The mural at St. John A.M.E. Church is at high risk of being lost as it continues to experience deterioration. Stucco that is the substrate for the mural and was applied to the brick wall has peeled off in a number of areas, particularly at the base of the mural underneath the text “The Open Door,” where a large portion of brick wall has become visible. In addition to the peeling of the wall itself, the paint has chipped and peeled throughout the mural, and there has been a significant amount of fading, as the east-facing wall is exposed to the sun.

At this point, the St. John A.M.E. Church does not have any plans to restore their murals, as it would be an expensive process of renovating the wall on which it is painted, as well as entirely repainting the work, that they are not financially prepared for. Despite this fact, the mural on the church is the only outdoor religious community mural on a religious building within the study area, therefore increasing its significance through its rarity. This, along with its conservation issues, make the mural of St. John A.M.E. an ideal candidate for protection and preservation.
CHAPTER FIVE: MURAL CREATION/PRESERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

In New York City, the creation of community murals, as well as their later maintenance, is often initiated, executed and financed by non-profit preservation or public art and mural organizations. Through this collaboration between non-profit organizations, artists and communities, the painting of murals becomes a process that involves the entire community and can address issues that represent a larger group of people than the private commissioning of artists to create a mural. Three organizations that have worked to effectively create and/or restore murals in New York City are Heritage Preservation’s Rescue Public Murals, CityArts and the Municipal Art Society’s Adopt-A-Mural Program. In understanding how these organizations manage their successful preservation projects, a clearer idea of how to effectively manage a community mural preservation project is possible, and will allow for a broader discussion of what needs to be done in New York City in the future to more effectively manage outdoor community murals.
Launched in 2006, Rescue Public Murals, based at the national nonprofit public policy organization Heritage Preservation in Washington D.C., works to “bring public attention to U.S. murals, document their unique artistic and historic contributions, and secure the expertise and support necessary to save them.” Assisted by a national committee of advisers, including muralists, conservators, art historians, and public art professionals, Rescue Public Murals has worked on both mural condition assessments and restorations, documentation, and the creation of a “Best Practices for Mural Creation”, through which artists, conservators, conservation researchers, public art programs, and paint manufacturers can identify techniques and materials that will ensure the longest life for outdoor murals.

In creating their “Best Practices for Mural Creation,” Rescue Public Murals divides its suggestions into six sections in order to understand how common issues can be mitigated more easily. The first of these categories is planning, through which Rescue Public Murals proposes that before a mural is created, “each party, the commissioning organization/agency, artist(s), building owners, community members and other partners, should establish what rights and responsibilities they have in the process of creating and maintaining the

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102 Ibid.
mural.” Along with this suggestion, they provide extensive questions for both the commissioning agency and artist(s) to address before the creation of a mural, including the determination of who will own the mural upon completion, who owns the copyright for the mural, what does ownership mean in terms of maintenance and what rights does the artist maintain under VARA. Finally, they provide a list of further reading on the subject of mural creation planning. The next step in the Best Practices suggestions is the selection of a wall on which to paint a mural, for which they provide a series of questions including the location and design of the wall and its exposure to the sun, rain, other weather and vegetation, structural and materiality issues of a wall and security issues to ensure the mural’s safety. Following the wall selection, Rescue Public Murals addresses issues of wall preparation with a series of suggestions and questions, including how to effectively prepare a wall for primer and paint, how to photograph the wall before and after paint application for future reference, and the best weather to paint a wall (warmer than 50° Fahrenheit). Next, a discussion of painting explores how to most effectively apply paint to a surface, and includes suggestions such as painting

from the top of the mural down, so as not to have paint drip on the work, what types of paints are best for certain walls, and provides information on the paint or its application to the commissioning body for when the mural needs to be restored. Following painting, Best Practices explores coating for murals, explaining that they should be made by the same company who produced the paint for the mural to ensure compatibility, that the best coatings are removable if necessary through solvents, and the benefits of glossy versus flat coatings, among other suggestions. Finally, the last section of Best Practices explores maintenance issues. As noted by Rescue Public Murals, raising funds for mural conservation can be difficult and expensive, and so they argue that “it is much more cost effective at the start of a project to select materials that are designed to withstand the environment and to begin a schedule of regular maintenance that can cost a fraction of a complete restoration.” Along with this, they provide a series of suggestions to maintain the mural, including signage next to it with contact information to report graffiti or vandalism, creating a regular schedule for inspection, ideally twice a year, photographing the mural before and after any cleaning, and recommendations on how to clean as gently as possible, using detergents and low-pressure water.

Rescue Public Mural’s first mural restoration began in September 2007, on the mural *Homage to Seurat: La Grande Jatte in Harlem* (Figures 25 & 26). The mural was painted in 1986, when Hope Steven Community Garden, formerly known as the West Harlem Assistance Garden, was selected to participate in Artists in the Gardens, a project of GreenThumb, a community gardening program sponsored by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.\(^\text{109}\) From a selection of artists, Eva Cockcroft was chosen to paint a

mural on the apartment building facing the garden. On two 30 foot by 30 foot walls, Cockcroft painted a mural inspired by Georges Seurat’s *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*, replacing the images of nineteenth-century Parisians with contemporary African-American figures located in a park setting. Incorporating Seurat’s pointillism technique, Cockcroft covered the stucco wall with contrasting jewel-tone brushstrokes, creating an interplay between color and texture. Through this work, Cockcroft was able to depict a scene that was easily identifiable as a reference to the iconic original painting, while also being relatable to the community for which it was painted through its reinterpretation. With no primer coat or varnish applied to the work by Cockcroft, the wall was left to deteriorate and fade over the next twenty years, when, by 2007 much of it had cracked or fallen off of the wall.110 That year, Rescue Public Murals adopted the mural as its first restoration project, through the support of Friends of Heritage Preservation, a private charitable group that seeks to promote cultural identity through the preservation of significant endangered artistic and historic works, artifacts and sites.111 Conservation of the mural took place under the guidance of artist Janet Braun-Reinitz and Harriet Irgang Alden of Rustin Levenson Art Conservation. Consulting historic


photographs from 1986, the mural was repainted, rather than restored at a cost of $70,000, using a total of eighteen gallons of paint and fifty-one brushes to create the more than seventy colors within the mural, thirty of which are different shades of green. In addition, an ultraviolet-resistant varnish was applied to the wall, in order to combat future deterioration.  Of the repainting, Alden stated that in order “to be true to the artistic intent, we painted over [the original]. There’s no technique for turning faded paint back to its original color.” Specifically of the effort to maintain the original colors of the mural, Braun-Reinitz noted, “working slowly, we mixed the darkest background blue, the most prominent green, and the lightest color, a pale yellow green, thus creating the range of colors of the original mural. The accuracy of each additional color was not only measured against these colors and the original visuals, but also with the neighboring colors and the flow of colors across the mural.” Today, the Hope Steven Community Garden and its mural is under the control of the Manhattan Land Trust, which bought the land in 1998, ensuring its continued preservation.

113 Mike Reicher. "Restoring a Harlem Mural Inspired by a Masterpiece."
114 Ibid.
CityArts Workshop was originally founded in 1968 by a group of artists, and was developed with the goal of creating professional murals throughout New York City in order to “uplift the communities in which they were painted.” The program was in effect until 1989, when it closed its doors due to lack of funding. It was at this point that the current Executive and Creative Director, Tsipi Ben-Haim, a former commander in the Israeli army, stepped in to re-launch the nonprofit, changing the organization’s name to CITYarts, and expanding its focus from professionally painted murals that worked to beautify cities, to, as noted in their mission statement, bringing “young people and professional artists together to create public art. Through this creative process, CITYarts empowers youth and connects children locally and around the world to become active participants in transforming communities.”

Since Director Ben-Haim’s revamping of the non-profit organization, CITYarts has completed nearly 300 community murals throughout the five boroughs of New York City, all of which focused on ideas surrounding themes of community identity, culture, the environment, justice, and artistic expression. In addition to these New York City murals, CITYarts has created four murals abroad through its Peace Walls project. This program, which


focuses on creating a discussion about international peace between youth, has resulted in the creation of large scale murals in Karachi, Pakistan, Berlin, Germany, London, United Kingdom and Tel-Aviv, Israel by local children under the guidance of professional artists. In 2015, they will create their fifth Peace Wall, in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Following the success of the Peace Walls, CITYarts created a second internationally-focused program entitled Pieces for Peace, where children create a six by six inch work of art answering the question “what does peace look like to me?” To date, sixty-five countries have participated in the workshop, with the children’s art being displayed online in order to connect people throughout the world through their shared beliefs in the importance of cultural tolerance.

At CITYarts, the creation process of painting murals is a key component of their work, and it begins with workshops that allow children to first express the concepts that they believe are important to their communities and would like to see in a mural. CITYarts has created five programs that guide their mural creation process and deal with different issues, including the Community Identity Program, which deals with issues of the local community and self-expression, “encouraging participating youth and adults to beautify their communities. The program revitalizes neighborhoods and addresses social issues by bringing local artists, youth, families and community members
together to collaborate on the creation of art for their neighborhood.”\textsuperscript{118} The \textit{Young Minds Building Bridges Program} is an international program in conjunction with the Peace Walls and Pieces for Peace project that follows up on the idea that the youth of the world from diverse backgrounds can build bridges of cultural understanding through the creation of art. The \textit{Global Heartwarming Program} works to celebrate nature and raise awareness of environmental changes, inspiring the “youth to voice their ideas about climate change. Workshops and mural projects inspire youth to encourage change in their community and make a difference on a global level.”\textsuperscript{119} The \textit{Kids for Justice Program} encourages children to express their thoughts on justice through art, and is supplemented by meetings with judicial representatives to discuss justice and social responsibility. Finally, the \textit{Windows of Opportunity Program}, which targets children who have already worked with CITYarts on other projects and show artistic potential or interest, and connect them with professionals in the art field “to offer a range of support, including career advice and recommendations on higher education choices.”\textsuperscript{120}

Following one of these five workshops, using the ideas expressed and drawings created by the children, professional artists involved with CITYarts

will put together a design that brings all of the concepts into a comprehensive design. This mural painting process is a collaborative one, involving the children, professional artists, and people on the street who happen to walk by and show interest. In order to finance these murals, CITYarts applies for grants through foundations that support non-profit art and educational programs, as they qualify for both, as well as funding from government organizations, the Department of Youth and Community Development, Manhattan Borough President and other government and philanthropic agencies. The creation of the murals is done exclusively by paint and paintbrushes, consciously avoiding the use of mediums such as spray paint, to “teach kids that they can paint on walls without resorting to graffiti or underhand criminal acts.”

According to Director Ben-Haim, the threat to the murals produced by CITYarts is not rooted in vandalism or graffiti, although the murals receive an anti-graffiti coating, but rather, the inevitable deterioration of time and weather. She states that “when kids create, they do no destroy,” and goes on to explain that “our murals largely stay graffiti free because they are part of the community by the community, rather than a professional artist coming in, painting, and leaving. Our mural painting process takes a long time, it is something that people can see going on, and they don’t want to destroy that because these murals are a constant reminder for these kids, who are often

121 Interview with Tsipi Ben-Haim, February 26, 2015
underprivileged, living in shelters or fosters homes, that they are cared for, paid attention to, and their voices matter. They have something to say and someone takes note of that.”

When it comes time to restore a mural, Director Ben-Haim has created a process which she calls “restoration/recreation,” stating that “most of the time, the community likes to preserve what they had there to begin with, but they may also want a new mural, a new idea, something they that can directly relate themselves to. On the one hand, we don’t want to completely erase the past, but on the other hand, with something like Stuyvesant High School students, who are working on a mural on Chambers Street, I want them to remember that the students before them, following September 11th, needed to express themselves, and painted this mural. It is a beautiful mural, and it needs to be restored, but part of it can be recreated with new ideas or imagery to suit the new students, and that is fine. We will leave the base of it, the colors may change, maybe things will happen in between the spaces that the newer students want, in order to feel a sense of ownership, and this process works well for us.”

During the restoration and recreation process, CITYarts often partners with large companies, which help to finance the work and provide employees to work on the restorations. Their most successful collaboration has been between

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122 Interview with Tsipi Ben-Haim, February 26, 2015
123 Ibid.
Disney, which has worked with them on the preservation of their murals, sending animators, theatrical designers and other artists who work for the company to repaint the murals, serving as both instructors and partners alongside the children during the process. In addition to this help from professional artists, Ben-Haim states that many people who worked on murals with them as children in the past come back decades later, with their own children, and help to restore the works that they created. Through this, a community effort to preserve these works is possible, through the passing down of the value of these works and knowledge of how to create and preserve them through multiple generations.
The Municipal Art Society (MAS) was founded in 1893, and for over 120 years has worked to “protect the best of New York’s existing landscape, from landmarks and historic districts to public open spaces” and “encourage visionary design, planning, and architecture that promote resilience and the livability of New York.” During the nineteenth century, one of the early missions of the MAS was to install public art throughout New York in order to beautify the city. However, by the 1980’s, many of the monuments and statuary installed throughout the city had experience decay due to neglect and acid rain.

Following the prototype of the restoration of the Statue of Liberty that took place from 1982 to 1986, the MAS launched their Adopt-A-Monument Program in 1987. Recognizing the immense cultural pride that New Yorkers have in the City, the MAS worked to engage corporations, foundations and other groups in the restoration of monuments, forming a public partnership that allowed for the program to succeed through private donations. Beginning with twenty monuments, the Adopt-A-Monument Program soon expanded to include an additional fourteen. With the success of program, the Municipal Art Society was contacted by the City, asking if they would expand on their work.

and create a program to restore and preserve murals throughout the city, many of which were deteriorating. In 1991, the MAS created the Adopt-A-Mural Program, identifying fifteen at risk interior murals and two outdoor community murals composed of mosaics. In selecting outdoor murals to preserve, the MAS chose mosaic murals, versus painted, as their demolition would be more expensive and time consuming than painting over a wall, insuring that they would be able to maintain the works for as long as possible. Since the founding of the Adopt-a-Mural program and their successful restoration projects, they have not adopted any additional murals into the program, but rather, have created long term preservation plans in order to maintain their restored works.\textsuperscript{126} Although currently not taking on any new preservation projects, the Municipal Art Society’s Adopt-A-Mural program serves as an important example of how a local organization can set out to preserve murals and continue to prioritize their maintenance into the future.

Despite the success of the Adopt-A-Mural program, a major critique of the Municipal Art Society is that they have failed to address the value of community murals, choosing instead to focus on what is considered “fine art” murals. By doing this, they have ignored a number of community murals throughout the five boroughs of New York City that are in need of a preservation plan and restoration and that are highly valued by the people who

\textsuperscript{126} Phone Interview with Phyllis Cohen, March 25, 2015
created them, own the buildings on which they are painted, and the communities who see them daily.
PRESERVATION STRATEGIES

In addressing the preservation of outdoor community murals, it is necessary to understand the various circumstances that can both threaten a work, as well as argue for its significance and preservation. Through this, different preservation strategies can be employed, either individually or in different combinations for different projects, ensuring that the community murals of Central Harlem and East Harlem remain integral parts of the built fabric of the neighborhoods. These strategies include: development of community support, regular maintenance, easements, designation and the creation of regulatory protections programs.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The most grass-roots preservation strategy that can be employed to preserve a mural is the creation of community support for a work and its continued existence. In order to do this effectively, the public must be allowed to speak about the role and relevance of community murals in their neighborhoods, and be listened to by larger organizations that finance and allow for these works to be created. Through this, a more effective collaboration can be made between the two groups in order to create and preserve murals that the community actively values. A second way in which to implement community value of community murals is the implementation of educational programs for children at a young age. Through a discussion of the
role and value of community murals with children, an interest in public art can be instilled, potentially allowing for their own creation of community murals in the future and their continued preservation after they have been painted. According to CITYarts Director Tsipi Ben-Haim, “when kids create, they do not destroy,” and this statement may provide a key answer in how to preserve future community murals through the involvement of youth in creating them.

A third way to encourage community participation and knowledge of community murals is through the creation of exhibits exploring their importance. This was done by Marina Ortiz of the non-profit organization East Harlem Preservation, in 2014. Ortiz organized a display of over 100 photographs of different murals throughout East Harlem at the East Harlem Café, located at Lexington Avenue and East 104th Street. A final way in which to increase community participation is the involvement of the artists or people involved with the creation of a mural with the community members. By creating a dialogue between artists and the community in regards to the significance of a work, community interest may be increased and allow for a mural’s future to be less threatened.

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MAINTENANCE

A second strategy that can be employed to insure the preservation of community murals is the adoption of a regular maintenance routine for the work by the owner of the wall on which the mural is painted. Through proper, regular cleaning of the area, removal of graffiti or chipping paint and maintenance of the substrate on which the work is painted, larger conservation and preservation issues can be avoided in the future. This work can be done by community members, the artist, the commissioning body, or the owner of the building on which the mural is painted.

EASEMENTS

A third tool that can be used to preserve community murals is the use of easements. An easement is a voluntary, legally binding agreement between a building owner and the easement holder, generally a government or non-profit organization, with the aim of providing protection against demolition or neglect, with a financial benefit for the property owner. In New York City, a common example that is employed is façade easements, which protect a historic property from being altered in a way that destroys the historic fabric of a building or site. Through façade easements, buildings are protected from demolition or neglect, with restrictions placed on how the building façade can
be altered. With the creation of mural easements, an agreement can be made between the owner of a building with a mural and public art programs, allowing a mural to be protected for a finite amount of time. These easements would be binding between the individuals involved, and remain valid even if a property changes owners during the easements designated time frame.

However, a limitation of mural easements is that they generally do not apply to existing murals, but are put in place during the creation of a new mural. If this is done during the painting of a new mural, it will ensure that the work will remain on a building and in good condition during the duration of the easement.

DESIGNATION

A fourth strategy to preserve community murals in New York City is landmark designation. In New York City, the four types of landmarks include individual, interior, scenic and historic districts. With the community murals of Harlem and East Harlem, individual landmark status is the most applicable. Individual landmark designation in New York City calls for a building to be at least 30 years old and “possess a special character or special historical or aesthetic interest or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural

characteristics of the city, state, or nation. Examples of types of properties that are included in this category include parks, statues, lighthouses, skyscrapers, bridges and burial grounds. If a property meets these criteria, it can be nominated for designation. The nomination process first requires an individual to submit a Request Evaluation Form (REF) to the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC). Following submittal, the REF is reviewed by LPC members to determine if it qualifies under the designation requirements. If the landmarks designation request is approved during this stage, information about the property as well as recommendations are sent to members of the Commission for review. Following this, if the members of the Commission are in support of designation, a full LPC review will take place, which involves a public hearing, and includes the property owner and potentially individuals in support or opposition to the landmarking. If the Commission votes in favor of a property to be designated as a landmark, it is given a certain level of protection under the City’s Landmark Law.

In addition to protection through designation, a landmark mural may have the ability to override the stipulations of the Visual Artist’s Right’s Act. According to VARA, with murals created before 1991 where the title was signed over to the building owner, there is no legal action that can be taken to protect

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130 Ibid.
the work. However, if a mural is to become landmarked, this protection will override VARA, allowing an artist to continue to protect the work.

Although there are currently not any designated outdoor community murals in New York City, landmarking would be an effective way to protect these artworks. In an article published in *The Uptown Chronicle*, LPC spokesperson Elizabeth de Bourbon explained, “murals and painted signs on privately-owned buildings do not qualify for landmark status. Designating the sign of a privately-owned building would prevent the next owner from using the building the way he or she would want to, and would amount to a taking which is not the intent or the purpose of the landmarks law.”

The fact that the LPC views signage and murals as the same thing, however, is problematic in that it fails to acknowledge the value of these works within the communities that they are painted, in the same way that unique, historic or culturally important architecture add value to neighborhoods.

**REGULATORY PROTECTION PROGRAMS**

Finally, through the creation of regulatory protection programs for outdoor murals, New York City can more effectively preserve the large collection of community murals throughout the city. Two cities that have successfully done

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this are Los Angeles and Philadelphia, through the programs Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) and Mural Arts Program (MAP). SPARC was formed in 1976 in Los Angeles, California, by muralist Judith Baca, along with Christina Schlesinger and Donna Deitch, with the aim of espousing “public art as an organizing tool for addressing contemporary issues, fostering cross-cultural understanding and promoting civic dialogue.” With this mission, SPARC has created and preserved a number of the great outdoor community murals of Los Angeles, most notably The Great Wall of Los Angeles. In addition to the physical creation and preservation of murals, SPARC’s Mural Resource and Education Center (MREC) is the largest collection of written, visual and audio documentation of public art, including murals, in the world, containing 60,000 slides of historic and contemporary works created in Los Angeles since 1976. Along with this collection, MREC works to maintain an artist registry database, monitor artist copyrights, and works to collect fees from publishers and other organizations that want to reproduce images of murals for commercial use.

Philadelphia’s Mural Arts Program was founded in 1984 as part of Philadelphia’s Anti-Graffiti Network’s goal of removing graffiti from the city. Today, MAP is the largest public art program in the United States, working to maintain the 2,500 outdoor murals throughout the city, restoring 30 to 40

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important public artworks each year through their Restoration Program, as well as promoting the creation of new murals. The success of this program can be attributed to its commitment to community involvement, through its engagement with both students and property owners.

In order to effectively preserve the community murals of Central and East Harlem, as well as other neighborhoods throughout New York City, the implementation of a similar regulatory protection program is the best option to preserve community murals on a large scale. Like MAP and SPARC, through private funding from corporations and individuals, a non-profit organization can work to use the tools discussed previously in order to empower artists, building owners and the community to preserve the existing murals throughout the city.

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CONCLUSION

As evident by the more than one hundred community murals that decorate walls of buildings throughout the neighborhoods of Central Harlem and East Harlem, the presence of these murals plays an invaluable role in allowing residents to express, along with their aesthetic and artistic tastes, how they view themselves and how they would like to be seen by the public, amongst other themes. As a result, it is important that New York City works to implement a larger preservation plan and formal policies that would allow for their continued existence, enabling the physical manifestations of these communities and their voices to continue to speak publicly in the future. This can be done most effectively by taking advantage of the existing tools, including development of community support for community murals, regular maintenance of these works, easements, potential designation options and the creation of regulatory protections programs that will manage large-scale preservation initiatives to maintain community murals.


Interview with Tsiipi Ben-Haim, February 26, 2015


http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1999/2/99.02.06.x.html#g.


Phone Interview with Hank Prussing, March 20, 2015.

Phone Interview with Phyllis Cohen, March 25, 2015

http://www.heritagepreservation.org/RPM/MuralBestPractices/planning.html


http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/public_programs/conferences/mural.html

http://cityarts.org/?page_id=3030


http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ccbh/souls/vol1no1/vol1num1art4.p
IMAGES CITED

Figure 1. Prometheus, José Clemente Orozco (1930)
http://www.pomona.edu/museum/collections/images/prometheus-ss-2.jpg

Figure 2. Street Meeting, David Alfaro Siqueiros (1932)

Figure 3. Man at Crossroads, Diego Rivera (1933)

Figure 4. Wall of Respect, Organization for Black American Culture (1967)
http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ug01/hughes/images/mural.jpg

Figure 5. Southwest corner of 116th Street and 4th Avenue, 1895

Figure 6. Common Threads, Meg Saligman, 1998

Figure 7. Wilson-Pacific Building Murals, Andrew Morrison (2001)
http://static.seattletimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/IMG_9766.JPEG-780x438.jpeg

Figure 8. 5 Pointz. http://veblenesquegorge.tumblr.com/post/68880991244/my-piece-of-5-pointz

Figure 9. Towards Freedom: Our History Moves from Slavery Towards Freedom, John Pitman Weber (1993)
http://www.jewishjournal.com/images/featured/com_jccmural1_080808.jpg

Figure 10. Harlem Harvest. Photo taken by Michael Munro.

Figure 11. Know Your Rights. Photo taken by Michael Munro
Figure 12. Zulu Nation. Photo taken by Michael Munro

Figure 13. Andre Huddy Hudson. Photo taken by Michael Munro

Figure 14. Todos son Bienvenidos. Photo taken by Michael Munro

Figure 15. The Spirit of East Harlem, Hank Prussing, 1973. Photo taken by Michael Munro

Figure 16. The Spirit of East Harlem, Hank Prussing, 1973. Photo taken by Michael Munro

Figure 17. Free Oscar & Avelino!!!, Boricua Human Rights Volunteers, 2010. Photo taken by Michael Munro

Figure 18. Crack is Wack (First Version), Keith Haring, 1986 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/matthew-israel/keith-haring-crack-is-wack-mural_b_5651871.html

Figure 19. Crack is Wack (Second Version), Keith Haring, 1986. Photo taken by Michael Munro

Figure 20. Crack is Wack (Third), Keith Haring, 1986 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/matthew-israel/keith-haring-crack-is-wack-mural_b_5651871.html

Figure 21. Crack is Wack (Detail). Photo taken by Michael Munro

Figure 22. Crack is Wack (Detail). Photo taken by Michael Munro

Figure 23. La Calle de Pedro Pietri, Manny de la Vega, 1999. Photo taken by Michael Munro

Figure 24. St. John A.M.E. Church Mural. Photo taken by Michael Munro

Figure 25. La Grande Jatte in Harlem, Eva Cockcroft, 1986 http://www.heritagepreservation.org/RPM/images/NewYorkHomageLeftWallAfter.jpg

Figure 26. La Grande Jatte in Harlem, Eva Cockcroft, 1986 http://www.heritagepreservation.org/RPM/images/NewYorkHomageLeftWallAfter.jpg
Title: Central Park East Mural  
Location: East 103rd St. & Madison Ave.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: School/Community Pride  
Condition: 1

Title: 103rd Street Community Garden  
Location: East 103rd St. b/w Park & Lexington Avenues  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category:  
Condition: 2

Title: La Reina Cecilia  
Location: East 103rd St. & Lexington Ave.  
Creator: James de la Vega  
Date: 2003  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: Commemorative  
Condition: 2

Title: Children’s Community Art Project  
Location: East 103rd St. b/w Lexington & Park Avenues  
Creator: El Museo del Barrio & Hope Communities Inc.  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on cement wall  
Category:  
Condition: 3
Title: Spay & Neuter  
Location: East 103rd Street & Third Ave.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category:  
Condition: 3

Title: La Calle de Pedro Pietri  
Location: East 104th Street & Lexington Ave.  
Creator: James de la Vega  
Date: 1999  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: Commemorative  
Condition: 2

Title: The Spirit of East Harlem  
Location: East 104th Street & Lexington Ave.  
Creator: Hank Prussing  
Date: 1978  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: Community Pride  
Condition: 2

Title: Morris Wittenberg & George E. Calvert  
Location: East 104th St. b/w Lexington & Third Avenues  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: Commemorative  
Condition: 1
Title: Growing Hope  
Location: East 104th Street b/w Lexington & Third Avenues  
Creator: Caw4Kids  
Date: 2008  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: Community Pride  
Condition: 1

Title: Be Yourself Compost Corner  
Location: East 104th Street b/w Third & Second Avenues  
Creator: -  
Date: 2012  
Medium: Paint on concrete blocks and stucco wall  
Category: Environmental Awareness  
Condition: 1

Title: Espiritu  
Location: East 105th & Lexington Ave.  
Creator: Manny Vega  
Date: 2012  
Medium: Mosaic on stucco wall  
Category: Community Pride  
Condition: 1

Title: Dos Alas  
Location: East 105th Street & Third Ave.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: Political Activism  
Condition: 1
Title: Universal Business Media SCH
Location: East 105th St. b/w Third & Second Avenues
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on brick wall
Category: 
Condition: 3

Title: In Loving Memory of Booga
Location: East 105th Street & First Avenue
Creator: TatsCru
Date: 2014
Medium: Spray paint on brick wall
Category: Commemorative
Condition: 1

Title: Flower Mural
Location: Madison Avenue b/w East 105th & 106th Streets
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on brick wall
Category: School
Condition: 1

Title: Graffiti Hall of Fame
Location: East 106th St. & Park Ave.
Creator: Various artists
Date: 2014
Medium: Paint on concrete wall
Category: Community Pride
Condition: 1
Title: Dance  
Location: East 106th St. & Lexington Ave.  
Creator: Manny Vega  
Date: -  
Medium: Mosaic on brick wall  
Category: Cultural/Community Pride  
Condition: 1

Title: Julia de Burgos  
Location: East 106th St. & Lexington Ave.  
Creator: Manny Vega, commissioned by Hope Communities Inc.  
Date: -  
Medium: Mosaic  
Category: Commemorative  
Condition: 1

Title: Stop Police Violence  
Location: East 106th St. & Lexington Ave.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: Social/Political Activism  
Condition: 1

Title: Amber Together... Together We Can!  
Location: East 106th St. & Third Ave.  
Creator: Maria Dominquez  
Date: 2008  
Medium: Paint on  
Category: -  
Condition: 1
Title: Free Oscar & Avelino!!!
Location: East 107th St. b/w Lexington & Third Avenues
Creator: Boricua Human Rights Artists
Date: -
Medium: Paint on brick wall
Category: Political Activism
Condition: 2

Title: Lounge 108
Location: East 108th St. b/w Lexington & Third Avenues
Creator: TatsCru
Date: 2014
Medium: Spray Paint on brick wall
Category: Commemorative
Condition: 1

Title: The Way to Hope
Location: East 108th St. b/w Third & Second Avenues
Creator: Children’s Aid Society
Date: 2008
Medium: Paint on brick wall
Category: School
Condition: 2

Title: Respect/Responsibility/Fairness
Location: East 108th St. b/w Third & Second Avenues
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on brick wall
Category: School
Condition: 2
Title: Dream Above the Clouds  
Location: East 108th St. b/w Third & Second Avenues  
Creator: JHS 117 Students  
Date: 2010  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: School/Community Pride  
Condition: 1

Title: Shark Unit Gear Inc.  
Location: 110th St. & First Avenue  
Creator: Derek M. Armstead  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: -  
Condition: 3

Title: Alaine L. Locke School Playground  
Location: West 111th Street b/w Malcom X Blvd. & Fifth Ave.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: School  
Condition: 1

Title: P.S. 101  
Location: East 111th St. & Park Ave.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: School/Community Pride  
Condition: 1
Title: Homage to Picasso  
Location: East 111th St. & Lexington Ave.  
Creator: James de la Vega  
Date: 1996  
Medium:  
Category: Commemorative  
Condition: 2

Title: Alaine L. Locke School Entrance  
Location: East 112th St. b/w Malcolm X Blvd. & Fifth Ave.  
Creator: TatsCru  
Date: 2014  
Medium: Spray paint on brick wall  
Condition: 1

Title: P.S. 57 M  
Location: Third Ave. & East 115th St.  
Creator: TatsCru  
Date: 2014  
Medium: Spray paint on brick wall  
Category: School  
Condition: 1

Title: The Immigration Game  
Location: East 115th St. & Second Ave.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on stucco wall  
Category: Political Activism  
Condition: 1
Title: Rest in Paint 5 Pointz  
Location: East 115th St. & First Ave.  
Creator: Ay Yo Ma  
Date: 2013  
Medium: Spray paint on stucco wall  
Category: Commemorative  
Condition: 1

Title: Metamorphosis  
Location: East 115th St. b/w First & Pleasant Avenues  
Creator: Grupo Botero Dali  
Date: 2007  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: Community Pride  
Condition: 1

Title: The Path  
Location: East 115th St. b/w First & Pleasant Avenues  
Creator: TatsCru, Caw4Kids & Hope Communities Inc.  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: Social Activism

Title: P.S. 207  
Location: West 117th St. b/w Malcom X Blvd. & Fifth Avenues  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: School  
Condition: 2
Title: Children’s Aid Society  
Location: West 117th St. b/w Malcom X Blvd. & Fifth Avenues  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: School  
Condition: 1

Title: P.S. 149 Sojourner Truth  
Location: Fifth Ave. b/w East 117th & 118th Streets  
Creator: P.S. 149 Students, Martin Wong Foundation  
Date: 2012  
Medium: Spray paint on brick wall  
Category: School  
Condition: 1

Title: La Luz Que Sala de la Oscuridad  
Location: Park Ave. b/w East 117th & 118th Streets  
Creator: Betsy Z. Casañas  
Date: 2013  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: Commemorative  
Condition: 1

Title: PUERTO RICO  
Location: East 117th St. & Third Ave.  
Creator: Bad Garcia & Clarkzilla  
Date: -  
Medium: Spray paint on brick wall  
Category: Community Pride  
Condition: 2
Title: Untitled Commemorative  
Location: East 117th St. b/w Third & Second Avenues  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on stucco wall  
Category: Commemorative  
Condition: 1

Title: Zapatismo  
Location: East 117th Street b/w Second and First Avenues  
Creator: -  
Date: 2001  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: Political Activism  
Condition: 3

Title: If Walls Could Talk  
Location: East 117th St. & First Ave.  
Creator: Kate Yamasaki  
Date: 2012  
Medium: Paint on painted brick wall  
Category: Social Activism  
Condition: 1

Title: Sydenham Health Center  
Location: East 118th St. b/w Frederick Douglass Blvd. & Saint Nicholas Ave.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Mosaic  
Category: Health  
Condition: 1
Title: Panda
Location: West 118th St. b/w Malcolm X Blvd. & Fifth Ave.
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on brick wall
Category: School
Condition: 2

Title: Youth Action Youth Blind
Location: East 118th St. & Third Ave.
Creator: The Royal Kingbee
Date: -
Medium: Spray Paint on stucco wall
Category: Community Pride
Condition: 1

Title: Sharing Wisdom and the Dream of a Better Community
Location: West 119th St. & Fifth Ave.
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on wood attached to wall
Category: Community Pride/Social Activism
Condition: 

Title: Todos Son Bienvenidos
Location: East 119th St. b/w Third & Second Avenues
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on cement wall
Category: Religious
Condition: 2
Title: P.S. 112  
Location: East 119th St. & Pleasant Ave.  
Creator: P.S. 112 students  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: School  
Condition: 1

Title: P.S. 76  
Location: West 120th St. b/w Saint Nicholas Ave. & Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd.  
Creator: P.S. 76 students  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: School  
Condition: 3

Title: The World Vision  
Location: Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd b/w West 120th and 121st Streets  
Creator: Franco Gaskin  
Date: 2014  
Medium: Paint on metal storefront door  
Category: Social Activism/ Community Pride  
Condition: 1

Title: P.S. 7  
Location: East 120th St. b/w Lexington & Third Avenues  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: School/Community Pride  
Condition: 1
Title: P.S. 96
Location: East 120th St. b/w Third & Second Avenues
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on brick wall
Category: School
Condition: 1

Title: Education is a Birthright
Location: First Ave. & East 120th St.
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on brick wall
Category: School/Social Activism
Condition: 1

Title: East Harlem Multi-Service Center
Location: East 120th St & First Ave.
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on brick wall
Category: Advertisement/Community Pride
Condition: 2

Title: The Animation State
Location: West 121st St. b/w Adam Clayton Powell Jr. & Malcom X Blvds.
Creator: P.S. 242 students, Paul Deo, Groundswell
Date: 2007
Medium: Paint on brick wall
Category: School
Condition: 1
Title: Mother & Child  
Location: East 121st St. & Third Ave.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Spray paint on brick wall  
Category: Community Pride  
Condition: 1

Title: P.S. 144  
Location: West 122nd St. b/w Adam Clayton Powell Jr. & Malcolm X Blvds.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on Brick  
Category: School  
Condition: 2

Title: All Power to the People  
Location: East 122nd St. b/w Third & Second Avenues.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: Social/Political Activism  
Condition: 1

Title: Untitled  
Location: East 124th St. & Lexington Ave.  
Creator: James de la Vega  
Date: 1999  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: Social/Political Activism
Title: Justice
Location: East 124th St. & Third Ave.
Creator: Creative Arts Workshop
Date: -
Medium: Paint on stucco wall
Category: Political Activism
Condition: 1

Title: Homebase
Location: East 124th St. & Third Ave.
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on brick wall
Category: Social Activism
Condition: 1

Title: Centro de la Paz
Location: East 124th St. b/w Third & Second Avenues
Creator: Creative Arts Workshop and volunteers
Date: 1995
Medium: Paint on stucco wall
Category: Community Pride

Title: The Spirit of Harlem
Location: Frederick Douglass Blvd. & West 125th St.
Creator: Louis del Sartre, North Folk Bank
Date: 2005
Medium: Mosaic
Category: Community Pride
Condition: 1
Title: Breast Examination Center  
Harlem  
Location: West 125th St. b/w Adam Clayton Powell Jr. and Malcom X Blvds.  
Creator: Murdist Brian Collier  
Date: 2003  
Medium: Paint on stucco wall  
Category: Health  
Condition: 1  

Title: Manna’s Soul Food  
Location: West 125th St. b/w Malcom X Blvd. & Fifth Ave.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on concrete wall  
Category: Community Pride/Advertisement  
Condition: 1  

Title: Get Your Flu Shots  
Location: West 125th St. b/w Malcom X Blvd. & Fifth Ave.  
Creator: Rite Aid  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on metal storefront door & concrete  
Category: Health/Advertisement  
Condition: 1  

Title: Michael Sherman  
Location: Fifth Avenue & East 125th St.  
Creator: Michael Sherman  
Date: 2008  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: -  
Condition: 1
Title: P.S. 154  
Location: West 126th St. b/w Frederick Douglass and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvds.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall and doors  
Category: School  
Condition: 1

Title: Important Black Figures  
Location: West 126th Street & Malcolm X Blvd.  
Creator: Paul Deo  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall with paper collage  
Category: Community Pride/History  
Condition: 1

Title: Zulu Nation  
Location: East 126th St. & Fifth Ave.  
Creator: National Black Theater  
Date: 2014  
Medium: Spray paint on brick wall  
Category: Community Pride  
Condition: 1

Title: P.S. 30M Entrance  
Location: Lexington Ave. b/w East 127th & 128th Streets  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: School  
Condition: 1
Title: P.S. 30M
Location: Lexington Ave. b/w East 127th & 128th Streets
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Mosaic
Category: School/Community Pride
Condition: 1

Title: P.S. 30M Playground
Location: Lexington Ave. b/w East 127th & 128th Streets
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on brick wall
Category: School
Condition: 1

Title: P.S. 30M Basketball Court
Location: Lexington Ave. b/w East 127th & 128th Streets
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on concrete wall
Category: School
Condition: 1

Title: Reading Dragon
Location: East 127th St. & Lexington Ave.
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on brick wall
Category: School
Condition: 1
Title: Crack is Wack  
Location: East 128th St. & Second Ave.  
Creator: Keith Haring  
Date: 1986  
Medium: Paint on concrete wall  
Category: Social Activism  
Condition: 2

Title: Edward P. Bowman Park  
Location: East 129th St. & Lexington Ave.  
Creator: Shirley E. Johnson & Timothy Fowlkes  
Date: 1994  
Medium: Paint on stucco wall  
Category: Community Garden  
Condition: 2

Title: Untitled  
Location: East 130th St. b/w Fifth & Madison Avenues  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: Community Pride  
Condition: 2

Title: Our Neighborhood Place  
Location: West 132nd b/w Adam Clayton Powell Jr. & Malcom X Blvds.  
Creator: Abyssinian Dev. Corp. & 127th Street Block Association  
Date: 2001  
Medium: Paint on stucco wall  
Category: Community Pride  
Condition: 1
Title: St. John A.M.E. Church
Location: West 134th St. b/w Adam Clayton Powell Jr. & Malcom X Blvds.
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on stucco wall
Category: Religious
Condition: 3

Title: P.S. 175
Location: West 134 St. b/w Adam Clayton Powell Jr. & Malcom X Blvds.
Creator: -
Date: 2014
Medium: Paint on brick wall
Category: School
Condition: 1

Title: Untitled Man
Location: Lennox Terrace Pl.
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on wood attached to wall
Category: Commemorative
Condition: 3

Title: Two Communities, One Harlem
Location: Lennox Terrace Pl.
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on brick wall
Category: Community Pride
Condition: 2
Title: Unfinished Group of People
Location: Lennox Terrace Pl.
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on stucco wall
Category: Community Pride/Commemorative
Condition: 2

Title: Harlem Renaissance
Location: Madison Ave. & 135th St.
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on brick wall
Category: Community Pride
Condition: 1

Title: Thrive P.S. 175
Location: West 135th Adam Clayton Powell Jr. & Malcom X Blvds.
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on wood attached to wall
Category: School

Title: Harlem Central Hospital
Location: West 135th St. b/w Malcom X Blvd. & Fifth Ave.
Creator: -
Date: -
Medium: Paint on brick wall
Category: Health
Condition: 2
Title: Know Your Rights  
Location: West 138th St. & Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd.  
Creator: Sophia Dawson & volunteer artists, Center for Constitutional Rights  
Date: 2013  
Medium: Paint on stucco wall  
Category: Social/Political Activism  
Condition: 1

Title: Annie G. Newsome  
Location: West 138th St. b/w Adam Clayton Powell Jr. & Malcolm X Blvd.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: Community Pride/Education  
Condition: 3

Title: St. Mark the Evangelist  
Location: West 138th St. & Malcolm X Blvd.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: Religious  
Condition: 2

Title: Harlem Harvest  
Location: Malcolm X Blvd. b/w West 138th and 139th Streets  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on stucco wall  
Category: Community Pride  
Condition: 3
Title: Harlem 40  
Location: West 140th St. b/w Adam Clayton Powell Jr. & Malcolm X Blvd.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on stucco wall  
Category: Community Pride  
Condition: 2

Title: Big L  
Location: West 140th St. & Malcolm X Blvd.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Spray paint on brick wall  
Category: Commemorative  
Condition: 1

Title: Drew Hamilton Educates Future Leaders  
Location: West 142nd St. & Frederick Douglass Blvd.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on brick wall  
Category: Education/Community Pride  
Condition: 1

Title: Skyward Gardens  
Location: West 143rd St. b/w Adam Clayton Powell Jr. & Malcolm X Blvd.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on stucco wall  
Category: Community garden  
Condition: 1
Title: Andre Huddy Hudson  
Location: West 143rd St. & Malcolm X Blvd.  
Creator: T.D. & Suga J  
Date: 2010  
Medium: Spray paint on brick wall  
Category: Commemorative  
Condition: 1

Title: Public School 194  
Location: West 144th St. b/w Frederick Douglass & Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvds.  
Creator: -  
Date: -  
Medium: Paint on concrete block wall  
Category: School/Community Pride/History  
Condition: 3