

Piru – Camulos Recreational Trail Public Art Project

Grand opening of this art project is scheduled for Saturday, April 18 at 10 a.m.

Highway 126 began as El Camino Real – the mission trail. The road connecting Mission San Fernando to Mission San Buenaventura went through the Santa Clara Valley to reach the coast. The coming of the railroad in 1887 brought a dramatic change to the Santa Clara Valley. Paralleling El Camino Real (now known as Telegraph Road), the rail line was built from east to west - Los Angeles to Ventura. With the railroad came the establishment of the valley's towns, including Piru.

In 1995, the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) purchased the Southern Pacific Railroad property and rail transportation right of way that runs through the Santa Clara Valley. The purpose for this acquisition is to reestablish a transportation corridor through the Santa Clara Valley that includes the reestablishment of rail service and construction of a Class II bicycle trail.

In April 2007, a construction contract was approved for the second phase of the Piru – Camulos segment. Among the work components were the construction of two retaining walls. One wall, directly behind the houses along Center Street, was designed with a faux rock finish. The other wall was not designed with this finish because it was assumed to be inconspicuous. However, upon construction, its size (375' by 8') and location make it easily seen from not only the bicycle trail but the adjacent roadway. Almost immediately after being built, it became a target for graffiti. The estimate from the construction contractor to cover this wall with faux rock was \$80,000.

As an alternate solution, permission was sought and obtained from the funding sources (Caltrans and California Resource Agency) to amend the project description to include a public art component on the one wall to act as an anti-graffiti covering. Because the construction project bids were lower than anticipated, the addition of the public art keeps the project within the scope of the original project budget approved by these two entities.

A Request for Proposal was sent out to artists in the counties of Ventura, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles. Twenty nine responses were received. A selection panel that included Piru community members interviewed the top candidates.



The artist selected, Carlos Callejo, was the panel's unanimous choice. Carlos has more than thirty years experience in public art projects and has played a major role in over 40 mural projects both nationally and internationally. As a public art advocate, he has earned a reputation for expertise in muralism. His specialty is talking to the people of a community and depicting their histories and ancestries.

Carlos Callejo was born in El Paso, Texas and at the age of nine moved to Los Angeles, where he pursued a degree in graphic arts at California State University and studied at Ottis Art Institute. Throughout Callejo's artistic career, he has held positions as art director, project coordinator, curator and technical consultant. He has served as organizer and presenter in numerous art workshops and conferences. Carlos has provided training to schools, libraries and art advocacy groups for art educational projects, and has served on boards and councils to review, screen and evaluate the merits of public art projects.

Carlos has received public recognition and formal commendations from public officials, art institutions, schools and community groups who have benefited from his artistic talents and his dedication to community empowerment.

- One of his most prestigious endeavors took him on an artist residency in Spoleto, Italy to study the work of 14th/15th century fresco masters with the Lamama Umbria Institute; this residency was awarded to Callejo by the Lila Wallace Readers Digest Arts International Program.
- In 1993, Callejo was invited to paint a mural for the Smithsonian Institute's 27th annual Festival of American Folk life in Washington, D.C.
- The El Paso Museum of Art bought art works by Carlos, for its permanent collection during the exhibition "Paper to Wall" in 1993. This exhibit was a one person show celebrating Carlos past accomplishments.
- Callejo's work was included in "Fusion de Culturas" in 1992 at the Museo de Arte in Chihuahua, Mexico, an exhibition sponsored by the American Consul General and the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes of Mexico City.
- In 1991, Callejo won a competitive commission to paint a mural on the new El Paso County Courthouse atrium, this commission was the largest in the state of Texas for this type of project.
- Callejo has been founder/co-founder of: El Centro Cultural del Pueblo, Echo Park L.A., SPARC "Social and Public Art Resource Center" Venice Cal., CAUSA "Coalition of Artist United for Social Action" El Paso TX. , Canutillo Cultural Center TX, Artistic Director for the Spaghetti Bowl Murals Project.

Numerous periodicals and books as well as TV documentaries have published and featured Callejo's work and accomplishments.

Below are a few photos capturing this art work in progress.



