

# Activate Action Project

May de Castro {Cultural Policy Fellow}

ARTS 4 LA {ACTIVATE 2019}

Council District 1 {Highland Park}

TOPIC

# Gentrification and the erasure of murals in Highland Park.

**To foster connections across race, generation and class, and to create awareness about the the impact that gentrification has had in the neighborhood.**

## WHAT IS THE ISSUE

Over the last few years, there has been a community outcry regarding the erasure of murals in Highland Park by either new renters, building owners, and/or the city—unbeknownst to the community who grew up with them. This action has only added fuel to the anti-gentrification movement growing there. Though several murals have been “white washed” over the years, at the center of the current debate is the erasure of a mural called “Resist Violence With Peace.”

## WHAT IS THE ISSUE



“Resist Violence With Peace” by John Zender was located at the current Highland Park Bowl. Photo from “Restorative Justice For The Arts.”

## WHAT IS THE ISSUE

Over the course of my Activate fellowship, I interviewed several stakeholders in the Highland Park community on both sides of the debate, about the mural's history. Although no one has taken responsibility for the removal, there is a consensus that the long time residents/community, were not informed or asked about their opinion on the matter. Whether they were obligated to or not, is another issue, but in their exclusion, some residents have seen this as a direct effort to erase their own identity and culture as many of the muralist and themes were tied to the Latin/Native American heritage.

ACTION

To create a mural  
that involves all  
community in the  
90042.

## ACTION

I would recruit **the youth**—

highschool and middle school students from Highland Park to create the mural. I would collaborate with a local muralist and art teacher to train and educate the students about the importance of public art, conservancy and to impart the power of creativity and the arts. And more importantly, I will invite the community to take part in the process.



## NEXT STEPS

- 1) Identify key collaborators and invite the community to a townhall to discuss the mural project
- 2) Create a plan to propose to the councilman's office and various organizations to secure funding and location
- 2) Identify and involve local organizations that may need to approve this project
- 3) A call for artist

## OUTCOME

To create unity and  
community building  
through the arts—  
where all involved  
will be heard.