

# LA Observed

Los Angeles media and sense of place

## Second Siqueiros mural found



Suddenly Los Angeles is awash in lost murals by Mexican revolutionary artist David Alfaro Siqueiros. In 1932, the comrade of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo came to L.A. to teach a class at the Chouinard Art Institute, the famed private art school that folded into CalArts in the 1970s. While here, Siqueiros painted controversial political murals on a wall at the school near MacArthur Park and another at Olvera Street. Both were covered over in the anti-Communist fervor of the 1930s. The Olvera Street work, *La América Tropical*, has been uncovered and is undergoing restoration by the Getty Conservation Institute. The mural painted at Chouinard, "Street Meeting,"

had been believed lost.

A story by Suzanne Muchnic in Sunday's Times (subscribers only) details how some history detectives think they have found the mural, obscured but still intact, on a wall at the old Chouinard campus at 743 S. Grand View Avenue. The former campus, a city historic-cultural monument designed by under-appreciated L.A. architect Stiles O. Clements, is now a Korean church. The church is cooperating with plans to raise money to further investigate and possibly restore the work. The image above is a later self-portrait by Siqueiros.

Chouinard's influence in the arts in Los Angeles was substantial. It along with the Otis Art Institute formed a thriving arts district around Westlake Park (now MacArthur Park) from the 1930s into the '60s. The Chouinard name disappeared in 1972, but artist David Tourjé became intrigued after he bought a South Pasadena home that had belonged to the founder. In 1998, he and a partner started the Chouinard Foundation with an advisory board of former students and faculty. There's now an art school going and it's Tourjé who is spearheading investigation of the Siqueiros mural. (Robert Perine, the other partner, died recently.)



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