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Mayor steps up in support of the arts

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AS the artistic director of the Watts Village Theater Company, a midsized multicultural theater that works to bring people of all colors and creeds together through theater, my confidence in our mayor's commitment to art is much more galvanized than the guarded praise he was given by even his most generous advocate in Diane Haithman's article ["A Patron at the Helm?" Jan. 7].

To blindly dismiss Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's support for Watts Village Theater and other organizations as "smoke and mirrors" is painfully ignorant.

While the article's attempt to put Villaraigosa on trial is an interesting approach to framing the arts issue, and while the jury may still be out, Watts Village Theater Company has cast its vote for the mayor's acquittal.

GUILLERMO

AVILES-RODRIGUEZ

Watts

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THERE will always be naysayers, but the fact that we have a mayor with a stated purpose of support toward the arts is something that should be focused upon. The Chouinard School of Art was awarded the first public-private initiative, which the mayor approved, to bring our art education program to the children and teens of L.A. through the Department of Recreation and Parks. In this, the city provides all space, materials and assistants -- true civic assistance in the arts, not empty statements.

DAVE TOURJE

*Los Angeles**Tourje is the executive director of the Chouinard School of Art.*