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# Flor Del Barrio

Artist: Desi Mundo

2024

Washington Community Center, 921 S 1st St B, San Jose, CA 95110 / Council District 3

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## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Washington Community Center is a 17,000 square foot facility that includes a gymnasium, multi-purpose room, classroom, conference room, and game room. The community center offers programming targeting elementary through 24 years of age and support services for parents and other adults. The community center is adjacent to Biblioteca Lationamerica and Washington Elementary School, and is located in one of San José's most historic Chicano/Mexican-American districts, located just south of Downtown San José. The portion of Willow Street that makes up the Calle Willow business district, is made up primarily of Spanish-speaking businesses. It is designated by the city as a historic conservation area, owing to the high number of historic of buildings exemplifying 19th and early 20th century architecture.



*Desi Mundo, Flor Del Barrio, 2024, at Washington Community Center*

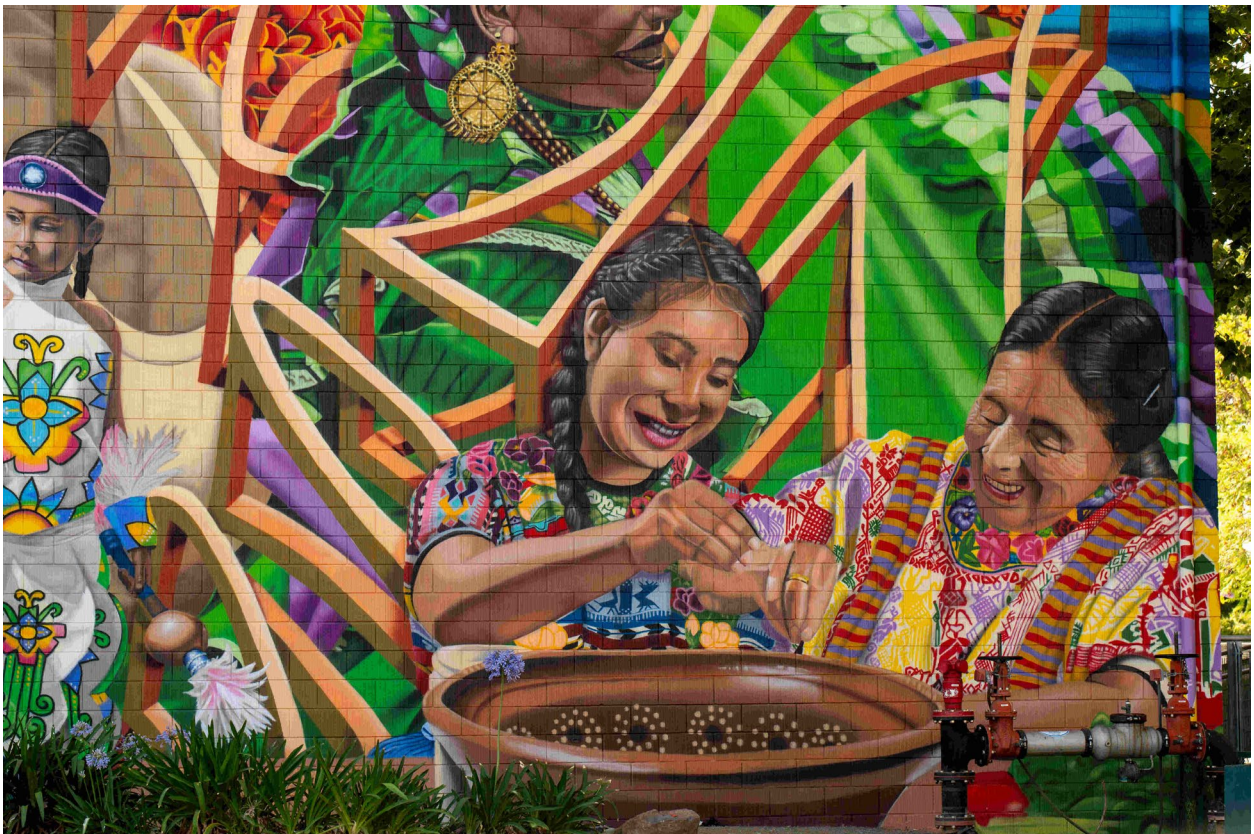
Desi Mundo's vibrant and colorful mural design on the North side of the community center features several figures unified by the word "Flor" written in his distinct lettering style. The title of the mural *Flor Del Barrio* means Neighborhood Flower.

On the left side of the mural, a man reaches toward apricots and grapes, a nod to cannery workers and the agricultural industry that shaped the Guadalupe-Washington neighborhood. Above the farmworker, a woman holds a broom in the air, a reference to the Justice for Janitors campaign that began in this

neighborhood in the 1990s. Next to this farmworker are two food vendors with carts. These figures represent the past and present members of the Guadalupe-Washington community.

In the center of the mural, a sepia-toned male figure has an Ohlone girl tattoo on his arm. She is positioned above one of the California missions and rows of barb wire, referring to the Spanish colonization of the indigenous Thamien (Ohlone) communities of this area. An Ohlone girl in regalia contrasts with the tattooed arm, representing past and present conversations with history. Behind this figure, a Pachuco man in a zoot suit stands next to his car, a symbol of self-made success.

On the right side of the mural, a folklorico dancer twirls her bright green dress. At the bottom right, an older woman with a young girl cook together. These figures are examples of education outside of the academic classroom.



*Desi Mundo, Flor Del Barrio (detail), 2024, at Washington Community Center*

In the background behind all the figures, a serape in sunset colors with images of marigolds and roses throughout the mural. A single hummingbird flies above a rose, an important animal in the Ohlone creation myth. Overall, the main themes in this mural are different pathways to success, honoring history, and community healing.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Desi Mundo is an Oakland-based spray paint educator, hip-hop cultural diplomat and the founder of the Community Rejuvenation Project, a pavement to policy mural organization that has produced more than 300 murals throughout the Bay Area as well as nationally and internationally. Desi has been a spray can artist and muralist for the past 30 years. He merges studies of space, balance and transparency within his unique stylized letters and masks with a strong foundation in cultural engagement, community reflection and rooted spirituality. Desi's work has been shown at Depaul University, the St. George Art Museum and the Block Museum at Northwestern University.

His largest mural, the *Universal Language* galvanized the Oakland community in the struggle against gentrification resulting in \$20 million in community benefits, as documented in the feature documentary film *Alice Street*. Desi's legacy as an educator and youth worker in K-12 schools spans two decades. He has been awarded the Individual Artist grant from the City of Oakland eight times. He served as a hip-hop cultural ambassador to Egypt through the Next Level program of the US State Department in 2017. In 2020, Desi completed his tallest mural *AscenDance*, a 90' tall piece on the Greenlining Institute, followed by a 25' tall, block-long mural *East Bay Rising Together* for Kaiser Permanente in 2021.

More information on the artist can be found at <https://www.desimundo.com>.

## ABOUT THE PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

The City of San José Public Art Program seeks to build community identity by initiating artworks and exhibitions that enhance the civic landscape. Through active community engagement, public art strives to reflect the City's diversity, historic richness, and envision its present and future.

The Public Art Program is part of the City's Office of Cultural Affairs, a division of the Office of Economic Development. The Public Art Program was established by a 1984 municipal ordinance that provides public art through funding from City capital improvement projects and eligible private development.

For further information and photos, please contact the San José Public Art Program.

