

# chicano centros, murals, and art leonard castellanos

*An artist, he is the Director of the  
Mechicano Art Center.*

On the corner of Whittier Boulevard and Gage, in East Los Angeles, sits a building called the Mechicano Art Center. It is hard to ignore because of all the murals painted on the outside. It has an aluminum bear can covered door and occupies approximately 8,000 square feet. The Mechicano Art Center opened its doors in April of 1971 and was in existence a year before that. It was originally started with the ideas and funds of Mura Bright and Victor Franco. Victor Franco is presently the Chairman of the Board and Mura Bright is the Treasurer. Mechicano was not the first *centro*, but it has been one of the most dynamic throughout Aztlan.

The Mechicano Art Center, which has been at the forefront of controversy as well as an instigator of new programs, was one of the first to organize an effective mural program. We have been funded several times by the Expansion Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, twice for a community silkscreen program, and once for a mural and supergraphic program. The Catholic Convention for Human Development has also funded our silkscreen project. Mechicano is primarily a center for the support of ongoing projects, such as silkscreen workshops, drawing and painting classes, and the development of art exhibits. We also carry on special activities such as the preparation

Mural including pieces by Willie Herron at an East Los Angeles park building. Photo by Romatsky.

