

November 13, 2012

Countdown to Riverside City College's 100th Anniversary

On the south exterior wall of Riverside City College's former Life Science building exists an ecological mural that has been a part of the campus since 1975. The 10 by 55 foot mural, made up of metal objects, cement, acrylic paint, sealant and polyurethane coating, is the creation of Dr. Sam Huang (Professor of Biology / Health Sciences 1974-1998). The mural was funded by a faculty grant of \$1,500 from the RCC Board of Trustees. This is the same grant that funded Bill Mitchell's "Untitled Sculpture" by the Martin Luther King Jr. High Tech Center. Several youngsters aged 8 to 14 showed up to help Dr. Huang with the project including his daughter. At the time of the mural's completion Dr. Huang said:

"I feel it was a very good experience for them. Years from now when they come back here, they'll be able to say that they helped make that".

Dominating the mural are two human figures. One a woman is holding a falcon while other creatures nestle up to her. The other, a man, is playing a musical instrument from which flow wrecked cars, Freon gas, a nuclear bomb, and other elements affiliated with modern society. When Dr. Huang first started the mural, he fastened metal objects to the ceramic block wall with bolts and epoxy glue and then covered everything with a quarter-inch layer of cement. Other figures were molded and later attached. All details were then painted in. The entire mural was covered with sealant and given a polyurethane coating which gave the mural a fine sheen. Dr. Huang had to work around objects that were on the building such as a water outlet and an ashtray that was (in those years) built into the side of the wall. Instead of getting rid of the obstacles, the artist merely adapted them into the piece. A major problem with public art is vandalism. Dr. Huang explained,

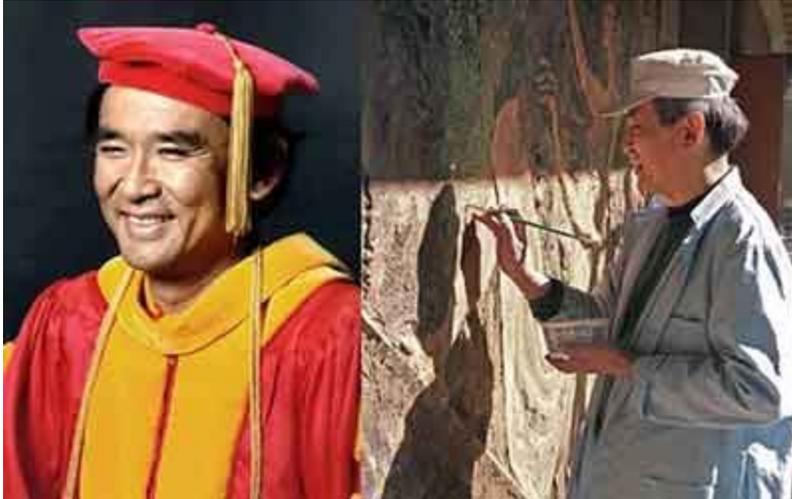
"Since it depicts modern society, it should also show that vandalism is part of such society."

Much of the above article was adapted from a December 5, 1975 "Viewpoints" newspaper article by Phyllis Irwin.

Thanks to Anthony Rizo for providing the photo below of Dr. Huang's mural. The work of art is so large that it could not be photographed in one shot. Rizo had to take multiple images of the art work and "stitch" them together.



The first photo (below left) depicts Dr. Huang in full academic regalia. He was one of the first RCC faculty members to be granted a "full professorship". The second photo (below right) shows Dr. Huang, not long after his retirement, returning to the campus to touch up his mural.



It is 3 years and 17 weeks until RCC's 100th Anniversary on March 13, 2016.

The Riverside City College Instructional Media Center is bringing you this five year countdown to RCC's 100th Anniversary. Our intention is to give everyone a weekly glance at the many people and events that have been a part of the college.

Our thanks go to the RCC Digital Library Archives and the District's Office of Strategic Communications and Relations for allowing us to use their photo and newspaper collections. Thanks as well to all of the RCC students and Faculty Advisors that were a part of the yearbook and newspaper staffs. Thanks also to Tom Johnson and Gilbert Jimenez who wrote "the book" about RCC's history. "Riverside City College 1916-1981- A 65 Year History" is available in the RCC Digital Library.

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