Minnesota Unraveled

EP101 - Museum of the Streets: Muralismo in St. Paul

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Chantel Rodríguez:

Many years ago, I was on the bus heading to Uptown and found myself at the intersection of Chicago and Franklin Avenues in Minneapolis. This neighborhood was busy, cars and buses zooming past. As the bus pulled into its stop, I saw it, a huge mural painted on the side of a building. I got off the bus to take a closer look. The image was arresting. Looking back at me, a woman with a mournful look on her face. She was holding a small sleeping baby on her left arm and another child rested against her chest. The colors clashed, but at the same time worked so well together. The artist used a variety of blues to create the water and sky. There was a bird, a scorpion, and was that a butterfly, all painted in black. It was aggressive, but at the same time soothing and familiar.

Growing up, I had heard stories about a weeping woman, La Llorona. This character seemed similar, but this mural was a departure from the folk story I heard while growing up. The one my parents told me about was about a woman who drowned her children in a fit of rage and in the aftermath spent her time weeping for her children along the riverbanks at night.

That image of La Llorona left an impression on me. I couldn't stop thinking this looked like a Chicano-inspired mural. I wanted to know more. Where do these Chicano murals come from and why are they here? So I started doing some research and it turns out this is a story with roots in the West Side neighborhood in St. Paul. To better understand this story, we're going to speak with a long-time resident of the West Side and a Chicano artist.

Welcome to Minnesota Unraveled. I'm your host, Chantel Rodríguez. This is episode one, Museum of the Streets, muralismo in St. Paul. I spoke with Ralph Brown, a long-time, West Side resident and the founder of West Side Community Organization, or WSCO.

Ralph Brown:

I first came to the West Side as a young adult in 1970, so as far as the number of my neighbors are concerned, 1970, I'm still the newbie, but they accepted me anyway.

Chantel Rodríguez:

And since you've been living in the West Side neighborhood for so long, what would you say the West Side neighborhood means to you?

Ralph Brown:

It means home. There are people who are fourth, fifth, sixth generation in the community. And even myself, when we had our grandchildren and my mother-in-law living with us for a while, we were a four generation family in just went home. A lot of the people have moved from elsewhere. In fact, individuals come all the time, but we also had a number of massive immigration waves that have come to the West Side starting in the 19th century and then going till today. And those folks found this to be a, for the most part, a welcoming place. There were tensions, always tensions. One group always have felt tense as another group was moving in. Perhaps to be expected, I don't know. But on the West Side, people did tend to get along very well and continue to to this day.

Chantel Rodríguez:

When we talk about the West Side and where it actually exists geographically, can you situate it for me for where it exists right now?

Ralph Brown:

The West Side is actually the south central part of the city, and you'll find it directly north of West St. Paul, which is the separate municipality. But that's where, if you were in downtown St. Paul and you crossed any of the bridges across the Mississippi, you would find yourself on the West Side. And it goes down to Annapolis Street, basically. Roughly, I don't know, 14, 15,000 people, depending on which census estimate you want to follow, but that's our size.

Chantel Rodríguez:

The West Side has maintained that diversity. Back in the 1950s, St. Paul's West Side flats were a melting pot of residents. Immigrants from Mexico, Russia, Poland, Latvia, and Germany joined the indigenous people already there. Residents lived in a mix of single family homes and apartment complexes. Rents were low and there was a village within a city feeling that Ralph says was appealing.

Ralph Brown:

They loved the sense of community. That was a real thing, and important to them. And their church was there and their social centers were there. Two of your earliest

breweries in Minnesota, Yoerg and Brueggemann started on the West Side with the West Side Germans. And myself, I'm a parishioner of the Church of St. Matthew. And fortunately for our church, the Brueggemann family also belonged, and we've got a church that was basically built on beer sales.

Chantel Rodríguez:

Can you tell me a little bit about those urban renewal efforts, why they happened to begin with, and why these folks were forced out, and where they went?

Ralph Brown:

It's hard, I think sometimes to give the full picture, in that there's a tendency today to think about how despicable it was more than anything else. It is hard to remember that for at least some of the people doing it, some of them probably had good intentions in mind. One of the difficulties of living on the flats, and it was the flat land right along the river, major floods. People had to escape with rowboats out of their second floor windows.

Chantel Rodríguez:

The West Side Flats neighborhood was lively, but it was on a low-lying part of the Mississippi River that was prone to flooding. Three of the biggest surges happened in 1943, 1951, and 1952. At the time, the 1952 flood was called the worst St. Paul flood in recorded history and caused massive damage. In 1956, St. Paul's Port Authority decided it wanted to convert this area into an industrial park. To make this happen, the Port Authority announced it would demolish the neighborhood.

Ralph Brown:

What happened is the urban renewal movement really started in the sixties. I think it was even as Eisenhower was leaving office, they started signing legislation to build the levees, basically flood walls along the river. And it was thought at the time that it would be great to turn that whole area into an industrial land because people wanted jobs.

Chantel Rodríguez:

The city began incentivizing homeowners and renters to relocate by buying homes for a fraction of their worth. In June, 1961, there were 2,147 residents. About four-fifths were of Mexican ancestry still living in the West Side Flats neighborhood. Homes started to be torn down in 1962, so by 1963, all the residents had either left or had been relocated.

Ralph Brown:

There was a desire on the part of many political leaders in St. Paul to just cram the rest of the West Side, the Concord Terrace area, which is sort of the area north of Cesar Chavez Street running to the terraces.

Chantel Rodríguez:

Many former West Side Flats residents of Mexican ancestry stuck together and created a new neighborhood along with a business district just uphill along Concord Terrace.

Ralph Brown:

That wasn't the end of it though, because it also continued on into the 1970s with now that we've kicked all these people out, what do we do about that?

Chantel Rodríguez:

I would love to hear more about what happened after urban renewal and the destruction of West Side Flats, and these folks that were basically kicked out. We know that they tried or really did succeed in rebuilding a community and neighborhood. What was it like to be forced from your home and intentionally have to rebuild a community?

Ralph Brown:

Okay, well, there was a lot of strong feeling and the strong feeling. And the strong feeling was two-part. Number one, there was anger and frustration, and that still comes out today. I did not live on the Flats myself, but I've got a bunch of friends who did, and I can still hear when we talk how they have not forgotten.

There was a real diaspora of people, but I'd say two places in particular that most people on the West Side followed. The first of course, will be those people who simply moved "up the hill", and either on the higher parts of the West Side or into West St. Paul. And at this point I would say that it was beginning to be seen more as a Hispanic issue rather than so much of a multicultural issue. And part of that is I think a lot of Hispanics claimed, I think with great justification, that they had a harder time finding housing in other places than say the people who were with a more of a European background, probably great truth in that. But when they did find a place, they were also feeling a sense of pride.

Chantel Rodríguez:

As a direct response to this forced displacement and destruction of the West Side Flats, Mexican-American residents took inspiration from the Chicano movement or El Movimiento happening across the United States. El Movimiento aimed to end racial discrimination, celebrate a distinct ethnic identity, and create support for educational, employment, and social opportunities for Mexican-Americans. Many residents took on activist roles with two goals in mind, showing the strength of the community, and honoring Chicano identity and culture. One way the activism took shape was through muralismo.

Ralph Brown:

It was in the seventies that I first noticed some murals popping up on the West Side. In retrospect, I've come to realize, well, it was because the movement that started in Los Angeles in the sixties was then finally spreading out.

Chantel Rodríguez:

Chicano artists, activists, and community members use these murals to create a museum of the streets. These expansive paintings reshaped the visual environment of the West Side neighborhood and worked to unify people through this shared cultural imagery.

Ralph Brown:

I think it was individual artists approaching the owners of small business buildings, Concord Drugstore and so on, the West Sider Bar, and some others, and were given permission to paint on the side of the building. And the initial ones did reflect, I think, very much at Chicano awareness.

Chantel Rodríguez:

To some the murals had deeper meaning. They were tools for this group to claim visual, social, and political space, to maintain a sense of community and resilience in the face of destructive urban policies, poverty, and neglect.

In the 1980s and 1990s, like a lot of the United States, Minnesota experienced an increase in immigration. New groups from Latin America, Africa, and Asia settled in the state. During this time, muralismo evolved beyond Chicanismo, or the cultural

consciousness behind the Chicano movement to embrace the multiculturalism of the neighborhood.Ralph Brown's favorite mural, Hunger Has No Color, was painted in 1985 on the side of Captain Ken's Food for St. Paul Harvest Food Bank.

Ralph Brown:

If you're driving on Robert Street heading toward downtown, as you pass the Girl Scout building, look to your right and you'll see it on the wall. The Hunger Has No Color mural. It's very easy to see.

Chantel Rodríguez:

Armando Gutiérrez, John Acosta, and Richard Schletty were the artists.

Ralph Brown:

It was a funny thing how it developed because I think it was the intent of the artists initially to paint it in vibrant colors, and they were first just mapping it out using blacks, grays, a little bit of brown as well, I think

Chantel Rodríguez:

The monochromatic image includes 27 West Side residents or former residents. It depicts residents in a grassy field with trees. Some carry baskets full of food while others hold empty baskets. The mural brought attention to the struggle of poverty and food insecurity, while at the same time showing the power of diversity.

Ralph Brown:

West Siders know that building it was built on, going back to the 1920s, that has been a food factory of some sort for all those decades, and to have a mural about hunger about there was just so appropriate.

Chantel Rodríguez:

In this moment of the seventies and early eighties, artists like those who painted Hunger Has No Color were working alongside the community, contributing to this vibrant sense of neighborhood identity. The West Side was really a place where artists could paint murals and inspire people. A new wave of artists were working alongside the old ones, and one of the new arrivals was Jimmy Longoria.

Jimmy Longoria:

My name is Jimmy Longoria. I'm the Chicano artist in Minnesota, and my area of expertise is outrageous.

Chantel Rodríguez:

Jimmy Longoria is the artist who painted La Llorona. After speaking to West Side resident Ralph Brown and learning about the connection between muralismo and the destruction of the flats, I wanted to talk to a Chicano artist and dig a bit more into the process of creating a mural. Plus, Jimmy is one of the best known Chicano artists around.

I interviewed Jimmy at his house, surrounded by his vibrant artwork. Jimmy is dressed in an orange shirt splattered with paint and black trousers. His feet are bare during our lively conversation.

Jimmy Longoria:

I got here in '88 and I had a plan. I was going to be here in Minnesota for five years and develop my hand.

Chantel Rodríguez:

Jimmy was born in South Texas, and spent time in Chicago and southern California where he wanted to study art. He reached out to several art department chairs about joining their program to work on his painting. But Jimmy was met with resistance. They all said there was no way he could create the art, the Chicano art he wanted to make.

Jimmy Longoria:

It's impossible. Chicano art is impossible. There's only American art, and that's it. I thought that's great. Oh, you think about it. They were just telling me it was virgin territory. Nobody was out there. I came to the term Chicano when I arrived in California. So Chicano back then with the O, is that we are the group of people that are active in cultural conflict. We're civil about it. Be polite.

Chantel Rodríguez:

El Movimiento used the term Chicano to show a sense of ethnic pride, strengthen cultural identity, and express resistance. What it means to be Chicano varies from person to person.

What makes something Chicano art? Are there particular themes? How can you identify something that is Chicano art?

Jimmy Longoria:

Chicano is not realistic. There's a big head in a mural, a big portrait head, and then there are subordinate figures, and generally it's a rectangular picture frame. It's problematic because it's a hybrid between what's called a portrait and a landscape.

So most murals, if you look at them and know nothing, you could analyze them as being in between those two things, a hybrid unification. And for me, that is what Chicano art is calling. It parallels the Italian Renaissance, but in part it comes from what is the legacy of all of us Latinos. We're a hybrid of the indigenous culture.

Now indigenous art has long been maligned as being animalistic and decadent, but it's not. It deals with icons and personal icons that are vaulted. In other words, connecting the spirits. So Chicano art must A, have spirit, indescribable spirit. It must have a complex composition. And it must have vibrant colors in the sense that the colors interact with each other in a significant way. So Chicano roots actually for me originate in the collision between the Iberian, the Peninsula culture and the indigenous cultures here.

Chantel Rodríguez:

But what about the colors?

Jimmy Longoria:

Are there such a thing as Chicano colors? And the answer is yes and no. Most Mexicans come north, originate in Sonora, and Sonora has a certain combination of colors. Occasionally, there are some that come all the way from Guatemala down to the peninsula, and then they go for tropical blends. You put those colors together, that the environment in which Mexicans lived in the higher levels, exposed them to a purer blue, that the purples, and the reds, and the browns, and the greens were different, and that they were different from the Mediterranean colors, which if you go and study European cultural history, there's a difference between the Nordic color palette and the Italian palette, and it depends on where you are. And then there are African colors, so that's there, that's legitimate.

Chantel Rodríguez:

That can see these themes, motifs, and colors in some of the murals I've seen around the Twin cities. And these elements are some of the reasons Jimmy's La Llorona is embedded in my memory.

Jimmy Longoria:

It was an accident that it came, that I got to do La Llorona. And La Llorona really changed the game because it was classic Chicano in the sense it was a purpose. It was about changing the environment on there.

Chantel Rodríguez:

Jimmy got his break on this project when an artist, he knew Armando Gutiérrez was asked to paint a mural. He was one of the artists who painted Hunger Has No Color. Armando passed on the project and suggested that Jimmy should do it. Painting a mural outside on a busy street corner like Chicago and Franklin posed so many challenges from safety to finding workers to help paint. But why would they put a mural here?

Jimmy Longoria:

It was a drug treatment corner. It was a place that was unsafe and it was right behind Central.

Chantel Rodríguez:

Before any work could start, Jimmy and the building owner needed to decide on the cost. Everything was new to him, the scale of the project and the amount to charge for this kind of work.

Jimmy Longoria:

How do you make a price? And I said to him, "Who's your billing man, maintenance guy?". It comes in, "How much do you spend in three years painting out the graffiti?". Guy comes back a few minutes, and just walks away and comes back. He says, "$7,500". I said, "Well, that's the price."

Chantel Rodríguez:

And with that Jimmy was all in. He had never worked on a painting of this size. He was confident he could do it, but first he had to decide what to paint on this huge blank space. He remembers it being a bit daunting, but it was time to take a risk.

Jimmy Longoria:

It's an anti-graffiti mural, which allowed me to make it the first really aggressive Chicano mural. And this one, La Llorona, is the first in-your-face Chicano mural. And it's kind of sneaky. The name of the game of being a Chicano artist in Minnesota, which is presumed to be virtually all white, is to go and do the outrageous.

To paint a mural in Minnesota on Lake Street back then, you had to pull the weeds first, you had to scrape the wall, and then you have to start the process of getting it primed.

Chantel Rodríguez:

Painting a mural doesn't happen with just the artists. It can be a real community endeavor, one that brings people together. For La Llorona, this definitely was the case. Kids from the community got involved.

Jimmy Longoria:

We were discovered by a few probation officers in the juvenile system. In Minnesota throughout progressive, they figured out we don't want to incarcerate every kid in juvenile U, which gets them to be junior criminals. And that was tough. Can we divert some of them? So they went and diverted them to us. And it was interesting to have kids show up. They start at nine o'clock, like 10:30, they're panting and going, sick. But about a week or so later, you get these kids that have this look in their eyes, like, "Where are we today Mr Longoria?". And we're almost done. And we grew. We went from initial five kids to up having 35 kids.

Chantel Rodríguez:

One of the challenges of making a mural of this scale, at least the way Jimmy makes them, is they have to be impactful, far away and close up.

Jimmy Longoria:

You have to account for the three foot, the six foot, the 18 foot, and the 30-foot viewer, which means that's how far they are from the wall. So up close, you still have to paint

hand. That's where my discipline as a painter, which is to make every square inch interesting.

Chantel Rodríguez:

The learning curve was steep. His crew were not artists, and the job was massive.

Jimmy Longoria:

There are hundreds of square feet. And in a square foot is 144 square inches. Divide that by two. Okay?

Chantel Rodríguez:

That's a lot of work.

Jimmy Longoria:

It's a lot of strokes. You came from the bottom up and my kids were totally awesome. That's how they can be so fast. They paint a huge block. This block is red, and then they bring it back with detail. And I didn't make a single muralist. 330 kids, not a single one wanted to become a muralist, but I make 330 kids that could do anything that would test their metal.

Chantel Rodríguez:

This sense of place is such an important part of muralismo. When Ralph Brown talked about the Hunger Has No Color mural being painted on the side of a food factory, that conveys a message. La Llorona is no different.

Jimmy Longoria:

A mural has to live in a place and with a people, and it has to be a smoking mirror to their existence. La Llorona, because I was actually on that bus. The bus from St. Paul, it comes, and goes up to Franklin, and comes across. And if you're going to go downtown, you go to there, and you get off at Chicago and you switch buses.

But I had seen that because there were all these social service agencies there, these girls were jumping on the bus with their kids to go there. Right there entering in Chicago used to be service centers for young mothers. And I saw them and that was like, okay, La Llorona was a concept. And originally La Llorona was further down in the middle of the building because I wanted to bring her down to intimidate the drugs.

Chantel Rodríguez:

To what extent does location play a role in your artistic expression?

Jimmy Longoria:

Thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Okay. People who have asked us about murals and stuff, assume that the murals exist just in abstraction. And because I was a nerd, a historical nerd, and I want to understand how things were composed.

Chantel Rodríguez:

So La Llorona?

Jimmy Longoria:

La Llorona. You've got it. Because what's the first thing you see? When you come around the bend up over the rise? The first thing you're going to see is this woman up in space, and it just boom. And then the composition there, it comes down, it sort of trickles down. And then as you get close, it gets intense and then it passes on.

Chantel Rodríguez:

Jimmy used those attention grabbing colors, blues, pinks, pops of orange to create La Llorona, a mural depicting a real world issue inspired by a folklore story. The story I remember and Jimmy's version are similar because we both grew up in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas.

Jimmy Longoria:

It's titled La Llorona, this huge woman who's African-American, holding a baby in the Llorona story, which for the people who don't know, it's from South United States. And it's about a young woman who falls in love with a man above her caste, has three children with him, and then the frustrating part, he won't do right by her. And so in a fit of anger, she drowns her children and then is damned to look for them on railways. Within South Texas, it means a lot because it's dangerous. The water moving there will kill kids. It's a totally mad story. A story about a woman to keep kids away from water.

News Clip:

It's a scary story. They were told to me all the time when I was little.

Jimmy Longoria:

Yes.

News Clip:

Get ready to go to sleep or La Llorona's going to come get you. The weeping woman who cries for her children take you away.

Jimmy Longoria:

The story that got me is because I had seen young African-American women coming to that area because there were social service agencies there, with their kids. And there was actually one young lady, she was in her teens, she had three kids. I saw two toddlers and a baby. And I went, that's it. That will resonate with everybody because it was a very mixed community. But from the top down, that's a big image. And we get down and there's all this sort of mystic elements, and great complexity and color. And then put kind of poem, the whole thing.

Chantel Rodríguez:

When I first saw La Llorona from the bus so many years ago, the poem really drew me in. It conveys some of the deeper meaning behind the mural, the story, the place and the community. Jimmy used the La Llorona folklore to communicate the suffering of teen mothers as they seek to provide and care for their young children and themselves. The poem reads, "Young love child on each arm, a wind, a whale, a river of madness, a lonesome despair. Babe's constant demands, lost youth, endless tears into the water's darkness. The whale and wind, horror, and self-death. A constant search, a constant whale. La Llorona calls to you."

Muralists know that their art is not meant to last forever, and yet they put so much time and energy into spreading joy through their work. These murals live outside in Minnesota's harsh weather, those cold winters and hot summers. Buildings change owners. And there's the passage of time. Despite all of these challenges, we have a community and artists who choose to invest time and energy in trying to keep them alive.

The Hunger Has No Color mural is one of those that has endured. The love for this mural was evident because it's been refurbished twice, once in the early two thousands, and then again in 2024.

News Clip:

Tonight, a wall size piece of art is getting a major makeover, a makeover that is decades overdue. A community favorite is getting restored by the three original painters.

Chantel Rodríguez:

The three original artists got back together to restore the mural.

Ralph Brown:

They came back on their own and they repaired it. They just came back and repainted parts, scraped things down.

Chantel Rodríguez:

The curators of the Museum of the Streets are often volunteers from the community that see the intrinsic value of these murals

Ralph Brown:

With community support, a neighborhood star grant, I think from the city, the Traxler family, the people who own Captain Ken's today, they kicked in a lot of work and they've rebuilt it.

Chantel Rodríguez:

So with the changing urban landscape, it's a small victory for this piece of history to continue to have life.

Ralph Brown:

I think that that's the beauty of murals is that they become part of the community.

Chantel Rodríguez:

We don't know exactly just how many murals still exist on the West Side. Ralph says organizations like Westco are working to catalog what murals remain.

Ralph Brown:

We have take photographs of them, get down the names of the people who painted them, and want all the information we can and keep this in a place, ideally online where that could be found.

Chantel Rodríguez:

Some of the existing murals are under threat from new developments and vandalism.

Ralph Brown:

One of the things that we liked about murals, walls that had murals were left untouched. They were not defaced. And that, going back to the seventies.

Chantel Rodríguez:

Ralph started to notice positive changes around the neighborhood. New murals and public artworks incorporating the faces and cultures of the continually changing community started to pop up.

Talking about these early murals having Chicano awareness, very much rooted in this larger Chicano movement. And now it's changed over time because we've had new immigrants coming in, and therefore the murals are reflecting the community in that way. And it's telling history.

Ralph Brown:

Uh-huh, very much so. And I've noticed now a number of the muralists who have done fantastic work with paints in the past are moving into sculpture. It's like, well, okay, we've done that for decades. Let's try something else for a change. And that gives a whole different feel to the community as well. The most recent mural that went up on the West Side, Suni Lee, her grandparents have a store there. That's why they put it up. It's a celebration of the entire community at this point.

Chantel Rodríguez:

Suni Lee is a gymnast raised in St. Paul. She's the first Hmong American Olympian and an Olympic gold medalist.

Ralph Brown:

If we can interpret them and understand them, and I think a lot of them are easy to understand, they're telling a story about what life was like, some aspect of life in the community at the moment that they were created. And that now stays. It's like a chapter in a history book, that you can keep flipping through the book, but that page always stays there.

Chantel Rodríguez:

Some of the prominent West Side muralists that have been painting since the late-nineteen-seventies have spread their art far beyond the neighborhood.

Ralph Brown:

A lot of the murals that you find elsewhere in the Twin cities and Minnesota are painted by the same folks who painted the ones on the West Side. I mean, there's only so many blank walls in one community. If you want to keep doing it, you've got to spread out. And so I would like to think we've helped to move murals to the rest of the state by simply using up all of our space.

Chantel Rodríguez:

This was new to me. Many of the mural artists of the West Side are doing murals across the state now. It's incredibly significant because when I started looking into Chicano-inspired murals, I thought it was a story about the West Side and the Twin cities. But as it turns out, it's more complicated than that. Chicano murals may have been a response to the destruction of the West Side flats, but their evolution and expansion beyond the West Side is a multicultural story about the close relationship between art, artists, and community.

When La Llorona was completed, Jimmy went back to visit his work. He went undercover. He was just a guy with a cup of coffee, standing at a bus stop, my bus stop, listening to a bunch of people talk about La Llorona, his mural, the mural he and 330 kids had toiled over. Jimmy was standing around listening to the bus stop chatter when a guy turns to him and says...

Jimmy Longoria:

"Oh, you like our mural?" I go, "Yeah." He says, "Well, we told the artist to do that." And he began to narrate what it was. Okay and I just stood there playing the bobo. It's like, "oh, I didn't know that. I didn't know that."

But it was really fascinating because he really possessed it. It's his. The bus comes, everybody gets on, and he gets on and says, "Come on." And I go like, "No, I'm sorry. I catch the next bus." And he says, "Well, we have to do this because the artist died." And it's one of those moments, and how I felt about it, at first I was shocked. They killed me. They had to murder me. And then I realized it was important for them to own it. And I teared up afterwards. I still get a little chokey here because, aye, that's the greatest compliment. They're going to carry on the story, the narrative, wrong as it may be. It doesn't matter. It's their wall. Yeah, so it is. That's the feeling.

Chantel Rodríguez:

That's what this idea of the Museum of the Streets means. The communities and artists are the curators. They decide which histories and stories will be told in the murals. What is most striking to me is the role of art and the artists in community cohesion. Murals can be used by communities to grieve while at the same time expressing hope and resilience. That feeling of hope and that cohesion can feel challenged by tragedies or acts of violence in the community.

During the production of this episode, 66-year-old Carrie Kwok was tragically killed while working on an outdoor mural in St. Paul, we want to take a moment to recognize this loss, but also the beauty and joy she brought to the community with her work.

Remember that what's painted on the wall is only a small part of the story. Get curious about who painted the mural and what inspired the artist. Get close up. How was it painted? There are many ways that people in the community might interpret that mural. Every piece of art holds multiple meanings.

So my bus ride and seeing La Llorona helped inspire my curiosity. And I want you to be on the lookout for art that adds to the curation of the Museum in the Streets. Where do you find murals in your own community? What stories do they tell? Let us know what you find. Take a photo and share it using the hashtag MNUnraveled.

A huge thank you to my two guests, Jimmy Longoria and Ralph Brown for sharing their stories, insights, and expertise. And a big thanks to all the artists and community members helping to create a Museum of the Streets.

You've been listening to Minnesota Unraveled, pulling on the threads of Minnesota history. I'm your host, Dr. Chantel Rodríguez. You can find more information on this

episode, including transcripts, bibliographic resources, and MNopedia articles at our website MNHS.org/unraveled.

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Thank you for listening. Until next time, stay curious. And remember, the tapestries of history are all around you just waiting to be unraveled.