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Local

## New mural near Paseo Nuevo

by Madison Hirneisen | April 29, 2021 | 0 comment

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### “Nurture our Mother” completed just in time to wrap up Earth Day



RAFAEL MALDONADO/NEWS-PRESS PHOTOS

A mural of colorful Earth Day-inspired images debuted Saturday near the Museum of Contemporary Art at the Arts Terrace parking deck. The mural, “Nurture our Mother,” was created by Santa Barbara-based artist Claudia Borfiga and Goleta-based artist Adriana Arriaga.

A massive, multi-colored mural debuted just in time to wrap up Earth Day.

Depicting images of Earth and Mother Nature at the Arts Terrace parking deck near the Museum of Contemporary Art, the mural was made possible thanks to a collaboration between two local artists.

Santa Barbara-based artist Claudia Borfiga and Goleta-based artist Adriana Arriaga collaborated to create a piece titled “Nurture our Mother,” which features a collection of images in multicolored blocks, including an Arroyo Toad, California Poppies, a mushroom and a massive portrait of a woman breastfeeding her baby.

The piece, which debuted Saturday, was created for an Earth Day Mural project spearheaded by the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Community Environmental Council, Paseo Nuevo, The Arts Fund and Santa Barbara BCycle. The organizers asked local artists to develop a mural concept that would express the importance of climate leadership and recognizing the impacts of climate change. Out of 27 submissions, Ms. Borfiga and Ms. Arriaga’s concept was chosen as the winning design.

With the massive canvas provided through the mural project, both artists desired to communicate the importance of nurturing the Earth and passing down good practices to the next generation.

“We’re on borrowed land, and the Earth itself, we don’t own it, yet that’s kind of the way we go about living on it a lot of the time,” Ms. Borfiga told the News-Press on Wednesday. “And thinking about the fact that we’re just one part of an ecosystem, and there are all these other parts of an ecosystem and all of them need to exist for us to thrive, so we have a duty to protect them.”



**A striking portrait of a mother breastfeeding her child is the largest element of the mural and stands as a testament to the life-giving power women hold and also represents Mother Nature, artist Adriana Arriaga explained.**

Each piece of the mural symbolizes an aspect of the artist's theme of nourishing and protecting the Earth. While tying in elements native to the Central Coast, such as the Arroyo Toad, the California Poppies and the Monarch Butterflies, the artists also drew inspiration from indigenous culture, exemplified through the painting of an ear of corn and a hummingbird.

The mural also features human elements, such as the depiction of hands handing over soil, representing the importance of sharing knowledge with the next generation about safe environmental practices.

The largest element of the piece, the portrait of the mother breastfeeding her baby, represents Mother Earth and stands as a testament to the life-giving power women have to nourish another human being, Ms. Arriaga explained.



**The Arroyo Toad is a local species found on the Central Coast that the artists decided to include in their Earth Day-inspired mural.**

“I think the way she’s portrayed is a way to kind of say thank you to a lot of people in my life who have inspired me to take care of the land and shared knowledge with me on how and why we should protect the land,” Ms. Arriaga told the News-Press. “And I thought it was really important for her to have brown skin because for me, I know in my other work, a lot of people will reach out and say how much it meant to them to see themselves (represented) in my pieces, especially in large scale portraits. And so I really just wanted to celebrate brown skin.”

For both artists, finishing the Earth Day-inspired project was the first mural either artist had ever completed. The pair met in a local group known as the Friends of Public Art Santa Barbara, a collection of local artists who aim to preserve and increase the amount of public art in the region. When the Museum of Contemporary Art put out an Artist Call for the Earth Day Mural project, the duo began brainstorming ideas and combining their skills to create the winning design.



**The artist included local nature elements, like the Monarch Butterfly and kelp forest, in their design of the mural.**

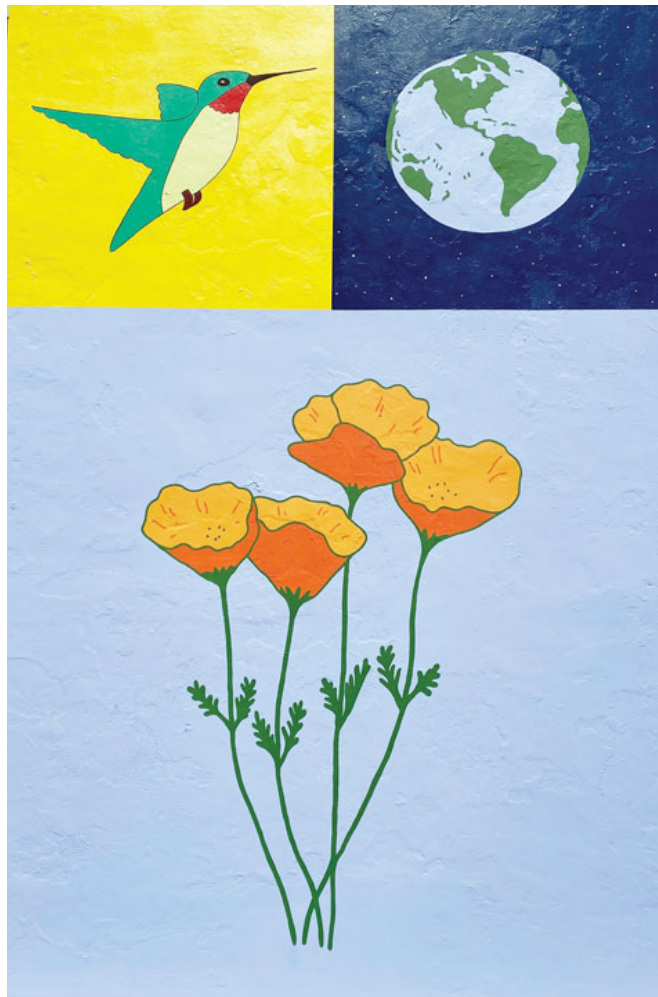
Both artists come from unique creative backgrounds, and neither creator specializes in painting. Ms. Borfiga uses screen printing to create colorful nature-inspired pieces, while Ms. Arriaga is a contemporary Chicana artist who uses graphic design mediums to create portraits and images of human forms.

Neither artist specializes in painting in their creative backgrounds, but were able to combine their talents to create a compelling and eye-catching piece that will remain on display until next year's Earth Day Mural contest.



“Claudia and I, even though we have different backgrounds artistically, we were able to find a balance that complements each other’s styles, and we really love working with color,” Ms. Arriaga said. “I think that was something that Claudia and I have a lot in common, we just love just playing with bright bold colors.”

Thanks to the help of friends and fellow artists, Ms. Borfiga and Ms. Arriaga was able to finish the mural in just one week, a lightning speed turnaround time for such a large piece of art.



**Various elements of the mural are inspired by nature found on the Central Coast and elements of indigenous culture.**

When the mural officially debuted on Saturday afternoon, both artists shared a celebratory embrace, which they posted in a video on their Instagram profiles.

“Of all the projects I’ve done, there is normally some unfinished business, like (the piece) never looks quite as good as it did

in my head ... or there's always something that I'm like okay, I have to build on this and the next project," Ms. Borfiga said. "Whereas with the mural, it looks exactly like our submission. I'm just so proud of seeing up big on the wall."



**In addition to nature elements, the mural also features human figures, such as the two hands holding soil. This element of the piece represents the importance of passing good environmental practices and knowledge on to the next generation.**

In the future, both artists are hoping to contribute to more murals in the Santa Barbara area. Ms. Arriaga already has plans in motion to create another series of murals in the upcoming months.

As a vocal supporter of the preservation of the murals in Ortega Park, Ms. Arriaga is hopeful the amount of public art in the

city will grow in the coming years.

“I think one of the things that I want to keep doing is just show and represent the community of Santa Barbara and tell stories with the murals,” Ms. Arriaga said.

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