

# Journal

Vol. 2/9/Oct. 79

News of The Cultural  
Council Foundation  
CETA Artists Project

## Joan Mondale, Ernest Green to Dedicate WTC Murals



CCF/CETA artist Hunt Slonem's "Fan Dancing with Birds" is one of three murals which have been completed on the 43rd Floor of One World Trade Center. Slonem's work measures 45 x 8 feet and is located at the entrance to the employees' cafeteria.  
Photo by Marbeth

At the largest gathering of federal and city officials for a CCF/CETA event since the Artists Project began in January of 1978, Mrs. Joan Mondale, wife of the vice-president, and Ernest Green, assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor, will dedicate four CCF artists' murals at the Port Authority Trans-Hudson Corporation and Port Authority of New York and New Jersey on November 8.

Dedication ceremonies will begin at 11:30 a.m. with a concert by the CETA Orchestra of New York. The highlight of the ceremonies will come when Mrs. Mondale dedicates a plaque commemorating the occasion and turns on a switch illuminating *Commuter Landscape*, a 53 by 8-foot mural by Cynthia Mailman, depicting a view of the Pulaski Skyway as seen from inside a PATH subway car.

Mrs. Mondale, Ernest Green, and the official party will also go to the 43rd floor of One World Trade Center where three other CCF/CETA murals by Hunt Slonem, Germaine Keller and James Biederman will be viewed, as well as portions of CCF's traveling exhibition PROPOSALS/SOLUTIONS: Art for Public Spaces, an exhibition of CCF public art projects throughout the city's five boroughs.

The dedication of the four murals at the World Trade Center is only a part of the work CCF/CETA artists are doing for PATH and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

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## Four CCF Artists' Work to Grace World Trade Center

By JUDD TULLY

For the past several months, employees of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey working in the World Trade Center witnessed a curious sight on their way to lunch. Lining the narrow, red-carpeted corridor that leads to the employees' cafeteria on the 43rd floor of Tower One were artists painting murals directly on the cream-white walls.

No electricians fiddling with spaghetti wiring or plasterers repairing skid marks from a runaway caster-wheeled dumpster but real artists transforming hundreds of square feet of virgin wall. Naturally, it was equally startling for the artists to absorb the pitter-patter and small talk of lunch-time traffic just inches from their fast-stroking paint brushes.

Forty-three stories below, hidden in a recessed area of a sub-basement was another artist tackling 50 feet of canvas that will hang over the commuter

mecca of the Port Authority Trans-Hudson Corporation, popularly and anagrammatically known as PATH. "Commuter Landscape's" resting place in the Terminal Concourse has an audience of 85,000 passengers per day. Now that is what is known as public art.

All four artists participating in this experiment with the Port Authority are public art team members of Cultural Council Foundation's CETA Artists Project. Their mural proposals were chosen by an independent art panel assembled by the PA and range from exotic, full-channel color realism to minimally pristine travel hieroglyphics at the far spectrum of abstraction.

Cynthia Mailman's acrylic view of a PATH rapid transit car takes the viewer inside for a panoramic sweep of industrial landscape featuring the Pulaski Skyway that straddles two rivers, the Hackensack and the Passaic. "People relate to realism," the artist states, "and my work to some degree is a reaction to Abstract Expressionism and the experience of growing up in an era when the Atomic Bomb was new and there was a general lack of control in the world and in art. There was havoc everywhere." Gesturing to the vast canvas that was propped up on a row of cinder blocks, Mailman continued, "This is my very quiet space. It is very planned and controlled. It is a reaction to that whole era of intuitiveness."

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## Joan Mondale...

Last June, CCF and Port Authority officials opened *Rock Paper Scissors*, a year-long exhibition of 48 original silk screen prints and ceramic tiles, in the Ninth Street PATH station in Greenwich Village. The prints are placed in the advertising spaces throughout the corridor of the subway station and the ceramic tiles of multi-colored oak leaves are installed at the entrance to the station and at the turnstiles on the platform level. Exhibiting in *Rock Paper Scissors* are CCF artists Akira, Ellsworth Ausby, Bimal Banerjee, Robert Carvin, Herman Cherry, Stanford Golob, John Gruen, Francine Halvorsen, Germaine Keller, Wyn Loving, Kurt McGill and Kwok-Yee Tai. Ms. Tai also created the tile murals.

*Rock Paper Scissors* has received considerable critical acclaim throughout the New York City press. John Perrault of the *Soho Weekly News*, for example said, "the show is a thoroughly successful effort" and that the prints "offer a great variety. All of the works, I can truthfully say, are of more than passing interest."

In addition to the Ninth Street Exhibition and the work of artists at the World Trade Center, CCF/CETA artist Johann Sellenraad is working with PATH architects and other officials in implementing his designs for the complete restoration of the Christopher Street PATH Station.

Earlier this year, the Port Authority also provided a huge raw space on the 43rd Floor of One World Trade Center for the Artists Project to sponsor "Site Works", a month-long exhibition by 50 artists. The painters, photographers and sculptors conceived and executed works of art specifically for this unfinished space. Poets and writers provided free lunchtime readings for Port Authority employees.

## CCF Public Art Work Flourishes In Five Boroughs

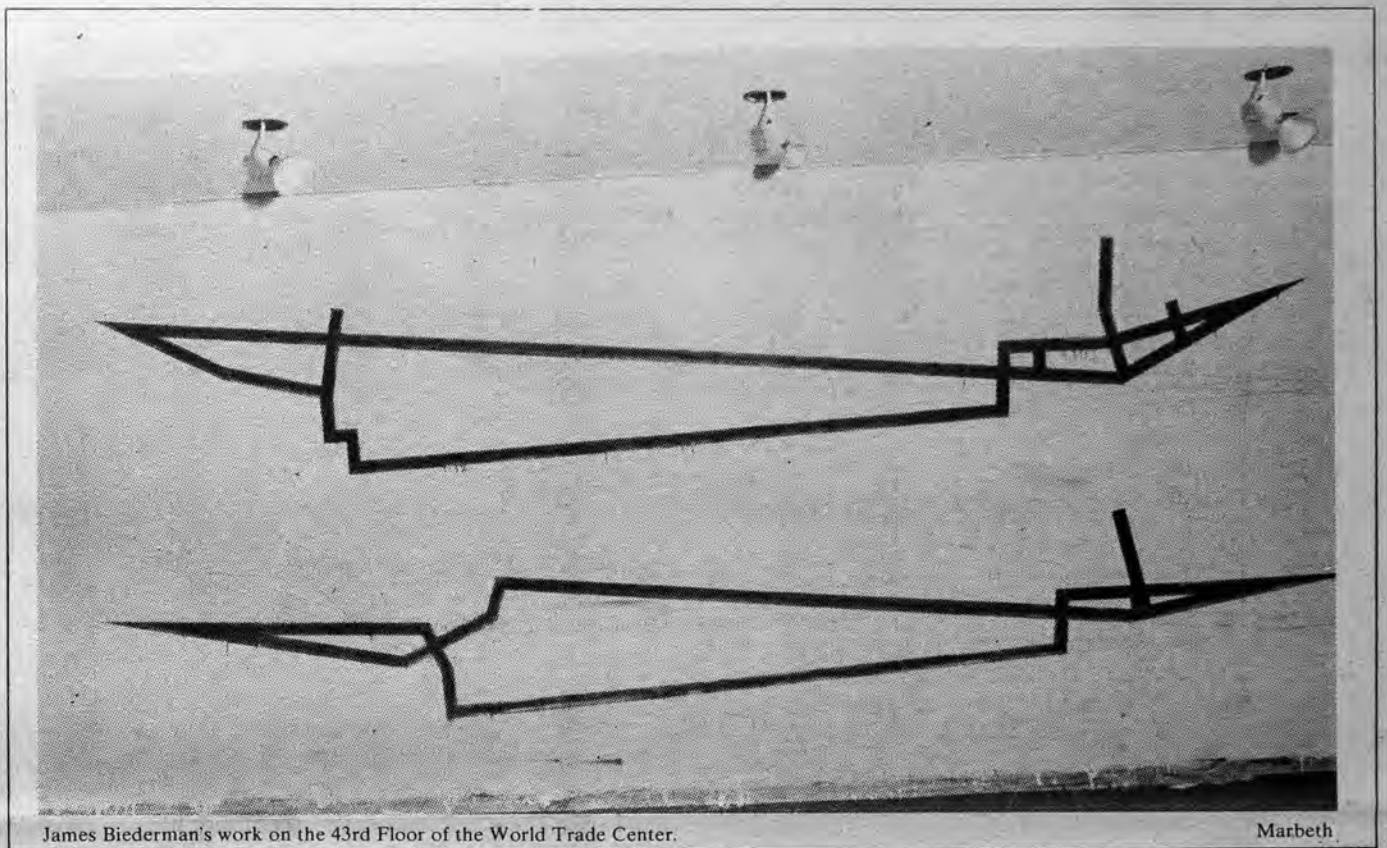
By RICHARD VETERE

Not since over four decades and the days of the WPA Federal Art Project has New York City seen such an explosion of art in public spaces as that generated by the CCF/CETA Artists Project which was launched in January 1978.

Over a hundred works of public art have been completed and planned by CCF/CETA artists. A representative selection (47 exactly) is featured in an exhibition called PROPOSALS/SOLUTIONS: Art for Public Spaces which opened at Pratt Institute in October and will be on tour in the months ahead.

The exhibition curated by Denise Mattia displays proposals for and photographs of public art projects in subways, parks, hospitals, churches and community centers throughout the five boroughs of New York. It is created by 38 CCF/CETA painters, photographers and sculptors and includes sketches and models which represent the artists' solutions to the problem of creating a work of art for specific public spaces.

Throughout the New York City Community CCF/CETA artists have created a variety of public art. Three artists, Johann Sellenraad, Joseph Stallone and Alan Samalin worked on a ceramic project at the Clark Street subway station in



James Biederman's work on the 43rd Floor of the World Trade Center.

Marbeth

Brooklyn. Not only was the project important because of the unusual use of materials, but also because the Metropolitan Transit Authority, a major city agency, sponsored the art work.

In Queens, Ursula Von Rydingsvard is creating an outdoor wooden sculpture for a housing project called Six Towers which was sponsored by Woodside On The Move and will be unveiled in November. Also in Queens, a public art project everyone is excited about, no doubt because of its scale, which is still underway, is Colin Marcelli's attempt to create a large outdoor sculpture garden with Pre-Columbian motifs and functional amphitheatre out of a large vacant lot in Corona, Queens. The work is being sponsored by the Langston Hughes Community Library & Cultural Center with the Department of Cultural Affairs donating materials: a backhoe, a bulldozer and sand, which was sorely needed to clean out the garbage filled lot. The work, when completed, will most definitely encourage more of the same.

Art Guerra just completed a mural for a men's shelter on the Bowery for the Catholic Charities Council Center, and Herman Cherry did a very large oil painting on canvas for St. Malachy's which is located on midtown Manhattan's West Side. He did the mural at a place next to the church where retired actors socialize.

Other works include a steel sculpture by Kenn Stepman, which is permanently installed at the Edenwald-Gun Hill Community Center in the Bronx, and David Seccombe's wood piece at the Snug Harbor Cultural Center on Staten Island.

A public art project is undertaken by an artist only after several important steps have been taken. The neighborhood must first request the art and have the funds to pay for the materials involved and expenses. From there, those artists from CCF/CETA who wish to take on the "commission" must present slides and models of their work to the neighborhood committee for possible selection. The artist whose work appeals to the neighborhood committee will be the artist who will create the planned project. The artist, of course, is on CCF/CETA payroll, and the work he does is his assignment, after everything has been approved. All of this is administered by Suzanne Randolph who is the director of public service employment; Joe Giordano, the overall coordinator of the Public Art Team and Steve Appel the artist coordinator. Their work has been successful and continues to gain momentum. "The idea of the Public Art Team is to bring a visual aesthetic to as many people as possible, a work of art in a public place

### In Memoriam

All of us at the Cultural Council Foundation and the Artists Project mourn the passing of Arthur J. Kerr, a close friend of artists and of our Project. Arthur was associate director of the New York State Council on the Arts, and then executive director of the New York Foundation for the Arts, a position he held from 1974 until his death last August from cancer. In that role he offered advice, encouragement, and, in January, 1978, funds to make our first Artists' Orientation possible. We came to rely on Arthur's watchful eye and keen insights into the plight of the artist in our society. We and all our artists have lost an invaluable friend.

R.S.

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The Cultural Council Foundation Artists Project places artists in community based residencies throughout the five boroughs of New York City and provides artistic services and products through six specialized teams: Public Art, Exhibitions, Literary Works, Graphic Design, Documentation-Neighborhood Life, & the Performance Ensemble at Lincoln Center. The Association of Hispanic Arts, Black Theatre Alliance, & The Foundation for Independent Video & Film, all CCF subcontractors, provide additional services & performances throughout New York City.

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## Four CCF Artists'...

Rocketing up in the queasy-stomach confines of the Trade Center's beeping elevators and beating the red-carpeted path to the one-story chrome-finished escalator for a final descent into a nest of CETA art, you encounter the world of Germaine Keller. Unlike the electric pounce wheel method of Mailman, Keller worked with masking tape and small rollers to apply her fine lines to "Path Mural" which is not related to the mass transit tubes that cross the Hudson River. The path the artist speaks of is the journey from her loft on Canal Street to the sun-dappled spires of the Trade Center.

"To me," Keller says, "the working drawings (done directly on elevation and floor plans of the 43rd floor) are more interesting than the piece itself. I am interested in pushing people's perceptions into another realm. I'm trying to enhance their course, their path. These are the markings of space as you move through it. You experience the art kinetically. The bank of images are at eye level and the 15-inch high path travels 75 feet on the right and left sides of the corridor.

Mailman's "Commuter Landscape" shows the strap-hanger what the world looks like outside the air-conditioned plate glass expanse—assuming he raises his eyes from the terrain of newspaper headlines. Keller's landscape is a more personal journey, a vista that corridor strollers can only digest with a subliminal palate.

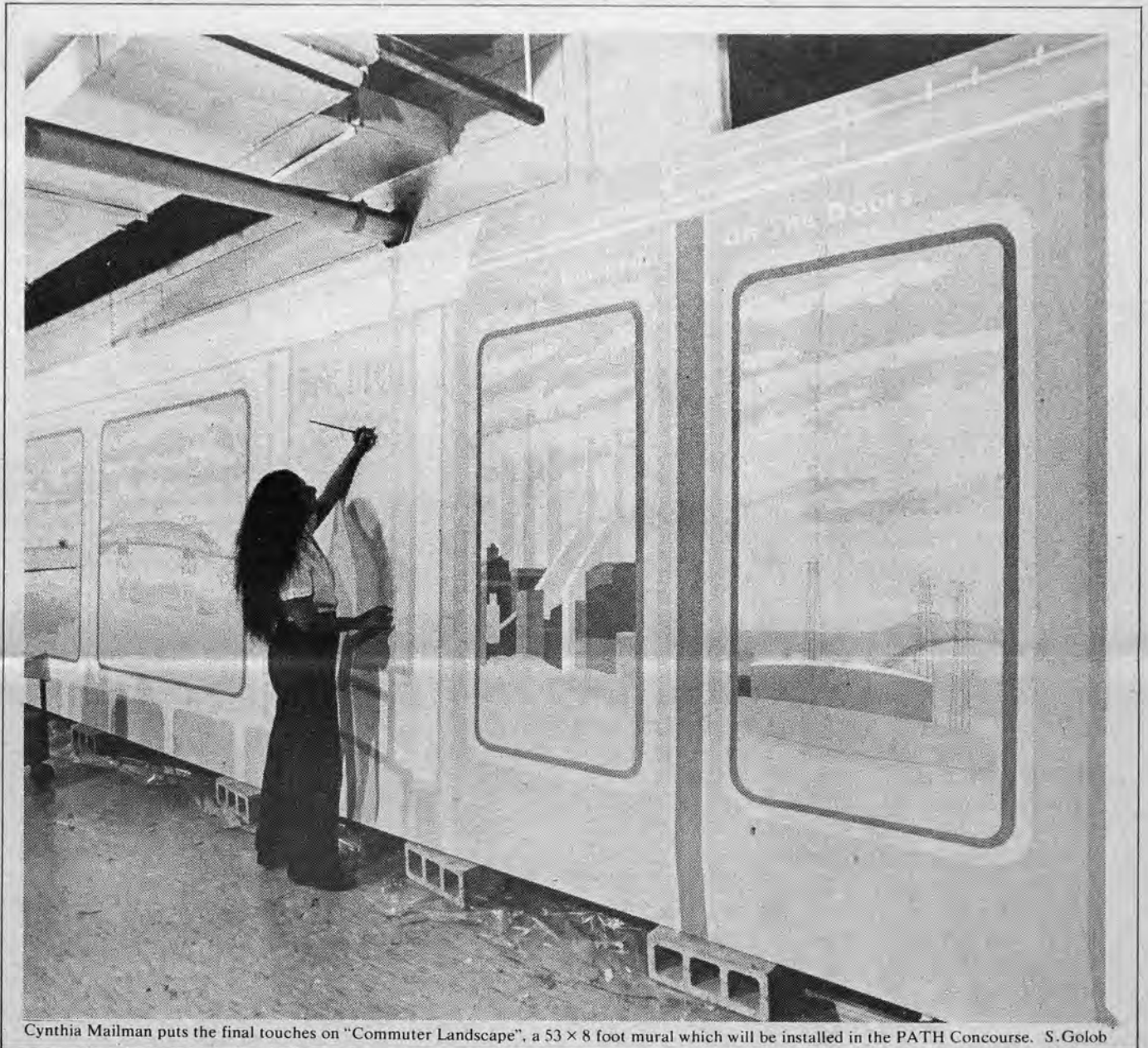
Hunt Slonem's "Fan Dancing with Birds" steers clear of modern "temporal" symbols and coaxes the "corridorian" into a different reality. The mural exudes a steamy rain forest landscape of astrological totems, aquatic creatures and retina-searing floral patterns. The high gloss patina of his antelopes and crustaceans heats up the dead space that is book-ended by entry-ways to the cafeteria.

"My work," Slonem begins, "is all about good and evil—the struggle between air, water, earth and fire, symbols which are universal. People don't relate to the mammoth metal abstract sculptures of the same material that the edifice houses them in. There is a need for the return to the blatantly spiritual and mysterious. There is energy behind the painting. You either love it or hate it."

While Slonem refers to his space as a chamber of a labyrinth, James Biederman's mural could qualify for dwelling inside a foyer. The dual image that lances the wall space and creates a visual tension that appears to hold up the sheetrock, could be a distant forebear of Gertrude Stein's repetitive rose. Formalist poetry aside, the work accomplishes a fiendish sort of cat's cradle exercise. There is vigorous play inside and outside the space. The angular prow of the penthouse image cuts through space like a racing sloop would through choppy water. The lower story was described by the artist as a "giant ladies' hairpin."

In describing his drawings with steel and plastic rules aided by varying gauges of charcoal sticks and smudges of pastel, Biederman doffs his geometric hat to process. Ad libbing an old TV show for kids that told junior how to draw a chair, the artist gestured through space like an arthritic video tutor. His drawings flaunt process and the notion of retracing steps to re-work lines in space.

It is possible then to be waylaid by art on the carpeted causeway to the cafeteria. Blue plate specials could wilt in their stainless steel frames while potential diners loll in front of a highly seasoned yet visual smorgasbord. Abstract and figurative works share the well-trodden corridor and even casual viewers will imbibe a rather cosmically diverse range of art. Dessert comes later, served downstairs in PATH's square rotunda.



Cynthia Mailman puts the final touches on "Commuter Landscape", a 53 x 8 foot mural which will be installed in the PATH Concourse. S. Golob



Germaine Keller's mural graces both sides of a 75 foot corridor which leads to the employees cafeteria.

Marbeth

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## CCF Public Art...

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hopefully helps to enrich the community," says Joe Giordano. The Public Art Team's function is to put up as many works of art in as many places for as many community sponsors as possible. This gives a particular artist incredible exposure and gives a community something it requested in the first place—a work of art."

"A work of art in a community humanizes the environment," says Suzanne Randolph. "It satisfies a community's needs and helps it express what it has on its mind, through the talents of a specific artist. Statues in the park are public art works. Whether it be a representational piece or an abstract one, art is a public service. Working for a particular community is also their artistic statement."

Being accessible is not a public service, but it is a choice an artist makes with his audience. If a working-class neighborhood prefers to have a work of art in its backyard instead of going off to a museum to see it or instead of not being able to afford its own private collection, they have that right, as any audience should. Public art will continue to gain recognition, and its success will continue to create admirers because it is essentially wanted. If you're an elitist or not, at least that much should be clear. With perceptive administrators and talented artists as those at CCF/CETA, those public works of art created in the coming year will help the debate even further.

Art works in public places are necessary not only because it is a social remedy to urban blandness, since a neighborhood left alone will create its own aesthetic beauty through the sensibilities of its inhabitants, and not because a visual work of art enriches people's lives anymore than reading a good book, but because the concept of public art in public places blends well into the fine line between non-commercial and commercial creativity. Working on a mural for a neighborhood is an acceptable bridge between working for the self-centered monetary gains of a producer or, at the other end, the penniless reality of working for yourself. Public art is not a private matter, so take a look at the above mentioned sites and make up your own mind. Artist or not, you're still a taxpayer; and the work is there for you.



Alan Samalin prepares his Earth/Science mural for installation at the Hall of Science in Flushing Meadow Park, Queens.

Blaise Tobia

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