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Los Angeles Public Library Hangs Soccer Mural to Celebrate the Return of the World Cup to Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES June 8, 2026—The Los Angeles Public Library presents *World Encounter over El Arroyo Seco*, a mural by the East Los Streetscapers, to celebrate the FIFA World Cup. On view through August 2028 to coincide with both the World Cup and the LA2028 Olympics and Paralympics, the mural hangs in the Atrium of the Tom Bradley Wing outside the Art, Music, and Recreation Department.

The large vertical mural depicts two soccer players vying for the ball as they float into space towards a passing satellite. Far below lies the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, its rim mimicking the curvature of the earth.

The East Los Streetscapers (David Botello and Wayne Healy) created this dynamic image in 1994 to capture the global excitement of the World Cup when Los Angeles last hosted the games. The mural—measuring 9'6" x 24'2"—celebrates the potential for sport to unite the globe.

"Los Angeles Public Library is thrilled to pay tribute to the world's passion for soccer with this spectacular, multi-story mural—World Encounter over El Arroyo Seco—hung inside Central Library's Atrium," said City Librarian John F. Szabo. "Although the East Los Streetscapers painted the piece in 1994, their message of hope that international sports can help unite the world resonates today."

World Encounter over El Arroyo Seco was originally installed on the old air traffic control tower over the main entrance to Hollywood-Burbank Airport. It symbolized global peace and friendship, welcoming visitors arriving for the World Cup games. It hung at the airport for a month, and then was placed in storage for more than 30 years.

Botello and Healy always work closely together to plan and paint their murals. Of the two artists, Healy holds the most enthusiasm for soccer, even playing the position of goalie on the Hughes Aircraft Company team. In fact, Healy's job as an aerospace engineer in the satellite division of Hughes influenced the design concept of satellites and space.

Botello has stated that they often use circles in their murals as symbols of unity and wholeness, and several can be seen in the World Cup mural. The curvature of the earth is also depicted in a number of their murals, a reference to circles and interconnectedness.

Kren Malone, Director of Central Library, said, “Displaying the mural near our Art and Recreation department is a wonderful idea and a nod to both sport and play. It not only highlights the excitement of soccer but also beautifully captures the art of movement and moments of intensity through color and action.”

Inspired by the Chicano Mural Movement, Botello and Healy founded the East Los Streetscapers (originally called “Los Dos Streetscapers”) in the 1970s. The two men remain the core members. They have worked collaboratively painting murals for nearly 50 years, inviting other artists and hundreds of youth to join them on their public art projects. People from diverse backgrounds in their murals reflect the city as a place where culture and traditions are shared, and community flourishes.

"This summer, we are celebrating all things soccer (or fútbol) by holding events in our branches and Central Library with Kick It in the Library, a timely program that coincides with interest in the World Cup," said Mayra Valadez, President of the Board of Library Commissioners.

About Los Angeles Public Library

A recipient of the nation’s highest honor for library service—the National Medal from the Institute of Museum and Library Services—the Los Angeles Public Library serves the largest and most diverse urban population of any library in the nation. Its Central Library, 72 branch libraries, collection of more than eight million books, state-of-the-art technology accessible at lapl.org and thousands of public programs provide everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for lifelong learning.