



The Latinx Muralism Apprenticeship at CLUES Artist Statement

The Latinx Muralism Apprenticeship at CLUES (Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio) developed a collectively-created and community-informed mural highlighting the Latinx community in Minnesota, with a focus on Latina women, in order to flesh out a more complete picture of Minnesota's past, present, and future. This team adopted a collaborative approach, with lead artists Marina Castillo, Zamara Cuyún, Aaron Johnson-Ortiz, and Gustavo Lira. Another 10+ artists have participated in direct and indirect ways in the creation of this mural. The mural was also informed by community input, including Latino elders and young Latina women.

Latinx populations - specifically those identifying as Mexican-American - have been an integral part of the Minnesota story since the late 1800s and early 1900s with the creation of vibrant communities in St. Paul - communities that were subsequently displaced and erased on multiple occasions. Agricultural workers, of predominantly Mexican origin, have made significant economic and cultural contributions to greater rural Minnesota throughout most of the State's history. Compounded by traditions of female silencing and invisibility within male-dominated Western cultures, Latinx women find themselves doubly unseen and doubly erased within our mainstream Minnesota society.

Our central allegorical figure is that of a woman, a worker, standing strong, claiming her many accomplishments and contributions to society that are too often ignored. She wears the wings of the monarch butterfly, whose migratory path between Mexico and the United States follows the same path traveled by many of our Latinx relatives. Behind her are the fields in which so many have labored in order to make a home and a life here. On the left side, corn plants grow along the arm. A sacred food, it is an important symbol of the origin and sustenance of human life. Today, it is the number one crop grown in Minnesota. At the foot of the hands stand Latinx community members representing our diversity and our heritage.

For more information on the Ramsey County Courthouse/St. Paul City Hall Council Chamber Art Project, full artists' statements and more, see <https://www.rchs.com/news/chamber-art/>

