



BRENDA PEREZ RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FOR THE ARTS

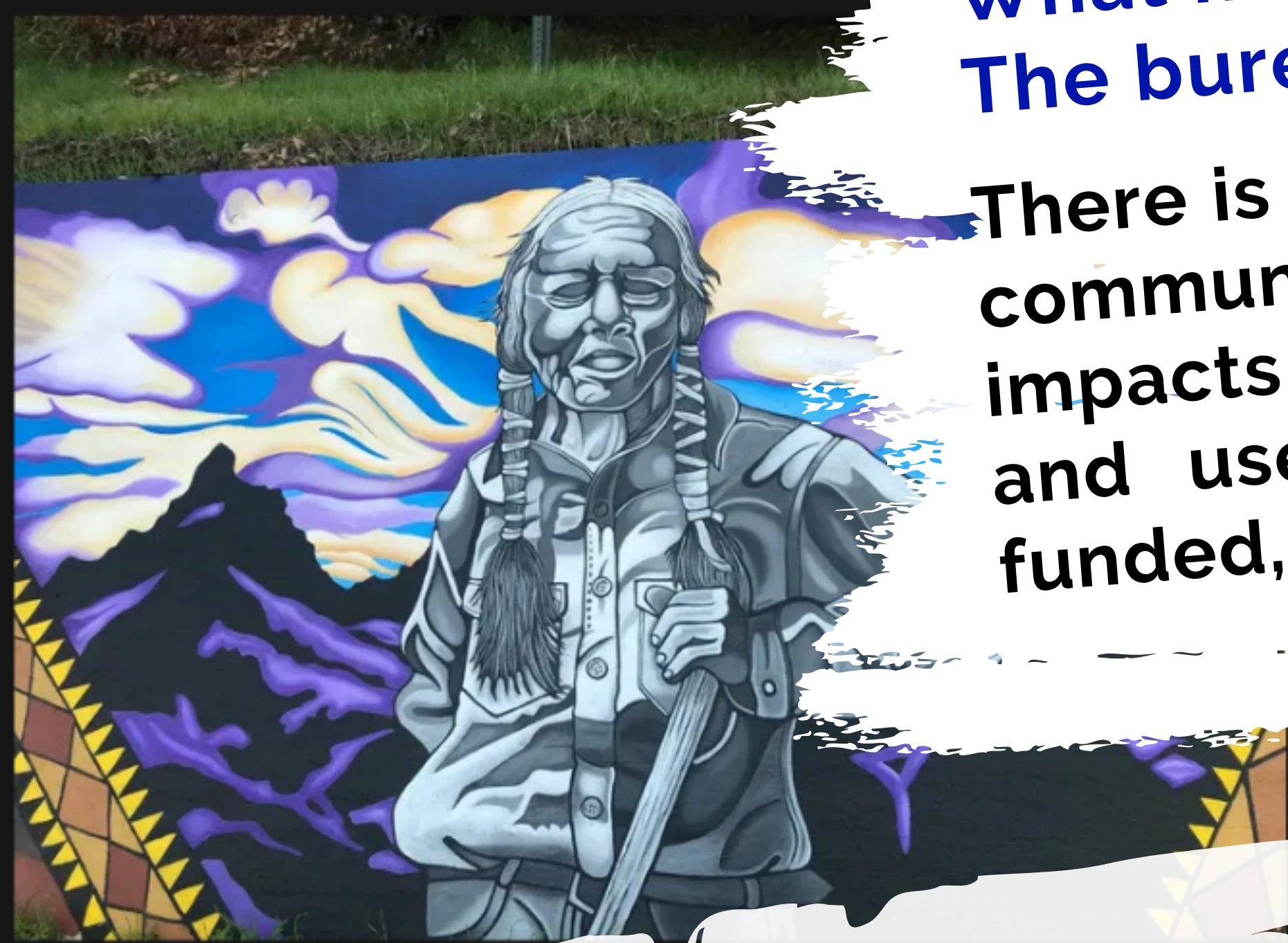
What inspired you to initiate Restorative Justice for the Arts?

Restorative Justice for the Arts (RJFTA) was created in response to many murals being systematically whitewashed in Highland Park, Los Angeles, California. **RJFTA** is an activist platform mobilized toward mural preservation, restoration, and securing protections for artists and their art. As a research inquiry, **RJFTA** investigates the importance of sacred imagery as a visual language within culture that heals trauma and maintains community well-being.



What have been some hurdles?
The bureaucracy?

There is a great lack of funding and support for grassroots community organizations such as **RJFTA** despite proven impacts. Grassroots activists who embrace moral courage and use art to fight injustice are not acknowledged, funded, nor rewarded enough.



How does your work dignify your community?

RJFTA has created unique community frameworks that have restored lost murals and continue to educate communities and its artists on how they can protect their art from destruction. For example, the federal Visual Artists Rights Act (VERA) requires that every artist be given at least a 90 day notice before modification or destruction of their art. Now that the artist and/or community is aware, they can exercise their rights to prevent their art from being destroyed.



What would you share with others outside your community in terms of how to fight back?

Speak out against erasing communities through the whitewashing of their art! Know that your art is protected. It is a myth that the purpose of art is only a means for upward mobility and success. Art is a powerful tool that carries with it the responsibility to see that it is well used in the world. Art should be done to nourish that which is best for humanity or noblest in the human spirit.