

Foreword

A GREAT UNIVERSITY provides opportunities of all kinds for its scientists, scholars, artists, teachers, students, and visitors to explore the world scientifically, sociologically, aesthetically, and culturally and to make significant contributions to our global society's intellectual and artistic life. One such contribution, the newly created mural by Art Rosenbaum in the Center for Humanities and Arts, communicates the splendid variety of activities that the University of Georgia sponsors in the humanities and the arts at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The mural is a magnificent art work in itself, and I invite our faculty, staff, and students, as well as our many visitors, to go to the Center for Humanities and Arts to see it.

Sitting in the Center for Humanities and Arts conference room, one feels part of the action of the painters, musicians, dancers, sculptors, actors, photographers, poets, and scholars who are dynamically portrayed along its wall. The mural radiates energy, like the University of Georgia, where talented individuals from around the world gather to perform, create, and exchange ideas with our own talented students and faculty. Painted by Art Rosenbaum of the University's Lamar Dodd School of Art at the invitation of Betty Jean Craige, Director of the Center for Humanities and Arts, it reminds us all of the wonderful privilege we enjoy as members of a vibrant academic community. And it records forever the excitement University of





Georgia students experience as they involve themselves in the arts and in the humanities during the years they spend here. The mural, composed of the familiar figures of our own colleagues and students who represent the diverse artists and thinkers working at our institution, conveys the joy one gains from participating in the life of a great university.

I am delighted to recognize the *The World at Large: The Art Rosenbaum Mural at The University of Georgia Center for Humanities and Arts* as an artistic landmark at the University, one which will forever commemorate the extra-ordinary arts and humanities on our campus at the turn of the twenty-first century.

Karen A. Holbrook

*Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
The University of Georgia*

The World at Large: The Art Rosenbaum Mural *at The University of Georgia Center for Humanities and Arts*

THE ART ROSENBAUM MURAL, titled *The World at Large*, commemorates the programs of the University of Georgia Center for Humanities and Arts at the beginning of the twenty-first century. It celebrates the engagement of faculty, students, and visitors from around the world in a variety of activities: dance, music, drama, photography, film, art, poetry, and scholarship. And it pays tribute to President Jimmy Carter and Archbishop Desmond M. Tutu, the first two recipients of the Delta Prize for Global Understanding, which the Center for Humanities and Arts and the Center for International Trade and Security co-founded.

I want to recount the history of the mural, in hopes that the University of Georgia will preserve both the artwork itself and the story behind it for many years to come.

In February of 2000, the Center for Humanities and Arts moved into Room 164 of the Psychology Building, into space that required renovation. Because the conference room area had a long, windowless wall, I invited Art Rosenbaum, a painter and muralist in our Lamar Dodd School of Art, to create a mural that would depict the humanities and the arts at the University of Georgia. It would communicate the efforts of the Center to increase intercultural understanding.

Art Rosenbaum, named in 2001 the first Wheatley Professor in Fine Arts, came to the

University of Georgia from the University of Iowa in 1976 as Assistant Professor of Art. He graduated from Columbia College in 1960 with an A.B. in Art History and from Columbia University in 1961 with an M.F.A. in Painting, after which he received a Fulbright to France in painting. In his twenty-five years in Athens, Georgia, he has distinguished himself not only as an award-winning painter and teacher, but also as a folk musician and folk music scholar and collector. He has written and illustrated the books *Shout Because You're Free: The African American Ring Shout Tradition in Coastal Georgia*;



The Art of the Mountain Banjo; and *Folk Visions and Voices: Traditional Music and Song in North Georgia*. He has painted two murals in Dothan, Alabama, “*Spanish Expedition Meeting Native Americans in the Wiregrass*” and “*Stewart Abduction*”; a panel painting in Athens, “*Athens/Northeast Georgia Olympic Spectrum*”; a mural at the Château Elan Winery in Braselton, Georgia, “*The Story of Winemaking*,” and a mural in the UCLA School of Law.

Art began work on the mural in the Center for Humanities and Arts conference room in January of 2001, after doing a huge black-and-white preliminary sketch in his home studio. He first drew the picture on the wall and then applied an orange-brown undercoat, using blue to delineate figures from ground. Laboring for three or four hours a day for most of every week, while listening to the French television cable channel, he completed this stage of the process by the end of February. In March he started applying full color.

In the meantime, faculty brought their classes to view the unfinished mural, and art students came individually to the Center for Humanities and Arts to see the progress being made. Carmon Colangelo, Director of the Lamar Dodd School of Art, brought his Board of Visitors. Art Rosenbaum brought his own painting students, some of whom he had portrayed in the mural. I brought colleagues, students, and Center for Humanities and Arts visitors. Thus, many members of the University community witnessed the mural’s creation, and Peter Frey, of University Communications, photographed it.



The mural need never be destroyed, because it has been painted on canvas that can be removed from the wall and transferred to another wall should the building be renovated. It shall be known hereafter as *The World at Large: The Art Rosenbaum Mural at the University of Georgia Center for Humanities and Arts*.

Betty Jean Craige

*Director of the Center for Humanities and Arts
University Professor of Comparative Literature
The University of Georgia*



THE WORLD AT LARGE: *The Art Rosenbaum Mural at The University of Georgia Center for Humanities and Arts*



Acrylic 90½ x 272 in (231 x 692 cm)

The Mural in Context

MURAL PAINTING has its own history, style, and requirements. Art Rosenbaum's mural for the University of Georgia Center for Humanities and Arts, *The World at Large*, brilliantly exemplifies this tradition.

Painting on walls was done by our earliest ancestors. Whether spiritual or pragmatic in nature, such images probably told a coherent story. By the Renaissance, fresco painting had reached its formal and conceptual apotheosis. Whether as a single scene, such as Leonardo's *Last Supper*, or embedded in fictive architecture and encompassing the entire wall space, as does the Sistine Chapel, paint was used to disguise quite literally the wall surface on which it rested. The scene before the viewers' eyes was intended to share the space in which the viewers stood. For biblical narratives, the illusion of communality served a specific religious function: the viewer could feel, through sight, as if he or she were there at the event depicted.

In the modern age, large-scale wall painting has served a variety of masters. Governments, corporations, even private patrons commissioned murals depicting historic moments. Typically representational, these works presented the public with commemorative images of America, her history, and her people. Such is the style and the purpose of, for example, Thomas Hart Benton's *Politics and Agriculture* for the Missouri State Capital. In the last fifty years public murals have been increasingly the expression of communities—political, social, or cultural. It is in this context that *The World at Large* belongs.

The stylistic demands on a mural are, at first glance, rather straight-forward. One needs to be able to recognize the ideas being articulated. The immediate assumption is that the artist should work in a realistic manner, making things appear as they do in nature. Yet a mural is not a photograph. By bringing together diverse people, things, and events, the artist rearranges history and, in doing so, creates an image that transcends the particular. Art Rosenbaum was ideally situated to produce a mural for the Center for Humanities and Arts. In his long career he has searched to create naturalistic depictions of real people doing real things. Yet through his concentration on the momentary he is able to depict the eternal. This contrast between the here and now and the enduring is articulated through motion. The illusion of unceasing action, in the movement of an arm or the rhythm of feet, link his triptychs, such as *India*, completed in 1999, and his renditions of the "ring shout" tradition of coastal Georgia. Rosenbaum's fascination with music and dance—sound and motion—has taught him a new way to tell stories.

In 1982, Val Lewton, reviewing a show for the *Washington Review*, wrote:

There is a mixture of direct observation and storytelling that is reminiscent of the best of Chagall's folktale paintings. In the best of Rosenbaum there is a biting edge of Orozco's social conscience. The mixture of strong overall structure and attention to detail takes his work out of the realm of the simply well crafted or decorative into the maligned field of

narrative art. It is Rosenbaum's sure drawing and immediacy that seem perfectly suited to social history painting and it would be worth the money to give him a wall to tell some of his tall tales on a grand scale.

The Center for Humanities and Arts has done just that—given him a wall. But it is not a tall tale that Rosenbaum tells here, but a true one: the never-ending story of the role of art and culture in the life of the University of Georgia, in all our lives.

The mural stretches across a long wall. Along this length the images are multiparious. The eye leaps from a single seated figure to the multiple variants on the figure, which suggest shifts of time and space. Figures dance across the light above our heads while at the far end artists paint portraits of themselves. Where does one start looking? Where the light pours in from the window, where the figures seem to rain down on the viewer from every angle, or where a solitary figure, seated as we might be at a meeting, appears to contemplate the last comment made at the conference table in the center of the room?

By creating what seems to be almost random conjunctions of figures and actions, the artist avoids the static organization of a painting with a center and an outer edge, a foreground, middle-ground and background, or a beginning and an end. A mural that does not represent a single event, *The World at Large* tells a single story, but it tells it outside time and beyond perspectival space. In order to see it all, the viewer must move through the



room, inhabiting both space and time. The mural parallels our journey. It too encompasses time, through motion and repetition, and space, through a deliberate, almost abstract layering of places and people. The vision is one of universality—the personal and communal place of art in all our lives.

Shelley Zuraw

*Associate Director of the Lamar Dodd School of Art
Associate Professor of Art History
The University of Georgia*

Execution of the Mural

THE OPPORTUNITY TO DESIGN and paint a mural in the conference room of the University of Georgia Center for Humanities and Arts presented some conceptual, formal, and technical challenges.

Since the mural would be situated in a fairly small room dominated by a large conference table, I designed it to engage the viewer and open the wall visually into a deeper space. In that space the eye moves among various figures representing the arts and the humanities—scholars, sculptors, poets, painters, dancers—some active, some contemplative. The center foreground figures, which are almost life-size, are at eye level with viewers sitting at the conference table; some seem to make eye contact with those viewers.

With this scale I intended to imply a movement in time and space back into the composition along the orthogonals left and right, with shifting stages for the figures. Some figures are depicted through multiple images, encompassing two or three or more moments in time. Other figures either suggest movement with gesture toward other forms or express a contrasting stasis. Pyramid shapes anchor the center of the composition, while the circular and linear movements carry the eye back and around.

In preparation for the preliminary drawing and the mural, I spent almost a year taking Polaroid photographs of people I wished to have in the composition. In some cases I generated multiple images by double- or triple-exposure Polaroid photos. In response to the request that I include myself in the composition, and in order to acknowledge the role of photography in the project, I represented myself in motion with an old Polaroid camera in the left area of the mural, to suggest the artist's eye

moving into the picture. A few of the figures, such as President Jimmy Carter and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the first two recipients of the Delta Prize for Global Understanding, were adapted from photographs taken by others. Further help was provided by some of the subjects and models who were “stand-ins,” coming to the site and allowing me to further develop the figures from life.

Many of the figures appear to be illuminated from the left, in correlation with the actual light coming from a window to the left of the wall. This device was employed routinely by Baroque and Renaissance mural artists.

A word about who is included: A few individuals, like President Carter, Archbishop Tutu, Charlayne Hunter-Gault, and Betty Jean Craige were important in the history of the Center for Humanities and Arts and needed to be in the picture. Other individuals, ranging from well-known poets to student painters, actors, and dancers, stand for the many, many artists and scholars not specifically represented.

I completed a large charcoal drawing for the mural during December, 2000. If I had been totally satisfied with the drawing, I would have gridded it off for transfer to the wall. However, I realized that I needed to make numerous adjustments, so I redrew the composition freehand on the wall, after preparing the wall and applying a ground. The preparation involved adhering cotton canvas to a plywood wall surface with polymer gel and gesso, impregnating the fabric with more gesso and polymer medium, and applying two additional coats of polymer gesso as a ground. After drawing the composition on the wall in charcoal, I scraped on the surface a veil or *imprimatura* of

acrylic gel and iron oxide red, to make a reddish middle value which would allow the underdrawing to show through. Then I did a monochrome underpainting, using neutral browns and whites over the entire composition, adopting a method that the sixteenth-century Venetians developed to use in their portable easel paintings. I have found that modern acrylic paints lend themselves well to such underpainting in mural work. I completed the underpainting in six weeks, establishing a compositional substratum of form, space, and dark and light.

Then I began the overpainting, using a full spectrum of colors which I applied in glazes, scumbled and opaque passages. During this process, which took over three months, I made numerous revisions and modifications, painting out some figures and redrawing and overpainting others. These alterations would have been impossible, or at least difficult, in the traditional fresco medium. I chose a line of matte acrylic paints, manufactured by Golden Artists Colors, which gives the flat “wall sense” of fresco without creating an inappropriate satin or glossy surface and excessive depth in the dark areas. I used colors which range from the traditional earth and mineral palette to some new organic colors developed by modern paint technology. As the mural is seen close-up, it was important for me to keep the surface lively, bold, and nuanced at the same time. Painterly brushstrokes serve not only to help create illusion of form but also to act as expressive agents in their own right. Finally I applied to the finished work a matte varnish that retains the desired surface and at the same time protects the work.

When I was close to completing the mural, Gary Green of the University’s Physical Plant looked in. “That’s all right,” he said. “What are you going to call it?” I told him that I hadn’t yet come up with a title and asked him whether he had an idea. “The World at Large,” he said immediately. That was it. Later he elaborated, saying that the mural had communicated “every aspect in life, the people, places, the technology, the cultures, from youth to old.” Sadly, Mr. Green passed away unexpectedly in August, 2001.

I must express my appreciation to Betty Jean Craige for inviting me to undertake this project and for her support and encouragement along the way. The staff of the Center for Humanities and Arts—Lloyd Winstead, Julie Dingus, and Stacy Smith—have been unceasingly helpful as well. Thanks also to my wife Margo and many friends, colleagues, fellow artists, and students who offered helpful and insightful criticisms and suggestions, particularly in the final stages of the work. Finally, I am grateful to my mother, Della Rosenbaum of Sarasota, Florida, for encouraging my work in art from a very early age.

Art Rosenbaum

Wheatley Professor in Fine Arts
The University of Georgia

Art Rosenbaum

Wheatley Professor in the Fine Arts, The University of Georgia

ART ROSENBAUM is a painter, draftsman, muralist, folk music performer, and writer. Born in 1938, he grew up in Indianapolis and received his A.B. in Art History and his M.F.A. in Painting from Columbia University. He received a Fulbright Scholarship in Painting in 1964–65, and worked in Paris. After having taught at the Craft Students' League in New York and the University of Iowa, he came to the University of Georgia in 1976, where he continues to teach drawing and painting in the Lamar Dodd School of Art.

Rosenbaum has shown his work in numerous group and solo exhibitions for over forty-five years. Among his curated museum exhibitions are “More Than Land or Sky: Art from Appalachia” at the National Museum of American Art in Washington (1981); “The New Orleans Triennial” at the New Orleans Museum of Art (1983); “Southern Fictions” at the Houston Museum of Contemporary Art (1985); “Fact, Fiction, Fantasy: Recent Narrative Painting in the Southeast” at the Ewin Gallery at the University of Tennessee (1987); “41st Biennial of Contemporary American Painting” at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington (1989); and “The Human Condition” at the Columbus (Georgia) Museum (2001). He developed two exhibitions of drawings and paintings, with photographs by Margo Newmark Rosenbaum, based on their folklore field research, which were widely exhibited: “Folk Visions and Voices” (circulated 1978–1984) and “Shout!” (circulated 1994–1996). Numerous solo shows include five in New York, the most recent being “Hurricane Season, India Triptych, and Other Paintings” at the Blue Mountain Gallery (1999). In the March 2000 issue of *Art in America*, Aimée



Brown Price characterized his paintings as “richly episodic compositions with . . . uneasy disjunctures and willingness to tackle big themes . . . grand paintings of grand ambition [with] sometimes edgy and foreboding but loving riffs on and tributes to our country . . .” His work is in many private and public collections, including the New Orleans Museum of Art and the Morris Museum of Art in Augusta, GA.

Rosenbaum has executed mural commissions at the University of California at Los Angeles Law School (1973), in Dothan, Alabama (1993), and at Chateau Elan Winery in Georgia (1989).

Rosenbaum has been a recipient of many awards for studio work and teaching, including a Southern Arts Federation/National Endowment for the Arts Individual Artist Fellowship in 1985, a Fulbright Teaching Professorship to Germany in 1984–85, and a General Sandy Beaver Teaching Professorship at the University of Georgia in 1994–1997. He was a Senior Teaching Fellow at the University of Georgia in 1998–99. In 2001, he was named the first Wheatley Professor in the Fine Arts at the University of Georgia.



Rosenbaum has also for many years been a performer, collector, and scholar of traditional folk music. His fieldwork in Georgia, Indiana, New York, and Scotland has produced archival material in the Indiana University Folklore Archives, the University of Georgia Libraries, and the Archives of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. From his field work have come over twenty documentary audio LPs, cassettes, and CDs which he produced and annotated, several radio and television documentaries, and three books which he wrote and illustrated. His books include *Old-Time Mountain Banjo* (Oak Publications, 1968), *Folk Visions and Voices: Traditional Music and Song in North Georgia* (University of Georgia Press, 1983) and *Shout Because You're Free: The African American Ring Shout Tradition in Coastal Georgia* (University of Georgia Press, 1998). As a solo performer, he has appeared in major folk festivals in the United States and Europe and has played banjo in several tradition-oriented string bands.

Acknowledgments

The creation of *The World at Large* was a big project. It involved not only the effort, talent, and time of Art Rosenbaum, the artist, but also the management skills of Lloyd Winstead, Program Coordinator for the Center for Humanities and Arts. Lloyd Winstead, with the assistance of Julie Dingus and Stacy Smith, oversaw the preparation of the room for the mural, the lighting, the photographing, and the publishing of this brochure. We should all be grateful to them for their good work. We should also recognize the contribution that Bill Reeves of University Printing made to the project in designing the brochure. Thank you.

Betty Jean Craige