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DESIGN

## A Mural in East L.A. Paints History of Water in California

May 5, 2011 • 8:00 am PDT

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**ALISSA WALKER**

*A writer, a gelato-eater  
and a walker in LA; Los  
Angeles editor of GOOD*

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While the debate about graffiti and vandalism explodes around the *Art in the Streets* exhibition at MOCA, a few miles away, a new mural that taps the talent of local street artists hopes to send a different message. "Cuidela" (or "care for it" in Spanish) is the name of a 25-foot by 100-foot mural recently completed in Boyle Heights, one of ten public art projects launched by the Estria Foundation worldwide as part of a campaign called "Water Writes" to empower young people in the preservation of water.

With vibrant colors and incredible detail, the mural depicts various stories—real and fictional—about California's water. Figures from Aztec culture like the goddess Chalchiuhtlicue, whose jade skirts represented her protection of lakes and streams, and river god Tlaloc, or "He Who Makes Things Sprout," are intertwined with the visualization of contemporary issues like the privatization and corporate control of our

most precious resource. A map studded with X's represents the few remaining free sources of local water.



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Using this eye-catching narrative, the artists hope to instill a sense of responsibility and encourage action when it comes to saving and protecting water, especially in young people. Students from the [KIPP Los Angeles College Preparatory School](#), which hosts the mural outside one of their buildings, participated in a series of environmental workshops and helped to paint the mural, as well.

You can see more [gorgeous photos](#) of the mural, which you can find in person at 2810 Whittier Boulevard in Boyle Heights. A few blocks away, [La Mascota Bakery](#) makes some of the best tamales in town—perfect for a mural-viewing snack, along with a big glass of water, of course.

*Photo by Christine Kim*

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ANTONIAACOCK

This mural not only represents a crucial environmental issue but it represents untapped talents of young and environmentally interested and artists. This gives hope to the world. Let's pass it on!

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JONATHANCAREN

History of Water in Los Angeles. A city that doesn't have it's own water source. The story told through a mural. Excellent.

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IANIVERSE DESIGNS

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