

here comes the neighborhood PUBLIC ART

# ARTWORK PROPOSAL

## BY ROBERTO SALAS

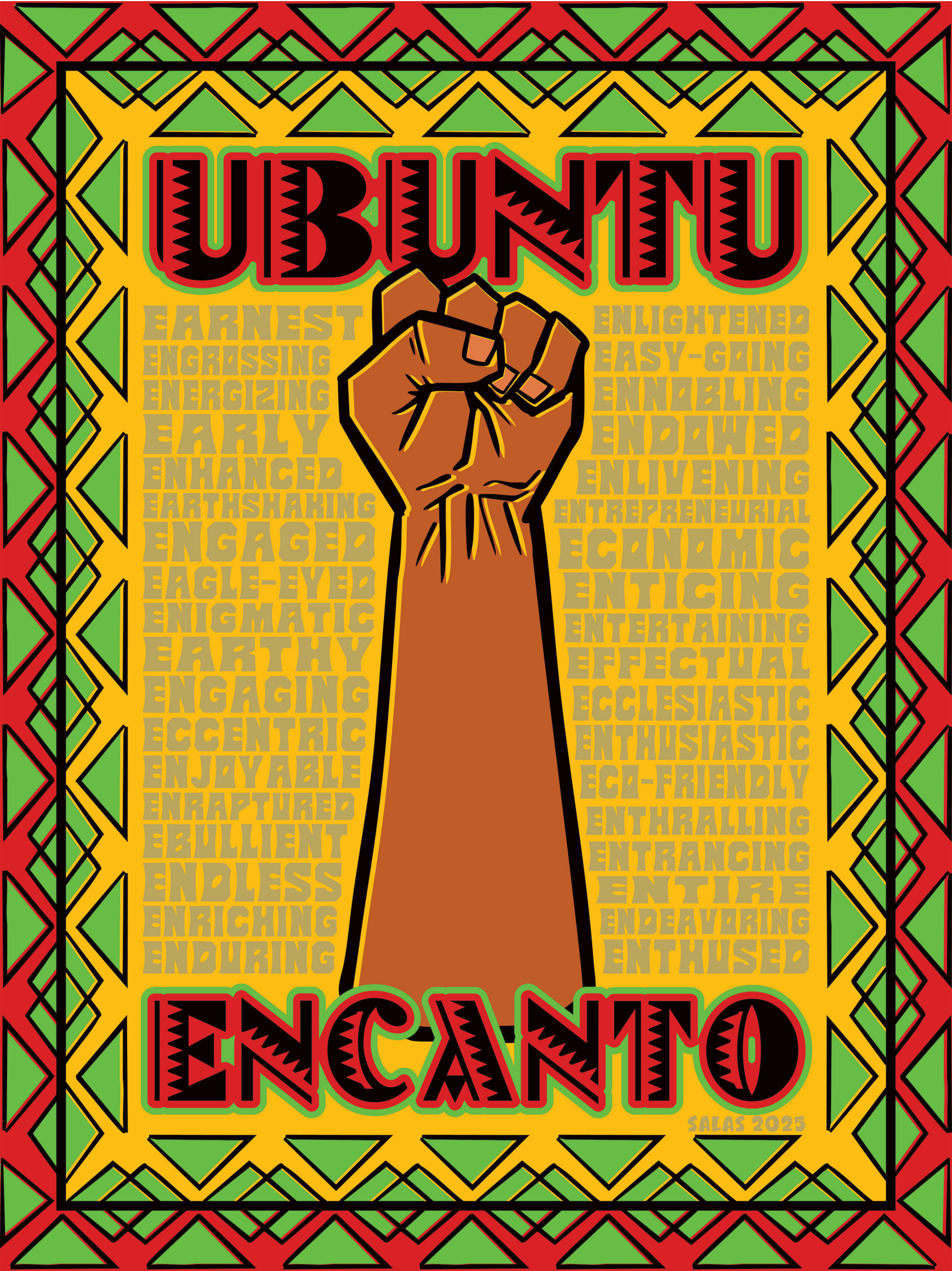


Artist Roberto Salas is creating a site-specific artwork for Encanto and the San Diego Black Arts and Culture District as part of *here comes the neighborhood: Encanto*. The artist spent several months exploring the area and engaging with the community to develop this proposal.

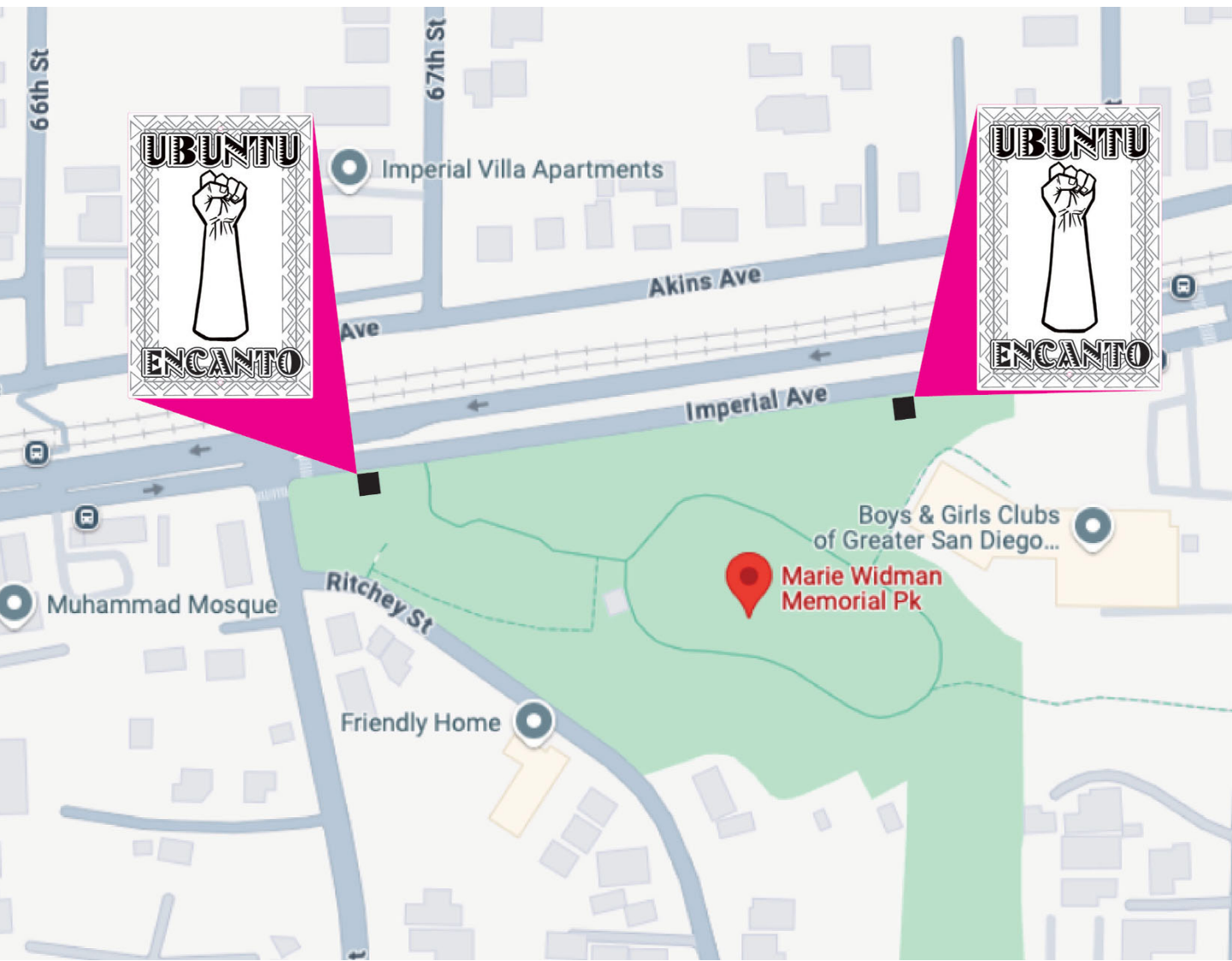
The proposed artwork, titled *Ubuntu*, takes on an unconventional format for a public artwork, which is typically understood as one piece in one place. The project will involve the distribution via gifting of displayable plaques distributed throughout the Imperial Avenue corridor and the San Diego Black Arts and Culture District in places such as markets, restaurants, offices, coffee shops, etc. where the plaque can be seen in public. The artist will walk the Imperial Avenue corridor between 61st and 68th street and offer the plaque, along with its installation, stimulating a direct dialog and connection between the artist and residents, workers, and business owners. Residents will also be able to collect a poster version of the plaque, to display as they choose.

In addition to the plaques that are distributed through gifting, there will be a permanent version of the plaque in the idiom of a common street sign installed in several locations along the Imperial Avenue sidewalk in Marie Widman Park.

Plaque hosts may display them in their businesses, offices, etc. as they see fit. The plaque may be encountered on the street or in a business along Imperial Avenue, or both, inspiring curiosity about their origin, and connecting awareness of the Black Arts and Culture District to the businesses, organizations, and residences that make it up.



The plaque design consists of the greeting of the word “UBUNTU” with positive words in faded text relate to the letter E, as in Encanto. Additionally, the raised fist at the center of composition bears an uncanny resemblance to the letter E in American sign language.



Proposed approximate location of permanent “Ubuntu” street signs

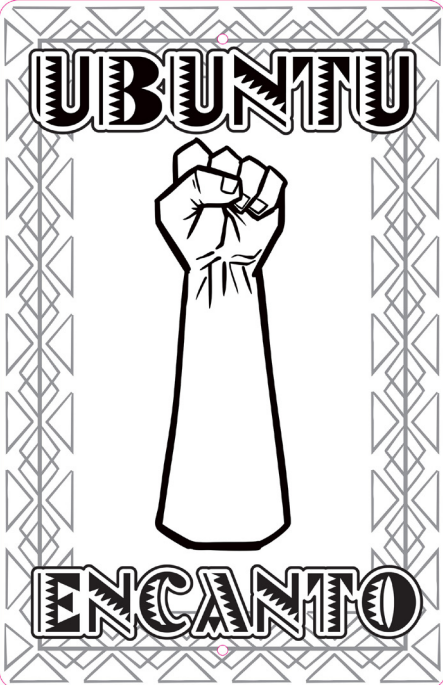
The artists learned of the African philosophy of Ubuntu from an Encanto resident during a meet-the-artist event in the fall of 2024.

From the artist: *“I Am Because We Are: the African philosophy of Ubuntu. We as a people of color need to have images that are relatable to who lives in our communities.*

*The “buy in” concept of this project is designed to empower the name Encanto and its people through hosting a plaque. Spreading the “good word” is important for unification, pride, and visual affirmation. In this era of such negativity, we need images to bring us together.*

*With years of domination this iconic image of the raised fist is a reaffirmation of empowerment in both and black and brown diasporas. It’s given us strength, unity and new beginnings ... I first learned of it as a young teenager during the 1960’s.*

*I witnessed the black power salute during the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, this gesture empowered me.”*



“Ubuntu” plaque in the idiom of a common street sign



Rendering of street sign along sidewalk in Marie Widman Park