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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on understanding the meaning and significance gleaned from a twenty six month examination of the murals on *The 34th Street Wall*, Gainesville, Florida, in its local and the larger general context. The Feldman method (1994) of critical analysis was used to interpret the murals. The supporting investigation included defining the local multicultural structure and a review of the historiography of those origins.

The earliest examples of murals were the animals, hunting scenes, fertility symbols, and mystical realms of religion on the walls of caves and the surfaces of Paleolithic rocks (Dissanayke, 1992). The art of the ancient world was inseparable from religion and without it would probably have found little inspiration. These images represented a need not only to exist within our environments, but to impose ourselves indelibly into them. The society in which we live was here before us; it will be here after we are gone. The small intimate groups within which we function are but a part of the larger society of human beings; the world is the landscape.

Important to our understanding of current multicultural American murals and their contexts, and in particular *The 34th Street Wall* murals, is the knowledge of murals throughout the world. Rapid global communications expose us to a myriad of images, symbols, and ideas. Air travel and computers have changed the world. Being in closer contact gives us the opportunity for the exchange of ideas, some which may be understood at varying levels within the parameters of our knowledge, within our own culture and experience. The murals on the walls and the caves of Australia, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas may contain underlying concepts and images we may use to help us understand *The 34th Street Wall*.