

# Celebrating Mexican with Ray Patlan

By Laura De Los Santos

A reception was held celebrating the visit of Chicago muralist, Ray Patlan. The event was hosted at the National Museum of Mexican Art on April 13. Event organizers were Blue Islanders, Laura De Los Santos, Jaime Frausto and Chicagoan Antonio Patlan. Sponsors for the event included founder of the National Museum of Mexican Art, Carlos Tortolero, Nuevo Leon Restaurant, Benny's Pizzeria, 5 Rabbit Cerveceria and Blue Island's Pierre's Bakery donated a beautiful cake with a depiction of the Blue Island mural, "The History of the Mexican American Worker" by Ray Patlan, Vicente Mendoza and Jose Nario. See photo below.

In attendance were many muralists from the formative years of the Chicago Community Mural Movement, such as Marcos Raya, John Pitman Weber, Carol Yasko to name just a few, as well as our own Blue Island muralist, Ricardo Gonzalez, the creator of the mural that presently beautifies uptown Blue Island, depicting Blue Island history.

Ray Patlan was one of the artists commissioned to create a mural in Blue Island in 1973 entitled, "The History of the Mexican-American Worker" with fellow artists Vicente Mendoza and Jose Nario. The mural was installed amidst racial controversy that existed in Blue Island at the time, and a court case was filed by Plaintiffs August Sallas, President of the Latin American Advisory Council, the Illinois Labor Historical Society, and Artist Ray Patlan, against each and every member of Blue Island city hall in their official capacity and as individuals. The plaintiffs won the case and the mural adorned Broadway and Olde Western Avenue for several decades. Few may know it, but the American Civil Liberties Union cited the Blue Island mural case to be the one of the most important cases in constitutional law involving art and an artist's freedom of speech.

Speakers were: Musicologist Dr. Jesus "Chuy" Negrete who also gave a performance; Historian Dr. Victor A. Sorell; Chicago Muralist John P. Weber and Ray Patlan gave a presentation. For more on Ray: [www.raypatlan.com](http://www.raypatlan.com)



**Editor's Note:** A master of understatement is our Laura. This was a wonderful, festive evening held in the beautiful museum banquet room. It was completely memorable as were the presentations by several scholars.

The National Museum of Mexican Art is celebrating their 25th anniversary. Their modest beginning from a few donated prints has grown into a collection of over 7000 works of art. A true cultural center, the museum is located at 1852 West 19th Street in Chicago; open Tuesday thru Sunday from 10:00 until 5:00 and admission is always free.

Ray Patlan was the primary muralist on the artwork which was once here in Blue Island. He went on to produce remarkable works throughout California and is also known as a lecturer, instructor, consultant and community activist. His mural here in Blue Island no longer exists.



**Tonio, Jaimz, Ray and Laura.**  
*Photos by Eliazar De Los Santos*

# Dinnerville Exhibit

Maybe you remember the striking photographs of locomotives, bridges and or canal which were published by the FORUM - quite proudly on our front page.

We are happy to announce that photographer James Dinnerville held his first solo exhibit at the Beverly Art Center, 2407 West 111th Street in Chicago.

In one of his exhibits, he focuses on people terming them non-people as they are shown in a stylized mannequin form, in order to portray a sense of the isolation present in modern day society.

This exhibit is arresting and we offer our congratulations to another talented Blue Islander.

