

# Pointing an arrow at peace

By Tanya Rodrigues

Last year, when local artist Mario Torero first considered a piece for inSITE97 in Barrio Logan, he envisioned a dark, symbolic bomb.

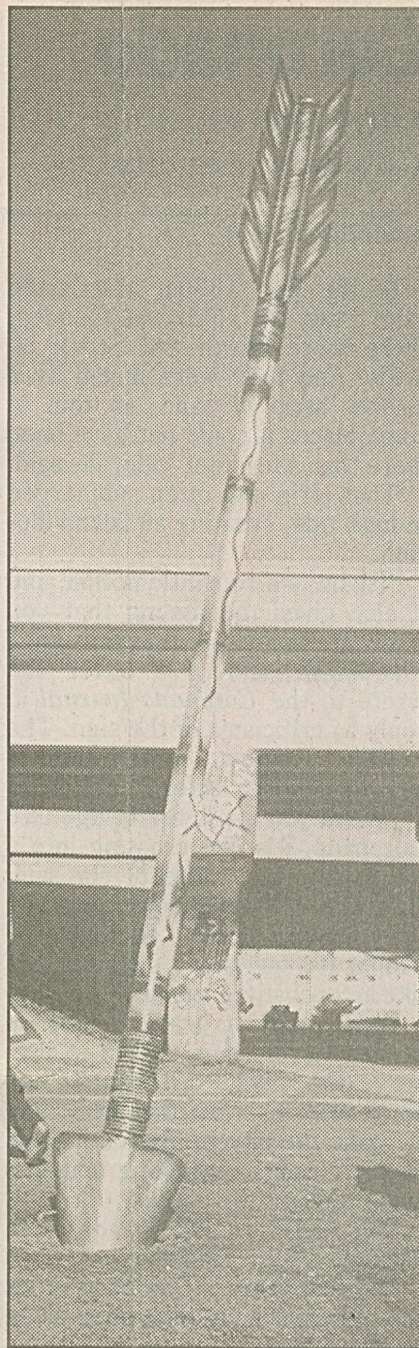
Strife continued at the time over the Port District's too-close use of toxic fumigants. Also, Caltrans' planned retrofit of the San Diego-Coronado Bridge above Chicano Park would destroy precious murals painted on the bridge's pillars.

But in July, those problems changed — Caltrans unveiled a new plan that preserved the murals and the Port agreed to stop using the toxins regularly. So did his mind. "It was a symbol of war," he said, "and now, it's time for peace."

Yesterday, he and other supporters gathered beside that same park to dedicate what he created instead: "Arrowpoint/Victory," a 20-foot steel arrow following Kumme-yay tribe design and painted in acrylics of rich red, purple, brown, yellow and green.

It was part of inSITE97, the binational public art exhibition that began Sept. 26 and continues through Nov. 30.

Fuerza, a group of artists who support Chicano Park, was given \$10,000 to fund four inSITE97 projects, and found additional funds through groups including the Peace



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**Arrowpoint/Victory: The 20-foot arrow in Chicano Park is part of inSITE97.**

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## Arrow

'The things we create are reflections of the people'

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Resource Center, the Environmental Health Coalition, Pantaleon Enterprises, the Paradise Senior Center and the World Beat Center.

Danza Mixcoatl, an American Indian dance group, performed at the small opening ceremony. Later, local groups discussed community identity.

Mary Lou Valencia told the informal group that the sculpture means "not only to have a cultural landscape in the city, but to have an internal landscape."

Torero, 50, his graying hair tied back, reflected that his work and youth once distanced him from the community. "It was easier to be individual," he recalled.

While working on a mural in Chicano Park for the Environmental Health Coalition last year, an accident caused Torero to fall 15 feet, breaking his nose and his wrist. It changed him, he said, strengthening his commitment to the community.

Torero strives to be a public artist, he said. "The things we create are reflections of the people," he said.

"I must get them involved in the actual creation of the artwork, so it's theirs," he continued, waving his arms toward the park. "That's our arrow."

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