

**Sal Daguarda** was depicted in Diego Rivera's 1940 San Francisco Mural Pan American Unity. At 86 he is attempting to rebuild the Pacifica Statue that was designed for the San Francisco 1940 Panama Pacific Exposition that he participated in as a 20-year-old swimmer. He discusses the influence of the mural and his vision to recreate the Pacifica Statue on Treasure Island in the San Francisco Bay.

Interview Questions for Sal Daguarda, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007 Concord, California

**BMW: How did you come to be illustrated in Diego Rivera's 1940 Panama Pacific mural, Pan American Unity?**

**Mr. Daguarda:** My name is Sal Daguarda and I was a swimmer at Treasure Island in the 1940 Panama Pacific Exposition with the Billy Rose Aquacade and my first time spotting Diego Rivera was when we went in this hall one of the empty buildings but I thought he was just some guy with graffiti going on the walls. I had no idea who he was. I didn't meet him or anything but watched him for a while and one day we were coming out of the water which is in this picture here and three of us, Clyde Divine on this side, me in the middle and George Winberg on the side. They are both gone now. They died several years ago. We came out of the water and a fellow came up and took a picture of us and we asked what he was going to do with that and he said we are going to try to do some painting with it. He didn't say too much he just took the pictures and left and then later on is when we found out, in fact, years later that was the picture that went into the mural. So that's about the size of getting into the mural.

My friend Bob Seward talked about the mural and all of a sudden it came back to me when I was going through my pictures that I was making up to put into a shop to leave there and all of a sudden it dawned on me. That was the picture that was taken when whomever it was representing Diego Rivera came in and took our picture and that's when we decided that there was two us up there. Clyde Divine, we think Diego turned his hair blonde. He couldn't have liked the black hair and so he became a blonde. Since then it's been a whole new life to me because I was never much into the arts but I've got a whole new appreciation for the arts now.

**BMW: Can you talk again about your memories and how you were photographed and included in the mural?**

**Mr. Daguarda:** One day after a show we were coming out of the water, because you swim and then you exit out a tunnel. As we were coming out of that tunnel there was a fellow there with a camera and he snapped some pictures of us and we said we wanted copies, kidding around with him, and we'll take two of each. So he said, "I'll get you a copy of it". So he did and I managed to keep the one copy, which I showed earlier and the other one. Somebody said, I think there is a guy from next door where they're painting, but I didn't pay any attention to it until years later when after I met Bob and the mural came up, because I had never seen the mural until after that and that's when I looked at it and I was segregating my pictures which I was giving to San Francisco City College for their archives. I made copies from the World's Fair and all the swimmers so that they could put it in the collection and that's when I ran across it and I said, gee that's the picture they took when they put it in the mural and that's how we discovered that I was in the mural.

We never heard anything about the mural with Rivera until after I met Bob Seward and then he gave a lecture and then he took me over to the college and I saw the mural on the wall and all of a sudden, its almost like, my heart started pumping like here was a whole new thing in my life that just started all over again. And so between that mural and the statue and the help of the art department over there we started seriously going to work on the statue and I've been working hard at it now, one for Pacifica and one will go in the Frida Kahlo garden at City College. It's right outside where the mural is inside the auditorium.

**BMW: How has being depicted here affected your life? Can you talk about your current project and why you have been doing this?**

**Mr. Daguarda:** What I am working on at the present time is. There was a statue, an 80 ft statue called Pacifica and the navy, when they took over in 1941, they tore the statue down because they wanted to make room for the height, because the airport was going on Treasure Island and so at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Exposition I was with Dave Mackleadden and I said to Dave I am going to rebuild that statue. So about 10 years ago was when I started putting the statue together and we kept waiting for the navy to turn it back to San Francisco and they finally did this last year and I made some models. I've got some three-foot models, which the City of Pacifica loaned me. We made castings from there and now I am in the process of making two eight footers one will go on the entry to the city hall at Pacifica and the other will go at City College. City College was very helpful to me in everything I've done or been working on because its related to the mural.

This is going to be my legacy and my kid's legacy and the legacy of the people that are working on Treasure Island redevelopment and I'm not going to give up on it. The statue is going to be built come hell nor high water and that's why I've slept it, dreamed about it, you name it, I've built the statue thousands of times in my dreams and with the mural and the people I've met though the mural I think it's all leading into my road to building the statue and the eight footers that we are doing now its just the beginning and its just a way of getting to more publicity to put it on Treasure Island because it could go to Treasure Island immediately. We don't have to wait for the re-development of Treasure Island, because as my son said, Dad, every time there's a baseball game or a football game at Oakland or San Francisco, when that blimp flies over the top, they're going to be showing that statue and everybody watching those games all around the world, not just San Francisco or Oakland but the world will see that statue. My daughter says, Dad, he's right that's going to be the statue of liberty of the west coast and so my hope is to keep going and growing and my daughter says don't ever give up on it dad. So that's what's keeping me going is that statue and it'll get done.

**BMW: Can you talk about the meaning of the Pacifica Statue?**

**Mr. Daguarda:** The statue of Liberty stands for the European countries coming to America but the Pacific statue was like the welcoming statue here to the Asian Countries and the Pacific Rim and that's why the figure is not anyone person. You can take it for whatever part of the Pacific you want to see. It was at the opposite end of the Sun Tower, which was a tall building on Treasure Island and the two were facing each other. Practically anyone that's ever gone to the fair can remember the statue or Pacifica. It has something when you look at it, a feeling of part of your life, a meaning. I look at it and it brings back the thoughts of my days then. I look at my statue and it makes me feel like I am looking at the same person.