

Carlos Agredano*Collector, 2020*

Smog, Carbon Monoxide (CO), Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Ground Level Ozone (O₃), Particulate Matter (PM2.5 and PM10), soot, dirt, dust, and other unidentified debris sourced from Lynwood, California on canvas

Framed: 102 3/4 x 72 1/4

The US Federal Government played a role in developing segregation with the passage of the Home Owners Corporation Act in 1933. The act created the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), a company designed to help homeowners facing foreclosure during the great depression. In order to determine which families were eligible to receive mortgage financing, the HOLC developed Residential Security Maps, which surveyed the lending risks in cities with populations over 40,000. The lower the grade the higher the “loan risk” would be for private lenders. These reports explicitly cited race, class, and ethnicity as the basis for grading in a process that became known as “redlining.”¹

In a 1933 HOLC report, the city of Watts and Lynwood received the lowest possible grade, D “red,” because it housed “one of the largest concentrations of Negroes in Los Angeles County,” in addition to “many Mexican and Japanese residents.”²

As a result of redlining, the value of homes in Lynwood and Watts plummeted, making them particularly vulnerable to seizure by the government for public development.³ Through this process called eminent domain, homes in Lynwood and Watts were seized for the construction of the I-105 Century Freeway.⁴

The American Lung Association suggests that living within 1000 feet of a freeway is a hazard for children, the elderly, and adults with respiratory problems.⁵ This risk is due to the elevated levels of air pollution particles emitted from vehicle exhaust. The artist’s childhood home in Lynwood is exactly 35 feet away from the I-105 freeway. As part of an ongoing yearly process, this canvas was left in the artist’s backyard for exactly one year.

¹ Understanding Fair Housing, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Clearinghouse Publication 42 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), 4.

² Robert K. Nelson, LaDale Winling, Richard Marciano, Nathan Connolly, et al., “Mapping Inequality,” American Panorama, ed. Robert K. Nelson and Edward L. Ayers, accessed March 1, 2023, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=3/39.91/-121.64&opacity=0.8&text=bibliograph>

³ Ibid.

⁴ US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (1978) Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Routes I and I-105 (El Segundo- Norwalk) Freeway-Transitway, Washington D.C.

⁵ American Lung Association. 2017. “Living near Highways and Air Pollution.” Lung.org. 2017. <https://www.lung.org/clean-air/outdoors/who-is-at-risk/highways>.