

COMMUNITY MURAL GUIDE

Information and Advice for
Creating a Community Mural

Betni Kalk

For updated content and links, please visit:

communitymurals.info

This guide is meant to be a companion to the website communitymurals.info. Its purpose is to be helpful at community planning and design meetings.

This project by Associate Professor Betni Kalk was partially funded by a grant from The Dr. George F. Haddix President's Faculty Research Fund through Creighton University.

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or email us to share your advice,
experiences and images.**

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Since 2005, I have painted for many types of clients including non-profits, restaurants and schools. But up until 2015, I had not collaborated with a community on a mural. My thanks to the Union for Contemporary Art in Omaha for inviting me to work on my first community mural with Prospect Village Neighborhood. Through that experience and subsequent murals, as well as being a mentor through the mural program of the Joslyn's Kent Bellows Program, I saw the need for a guide to help artists and communities learn more about community-based mural collaboration. Based on my own experiences, additional research and interviews with community muralists - I've put together a website and this coinciding printed guide that can be used at community mural meetings.

I hope this guide is helpful to you. It is a work in progress and will be updated as I get feedback so please send me your advice on revisions or additions. Please also send your photos of meetings, painting days, and your mural celebration as well your thoughts and advice on the experiences of participating in a community-based mural. I'm also doing a series of videos so if you want to share your thoughts on video, let me know!

Thank you to A Midsummer Mural for the use of their photos.

Thank you!
Betni Kalk

Far beyond simple beautification, artist-community collaborative murals strengthen communities as a community-building exercise that brings together all ages and projects their collective voice. When neighborhoods, art centers, schools and other organizational communities collaborate with an artist, they can work together to create impressive, impactful, professional murals with relevant content that is co-designed and painted together.



Photo by Betni Kalk at Prospect Village Mural's Community Paint Day

Some people are too intimidated to help paint a mural, thinking that tremendous art skills are a requirement. But when a design system is used where the end result is essentially a giant coloring book, sometimes complicated and other times simple, the mural can be painted simply and requires no special artistic technique or skill.

When a community paints together, it's truly amazing to see a 3 year old painting next to a 75 year old is wonderful. Artists can touch up as needed after the community paints, so the mural is professional-looking and yet the entire community is welcome to participate.

This project is to help artists and many kinds of communities of diverse people to work together to create art that can lift up their voices and show their pride in who they are and perhaps also what they wish for their families and future.



Community Painting on Prospect Village Mural in Omaha / Photo by Betni Kalk

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement is the cornerstone of the process of making a community mural. There are so many kinds of communities so your community might be a group of people from a neighborhood, school or church. Your group might be just five people or 50! Different people will take on different duties to make a successful project. The process of meeting together for the planning meetings, design meetings, and also to paint can turn a group of strangers into a group of friends. The results of the group effort is not only a piece of art, but a stronger community!

Below are quotes from mural artists about their perceptions of the benefits of community-based public art. *If you have your own quote to add, whether you are an artist or community member, please email us at communitymuralsinfo@gmail.com.*

RICHARD HARRISON / A Midsummer Mural

Quote is from an artist survey the CommunityMurals.info sent to community-based muralists

“The benefits to a community to paint a mural are many. They get a chance to express their identity; who they are, where they came from, and what’s important to them. They get together in meetings and get to know each other better. Bridges are built between owners of businesses and residents, people who are needing resources and those who can help them. Creative ideas like community gardens and other projects get brainstormed and energized. Problems the community are experiencing get discussed and people feel heard and more hopeful about getting to a better future. Churches, social organizations, and business associations get involved and get an opportunity for awareness of what they offer and how people can use their services. The final product can add color and beauty to walls that once were ugly magnets for graffiti. Youth get new ideas of how to express their creativity and it leads them to better life paths. People feel encouraged to pick up trash, mow grass, keep up the area, and feel proud of where they live.”

OLIVIA GUDE / Chicago Public Art Group

http://www.cpag.net/guide/1/1_pages/1_1.htm

Community Public Art Process by Jon Pounds and Olivia Guide

“First, let’s consider the outcomes for the direct participants—the people who help with the planning, organizing, fundraising, design, and making of a project. These people frequently report an increased sense of agency, a pride founded in the recognition that they have made a substantive contribution to their environment.

Second, such projects create a sense that individuals and organizations can work together to have an impact on people’s lives. Most projects represent collaborations of several organizations—local agencies, community organizations, schools, government entities. Public art projects demonstrate that such structures can function to enhance community life in practical and deeply emotional ways.

... When people see a fantastic art project in their neighborhood, they perceive themselves as being part of a community that can produce something of high quality. This can overcome internalized negative feelings from living in dysfunctional neighborhoods or in prosperous places that lack a sense of cohesion and belonging.”

HUGO ZAMARANO

Quote is from an artist survey the CommunityMurals.info sent to community-based muralists

“Collaborating with a community means that there is a possibility to have more content for the mural, more ideas floating around, more people experiencing the process, more connections to people and to the artwork being made, more people being proud of what is being created, and more impactful the mural can be... It’s also a giant learning experience both culturally and technically for both the artists and the communities. My favorite aspect of being part of a community mural is being able to hear other people’s stories, learn more about that community, and seeing the value and impact that the mural can have no matter how small or big. Also knowing that your are doing what you love will be appreciated by others, while actually being part of something that was not just yours but of people in that community and sharing the ideas of that community through art.”

COMMUNITY PLANNING MEETINGS

(Ideally, complete these prior to meeting with artist)

The following is an ideal set of steps to a community mural. However, each community will need to decide in which order these action items happen as well as when to bring in the artist. Some items that are discussed in the initial community meetings will probably be revisited in the design meetings with the artist, especially if additional community members attend these meetings. Each community is different based on number of people involved, you might be able to do just a few meetings, but you also might need a lot more. There are usually four community planning meetings open to the public where people can share their thoughts, experiences, and ideas. These are followed by another four (or more) design meetings that are also open to the community to help work on or have input on the design.

WHICH WALL?

BUDGET / MURAL COSTS

TIMELINE

SUBJECT MATTER/PURPOSE/AUDIENCE

WHICH TYPE OF COLLABORATION?

PAINTED OR PRINTED/INSTALLED?

COLORS

AESTHETIC/STYLE

CHOOSING AN ARTIST



Magic City Mural, 24th & N Streets in South Omaha / Lead Artist Mike Giron / Photo by A Midsummer Mural Team



Historic Benson Mural on the west end of Benson in Omaha, NE / Lead Artist Maggie Webber / Photo by Brian Lai



Nelson Mandela Elementary's Cafeteria in Omaha, NE / Lead Betni Kalk / Photo by Betni Kalk

COMMUNITY PLANNING MEETINGS

BUDGET / MURAL COSTS

It is fantastic if you already have a budget for a mural, but if not – consider fundraising and crowdsourcing for the funds necessary to pay the artist/designer for the design, painting, and supplies. While you may find an artist who might work for free or at a reduced price for a project they want to support - you should not expect that. Keep in mind that designing and painting a mural is a huge time commitment and few people can give up weeks of work time.

To keep costs down, ask for donations or deep discounts of paint and materials that are often given through stores. At times the store managers want to see the design before they will agree. To sweeten for them, you can offer to make a plaque or text on the wall that lists them as a sponsor.

Sometimes the artist might agree to first be paid to do the design then further fundraising could occur to pay for the paint and painting after the design has been finalized. Sometimes crowd-sourcing will be more successful when the public can visualize the final product.

Talk with a local arts organization who can sometimes get funding for a joint project. Though depending on grant deadlines, that process can take 6 months to a year in advance of your mural project and then its possible that the partnering organization may not win the grant.

Do some research in your town or city because sometimes there are foundations or city government who give grants to neighborhoods. For example, in Omaha the Omaha Foundation gives grants to neighborhood projects and one of the purposes is beautification of neighborhoods. The city of Omaha also has Neighborhood Grants available.

<https://omahafoundation.org/nonprofits/community-interest-funds/omaha-neighborhood-grants>

<https://mayors-office.cityofomaha.org/neighborhoods>

COMMUNITY PLANNING MEETINGS

The cost of the mural is the most difficult to determine because there are so many factors that determine the pricing including:

1. Size / Square Footage - *multiply the height by the width*
2. Lifts & Scaffolding - *if the wall is higher than 15 ft, this requires the use of lifts and/or scaffolding which can be rented*
3. Surface of Wall - *Textures can increase time to paint and amount of paint if highly textured*
4. Cost of paint and materials
5. Intricacy of design
6. Working conditions - For example, restricted hours of operation, tight timeline, cramped spaces
7. Extra Wall preparation - *it is expected that the walls have been fixed, cleaned and primed but if they need extra work, the artist fee will increase*
8. If artist is from out-of-town, you may be expected to pay transportation, lodging and food

Each artist has their own specifics regarding payment. Many require 50% down payment after a contract has been signed. This money goes towards supplies and paint and the time now dedicated to your project. The costs of a mural can vary greatly between artists depending on their experience, reputation and where they live. Murals can cost \$10-\$200 per square foot depending on the difficulty or intricacy of the design. The average cost is closer to \$15-\$30.

If you are sending out an artistic call to find an artist, list the artist stipend amount that you have decided on so that only those who are willing to work for that amount will apply. A way to reduce costs of a mural is to have a simple design or one that uses lots of negative space of the wall.

COMMUNITY PLANNING MEETINGS

NOTES ON BUDGET / MURAL COSTS

Amount of Money Already Raised _____

Amount of Money Yet to Raised _____

Fundraising Ideas _____

Partner with Others? _____

Who will research this? _____

Discounts from Which Stores? _____

Who will research this? _____

Local Philanthropic Organizations who give grants for Beautification? _____

Who will research this? _____

State or City Funds for Beautification? _____

Who will research this? _____

Crowdsourcing (Indiegogo, Kickstarter, etc)? _____

COMMUNITY PLANNING MEETINGS

TIMELINE

When is your mural to be completed? Be sure to leave enough time for community meetings, design meetings, and actual painting including transfer-design-to-wall day and community paint days. Depending on where you live, the weather, and if permissions are needed from your city - your timeline might extend to a year or longer unless you have frequent meetings. If it is an interior mural, then that will cut down on time needed since the weather won't affect the painting.

Ideal Date Of Completion _____

Number Of Community Planning Meetings _____

Date/Time/Location _____

Date/Time/Location _____

Date/Time/Location _____

Date/Time/Location _____

Date/Time/Location _____

Date/Time/Location _____

Number Of Community Design Meetings _____

Date/Time/Location _____

Date/Time/Location _____

Date/Time/Location _____

Date/Time/Location _____

Date/Time/Location _____

Date/Time/Location _____

Wall Should Be Prepared By This Date _____

Design Transfer To Wall Dates/Times _____

Number Of Community Paint Days + Extra "Rain Days" _____

Date/Time _____

Date/Time _____

Date/Time _____

COMMUNITY PLANNING MEETINGS

TYPES OF COLLABORATION

One of the first things the community needs to figure out is what type of collaboration they wish to have with an artist(s) or designer(s). Do you want all ages to help paint, including children? Do you want the design to be realistic or simplistic?

The budget might dictate this decision. Its most economical to the community to paint a mural themselves. A community could paint with the artist on Community Paint Days to reduce costs. If the mural is painted solely by the artist, the cost could be significantly higher but this depends on the chosen artist's pricing.

These four basic types of collaboration all assume that they are designed with community. If multiple members of the community are not part of the design process and the meetings aren't not open to the public, then it shouldn't be called a community mural. The artist/designer is paid for attending meetings and for creating a design based on the requests of the community. Depending on the type of collaboration, the artist/designer might not actually paint the mural.

- **Painted by Community**
- **Painted by Community with Artist**
- **Painted by Artist(s) + Assistant(s) from the Community**
- **Painted by Artist(s)**



Hope Center for Kids, 2200 N. 20th St. Omaha, NE / In memory of the center's founders, Ty & Terri Schenzel
Lead Artist Maggie Webber / Photo by Brian Lai



Betni Practicing Lift Safety on Cuming/Florence
Photo by Painting Volunteer



Paige Reitz in Lift at Prospect Village Mural
Photo by Betni Kalk



Unused Creighton University Building (Building removed in 2019) on Cuming & Florence Blvd in Omaha, NE
Lead Artist Betni Kalk / Concept by Creighton University design student Daniel Theisen with guidance by and additional birds by Professor Betni Kalk /Painted by Betni with 10+ volunteers including rockstar volunteer Lee Lohman Photo by Betni Kalk

COMMUNITY PLANNING MEETINGS

PAINTED OR PRINTED/INSTALLED?

Murals can be painted off-site on wood panels, Poly-tab fabric or canvas and then installed. Designs can be also be digital and then printed and installed. Some of these options mean the mural is temporary. The life span of printed materials is generally much shorter than a mural painted directly on wall.

If your mural is going to be designed and then printed - you could choose a graphic designer or digital artist instead of a muralist. Printing large murals can get expensive in addition to having it installed. So, it is not necessarily cheaper than paying an artist to paint a design. The image below is of 20 x 80 foot digital designs printed and installed on silos as a project by Emerging Terrain in Omaha.



Vinton Street & I-80 in Omaha, Murals about Transportation, Project by Emerging Terrain / Photo by Betni Kalk

COMMUNITY PLANNING MEETINGS

COLOR / CONTRAST

What colors should be avoided and which be must included for your community? Decide on a few main colors that would be most dominant, but also make a list the other colors to be included. Its also a good idea to keep a “maybe” list of colors.

Is this a quiet mural with low contrast or is it to be brightly colored and bold? What is the feeling that the viewer should experience when seeing the mural? Both colors and aesthetic of the this mural combine together to influence the emotion embedded in the mural.

Color and contrast in combination with the imagery can cause strong emotion by the viewer. Colors can be bright and fully saturated or they can be muted and very quiet. Murals can brighten up the mood of a neighborhood or they can be more somber to help people remember past events or other important matters.

Contrast can come from different hues and they can also come from different values. A hue is pure color that has no white, black, gray or brown mixed in. Value is lightness or darkness of a color. Typically value and hue go together to create an image with variety and depth.



Color Wheel Exercises from Winter-Simat family / Photo by Betni Kalk

LIMITED COLOR PALETTE

Limited color palettes create greater balance in the mural. Palettes usually include warm and cool colors as well as value contrast. Limited palettes not only help connect a variety of subject matter into one large image, they can also make it easier for community paint days. Similar colors can be mistaken for each other when volunteers paint them onto the wall, so it's a good idea to keep the colors distinct. Another benefit is that you will buy less paint.

Below is Cey Adam's mural "Love" on 24th and Lake Streets in Omaha. The curve of the letters is complemented by the curls and curves in the background. The letters are bordered by a darker color to help them show up against the background. This is an example of limited color palette. Instead of using black for contrast, he used a deep shade of red. Its lightest color is a light yellow instead of white. It contrasts cool colors of green-blues and olive green with warm colors of yellows, a rust orange and dark red. Even without using black and white, there is plenty of contrast and this is highly visible from the street from a distance. The simplicity of the design also helps its visibility and legibility from a distance.



COMMUNITY PLANNING MEETINGS

NOTES

PREFERRED COLORS _____

MAYBE COLORS _____

COLORS TO AVOID _____

TYPE OF CONTRAST _____
Through Dark & Light? _____
Through Changes in Hue? _____
Strong or Quiet Contrast? _____

COMMUNITY PLANNING MEETINGS

AESTHETIC/STYLE/TYPE OF MURAL

Your community mural planning group should have a few examples of what they like to show the artist, keeping in mind that if the community will participate in painting the mural, the design approach must allow this. There are differing levels of community participation in the painting process from color blocking in large areas to painting the whole thing.

Encourage the public to bring images of their favorite murals to generate discussion. For each image, ask about the colors, aesthetic, and the subject matter to get an understanding of why the image was brought in.

The images that the group looks at don't have to be community murals, but keep in mind which type of collaboration the group has decided to do with the artist. If the imagery is very detailed and realistic, the community won't be able to do much of the painting.

WALL TEXTURE / WINDOWS / DOORS

Thick or deep wall textures can impact the painting process which might affect the aesthetic of the mural, including some brick and corrugated metal. If the wall is interrupted by windows or doors, these can also affect the design. If you prefer for the doors to be painted on with the mural design, make sure you have permission from the building owner and inform the artist as well.

SIMPLE OR DETAILED? BOLD OR QUIET?

If the mural is outside, determine if there is foot and/or car traffic. This can influence how simple or complicated the design is. Also, determine the speed limit. If it is a location that will be seen at a higher speed, a simple design is best so that you don't distract drivers. If the area is passed by pedestrians, it's nice to have some areas of detail for the person walking by at a slow pace.

PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA?

Is this a wall where you want people to stop and take pictures in front of it? The design will need to include an area that a person can capture while also getting a good portrait.

BASIC DESIGN STYLES

- Abstract or Geometric Shapes
- Patterns
- Shapes in Backgrounds with some Recognizable Objects in Front
- Recognizable Images but Very Simplified/Illustrative
- Cartoon
- Detailed Graphics (architecture, landscape, including Portraits)
- Text
- Combinations of these!

Keeping in mind that you need to first decide the level of community involvement with painting, the next few pages have examples of community-based from around Omaha to help get you thinking. There are more examples online at communitymurals.info.



The Ancestor, The Identity, and The Seed

LEAD ARTIST: Reggie LeFlore, Assisted by Baber
 LOCATION: 24th and Ohio Streets / Omaha, NE

“Called “The Ancestor, The Identity, and The Seed,” the mural represents the same themes as the Pan-African flag. The Union held three meetings where community members gave their thoughts on what the mural’s design should be...A portrait of an Omahan accompanies each of the three stripes, and references one of the flag’s themes: Celeste Butler, 59, who was a 2017 Union fellow; Jonathan Brice, known as the local rapper “Lite Pole”; and Thailea Brice, a 10-year-old girl who goes to art classes at the Union.”

By Aaron Hegarty / World-Herald staff writer Oct 7, 2018

https://www.omaha.com/news/metro/new-mural-at-corner-of-th-and-ohio-streets-captures/article_a3997466-3a2e-52a3-ba8f-6fa80f5cf74c.html



Photos by Betni Kalk



I love Florence

LEAD ARTIST: Christine Stormberg, Assistants Hugo Zamorano and Sarah Jones
 LOCATION: CHI Health Rehabilitation Care Florence / 8405 N. 30th St. / Omaha, NE

“When Stormberg arrived in Omaha she did not have a design planned for the wall. She spent time learning about Florence during meetings with community members. She researched, hanging out at Harold’s and driving around the neighborhood. She created an image collaboratively with the members of the Florence community...The community came out one Saturday to fill in large spots with colors. Children and adults picked up brushes and helped out. About 30 people came to help with the mural.”

By Andrea Kszystyniak / World-Herald staff writer Aug 6, 2016

https://www.omaha.com/news/metro/new-mural-at-corner-of-th-and-ohio-streets-captures/article_a3997466-3a2e-52a3-ba8f-6fa80f5cf74c.html



Photos by Betni Kalk



Omaha Conservatory of Music / Omaha, NE

LEAD ARTIST: Betni Kalk
 DESIGNED BY: Betni with group of five OCM high school students
 PAINTED BY: 10+ middle school and high school students of OCM, Betni Kalk, Weston Thomson
 LOCATION: 27023 Cass St. / Omaha, NE

The students drew their favorite instruments which were scanned and incorporated into a digital design. OCM's logo included a leaf which implies growth and students liked the ideas of idea of music flowing and overlapping which Betni created using patterned lines. Colors came from OCM's branding.

Photo by Betni Kalk



Heart Ministry - Former Food Pantry

LEAD ARTIST: Betni Kalk
 DESIGNED & PAINTED BY: Betni & group of three high school students from Kent Bellows Program
 LOCATION: 2222 Binney Street / Omaha, NE

The students individually drew different types of food and the text. The drawings were scanned and incorporated into a digital design. The Heart Ministry logo was placed in the background.

Photo by Betni Kalk





Former Building of Union for Contemporary Art

LEAD ARTIST: Alicia Reyes Mcnamara, Typography by Betni Kalk
 DESIGNED/PAINTED BY: Alicia Reyes Mcnamara & Betni Kalk
 LOCATION: Burdette and 24th in Omaha, NE

Alicia Reyes Mcnamara designed and painted the patterns and figures in consultation with the neighborhood. Betni Kalk designed and painted the text and assisted with pattern painting.



Photos by Betni Kalk



Zajednica - The South Omaha Croatian's Community Mural

LEAD ARTISTS: Richard Harrison & Rebecca Van Ornam of A Midsummer Mural
 PAINTED BY: Community Members and A Midsummer Mural's Team
 LOCATION: Bere's Hall at 36th and W in South Omaha

"The Croatian mural was the fifth official public artwork of the South Omaha Mural Project – a series of ten community-based murals depicting the culture, history, and ethnic heritage of groups that settled these tightly clustered neighborhoods. We engaged communities to share their memories, concerns and hopes to shape a place-making, community-built monument to their past and ongoing vibrant culture...The design process consisted of six community meetings and three design workshops – discussion and artistic exercises regarding, in this case, the identity, culture, and heritage of South Omaha's Croatian community. The artists lead community paint days."

<https://www.amidsummersmural.com/south-omaha-mural-project/croatian-mural-project/>



Photos provided by A Midsummer Mural Team



The Plaza De La Raza Mural Project

LEAD ARTISTS: Hugo Zamorano of A Midsummer Mural
 PAINTED BY: A Midsummer Mural's Team
 LOCATION: Kubat Pharmacy building at 2401 South 24th Street / Omaha NE

This is a "series of four murals sharing the stories of people of Mexican, Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Honduran heritage living in South Omaha." The murals are on walls that border the Plaza de la Raza, at the heart of South Omaha's Cinco De Mayo celebration.

<https://www.amidsummersmural.com/south-omaha-mural-project/the-plaza-de-la-raza-mural-project>



Photo provided by A Midsummer Mural Team



13th Street Bohemian Mural

LEAD ARTISTS: Rebecca Harrison, Assisted by Richard Harrison, Jeremiah Neal & Gerardo Vazaquez
 LOCATION: 13th and William on the back of the Konig Dune Law Firm / Omaha, NE

"The mural is a compilation of people, places, memories, and dreams that we have gathered from the neighborhood. We met with interested community members at four different meetings held at the Bohemian Café, the Donut Stop, and Rebel Interactive. During these meetings, attendees were asked to brainstorm elements of the neighborhood they are proud of and identify areas where they would like to see change. From these meetings we came up with a design that includes many of the stories and dreams that we had the pleasure of listening to."

<https://www.amidsummersmural.com/bohemian-mural/>

Photo provided by A Midsummer Mural Team

COMMUNITY PLANNING MEETINGS

CHOOSING THE ARTIST

Choosing the right artist for your mural project is one of the most important steps of the process. One factor that needs to be determined by the community right away is to decide whether or not they prefer someone from their own community to be the chosen artist. You might also consider hiring an artist from outside your community if they will work with your youth. You might also hire a lead artist from outside the community while also hiring assistant artists from within the community.

Your budget might also determine which artist is chosen. Perhaps you want to give a young artist from your own community a chance even if they've not painted a mural before? Perhaps someone in the community already knows a muralist? Depending on the size of the community that you live in, sometimes it could be easy to find an experienced community-artist and sometimes it could be difficult. Make sure that you allow time in the whole time-line to find the right artist for your intentions.

ARTIST CALLS - RFQ vs RFP

If you don't already have an artist in mind, you could send out a call for interested artists which is either an RFQ (request for qualifications) or an RFP (request for proposals). You can find an example of these on communitymurals.info as well as doing a search on your favorite search engine.

The limitation for an RFP is that you may get fewer responses since there is no stipend for the work upfront. It also means you will need to have an accurate list of what the community has decided to include for subject matter and style preferences in the RFQ to get relevant designs.

For an RFQ, you ask the applicants to provide images of previous mural. In addition to requesting to see images of past work, you can also require

them to write about why they wish to be a part of your project. You can also specify your preference for where the artist is from - perhaps they already live in your community or perhaps it is an artist who has moved but is willing to come back for the mural? Keep in mind that bringing an artist back to your community might require paying for travel.

In addition to posting your RFQ to your social media accounts, community art centers and arts organizations are a good place to send the word out to artists. You could also post it in your local magazines and newspapers, colleges and galleries. For RFQs, allow a long enough period of time for artists to respond, one to two months is a good amount a time. A multi-pronged approach is the best to get a good number of applications from artists.

COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

Some colleges and universities have service-learning components in their curriculum so if you have a small budget, you may want to consider contacting them and perhaps a design or art class can help. While a design student might not have experience in painting, if your community intends on painting, this could be a great solution for a good design. This method requires contacting faculty at least a semester in advance. A few art schools also have community based programs.

STYLE OF ARTIST

Some artists are unwilling or unable to change their style so be mindful of whom you choose for the project. For example, if you wish for the community to be painted by community members or all ages and abilities, this type of mural requires simplicity and clarity and the design is essentially a giant fillable coloring book page. This means that the design is placed on the wall usually in outline form and a printed color guide has been given to community members. This allows community members of all ages and abilities to paint on during community paint days. Make sure that the artist you choose understands this before they begin the design

COMMUNITY DESIGN MEETINGS

After the community has had multiple planning meetings to brainstorm about subject matter and have chosen an artist or team or artists for their murals, its time for the design meetings. The design process also requires multiple community meetings.

Your group has made some decisions about the mural in the planning meetings, so it is time to present all your ideas to the artist(s). Once the artist understands that the community wants for the their mural, the artist might offer you advice on appropriate changes.

Invite the public to these meetings. Individuals who didn't come to the planning meetings may still come to the design meetings. You can also involve the community via social media by having people vote on design and color options.

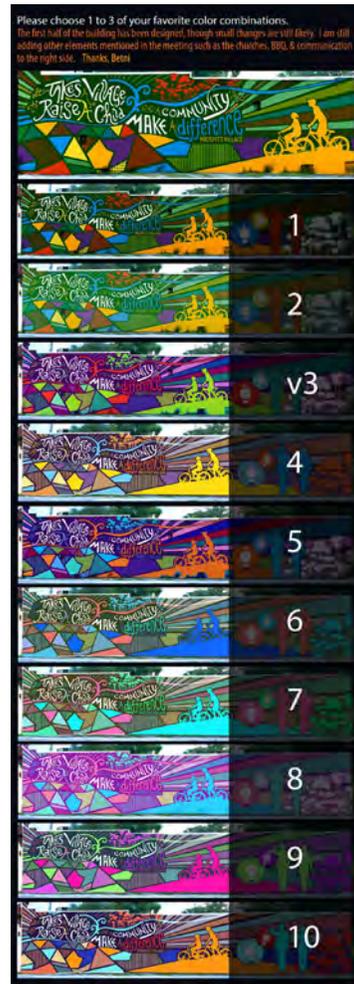
The group will meet with the artist/designer multiple times:

MEETINGS

1. Meet the artist and give them direction on the mural design that includes details about the wall, timeline, type of collaboration, desired subject matter, aesthetic/style and colors
2. Artist shows design(s), community gives feedback
3. Artist shows final design(s) again, community gives further feedback
4. Final review



Photo by Betni Kalk



Color Options - Voted on via Facebook



Photo provided by A Midsummer Mural Team

PUT THE DESIGN ON THE WALL

The artist you choose will likely have a preferred transfer method. When using projectors, this allows for the community to help transfer the design onto the wall. Unless using a projector, many artists will combine multiple methods to get their designs to the wall.

- Projector (either digital or transparency)
- Gridding
- Stencils
- Pouncing
- By Hand (with chalk or water-washable pencils)

PROJECTORS

Using a projector is the easiest method of getting a design onto a wall. Some artists use a digital projector and others will use a transparency projector. However, when the mural is in an alley or hallway without enough space to project, then another method will have to be used.



Projecting Design
Photo by Betni Kalk

GRIDDING

This is an old but reliable technique for enlarging a design or drawing. The artist creates a grid of squares on the design and a corresponding grid of squares on the wall. The grid on the design can be drawn on an acetate or tracing paper overlay to avoid damaging the original drawing. After priming the wall, a grid is created using a chalk line or Stabilo pencils with levels. By copying onto the wall what is in each square of the design, the artist can begin to reconstruct the mural design accurately at a large scale. The artist first draws the basic outlines of your mural first, adding details later because its important to establish the basic design first to check for the correct proportions. It helps to first draw with vine charcoal or washable pencils. Use a wet rag as an eraser and then to paint in the drawing as each section is completed and judged as accurate.

STENCILS

Artists transfers their drawing to a thin sheet of cardboard, plastic, or metal. They then cut their images or text out of their chosen material. The stencil is taped or stuck to the wall with temporary spray glue. Then paint is either brushed or spray painted through the open areas of the stencil.



Nik Winter-Simat with Stencil
Photo by Betni Kalk

POUNCING

Pouncing is the technique Michelangelo used to transfer his full-scale drawings onto the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Its another type of stencil that is used for detail. The first step is for the artist to make large drawings to scale on paper. Holes are punched through the paper at frequent intervals along the drawing, usually with a tool that rolls with spikes. This punched paper outline is then taped to the wall and a charcoal or chalk powder is “pounced” over the holes, forcing the powder through the holes onto the wall. When you remove the paper from the wall you should be left with a series of small dots following the lines of the original drawing which can then be used as guidelines for the painting. Then the artist makes the basic lines more permanent with thin lines paint.

BY HAND

If the design is simple, it is possible to freehand the design. Artists usually lightly sketch the design with chalk, vine charcoal or washable pencils because revisions are easy with water and a rag. Once the design is correctly on the wall, they will go over with a more permanent mark or paint lines. If there are straight lines in the design, artists will use straight edges, levels and tape to make the lines.

COMMUNITY PAINT DAYS



Photo by A Midsummer Mural's team

Community paint days allow more people to participate in the mural process. After you choose your ideal painting days, have some back-up dates called “rain days” in case the weather doesn’t allow for painting. Depending on the size of the mural, you might need more than one paint day.



Design Transfer Event / Photo by Betni Kalk

You can also do a mural drawing day or evening. Depending on how the design is placed on the wall, if the design is to be projected at night - you can also have an evening for the drawing. Generally this will take a few hours and it is ideal for students in grade 3 and up to help.



Paint & Brushes Station / Photo by A Midsummer Mural's team



Photo by A Midsummer Mural's team



Photo by A Midsummer Mural's team

The mural group members in charge of the paint day can help make the day go smoothly by providing the following in addition to the regular supplies listed on the “Mural Supplies” page. Many of these items could be borrowed from community members to make this a successful day.

PAINT DAY SUPPLY LIST

- Tent for cover from the sun
- Folding chairs to put under and around the tent
- Folding tables for snacks and water
- Extra Folding tables to place the paints and brushes
- Many printouts of the design with the correct colors for reference
- Extra brushes of differing sizes
- Two people (more is better) to help community members get the paint and brushes they need and then also to wash out brushes
- Extra Buckets for washing out brushes
- Extra containers with lids for smaller amounts of paint
- Snacks
- Water
- Ice and Cooler for water
- Extra Drop cloths
- Extra Ladders and/or scaffolding (*don't allow children to climb the ladders or scaffolding to avoid injury*)

What community members should wear/bring:

- Wear old clothes and/or Painting aprons
- Wear comfortable shoes
- Rubber or latex gloves if you want to keep your hands clean
- Hat (*one that protects your neck and face is best*)
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Water to drink
- Snacks
- Something to kneel and sit on such as cardboard, towel, or garden kneeling pad

MURAL PAINTING SUPPLIES

This is a basic list of supplies needed for the mural. An additional list specific to community paint days is also here. There is some overlap on those lists as you will need most of these items on Community Paint Days.

- Paints
- Stirring sticks
- Paint can openers
- Empty containers with lids or use plastic wrap on cups for smaller amounts of paint
- Regular Rollers for background or large areas
- Small rollers (not foam) for small simple areas
- Extension handles for your rollers
- Good Brushes – its worth it to buy good brushes – these can last
- Rags and/or paper towels
- Drop cloths
- Yardsticks or measuring tape
- Painters tape
- Brooms (to sweep wall just prior to painting after wall has been prepared/fixed/cleaned)
- Eye protection (goggles)
- Ladders/scaffolding/lift
- Milk crates or other sturdy boxes to store paint cans
- Printouts of the design with the correct colors for reference
- Buckets to hold water for cleaning brushes
- Access to Water - (if there is no water hose nearby, be prepared to bring water in buckets with you for washing brushes)
- Something to kneel and sit on such as cardboard, towel, or garden kneeling pad

ALSO MAYBE

- For small jobs, painting palettes or trays for mixing colors
- Paint Sprayer for extremely large areas (only for huge murals)
- Used/Old brushes for textures

TIME TO CELEBRATE YOUR MURAL!



Zajednica - Croatian's Community Mural Celebration / Photo provided by A Midsummer Mural Team

Schedule a day to celebrate your new mural!

Invite the whole neighborhood, the volunteers and the artists.