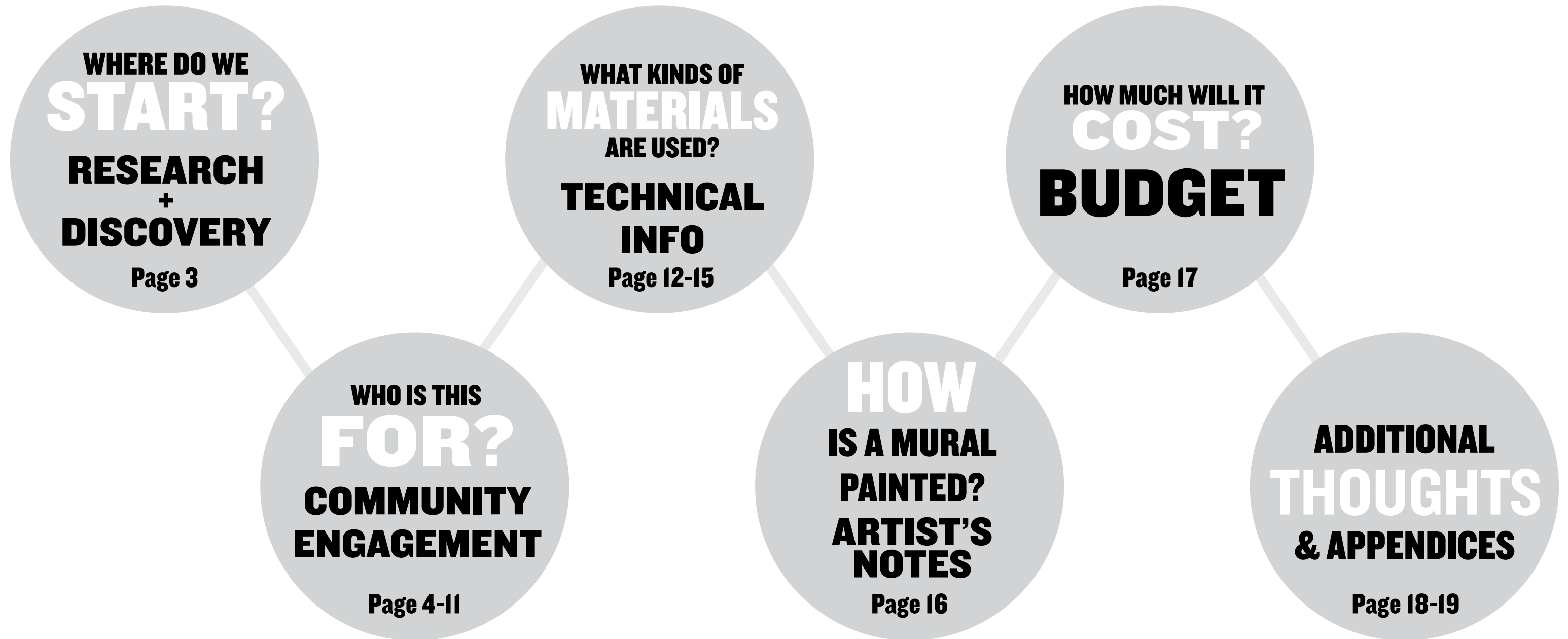


**STARTING A
COMMUNITY MURAL
PROJECT IN CALGARY:
A GUIDE FOR
COMMUNITIES & ARTISTS**

COMMUNITY MURAL GUIDE: TABLE OF CONTENTS



COMMUNITY MURAL GUIDE: RESEARCH & DISCOVERY WHERE DO WE START?



WHAT ARE THE GOALS?

Defining clear goals and having everyone involved on the same page about what defines a successful mural outcome is key. Often a major goal is adding beauty to a space or neighbourhood, but other goals may include telling a story, sharing skills or gaining experience, covering over an eyesore, creating a collaborative activity to bring community members together, celebrating a group or individual, or simply expressing a unique creative vision to the world.

WHAT DO WE NEED?

Part of the success of community murals lies in relationships - choosing stakeholders and collaborators that are a good fit for one another is valuable. The main stakeholders are generally the community, the artist(s) and the mural site owner. Other stakeholders may include grant funders, municipalities, architects, tenants, communities or individuals being represented, and more.

COMMUNITY

ARTIST(S)

MURAL SITE

COMMUNITY MURAL GUIDE:

RESEARCH & DISCOVERY

WHERE WILL THE ART LIVE?



LOCATION

Some mural projects will need to find a wall or walls - others will have some in mind from the start. If you're looking for walls, it's usually best to connect directly with the property owner of a prospective building, as they will be the final decision maker.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS

- What are the sightlines for the mural? How far will people be able to see it from? At what distance will the mural be best seen from?
- How much prep does the wall need before art can be painted?
- How much prep is required to protect the surrounding space from paint?
- How difficult is it to access the wall to paint it? Will you require a ladder, lift, or scaffolding?
- Can this site accommodate the intended lifespan of the mural?

TEMPORARY MURALS

If you can't find a wall that's a great fit for your mural, another option is to build a wall. Panels can be painted and then installed, or installed and then painted once on the wooden easel. This wooden easel can be freestanding or attached temporarily to another structure like a fence or building.

*** Please See Appendix A for a diagram of a temporary mural wall you can build***

COMMUNITY MURAL GUIDE:

RESEARCH & DISCOVERY

WHO ARE THE ARTISTS ON THIS PROJECT?



LEAD ARTIST / CONSULTANT

It's advisable to work with or at least consult with an artist experienced in muralism, especially for murals larger than 10'x 10'. All artists should be compensated for their time and expertise. Consider hiring a Lead Artist from within the community.

COLLABORATION

Collaborations between artists and communities can work in many different ways - consider which will be the best fit for all involved. It's key to share values and expectations upfront at the beginning of a project. Some of the different ways a collaborative community mural can work include:

- Mural is co-designed by lead artist & community, then painted by artist OR
- Lead Artist is hired to research, design, and paint a mural, design reviewed and approved by community representatives OR
- Mentorship: Lead Artist mentors a team of community members to collaboratively paint a mural (design should consider abilities of contributing members) OR
- Community comes up with a mural concept, hires Lead Artist to paint it (with the understanding the artist may need to adapt the design in order to paint it if they have not been consulted beforehand) OR
- Community consults with artist, who provides instruction and advice for community members to paint the artwork themselves

COMMUNITY MURAL GUIDE:

RESEARCH & DISCOVERY

WHO REPRESENTS THE COMMUNITY FOR THIS PROJECT?



COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

It's helpful to have one or two people who are the main points of contact between the artist, the community, and any other stakeholders (examples of other potential stakeholders: building owner, tenants, architect, municipality)

DECISION MAKING

Expectations around how decision making on behalf of the community is done should be made clear up front. Setting meetings with clear outcomes and deadlines for decisions can help keep creative projects on track.

ENGAGEMENT

There are many ways to engage community members without having 'too many cooks in the kitchen'. The next section will offer some thoughts around community engagement.

AGREEMENTS

It's helpful to have this arrangement down in writing. Decide who owns the physical mural, copyrights to the image, and who is responsible for any maintenance over the lifespan. Private property may change ownership over time - consider how this may affect the mural.

COMMUNITY MURAL GUIDE:

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WHO IS THE ARTWORK FOR?



WHO DOES THIS ART SERVE?

- Which communities is this artwork intended to serve? (The neighbourhood it's in is important, but the artwork may also serve communities united by factors other than location)
- Is there a specific message being communicated by the mural? If so, who will be seen as the author of this message, and who is intended to receive it?
- Is the main goal of a project to beautify a community space to a professional standard? Or to share skills and provide a fun and meaningful activity? Or to tell a story, send a message, identify a place? It will often be a combination of many goals, but choosing priorities is important in helping a project stay focused and keeping everyone on the same page.

WHY?

- One question that should be answered by each stakeholder early in the process is why they are taking part and what an ideal outcome would look like for them. Answers are shared - this makes it easier to help achieve each other's goal and understand perspectives.

REPRESENTATION

- Are there specific people or communities being represented in the artwork? When will people or members from that group be informed about the project? When will they have opportunity for input during the process?

COMMUNITY MURAL GUIDE:

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?



IN GENERAL

Community engagement is always about building relationships and connecting first as humans.

WORKSHOPS

- Workshops often benefit from a component of skill-sharing, where attendees walk away with new skills, techniques, or knowledge
- This can be an opportunity to share/explain a mural concept and offer space for input

RESEARCH MEETINGS

- Before a concept is formed, artists and community representatives connect to brainstorm project goals, values, possibilities and build on relationships

SURVEYS

- Surveys can be an efficient way to reach a large group of people and ask for feedback
- Surveys can be on paper or online, and should be short and easy to understand

MENTORSHIP

- Intensive skill-sharing where Lead Artist guides smaller, dedicated group of people to design and paint artwork. Helps build the next generation of mural artists within a community

PRESENTATION / Q&A

- Artist can be invited to share a portfolio, process plan, moodboard or sketch
- Community can explore concept and offer feedback through Q&A

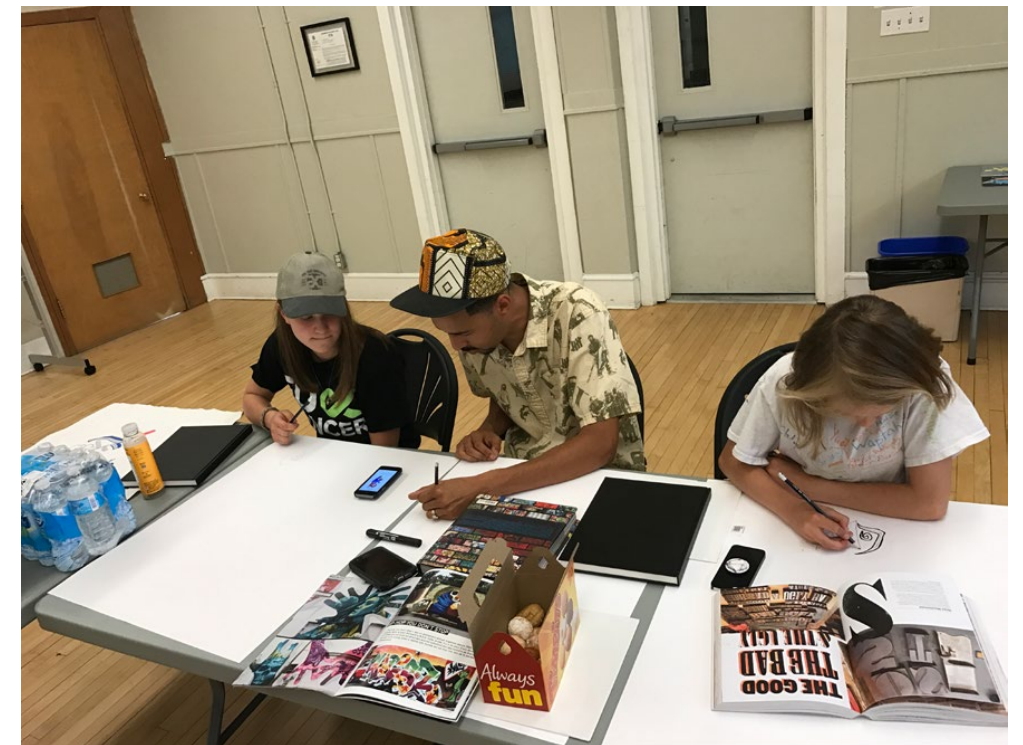
EMBEDDING

- The artist may spend time living, observing and/or studying within the community, and make a record of their research

COMMUNITY MURAL GUIDE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CASE STUDY | 14TH STREET TUNNEL MURAL

WHAT MIGHT
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT
LOOK LIKE?

WORKSHOP + MENTORSHIP



COMMUNITY MURAL GUIDE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CASE STUDY | 10TH STREET TUNNEL MURAL

WHAT MIGHT
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT
LOOK LIKE?

PRESENTATION / Q&A + SURVEY / EMBEDDING



CONFEDERATION PARK - 10 st Mural COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSION

Please answer using words or pictures. Feel free to use the back for more room!

What is your favourite thing to find/see in Confederation Park?

What is one thing that would shock/suprise/delight you to find here?

What do you hope to find growing here in the future?

STREET ART PROGRAM: 10th Street Tunnel Mural Community Engagement Results

13
Surveys answered by engagement attendees, along with many stories shared in person and via email

Answers:
What is your favourite thing to find/see in the park?

- Pussy Willows
- Big Trees
- Creeks
- Rocks
- Playfort / Cannon
- Trees
- Bridges
- Springs
- Shiny Hockey!
- Darkhills along creek
- Children learning to ride bikes
- Bird Watchers
- Duck pond (7 goings this year)
- View from community centre
- The activity / motion
- Nature
- People watching
- Kids playing
- People enjoying scenery
- Animals living peacefully
- The possibility of movement
- Skaters on rink
- Happy couples
- Cute dogs
- Birds (geese, ducks)

Answers:
What is one thing that would shock/suprise/delight you to find there?

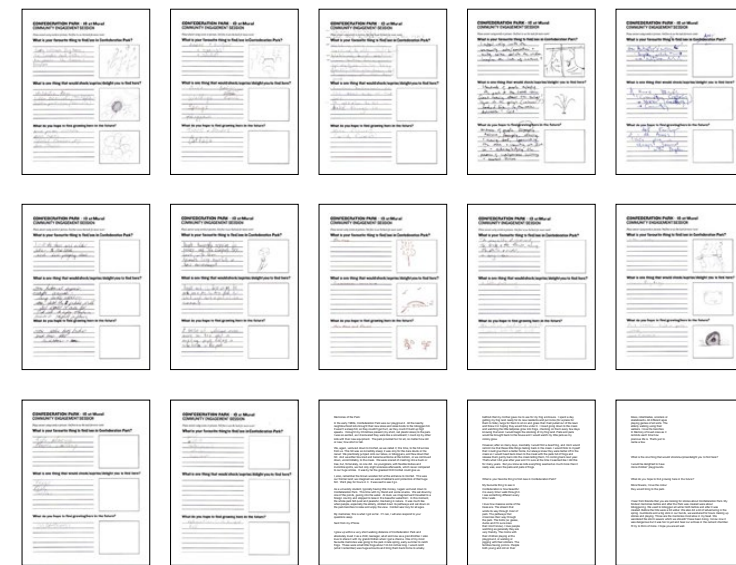
- Chinchilla
- Frogs (big frogs)
- Hidden Treasures
- Hidden Pathways
- Owls
- Weddings
- Springs
- Toboggans
- Another bathroom (west side of park)
- A gazebo to sit in
- Hundreds of people enjoying the park
- A huge Picnic party
- Historical surprises
- Maybe animals
- Tribute to Calgary performers
- The wildlife - native birds
- Fish
- Turtles
- More playgrounds

Answers:
What do you hope to find growing here in the future?

- More Pussy Willows
- More Creeks
- Colourful Flowers
- Big Sunflowers
- Trees & flowers
- Cattails
- More wild flowers
- People enjoying nature, sunning, relaxing, appreciating where we live, acknowledging indigenous history & current issues
- Families of all ages
- Native berry bushes (saskatoons?)
- A sense of welcome

Additional Notes & Suggestions:

- Hares
- Voles
- Ducks
- Flickers
- Owls
- Redwing Blackbirds
- Yellowwing Blackbirds
- Voyageur Canoe
- Rocks painted to look like ladybugs
- Rocks in the creek had names (Treasure Island)
- About a dozen springs in the park right now
- Light reflecting off of snow in the evening
- Many good memories tobogganing



Images courtesy of AJA Loudon Studios LTD.

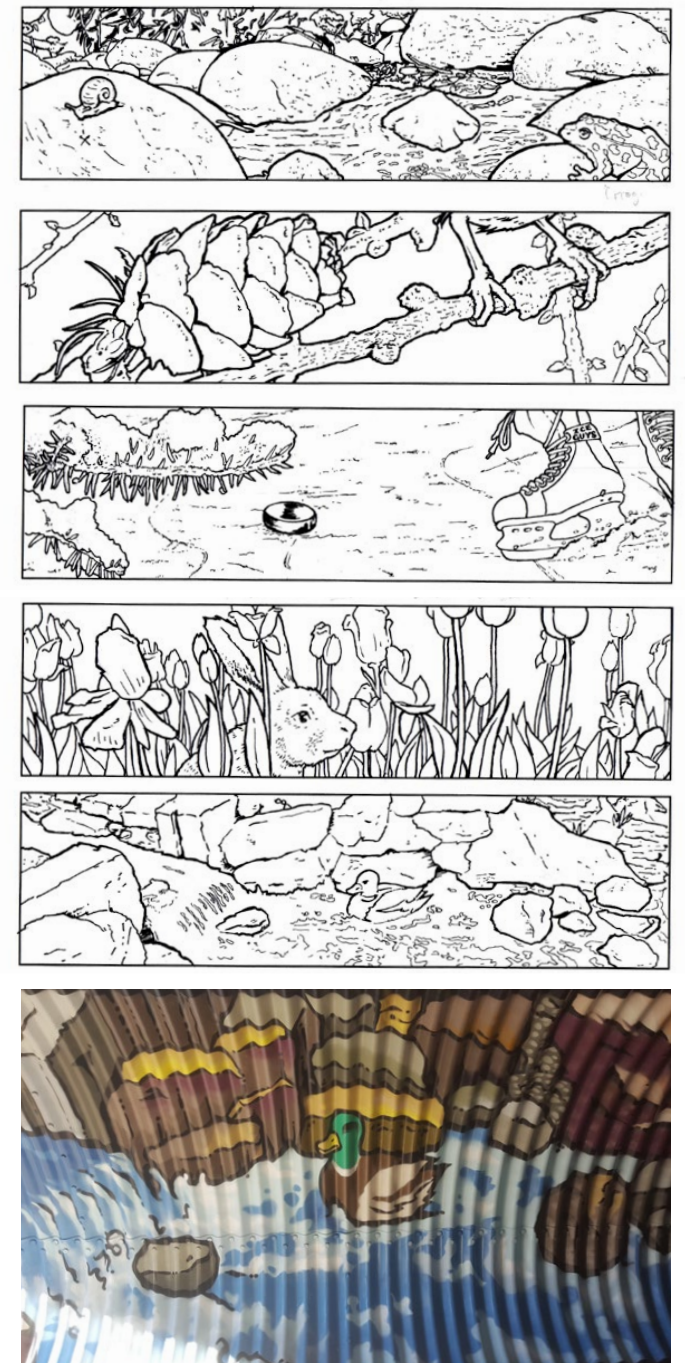
STREET ART PROGRAM: 10th Street Tunnel Mural Reference photo samples (APRIL)

300+
Reference photographs taken over multiple site visits during April, May and June of 2017.



STREET ART PROGRAM: 10th Street Tunnel Mural Reference photo samples (MAY)

300+
Reference photographs taken over multiple site visits during April, May and June of 2017.



After the initial Research Meeting to which community members from the area near the mural were invited, a survey was shared. Results were recorded and organized, then shared back.

The Lead Artist spent time through multiple seasons documenting the change in flora and fauna in Confederation Park (the site of the final mural)

Mural design was based on research & engagement combined with the Lead Artist's vision.

COMMUNITY MURAL GUIDE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CASE STUDY | CALGARY DOWNTOWN MOSQUE (IISC) + CONTAINR YARD

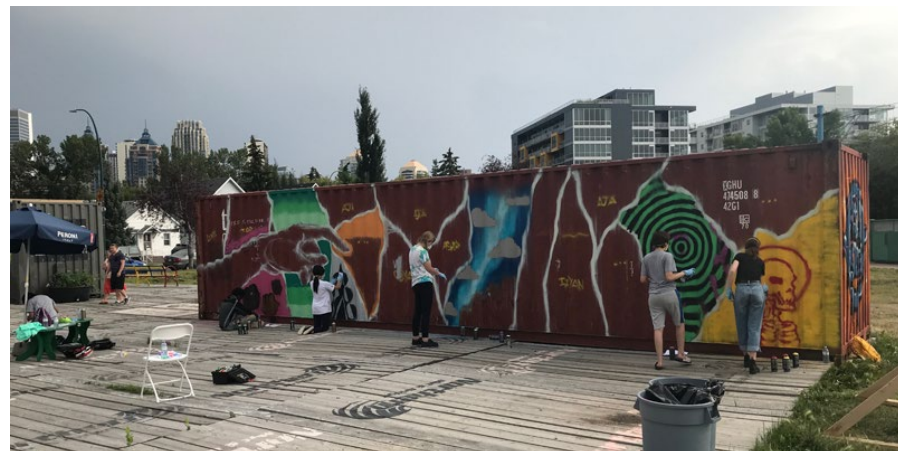
WHAT MIGHT
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT
LOOK LIKE?

RESEARCH MEETINGS + MENTORSHIP

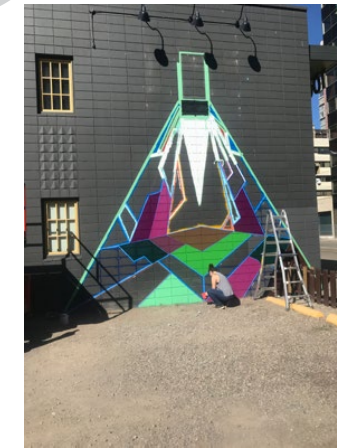
Often project will have multiple goals and several stakeholders. If not all of the key goals are able to be aligned in a single piece of artwork, creating multiple pieces can be a solution.

For this project, the Lead Artist mentored a group of youth through the process of co-designing and collaboratively creating two public art murals in different parts of downtown Calgary. The first mural was at ContainR Yard (near Sunnyside Station), and was co-designed and collaboratively painted, created an opportunity for the mentees to learn the materials and techniques. The second mural was painted at Calgary Downtown Mosque. The artist team worked alongside Blackfoot Elder Sheldon Firstrider and Imam Abdullah Barahim who acted as community representatives and were consulted with extensively on the content of the mural.

Once the mural was completed, the community of animators and programmers in Calgary was engaged with, and an Augmented Reality app was created for the mural - if you view the mural through the free app on your phone, animations created by local youth and pro animators in response to the mural will appear, bringing the mural to life in a new way and offering another element of connection.



Images courtesy of AJA Loudon Studios LTD.



Images courtesy of AJA Loudon Studios LTD.

COMMUNITY MURAL GUIDE:

TECHNICAL INFO

WHAT TYPE OF PAINT IS USED?



Product application guidelines should be researched and followed where applicable. Manufacturers often have technical advisors who can help advise if questions arise.

IN GENERAL

Depend on the knowledge and experience of your lead artist or consultant.

ACRYLIC 'HOUSE PAINT'

- This is cost effective for covering large areas
- Colours can be custom-mixed to match or chosen from a manufacturer's palette
- Exterior Paint is used for outdoor murals
- Can be rolled, sprayed, or brushed on

ACRYLIC/OIL PAINT

- Due to cost, acrylic paint sold in tubes is only suitable for smaller murals (< 10ft x 10ft)
- Oil paint should only be layered over acrylic (acrylic paint will not stick well over oil paint)

OTHER MEDIA

- Media like watercolour, gouache, student-grade acrylic, wax pencils, and ink markers are generally not suited for outdoor murals

SPRAYPAINT (CANS)

- Ideally Artists' grade
- Acrylic spraypaint can be layered with other acrylic paint
- PPE required

PRIMING

- Most exterior walls should be cleaned and primed before being painted. Previously unpainted surfaces should be primed with a surface-specific product
- Primer can be brushed, rolled or sprayed on

COMMUNITY MURAL GUIDE:

TECHNICAL INFO

WHAT TOOLS ARE COMMON?



Product application guidelines should be researched and followed where applicable. Manufacturers often have technical advisors who can help advise if questions arise.

IN GENERAL

Depend on the knowledge and experience of your lead artist or consultant.

BRUSHES/ROLLERS

- Should be purchased based on the surface or intended effect
- Vary in quality & purpose

LIFTS

- Should only be used by someone with training
- Benefits include ability to move it away from the wall easily to check or record process
- Can be expensive, require gasoline or power

LADDERS

- Very cost effective
- Can be grueling to paint a large or tall mural from a ladder

PAINT SPRAYERS

- Best used by someone with training
- Apply paint quickly on variety of surfaces
- May require a compressor, power source

SCAFFOLDING

- Cost effective way to reach high up on a wall
- Safety training recommended
- PPE recommended

PPE

- Varies based on project, may include:
- Fall-arrest harness
- Respirator (spraying paint)
- Gloves/skin protection

COMMUNITY MURAL GUIDE:

TECHNICAL INFO

HOW DO I PREPARE THE SURFACE?



TIP: Consider the costs of purchasing blank panels, prepping them (cutting, priming & sanding), painting and storing them in a safe place, packing them for safe transport to mural site, transporting them, and installing them, compared to the costs of painting the mural directly to the surface, before making a decision.

IN GENERAL

Make sure paint will stick to the mural surface for the intended lifespan. Often, if the mural wall is unsuitable for **direct-to-surface** painting, or if the artist(s) prefers to work in-studio, the mural can be **painted on durable panels**, and installed to the final surface later. Examples below.

DIRECT-TO-SURFACE vs **PAINTING ON PANELS**

Cost effective, efficient, requires artist(s) to work on-site for entire mural.

Panels can be expensive, can be a lot of work to install, but allows artists to work in studio.

PAINTED SURFACES

- If existing paint in good condition, pressure wash wall, allow to dry, start mural
- If existing paint is flaking at all, entire surface should be abraded (scraped or sandblasted) and re-primed

EXTERIOR GRADE WOOD

- MDO (medium density overlay) is a plywood with a smooth surface suitable for painting
- Cost effective, weather resistant
- Can be cut by hand, sand before priming

UNPAINTED SURFACES

- Should be cleaned, primed before painting
- Surfaces like unprimed cinderblock may require block filler before priming
- Any loose substrate removed before priming

ALUMINUM COMPOSITE

- Many brands available (Dibond, Alucobond...)
- Can be cut by hand, easier to cut by CNC
- 6mm thick version is more durable than 3mm
- Sand surface before priming

COMMUNITY MURAL GUIDE:

TECHNICAL INFO

HOW DO I PROTECT THE ARTWORK?



IN GENERAL

Assess risks for damage to the artwork, and plan accordingly. Artwork can be damaged through environmental conditions like sunlight, road salt, precipitation, vandalism, or deterioration of the substrate it is painted on. Coatings can be applied and other considerations made to protect the work.

PLACEMENT

- Consider factors like road salt, snow buildup, rain runoff, gravel/dirt spray from traffic, plan location and position of mural accordingly

STRUCTURAL

- A drip cap may be installed on the top edge of a mural, prevent water running down the face
- Washers may be used to offset panels from a substrate, allowing water to run behind

ISOLATION COAT

- Used to isolate the artwork from the protective coatings
- GAC100 is often used for this

SACRIFICIAL COAT

- A coat that protects the artwork, but must be removed and re-applied if any damage occurs

NON-SACRIFICIAL COAT

- Permanent coat, meaning the mural can't be replaced or updated easily
- Protects the artwork from abrasion, vandalism, can be pressure washed

CLEANING

- Ideally mural should be designed and placed so that cleaning is not required often, if at all, unless coating/mural is damaged
- While cleaning, only use warm water with a small amount of soap.

COMMUNITY MURAL GUIDE:

ARTIST'S NOTES

HOW IS A MURAL PAINTED?



IN GENERAL

Depend on the knowledge and experience of your lead artist or consultant.

1. SKETCH

- Often a design is produced before the mural is painted for approval and planning purposes
- May be an exact diagram, or a rough sketch

2. TRANSFER

- Sketch is scaled up, transferred to the surface
- Many ways to do this, including freedrawing, pouncing, using a grid, or projecting

3. BLOCKING IN

- Often the main colours are applied next, filling in the body of the sketch
- This requires attention, but potentially less experience or skill than the next steps

4. DETAILING

- The details are added to finish the mural
- Often the most time consuming part of a mural painting process, requires expertise

5. FINISH

- Applying any final protective coatings
- This can include UV protection or protection from other physical damage

6. DOCUMENTATION

- The mural should be photographed in progress and soon after being finished to enable touchups or repairs to match original creative intent
- Paint chips and colour names / recipes should be recorded where possible

COMMUNITY MURAL GUIDE:

BUDGET

HOW MUCH DOES A MURAL COST?



IN GENERAL

Asking how much art costs is similar to asking how much a car or house costs - it can vary a lot based on your values and priorities. Depend on the knowledge and experience of your lead artist or consultant. CARFAC fees can be a helpful place to start, but sometimes represent a minimum pay rate. Often budgets will be presented in a range, unpredictable factors like weather can play a role in final costs.

ARTIST FEES

- All artists should be compensated for each stage of the process - expertise is required for initial consultations, to produce a sketch, conduct engagement, & paint a mural
- Rate of compensation should be agreed on with the artist - this may be a rate based on time, a flat fee, or another method
- Travel and accommodation costs should be covered for the artist if necessary

ACCESS / PREP

- Costs to prep a wall should be considered
- Rental costs for lifts, scaffolds, paint sprayers, or other equipment can be found online or by calling rental companies

MATERIAL COSTS

- Vary based on quality of materials used and how they are applied to the surface
- One can of spraypaint will cover up to 25ft² (about 5'x5')
- One gallon of latex will cover up to 400ft² (about 20'x20')
- Varnish/finishing costs vary based on needs
- Sundries and safety tool costs (prefilters for masks, roller sleeves, etc.)

OTHER

- A contingency budget of 5% is usually included to cover unforeseen challenges
- Every project is different, so other costs may be involved

COMMUNITY MURAL GUIDE: ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS



IN GENERAL

Muralism is an incredibly powerful artform. It can transform the feeling of a place - art in public places can make a space feel more or less welcoming, it can leave an audience more informed or inspired, or introduce a new perspective or point of view. There's a responsibility on the part of all muralists to consider how their work will transform the space around it for others.

CHALLENGES

- One challenge with muralism is finding artists with skill and experience - it's an expensive artform, and skills from other media don't always transfer over easily - mentorship is so valuable to keep skills local!
- No one piece of art is universally loved - murals are no different. Consultation is key, but there will always be both people who enjoy and people who dislike any art piece.

FREEWALLS

- Freewalls are spaces where anyone can practice large scale artwork which can be seen by the public
- Work on freewalls is temporary and transient, but provides a place for practicing skill and creative expression
- These are highly recommended for building skills within a local community, but can require some maintenance or management

APPENDIX A: TEMPORARY MURAL WALL BUILD DIAGRAM



(6) 96" x 2x4s



(10) 60" x 2x4s



(4) 4' x 8' x 0.375" Sign Panel (smooth side out)
double primed and sanded for a smooth surface

