



Participatory Murals

How to Organize Paint-by-Numbers Murals
That Your Community Can Create





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Public art brings many benefits. It can make a place attractive and beautiful; it can shape a sense of local identity—or, in the words of community planner Jeremy Liu, it can make “community identity, visions, hopes, values, and practices ‘legible’ by representing them visibly” (2016, p.19); it can help attract businesses, which often place significant weight on the appearance of the locations they lease, and which consider public art a positive factor (Roberts & Marsh, 1995); and it can send a message of care and attention, potentially reducing crime rates (Crowe, 2000).

Participatory public art—art that involves community members in the process of making it—brings even more benefits. By offering community members the chance to shape their own environment, participatory public art can be more equitable than projects brought into a community from the outside, and community members’ involvement in making the art can convey a sense of pride and ownership (López de León, 2016). In an additional benefit, the process of creating participatory public art can build “tangible networks and interpersonal links, promoting social development and cohesion” (Hall and Robertson, 2001, p.10). By bringing community members together to physically create artwork, for instance, participatory murals strengthen connections within the community through the process of coming together to create the murals, as well as through the identities and values expressed in the finished piece.

This booklet can help you organize a particularly accessible type of participatory public art, a paint-by-numbers mural, that people from all different backgrounds, ages, and artistic abilities can help create. Just like a paint-by-numbers coloring book, a paint-by-numbers mural is based on an outline drawing with color-coded numbers in each section of the outline. Figure 1 shows a mural outline designed in a paint-by-numbers style, Figure 2 shows the same design colored in, and Figure 3 shows the completed mural (modified from the initial drafts to include wildlife).



Figure 1. Draft Mural Outline for “By the Dam,” by Henry Hartig and Raquel Madrigal. ©Copyright 2019 Henry Hartig and Raquel Madrigal. Used with permission.

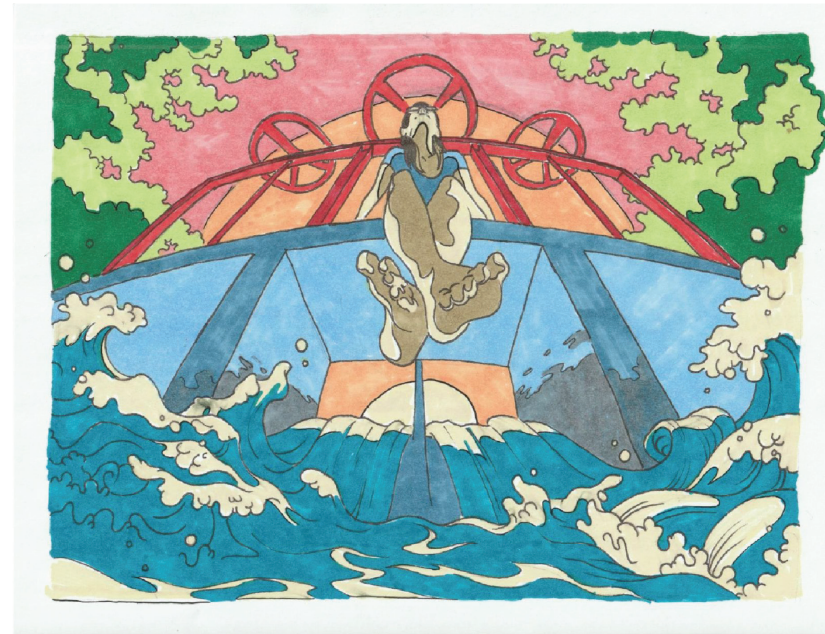


Figure 2. Colored Draft Mural Outline for “By the Dam,” by Henry Hartig and Raquel Madrigal. ©Copyright 2019 Henry Hartig and Raquel Madrigal. Used with permission.



With a participatory, paint-by-numbers mural project, people in your community—people from all sorts of different backgrounds, ages, and artistic abilities—can help make the murals beautifying their communities. And with this booklet, you can learn about the background work that makes a participatory mural possible.

A Process for Organizing Participatory Murals

This booklet is designed to help you organize a participatory mural in your community. As you move forward, the process you use is likely to resemble the steps in Figure 4, which offers an overview of the general tasks involved in organizing a participatory mural.

- 
- Choose your organizing approach
 - Select a site
 - Secure funding
 - Select a mural theme (optional)
 - Call for artists/designs
 - Select artists/designs
 - Set date and time
 - Get event insurance
 - Organize event staff and volunteers
 - Get supplies
 - Prep site
 - Host participatory mural event(s)
 - Touch up the mural
 - Arrange a maintenance process (optional)
 - Publicize the project

Figure 4. An overview of the tasks involved in organizing a participatory mural.

The tasks in Figure 4 are presented in an order that will work for many projects, but depending on your particular project and goals, it might make sense to do the tasks in a different order. Also, on-the-ground circumstances might well change your plans while you're in the middle of them, so you might need to circle back and repeat some steps you've already done. That's just fine.

To complete each task, you can draw on a wide range of possible approaches, including the options described in each section of this booklet. Based on your knowledge of your community, you might use some of the options we've included, you might use all of them, or you might develop your own approaches that aren't yet included in this booklet. In any case, great!

Choose Your Organizing Approach

The first step in coordinating a participatory mural is deciding who'll make the decisions and do the work. If you choose a planning team, a small group of servant leaders is responsible for organizing the project and planning logistics, with frequent engagement from community members to make sure the project is on the right track. With public meetings/workshops, the community as a whole is invited to take responsibility for setting the vision and organizing the project. Each organizing approach has advantages and disadvantages, which are shown in Table 1.

We have found that planning teams—combined with public calls for volunteers, public calls for mural designs, and public voting to choose the mural design(s)—can produce successful and inclusive projects over a timeline of about six months. As a general guideline, we would recommend organizing participatory murals through planning teams, but if the visions and expectations of your community are sharply contested, it may be important to use public meetings/workshops to allocate even more control and responsibility back to the community. If you choose to organize the project through public meetings, start the project by organizing and publicizing those public meetings.

APPROACH	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<p>PLANNING TEAM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A team of servant leaders is more likely to produce a completed project, since responsibility is clearly allocated. • Allocating the logistical work to a small team of servant leaders is less expensive and less time-consuming than hosting public meetings and workshops. • Interested members of the public can be involved through volunteering, consultations, choosing the mural design, and painting the mural; at the same time, no one outside the team of servant leaders has to dedicate scarce time or money for the project to succeed. • Volunteers on a team of servant leaders can accurately reflect the demographics and interests of the community, especially if the work is publicized and additional volunteers are welcomed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the planning team does not accurately reflect the interests and perspectives of the community, the project might not either.
<p>PUBLIC MEETINGS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public meetings can include more people all steps of the project process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership structures and responsibilities can be unclear, reducing the likelihood that a project will be completed. • Many community members may not have the time to attend public meetings or to help organize the project, so the voices gathered might not represent the community well.

Table 1. Comparative advantages and disadvantages of organizational approaches for participatory murals.

Select a Mural Site

So, where is your participatory mural going to be? As you think about the options, there are several important factors to consider:

The size of the area to be painted.

The larger the area to paint, the more people can be involved—but the larger the budget will need to be.

The accessibility of the area to be painted.

Are there areas of the site higher than an adult could reach with brushes and rollers? Will you need stools, ladders, scaffolding, or lifts—and if so, how will you ensure that these tools are used safely? Are there areas of the site that are simply too high for members of the public to paint safely? If so, you could have professional artists paint the high areas, but that'll be something to plan for. Are you working in an enclosed space, like a pedestrian bridge, where wet paint could be a barrier that keeps you from reaching parts of the area to be painted? If so, you can work around that—say, by painting the pedestrian bridge from the center out—but, again, people's ability to access and paint the space is something to think about and plan for.

The texture of the area to be painted.

Relatively smooth surfaces—like concrete, cinderblocks, stucco, or smooth wood—work wonderfully for participatory murals. They're easy to paint with brushes, so anyone who can use a paint brush can help paint a mural on smooth surfaces. Rougher surfaces, like asphalt, can work well too, although it's a little harder to get good paint coverage in all the little dips and divots, and murals painted on rough surfaces might not last as long. Surfaces with a lot of depth—like a brick wall where the edges of the bricks stick out from the mortar—are best avoided unless you expect participants to be talented aerosol artists. (Spray paint does just fine on surfaces with a lot of depth.) The deep areas in highly textured walls are hard to paint accurately with brushes, and even a little bit of depth, even as little as half an inch, adds a lot of surface area. Overall, surfaces with depth require a higher level of painting expertise, more time, more supplies, and more money. Avoid surfaces with a lot of depth unless you have good reason not to: for instance, if the location is great and you have a relatively small or simple design.

Repair/cleaning needs for the site.

The site surface should act as a good “canvas” for the mural, and sometimes a site will need to be repaired before it can work well for that. For instance, if an old concrete stucco finish at the site is starting to bubble, crack, and peel, that finish should be repaired or replaced before you start the mural. The site should also be cleaned before you paint it, so that the paint will stick. Even well-maintained surfaces can collect a lot of dust and random detritus, which you'll want to clean up before starting the painting process. Also, you may want to paint the surface for the mural white or off-white to make the design easier to see and the paint colors truer.

Space for a signature/sponsor section.

Is there space at the mural site where you can thank sponsors by including their names and/or logos, and where you can invite participants to sign their names? You can include these elements within the mural if extra space isn't available, but the mural may look nicer if participant signatures and sponsor logos are included in an adjacent area.

Safety at the site.

Participatory murals can draw large crowds and lots of kids, so you'll want to choose a site safely away from hazards like busy roads. (If a desirable site is close to a busy street, you might want to work with government officials to get a permit to close part of that street during your event.) Consider how safe the site would be during preparatory work like cleaning and repair, too—volunteers may well start very early in the morning or stay late at night, so think about their safety when selecting a site.

Logistics at the site.

Think about how volunteers and participants will use the restroom. Will the site already have a restroom? Will a nearby business let you use theirs? Or will you need to rent portable restrooms and a handwashing station? Also, think about whether you'll need to wash paint brushes throughout the day or whether you're bringing enough paint brushes to let each be used just once before you wash them off-site. If you can wash brushes and other tools on site, you won't need as many brushes, rollers, trays, and pails.

Ownership of the site.

For privately owned sites, getting permission to paint a participatory mural is fairly straightforward; you just need the written permission of the owner(s). (Note: If the site is leased, be sure to get permission from both the landlord and the renter.) For government-owned sites, the process of getting permission/permits is likely more complicated. The exact process varies from location to location, so we can't offer specific advice for your city, but if you're considering a government-owned site, get in touch with the government officials responsible for the site, and leave yourself plenty of time to move through paperwork. The paperwork can be worth the effort—locations like parks and public libraries are great for participatory murals, and government officials are likely to be supportive of public art, for all the benefits mentioned in the introduction.

Repair/cleaning needs for the site.

All murals are temporary and wear down eventually, but some sites are likely to last longer than others. In alignment with how long you hope the mural to last, consider factors like whether planned renovations would remove the mural, whether the underlying surface (say, an already-old wooden fence) has a short expected lifespan, and how long the current site owner is likely to stay (a new tenant may paint over old murals). Sometimes, you might actually prefer a short-lived site! If you're just starting out with community projects, you're likely to have an easier time getting permission for a temporary project.

Your connection(s) to the site.

If possible, try to create the mural in an area you're familiar with—an area where you live, work, or play. If you understand the area and the communities in it, you'll be better able to help create a mural that works for the communities.



Secure Funding

To organize a participatory mural, you'll need funds to pay for supplies, labor, marketing, and ideally food and drink for painting days. The total cost will depend on your particular project, but to paint something like a building wall or a pedestrian bridge, you'll likely need to raise several thousand dollars.

Many grant funders are interested in public arts and community building, so you may be able to secure grant funding for a participatory mural in your area. Members of your community can also be a good source of support, and a crowdfunding campaign that invites contributions from both individuals and companies may bring in enough revenue to fund your project. We've been involved in successful participatory murals funded through both approaches.

If you choose to use crowdfunding to pay for the mural, you can combine fundraising with overall publicity for the project. You can raise funds and raise awareness at the same time.

Whichever way you fund the project, be sure to thank your funders. Acknowledge them in publicity materials, and consider using an area adjacent to the mural to thank sponsors by including their names or business logos.

Select a Mural Theme (Optional)

So, what's the participatory mural going to depict? You can leave that choice up to the public voting phase, or you can set up some guidelines before sending out the call for mural designs. If the site owner(s) and/or funder(s) have particular wishes or constraints on subject matter, you'll want to respect those interests when you send out the call for mural designs.

Even if the site owners and funders don't have any significant restrictions on the mural themes, you might consider giving artists guidelines that can help the mural reflect the community and build a sense of identity by including themes like the natural environment in the area, local history, notable local figures, or area landmarks.

Publicize the Project

Depending on your approach—planning team or public meetings—you might have publicized the project even before identifying a site, and depending on whether you pursued grant funding or crowdfunding, you might have started publicity during the fundraising period. In any case, once you have a site and funding secured, it's definitely time to start spreading the word about the participatory mural!

Overall, you may have up to four goals for your publicity campaign, depending on the approaches you take:

- 1** Raising community awareness and participation for the planning phase (especially if you choose public meetings as an organizational approach)
- 2** Simultaneously raising awareness about the project and raising money for the project through crowdfunding platforms, such as Kickstarter or Ioby.(In Our Backyards)
- 3** Inviting design submissions from artists (see the sample "Request for Proposals" in Appendix A)
- 4** Raising public awareness about the painting days for the participatory murals, with the goal of engaging both participants who can help paint the mural and volunteers who can help run the event(s)

To raise awareness about your participatory mural, you can use multiple approaches. Especially effective avenues include press releases to your local papers, television stations, and news radio stations; posts on social media, such as Facebook and Instagram; posters and flyers distributed around the project area; and the contact lists or newsletters of local organizations, especially organizations involved in arts, education, religion, or community-building. With all of these approaches combined, we've consistently been able to engage hundreds of people with participatory murals.

Call for Artists/Mural Designs

Part of what makes participatory murals participatory is that members of the public can submit mural designs, which the public then votes on to choose the design to paint. To invite designs from artists, you'll need to send out a call for artists/mural designs, or—more formally—a “request for proposals,” or RFP. You can find a sample RFP in Appendix A; please use and adjust it to meet your needs. Once you've developed the RFP, send it out through your publicity channels, and get excited about the awesome designs that will be coming in!

To give artists enough time to learn about the RFP and develop their designs, try to publicize the RFP at least 10 weeks before the submission deadline you set.

Select Artists/Mural Designs

So, the deadline for design submissions has passed, and you've got a collection of great designs! How do you choose one?

You can go straight to public voting, but we recommend a two-part approach, starting with a small panel. The panel might include the planning team, as well as local stakeholders and artists who didn't submit designs, and before public voting starts, the panel reviews submissions with several questions in mind:

- 1 Does the submission meet the thematic and content requirements (if there are any)?
- 2 Does the design work with a paint-by-numbers approach?
- 3 Would the design fit the available space well?
- 4 Would this design be family-friendly and work well with our community?
- 5 From the résumé(s) of the artist(s), would they be able to complete the project successfully?

If the answer to any of these questions is no, that particular submission is removed before public voting starts. This step helps ensure that the project will be successful, and it also reduces the time investment required of the voting public, increasing the likelihood that voters will consider all possible options and choose the one they like best. If there are dozens of different submissions, voters are unlikely to have the time to review and evaluate them all; if there are just several options, all of them excellent, voters are more likely to have the time to carefully consider each.

For public voting, you can use all sorts of online voting sites, including SurveyMonkey, Google Forms, and Facebook (to name a few); you can use physical ballots at the mural site or other public spaces, like libraries; or you can use a blend of physical ballots and online voting.

Whichever voting approach you use, you'll want to make some decisions about voting security. Do you want ballots to require identifying information, such as name or email address? For online voting, do you want to require that voters have an account with the voting site, or do you want to limit the voting to one vote per IP address? Do you want to just go with the honor system?

Every one of the security features available can be bypassed, and each of the security features also involves problematic consequences. For instance, a one-vote-per-IP-address policy could give a person with multiple devices multiple votes, while allowing only one vote from each computer workstation at the public library. Overall, we've preferred to err on the side of trust and accessibility. The honor system has worked well for us previously, but we recognize that it could be abused by determined cheaters. The voting approach isn't a simple choice, so take the time to really discuss it with your planning team or at your public meetings. Even though none of the choices is perfect, you can find an approach that'll probably work just fine for your community.

Tip

The artists in your community might come up with several beautiful designs, and even though your community probably has to choose just one for the original mural site, there's no reason an excellent design couldn't be used elsewhere in your community! Two murals in this booklet—the “By the Dam” mural in Figures 1 through 3 and the break room mural described in the “Example Projects” section—were originally designed for the amphitheater wall of a public library (described in the “Example Projects” section), but found wonderful new sites with additional funding—which was easier to raise with the designs already developed.



Set Date and Time

Choose a season when the weather is likely to be nice, and avoid dates already taken by other big community events. Depending on the size of the mural, plan for one long day of painting or several shorter sessions. In case the weather turns bad, have a back-up date or two planned.

Get Event Insurance

Event insurance is essential. Unless you are at a location that already has liability insurance for public events and activities, budget for and get event insurance; your local insurance companies can help you. [Note: This booklet is sharing the experiences of one particular group for informational purposes. Speak to your legal counsel to determine the best actions for your organization.]

Organize Staff and Volunteers

A participatory mural requires a lot of participation! To run the event(s), you'll need staff or volunteers handling tasks that include:

- Cleaning and preparing the site

- Getting and transporting supplies before the event

- Setting up the site at the beginning of the day

- Getting any forgotten supplies on the day of the event (it's easy to overlook a few things, and having a dedicated person available to go get them is super helpful)

- Handling logistics during the event(s)

 - Staffing the welcome booth and registration area

 - Handing out paints and brushes

 - Directing participants

 - Cleaning brushes

- Cleaning up the site at the end of the day

As you publicize the event, publicize these volunteer roles too, and ask for people to volunteer for particular roles in particular time slots. Each time slot can be as brief as 2-3 hours; people don't need to volunteer for the whole day to make a difference.

In Table 2 on page 14, you can find an example of volunteer roles and time slots for a participatory mural.

So that participants can quickly identify people who can guide them, have nametags or special shirts for your staff and volunteers.

Get Supplies

Based on the mural design and the size of the area to be painted, work with the selected artist(s) to purchase the paints and supplies that you'll need. For paint, if your mural is outdoors, you'll want to buy outdoor, UV-fast paint to help the colors last as long as possible. If you'd like the mural to have a very long lifespan, you can also put a clear layer of UV protection over the finished mural.

In addition to the regular paints and supplies that you'll need to paint a mural (which the selected artist can help you identify), be sure to get dozens of extra brushes, and get lots of paint containers that work with the types of brushes and/or rollers you'll be using—it won't be possible to give each participant a whole bucket of paint. If you're hosting a multi-day event, get paint containers with lids. Get plenty of extra buckets and boxes too to hold used brushes and rollers

For day-of logistics, you'll want several other types of supplies, including event signs (banners and A-frame signs work well), shade structures, folding tables, and folding chairs. Depending on the site you've chosen, you may also need step stools and/or short ladders, and you may need to provide trash, recycling, and/or composting facilities. Non-profit organizations in your area are likely to have many of these supplies and may be willing to support the project by lending them for the event. Additionally, since you never know when you might need to create a sign on the go or fix a tool at the event, bring plenty of miscellaneous materials like duct tape, papers, markers, etc.

If you're working with a non-profit organization, you may be able to get substantial discounts from most vendors, so ask to speak with a manager and inquire about whether discounts are available for non-profit, charitable projects. The answer is likely to be yes! If vendors give you a discount, thank them in the same ways you thank other funders—for instance, credit in promotional materials, business name or logo on part of the mural, etc.

Once you have all the supplies, make sure that all paint is mixed and labeled according to the paint-by-numbers key. Make copies of the number/color key for volunteers and participants.

Tip

In case you need more paint in the future, remember to write down the paint color information and the stores you purchased the paint from.

	CARLETTE	DEMARUS	EMMY	ERIN	GEN	LAURA	OMAR
6:30 AM	Unload cards, do final sweep of bridge	Set up pop-up tent for paint crew on South Park side	Do final sweep of bridge / get coffee from Tim Horton's	X	Unload cards, do final sweep of bridge, get bagels	Do final sweep of bridge	Unload cars, do final sweep of bridge
7:00 AM	Assist WAGS with chalk likes or get supplies to a paint tent	Drop off granola bars at food table. Set up food table	Help move paint supplies to South Park side	X	Help get paint to Oregon side	Get water station set up, get registration ready	Help get paint to Oregon side
7:30 AM	Ditto	Ditto	Get clean-up station set up on South Park side	Get food area set up	Get clean-up station set up on Oregon side	Manage registration/assist paint crew on South Park side	Get clean-up station set up on Oregon side
8:00 AM	Calcite Cavaliers (chalk outlining)	Shuttle volunteers to Oregon side	Setup activities	Work food table	Assist WAGS with whatever needs done	Ditto	Assist Emmy with activities if needed
8:30 AM	Ditto	Ditto	Assist WAGS on South Park side	Ditto	Pick up coffee from Press	Ditto	Assist WAGS on Oregon side
9:00 AM	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Assist WAGS on Oregon side	Ditto	Ditto
9:30 AM	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto
10:00 AM	Assist WAGS with South Park paint crew	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto
10:30 AM	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto
11:00 AM	Ditto	Break	Break	Ditto	Shuttle volunteers to Oregon side	Ditto	Ditto
11:30 AM	Ditto	Break	Break	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto
12:00 PM	Ditto	Work food table	Shuttle volunteers to Oregon side	Break	Assist WAGS on Oregon side	X	Break
12:30 PM	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Break	Ditto	X	Break
1:00 PM	Break	Ditto	Ditto	Work registration	Ditto	X	Assist WAGS on South Park side
1:30 PM	Break	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	X	Ditto
2:00 PM	Work Paint Crew with WAGS	Ditto	Do activities with volunteer motivators	Do activities with volunteer motivators	Break	X	Help Emmy with activities
2:30 PM	Work with Paint Crew Oregon District side	Ditto	Work with Paint Crew Oregon District side	Work with Paint Crew Oregon District side	Break	X	Activities of Paint Crew
3:00 PM	Ditto	Work with Paint Crew South Park side	Ditto	Ditto	Work with Paint Crew South Park side	X	Ditto
3:30 PM	Ditto	Work with Paint Crew Oregon District side	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	X	Ditto
4:00 PM	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	X	Ditto
4:30 PM	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	X	Ditto
5:00 PM	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	X	Work with Paint Crew South Park side
5:30 PM	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	X	Ditto
6:00 PM	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	X	Ditto
6:30 PM	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	X	Ditto
7:00 PM	Clean-up	Clean-up	Clean-up	Clean-up	Clean-up	X	Clean-up
7:30 PM	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	X	Ditto

Table 2. Example volunteer roles and time slots for a participatory mural

Prep the Mural Site

You're getting close! Now it's time to make sure the site is ready to host a participatory mural event. If the site needs any repairs—for instance, patching walls, potholes, etc.—take care of those repairs. The site owners may prefer to take responsibility for this, so ask if they'd be willing to handle repairs themselves—which would be ideal! If they'd prefer for you to do it, get their written permission, a signed liability waiver, and liability insurance for this work in case something goes wrong. Note: This booklet is sharing the experiences of one particular group for informational purposes. Speak to your legal counsel to determine the best actions for your organization.) If the site doesn't need repairs, or once the repairs are done, clean the site: pick up garbage and debris, sweep the site, and consider hosing down and scrubbing the surface to help get rid of dust and oils that could keep paint from sticking well.

Once the surface is clean and in good repair, the artist(s) can start outlining the mural. As artists, they'll know how this process works, but we'll still offer a few tips from what we've learned:

- 1 Start the outlines with chalk, so that you can erase any lines and try again if you need to
- 2 Once the chalk outlines look good, paint over the chalk to create the permanent outlines. If you want the outline to be visible in the finished mural, make the outline a dark color. If you don't want the outline to be visible in the finished mural, choose a light color.

Once the outline is finished, use chalk or light-colored paint to label each section of the outline in a paint-by-numbers style. Remember to write down a key that lets you know what color lines up with each number.

Lastly, if the mural has any areas that wouldn't be safely accessible to members of the public—say, areas higher than eight feet—either supply equipment like ladders that would allow adults to paint those areas, or have the artist(s) completely finish those areas, using both outlining and paints.

Throughout the process of preparing the site, consider the artist's safety. Use common sense, especially when working late at night or early in the morning, and work in teams whenever possible. If there's an accident or emergency, you want people there to help. Speaking of teams, be open to unexpected help: your community has a lot of talented artists, and some of them might be interested in helping prep the mural site. Welcome them.



Host the Participatory Mural Painting Event(s)

A day or two before the event, send a reminder email to volunteers and participants. Include typical event details—address, times, etc.—and give volunteers any additional information they might need, like reminders about their specific roles or breaking news about the event. Also, make sure to mention things like wearing clothes they don't mind getting paint on, wearing sunscreen and hats to protect from the sun, and reminders to bring water bottles and to stay hydrated.

Early on the day of the event, if the weather isn't good or isn't likely to be good, reschedule the event for one of the backup dates you chose earlier.

On the day of the event, try to arrive at least two hours early to set up and handle any minor, last-minute emergencies like unexpected cleaning. Post the event signage, and organize up to four stations:

- 1** A welcome area for event registration—including liability waivers—and information like the event schedule, small-scale images of the mural design, and a key matching paint numbers and colors
- 2** A supply area where paints, brushes, rollers, paint trays, chalk, measuring tapes, and other materials are kept (be sure to have a key of paint numbers and colors here, too)
- 3** A paint brush washing station
- 4** A food and drink area for water, coffee, donuts, fruit, etc.

For each area, a shade structure with two to three folding tables and several chairs can be helpful. Depending on the site, you may also need to set up a station to deal with waste: trash, recycling, compost, etc.

Plan to have the volunteers who will help coordinate the event arrive about when you do—a few hours early—to get oriented, get final instructions, maybe get refreshments, and help with setup. You'll want volunteers for several roles during the event:

At the Welcome Station, volunteers will be welcoming participants, explaining how a participatory mural works, collecting signed liability waivers, and sending participants to the mural outline to pick a paint color/number

At the Supply Station, volunteers will be giving participants supplies. This role includes pouring paint into cups, labelling the cups with the appropriate numbers, and/or mixing paints.

Moving around the site to help participants and pick up any messes

Travelling to get/purchase any needed items that aren't already at the site

Cleaning paint brushes at the Brush Washing Station

Resupplying the food and drink station and/or picking up meals

If you have to paint the outline on the same day that you're hosting the mural painting event (for instance, if you're working on a pedestrian bridge or in a parking lot that can only be closed for one day), have a team of artists arrive several hours before the first participants are scheduled to arrive, and have those artists start creating the outline based on the standard approach described previously in "Prep the Mural Site." The artists don't have to finish outlining and numbering the mural before participants arrive, but you do want to give the artists a comfortable head start. Participants can add color to each part of the outline as soon as the artists finish each section. Figure 5 shows an artist doing day-of outlining for a participatory mural at a pedestrian bridge in Dayton, Ohio.



Figure 5. Chalking the outline for a participatory paint-by-numbers mural on the morning of the event. ©Copyright 2012 UpDayton. Used with permission.murals.



Figure 6. A participatory mural in progress at the Branigan Library in Las Cruces, New Mexico

As participants start to arrive, volunteers can give them an introduction to the event at the welcome table, then send the participants to the mural outline to choose a number/color they'd like to paint. Once participants choose a number/color, they can get a cup of that paint (labeled in permanent marker with the number) and a paint brush at the supply station. After participants are finished with their paint/number, they return the brushes to the Brush Washing Station for cleaning. Figure 6 gives an image of participants painting a mural in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

As the event winds down and the participatory mural comes closer and closer to completion, start cleaning up the site as much as possible. After the official end of the event, leave yourself and the volunteer team several hours to pack up the supplies and clean the site. It'll look great!



Figure 7. A section of the participatory mural at Branigan Library, "Tierra Sagrada" (Sacred Earth) with shading details added during touch-up by artist Eugenia "AO" Carmona

Touch Up the Mural (Optional)

There are bound to be a few spots on the mural where paint landed somewhere unintended. If you want the mural to look fully professional—which can contribute to a sense of pride in the community—it'll be important to have an artist (or artists) touch up the mural after the initial layers of paint dry. Also, if the design calls for some details that require a professional painter, the artist(s) can add those details after the initial paint dries. Figure 7 shows shading added by artist "AO" Carmona as part of touch up work.

Arrange a Maintenance Plan for the Mural

All murals are temporary, but with a maintenance plan, even outdoor murals can last for a decade or more. If the community is interested in extending the life of the mural, you can have a designated person or organization store the paints and supplies left over from the mural, and you can have an organization responsible for deciding when to touch up the mural.

If the mural is at a private home or business, the site owner is a natural choice for storing supplies and maintaining the mural. If the mural is at a public site, use several communication channels to ask if people/organizations would be interested in assuming responsibility for maintaining the mural. If people in the community are interested in taking responsibility to care for the mural, great! If not, there's no need to worry—again, all murals are temporary, and when old participatory murals start to wear down, you have an opportunity to paint new ones.



Overall Advice

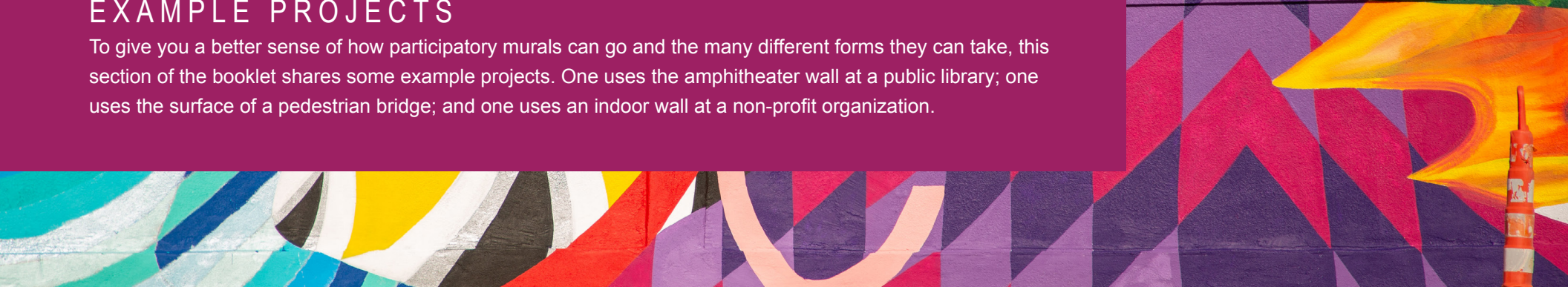
Participatory murals are deeply rewarding, and there's a good chance that hundreds of people from your community will delight in helping to beautify their neighborhoods. As you go through the process of organizing a participatory mural, keep your end goal in mind—a bunch of community members happily contributing to the common good—and be flexible with pretty much anything else. You might need to change sites mid-project; that's okay. You'll might need to reschedule painting days on account of bad weather; that's expected! Just keep moving toward the end goal, in whatever shape it gradually takes.

It'll be worth it.



EXAMPLE PROJECTS

To give you a better sense of how participatory murals can go and the many different forms they can take, this section of the booklet shares some example projects. One uses the amphitheater wall at a public library; one uses the surface of a pedestrian bridge; and one uses an indoor wall at a non-profit organization.



Amphitheater Wall at a Public Library

The mural at the amphitheater wall of Branigan Library in Las Cruces, New Mexico, wasn't originally going to be at Branigan Library. It was actually designed for the west wall of a non-profit makerspace in the community, Cruces Creatives, but an impromptu aerosol arts event created a lovely mural at that site before the participatory mural approach could. Fortunately, there are lots of walls in downtown Las Cruces (we bet there are in your city, too), and the downtown public library happily accepted the opportunity to host a participatory mural on its amphitheater wall. Figure 8 shows the mural as it appeared near the end of the third day of community painting.

Since the library site is owned by the city, the project needed the approval of the city art board—which took some time—and the amphitheater wall needed repairs before the mural could be painted, which took some more time. That wound up being just fine. Over the course of a three-day participatory mural event, over 300 people came out to help brighten their downtown. Figure 9 shows a family painting together.

The total budget for this mural was \$6,000, allocated as follows:

Artist: \$2,500

Materials: \$1,500

Administrative Budget (including the writing of this manual): \$1,200

Layout and graphic design for manual: \$800

This budget was funded through two grants, with \$5,000 donated by the Rumphius Foundation and \$1,000 provided through the MESA Project, funded by ArtPlace America.



Figure 8, above. A participatory mural on the third day (and final) day of painting at Branigan Library in Las Cruces, New Mexico

Figure 9, below. A family painting an area of “Tierra Sagrada,” the participatory mural at Branigan Library in Las Cruces, New Mexico



EXAMPLE PROJECTS



Figure 11, above. Children painting the break room participatory mural
Figure 10, below. A stencil-based, participatory, paint-by numbers mural



Break Room Wall at a Non-Profit Organization

Participatory murals don't have to be big and complicated! Figure 10 shows a participatory mural at Cruces Creatives, a non-profit makerspace in Las Cruces, New Mexico. The designs in the mural were traced in pencil from stencils made on a laser cutter at the makerspace, and then community members could visit the makerspace any time during business hours to help paint the mural. Over one month, roughly 100 community members participated.

Notably, the design for this mural had originally been submitted as part of the project that turned into the amphitheater wall mural at Branigan Library. Although this design wasn't selected for the amphitheater wall, we thought it would work wonderfully for the break room in the makerspace, so we asked the artist if he would be willing to change locations and scale. He was, and the project turned out wonderfully. Figure 11 shows children happily doing their part to paint it.

The total budget for this mural was \$500, including materials and payment for the artist.

Pedestrian Bridge Over Highway

In 2012, a civic organization in Dayton, Ohio— UpDayton— called for a mural design for a pedestrian bridge, with the important requirement that the design be painted by members of the community. In response, a team of artists (including the authors) submitted a paint-by-numbers design that referenced the historic gardens and stained-glass architecture of the neighborhoods on each side of the bridge. An aerial view of this design is shown in Figure 12.

The timeline for painting the mural was a challenge, since the bridge covers a large area— 380' x 8'— and the City of Dayton gave permission to close the bridge only for a single day. To complete the large mural in a single day took several essential steps:

- Extensively cleaning the site before the painting day. With only one day to outline and paint the mural, there was no time on the day of the event for cleaning, so cleaning and preparatory work was done ahead of time.
- Organizing a team of professional artists to arrive early in the morning and outline the mural design in chalk. To outline the design, the team of artists first marked 5' sections on the bridge, using chalk and measuring tape, and then consulted a scale drawing of the mural (shown in Figure 14) to determine what to draw in each section.
- Setting up supply stations on each side of the bridge. Since the bridge could not be crossed without damaging the wet paint, we set up supply stations and volunteer coordinators at each side of the bridge.
- Designing the mural so that large areas would be painted a single color and could be filled in quickly.
- Incorporating the color of the gray asphalt on the bridge as a border for the design, reducing the area to be painted and the required painting time.
- Creating a special chalk holder that made chalk outlines the same width as a trim roller, allowing all outlines to be applied quickly, easily, and accurately.
- Painting the mural from the center outward, using the two supply stations and two teams of community members to paint each half of the bridge simultaneously.

Through this approach, 70+ community members were able to paint the entire 380' x 8' mural in a single day. Figure 14 shows the work in progress.

The total budget of \$1,500 was raised by UpDayton through a Kickstarter campaign: \$1,000 went toward materials and food for participants, and \$500 went toward the artist team.



Figure 12, top. Aerial view of the pedestrian bridge participatory mural in Dayton, Ohio. ©Copyright 2012 UpDayton. Used with permission.
Figure 13, middle. A scale drawing of the overall mural design for the pedestrian bridge project
Figure 14, bottom. Participants painting the pedestrian bridge in Dayton, Ohio. ©Copyright 2012 UpDayton. Used with permission.





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APPENDIX A: SAMPLE REQUEST FOR
PROPOSALS—CALL FOR ARTISTS/DESIGNS

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS—CALL FOR ARTISTS/DESIGNS

Request for Proposals A Paint-by-Numbers Community Mural at Cruces Creatives

Due Date: 11:59 pm, Friday, May 31, 2019

Overview:

With the generous support of the Rumphius Foundation and the Meetings for Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (MESA) Project, Cruces Creatives is seeking proposals for a mural to be painted with community involvement on the west side of its building at 205 E Lohman Avenue, Las Cruces, NM 88001. So that community members of varying ages and artistic abilities can help paint the mural, the mural should be in a paint-by-numbers style. For an example, see Figure 1.



Figure 1. A paint-by-numbers community mural in Dayton, OH. Note the black lines (4") between color blocks.

The overall goals of the project are

- To create a mural to brighten the west side of Cruces Creatives makerspace and help with the ongoing revitalization of downtown Las Cruces
- To have the mural use a paint-by-numbers approach with thick lines between blocks of color (like stained glass), making it possible for community members of widely varying ages and artistic talents to help paint the mural during a one-day public event
- To document the process of mural creation and write a how-to booklet for paint-by-numbers community murals. (This task will be handled by Cruces Creatives team members, but involvement from the selected artist(s) would be welcome.)

In alignment with these goals, the mural design should

- Use a paint-by-numbers approach with thick lines between blocks of color (like stained glass), making it possible for community members of widely varying ages and artistic talents to help paint the mural
- Bring joy through the use of artistic elements and choice of subjects/themes
- Be family-friendly
- Include elements that reflect the natural environment of Las Cruces
- Include agricultural elements to reflect the farming history of Doña Ana County, and include elements of sustainable agriculture (such as drought-tolerant and salt-tolerant crops) to reflect its agricultural future

The space available for the mural is an approximately 15' high by 200' long textured brick wall with a rough surface, shown in Figure 2. The mural design may use all or part of this space.



Figure 2. The wall available for the mural

The selected artist or artist team will be paid \$2,500 for their work, and an additional \$1,500 is available for materials and supplies. Lowe's generously provides materials to Cruces Creatives at prices below market value, so the market value of proposed materials may exceed the materials and supply budget of \$1,500.

The selected artist(s) will be responsible for the following work:

- Communicating with Cruces Creatives team members about scheduled work periods for mural outlining and painting above 8' so that the Cruces Creatives team can document the process for the instructional booklet
- Outlining and labeling the paint-by-numbers mural detailed in their proposal
- Painting any parts of the mural higher than 8' above ground level
- Helping set up the community mural painting on [date] and assisting community members as they fill in the paint-by-numbers system
- Retouching the mural after the community painting event(s)

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS—CALL FOR ARTISTS/DESIGNS

Application Instructions

To apply, email a mural design, a supplies and materials list, résumé(s)/CV(s) of the applying artist(s), and the submission form and agreement signed by the submitting artist(s) to Pat DeSimio, p.desimio@crucescreatives.org, by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, May 31, 2019.

Physical copies of all application materials—mural design, supplies and materials list, résumé(s)/CV(s) of the applying artist(s), and the submission form and agreement signed by the submitting artist(s)—may also be mailed or delivered to Cruces Creatives, 205 E Lohman Avenue, Las Cruces, NM 88001.

For full consideration, all application materials must be received by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, May 31, 2019. Postage dates will not be considered.

Applying artists will be notified on or around June 24, 2019.

Paint-by-Numbers Mural Proposal Application Package

1. Mural Design

Attach image(s) of the mural design. Include both overall and detail images.

2. Résumé(s)/CV(s)

Attach résumé(s) or CVs for the applying artist(s).

3. Submission Form and Agreement

Item 1. I attest that the materials in this application are my original work or the original work of my artistic team.

Item 2. I grant Cruces Creatives the right to post for online public voting the design(s) and image(s) I submit as part of this application.

Item 3. If my design is selected for the mural, I understand and agree that the selected mural design and the mural itself shall be works for hire, to which the intellectual property rights shall be held by Cruces Creatives. The rights of Cruces Creatives in this work for hire notwithstanding, I shall retain the rights to physically and digitally reproduce and distribute images of the design for my portfolio and promotional materials

Item 4. If my design is selected for the mural, I agree to complete the following tasks according to the following timeline

- Outline and label the paint-by-numbers mural detailed in my proposal by August 24, 2019.
- Paint any parts of the mural higher than 8’ above ground level by August 24, 2019.
- Help set up the community mural painting on Saturday, September 7, and assist community members as they fill in the paint-by-numbers design.
- Retouch the mural after the community painting event, with work completed by October 9, 2019.

Item 5. If my design is selected for the mural, I understand and accept that payment to me and/or my artistic team in the amount of \$2,500 is conditional on the satisfactory performance of the tasks described in Item 4.

Item 6. I grant Cruces Creatives and its agents permission to take and distribute photographs and audio and video recordings of me and my work at Cruces Creatives.

Item 7. The rights to designs not selected by Cruces Creatives shall remain entirely with the artist or artists who developed them.

With my signature, I agree to these terms and conditions.

Name

Signature

Date

Name

Signature

Date

Name

Signature

Date