## Suggested Mural guidelines for Artists, Building Owners and the Community

Once a mural is painted in an outdoor location, it becomes public art. An artist, a business owner, or the public can propose a mural. There are a number of factors that need to be taken into consideration before a mural is started.

- 1. The artist and the building owner will agree upon the content of the mural with an estimate of the cost.
- 2. A written contract should be signed between all parties involved, i.e. artist, building owner or leaser, and the funder if appropriate.
- 3. The contract should designate the lifetime of the mural (three, five, seven or other, agreed upon years) that the mural will be left undisturbed, after which the mural can be painted over without penalty.
- 4. Prepare the wall surface so the mural will have a long life.
- 5. Investigate the different paints available and strive for the most durable.
- 6. Determine who will maintain the mural if the work is damaged.
- 7. Take into account the surrounding businesses and residents when planning the mural.

## Other Considerations

- 1. Sign and date the work and/or copyright the mural.
- 2. Review the rights of artists and business owners, Civil Code 987. (posted on FAC website)
- 3. Register the mural with the Fresno Arts Council, (posted on FAC website)

## **Mural Making Process**

When painting a mural, it is important to choose an appropriate wall and location. Solid, concrete and stucco walls are the best walls on which to paint. Brick, concrete block, wood and retaining walls are more difficult because paint may eventually chip and peel off these wall types. Water leaks and cracks in the wall may have adverse effects on the mural and should also be avoided. Murals, which face direct sunlight during the daytime hours (especially those facing south and west) fade and peel much faster than walls which do not get direct sunlight or are protected by overhanging architecture. Murals located in heavily trafficked areas, such as on freeways or busy streets, will be subject to more smog, dirt and chemicals which may change the colors of the original paint.

Before painting a mural, it is recommended that the selected wall be washed with a high-power water hose or sandblasted. The cleaner the surface is, the longer the mural will last. After the wall has been cleaned, a wall coating such as gesso should be applied to create a smooth and consistent surface to which the paint can bond. Wall preparation, materials, paint, and anti-graffiti coating should be compatible with each other as well as with the surface. Consult manufacturers of products for specific information. One type of paint that may be used is mineral paint because it bonds extremely well with the wall and should last many years. Paint should be applied thinly and evenly. Thick layers of paint take longer to dry and tend to peel quickly.

It is recommended that a protective anti-graffiti coating be applied to murals to protect them from graffiti and vandalism. Several products that employ a sacrificial coat to the mural surface are on the market. Some coatings may crack, bubble, fog, yellow or otherwise alter the colors on the mural. Therefore, a layer of varnish may be applied to the finished mural first to isolate and protect the paint layer.

Consistent maintenance is extremely important to the durability of outdoor murals. It is recommended that a regular maintenance plan be devised for each mural.

## **Copyrighting the Mural**

For copyrighting the mural, the copyright logo © and the date are sufficient. The artist should also sign the mural and include a phone number if possible. An official copyright can be obtained by applying to the Copyright Office at the Register of Copyrights, Library of Congress Washington, D.C. 20559. Ask for Class VA Forms for the Visual Arts. The telephone number for information is 202-479-0700. this will protect the mural from being used commercially without permission and from other people profiting from it.

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