



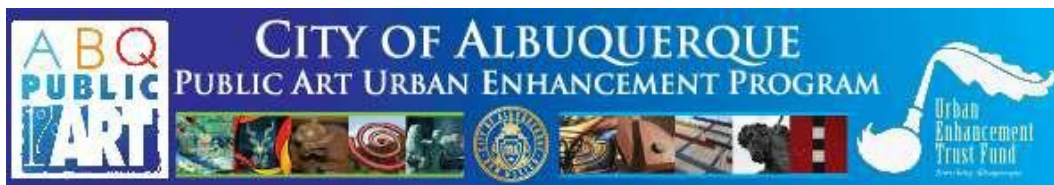
# Public Art Program Mural Policy 2014

City of Albuquerque  
Cultural Services Department



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## Introduction

Murals are an integral and traditional component of the arts scene in Albuquerque and the southwest. Up to this point, the City of Albuquerque Murals Program Plan, written in 1992, had not been evaluated or updated. Despite the public demand for murals, and interest on the part of local artists for more mural opportunities, publicly funded murals in Albuquerque have languished for more than a decade. Several factors helped create this situation, namely the difficulty of the Public Art Program's ability to maintain murals into perpetuity. This newly adopted Murals Policy seeks to update the old plan, address the needs of the community, artists, and the City of Albuquerque Public Art Program. This policy will also streamline the process for implementing new murals throughout Albuquerque.

The Public Art Murals Policy is a City of Albuquerque program administered by the Public Art Urban Enhancement Program. Proposed new murals, which are funded wholly or in part by 1% for Art funds, are reviewed and recommended by the Albuquerque Arts Board, and routed through the Mayor's Administration for final approval. The Board is comprised of artists, arts advocates and interested professionals that are appointed by the Albuquerque City Council and the Mayor of Albuquerque.

The Public Art Program provides funding for murals that reflect diversity in style and media, and encourages artists from diverse backgrounds and range of experiences to apply. The established goals for the Public Art Program, as defined in the City of Albuquerque Public Art Program Guidelines, will apply to the initiation and implementation of new murals. Murals approved through this process become part of the City's Public Art Collection for between five to ten years. This policy will address the myriad ways in which a mural is proposed, initiated, funded, implemented and cared for.

## WHAT

What is a mural? Is it a painting on a wall surface? A mosaic tile piece mounted to a wall? A collage of elements mounted on a wall? Can it be a hybrid

of these methods? There are digitally produced photographic murals, wheat paste murals, and all manner of techniques for applying murals to surfaces. Most murals are on outside walls, although this is not always the case. Murals are defined as a hand-produced work of visual art that is tiled or painted by hand directly upon, or affixed directly to an exterior (or interior) wall of a building.

The more precise question seems to be, what is *not* a mural? The zoning and permitting process makes a distinction between a sign (or an advertisement) and a mural. According to Article 16 of the City of Albuquerque Zoning Code, the definition of a sign is “*any display to public view of letters, words, numerals, figures, statues, devices, emblems, pictures, or any parts or combinations thereof designed to inform or advertise or promote merchandise, services, or activities...*”

Therefore, a mural cannot indicate or describe in narrative, the form of commercial activity that happens *inside* a building. There are some terrific murals that have political/social content, and that utilize text, and muralists can continue to incorporate these elements, however, in order for the Arts Board to approve and fund a mural in Albuquerque, it cannot fall under the definition of a “sign.” All mural proposals must also meet the Public Art Program “Code of Appropriateness” criteria, as described in the Public Art Program Guidelines, and at the back of this policy.



“The Harvest” by Gilberto Guzman, in the Very Special Arts Garage at 5<sup>th</sup> and Copper NW

## WHEN

When is a mural no longer viable as an artwork? Is there a reasonable “lifespan” or “service life” for a mural work? Are all murals subject to on-going conservation, maintenance and refurbishing and how often should a mural’s condition be assessed? Is there a scale to determine what should last 5 years and what should last 10? Artists may be offended by the reticence of a program to guarantee conservation and maintenance “forever.” However, Albuquerque’s harsh conditions require that the life of a mural be realistically addressed. It is in the spirit of ensuring that murals funded and supported by the Albuquerque Public Art Program look their very best that limits how long maintenance and conservation can be funded. For the purpose of this policy, murals funded and supported by the City of Albuquerque Public Art Program will be maintained for between 5-10 years. This ensures that murals will continue to look as their artists and designers intended. It also ensures that new murals are painted to reflect the changing perspectives and styles of a neighborhood as well as support emerging artists, as they move into the mural painting field. The issue of the lifespan of a mural is addressed in greater detail under each of the “tiers” of the mural policy, described below.

## WHERE

Where can publicly funded murals be placed? Murals that are funded by the City of Albuquerque Public Art Program can be placed on public buildings and facilities, such as libraries, community centers, as well as walls and other structures along bike trails and other City-owned infrastructure. Public-Private partnerships for murals must be created in accordance with official City requirements regarding building uses and ownership, which can vary depending on the site.

## WHO

Who can propose mural projects? Anyone can propose a mural project, including artists, organizations, neighborhood associations, and government

agencies. Ideas for murals will be accepted from anyone, provided they address and meet the Mural Policy criteria.

## HOW

How would a mural proposal be evaluated? What should the criteria be for a mural? Are there different purposes for a mural? Budget limits have been assigned to the various levels of commitment the art program can support. A community based mural project utilizing area youth will likely be funded at a different level from a large scale “professional” mural. This plan will address how to appropriately budget for different types of murals and mural projects. Mural proposals will always be evaluated by how they contribute to the context of the urban environment, the diversity and excellence they add to the Public Art Collection, and the strength of the original proposal.



Apprentice artists paint “Augmented Reality of Open Spaces” along the Railway Corridor

## History and Advantages of Murals in Albuquerque

(Adapted from the 1992 Murals Plan)

- Murals are an important public art form in the history of New Mexico. For centuries murals have been made by both Native Americans and Hispanics;
- Nationally and globally, and across many cultures, mural making and “street art” have become popular forms of community and self expression;
- Appropriate murals can be large and colorful, and a valuable way to enhance the built environment, often providing a significant, positive impact with modest public investment;
- The public benefits of murals can be derived from the very process of creating them; when planned properly, the mural making process can be a valuable social/educational experience by involving young people, the disadvantaged, students, and others from the Albuquerque community, and beyond;
- Murals which deal with social, cultural and political issues are a valuable form of public education;
- Art education in local schools needs to be supported. The mural making process has many facets which lend it to a variety of educational experiences, including math, measurement, color schemes, design styles, historical and cultural exploration, and self-expression.



“Santa Madre Tierra y su Alma” by Frederico Vigil, on the Albuquerque Museum

## Murals Policy

### A. Tier One: “Community and Educational Commissions”

This category includes student/mentor projects designed to foster art making experiences and “pride-in-accomplishment” endeavors. Neighborhood commemoration (honoring local luminaries and notable community members) and “pride of place” projects that call attention to regional/local characteristics and historic anecdotes.

Applications to the Program for Tier One Murals consist of:

1. Statement of need/intent explaining scope
2. Number and background of participants
3. Location diagram
4. Budget and logistics plan
5. Work schedule and appropriate safety/parental permission for each student or community member

If the proposal is unsolicited, the budget would be funded up to \$8,000. A jointly negotiated City/Community maintenance agreement for up to 5 years of mural life will be drafted. Muralists must abide by the Public Art Program code of Appropriateness, found at the back of this policy. The standard Assignment of Copyright and Visual Artists Rights Act (VARA) Waiver by the artist(s) is required.



“Augmented Reality of Open Spaces” by Nettrice Gaskins, along the Railway Corridor



## **B. Tier Two: “Commissions to Give Focus”**

This category creates interest on an existing structure. This is a broad category that includes a variety of locations for potential mural creation and is custom-made for theme commissions, and user-agency requests.

Applications to the Program for Tier Two murals consist of:

1. Proposal packet documents (if RFP used)
2. Location diagram
3. Budget and logistics plan
4. Work schedule and appropriate safety/parental permission for each student or community member.

If proposed by user agency, an Art Selection Committee would be established and the budget would be funded up to \$15,000. A City maintenance agreement for up to 5 years of mural life would be executed. Muralists must abide by the Public Art Program code of Appropriateness, found at the back of this policy. The standard Assignment of Copyright and VARA Waiver by the artist(s) is required.



[“Inland Empire: A Suspended Animation” by Jamison “Chas” Banks, along the Railway Corridor](#)

### **C. Tier Three: “Direct or Limited Access Commissions”**

This category is reserved for notable, specific commissions by recognized practitioners in the field, specific artists selected to highlight the Public Art Collection and larger scale, higher budget selections made by the Arts Board.

Applications to the Program for Level III murals consist of:

1. RFP/RFQ documents as outlined in Call
2. Location diagram
3. Budget and logistics plan
4. Work schedule

If proposed by user agency, an Art Selection Committee will be established. If it is an Unsolicited Proposal or Direct Selection by the Board, the budget would be funded up to \$30,000. Because of the higher initial investment, a City maintenance agreement for up to 10 years of mural life would be executed. Muralists must abide by the Public Art Program code of Appropriateness, found at the back of this policy. The standard Assignment of Copyright and VARA Waiver by the artist(s) is required.



“Trance Dance” by Larry Bob Phillips, along the Railway Corridor

## Materials Clause

All Contracts/Agreements executed for mural projects will reflect standards for surface preparation and murals materials to be used. This is an attempt to insure maximum service life of all murals commissioned and sanctioned by the Public Arts Program. Surface preparation, base coats, UV shielding and weather-proofing varnishes and regular condition assessment will be standard requirements, regardless of the project tier level.

## Public Art Program Code of Appropriateness

Proposals for, or existing, Works of Art that include subject matter such as the apparent representation of violence, inappropriate nudity, denigration of individuals or cultures, or desecration of significant cultural symbols, will be reviewed for their appropriateness for public display. Proposals for, or existing, Works of Art that include religious subject matter or symbols may be placed in a public space as long as it is not in a location where it can be revered and is solely for the purpose of exhibiting cultural or historical traditions.



["Campo Expandido XVIII" by Raymundo Sesma and student apprentices from Working Classroom, at the North Fourth Art Center, 4904 4<sup>th</sup> St. NW](#)