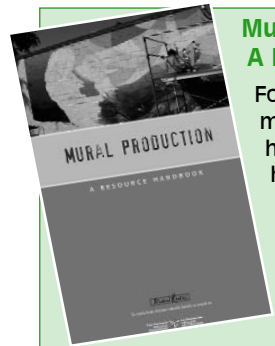


In Brief

Mural Artists' Network on **Thursday, August 11, 2005, 6 p.m - 8:30 p.m.** An open exchange of ideas on public art murals hosted by Mural Routes and Scarborough Arts Council in the park at 1859 Kingston Road, Toronto, Ontario. \$7.00 donation for refreshments. Pre-register by phone 416-698-7995 or email info@muralroutes.com.

California Mural Symposium October 5 - 9, 2005

The Bishop Mural Society is hosting the **California Mural Symposium** from October 5 - 9, 2005. Great networking opportunities, sessions on starting mural programs and presentations from world class experts. For more info about the conference, call 760-873-3600 or email barbel@ladybuggallery.com



Mural Production: A Resource Handbook

For those who want to have a mural project but are unclear as to how to go about it, this resource handbook is an invaluable vehicle. This concise and easy to read collection has been designed as a handy tool and reference guide for anyone interested in the nuts and bolts of the public mural creation process.

Price: \$25 or FREE with membership

Available at Mural Routes, 1859 Kingston Road, Scarborough ON, M1N 1T3, or online at www.muralroutes.com

Winnipeg's mural of the year award announced

The Murals of **Winnipeg** website and its panel of independent judges recently announced its selection for the 2004 Mural of the Year.



Layin' Down Tracks by Charlie and Sarah Johnston at 190 Disraeli Freeway, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The judges selected the mural at 190 Disraeli Freeway, created by artists Charlie and Sarah Johnston to receive the honour. The mural, entitled "Layin' Down Tracks" was commissioned by Levy's Leathers and measures 14,000 square feet. It is currently the largest privately commissioned mural in the country and the second largest mural in Canada.

"This mural is a splendid visual feast that combines prairie, railroad and music themes, all blended and blurred together in a playful visual metaphor," says Bob Buchanan, who created The Murals of Winnipeg Website and the

contest to celebrate Mural of the Year.

The Johnstons used 80 gallons of paint for the project, which took them 3½ months to complete. "It was a dream project to work on," said Charlie Johnston, adding that the client gave them total artistic freedom and control on the wall. Adds Sarah Johnston: "I also like it because people commute everyday and it doesn't cost them any money to see this flood of colour; or to see just one thing, or to see a different thing every day."

For an extensive review of Winnipeg's murals, see <http://www.themuralsofwinnipeg.com>.

Creative Ways

to get the mural

By Trudy Turner



Kids in the Kommunity was a 2004 mural project by Winnipeg's West End BIZ.

on the wall

Are you short of funding but have a great wall just waiting for a beautiful mural project?

Mark your calendars for the 9th Annual Mural Symposium Kitchener, Ontario October 26 - 28, 2005

Mural Routes presents its 9th annual symposium in partnership with Waterloo Community Arts Centre and The Urban Gallery, with the support of the Kitchener Downtown Business Association. Keynote Speaker is **Glen Murray**, former Mayor of Winnipeg, who is best known for his vision to build culturally dynamic urban centres. He inspires Canadians to look at cities as the economics engines of Canada. Today, Glen Murray is Research Associate for the Centre for Urban Studies and a Visiting Scholar and Urban Policy Coordinator at the University of Toronto. Other speakers include Louise Aspin on fundraising and John Hood on how to approach a wall. For registration information, call 416-698-7995.

Why not try one of these creative methods of achieving outstanding mural art? Each has a distinctly unique appeal. Though each requires a good match of co-operative business/wall owner, enthusiastic and flexible artist and involved community – the end result is worth the extra time.

Mural Mentorship

This program has already created three outstanding walls in Winnipeg's West End that attest to its success.

The "Mural Mentor" (MM) is an artistically talented university student with an interest in working with youth. Recruited as an hourly waged summer student, they become the project co-coordinator. They begin in May by locating and negotiating the use of "the wall". Then, in collaboration with the wall owner and various community groups, they design a project suitable for the location and achievable for young people to paint it (local youth aged 10 to 15 who volunteer their time.)

It is helpful to persuade an experienced muralist to volunteer to assist the MM with the project. The artist can provide basic information about how to prep the wall, project the image, etc. (Since this can usually be accomplished in a couple of

hours, artists have been easy to persuade.) Before the youth begin, the wall is power-washed and prepped. Younger kids who want to help but are not old enough for other tasks can assist with the priming. The project is then transferred to the wall and the creation begins.

Young people have a short attention span so they are scheduled in two to three-hour "shifts" in the morning or the afternoon. They usually come three or more days each week as the excitement builds. You should provide t-shirts or smocks (for clothing protection) and ensure that parents sign waivers for each child who participates.

Because of the involvement of local youth, it is relatively easy to gain support for this project. Past projects have received funding from HRDC-Summer Career Placement program and other grantors, and the building/wall owner has been provided financial and other support.

See Creative funding page 2

Become a member of Mural Routes!

You can support the goals of Mural Routes with your membership. Members will receive mailing of all newsletters, and communication about future symposia, think tanks and discounts on registration fees. Member artists will have their contact information posted on the Web site.

COST Individuals \$25
Charitable /Non-profit organizations \$50
Corporate membership \$150
Mural Routes secure online membership form is now available. Please visit www.muralroutes.com

MURAL ROUTES MEMBERSHIP FORM if paying by cheque, please make payable to Mural Routes Inc. and mail to: Mural Routes Inc., 1859 Kingston Road, Scarborough, Ontario, M1N 1T3, Tel: 416-698-7995

Name _____
Address _____ Are you a Mural Artist? _____
City/Prov/Postal Code _____ Tel _____
E-Mail _____ Web _____
Membership category (check one) Individual Charitable Corporate
Amount \$ _____ Cheque / Visa / MasterCard (circle one) Expiry Date _____
Card Number _____ Signature _____

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A Message from the President

I'd like to take this opportunity to bid farewell to Mural Routes' Executive Director, Jackie Santos. Jackie is busy getting prepared for the next phase in her life – parenthood. Jackie started at Mural Routes as a volunteer about ten years ago, and remained actively involved in the organization. In 2003, she was hired as Executive Director. Over the last two years, Jackie has developed Mural Routes from its fledgling state into a dynamic, firmly rooted service organization. She has achieved a long list of accomplishments including: the organization of two Mural Routes Symposiums (Windsor and Toronto); the creation of the Resource Handbook, the facilitation of three mural projects, the redesign of our website and the introduction of e-commerce and credit card acceptance to our organization. Jackie also worked with an editor and designer to breathe new life into our publication, *Off the Wall*. As well, she has answered questions and provided advice to countless municipalities, organizations and artists about everything to do with murals. We will miss Jackie's gentle manner and productive, focused drive. We wish Jackie well in this next adventure in her life!

Mural Routes Board of Directors:

President: Carol Knowlton-Dority
Vice President: John Hands
Treasurer: Barb Beecroft
Secretary: Hedi Greenwood
Directors: Louise Aspin, Mark Dias
Executive Director: Karin Eaton

Newsletter staff:

Editor: Andrea Raymond
Layout/design: Janice Bennink

Contributors: Carol Knowlton-Dority, Devon Ostrom and Trudy Turner

Mural Routes gratefully acknowledges the hard work and generosity of many individuals and organizations. It receives support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council, Graffiti Transformation program, Ministry of Culture Summer Employment Program and HRSDC Canada. Mural Routes was founded by Scarborough Arts Council, with whom it continues to partner with in the arts.



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In July, we welcome Karin Eaton to the position of Executive Director of Mural Routes. Karin is changing hats as she leaves behind her ten-year post as Executive Director of Scarborough Arts Council and long tenure as President of Mural Routes. Karin was the catalyst for the origination of Mural Routes and has been devoted to promoting and developing its cause ever since. Karin started Mural Routes as a project for Scarborough Arts Council in 1990.

Under Karin's leadership, Mural Routes will move into the next phase of its development. Speaking of her goals, Karin says, "I am looking forward to taking on the position of Executive Director for Mural Routes so that I can direct Mural Routes' focus towards a more prolific expression of public art; it is important to bring art into the community – where we live. I believe that we need to do some education about the value of excellence in mural art. I would like to see murals valued as real art, not simply as street decoration or a means to develop tourism or social programs. I would like to see more employment for professional muralists and more work available to them."

As the newly elected President of Mural Routes, I share Karin's desire to create a broader acceptance and increased use of murals in contemporary life. I would like to see large-scale painting, both indoors and out, realize their great potential as an ideal form for public art and as an extraordinary form for fine art. I would like to seek out venues for mural work in Toronto, and abroad, that showcase the most compelling fine art imaginable. To this end, our upcoming symposium in October will bring together members of the art community (artists, consultants and designers, and agencies) as well as city/town administrators, the business community and a variety of partners who will engage in active dialogue and training sessions oriented to developing opportunities for the best in future mural work.

Carol Knowlton-Dority is President of Mural Routes. She is a practicing artist and muralist, who describes herself as an imaginative realist. Her work examines the human condition: its struggles, joys and questions. Carol recently exhibited a series of paintings at RedEye Studio Gallery.

Taxing billboards for a better city

By Devon Ostrom

If I asked those at City Hall to allow me to put megaphones on almost every major corner, blaring manipulative, sexist and other base messages 24/7 – you can bet that I would be laughed out of building... So, for those who cherish the visual aesthetic of our streets, what happened? The relentless assault of commercial advertising litters our city to no end. As a progressive society, we need to ensure that proper controls are implemented to balance these messages. Not only to enhance the beauty of our city, but to ensure diverse communication in public space. Clearly, we cannot rely on the industry to self-govern to our benefit. The clients of billboard operators have to spend increasing amounts of money to maintain exposure, recognition and penetration. This is because of competitive tactics that eventually lead to over-saturation. Once a billboard goes up, it detracts impact from other billboards around them. The main response to these diminishing returns has simply been more advertising; resembling something like an arms race – only run by

market forces.

Companies engaging in billboard advertising must be held accountable to the public for their access to - and impact on, public space.

Typically, I agree with advertising in other forums such as magazines, as it is seen to subsidize useful or enjoyable content for the consumer of the message. Accordingly, access to visual communication in public spaces needs to reflect the creativity and multiplicity that exists in Toronto – lest we alienate our population from their environment. Additionally, when produced locally, public art contributes to 'place making' and can serve to reinforce multiculturalism. Billboard advertising is typically the polar opposite, by motive, medium and methods. Billboards also undermine the perception of public ownership, whereas localized projects enhance it: Thus the Beautiful City Billboard Fee (BCBF) works as a remedial act – enabling and spurring people to further add to their communities in a positive format.

The objectives of the BCBF are:



a) Beautification; b) Creation of employment for systemically underemployed artists; c) Diversify access to visual communication in public spaces; d) Legitimize billboards; and e) Enhance public ownership and thus community efficacy in common spaces.

According to a Pollara (www.pollara.ca) public opinion poll, the majority of Canadians support a fee on billboard advertising that would be redirected into public art. A total of 2006 Canadian adults participated in the survey, 66% of which supported the fee and 11% were opposed.

Creative mural funding from page 1

Mural Mentorship works on many levels. It provides a responsible career-related summer job for a university student (plus a masterpiece for their portfolio)! It involves the community's youth in a lasting project that builds their self-confidence, self-esteem and community pride. It gives the community a beautiful piece of art that they can enjoy in the years to come. And it is a low-cost option to fill an empty wall with an outstanding mural!

Graffiti Restitution Program

This program was designed to provide a community service option for young persons (we'll refer to as "clients") who had been charged with multiple incidents of graffiti vandalism. It was designed in collaboration with a lawyer and the West End BIZ. The lawyer approached us saying she felt her clients had something to contribute and that given a chance, they could

do something meaningful in the community. Her hope was that a judge would accept the community service as payment for their offences.

A meeting was scheduled with the five clients involved, the lawyer and the BIZ. The five were all Fine Arts students at university and each had impressive portfolios. Because of their talent, it was decided that a suitable repayment could be for them to create murals in the community – with both the permission and the input of the building owners. The five were asked to produce preliminary drawings and based on those drawings were matched with two separate projects. It was explained that there was no guarantee that the judge would accept this effort and that they would be doing the projects "on spec". One opted out but the other four carried on.

Two building owners were approached. The clients attended meetings, listened to the wishes of the building owners, created

sketches and re-worked their designs based on the feedback they received, and then began the project. The walls were power-washed by the BIZ, and prepped and primed by the building owners who also contributed the paint. The clients volunteered a good portion of their summer to complete the murals.

The end result was successful in many ways! The building owners were very pleased with their mural art. The community loved the finished projects. The clients learned valuable information about the "business" end of murals that they can use in their future careers. The judge accepted the community service and stayed the charges. And perhaps best of all, based on their experience with the business owners, we truly believe that of the four who completed their projects, three will not tag again... we hope.

Trudy Turner is Executive Director of West End BIZ.

(±2.2%, 19/20) This result was closely mirrored in Toronto with 66% of participants supporting the proposal and only 15% disagreeing. (±8.3%, 19/20)

With the upcoming billboard harmonization in Toronto, the BCBF could use the existing municipal infrastructure for

tracking and collecting permits for third party outdoor signage (over 100sq. feet) into an annual payment structure. Alternatively, (with a more limited, but easier to enact effect) the existing variance process could be used on billboards licensed in this way. A third option includes instituting the fee as fine for outdoor advertisers who currently break outdoor signage laws. The BCBF could be waived for billboards allotted to registered charities. In order to coincide with the overall objectives of the BCBF, it is recommended that the disbursement plan should be structured so that the art produced reflects and engages the communities where the pieces are situated. It would also use existing public organizations. Ideally, the distribution partnership created would have both administrative and artistic expertise, as well as contact with the local areas in order to distribute the funds fairly and effectively. Hypothetically, at a charge of \$6 per square foot of billboard space per year, five 15'x25' billboards could subsidize one small art piece costing \$10,000 (as well as \$1,250 for administrative and maintenance expenses.) At a macro level, the 5000 billboards in Toronto would generate six million dollars for public art per year.

The BCBF is an initiative of Them.ca, a Toronto-based organization devoted to finding jobs for young artists, researching urban renewal in the form of art and promoting art exhibitions. For more info, visit: <http://bcbf.them.ca/>

Devon Ostrom is Curator of Them.ca.