

Paint a Mural

From the Latin word for walls, a mural is a large painting or decoration, either painted directly on the wall, such as a fresco, or prepared separately and affixed to the wall. Let Maxo Vanka's murals inspire you to create a mural of your own!

A mural can be made by assembling smaller works of art in a decorative design or pattern, and then hung on a wall.

Project Idea #1: Group Underwater Mural

Gather a group of friends, classmates, or family members. Give them each a square piece of paper. The size of the paper you choose will determine the final size of the mural. Using art materials such as oil pastels, polymer medium and collage materials, have each person create an underwater scene, which features a large fish. Concentrate on the details of the fish as well as the decorative water-like background. Use the oil pastels for the water, and the collage materials for the fish. When you are finished, arrange all the squares into a larger square. Before attaching them in the back with masking tape, look at color schemes, dark and light, texture and pattern to create an interesting arrangement of fish. Voila! You have now created an underwater mural. Find a big wall to hang it on at home or at school.

A mural can be a large-scale work you create with a group of friends or classmates on a large piece of paper.

Project Idea #2: Group Landscape Mural

Gather a group of friends, classmates, or family members. Lay out a large piece of paper on a table or on the floor. Use watercolors, tempera, or acrylic paints to create the background of a landscape scene. Focus on the sky, weather, time of day, and land forms that are far in the distance. Wait for the paint to dry. Add elements of the landscape that you would see in the foreground using cut paper. Think about trees, flowers, rocks, small plants and animals. Look at the work of French artist Henri Rousseau for inspiration. Find a big wall to hang it on at home or at school. Visit: www.nga.gov/exhibitions/2006/rousseau/index.shtm for more information on Rousseau.

A mural can be a work of art you paint directly on a wall in your classroom or bedroom.

Project #3: Wall Mural

Creating a mural directly on a wall requires permission (from parents or teachers), a great idea, the right kinds of art materials, organization, and a lot of hard work. It is important to start with a theme, and to create several sketches in an effort to develop a final idea. You may need to combine the sketches of several people to develop a cohesive image for the mural. Enlarge the sketch using an overhead projector, or by drawing with a grid technique directly on the wall. Practice painting on paper before approaching the wall so that the colors, brushstrokes and style reflect your design. Layer the colors – broad, large areas first, and then work into details. Use an opaque paint like acrylic paint so that it is easy to cover up surfaces (and mistakes!) While painting, keep standing back to see if the overall effect is what you had planned.

A mural can be created on a public surface, like the side of a large fence, a brick wall, or a train car.

Project #4: Public Mural

Organizing a public mural is an incredible amount of work. For suggestions about how to accomplish this successfully in your neighborhood or school, consult with the Philadelphia Mural Arts program at www.muralarts.org/ or the Cambridge Arts Council at www.cambridgema.gov/~cac/exhibitions_past_walls.html. Both of these organizations have developed incredible public art programs.



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