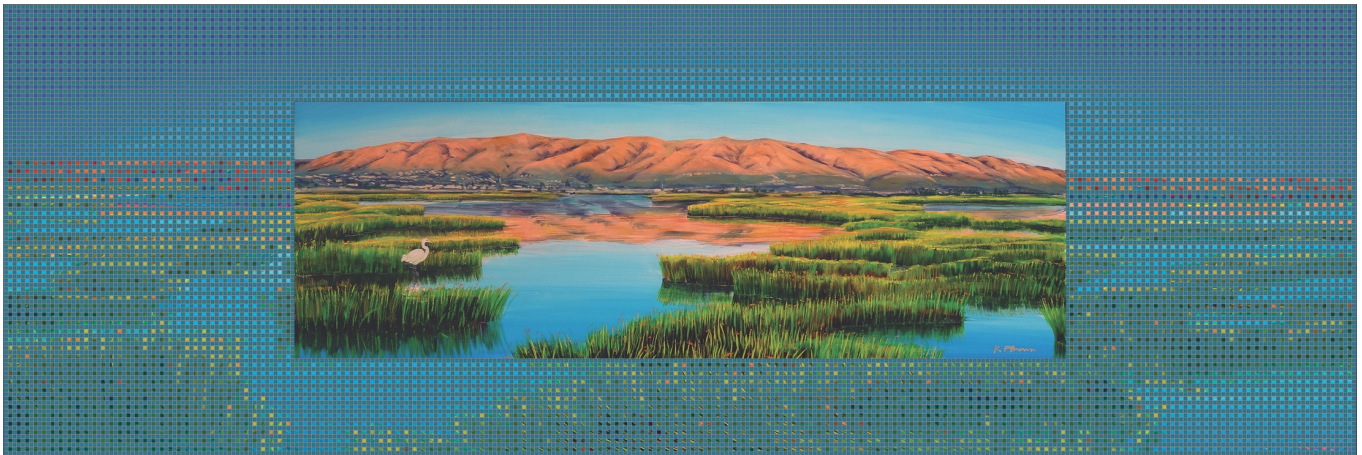


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Mountain View Community Center

Exterior Art Proposal



Mountains and Bay - design for glass mosaic © Kathleen Frugé Brown 2016

I propose to create an 8' x 24' glass mosaic for the Mountain View Community Center exterior art site #1, based on a design similar to my oil study, Mountains and Bay (with possible revisions, to be made in collaboration with the art committee).



The major criteria which guided me as I developed this proposal were:

- my desire to bring a sense of place to the community, and a sense of home to users of the Community Center;
- the committee's expressed interest in celebrating their landscape and place in the natural world;
- the importance of a durable, low-maintenance medium which would bring color and a hand-made feel to the artwork.

Arriving at Imagery—a sense of place

The Community Center serves the whole city from its place in the San Antonio district of Mountain View—the district identified in city planning as most in need of parks and open space, largely due to its density of population in general and children in particular. The city itself lies between two mountain ranges in the Santa Clara Valley, with a saltwater shoreline that is in process of being restored after decades of development. As I researched this amazing geography, I was struck with the contrast between Mountain View's dizzying growth since it became the birthplace of the Silicon Valley, and the serene magnificence of its natural world. The project took on, for me, the sense of mission which enlivens the best public art opportunities: a chance to celebrate with residents, and strengthen their connection with, the natural world in which they have put down their roots.

My approach to choosing imagery for public art always starts, if possible, with input from local residents. In this preliminary design for Mountain View Community Center, I've tried to give a clear idea of the kind of composition and technique I'd use for the final mosaic. But online research can't substitute for local knowledge; feedback from the committee could help me revise the design to have greater meaning and impact for residents of Mountain View. For example, I depicted the Mission Peak Range, largely because I found references identifying it as visible from Mountain View's Shoreline Park. But might a view of the Santa Cruz Range resonate more powerfully with residents? I've depicted an egret; would a clapper rail have more significance?



I'd also love to hear the committee's thoughts on depicting a specific, recognizable view, as opposed to an invented landscape combining features that perhaps can't be seen in any one 'real' place. For example, my research led me to the tidal salt marshes which once formed a complex habitat of channels and salt pans between land and Bay. The marshes are in process of being restored, and my preliminary proposal celebrates that fact with a vision of the marshes, not as they are, but as they might have been a century ago, and as they may be in the future. Another valid approach might be to depict the estuary as it is now, in our historical moment, with a view from a recognizable vantage point.

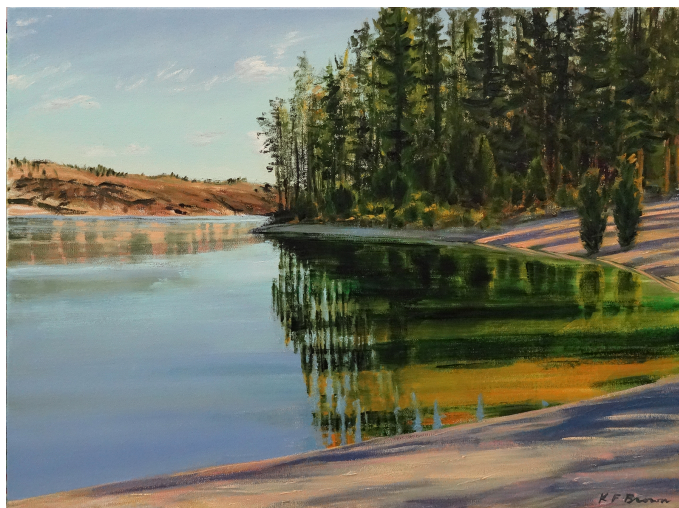
In a recent mosaic commission, I used both approaches: one mosaic depicting an exact, beloved spot that was quite recognizable to the community (*Porcupine Bay*, right); in a companion piece I combined numerous drawings and photographs of their high country plains and fields into one invented panorama (*Wheat Country*, next page; both commissioned by WA Arts in partnership with the Davenport School District.)





Mosaic—vitality and detail in a durable, low-maintenance medium

The exterior of a civic building is a challenging setting for an artwork, no matter its size. The site requires both a bold design (to have an impact on viewers hurrying by) and a high level of detail (to reward close, repeated viewing). The ancient medium of mosaic combines a strong graphic “punch” of gorgeous color with the human-scale, handmade surface qualities of the cut glass. It is extremely durable, UV-resistant, and needs minimal maintenance.



Mosaic is a technique which stylizes a design, and it’s important to recognize the ways in which a design changes as it is rendered in cut glass. The original oil painting for *Porcupine Bay* (left) shows the source for the design; a comparison with the final mosaic (pictured above, p. 3) will give an idea of the translation the Mountain View design will undergo as it is rendered in cut glass.

Fabrication

My design makes the most of the project budget by extending the colors of the central image throughout a patterned 'frame'; this gives the illusion that the landscape continues beyond the high-focus central area, as if behind a veil of color. The imagery in the center of the panel will be hand-cut and hand-set, using a cutting technique which abstracts and stylizes the depictions. The 'frame' will be made of the same glass tile as the imagery areas, but will be created by starting with commercial field tiles of the dominant color (in this case, I've tentatively chosen a low-saturation green-blue). One quarter of the uniform-color tiles will then be replaced, with tiles that carry the color of the image area across through the frame area. This will allow more of the budget to be allocated to the labor of hand-creating the mosaic in the central area, imparting a feeling of focus to the central depiction. The frame area will enlarge the landscape visually, giving the feeling that it continues on beyond its borders.

Working with the assistance of experienced mosaicist Monique Catino, I will fabricate the mosaic in the studio for later installation on site. I will begin by rendering the final design of the central panel at full-scale in acrylic on heavy craft paper, with special attention to the direction of strokes, in order to establish the lines of laying for the cut tiles. The tile setting will be done in sections directly over the preparatory painting, which will first be covered with transparent plastic, then with the mesh to which the tiles will be glued.

The tiles in the central panel will be hand-cut and glued to the backing mesh. (To the right is a photo of my assistant Monique at work on that stage of the process on *Porcupine Bay*.) The pre-set field tiles for the 'frame' areas come from the supplier mounted on mesh. One-quarter of these tiles will be peeled off in the studio, to allow individual tiles to be re-set to carry the colors of the landscape imagery through the frame.

When both the frame and the hand-cut central panel are completed, the mesh with its glued tiles will be cut into pieces approximately 1 sq. ft., so that they can be safely handled during transport and installation.



Installation

At this point there are still questions about the wall surface, but the basic techniques for the installation will differ only slightly depending on whether the mosaic is installed directly on the wall or on a substrate:

- 1) The wall will be prepared. If working directly on the wall, any grooves will be filled with SILK Patching and Finishing Compound, and the walls will be prepped with RedGard Waterproofing and Crack Prevention Membrane. If working over a substrate of concrete board, Wedi-board, or similar product, seams will be similarly prepped after the board is affixed to the studs of the wall.
- 2) Working from center, we will apply to the wall Custom Building Products' Glass Tile Premium Polyblend White Thin-Set Mortar (with acrylic mortar ad-mix), using a 3/16" V-notch trowel; we will back-butter each mesh section with mortar and apply the meshed tile to wall in 1 sq. ft. sections. Grout joints will be aligned between sections using 1/16" spacers and gently beating with wood block and hammer. Each section will be checked and any extra mortar removed before it can dry. Schluter's Schiene anodized aluminum framing material will be used to surround the installation to protect the edges from damage; it will be anchored in the mortar at the same time the tile is installed.
- 3) Mortar will be allowed to cure for 24 hours, then tile will be grouted in small sections using Custom Building Products' Fusion Pro Grout using a rubber grout float. After 10 minutes, each section will be wiped with damp sponges; finally, tiles will be buffed with dry microfiber cloth to remove any residual grout haze. (Fusion Pro Grout is a state-of-the-art acrylic/ silicone resin grout which requires no sealer.) Finally, the top edge only of the installation will be sealed with a bead of Custom Building Products' 100% Silicone Caulk.

Conservation and Maintenance

Glass mosaics are simply cleaned, annually or more frequently as needed, with non-ammonia glass cleaner and a lint-free cloth. Depending on the overhang of the building and the mosaic's exposure to rain, the top bead of silicone may need to be renewed every 1-3 years.

Timeline

Assuming design finalization takes place by October 2016, the mosaic should be completed in 8 -10 months, and will be ready for installation before October 2017. It should be noted that the installation will require about a week of dry weather.

Estimated Budget

artist design fee	6,000.
insurance	1,150.
tile (@ approx. \$25/sq. ft. x 192 sq. ft.)	4,800.
tools, mesh, glue, etc.	500.
fabrication labor (2 hrs./sq. ft. for frame, 7 hrs./sq. ft. for image: 892 hours @ \$50/hr.)	37,950.
identification plaque	200.
installation labor and supplies	5,500.
installation per diem, artist (200./day x 3 days)	600.
5.5% contingency	<u>3,300.</u>
TOTAL	\$60,000.