



Utility Box Mural Painting Guide PDF

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Summary:

A thorough how-to guide on painting murals on utility boxes for community beautification projects. In this crash course you will learn how to prepare, plan and execute murals for virtually any mural project you take on.

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- Materials and Paint Checklist:
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- Recommendations directly from SDG&E Procedure Form
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- General Do's and Don'ts
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General Timeline:

Site Visit

- Take photos
- Inspect if the surface requires extensive prep or repairs prior to painting

Discuss Budget, Art Direction, and Deadline

- Budget will help the artist create the artwork within the budget

Deposit & Contract

- 50% deposit is an industry standard as well as a fully executed agreement. The 50% deposit should also include a design fee to cover design time and possible revisions.
- The exception for a deposit is usually for smaller scale projects or projects under 1,000.00 in value so we suggest no deposit is required for utility box mural projects.

Submit Proposal

- This should include a design and cost.

Schedule Production

Material and Paint Procurement

Paint!

Submit Final Invoice and Photos

Materials and Paint Checklist:

Must Have

- Bucket or Aerosol paint suitable for exterior use.
- Exterior primer suitable for metal surfaces
- Paint key or spray caps
- Brushes (Larger brushes will be included)
- Rollers
- Painting Trays
- Drop Cloths
- Painter's Tape
- Chalk, Pencils or Sharpies
- Rags
- Bucket For Water
- Dish Soap
- Utility Boxes
- Paint Cups
- Painting Tape

- Design Printouts
- Stencils (If Applicable)
- Nitrile Gloves
- Trash Bags
- 4 Inch Rollers
- Paint Roller Handles
- Respirator (If working with aerosol paint.)

Nice To Have

- First Aid Kit
- Bottled Water (In case you have to rinse out your eyes or get thirsty.)
- Caution Tape & Cones (Recommended if working in a high traffic pedestrian or working near a busy intersection.)
- Brush Comb (For cleaning brushes.)
- Wire Brush (For cleaning brushes.)
- Step Stool or Ladder
- Knee Pads
- Rolling Cart

Suggested Paint Products:

- Primer that is suitable for metal surfaces. (Kilz and Zinsser work great.)
- Nova Color (available wholesale at www.novacolorpaint.com)
- Sherwin Williams: Accolade Exterior Acrylic Latex, Satin
- Behr Exterior Acrylic Latex
- Dunn Edwards Exterior Acrylic Latex
- Any exterior acrylic latex paint durable enough for the utility box
- Spray paints suitable for exterior use (94, Loop, MTN, Montana brands are good choices.)

Mindful Murals does not recommend the use of oil paints as it is hazardous to the environment.

Personal Safety Checklist

- Wear **sunglasses** to protect your eyes.
- Wear **sunscreen** to protect your skin from harmful UV sun rays.
- Wear a **hat**.
- Wear **old clothes** you don't mind getting paint on.
- Wear **closed-toe shoes** only while painting.
- Use **Gloves**. Avoid getting paint on your skin no matter how safe the paint is.
- Hydrate and take breaks, especially** if you're working in the heat.
- If you get paint in your eye, immediately rinse under running water for 5 minutes.

-Wash the paint off of your skin with warm soapy water and scrub gently until the paint comes off.

Artwork

-It is **best practice** to create public artwork that does not contain religion, sexual content, depictions of illegal activity, or negative and controversial imagery.

-Artwork may not include the **attachment of any object to the utility box** as it can be deemed as a safety liability.

-Artists who represent and warrant the **artwork will not violate or infringe upon trademarks**, trade names, copyrights, patents, right of privacy or publicity, or any other personal or property rights of any person or entity, nor constitute defamation.

-**Art changes once production** has begun should be managed as a Change Order. Cost should be disclosed by the artist to the client before proceeding.

Scheduling

Be sure to check the weather a few days in advance to ensure weather is suitable for painting. It is a good idea to communicate with the client closely and work as planned unless there are delays such as: rain, floods, earthquakes, and or other acts of mother nature.

Setting Up

-Grab a 5 gallon bucket with a lid, add water and soap in the bucket to clean brushes in.

-Lay the drop cloths down on the floor directly below where you plan on painting. Use painter's tape to line the edges.

-Have a designated area for all of your supplies and for brush cleaning and paint mixing.

-Make sure walk-ways are clear of anything you can step or trip on. If needed, tape off the work area so no one touches wet paint.

-Paint using one color a time per person. Always keep the paint cans covered when they are not being used so the top layer does not turn into a dry film.

-When distributing paint, pour a little in a cup or tray at a time so paint is not wasted.

-To save paint in cups, cover with foil or plastic to be reused again later.

Utility Box Painting Steps

-**Tape** over SDG&E safety and number decals.

-**Sand** surface with fine grade sand paper (suggested by not required).

-**Prime** surface or use paint/primer combo suitable for metal surfaces.

-**Sketch** your design onto the utility box using the grid, doodle, transfer paper, or projection or freehand method. Chalk, crayons, color or graphite pencils or sharpies will work depending on how apparent you need the linework.

-**Paint** 2-3 layers of the top coat for maximum durability and opacity. Generally, we

suggest painting lighter or more transparent colors first and overcorrecting with darker colors for cleaner lines.

-Apply UV or Graffiti Sealant (This is not recommended by Mindful Murals as it is more cost effective to come back and touch up without stripping off sealant first however it is up to the artist and client to make the final call.)

Recommendations directly from SDG&E Procedure Form

- “• Painting of pad-mounted equipment is restricted to main transportation corridors and business corridors.
- Once identified, the SDG&E equipment must be inspected by SDG&E personnel and deemed safe for the customer to move forward with painting.
- Decals, numbers, letter on pad-mounted equipment are NOT to be covered with paint.
- If light rust is present on SDG&E equipment; scrub lightly with a nylon abrasive pad to remove any small surface areas on the equipment. Furthermore, wide down and remove any loose dirt and debris before painting. If severe rust is identified upon arrival, please notify the Regional Public Affairs Manager.
- Tape over the decals, numbers, hinges, and any opening that would make servicing the equipment difficult. [DO NOT PAINT OVER THE NUMBERS, DECALS, OR HINGES.](#)
 - The tape should be immediately removed upon the completion of the painting.
 - Avoid painting the concrete or fiber base under the equipment as it may peel away.
- Upon completion, please dispose of all cleaning and painting materials in an environmentally safe and legal manner. “

Cleaning Up

-Dry brushes after cleaning with soap and water and lay flat to dry. Clean your brush hourly with a wire brush or tooth comb to remove dry paint. It is easier to paint with a clean brush.

-Make sure paint can lids are secured tight when not in use. Use a hammer if necessary to secure lids and tape for reinforcement.

-Pour dirty paint water in a sink that can be treated and recycled or contact your local paint drop off location.

-Dust off and fold up all drop cloths.

- Paints should be stored at room temperature for longer shelf life out of direct sunlight.
- Wash hands with soap and water to remove dirt and paint.

Damages & Wear and Tear

- Artists shall not be responsible for any damages to murals stemming from wear and tear or vandalism once the work day has ended or the job has been completed.
- Touch ups should be treated as a new work order and cost determined by the artist.

General Do's and Don'ts

- Generally speaking, painting should be painted from **background to foreground, top to bottom, and light to dark**. It is easier to over-correct when you paint a new color on top of the existing color. Working top to bottom allows you to avoid any drips on finished bottom layers. Applying lighter colors first is easier to paint over than to paint a light color over dark colors.
- Keep your work area **clean** and **organized** and **out of the way from foot or car traffic**.
- Put brushes in water when not in use**. Do not leave brushes out for long periods of time with paint on the bristles. This will damage your brush permanently as it is very difficult to get dried paint off completely.
- Make sure to paint each area to fill in any holes and gaps. This may take a few layers.
- Paint over the guidelines and allow the paint colors to meet up edge-to-edge to have a complete flushed look.
- Clean your brushes** every few hours with a wire brush or tooth comb to remove dried paint. It is easier to paint with a clean brush.
- Pour unused paint back into containers to not waste paint. Only **save paint** that is salvageable.
- Reuse any plastic cups** as paint containers. Leave wet paint cups out to dry and then stack when dry to put them away. Reduce and reuse whenever possible.
- Communicate** with your client as to the timeline, progress, and don't forget to snap some photos to share with them how much progress you've made. Building credibility and trust with people who hire you is extremely important and could generate future sales.
- Take pictures and have fun!** This is definitely an experience you will want to remember and share! :)

Examples of Design Proposals

A) Mockup vs Actual Mural



B) Mockup vs Actual Mural

