

Information about the Franklin Blvd. Plein Air Project

The Franklin Urban Plein Air Project is a temporary public art project featuring 25 artworks painted on the facades of businesses, schools and other locations along Franklin Boulevard in Sacramento. The project debuted on Second Saturday in September 2009 and included bus tours, lectures, art walks, and an artist-in-schools program at three area schools. The project brought attention and new customers to the businesses on Franklin Boulevard. It was featured on the front page of the Sacramento Bee's Ticket, and local TV stations carried the story.

A PDF of the map illustrating the locations of the artworks is available at the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission, the North Franklin Business District, and can be downloaded on the Arts Commission website, www.SacMetroArts.org.

More information about the project:

Sometimes we don't see where we live: the architecture, landscape, streetscape, design, beauty, ugliness, poverty, wealth, diversity, standardization, the generic and the unique. Rather we "feel" the absence of what makes a place a community and what makes a community home.

Inspired partly by artist, Ellen Harvey's New York Beautification Project and partly by Architect, Mary deLaittre's curriculum designed to "make neighborhoods visible"; the Urban Plein Air Project is intended to encourage dialogue and exchange about neighborhood, community, and the urban landscape, but more importantly about how urban design can affect a community's fate.

Franklin Urban Plein Air had three components; a temporary public art along the Blvd., an artist's in schools program at three local schools, and a traditional exhibition at the neighborhood's Tangent Gallery.

The temporary public art project features 25 artworks painted on the facades of businesses, churches, schools, and other locations along the street. The artworks are painted in the style called "Plein Air", a French term meaning 'in the open air' which refers to a process in which the artist paints a subject, on location, which is within his or her immediate view. In this case, the participating artists focused on the colorful sites along Franklin Blvd. The paintings and the unique perspective of the artist's, are meant to be visible from a car in transit, but viewed more intimately at a pedestrian level. They are purposefully restricted in size and at first glance seem to be more appropriate for a living room than the side of a building on a major Sacramento street. The paintings are meant to be temporary and could last from a few days (if struck by graffiti) or up to 10 years (if the people who do business and live in the neighborhood agree).

The mural project kicked off an artist residency program in 3 local schools, teaching 4th grade students' visual arts skills while they looked again at the businesses, organizations, natural vistas and homes that comprise their Franklin Boulevard community. Students viewed the plein air paintings to explore how art can communicate ideas and to identify what the artists were trying to reveal about their neighborhood. Artists taught students to use visual arts to explore their community and to create their own vision for its future. The teaching artists painted three of the 25 murals, which coincided with the 4th grade students' curriculum.

An exhibition of work at the Tangent Gallery on November 14, 2009, featured the work of all of the artists participating in the project.

Special Thanks to Tangent Gallery, the participating business and property owners, Council Member Lauren Hammond, County Supervisor Roger Dickinson, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA), North Franklin District Business Association, and the Sacramento Unified School District for making the project possible.

On September 17, 2010, the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission received the North Franklin District's President's Award in recognition of The Franklin Urban Plein Air Project.



Carlin Naify, then Chair of the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission accepts the President's Award at the Annual North Franklin Business District Luncheon, on September 17, 2010.





