

**REPORT FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT HILO
MARINE OPTION PROGRAM**

Marine Option Program (MOP) Mural Re-installation Project

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Abstract

Throughout the world, murals are a form of public art that can transform places into more desirable destinations. Murals are used to convey a variety of messages and are painted for different reasons. Today, ecological murals are used to promote awareness and help communities discuss issues concerning their environment. In the spring of 2017, we reinstalled a mural painting on the wall of the shipping container used by the Marine Science department. The purpose of this project is to beautify and enhance this particular area for students who pass by or utilize it and to deliver a message on the importance of our marine environment. Designing and painting of this mural was carried out using the grid method to help give us a great point of reference for where everything is and how large it is in relation with everything else. As a result of this project, we were able to complete this mural in accordance with the design provided or chosen. However, due to the noticeable plain view of the mural wall, additional organisms were included in the design.

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Introduction

Murals are a form of public art that captures public attention and cause viewers to explore the meaning behind them and what stories they tell (Song & Gammel 2011). According to Kayzar (2016), it is accepted that the art can transform places into a more desirable destination. They can beautify and enhance an urban environment and can be used to deliver a variety of messages painted for different reasons. Murals can express feelings, build a sense of community, and they can make an area welcoming and walkable. As a form of public art, murals serve as sites where people can socially interact. They are installed in places that people come to visit, work, study, play, and congregate. As well, to discuss matters that may relate to the content of the mural (Asare et al. 2013) or something in their daily lives.

However, due to many of the global issues concerning our environment today, murals have a much greater purpose. Murals can be effective tools for helping communities discuss issues about their environment that need to be addressed. (Song & Gammel 2011). Additionally, promotes awareness, engagement and activism around major environmental issues. Today, we have witnessed many ecological murals illustrating the importance of our land, our ocean and our environment as a whole. With the influence of art, we have fewer problems merging together with our own cultural values and our knowledge in science.

The main objective of this project is to reinstall a mural at UH Hilo Marine Science area (Figure 1). The goals are not only to continue to beautify and enhance this area but also to illustrate the importance of our marine environment to the community.



Figure 1. Wall of container for the mural project. Hilo, HI (2017)

Methods

On March 2017, a new mural was painted on a storage-shipping container (2.5 x 13.5m²) on UH Hilo campus located between the Wentworth and Marine Science building (Fig.1). Prior to the installation of this mural project, planning played a vital part. With careful planning and consideration to techniques and materials this helped us

Scaling the Design to a Mural Size

To scale the design to mural size we used the grid method, one of the easiest ways to transfer a design onto a large wall surface. Additionally, using a grid can help give us a great point of reference for where everything is and how large it is in relation with everything else. Therefore, prior to splitting the drawing into grid squares in proportion to the wall. We replicate the squares from the referential design into the corresponding squares on the wall surface.

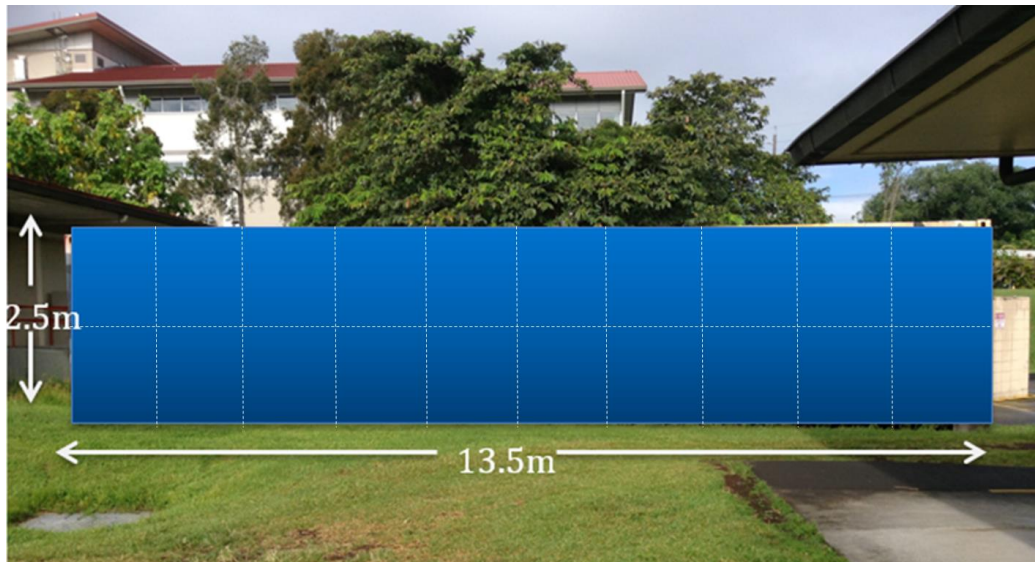


Figure 3. Measuring the wall of the container for scaling to paper size. Hilo, HI (2017)



Figure 4. Design for the mural project. (2017).

Mural preparation

During this mural installation, we documented and photographed the progress from the beginning to the end. We started with conducting a small-scale cleanup around the container as well as the area where we would be working. This included weeding out overgrown grass that gets in the way of painting and removing trash, rocks and other objects that may hinder or cause harms to those involved. We then began prepping the wall of the container by cleaning the surface thoroughly, which was done by power

washing (Fig. 5) the whole surface. We then allowed it to dry for 10-15 minutes.



Figure 5. a and b) Anthony Sagapoluteles and Natasha Ripley power washing the container. c) A view of the container after power washing and removing weeds around it (2017).

Mural Installation

Once the wall was dry, we applied three coats of highly quality (HQ) water-based primer (semi-gloss) (Fig.6). After each application, we waited 5-10 minutes before applying subsequent coats. By waiting this amount of time, the paint was allowed to dry and not be ruined by layering multiple coats.



Figure 6. a and b) Leilua and Natasha applying 3 coats of primer. c) View of the container after applying 3 coatings of white primer on the surface (2017).

When the white primer finally dried, we began sketching the gridlines on the wall (Fig. 7). We then outlined the design while at the same time other volunteers started painting the background with the selected shade of blue.

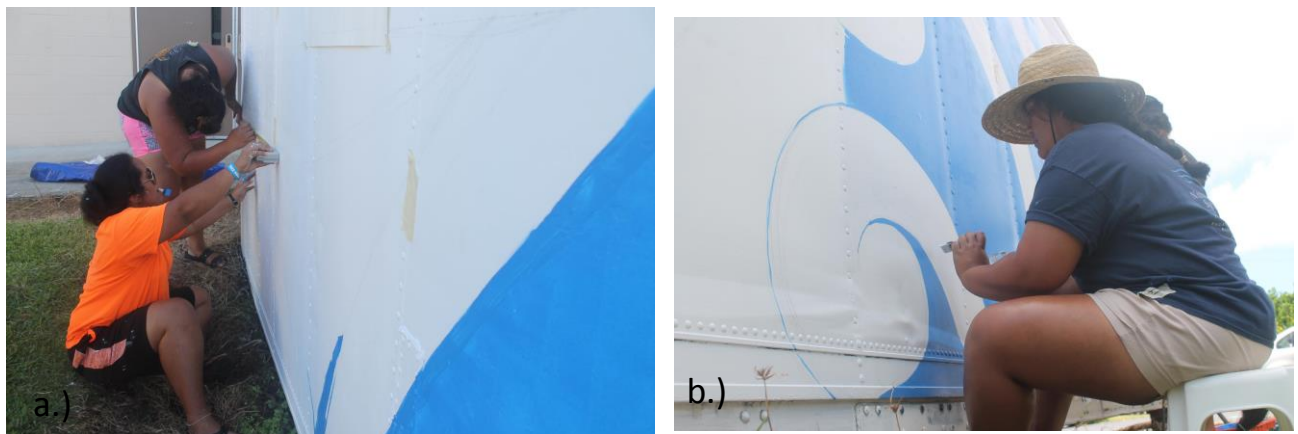




Figure 7. a) Leilua helping out with sketching the gridlines and the designs on the wall. **b)** Natosha started painting the sketched design outline. **c)** Students all working together to filled in the outlines of the design (2017).

After the background was complete, we continued painting other areas such as the cupping hands and the breaching whale using different shades of green and mixing of colors. The detailed images created required the use of different sizes of paintbrushes, colors and techniques to give the design the ideal texture and color (Fig. 7a and 7b).



Figure 7. a and b) Leilua, Anthony and Natosha painting the cupping hands with different shades of green (2017).

Result

After 1-3 days/weeks, the mural painting was completed. The design was brought to life and will hopefully allow audiences to understand the meaning behind it (Fig. 8). However, after reviewing the final product, we observed evident empty spaces on the final painting of the wall. I decided to enhance the original design and included more

marine organisms as well as color to fill these spaces (Fig. 9 & Fig. 10). Therefore, more organisms will be added in the future as well as plants to improve the design of the mural wall.



Figure 8. View of the mural wall after painting it with our chosen design.Hilo, HI (2017).



Figure 9. A view of organisms that were later added to the mural wall. Hilo, HI (2017).

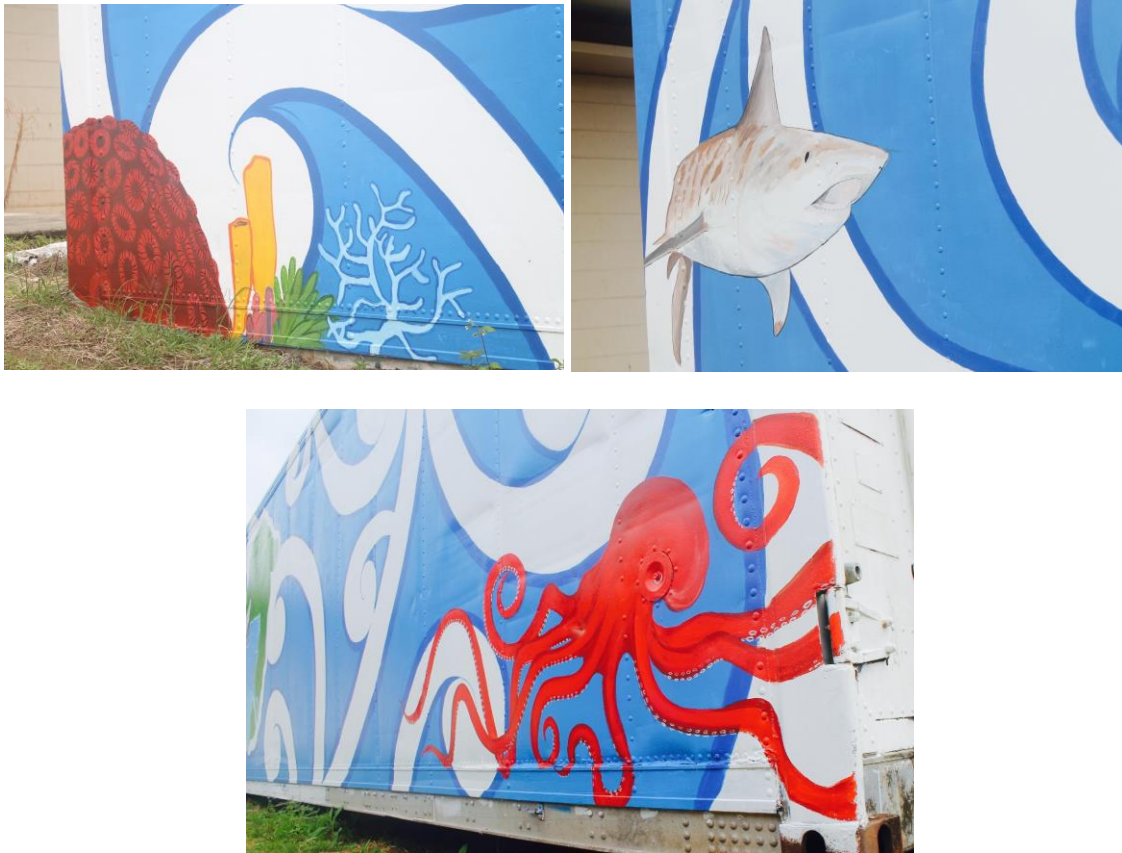


Figure 10. Several organisms added to the mural wall. Hilo, HI (2017).

Discussion

While working on the Marine Science Department mural there were a few setbacks that delayed its progress. One of the main ones was coming up with a design. Designing the mural was probably the most difficult part of planning because of the limited artistic skills brought forth by different individuals who have not painted or drawn before. Therefore, a simple design was made possible for the volunteers (especially this small group of people) to paint, which required minimal work with color shading and less detail.

In addition to designing, choosing color for the details of the design was more difficult than we assumed, even though selecting color for the wave patterns was unproblematic. Deciding on the color for the hands, however, took significant time. We were indecisive about whether we should paint them like human hands or if they should match the color of the wave patterns in the background. Luckily, a student suggested the hands of the fictional character Te Fiti from the Disney movie *Moana*, so we decided to use green, which also represents our lands.

Time was also another setback that we faced, mainly because attempting to work on the mural as much as possible during the week of Spring Break was difficult due to the availability of the volunteers. But gladly, much of work on the mural was completed in the first three days of the week allowing for rest time afterwards.

During the painting period, the unpredictable weather in Hilo presented more challenges. Rain can cause the previously painted areas to run (Fig. 11) but sunshine can

lead to uncomfortable working conditions for everyone in the blazing. Therefore, we decided to paint early in the morning, then relax or take break and begin again around 2:00 pm when shade became available in our working area.



Figure 11. Anthony pointing to the blue paint running down after it rains (2017).

Despite setbacks concerning the design and the weather, this ecological mural aims to highlight the importance of our marine environment as well organism that are threatened by our actions. The cupping of hands can metaphorically be viewed as the “Hands of Mother Nature” who gives and takes what belongs to here. The reinstallation of the mural hopes to beautify this area, promote interactions and generate conversations between students and viewers.

Acknowledgements

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