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Ventura Streetscape Mural Project turns streets into art gallery

Pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers and passersby will soon enjoy more public art as Ventura's Public Art Program has commissioned four local artists to transform utility boxes/traffic control boxes into new public artworks. The Ventura Streetscape Mural Project aims to engage community members in the arts and "soften" the city's hard infrastructure, such as bus shelters and utility boxes that house traffic signal controllers.

Started in 2007 with nine painted utility boxes, the Streetscape Mural Project continues beyond the downtown area to bring community participation and publicly accessible artwork into many of Ventura's neighborhoods. "This project has had a positive impact in minimizing graffiti in Ventura's vibrant downtown business district and will now serve to bring works of art to the Westside, Midtown and Pierpont neighborhoods, in addition to two new painted boxes downtown", stated Mayor Cheryl Heitmann.

In support of this next phase, the Downtown Ventura Partners are providing funding for the paint for this project.

Selected on a competitive basis, the four participating artists reflect a diversity of painting styles and techniques. These artists will begin painting August 13 – 30, and are expected to be completed by the end of September.

"Hope Chest" at the corner of Santa Clara and California Streets

Professional artist and art teacher, **Michelle Gould** wanted to create a playful design in which the traffic control box is of a faux wood grained cabinet with a small child peeking out of the cabinet doors.

"The Perspective" at the corner of Thompson Blvd. and Ventura Avenue Artist **Jon Nelson** designed a box using angular and linear abstract shapes that he hopes will "inspire people and give them something new to look at in their own perspective."

"Sunset of the Blue Heron" at the corner of Thompson Blvd and Chestnut Street Professional artist and art instructor, **Patricia Cadenas**, designed a beautifully detailed box in which each panel could be it's own composition or all the panels together can become one whole composition.

Ocean scenery will be featured at the corner of Seaward Avenue and Harbor Blvd.

Professional artist **Cathy Winton's** seascape will feature the beautiful Channel Islands and many species of local sea life.

Design proposals are still being accepted for additional locations throughout the city. The application and RFP are available online at www.cityofventura.net/artopps.

Ventura's Public Art program, established in 1991, sets aside 2% of Capital Improvement Project costs for the commissioning of artists and artist's services. The Public Art Commission, a seven member volunteer council advisory group, oversees the program by approving artists, designs, and Annual Public Art Work Plans.

For more information contact Tobie Roach, Public Art Project Manager, (805) 658-4759.