

Paper Mache for 7-18-25 by David Read

Public art is once again in the news in Yuba-Sutter. Last year, we added two significant works of art to our region's outdoor art gallery as I like to call it. First was the Mural Marathon in April of 2024 which saw the successful completion of a five mural display on the Church Street side of the Sutter Theater Center for the Arts, funded by a grant obtained by the Yuba Sutter Rotary Night Club. Then in September, we witnessed the dedication of the Cotton Rosser bronze statue in Marysville, a project managed initially by Yuba Sutter Arts & Culture.

Next up are two murals coming to Tower Plaza on Plumas Street. The City of Yuba City has hired Yuba Sutter Arts & Culture to manage the creation of murals on the adjoining walls to the park space under the iconic water tower that will complement the redevelopment of that space. With funding provided by a grant the City received and additional funding provided by the Blue Zones Project, the new murals will depict a bit of local history along with images related to health and wellness. We chose local artist, Madelyne Templeton for the project based on her exceptional record of delivering high quality art and her national reputation as a respected muralist. Madelyne was principal artist for many of the utility box murals around town and also created the 120' long mural, "Coming to America" adjacent to the Buddhist Church in Marysville and was also part of the mural marathon.

Speaking of mural artists, there is some interesting legislation we've been following as it works its way through the legislature. Senate Bill 456, authored by Senator Angelique Ashby (D-Sacramento), creates a critical exemption for mural artists under California's Contractors State License Law. Currently, muralists who paint public artworks must hold a C-33 contractor license when commissioned for projects exceeding \$1,000. This requirement has halted dozens of mural initiatives in cities like Sacramento, Stockton, Milpitas, and Palo Alto, stifling public art and employment opportunities for artists. SB456 clarifies that artists who "draw, paint, apply, execute, restore, or conserve" a mural under a legitimate agreement are exempt from contractor licensure. The bill narrowly defines a mural as a unique hand-painted work protected under copyright, excluding commercial signage. For mural artists, SB456 removes burdensome requirements like apprenticeships, business law exams, bonding, and licensing that rarely align with fine art practice. Advocates argue the reform will revive public art programs, help artists earn a living, and enhance community pride through visible art. The bill passed unanimously in the Senate committee and is advancing to appropriations. If enacted, SB456 will likely contribute to a vibrant renaissance in California's mural culture, unleashing creative expression and lifting economic barriers for artists statewide. SB456 is currently in the "Engrossed" status, meaning it has passed through the Senate and has been sent to the Assembly where it is now before the Appropriations Committee.

Despite all of the murals we have contracted over the years in Yuba-Sutter working with artists from all over the state and country, until SB456 surfaced I did not know about the licensure requirement. And for the record, to obtain a C-33 license requires a minimum of four years of journeyman level experience. Once that has been accomplished the process takes three months from initial application through testing and final approval. The cost is upwards of \$4,000 including insurance, bonding, legal and CSLB fees. Let's all hope the Assembly does the right thing and approves the important piece of legislation which will eliminate a major obstacle to the creation of more great public art in our state.