



Friedman Alley

THIS WAY TO THE WONDER OF WAUKESHA
WHERE THE RIVER MEETS THE CITY

Mural Design Proposal: “The Foxes of Friedman Alley”



This is a preliminary design proposal for the Friedman Alley Murals at the Thomas Press Building (Mural Areas One and Two). The artwork will be painted on exterior-grade panels or a similar durable surface, as requested by the building owner, and securely affixed to the wall. Panel materials and installation methods will be selected to ensure the artwork withstands weather conditions while preserving fine detail, color vibrancy, and long-term durability. Final artwork dimensions may be adjusted based on panel availability. This proposal represents the design concept for the primary panel; a complementary design will be developed for the second, smaller panel to align with and extend the overall aesthetic.

The color palette will be refined following an on-site assessment to respond to the surrounding environment. A lighter teal-forward option or a deeper, evening-inspired palette may be selected, with final colors chosen to complement nearby architectural elements and the overall character of the area.



Design Concept:

Artist Proposal

Artist: Thyla Arden / Unnaturell Design Co

Location: 920 Friedman Drive, Waukesha, WI

Proposed Installation: Spring / Summer 2026

Project Overview

This proposal presents an original mural design for one or both designated locations on the Thomas Press Building, as identified in the Friedman Alley Placemaking Plan. The artwork draws inspiration from Friedman Alley's role as a connective corridor between the Fox River and Downtown Waukesha, emphasizing movement and discovery.

The murals will be painted on durable, exterior-grade panels and installed on the building to ensure longevity. The design approach incorporates Art Nouveau–influenced elements and local references, creating an inviting visual presence that supports placemaking and public engagement.

Artistic Concept:

The central imagery features symmetrical fox figures, a recurring symbol throughout Waukesha's visual identity and a nod to the nearby Fox River. The foxes are rendered in an elegant, Art Nouveau–inspired style, forming a balanced composition that also functions as a visual frame and photo moment for visitors passing through the alley.

The foxes appear to “hold up” or support the space, acting as guardians of the alley and guiding viewers inward. Flowing water motifs weave through the composition, referencing the Fox River and the movement between natural and urban spaces. Surrounding florals and celestial elements, stars rising upward toward the sky, symbolize creativity, wonder, and the imaginative spirit of Waukesha.

Select details within the mural may incorporate subtle metallic accents, such as gold leaf or gold-toned finishes, applied sparingly to catch light and add depth while maintaining the overall cohesion and longevity of the artwork.

Together, these elements visually connect the river, alley, and city while celebrating the wonder found in everyday passageways.

Mural Area One – South Wall

Maximum Size: Approximately 14 feet wide by 13 feet high

Medium: Painted panel, affixed to wall

The larger mural will act as the **primary focal point** of the project. Two symmetrical foxes anchor the composition, framing the alley and creating an inviting photo opportunity for pedestrians. Water motifs flow between and around the figures, while florals and celestial imagery extend upward, enhancing the sense of wonder and movement. This mural is designed to be bold, legible from a distance, and engaging up close.

Mural Area Two – South Wall

Maximum Size: Approximately 4 feet wide by 12 feet high

Medium: Painted panel, affixed to wall

This vertical mural will function as a companion to the larger mural. The design will align with the primary artwork through consistent color and composition, supporting the overall theme while fitting within the smaller wall area.

Lettering

The current design concept includes the phrase “Friedman Alley - This Way to the Wonder of Waukesha, Where the River Meets the City.” The inclusion of lettering is optional and can be adjusted based on City and stakeholder preference. If preferred, the text may be removed and the space reimaged with additional illustrative design elements that align with and enhance the overall visual narrative of the mural.

Materials & Installation

- Exterior-grade acrylic paints
- Sealed and protected panels suitable for Wisconsin weather conditions
- UV-resistant and weatherproof coatings
- Artist-managed installation in coordination with City requirements

All materials and methods will ensure durability, safety, and long-term visual impact.

Community & Placemaking Impact

This project supports the goals of the Friedman Alley Placemaking Plan by:

- Enhancing pedestrian experience and wayfinding
- Encouraging public interaction and photo engagement
- Reflecting Waukesha’s natural environment and creative spirit
- Strengthening the alley as a welcoming connector between river and city

Conclusion

This mural proposal offers a cohesive, site-specific artwork that celebrates Friedman Alley as a place of transition, imagination, and wonder. Through symbolic imagery, thoughtful composition, and durable craftsmanship, the project aims to contribute a lasting and meaningful visual landmark to Downtown Waukesha.

Thank you for your consideration.



PROJECT ESTIMATE:

Client: City of Waukesha

Project: “The Foxes of Friedman Alley” site 1 and 2, Waukesha Friedman Alley

Artist: Thyla Arden – Unnaturell Design Co

PROJECT DIMENSIONS

Description

Dimensions

Area

Main Panel Group

14 ft × 13 ft

182 sq ft

Secondary Panel Group

2 ft × 14 ft

28 sq ft

Total Paintable Area

210 sq ft

Service	Description	Cost
Artist Design Fee	Concept development, design refinement, and preparation of final mural plan	\$500.00
Panel Materials	Exterior-grade Medium Density Overlay (MDO) panels, sealed and prepared for mural painting (approximately 5–6 panels required)	679.68 – \$1000
Panel Installation & Hardware	Professional installation including layout, framing, mounting hardware, anchoring, and labor	\$1,200.00 – \$2,000.00
Labor (Painting & Detailing)	Hand-painted mural with hand-painted lettering on installed panels, including surface priming, paint, and preparation materials. \$25/sq ft × 210 sq ft	\$5,250.00
Protective Coating	UV-, weather-, and graffiti-resistant clear coat	Included
Insurance	General liability coverage for project duration	Included

ESTIMATED PROJECT TOTAL

~ \$7,450.00 – \$8,750.00

NOTES & TERMS

- Final panel material selection will be confirmed prior to fabrication.
- Estimated pricing reflects the full 210 sq ft paintable area. Should the final surface area be reduced, overall project pricing will be adjusted accordingly.
- Pricing assumes standard installation conditions.
- Lift rental or specialty access equipment, if required, is not included and may be quoted separately.
- This quote is valid for 30 days from the date of issue.

PANEL INSTALLATION CONSIDERATIONS:

Panel installation requires the use of exterior-rated materials such as CDX, MDO, or ACP panels. Because panel substrates are more sensitive to moisture and temperature changes than direct-to-wall surfaces, all panels must be properly sealed, primed, and treated prior to painting. Panels will be mounted on a framed system that allows for airflow between the panel and wall to reduce moisture buildup and support long-term durability. Any wall penetrations required for installation will be sealed, and stainless steel exterior fasteners and appropriate sealants will be used to prevent rust and moisture intrusion.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACH:

As an alternative to panel installation, the mural may be painted directly onto the wall surface. Painting directly onto the wall is a more cost-effective option, as it eliminates panel fabrication and installation costs. This approach allows for a larger overall surface area to be painted at a similar price point, creating greater visual impact while maintaining the same level of artistic detail and durability. Final feasibility would be dependent on wall condition and surface preparation requirements.

Selected examples of murals painted directly onto exterior wall surfaces, demonstrating scale, durability, and visual impact.



Artist Biography:

Thyla Arden is an artist and muralist based in Caledonia, Wisconsin, known for vibrant murals and illustrative work that blends bold color, pattern, and symbolic imagery. Drawing inspiration from her South African roots and extensive travels, her work often explores themes of nature, myth, and place.

Through public art, Arden aims to transform everyday spaces into moments of connection and curiosity, creating murals that invite engagement and contribute lasting visual impact to their surroundings.

References:

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Articles of mural work:

- <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/local/milwaukee/2024/11/25/milwaukee-has-new-riverwalk-murals-heres-what-to-know-about-them/76425351007/>
- <https://www.milwaukee-downtown.com/bid-basics/community-projects/riverwalk-mural-collection>
- <https://visitdowntownfayetteville.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Press-Release-Old-Street-Oasis-Mural.pdf>
- <https://catholicherald.org/local/new-mural-inspires-community-to-let-your-light-shine/>

A woman with blonde hair in a ponytail, wearing a black long-sleeved shirt and a bright green safety harness, is painting a vibrant mural on a wall. She is holding a paintbrush in her right hand and a pink cup in her left. The mural features large, stylized yellow and pink leaves on a teal background. She is standing on an orange metal scaffolding or ladder. The background shows a chain-link fence and some construction materials.

I look forward to
working with you!

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