

CUTESY MACABRE AND DONNA LEXA MURAL PROPOSAL

Friedman Alley Mural locations (applying for all 3, with modifications to fit the space)

Preferred space: Mural Area 2, 300 West Main Street

Application: painted directly on wall

1. MURAL CONCEPT:





The painting I used for the mock-up of the design on the right is from a community painting we completed in the studio specifically for this mural application, with the actual students who would participate doing the painting (left side is the original community painting)

2. DESIGN CONCEPT AND DESCRIPTION:

My name is Keighley, and I am a muralist (art pseudonym Cutesy Macabre) and an art specialist at Donna Lexa Art Centers in downtown Waukesha. At Donna Lexa Art Centers, we have a constant feature in our studio called the “Community Canvas”. At the end of each class, any student with paint left on their palette is encouraged to add it to the community canvas. In the period of a week, 11 classes and over 75 students have the opportunity to add their touch to a piece of art that is collaborative, reflects their feelings at the end of their session, and belongs to not just one of us, but all of us.

In the design I’ve included above, the background of this piece is one such community piece. The concept is to create a large community canvas piece with the students and teachers at Donna Lexa as the background, and once that is installed, I would come and use the rich blue paint as negative space to carve out the design, and then use a few select colors to highlight the different elements: a Fox, representing the Fox River, curled around a Les Paul, with the border filled with flowers and plants as a nod to Waukesha’s beautiful parks, ice age trail, and Retzner Nature center, intermingling with different art tools and pieces. Waukesha has a thriving artistic community in the form of not only Donna Lexa, but in frequent art crawls each year, a community theater downtown with consistently delightful seasons, and many opportunities and studio spaces for artists.

The style of the mural allows the students at Donna Lexa, those without prior access to art classes and community, to take part in leaving their artistic mark on the town in the form of painting a mural, which increases a feeling of belonging. The style is also reminiscent of the scratch art cards, where a wooden stick is used to scratch off an upper black coating on a paper

to reveal the rainbow underneath. It's a reminder of the importance of play, the power and beauty in community, and the incredible artistic talent of the population we work with at Donna Lexa Art Centers; a statement that disability does not stand in the way of creative ability.

Using a limited palette and defined application rules (that we practiced in our studio on one of our own walls), we will be able to install a piece of art work that is deeply meaningful to all those Donna Lexa Art Centers has served over the years, with a high quality and professional application guided by an experienced muralist.

3. MATERIALS TO BE USED

The primary spot we are applying for and our preferred spot would be Mural Area 2. Being 0.3 miles from our studio (approximately a four minute walk), having our students paint the background onto the actual brick with assistance from the muralist would be preferred. We would be using a limited palette of satin or semi-gloss exterior paint acrylic paint, and I always start with either Kilz 2 or Zissner primer. Once the mural is fully completed and the paint has several days to cure and dry, I will seal the mural with a UV-resistant non-yellowing clear coat to assist in additional protection from the elements.

If our mural proposal (same design, and would shift elements around to fit the new dimensions of the space) was selected for either Mural Area One or Three, then we would be painting our design in-studio on multiple ½ inch thick Falken Design Aluminium Composite panels, and installing them on the building facade. Even when painting on composite panels I always begin with a primer to ensure the most hardy paint application, and will seal the panels as well.

4. TIMELINE

For preferred mural area 2:

From the beginning of the agreed start time, the installation would take approximately 3 weeks, with the potential for an extension due to weather or illness. The first week would be the prep and having any interested parties from each class of students from Donna Lexa adding their touch to the background. The second week would be the lift rental week, where I would start my carving out the designs at the top. I should have a majority of the mural completed by the end of the second week, and the third week would be used for make-up days in case of weather, as well as final details, highlights, shadows, and crisping up edges.

For mural area 1 or 3, the timeline would be similar. The first week, the panels would be painted on by the students in each class, and I would start on the design the fifth day of that week. Due to being inside and therefore not impeded by weather, the painting would be finished by the end of the second week, and the install would happen during the third week.

5. APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS

- Mural area 2, the dimensions would be the full 10x20 area, painted directly on the wall.
- Mural area 1, the dimensions would be 12x12 on the ACM panels installed on the wall.
- Mural area 3, the dimensions would be 8x12 on the ACM panels installed on the wall.

6. COST

- Mural Area 2, \$5000. This includes supplies, scissor lift, and artist fees.
- Mural Area 1, \$6000. This includes the ACM panels, scissor lift rental/delivery and pick-up, supplies, installation, and artist fees.
- Mural Area 3, \$4000. This includes the ACM panels, scissor lift rental/delivery and pick-up, supplies, installation, and artist fees.

Note: the artist fees will be divided between Donna Lexa Art Centers, Cutesy Macabre (the muralist), and the students who participate in the painting of the mural.

7. BIOGRAPHIES OF ARTIST AND COMPANY

- **Donna Lexa Art Centers**

Our namesake Donna Lexa founded the Donna Lexa Art Centers in 1985, after discovering that there were no art classes for people with disabilities in the Waukesha area. Donna Lexa Art Centers is a vibrant, innovative, inclusive art community for young adults and adults of all abilities. Grounded in Donna Lexa's groundbreaking vision that everyone should have access to the arts, the DLAC strives to eliminate barriers to any student who has the desire to access the benefits of participating in the creative process. Speaking from a personal note as an employee of nearly two years, working at Donna Lexa is consistently a highlight of my week. The amount of shared joy is beyond contagious; seeing someone overcome self-doubt, limiting beliefs, physical difficulties, or any number of obstacles to produce art creates such a feeling of pride and awe, and I count myself incredibly lucky to belong to a place whose mission is so centered on the betterment of its members and the community it belongs to.

If you'd like more information on Donna Lexa Art Centers, please visit their website at [Donna Lexa Art Centers](http://www.donnalex.org) (www.donnalex.org).

- **Cutesy Macabre**

Cutesy Macabre is a Milwaukee-based artist, illustrator, and muralist. After building a career in the arts and diving into the public art scene in 2020, I realized that I missed working with people with disabilities, which had been a passion and joy in my life pre-covid. I started working at Donna Lexa two years ago this October, and have had the luck of balancing traveling to paint murals, and coming home to help my Donna Lexa friends find their joy and passion in the art they make. I'm a former resident of Waukesha, and I've spent a large part of my twenties and now thirties in Waukesha. The Trailblazer run was my first half-marathon with my brother, I've seen my friends perform at Waukesha Civic Theater, I've attended the art crawls, started my day at The Steaming Cup and ended my night at The Salty Toad. I'm passionate about community, inclusivity, teamwork, and the healing power of art. I'm also a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, and am pursuing illustration children's books.

To see more of my work (than what it is included below), please visit my instagram page [@Cutesy Macabre Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/cutesymacabre) (@cutesymacabre).

8. PREVIOUS AND SIMILAR WORKS

I have completed 15 murals so far in 2025, with most recent being a shipping container for Habitat for Humanity of Waukesha and Jefferson counties, Sip & Purr Cat Cafe, and we're in the final stages of installing a mural at Donna Lexa using the technique I'm proposing to use for the Friedman Alley mural. I have extensive experience painting on brick (and stucco, dibond, MDF, wood, siding, etc), and have a professional relationship with a property development company in Tennessee where I install large site-specific murals with tight turn around times and often on active construction sites. The last few weeks as we've led up to this application, we've worked on the mural at our site, both as practice for the potential opportunity as well as a way to troubleshoot any problems and refine the installation process.



The top half of this image is the community painting background, and the bottom half (while still in progress) shows how it peeks through and looks after I've gone in with the negative space to create the design, and with some outlining completed.



Habitat for Humanity shipping container, Waukesha, May 2025.



Jersey Barriers and flower boxes, Ivanhoe Plaza Milwaukee, June 2025



Sip & Purr cat cafe, April 2025

Thank you so much for your time and consideration of our mural proposal. I (Keighley/Cutesy Macabre) will be the point of contact for this proposal, so if you have any questions, concerns, or would like more examples of my work, please don't hesitate to call or email.

CONTACT:

Keighley Sadler (or Cutesy Macabre)

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SCHEDULING NOTE:

I will be out of town for my first artist residency October 17-21, which may impact timeline of installation if the installation period doesn't begin until early October, but if there are any concerns please reach out so we can find a solution.