

## Waukesha Mural Concept for Friedman Alley - Wall 1 & Wall 2 Narrative by James Barany

Web: [jamesbarany.com](http://jamesbarany.com) email: [jamesbarany@miad.edu](mailto:jamesbarany@miad.edu) cell: 414.380.5176  
*Waukesha Resident & Professor, Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design (MIAD)*

Since 2017, I have worked with communities to tell their stories through public art. This mural continues that mission while paying tribute to the city that has been my family's home since 2000. Inspired by Waukesha's history, people, and enduring spirit, the mural spans roughly seventy-five years (c. 1875–1950) and explores themes of belonging, hope, and shared community.



The mural celebrates Waukesha's diversity through the universal lens of childhood. Across both mural walls, viewers encounter an imagined gathering of immigrant children assembled from historic photographs and archival materials from Wisconsin and Waukesha collections. Though drawn from different backgrounds and experiences, they are united by a common journey: the hope of building a better future for themselves and their families.

Their faces reflect resilience, curiosity, and optimism. While rooted in history, they mirror the experiences of countless families who continue to arrive, grow, and contribute to Waukesha today. The goal is simple: that every visitor can find a reflection of themselves, their ancestors, or their aspirations within the mural.

The composition begins with a graphic interpretation of the preamble to the United States Constitution. Fragments of "*We the People*" surround the children, reinforcing the idea that community is strengthened through inclusion and shared purpose.

The narrative then transitions to familiar moments from Waukesha's past. The historic Bethesda Spring House emerges alongside children gathered with their bicycles in Cutler Park. These scenes are not intended as monuments to specific events, but as reminders of the everyday experiences that connect generations across time.

At the center of the composition, a young Les Paul appears with guitar and harmonica in hand. His presence bridges imagination, creativity, and possibility. Around him, the mural shifts into scenes inspired by Waukesha's farmers market—a celebration of harvest, abundance, and the weekly traditions that continue to bring neighbors together along the Fox River.

Nearby, an historic Fox Head bottle cap acknowledges both Waukesha's industrial heritage and its relationship to the river itself, while creating a visual dialogue with the fox mural across the alley.

The composition concludes with Waukesha's youth proudly presenting livestock, a respectful nod to the city's agricultural roots and its historic identity as "Cow Town." Together, these figures celebrate the values of hard work, stewardship, and community that helped shape the city.

Rendered in a palette inspired by hand-tinted photographs and vintage postcards, the mural invites viewers to pause, reflect, and consider the generations of people whose dreams, labor, and resilience continue to define Waukesha. More than a historical image, it is a portrait of belonging—past, present, and future.

This final image below illustrates with black bordering where windows and building edges would align. Vinyl window inserts could continue the imagery in these areas.



Here is the proposal placed in context for reference from two different vantage points:





## Materials & Wall Preparation

After consulting with the building owner and reviewing the existing surface, I determined that the wall has been coated with Kilz primer and an exterior latex finish. The substrate is generally in good condition, with only minor masonry repairs required above the garage door header and in one additional location.

### Surface Preparation

1. **Masonry Repair**

All damaged areas will be cleaned, repaired, and refinished prior to painting. With a background in masonry restoration, I will complete this work personally.

**Masonry Consumables:** \$50

2. **Priming**

Proper surface preparation is the single most important factor in mural longevity, particularly in Wisconsin's climate. The entire wall surface will receive two coats of Sherwin-Williams LOXON Masonry Primer, providing superior adhesion while allowing the masonry to breathe and release moisture naturally.

**10 Gallons LOXON Primer:** \$485

3. **Mural Paint System**

The mural will begin with a tonal underpainting that establishes depth, value, and composition. Final imagery will be executed using Chroma Mural Paint, a

professional-grade acrylic system recognized for its color retention, durability, and exterior performance.

**10 Gallons Chroma Mural Paint: \$620**

4. **Metal & Non-Masonry Surfaces**

Doors, trim, garage doors, and other non-masonry elements will be painted using professional artist-grade enamel products selected for their long-term adhesion and weather resistance.

**Enamel Paints: \$135**

5. **Vinyl Window Inserts**

If the committee would like the imagery continued into the glass portions of the windows, perforated vinyl inserts (similar to what you see on busses) can be created to extend the image and still let light into the building.

**Vinyl Window Inserts: \$325**

6. **Protective Coating**

Upon completion and curing of the mural, two coats of Mural Shield will be applied by sprayer. This protective finish increases resistance to weather, UV exposure, and graffiti while extending the overall lifespan of the artwork.

**5 Gallons Mural Shield: \$500**

## **Equipment, Site Requirements & Insurance**

The mural will be executed using brushes, rollers, and rolling stair systems owned by the artist, allowing complete access to all portions of the wall.

The following site accommodations are requested during installation:

- Access to water and a utility sink
- Access to a restroom
- Secure overnight storage for rolling stairs, equipment, and supplies whenever possible
- My business - James Barany Studios LLC, carries a 2 Million liability policy to cover potential damages to property.

## **Painting Process**

Once the final design is approved, a scaled blueprint and measurement system will be developed for transfer to the wall. The process will proceed as follows:

1. Masonry repair and surface preparation
2. Application of LOXON primer
3. Layout and grid transfer
4. Tonal underpainting
5. Detailed painting and finishing
6. Final review and adjustments
7. Application of Mural Shield protective coating

Painting is completed in manageable sections, allowing for continual refinement and quality control throughout the installation process.

---

## Size & Dimensions

### Wall #1 and Wall #2 (Combined)

- Total Wall Area:  $129' \times 12.5' = 1,612$  sq. ft.
- Less Glass Areas: 70 sq. ft.

**Total Painted Surface:** 1,542 sq. ft.

---

## Fees & Consumables

Item	Cost
Masonry Repair Materials	\$50
LOXON Primer	\$485
Chroma Mural Paint	\$620
Artist-Grade Enamel Paint	\$135
Mural Shield Protective Coating	\$500
Masking Materials	\$75

Additional Vinyl Window Decals                      \$65 per  
window x5  
/ \$325

Equipment (Rolling Stairs, Carts, Tools)  
No charge

**Artist Fee (1,542 sq. ft. @ \$10/sq. ft.)    \$15,745**

**Artist Fee Includes:**

- Historical research and concept development
- Design and planning
- Wall preparation and masonry repair
- Priming and surface treatment
- Mural execution and painting
- Protective topcoat application
- Project management and installation

**Total Bid**

**\$17,285**

**\*If the committee would prefer the entire building surfaced with 3mm ACM product all sheets would be float mounted off the surface, this would add an additional 5.45k and 6mm would be an additional 10.4k in addition. This is what John Deere opted to do in Horicon (images attached). Doing this creates a smooth mural surface that actually protects the building from elements. ACM never rots. ACM (Acrylic Composite Material) prices fluctuate weekly with the onset of international tariffs on Aluminum. Painting on panels can happen at any time in the controlled environment of my Waukesha studio, otherwise all aspects are weather dependent.**

**Project Timeline**

Weather pending - I can paint about 50-60 sq. ft. per session. With good weather this project should take me about 1 to 1.5 months total to complete, including all aspects (Wall prep, priming, painting and sealing). I have teaching obligations through Early August. I could start as early as mid-August of '26. As a Senior faculty member I only need to be on campus 2 days per week, so most of my remaining time would be spent with the mural on-site in Waukesha.

It should be noted that mural season in Wisconsin usually runs from early May through mid October (You can't paint when hard frosts occur, the paint can crystallize and deteriorate). After the first hard frost, all jobs must wait until May to resume. Unless the client wants the images painted on panels, then work can occur anytime in the controlled environment of my studio.

---

## Artist Biography

**James Barany** is a Waukesha resident, award-winning muralist, experimental animator, and Professor of First-Year Experience at the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design (MIAD), where he has taught full-time since 2000. Since 2017, Barany has completed public and private mural commissions throughout the state of Wisconsin, including mural projects in:

2017 - De Pere (Definetly De Pere) & Waukesha (J.K.Lee Studio)

2018 - Chilton & Stockbridge (Calumet County Mural Initiative)

2024 - Hartford (Volunteers for a Beautiful Hartford) & Port Washington (Paint on Port)

2025 - Hustisford (Path of Hustisford)

2025-26 - Horicon (John Deere Horicon Works)

2026 - Mayville (Krieser Const.)

His work combines historical research, community storytelling, and large-scale public engagement to create murals that celebrate local identity and shared experiences from a Historical perspective.

James, his wife Diana, and their youngest son Liam reside in Waukesha near Buchner Park along with canines Gadget and Mocha.

## Artist Mural Portfolio - Recent Works

**Horicon - John Deere Horicon Works - 2025-26**



1st building of 3 installed, May '26. The entire project was 345 4'x4' ACM panels. The following image was the approved concept for John Deere. Installation completed by early July '26.



This is a digital projection of the completed work that was approved in August of '25. The entire work was painted in my studio at the Blackstone Plaza in Waukesha.

**Port Washington, WI - 2025**

This short documentary follows my progress on the Port Washington mural and does a good job of breaking down my process and approach (link below). Here was the approved proposal.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2N0E3b9zpEY>

**Hustisford, WI - 2024-25**



Committee led homage to the founder of their community (Mr. Hustus), their local passion for concertina music and a tribute to the original indigenous community of Ho Chunk and Menomonee. Installed on MDO panels, May of '25

**Hartford, WI 2024**



Tucked in behind the Mineshaft you'll find this tribute to their local community in Hartford, covering the duration from WW1-WW2. Manufacturing, service and agriculture tributes dominate this mural.

**Stockbridge, WI - 2018**



**Chilton, WI - 2018**



**De Pere - 2017**



**Waukesha - 2016-17**



**An homage to local founder and Tae Kwon Do Master, Mr. J.K.Lee**

**Thank you,  
Respectfully submitted,**

**James Barany  
902 E. Broadway  
Waukesha, WI  
53186**