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**MURALS**

**By The Bogside Artists**

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"MURALS"

( A brief excerpt from our book )

The abstract notion of `society', much touted by politicians, is, of course, a shibboleth. Society is the sum total of human relationships especially those we designate as "role-playing". Man is a social being and his life is by definition contextual. How he relates to himself, his work, his friends, his past, his present, his future, his family and the world in general determines his life and defines him. From the wastelands of the social pariah to the media touted `pillar of the establishment' is a broad spectrum indeed. It is a spectrum explored by satirists in general and by many of the major playwrights. Beckett's "Waiting for Godot", for example, is essentially an expose of the craziness of man as a social being. The theatre deals expressly with all aspects of social relationships. Is theatrical expression political? How can it not?

Painting deals with context quite consciously. Context is as much a theme of Manet's `Dejeuner Sur L'herbe' as it is of Beckett's "En Attendant Godot". It is as much exemplified in Picasso's Guernica as it is in the work of Magritte and De Chirico. All art is social. All art is therefore political in essence. Whether it becomes overtly political or covertly political has as much to do with context, as it has to do with the artist himself. A portrait of Hitler would be a revered object in a Neo-Nazi's lair but in a Jewish synagogue it would be something else entirely, if indeed it managed to hang there for more than ten seconds. Just as a man can attain immediate notoriety by streaking in the wrong place at the right time so careerists in the art world manipulate context in order to win maximum attention for themselves. Advertisers too like Benetton have not been slow to learn the trick. Therefore, to label certain artists as 'political' is simply to say they are 'overtly' political in the same way as a pickpocket is conspicuously a thief while the retailer who overcharges for his merchandise is merely a 'respected businessman'. Both are playing the same game. The word is not the thing.

How we relate to things will have a lot to say about the choices we make. After all, bigotry itself and its extreme manifestation racism, is at heart a relationship problem. The antithesis of the ugly and the beautiful is primarily a contextual problem whose parameters are always shifting. Consequently,

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modern art critics, bereft of any normative frame of reference in our time are all at sea as to what constitutes 'good' art and what 'bad'. Wily businessmen like Saatchi and Saatchi and unscrupulous curators everywhere are ever ready to capitalize on their ignorance and on the befuddlement of the public in general.

Since the 'scandalous' arrival of Duchamp's urinal the use of context has become a favorite weapon in the artist's armatorium. From that point of view there is really nothing new about Hirst's work. Surrealism, as a movement outside of its psychological pretensions, was pragmatically an investigation into context. In the era of New Age thinking, of course, and technological "advancement" all this seems like old hat these days but in their time these cultural statements were radical in the extreme.

In the case of The Bogside Artists the context was given. We were born into it. The site we chose to paint our murals, The Bogside, was a familiar part of our habitat. It was a daily fact of our existence, where we had lived and played, our history. It was drenched in blood. This by itself would, paradoxically and despite the blunderbuss abuse of our critics, make our work very reflective of where modern art is headed at the moment. For, it has long been an embarrassing fact to many curators that the gallery itself provides a false context for the viewing of art. The gallery in effect becomes a mediator between the viewer for whom the work was made and the artist himself. This leads to a reification of the work and a corresponding alienation of the work, the artist and his public. Art galleries therefore look wistfully at community art and the work of muralists like ourselves. They establish 'Outreach Programs' in the hope of redressing the balance. Performance artists, let us not forget, came into being explicitly to fill this gap.

With public art the modus operandi of the careerist artist whose will is to challenge the viewer on the presupposition that the viewer is actually blind and stupid, would nakedly contradict the context in which the mural artist seeks to live. The muralist's first remit is to communicate; else he would not have chosen a public site in the first place. He is willingly addressing public context, public mind, public belief, public perceptions in all their variety and contradictions. He is not appealing to the dilettante or the culture vulture. He is a rebel, painting with passion because he knows that true art is poetry and poetry is not the proper arena for careerism, which rightfully belongs to the market place and its chicanery. He is appealing, first and foremost, to the man in the street, on the assumption that the man in the street is not completely blind and no crazier than the artists who address him. This is the context in which the muralist places himself. It can be thin ice to walk upon, as the experiences of The Bogside Artists will readily testify; because it involves the whole social context. There are political currents to avoid and tribal rapids to negotiate. We seek to honor the context we have been given; not to abuse it in the name of an infantile delusion of license masquerading as 'freedom' which alone characterizes much of what passes for so-called 'contemporary art'.

William Kelly is one of The Bogside Artists. He is author of Murals. More info about the artists can be got at; [www.bogsideartists.com](http://www.bogsideartists.com)

### **How To Purchase A Mural Online For Your Child**

**By Rachel Goldstein**

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So you are thinking of having a mural installed or painted in your child's room? What a perfect addition to your little one's room. A mural is a beautiful gift to give to any child. I have a mural in each of my 3 children's bedrooms and I can't tell you how much joy it has brought to them over the years. If you could only see the look on little kids' eyes when they see my children's rooms. There are several options open for you online. Lets take a look:

### CANVAS

Canvas is my favorite option. The muralist can work off premises and paint a beautiful custom mural without ever entering your home. The best part is that the mural can be removed and saved for other children in your family or to take with you when you move. The mural can be adhered to your wall with heavy wallpaper paste, and once attached to the wall it appears as if it was painted directly on the wall surface. Here is one artist who paints on canvas:

AllKidsMurals.com –

<http://www.allkidsmurals.com/>

– All Kids Murals specializes in custom child murals,  
and starting at \$500 per wall, this is the cheapest around.

### PAINT BY NUMBER MURALS AND KITS

There are kits available that allow you to be the artist. The detail level of a custom painted mural is not available but there are some nice designs that I think your child will love:

Wall Art –

<http://www.wallartdesigns.com/>

– Each mural comes with a color guide and acrylic paint, so  
you don't have to worry about getting the colors right. You can be sure your mural will look just like the ones you see here.

Wall Nutz –

<http://www.wallnutz.com/>

– Paint–By–Number Mural Kits and even more kid decor!

Mural Magic –

<http://www.dreamroomcreations.com/>

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– With our kits and some simple instructions you don't have to be very artistic to create a work-of-art... anyone can do it.

Mural Design –

<http://www.muraldesign.com/kits/index.shtml>

– The kit includes easy-to-use patterns

which you can trace and paint onto any wall, headboard, or canvas.

## WALLPAPER

Wallpaper is the most inexpensive option, but it is also the least creative. However, there are some options out there that are pretty nice. Take a look at the below sites:

USA Wallpaper –

<http://www.usawallpaper.com/wallcoverings.html>

– Their collection of wallpaper

murals includes windows, boats, port holes, dolphins, dinosaurs and much more!

Wallpaper Guide –

<http://www.wallpaperguide.com/site/server/pages/index.asp>

– Mostly a collection of

adult murals, but you might be able to find something for your child.

Leland's Wallpaper –

<http://www.lelandswallpaper.com/index.htm>

– They have a collection of wallpaper

that when put together can look like a mural.

Internet Wallpaper Store –

<http://www.wallpaperstore.com/Murals.htm>

## MURALS

– A selection of over 200 murals.

### MURALISTS IN YOUR AREA

If you would prefer to have a custom mural painted directly on your wall, you would be better off with a local artist. You can look for a local artist in many ways via the internet.

1. Search Engines – Search engines, especially Google.com, do a search for 'muralists NJ' or whatever state you live in. You might also try searches like – 'kids murals NJ', 'Children's murals NJ', etc.

2. Yellow Pages Online –

<http://yellowpages.superpages.com/>

– Do a search for 'murals' and enter your state name.

3. Faux Directory –

<http://www.fauxdirectory.com/>

– A listing of Faux artists and muralists

So how are you supposed to know which muralist is right for you and your family? As with any employer, you will want to ask a lot of questions before signing any contracts.

1. Make sure you take a look at the artists' portfolio. Do the samples match your tastes?

2. What is the price? Have you compared the price to other artists?

3. How long is it going to take the artist?

4. Does the artist have positive testimonials from other clients?

5. Does the artist provide a sketch for you before making you sign a contract?

6. What quality paint will the artist be using?

7. Does the artist seem to have a personality that is pleasant and matches you and your family?

Having a mural installed can help brighten up your child's youth. Make sure that you get your money's worth. Good luck!

Rachel is owner of AllKidsMurals.com –

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<http://www.allkidsmurals.com>

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Custom hand-painted canvas murals that you and your child will love. Your mural can be hung like wallpaper and taken down to be saved and passed down through the family.

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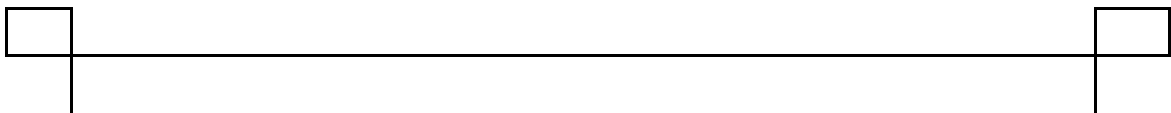
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