

# Murals







This mural in Italy was painted on plaster in about 500 B.C.E.

## What Are Murals?

A mural is a picture created for a wall. Murals can be painted or drawn on a building's interior or exterior walls. Most murals are what is called public art. This means they are meant to be seen by many people.

Murals are one of the oldest forms of art. Thousands of years ago, people drew pictures of animals on the walls of caves. Murals were painted by the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. Murals were very popular in Europe, especially Italy, from the 1300s to the 1500s. During the 1920s, painters in Mexico used murals to show Mexican history. In the 1930s and early 1940s, the U.S. government hired artists to create murals for public buildings.

Today, exterior murals are common in many places. Interior murals are common inside older buildings. Murals are often painted by people in a community working together to create a work of art. They can help give people pride in their history, city, or neighborhood.

### Key Notes:

How have murals changed over time?

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Diego Rivera painted many murals.

## Diego Rivera

One artist who made murals popular in Mexico was Diego Rivera. Rivera started drawing before he was two years old. When he was 10, he knew he wanted to be an artist. Rivera went to art school in Mexico and later studied art in Europe.

In Italy, Rivera saw murals on church walls. He liked the idea that everyone could see art around them, and he wanted to make art available to the people of Mexico.

When Rivera returned to Mexico, he painted murals on the walls of government buildings. He drew large people and used bright colors. His murals portrayed Mexican life and history, and they made Rivera famous. The historical murals portrayed events from Mexico's past. Mexican people could view the historical murals and be proud of their past and their art.

Today, some of Rivera's best-known murals can be seen in the National Palace in Mexico City. His murals are also in public places in the United States.

### Key Notes:

Who was Diego Rivera?

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A mural in San Francisco shows a cooking scene.

## Murals in San Francisco

San Francisco is known for its hills. It is also known for its murals. There are more than 600 murals on the interior and exterior walls of San Francisco's landmarks and other buildings. Four of these murals were painted by Diego Rivera.

One of Rivera's murals, which is at an art school, shows the building of a city. Another Rivera mural is at a theater in a college. This mural shows the mixing of North and South American cultural ideas.

Among San Francisco's landmarks is a tower. Inside this tower are murals that show farming, industry, education, and life in California. The artists who painted these pictures were hired by the U.S. government.

San Francisco also has two alleys that have murals on both sides. One of these alleys has walking tours in which people learn about the murals. In the other alley, there's a party every year to show off new murals that are added.

### Key Notes:

What kinds of murals can be seen in San Francisco?

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Murals can  
be painted on  
buildings.

## A Mural for Women

One mural in San Francisco was designed to honor women. It stretches across two walls of a four-story women's center. This mural is a tribute to women and depicts their many contributions to society all over the world.

The artwork includes many pictures of women. Some of the women are famous, and some are unknown. The mural is a tribute to women's successes in art and science, and to their contributions to society throughout history. The mural depicts girls and women of all ages. It also has many images of nature and food. More than 100 women worked to create it.

The seven artists who were the main creative force behind the mural are also art teachers. They wanted this artwork to encourage people to think about how to achieve justice, peace, and creativity through art. Two of the artists have called the mural "a commitment to a healthier future for all of our children."

### Key Notes:

Why was the women's mural painted?

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