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Orinda mural comes to life on side of library building

By Sora O'Doherty



Mural begins to take shape with huge printed sheets of velum paper taped to the Orinda Library wall. Photo Sora O'Doherty

With the coming of spring, the natural history of Orinda is being brought to life on the side of the Orinda Library by muralist Jane Kim of InkDwell Studios, San Francisco. After the city of Orinda prepared the wall of the library, giving it a coat of off-white paint, the artists of InkDwell got started on March 28, only slightly delayed by rain on that day. The mural is expected to take four weeks to complete and is on schedule, according to Kim.

Kim has done numerous large murals, both indoor and outdoor. Each mural has its own process. For the Orinda library project, the drawing was first done on a small scale, then scaled up to the size of the wall. The company has a very large format printer, which was used to print out the image on huge sheets of velum paper. These sheets were then taped to the library wall, and later, the figures were cut out with Exacto knives, and the outline of the image traced onto the wall with .9mm graphite pencils.

For the details within the shape, InkDwell uses standard transfer paper, working little bit by little bit to transfer the image to the wall and then apply some paint. For this project, Kim has three different transfer techniques going on at the same time. Kim says that her method is very efficient, and that efficiency is key to making a successful project. "Accuracy is very important to us," she noted, "because of our ties to natural history and science. It is not our style to freestyle."

However, there have been some changes to the mural from that which was proposed originally. When Kim and her crew came out to check the wall after the city completed its initial work, they found that the painting did not extend to the lower half of the wall, as originally planned. However, Kim decided to embrace the change as a "happy accident," and adjusted the design to fit the new area.

Kim is now no longer concerned about rain, and rather about the potential of excess heat. She will be having sunshades fitting to the lifts that the artists use to reach the wall.

When the library mural is finished, Kim will be moving on to several commissions that she currently has in studio to complete, including some projects in development for the fall. It is possible InkDwell will be working on something in San Francisco. Among InkDwell's largest outdoor projects are two series of murals about migratory animals, the monarch butterfly series and the Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep series that is painted on buildings along highway US 395.

In an interview with the Lamorinda Weekly, Kim revealed, "I love being here because public libraries are very meaningful to me. The library was a safe haven for me and my sister." Kim, who grew up outside of Chicago, added that she and her sister would spend Saturdays and sometimes Sundays too in the public library. Kim moved to the Bay Area 18 years ago, right after she completed college at the Rhode Island School of Design.

According to Nancy Ross-Madnick, president of the Friends of the Orinda Library, they have raised 97% of the cost of the mural, which will later be donated to the city. Anyone wishing to put the funding "over the top," can send donations in any amount to the Orinda Library, P.O. Box 152, Orinda, CA, 94563. The Friends ask that you please note "mural" in the memo line on the bottom of your check. For further information, contact Mary Kate Rittmann at krittmann@hotmail.com.

More ways to support the Friends of the Orinda Library can be found on their website:
<https://friendsoftheorindalibrary.org/membership/>

A gallery of InkDwell's work is available on their website, <https://inkdwell.com>



InkDwell staff applies transfer sheets. Photo Sora O'Doherty



Muralist Jane Kim at work. Photo Sora O'Doherty

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