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POMONA

DOWNTOWN GETS A COLORFUL TOUCH



PHOTOS BY JAMES CARBONE

Andre Miripolsky of Los Angeles, lower left, a multimedia artist who is the designer and painter of the new mural "Pomonacopia," oversees the details for the School of Arts and Enterprise middle school in Pomona on Sept. 17

Mural: School buildings' canvas is tribute to region's heritage and points to the future

By **Monica Rodriguez**
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POMONA In the course of his career, Andre Miripolsky has created different types of art. His work includes album covers for recording artists, clothing designs such as the keyboard costume Elton John wore in his 1980 Central Park concert, and billboard and magazine campaign ads for a prominent brand of vodka. But of all of Miripolsky's projects, none has been as big as the mural that covers the four sides of the School of Arts

and Enterprise middle school building on the northwest corner of Fourth and Main streets downtown.

"I consider this a world-class public art installation," Miripolsky said recently.

Miripolsky took a large white stucco building and turned it into a canvas for the work he calls "Pomonacopia," an abstract work that plays with contrasting shapes and although it's abstract, the mural is filled with symbols. Inspired by Pomona, the Roman Goddess of Fruit, and the area's rich agricultural history, the artist used yellow, orange,



Bisco Smith, 35, of Venice uses spray paint to outline the mural "Pomonacopia," at the School of Arts and Enterprise middle school in Pomona on Sept. 17.

Inside: New mural will bring attention to downtown Pomona area for its art. PAGE A6

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THE ARTS

Another plus for downtown Pomona

By **Monica Rodriguez**

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POMONA » The Andre Miripolsky mural, "Pomonacopia," which wraps around the middle school building of the School of Arts and Enterprise, brings more than vibrant colors to downtown Pomona's Arts Colony.

"I think it brings some notoriety to the city," said Brad Johnson, Pomona's planning services manager.

Almost from the start, the mural has drawn at-

tention from pedestrians and motorists alike, said members of the team of artists.

Pedestrians stop to look at it, people get out of their cars to take photos and some people stop to take a selfie, said mural team member Christian Ornelas, a Pomona resident.

The mural has also drawn attention via social media, said Cathy Tessier, president of the Friends of the SAE, the school's fundraising arm.

Tessier said the artwork required "quite a leap of

faith" by the city, the city Cultural Arts Commission and the City Council.

The final product, she said, has been worth the wait.

"I think it far exceeded what they thought to the positive," Tessier said.

Outside of the city, Pomona is known as an arts community and this project may play a part in Pomonans realizing what others know, she said.

Miripolsky said his mural has demonstrated Pomona, its leaders and its residents,

have a true interest in art.

"Getting public art like this is not easy," he said.

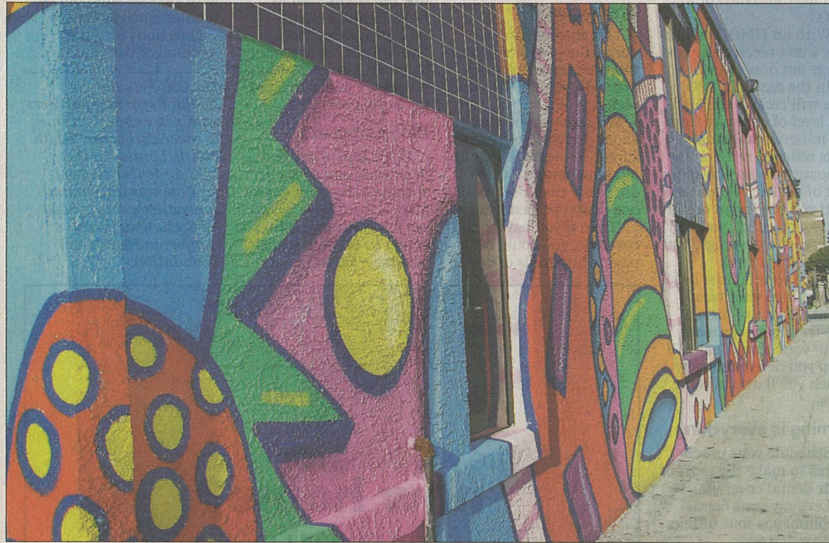
But Pomona and the mural seem to be a match.

"This seems to be the right place at the right time," Miripolsky said.

An art piece like this says Pomona and its leaders are "bold enough to allow a building to be wrapped like that," Johnson said.

It also does something else, according to Johnson.

"I think it continues that revitalization" of downtown, he said.



PHOTOS BY JAMES CARBONE

"Pomonacopia," a new mural designed by Andre Miripolsky, a multimedia artist from Los Angeles, was inspired by Pomona, the Roman Goddess of Fruit, and the area's rich agricultural history.

Mural

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purple and green dots and shapes to represent citrus, grapes and other fruits. Arrows of different colors are part of the design.

"There are lots of arrows," he said. The arrows are "iconic symbols for positive direction."

Some arrows point up and others point to the main entrance of to the middle school's building, a place where youth will find the tools and knowledge that will lead to successful futures, Miripolsky said.

"It's all about directing kids into an art education," he said.

Colorful, curving stripes represent roadways that lead to Pomona, he said. And then there are the horn-shaped cones, the cornucopia, the symbol of plenty.

Overall the project is "joyous and positive, but it's really big," Miripolsky said.

By the time it's done the mural will cost about \$100,000, including a coating to protect it from the elements and vandalism, said Cathy Tessier, president of the Friends of the SAE, the school's fundraising arm.

Work continues to raise \$20,000 to \$25,000 of the mural's total cost, she said. Of the total cost, \$55,000 came from the city's Public Art Fee Fund, making this the first public art project to be carried out with assistance from those funds.



Andre Miripolsky of Los Angeles, the multimedia artist who designed the new mural "Pomonacopia," describes the details of the School of Arts and Enterprise middle school in Pomona project as "joyous and positive, but it's really big."

Applying for funds was a lengthy process but it has helped bring a significant art piece to the city, say supporters.

"I think it's going to be a central piece to the (Downtown) Arts Colony," Tessier said.

Miripolsky's mural has captured the essence of the school and the community, said Lucille Berger, the school's executive director.

When the school opened, "the Arts Colony embraced our students," Berger said. Business people have provided learning and internship opportunities for students.

About 99 percent of SAE students go on to college.

The mural is a gift to the community, Berger said.

Three artists have been part of Miripolsky's mural team: Bisco Smith of Venice, Paul Juno of North Hollywood and Christian Ornelas of Pomona. Smith has been doing the mural's outlining work. Smith does abstract graffiti impressionism.

Smith enjoys being part of the project.

"Our dialogue has been great and it's been a lot of fun to work with him," Smith said.

Juno said he has always wanted to do mural work.

"It's just great because you are literally watching history being made," Juno said.

Such a project allows people — pedestrians, neighbors and others — to see art being made in real-

time, he said.

Ornelas is a 2015 graduate of the School of Arts and Enterprise.

He had a chance to work with Miripolsky when he painted a mural at the school.

"About three months ago he gave me a call. He said I've got work for you," Ornelas recalled.

"After hearing about the project I couldn't turn it down," Ornelas said.

The young artist has enjoyed working on the mural.

"It's acknowledgement," Ornelas said.

Plans call for a community celebration in early November after the mural is completed, Berger said.

"The community really has been a part of this experience," she said.