

## Off the Wall

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### Building or Remodelling?

Especially eye-catching: new custom tile paintings for the foyer or lobby, with a name or logo incorporated in the artwork

Custom tile paintings offer a dramatic way to add to the décor and ambience of an interior or exterior space. They are an exquisite, durable investment with lasting value and distinction, and are a perfect choice for the tropics, where sun and humidity eventually damage most art installations and signage.

Tile paintings can quickly set the mood in any room, and can be installed where traditional framed art would be displayed on the wall or expanded to completely fill the wall. The visual impact of a full-size mural can give the feeling of space and create the desired ambience in a dining room, living room or bedroom, as well as traditional tile locations such as the kitchen counter and backsplash, bath and showers, water fountains, spas and pools. Even in small applications, art tiles can add a splash of colour as a wainscoting around a room, doorway trim or mixed into a tile project as special accent tiles.

Custom art tiles can even incorporate a name or company logo into the artwork. This is especially attractive at the entrance of the property—just outside the front doors or at the property gate. Another eye-catching place to add custom tile artwork is at the bottom of a pool or spa.

Art tiles are created to fit a specific location, in both size and style, so they are suitable to many creative applications at residences, resorts and rental villas, restaurants, corporations, schools, retail stores and public facilities. When you want a tile installation that reflects your taste, this is a creative option. With a new and innovative process, these tiles go well beyond the traditional tile manufacturer's limitations. Imagine a bright silk batik painting on the wall by the pool or a detailed oil painting wrapping the shower; it's now possible with new technology.

Tile art is custom ordered to the client's specifications. The base tile is available in a variety of sizes and textures including ceramic, porcelain, glass, tumbled stone and marble tile. The glass tiles are suitable as a floor tile and exceed all Tile Council of America specifications.

### Creation of the reef mural shown above

The first step was to create a large oil painting on canvas. I love diving, so this reef scene was a natural subject matter for me—an imaginary reef with a few of my favourite fish, all in the right place at the right time, with the light sparkling through the crystal-clear water. When the oil was dry enough, the painting was shipped off to a company that works with international museums and art galleries and has a digital scanner the size of a truck. Because of the scan quality, the detail in the mural is the same high quality as found in a large fine art Giclee print.

The next step was to send this digital image file to a tile manufacturer to create the mural. I selected a mural size of 4' x 5' using 6" x 6" tumbled stone tiles. The mural could have easily been enlarged to 12' x 15' or larger without losing image quality. This size is perfect for an alcove on the veranda or to install on a wall above a couch or in a dining area. I chose the tumbled stone because it has an old, aged fresco feel and goes well with stone, stucco and casual exterior floor tiles. The tile company used my digital image and some computer wizardry to apply the image to the tile in the form of dyes. Then they applied heat and pressure, to force the molecules of the dyes to turn from a solid to a gaseous state and penetrate the surface of the tiles. When the tile cools, the dyes return to their solid state and are permanently impregnated into the tile.

Your contractor can easily install these tile murals. Each tile has a nice sticky label, creating a numbered grid format so the mural isn't a gigantic and confusing puzzle; it's as easy as ABC and 123. And if a tile is damaged in the shipping or installation, that single tile can be recreated; they keep your image files in reserve, just in case.

This is an amazing technology and product that opens many doorways into the imagination, applications and installations of fine art.