

Customized Art on

By Vivian Kistler, CPF, GCF, CMG

Tile made with customized images offers designers new options at affordable prices

Mosaics, stone etchings, and ornate tile designs have represented artistic expression since the beginning of human creativity. Today we are still moved by the art and craft of these works, whether encountering them in the rotunda of a new convention hall, in an outdoor market, or at the bottom of a swimming pool.

People are naturally drawn to such pieces and installations, which make tile murals a valuable design option for interior designers as well as an alternative type of framed art. They can add a new dimension to corporate, hospitality, healthcare, and other types of contract art and design projects.

Many people consider tile murals to be both time and cost prohibitive, far beyond the scope and budgets of

most contract design projects. But new innovations are now making tile art an affordable resource for designers.

Using a process devised by engineer Paul Anthony in 2002, the Tile Factory has been able to dramatically reduce costs and speed up design and delivery without having to resort to offshore labor. It makes custom tiles in ceramic, porcelain, glass, natural stone, and other mediums, offering a wide range of design options.

Tiles are durable and versatile. They can be installed on a wall—or in a picture frame—so the decorating possibili-



Large wall murals for lobbies and other public areas can be produced using etched natural stone tiles.

Tile

ties of tile now extend far beyond the kitchen backsplash or shower stall.

Tile murals create a dynamic focal point in a dining room using a framed or installed tile mural custom made for a customer's home. The Tile Factory can source images for a project, or you can use your own photos. They can scan most images and recreate them on the style of tile that suits your project. Images may also be chosen from the tile factory's collection or can be commissioned. Artistic images from such artists as Paul Brent, who is well known for his seaside watercolors, are available to be transferred to tiles.

When it comes to commercial installations, inventing new and innovative ways to decorate a large environment is often daunting. A brightly colored framed mural in glossy ceramic tile, accented by just the right decorative lighting, is a quick way to turn a dull space into a decorator's vision. Consider a Tuscan-inspired mural in classic tumbled marble as a fantastic backdrop for the entry of a restaurant. Smaller, related motifs like olives or grape vines could be installed in the dining areas, along with a map of the Tuscan region.

A full street map of Paris would also make a great backdrop to literally "set the scene" at a French restaurant. Throughout the restaurant, smaller framed murals of



Meeting rooms can be enhanced with classic and contemporary artwork on tile.



Another type of tile that can be used to enhance public areas is laser wall glass.

Parisian scenes could be featured. Regardless of the scene that is visible through the windows, you can create a custom-made view, from a cabana in the Caribbean to a trail at the top of the Andes Mountains.

The lobby of a hotel is a perfect place to use a mural to establish the customer experience. A theme can be created in a lobby and continued in related tiles in the hotel restaurant as well as at the bottom of the hotel pool. The

wall behind the reservations desk is a perfect place to offer a map of the city. The decor of a sports bar can be coordinated with murals of sports motifs from local teams or focus on a specific theme, such as baseball or football.

Business owners know the importance of branding. The Tile Factory can also take any image, design, photo, artwork, or logo and create a spectacular, one-of-a-kind medallion or mural in any size in most granite, marble, and slate selections to make sure your business brand is literally “set in stone.”

In addition to murals and mosaics, there are several other tile options. Art Glass is where Old World meets new design. Think of it as glass wallpaper with detailed designs embellished and repeated throughout. This high impact design statement can range from bold and stunning to understated and soothing. The almost limitless design capabilities help you capture a unique look and feel.

Laser-etched stone provides a unique, high-impact, finishing touch and distinctive grandeur to any decor project. For architects, builders, and designers, Natural Stone Etchings provide beautifully detailed, laser-etched designs in natural granite, marble, or slate stone for floor medallions and wall art murals.

There are unique artistic expressions that can be used for projects of all sizes, within the time and cost budgets of many designers, bringing this time-honored craft to a new, more accessible level. Not to mention that tile murals can make turn any proposal for a design project from ordinary to something special.

For more information, call 866-929-9151 or visit www.tile-factory.com. ■

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A ceramic tile art mural can be used floor to ceiling to make a room look and feel as if you've stepped into a painting.



This laser tile mural provides a focal point for this spa area.



Traditional mosaics, such as this mural reproducing Van Gogh's "Starry Night" with 1/2" porcelain tiles at an entrance area of a large condominium building, are much faster to install these days with automated tile-laying equipment.



Ceramic art tile murals can also be combined with frames to create a different type of artistic effect.

Tile Options

Art Tile and Photo Tile

Art and photos can be transferred to tile with photo quality results. The image is impregnated into the surface of the tile and is resistant to fading. Tiles from 4-1/4" to 12" are available. Photos and art can be scaled to fill a full wall depending on the quality of the artwork. There is a faster turnaround time for commercial projects.

Art Glass

Art glass tiles are available in 20 different hues in 6" squares. Using sophisticated laser technology, a pattern or image is transferred to the reverse side of the glass tile. A designer can select the frequency of a pattern repeat, pattern size, and translucency of the pattern or image.

Natural Stone

Natural stone can be etched by laser in a way that enhances the inherent beauty of stone. Black granite is a popular choice for both public and private spaces. Corporate facades can be embellished with natural stone medallions or with the artwork of old masters.

Mosaics

Available in 1/2" and 1" porcelain and 3/4" glass tile, mosaic tiles can be quickly mounted into murals using a fully automated mosaic tile mounting technology. The Mosaic Tile Master can create custom art mosaics, patterns, and blends. Thousands of square feet can be covered in weeks.



The reproduction quality of the art on ceramic tiles is now available so that murals can be done at more affordable prices.



A natural stone etched tile backsplash can add an artistic touch to countertops in suites.