

Mary Thiefels  
[treetownmurals@gmail.com](mailto:treetownmurals@gmail.com)  
treetownmurals.com  
734-845-4455  
Phase 2 Requirements  
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I spent more time walking around Allmendinger Park over the past few weeks, experiencing all that the park offers this time of year. It's December, and the park is quiet now, only whispers of play remain from the busy, joyful months of spring, summer, and fall. In the winter, when time stands still, we look around and reflect, experiencing the peace and calm.

My timeless design for the Allmendinger park will inspire all who encounter it year round. Each of the 12 pillars represent a month of the year, 3 pillars to a season. Seasonal activities illustrate the diversity and popularity of the park.

In the spring, lilac bushes blossom, children come out of hibernation to play hide and go seek, birds nest again in the oak and hickory trees, the playground comes alive with activity and laughter. On the summer pillars kites fly and sports abound, like basketball, volleyball, tennis, baseball, and soccer. On the fall pillars you see, colors changing, tree climbing, dog walking and frisbee tossing, sunny day picnics, and morning martial arts. Winter offers cross country skiing, snowshoeing, and snow angels.

I will paint these illustrations onto a third of each pillar space. The remaining area will be made up of tile or glass mosaic and a section of collected and found materials.

I intend to use striking and strong imagery, illustrating the activities with visual confidence. The figures, birds, and trees, could be painted in Kara Walker style silhouettes (to see visuals of Kara Walker's work, visit: <http://learn.walkerart.org/karawalker>). They can be heavily modeled and detailed or played down (painted more like a wood block, stencil or silhouette). Grays and earth tones can be used instead of blacks to better harmonize with the surroundings.

The tile or glass mosaic on the top and bottom create a strong visual frame on each pillar. A 7" to 10" vein of found objects and collected materials, pressed into thinset, will run next to the mosaic portions. Here is where I intend to involve the adjacent neighborhood, local schools, general ann arbor community, and basically anyone who has a history with the park or an interest in leaving their mark. I will invite anyone interested to contribute a stone, tile, marble, metal key, fossil, small trinket, shell, broken ceramic or parts of personal dishes, mirror, beads, or beach glass. These contributions represent, a wish, memory, or prayer.

The finishing touch is an undulating 3” to 5” vein of mirror running diagonally through each pillar, starting in one corner and rising through the imagery, moving like a wave, breaking up the linear design. The mirror catches the light and sparkles like a vein of gold in the sun. I intend for visitors of the park to catch glimpses of themselves and their surroundings, to become a part of the mural, whether with a physical gift or the visual discovery of themselves.

Once the design is finalized, surface preparation will be the first step. Each pillar requires patching of the concrete air pockets followed by a liberal layer of dry-lock, concrete sealer. The surface will then be primed. The mosaics for the top and bottom sections can be created off site and attached to a mesh, then transported to the site, affixed and grouted to the prepped pillars. The painted portion will be painted on site. A notice will be sent outlining the requirements for the donated found object section. These pieces will be placed onto the mural by hand into wet thinset. An exterior tile sealer will top the mosaic and thinset surfaces. An anti-graffiti top coat will be brushed onto the painted section. The anti-graffiti top coat has a compatible solvent that can be used to clean off any unwanted marks and the top coat can then be reapplied for lasting protection.

The estimated time lime for this project will be 2 to 4 months of design, prep and installation. I am local to the area and live within minutes of the site. Studio access for off site work can be easily acquired. Materials will require one third to half of the total budget. Artist time, travel, equipment purchase and rental, consultation, and labor will make up the remaining half to two thirds.

Since selected as a finalist, I have inquired about people’s personal stories about the park, in addition to it’s history. I have received numerous links and resources from local historian, Ray Detter, and his colleagues. If the committee feels strongly about including the Allmendinger history, I will help tie this into the project.

Involving the community in this project is very important to me and my work as a public artist. I want this project to bring pride to our community, giving us a platform to share our stories and legacies. Let’s preserve this gem of a park and honor all those who play, discover, and explore her mysteries.

Thank you,  
Mary Thiefels