

Nico Berry
nico@nicoberry.com
718-938-2906
98 Newton Street
San Francisco, CA 94112

North Fair Oaks Community Mural Project

Artist Statement

I am a muralist and graphic artist with over twenty years of experience designing and painting large-scale community and commercial murals. I have completed numerous community mural projects that directly engaged the community members, neighborhood associations, and local youth in the mural-making process. This engagement includes painting, planning, and incorporating photographs and the ideas and work of community members into the mural. I love painting community murals because both the process and product create a dialogue with residents, the landscape and history of the place.

I have not spent much time in the North Fair Oaks community, however I've lived in the Bay Area since 1996, mostly in San Francisco, but also in Oakland and briefly Menlo Park. My wife teaches creative writing at Stanford, and I've been a guest in a public art class with Stanford students and have worked closely with artists at Stanford and a local public arts organizer in Palo Alto.

I'm proposing a project for North Fair Oaks called "I Am Somebody." This project seeks public spaces to post arresting and engaging imagery along with the words, "I Am Somebody," in an effort to celebrate local community members. The mural also makes a statement about the presence and power of local residents in a time of displacement.

A recent article on KQED quoted Kent Manske, a local artist and professor who has lived in the North Fair Oaks neighborhood for twenty-four years, as saying, "When you tell people that you live in North Fair Oaks, no one has a clue to what North Fair Oaks is." It seems that the North Fair Oaks community is overshadowed on the regional and national stage by its flashier and more extravagant neighbors on the Peninsula. This mural will hopefully be a point of pride for the residents and a reminder to all who pass that North Fair Oaks is not invisible, and that every resident of North Fair Oaks is indeed somebody to be recognized and celebrated.

I am currently in the process of working with the Central City SRO Collaborative of San Francisco to install a number of smaller pieces with this same theme, but a different design, in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco. I would love the opportunity to paint an "I Am Somebody" mural on a large wall in North Fair Oaks. The design that I created specifically for the North Fair Oaks wall has the lettering in both English and Spanish and incorporates images of California poppies to make the mural more aesthetically beautiful and engaging as well as giving a nod to the native flora of the area.