

For the Love of THIS City at The Portico



Mural by: Illsol (Michelle Sawyer & Tony Krol)

Our interpretation of “For the Love of This City”:

Given the mural’s location in relation to two other Tampa themed murals, we aimed to emphasize elements that differed, yet complemented them, creating a triptic that encompasses the wide range of reasons this city is so lovable. Tampa has beautiful landmarks, a rich history, diverse communities and is surrounded by a wealth of natural beauty. Our visual expression of a love for this city places focus on that last aspect. Our image displays the connectedness and power between people coming together and having respect for the natural world, as well as the history around them. It is a symbolic “coming together for the good of all.”

The central image of rooster and alligator is symbolic in three main ways. One, as a reference to the Tampa’s natural beauty that existed alongside the first Native Americans who settled here. Two, the unlikely partnership of a predator and prey which would not exist in such a “loving form” in the natural world, but are represented to make a statement about “uniting” for one loving purpose, (which we feel is a very important message in today’s chaotic world, especially on the local level.) Three, relates to history of the main communities, namely Ybor, Seminole Heights and West Tampa (all elements exist within the neighborhood seals, or are culturally iconic to a specific area. The references are then surrounded by natural imagery you would find along Bayshore Blvd., and along the riverside, thus, this main images represents all of the main communities in Tampa). That image is flanked by native florals (Orange Blossoms and Magnolias), a rope, anchor and paddles. Those final three elements reference not only the shipping industry and boating activities of the port and river, but the home to abundant wildlife. On the left and right sides, the central image is bordered by native birds and are more than an allusion to our natural assets. Birds historically have a heavy symbolic significance relating to wisdom and the soul.

We chose to maintain the shape of the pointed arches to reference the building itself. Being that it is a church building, we took inspiration from Renaissance and Medieval altarpieces. In the background of these spaces, silhouettes of people were incorporated to reinforce the idea of connectedness between humans (working together represented by the subtle “cogs” in the upper background of the arches) and nature. Through scale and placement, these elements remind us that we are not the only significant inhabitants of this great city and a reminder of how our actions can have an affect not only on one-another, but the other inhabitants we coexist with.

The color palette was chosen in reference to Havana, Cuba, and Tampa’s hispanic heritage. In the area surrounding the main imagery, we broke up the space with subtle texture and symbols tied to Tampa’s culture and history.