

ENTERTAINMENT

Big new mural going in downtown



by **Jeff Hirsh**
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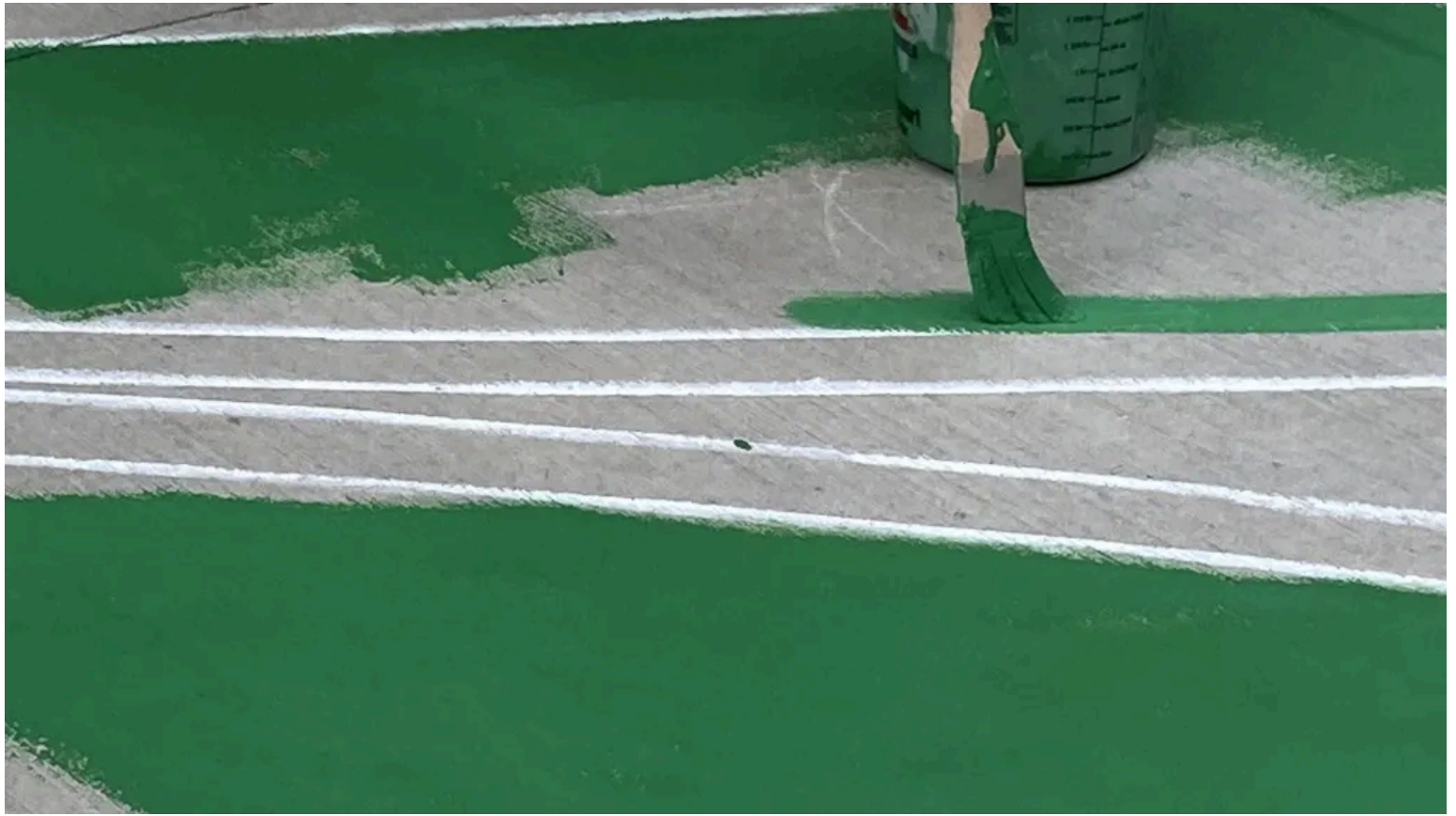


Mural artist Miguel Del Real, working on his downtown creation. Credit: Jeff Hirsh

You can't grow flowers in a concrete sidewalk.

But you can paint a colorful floral design on top.

That's what's happening right now on the sidewalk in front of the Orrington Plaza office tower downtown.



Credit: Jeff Hirsh

Artist/designer Miguel Del Real is coloring within the lines he created, putting down those lines after “first counting all the sidewalk squares,” to determine where the mural should twist, or turn, or go in a straight line.

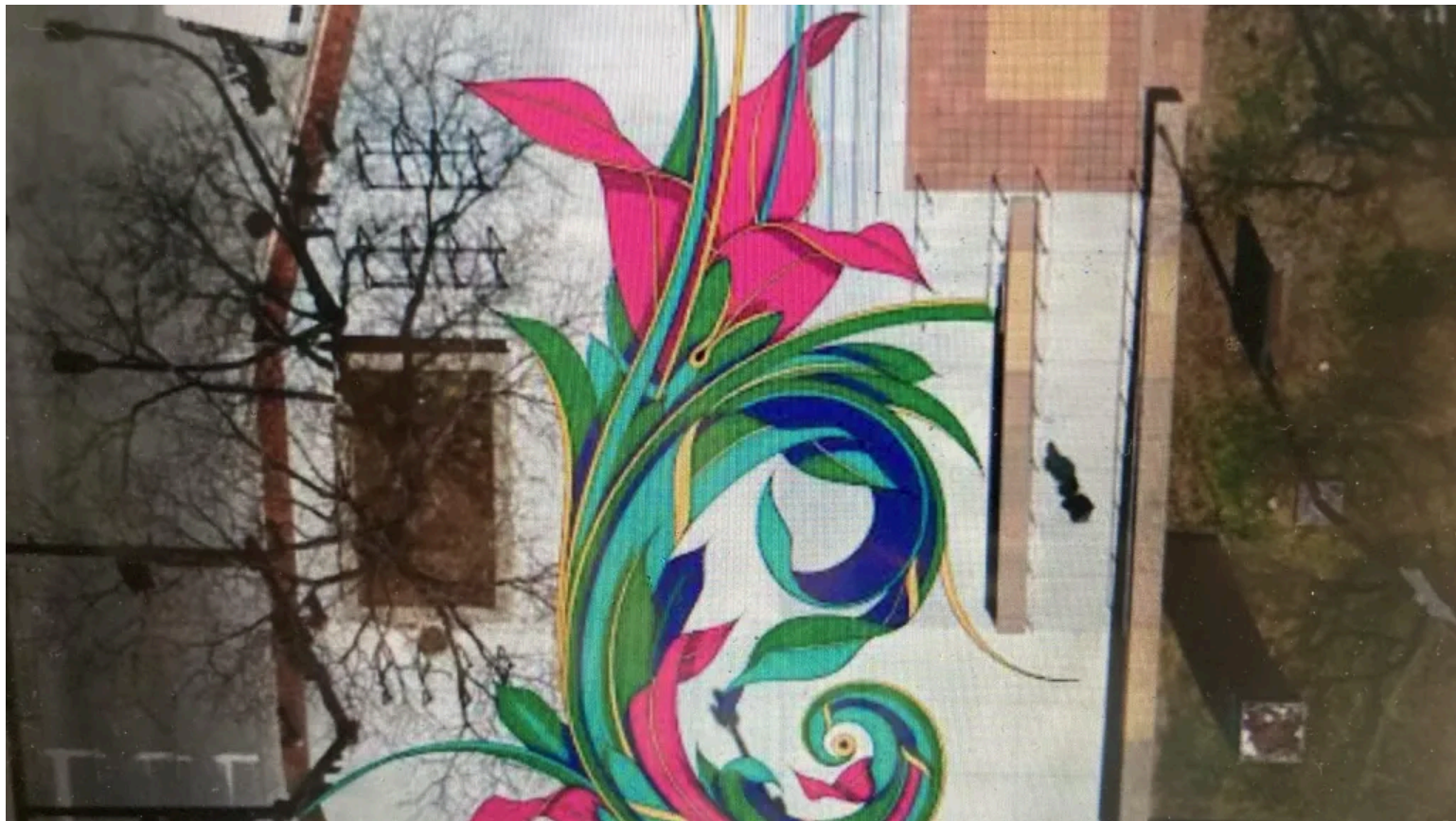


Some of the mural's outlines, yet to be colored in. Credit: Jeff Hirsh

Del Real is an experienced muralist, but this, he says, is a first – the first one on a sidewalk instead of the more traditional mural on a wall.

The mural-in-progress (unnamed as of now), will have “everything fit together,” Del Real says.

“It will follow a pattern,” just like a real flower.



What the mural will look like when finished. Credit: Art Encounter

This is the latest mural from Art Encounter, and its Evanston Mural Arts Program.

Executive Director Lea Pinsky says Del Real was chosen after twelve artists were considered.



Credit: Jeff Hirsh

The selection committee, Pinsky explains, was particularly impressed with Del Real's sense of "playfulness," because part of the mural extends off the sidewalk and climbs onto the adjacent steps.

ADVERTISING

The advertisement features a jar of Jif Peanut Butter & Chocolate Flavored Spread on the left. The jar is labeled "Jif", "PEANUT BUTTER & CHOCOLATE", and "50% LESS SUGAR". In the center is the Jif logo, which consists of three overlapping circles (red, blue, and green) with the word "Jif" in white. Below the logo is the text "The Merger". To the right of the logo is the text "The Flavor Merger America Craved". At the bottom right is a yellow button with the text "Buy Now". At the very bottom right, in small text, is "Peanut Butter and Chocolate Flavored Spread". The background is a solid yellow color.



(L-R) Lea Pinsky & Dustin Harris of Art Encounter, Miguel Del Real. Credit: Jeff Hirsh

Once the artwork is completed, Pinsky says, it will reflect both “a path and a journey.”

The journey to this particular mural began with Nathan Kostant, Orrington Plaza’s general manager.

A new sidewalk was put in not long ago, leaving what Pinsky terms a “beautiful blank canvas.”

Kostant “came up with the idea” of “transform[ing] the blank sidewalk into a piece of public art,” according to company spokesperson McKenzie Parker Whitney.

“Our goal,” at [Golub & Company](#), which manages and [partially owns](#) the building, “was to beautify the immediate surroundings and create a connection with the Evanston community through thoughtful, engaging artwork,” Parker Whitney says..

Kostant approached Andy Vick, executive director of the Downtown Evanston marketing group, who then brought in Art Encounter.

“We wanted ...[the mural] to be something big and organic,” Vick says.

The goal is “creating an uplifting and possibly inspiring experience for residents and visitors,” Vick says, “celebrating creativity.”

The mural costs about \$20,000, with Downtown Evanston, and businesses connected to Orrington Plaza, either as manager or tenants, picking up the expense.



Mural sponsors. Credit: Jeff Hirsh

Special paint is being used, to help the mural survive Evanston’s freezing winters and hot summers.



Credit: Jeff Hirsh

And the pattern is designed without certain colors which cannot be distinguished by those who are color blind.

The mural is scheduled to be dedicated on August 21.

Pinsky says she hopes that the sidewalk mural “becomes interactive, with children finding a walking path and play spaces.”



Credit: Art Encounter

Can't do that on a wall.

