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Artist to Watch | Matt Farrar
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Can you tell us a bit about your professional and artistic backgrounds?

I earned my BFA in 1996 from Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle. After several years of studio work and some gallery representation I moved to Santa Cruz and received a graduate degree in Scientific Illustration from UCSC in 2004. Since then I have supported myself as a graphic designer, illustrator and studio artist.

How did this project come to fruition?

My friend Jennifer Robin who is an interior designer often specifies my artwork for projects that require one of a kind paintings. In 2008 I created several paintings for Cetrella restaurant in Half Moon Bay. The owner is opening another restaurant in Los Altos. These murals will be a permanent part of that location.

Another important detail to consider is that my good friend Gary Maricich advised me on the technique of creating the artwork on Cambric cloth and then pasting them up at the location. This adds so much value to the work as it can be removed and is not permanently connected to a gypsum wall.

What has been your favorite part about working on the mural?

The best part has been the ease at which Brian, my painting assistant, and I have had working together. Discussing our daily approach, applying paint and simply doing the work without the burden of stress. My favorite part was the challenge and taking the risk of producing the 3 large paintings in less than 60 days.

The scale of your work is amazing! What do you hope people will feel when they dine next to them?

These are big paintings, larger than I typically create and pretty grand when you think that not too many new establishments even have the resources to commission a project like this. What is cool is that they are not ostentatious, but a fitting backdrop to the unique background of the space. The paintings have a suggested narrative of moving from one location to another. It is subtle but I think there will be a bit of awe and the thrill of being close to artwork of that scale.

What has it been like collaborating with each other for the mural?

It was a piece of cake and fun. The days that I was working alone were usually less productive and a little boring. Brian and I have very similar taste in music, so it was easy to dive into bands and the catalogs of musicians that we have been into for years. Spotify makes that pretty convenient.

What personal projects are you currently working on?

I will be jumping back into my graphic design biz. The work has piled up at my desk in my office at the Old Sash Mill and I have a couple clients I'm pretty excited to start working with again especially Corralitos Brewing Company. In the meantime I'll be in my studio at home doodling in Illustrator and producing some screen prints.

Where do you find your inspiration in Santa Cruz?

Inspiration comes easy to me. What's most important is to recharge my batteries with a solo mountain bike ride in Wilder Ranch or a few games of coed soccer a week with my team mates.

Are you following any artists and makers right now that we should check out?

Oddly right now I'm mostly intrigued by tattoo art and a few tattoo artists out there. My buddy Flip at Eights and Aces creates these really cool ink and paper cut pieces that are very original. Abby Drielsma in Melbourne has a nice illustrators approach in black line and Annie Frenzel in San Antonio has a outrageous amount of skill.

To check out more of Matt's work go to www.ignitiondesigns.org

<http://www.cameronmarks.com/blog/>