

Utility Box Art Programs - Process Options

The following was offered as the definition of Utility Box Art within the proposed Contra Costa County Public Art Policy:

Utility Box Art is the enhancement of County owned utility boxes through the application of artwork created by Artists. Utility Box Art programs traditionally have two approaches: either the artwork is painted directly on to the utility boxes by the Artist, or the artwork is applied to utility boxes as vinyl wraps printed with the Artist's design. Utility Box Art will be considered Temporary Public Art due to their susceptibility to damage or deterioration due to environmental conditions.

As indicated, there are two primary options for the fabrication of Utility Box artworks.

The following reflects pros and cons for consideration in identifying the mechanism for applying artwork:

1. Art painted directly on box surfaces:

Pros:

- "Original" hand-painted appearance similar to murals
- Potentially long-lasting lifespan

Cons:

- Requires liability insurance for artists to paint on-site or County Counsel approved liability waiver system
- Paint cannot be removed easily, artwork removal would require overpainting which can result in multiple layers of paint.
- A rotation of artwork designs will result in multiple paint layers and may have "ghost images" of previous images/brushstrokes from heavier paint application.

2. Art transferred to vinyl wrapping applied to box surfaces:

Pros:

- Easy removal and replacement of designs--allowing for an easy rotation for more artists to participate
- Installation by insured specialized contractors
- Artwork does not leave a lasting imprint on boxes

Cons:

- Does not have a hand-painted appearance
- Could be more subject to fading—which would be minimized as a concern with a timely rotation of artworks
- During hot weather, it is possible that the wrap may peel off the cabinet or trap heat in the cabinet, affecting the electronics.