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Community Trail Art Initiative (CTAI) 2007-09

CTAI was an ecoliteracy and art program that I designed and delivered to Pittsburgh-area middle and high schools through art classes and after-school programs. Students learned about the social and natural history of their riverfront and trail, and then translated their research into drawings. Students combined their drawings into compositions and transferred them onto up-cycled vinyl banners. In the final step, they painted the banners, which were then displayed along their riverfront trails. The program was administered through the Steel Valley Trail Council and brought attention to the trail, as part of the Great Allegheny Passage—a continuous bike trail from Pittsburgh to D.C.
Banner Making Process: Drawing
Completed Banners

Flora

Fauna

CTAI 2007-09
Completed Banners along the Trail
Mountain Laurel
The General Assembly made the Mountain Laurel Pennsylvania's state flower.

Red Tailed Hawk
The Red Tailed Hawk, like all raptors, has excellent vision.

Homestead Trail Guide with Student Drawings
Environmental Graphic Design

This course is a comparative and comprehensive study and presentation of design and graphics as applied to the built and natural environment. Methods, materials, and content engaged by practitioners in the fields of EGD, environmental art, and community art are explored. The emphasis is on research and collaboration, working with local clients to address their needs and develop functional design solutions and aesthetic value.

Art Institute of Pittsburgh. All projects located in Pittsburgh.
Oxford Centre Mural 2007

**Project:** Design interior mural panels for a very steep entry with poor light and low ceilings.

Coincided with Pittsburgh’s 250th Anniversary
Celebrating Pittsburgh’s Neighborhoods

In recognition of the 250th anniversary of the City of Pittsburgh, the mural celebrates what makes our city unique. Pittsburgh is truly a city of neighborhoods, with the Allegheny and the Monongahela rivers forming the Ohio River—our neighborhood separates the history of the city we call home.

With the Oxford Centre as the destination point, we highlight four neighborhoods representing the diversity of the Northside, Bloomfield, the Southside, and Oakland. Each neighborhood is portrayed on the mural, suggesting the flavors of our city as both green and technological. Each neighborhood represents a community or neighborhood, but also those of the Old North and the South Side.

The Oxford Centre is a significant historical landmark in the city of Pittsburgh, located at the confluence of the Monongahela and the Allegheny rivers. The area was originally inhabited by the Monongahela Indians and the Fort Pitt. Today, the Oxford Centre is a mall and a cultural center, housing a variety of stores and restaurants.

The Northside neighborhood reflects the growth and diversity in Pittsburgh’s urban landscape. The Northside is known for its vibrant culture, including the North Shore, and its cultural attractions, such as the Carnegie Science Center. The area is also home to the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and the Pittsburgh Opera. The Northside is a vibrant neighborhood, with a rich history and a thriving arts community.

Bloomfield is one of the most diverse neighborhoods in Pittsburgh, with a strong Italian-American community. The neighborhood is known for its cultural institutions, such as the Pittsburgh Opera and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Bloomfield is also home to the Italian Cultural Institute and the Pittsburgh Art Museum.

South Side is a historic neighborhood in Pittsburgh, known for its industrial past and its contributions to the city’s economic growth. The neighborhood is home to the Heinz Pittsburgh office building, which houses the offices of PPG Industries, and the Homestead National Historical Park. The South Side is also home to the University of Pittsburgh and the Carnegie Mellon University.

Oakland is a residential neighborhood in the South Side of Pittsburgh, known for its tree-lined streets and its proximity to the University of Pittsburgh. The neighborhood is home to the Heinz Endowments and the Carnegie Museum of Art. Oakland is also home to the Pittsburgh Museum of Art and the Duquesne University.

Interpretive signage with credits

The mural was designed and produced by students from the Carnegie Mellon University School of Art and Design. The design team included: Aimee Buechel, David Cates, Evan Cates, Emily Koehler, Eric Meden, and Kelly Reinhart. The mural was painted by the Pittsburgh Artists Collaborative and the Pittsburgh Public Art Project.
Project: Design interior interpretive signage highlighting CCI's LEED Gold building.
Art History: American Art History

A comprehensive overview of the history of art in America from prior to colonization through the present. This course offers a comparative perspective to solve assigned studio problems.

Project: Photo Essay

Assignment: Imagine that you are living at the end of the 19th century: the wild and pastoral American landscape is receding as the urban and industrialized landscape is ascending. What ‘story’ do you want to tell about this period through a series of photographs? Consider the artists, photographers and writers of this period and the stories they chose to tell—you will base your project on the style and content of one or two of them. Pittsburgh is a microcosm of this story, thus you will gather your images from your local surroundings.

Art Institute of Pittsburgh
This 8-week course for graduate students and seniors provided a hands-on introduction to eco/community art. Students explored the art historical, philosophic, and aesthetic foundations of eco/community art through readings, discussion, and weekly art projects. Art educators were introduced to numerous online eco-education resources and developed a project proposal for a classroom environment.

Final Project: Eco/Community Art Project

For the culminating, final project, students developed a project plan for an eco/community art project that they executed. Examples could be designing and planting a school garden that included interpretive signage or art elements; learning about the local watershed and translating that into art (e.g., book, banners, signage, mural); exploring a local park and learning about its social and/or natural history and translating that experience into art. Students were required to both realize the project and write a summary and evaluation of the final outcomes.
Bosch-inspired, collage altar made of found and recycled materials addressing waste and consumption.
Conceptual art project that encouraged the public to consider their transportation choices.
Poster and postcards designed to engage the community in a discussion of education and funding cuts.
The Springs Project. Collage photo panels documenting privately owned spring houses. Texts are from extensive interviews done by the student of the well owners. Interviews were compiled in a separate document. Each owner received a print interpreting their well.
The Springs Project. Final prints and documentation were exhibited at the local library.