



Baby Point murals give boost of colour to community

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Both Jane and Annette streets have received an infusion of colour with the installation of three murals.

The artwork was commissioned by the Baby Point Gates Business Improvement Area (BIA) and created by artist Walter Ruston, whose work can also be seen in Roncesvalles Village as well.

On Sunday, Nov. 6 an uncharacteristically warm and bright November day, Ruston was putting the finishing touches on a mural he has christened 'Boating Regatta on the Humber.' It can be found at 724 Annette St., just east of Jane Street.

The BIA's vice chairman Dennis Maslo said the group was looking for architectural, historical and natural themes to adorn the walls of three of its buildings.

"Beautification is one of the BIA's major goals.

The murals add character while creating a graffiti deterrent," said Maslo, adding that the organization wanted to take advantage of the City of Toronto's mural grant program.

In a matter of weeks, Ruston, who lives in the Islington Avenue and Lakeshore Boulevard West area, was able to turn three rather bleak brick surfaces into a whole new world. Each mural depicts a different time period and different attributes of the neighbourhood, such as the Humber River, a theme of all three, the Baby Point Gates - the BIA's namesake - and the Old Mill bridge.

Mural painting is far from new to Ruston. He's been painting them since 1972. His first was on a sign shop, The One of a Kind Only One in the World Shop on Charles Street, near Yonge Street, where Ruston once worked. He painted the whole building, he said. Those were the days he did lots of commercial work, including a stint with Paramount Pictures.

"I did a lot of cut-outs to decorate the interior of theatres," he recalled.

He can take credit for transforming two walls in Roncesvalles Village, one at Garden Avenue.

For the Baby Point Gates BIA murals, he sought the expertise of historian Madeleine McDowell, who provided copious amounts of historical documents and photographs. All three murals, said Maslo have a cohesive theme, but can stand on their own. After a week of research and countless drawings, Ruston said he finally came up with an idea for the murals that clicked.

The murals were spread over the two streets "because we wanted to keep a balance between Jane and Annette," said Maslo. One is at 238 Jane St., the other is at 268 Jane St.



Baby Point murals give boost of colour to street corner. Artist Walter Ruston puts the finishing touches on a mural on Annette Street, just west of Jane Street. He was commissioned by the Baby Point Business Improvement Area to paint three murals. BIA Vice Chair Dennis Maslo said beautification is one of the group's priorities. *Staff Photo/LISA RAINFORD*

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