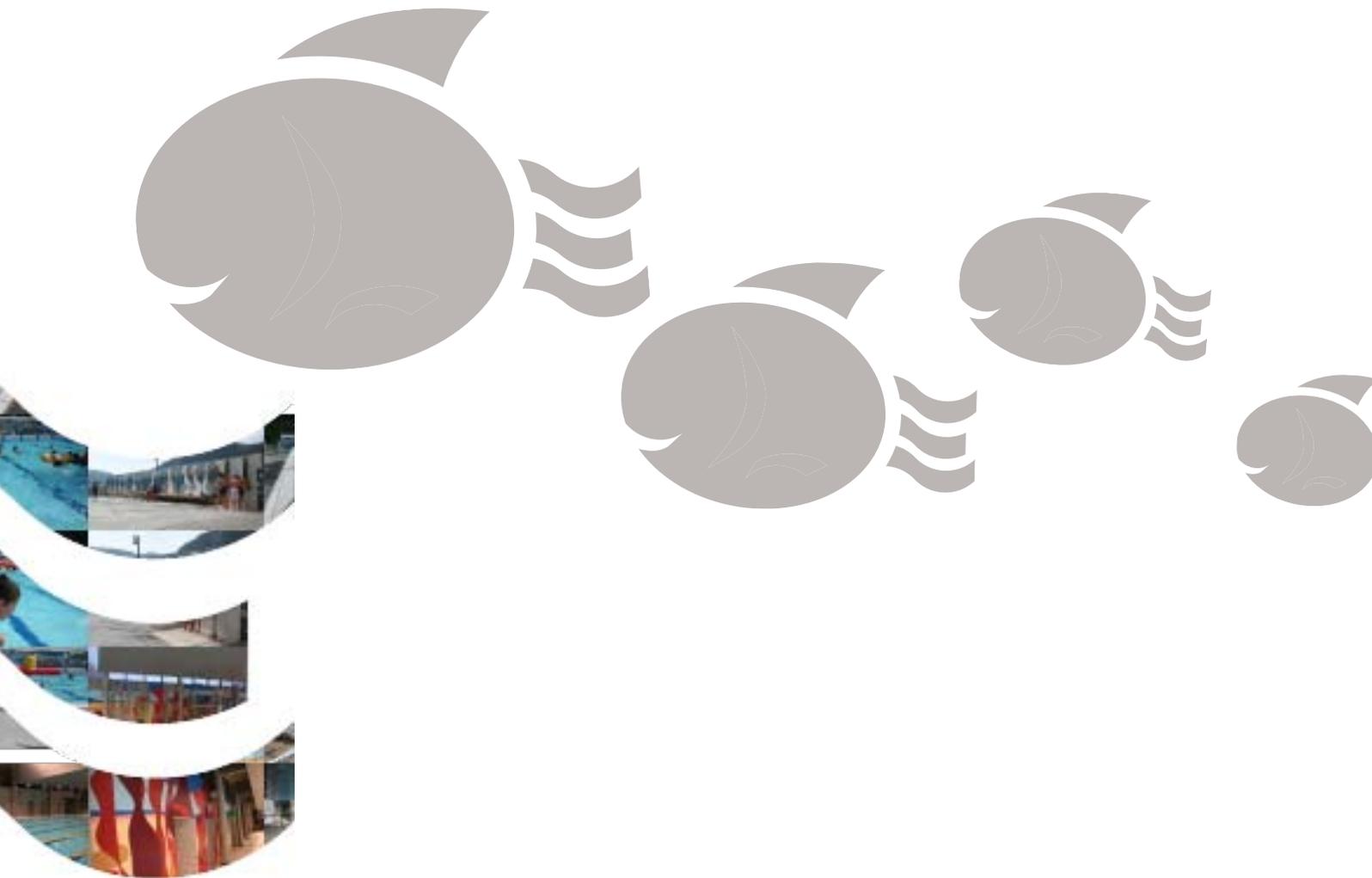


HØYANGER BADET MURALS

DANIEL LONGFELLOW





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Høyanger Badet: A Blank Canvas





The Beginning

The power of a mural has few equals in the world of art. The immensity of an image so large has a lasting effect that can completely change a mundane environment into an unforgettable place. In August of 2006, Sven Eric Lillehaug, of Høyanger Badet contacted me to produce a proposal for a series of four murals to decorate the soon to be completed swimming pool located in Høyanger, Norway. Since my family's arrival to Høyanger in February of 2006, we had eagerly anticipated the completion of the swimming pool, especially since the old swimming pool had been closed since before our arrival. Upon arriving at the construction site I was amazed by the fantastic architectural elements of the swimming pool, both inside and out and especially by the enormity of the cement walls within.

It was explained to me that the swimming pool was interested in decorating the large expanses of concrete wall on both the interior and exterior of the pool, and that they

were interested in a proposal visualizing how the swimming pool could possibly look. I was then free to photograph the pool and to come up with a concept that could improve the overall aesthetic presence of the space.

Standing inside the swimming pool I was struck by an interesting feeling that surrounded me. The architectural design of the swimming pool was strikingly powerful. Large three meter high, forty meter long expanses of concrete wall linked two large open spaces of three story glass at either end of the pool. The spatial environment was dynamic and beautiful to be in, as the glass walled areas at either end of the pool created a light and airy feeling which allowed one to feel as though they were outside when in. The problem with the interior space was that, even with all the large wall space made of glass, in daylight, the large areas of grey concrete wall created a cold presence of darkness. The color of the cement only exacerbated



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this problem, and would have to be addressed through proper color decisions and design.

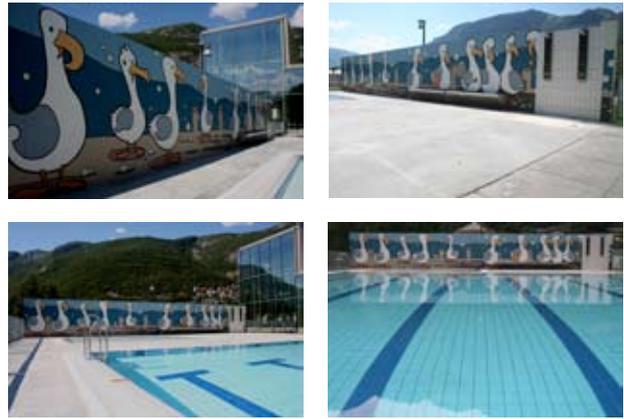
When I designed the motifs for the four walls, I contemplated the effects of the images upon each their respective environments. I considered the visitors that would be viewing the murals, their age and what would I as a swimmer like to view when I was in the water. I have always found that swimming is a very unique experience. The swimming pool becomes a portal, if you will, to a weightless experience where one can feel apart of another world void of gravity. The walls, I decided, should represent an opportunity to observe a new environment and a chance to study the contrast of ones self to the rest of the aquatic world. Respecting the fact that the walls on the exterior would most likely be visited by younger guests and sunbathers, and that the interior swimming pools would be the home of more adult or serious swimmers, and I wanted the murals to be in harmony

with each their own clientele. The exterior walls were to have a more childlike motif, where as the interior was to provide images that adults could find more intriguing to study over a longer period of time. In addition I wanted the interior to be warmed by the images that I chose. Many swimming pools have a cold presence due to color tones found by the reflecting water, I clearly wanted to avoid this by utilizing warmer color tones in the murals. Hopefully, the swimming pool could present itself as a warm oasis to contrast a rainy or snowy day in Høyanger.

Once the initial designs were approved for the Høyanger Badet Mural project I was filled with a sense of foreboding. I had completed large murals before, three-story "Giants" in my opinion, however nothing was to there in my mind to prepare me for the true monstrous proportions of the walls that lay before me. The only solace that I could find was that like any long journey, the trip begins with one footstep, and so I began.

The Exterior





The Seagull Wall

In 2004 I began working towards a concept of children's artwork which I call Choogoose. I wanted to design a line of children's illustrations which would be free of racial prejudices and allow children to see the humor in the world in which we live. I have produced an entire world of detailed illustrations of these birds which humorously go about their daily lives. I chose to utilize the birds of Choogoose on the first exterior wall of Høyanger Badet because of my familiarity with the subject and because of the appropriateness of the subject matter. The Seagull wall borders the exterior swimming pool at one end and is located next to the infant swimming pool where infants can easily hop in and out of the water. Attached to this wall are two outdoor showers, where bathers can rinse off the swimming pool water before sunbathing. Thinking hard about the location and environment surrounding the wall, I decided to create an illusion that the wall was an actual extension of the swimming pool. The design of the

wall is 11 seagulls waiting in line for a shower. Roughly 2 meters in height, the seagulls allow visitors a perspective contrast, allowing them to feel what it would be like to live as a seagull. It was also important to me that the exterior walls exist in harmony with the town itself. Surrounding Høyanger are the mountains of the Sogn region, and I wanted their horizon line to be reflected in the murals. This was achieved by the water line in the murals behind the seagulls.

Securing the work environment and clean the working surface for the primer paint to be applied, was my first task. Jotun Paints recommended using a surface cleaner solution however; the walls water runoff could possibly come in contact with the now filling swimming pools which were located just feet from the walls that needed to be painted. By using a power washer to blast any dirt and dust from the walls I could successfully clean the surface using a more environmentally sound technique. By doing so I



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learned quite a lot about the walls that were going to be painted. During the construction process of building the cement walls sheets of plywood are placed on either side of the wall in order to provide a surface for the cement to be poured into. Once the cement is filled into the wall cavity, the bubbles in the cement mixture rise to the surface and the cement is allowed to harden. Many of the bubbles that remained near the surface of the plywood did not successfully pop or make it to the top surface, and consequently formed a paper thin sheet of cement that under normal circumstances was of no concern, but now when power washing the cement became a problem due to the fact that each bubble popped represented a difficult hand brushed area of wall space. Høyanger Badet and I had agreed that the walls did not need to be prepared any more than their current status so it was now up to me to make sure that each and every bubble hole on the walls would be properly covered to the best of my ability.

Once the Seagull Wall was power washed I was able to set up the tarps to provide protection from the elements. I did so under blue skies, thinking to myself, "I don't even know if I'm going to need these," fantastic weather was the norm and my only concern was to make sure I had enough sun tan lotion and water to drink. The wall was now dry, and I was able to begin the application process of the sealant and primer for the paint. I decided that the Seagull Wall as well as the Fish Wall was to be freehand drawn, in order to preserve the playful lines of my original drawings. By using a neutral color of light grey I drew the walls design in just over an afternoon and stood back to observe the impact

of the wall in respect to its new environment.

The exterior walls were planned to reflect the location and surroundings of the town. I chose colors that I felt would harmonize with the rest of the town's buildings colors and not stand as a contrast to the palette of colors already in place on the façade of the house located there. Due to Høyanger's natural coastal location, it was a natural choice to use some of the local imagery in the paintings. The Seagull Wall depicts series of eleven seagulls all standing near the shower area located on the wall. The seagulls are drawn in a playful manner all studying the area near the shower as if they the Seagulls were also waiting in line to get a bath. The seagulls stand almost 2 meters in height and allow the viewer the opportunity to see the world through their eyes, or rather as equals. I wanted the viewer while in the pool to reflect upon their own relationship to seagulls and what it might be like to share a day in their life as equals rather than a bird one looks down upon. In addition, I wanted the wall to reflect the mountains which surround the town of Høyanger. The water line which, changes color in the painting from the fore to background mimics the horizon line of the hills located just behind the wall. Especially while immersed in the water, I felt that this image was particularly successful in its portrayal.

With my experience from the first wall, I knew that the walls would require more primer than recommended by Jotun. I decided in addition to tone the wall in a light blue color in order to speed the process of coloring. Once the priming and toning of the wall was done I was now ready. When I made the initial proposal for the designs



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of the murals I had originally anticipated a dark blue wall with blue fish with orange stripes and one large orange fish with blue stripes. When I attempted to order the paint from Jotun, I was surprised to see that the dark tones that I was hoping for were not available due to that fact that the paint could not hold the pigment necessary for good adhesion. I decided to alter the colors that were planned and went with a lighter sand color background. The fish would maintain their colors but the result would be a lighter mural. My initial concern for the results was soon assuaged by the playful actualization of the mural. Similar to the Seagull Wall I hand drew the design onto the wall and began. The original designs for

the fish were drawn using vector shapes on the computer. Unlike the design of the seagulls birds which I have drawn an infinite number of times, I was not satisfied with the final look of the fish drawing and decided to draw the fish as many times as possible to see if the drawing could evolve. There is an old saying in the world of art that, "If you draw something one hundred times then you will know". This became apparent when drawing the fish and I found that resulting fish to be far more aesthetically harmonious. In addition I found that the resulting fish was a more playful design which was also in agreement with my concept of an exterior pool designed for children.





The Fish Wall

At the opposite end of the exterior swimming pool is another wall which faces the Seagull Wall. In contrast to the Seagull Wall, the Fish Wall is located one and a half meters from the edge of the deep end of the pool. If the Seagull wall was to represent the water front above water then the Fish wall was to represent the world under water. As a child, I have always wished that I could have secret X-Ray vision and observe everything underwater, to know where the fish were, to know where the sunken treasure lay, and all the secrets of the seas. In respect to the creatures of the sea, I wanted the wall to reflect this society in the mural and to make a statement that hopefully children could ponder, if only subconsciously. If one studies the fish at a glance, one can see that all the fish, except for one, are blue with an orange stripe. One fish, to whom all the other fish are staring is Orange with blue stripes; the Fish Wall is actually a statement: Be Yourself.

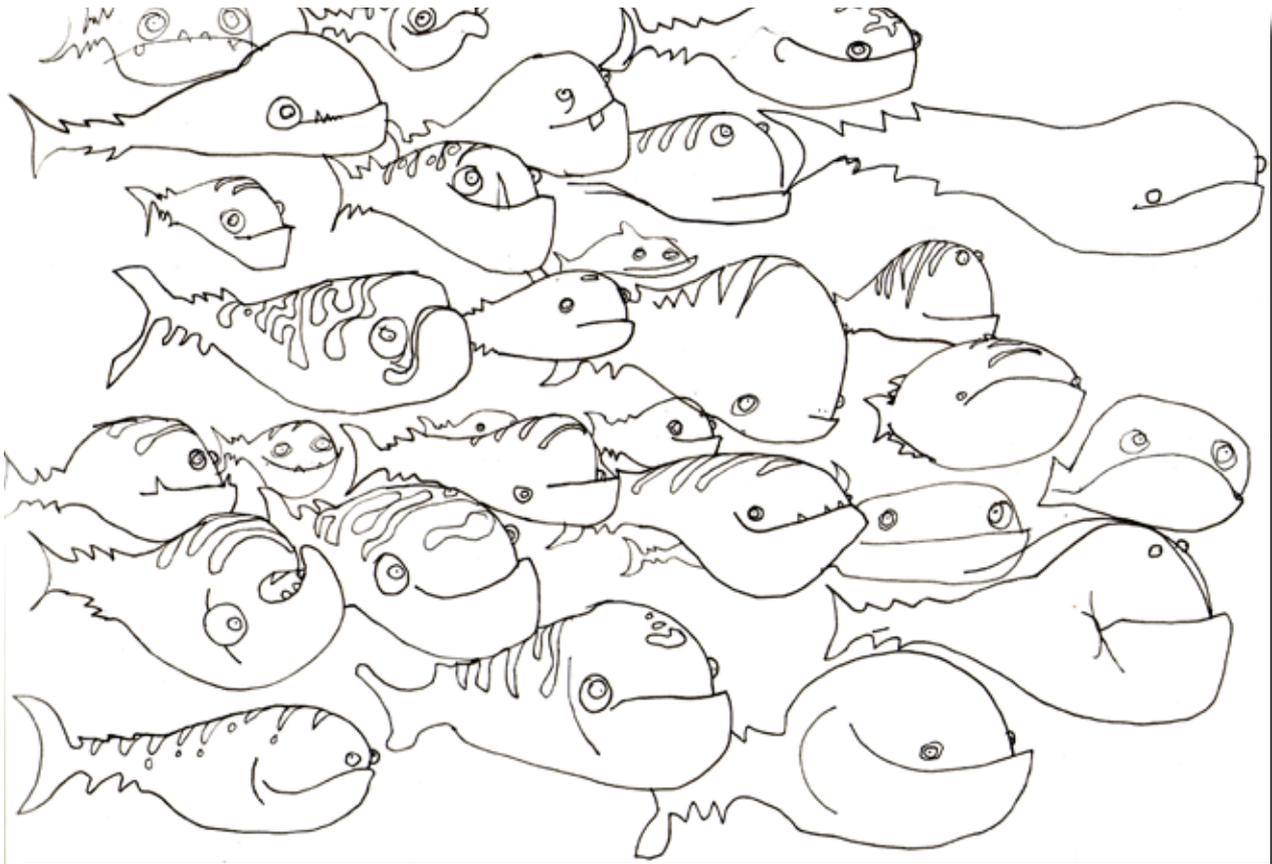
Production of the first wall had gone to plan,

and I was now ready to begin the second exterior wall. In addition to the primer, I decided to apply a base color to the wall to speed the later coloring process. I did this to see if I could not shave a few hours of production time, considering the fast approaching deadline of the opening of the swimming pool. When painting the Seagull I was lucky to experience very little rain. Sunlight was the norm for production and I was happy to start the next wall. On the 7th of August my luck ran out and a storm hit Høyanger. Unlike the Seagull Wall, which backside took the approaching rains, the Fish Wall windward direction was in direct line for any oncoming storms up the fjord. Erecting a 20 meter tarp by oneself is difficult under normal circumstances. In strong winds and heavy rain it is nearly impossible. I spent hours constantly tightening and adjusting the lines which held the tarp taut above my head. On the other side of the wall I used 20 or more 15 kilo stones to help hold the tarp down. My initial plans of renting a tent and scaffolding



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system began to look more and more appealing. With all my work and over 200 kilos of stone locking the tarp to the ground the tarp was still repeatedly ripped from its fasteners, a true testament to the power of any storm. I had hoped for the sunny conditions that were present with the first wall, but now with the constantly rattling tarp and excess water everywhere, the work site began to look comical. When the storm finally did subside, I was relieved to see that the paint was adhering beautifully to the wall and that no damage had occurred to the painted surface.

Regardless of the weather I had great success with the application of the paint on the Fish Wall. When considering the amount of time it takes to paint a wall of this size, one's mind can easily assume that production can proceed faster than reality dictates. I was able to begin the final black line process of detailing the painting on the 10th of August and was satisfied that I would have enough time to make the opening on the 12th.

Regardless of my optimism, I was not finished with the mural until 5:30 in the morning on the 12th. After having cleaned the work site for the opening, I had just enough time for a two-hour nap, shower, and change and go down for the opening. The town of Høyanger was invited to swim at the newly completed swimming pool on the 12th and several hundred spectators were present for the grand opening. I had spent many a day and night working alone on the murals and it was now time to unveil wonderful new swimming pools and the murals therein. It was a unique relationship that I had with the murals that I had just had such an intimate experience with, now I was to share the experience with all the residents of Høyanger and share in their enjoyment of the murals. To my utter joy the response to the murals was fantastic. The designs for the murals worked perfectly in conjunction with the children that now swam and played in the water before them. Watching children and families splash in the water and having a great





time, I could not help but feel that I too had contributed to their happiness. In particular I was delighted to see that the initial designs that I had planned for the exterior walls had functioned in reality. The Seagull Wall's illusion effect of the seagulls standing in line for a shower worked perfectly. While children splashed in the outdoor bath, the seagulls peaked over their shoulder and waited their turn. In addition, the Fish Wall had a wonderful effect that the chil-

dren in the water were now located under the sea as opposed to just a swimming pool.

After having completed the two exterior walls, the task of the two large interiors still remained. False impressions of being "half way" with the project were quickly set into perspective when I realised that the sum of the two exterior walls would still not complete one half of one of the interior walls that still remained.

The Interior





The Whale Wall

The interior walls represented for me a different set of aesthetic parameters in that I would subconsciously working on the visual fingerprint of the building and affecting how every visitor would come to remember the new swimming pool. My greatest concern was to create imagery that would work harmoniously with the buildings architecture as well as creating a warm and inviting environment. The concept of utilizing shapes to move the viewer visually through the swimming pool was paramount to the success of the murals. I decided to maintain the aquatic theme which began with the exterior walls, but to consider that the guests that would most likely frequent the interior swimming pools would be both older and more serious swimmers, however during the winter months the pool would also be used by children and families. Whenever I watch a television programming regarding sea mammals I have always wondered how large that creature is in comparison to myself. This was the premise for the larger of the

two interior walls. Noting the immensity of the wall, spanning 40 meters in length, I wanted to portray the largest of sea creatures on this wall in full scale. Of the two interior walls the largest was then to become the Whale Wall. Like the exterior the interior walls imagery would challenge the visitor to think about their own relationship and scale to the aquatic inhabitants of the world's oceans. By utilizing a 1:100 scale I wanted to paint the greatest fish and sea mammals onto the wall in a unique opportunity to allow one scale relationships between oneself and the fish of the sea. As a visitor one will now be able to judge their own size in relationship to a blue whale, or a great white shark.

The interior process was to be the same as the exterior, but on a much larger scale, and in addition to the size problems, was the fact that all painting of the walls could only be done while the swimming pool was closed to visitors. This meant that my work day consisted from 9 pm to





9 am. I had never tried the night shift before and never in a swimming pool with high temperatures. In attempt to make as little impact on my families daily life I decided to work only 6 hours a day in order to have the adequate sleep to allow for me to keep family responsibilities and take care of my son. I have to admit that working at night is not my favourite thing to do. The unique problem with only being able to work at night is that one's psyche will plead you to wrap it up for the day and begin afresh tomorrow, and when the day light comes and goes the next day the same tiredness returns. I now have an eternal respect for all individuals that are able to make the night shift work for themselves and their families, as for me it was extremely difficult.

In order to maintain a better production flow, I decided to prime both of the interior walls at once, so that I would not have to return to the primer process until the completion of the first wall. After the base paint was applied

I had to solve the problem of transferring the original image to the wall. The drawing to precisely reflect the original, due to the fact that the Whale Wall was to be a life size scale representation of the fish and mammals that swim in our oceans. Using the grid method of utilizing a scaled 1:100 drawing, where one square on a grid drawing would represent one square of the interior walls, I proceeded to apply the initial designs. The drawing of the grid on the Whale wall took quite a long time as the height of the wall made it necessary to use scaffolding to reach the highest corners of the wall.

In art one utilizes certain techniques to establish depth with in an image. An object in the foreground will most certainly have a stronger contrasting color in comparison to a distant object. In addition, an object in the foreground will often be drawn with a thicker line to denote its position in the drawing. This allows the viewer to place objects seen, in an order from front to



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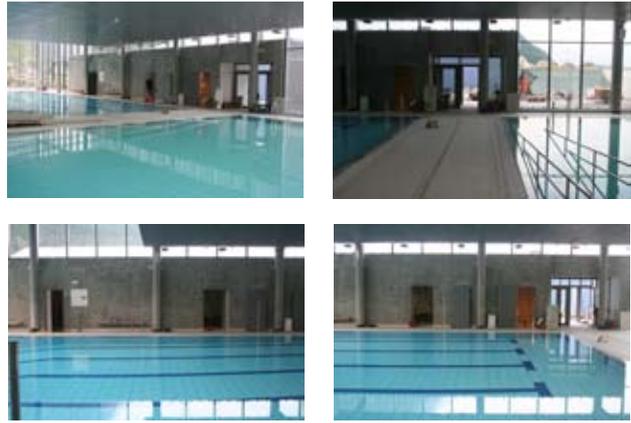




back, thereby establishing depth, and I wanted the colors and outline in the interior Whale Wall painting to have these characteristics. After completing the black line process of outlining, I was satisfied with the appearance of the colors chosen for the wall, but not with its appearance as a whole. When the objects of such a large scale painting had alternating line weights, the effect

was undesirable. The objects began competing for attention separately instead of becoming a harmonious group that told a unified story. I decided to continue on to the final wall and it was first after completing the Reef Wall that I returned and altered the line weights, that I was satisfied.





The Reef Wall

When I designed the four walls for the swimming pool I came up with one design which quickly became my favourite. The exterior walls were playful, the whale wall would be a unique visual experience, but the last of the four walls was just a beautiful artistic image, the Reef Wall. Recognizing the position of the Reef Wall I realizes that the wall would be the first image that a visitor would see upon entering the swimming pool. I wanted the image to be simple and beautiful, allowing ones eye to flow from one end of the swimming pool to the other in an opportunity to experience the mural in harmony with the architecture. The image required, in my opinion, a less detailed design, in order to compliment rather than compete with, the architecture. The greatest difference between the three other walls and the Reef Wall would be its simple portrayal of sea grass and sand on a reef. The design would be simpler in terms of forms in comparison to the other three walls but would make up for this visually through

its range of colors and design. The mural contains no less than 14 colors and its palette of warm tones and cool blues is designed to visually lighten ones visit to the swimming pool.

I had already primed the Reef Wall, while working on the Whale Wall so the majority of hard work was now completed. Transferring the design from the layout to the wall went as planned, and much easier I might add due to the lessons learned from the first wall. Often, the most time consuming process of mural production is solving the list of unknowns, how to design the image, how to prime, how to apply a working grid. As I had planned the image of the Reef Wall was simple to apply. I could have drawn the image in freehand but felt that I could easily lose sight of the proportions involved and decided to utilize the same grid technique used in the Whale Wall.

There is a natural flow that I really appreciate in the Reef Wall. One curve follows the



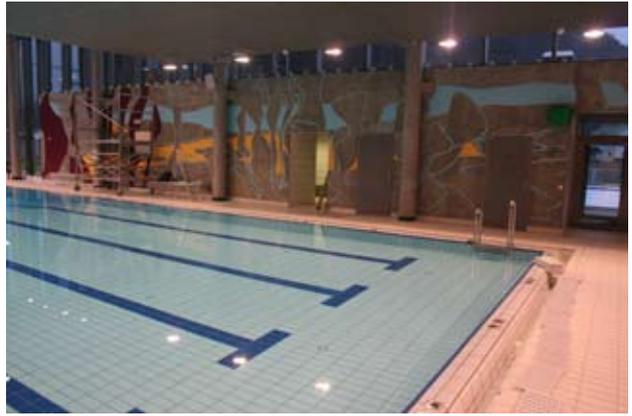


next, and allows the viewer to imagine oneself in another place. What I really like about the image are the colors used and how each shape contrasts the next. The flowery forms of the sea weed give the sense of movement in a subtle manner that functioned extremely well from conception to completion.

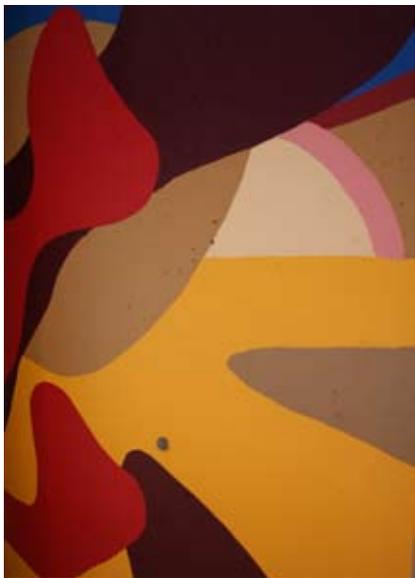
The biggest break for the production of the murals came in the few weeks leading up to Christmas. Until that moment I was only able to work on the walls from 9 at night to 9 in the morning. Due to repairs that were necessary, the swimming pool decided that it would be best to close the pool for 3 weeks leading up to Christmas and then re-open for the Christmas vacation visitors that could be expected. This meant that I was now able to concentrate my efforts on a hard push to complete the walls within that time period. I knew from my prior experience with the exterior walls that I would be able to make great strides every day and in addition I would

finally be able to sleep during evening hours.

One of the most notable changes with being able to paint during the day was that I was no longer alone. Welders and tile specialists were now on site and the interior of the swimming pool had its interior temperature dropped to a more comfortable level. I know felt more apart of a team and my moral for production soared. Color after color, I was able to move quickly forward, and as I reached the end of the coloring process I still had the “unfinished” Whale Wall which stared at me every day. I was still concerned about the thickness of the black line and its effect on the visual success of the mural. As I was quickly approaching the final strokes of the Reef Wall, I contemplated the black line for the Reef Wall and whether or not I should include a black line for the Reef Wall as well. All three of the other walls have a black line surrounding the shapes of color on each wall. The black line has an effective graphic power which I under normal



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circumstance like the effect. With the Reef Wall however, the more I studied the visual impact of the shapes and forms, the more I was resolved to finish the painting without the black line. I normally like to finish each color by meeting each color to the next in the cleanest line possible. It is not necessary when finishing a mural with black line due to the fact that the black line will cover and mistakes concerning color overlap, however I find it psychologically beneficial for myself while working on the mural. Finishing each color

as tightly and cleanly to the next as possible allows me to better observe the development of the mural. Subsequently the wall now needed very little cleanup in order to be completed. The more I now studied the look of the final wall the more I was satisfied with its appearance. All that now remained was to finish the thickness of the Whale Wall and clean the work site.

Conclusion

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Having the opportunity to complete this mural project has been nothing less than fantastic. When I look back at the results of this project I am filled with a sense of satisfaction; satisfaction for a job well done and also because I was able to complete the project alone and so closely to the planned design. Working alone can often be a lonely experience and this project was no exception, however in the process of working alone I have found that I can often draw strength from the self satisfaction of a job well done. A sense of pride as well as confidence in ones own abilities, is the reward for the hours spent alone. It was a tremendous opportunity and I would like to thank Høyanger Badet and especially Sven Eric Lillehaug and Arrild Gjelsvik for their support and vision noticing the possibilities of how a swimming pool should look. In addition I would like to thank Frode Øren of Bygger'n and his assistance with paint and contacting Jotun Paints. I hope that future visitors to the swimming pool enjoy the results of the murals which decorate the walls of Høyanger Badet and that swimming there is a more memorable and exciting experience for many years to come.



About the Artist

Daniel Longfellow is a 34-year old award winning artist that has been productive as a professional artist for more than 16 years. Paint has been the main concentration of his creative efforts throughout his professional career; however he has also a broad range of abilities in both the traditional and digital realm. Born in Washington, D.C., Daniel was initially trained in painting from Boston University's School for the Arts where he earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts in only three years, while receiving a the Dean's Full tuition Scholarship. Since then he has received his Masters in Experimental Animation from the California Institute for the Arts. In 1994, Daniel moved from the United States to Denmark, and since then has produced several commercially successful painting series with a concentration in landscape painting. Daniel has produced numerous large murals throughout his career, however the largest and most stunning to date are the climbing walls located in Copenhagen, Denmark. Daniel has exhibited internationally and is currently living in Høyanger, Norway with his wife and son. His current projects include the passionate development of a children's line of artwork, illustration and merchandising, supporting his own online company Choogoose.

The Seagull Wall



The Fish Wall



The Reef Wall



The Whale Wall





