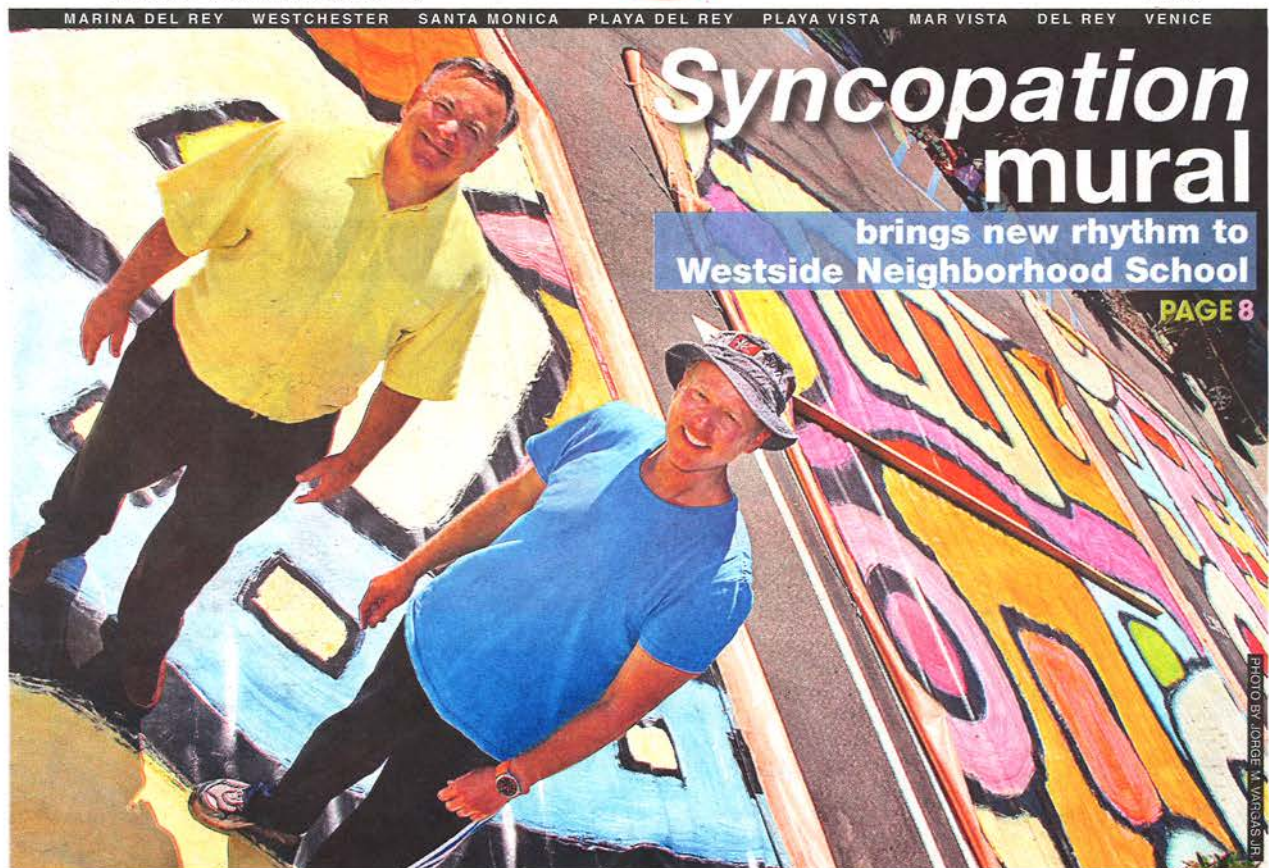


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MARINA DEL REY WESTCHESTER SANTA MONICA PLAYA DEL REY PLAYA VISTA MAR VISTA DEL REY VENICE



Syncopation mural

brings new rhythm to Westside Neighborhood School

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WESTSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD HEAD OF SCHOOL BRAD ZACUTO (left) and muralist Edward Massey stand on one of the panels of Massey's *Syncopation*. The mural will be installed at the school Sept. 6.

Del Rey

Distinct artwork finds a new home at Westside Neighborhood School

By Gary Walker

A colorful mural that previously decorated a movie theater in Culver City temporarily became an orphan earlier this year when the building was demolished to make room for a mixed-use development.

But now the artwork has a new home at Westside Neighborhood School in Del Rey.

The mural, called *Syncopation*, will drape the exterior of the K-8 school's buildings beginning Sept. 6.

Installed on the Culver Plaza Theaters in Culver City in 2004 by muralist Edward Massey, *Syncopation* is a 7,000-square foot artwork that stretches the equivalent of 20 football fields.

"Ed Massey's project-based approach is very closely aligned with how we teach and learn at Westside Neighborhood School," said Brad Zacuto, Westside Neighborhood's head of school. "We value and appreciate the process as well as the beauty of this artwork. We are honored to have it displayed

on our building façade."

"*Syncopation* is an iconic work of art that embraces many of the values we hold dear at WNS: community, collaboration and diversity," Zacuto continued. "Art is an integral part of academic program at WNS, engaging students in using the visual arts to communicate ideas and emotion." Westside Neighborhood School celebrated its 30th anniversary Sept. 22, 2010 with a ceremony at the school. Since then, the school has acquired a second building directly across the street.

The private K-8 school has undergone many changes over three decades, but the principles on which it was founded have remained the same, says Lynn Allen, who has been a teacher at the school since its inception in Westchester.

"We've been able to maintain our teaching philosophy, which is grounded in social and emotional stimulation and learning," Allen told *The Argonaut* during the week of the 30th anniversary.



NEW HOME – *Syncopation*, a mural by Edward Massey, was brought to Westside Neighborhood School after losing its home in Culver City.

PHOTO BY JORGE M. VARGAS

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Other artworks with Massey's credit include "Portraits of Hope," an initiative that he began in 2010 with his brother Bernie. The art, education and creative therapy program for children in hospitals and schools included transforming 156 Los Angeles County Lifeguard towers into a massive public art and civic project along Los Angeles County beaches, including those in Venice and Marina del Rey where children and their families painted murals on the towers' panels.

After the beach exhibition concluded, the art panels were removed from the towers and donated to participating institutions and social service agencies around the world to help beautify interior and exterior facilities, similar to what will soon occur at Westside Neighborhood School.

Other Westside education authorities have also seen the value of having art and murals in their schools. Earlier this year, students at Broadway Elementary School in Venice painted a mural on a wall on their campus. School representatives view the colorful, multicultural art therapy mural

as an outlet for students to release emotions that they may find hard to access.

"I really think (art therapy) helps the kids to learn to express their feelings," said Broadway Elementary Principal Susan Wang. "Often, children have feelings but don't know how to express them and they come out in other ways."

Santa Monica native Stephanie Mihalas, who is a psychologist, said art therapy can be used for multiple purposes.

"It is often used to decrease stress and we also can see it enhancing and promoting strength and well-being," Mihalas said. "Often in art therapy, students are able to explore creativity that can allow them to heal wounds that may exist in their subconscious."

The Broadway students were assisted by representatives from Cedars Sinai Hospital's "Share and Care" team. "Share and Care" is an early intervention and prevention program for students who have been impacted by trauma.

Students from Inside Out

Community Arts, a Venice nonprofit organization, also assisted muralist Kristel Lerman with a new art project at the site of an iconic Ocean Park painting in Santa Monica Aug. 1. Its theme is "Magic with Logic."

Over 20 teens from Santa Monica, Venice and Mar Vista took part in painting the mural.

The new mural, which has a colorful seascape with marine birds, is at the site of the *Ocean Park Pier* mural, which had been defaced over the years with graffiti and several other images that were not part of the original artwork.

"The mural will be an homage to environmental protection," Lerman said. "We will also have the figure of a Chumash-inspired woman in the center, along with the image of a pelican, the ocean and a seascape."

Westside Neighborhood School officials are planning to unveil *Syncoption* Sept. 6 at 1:45 p.m.

The school is located at 5401 Beethoven St., Del Rey.

Massey declined to comment on the mural or on its installation at the school. ■