

**T**his article ran in the Newark Advocate on September 6, 2007. The mural can be viewed at The Works museum in downtown Newark. For information about The Works, visit [www.attheworks.org](http://www.attheworks.org). For more about artist Michael Coronado, visit [www.michaelcoronado.com](http://www.michaelcoronado.com)



# Step into history

## Mural artist re-creates 1800s Newark at Works

By TIFFANY EDWARDS  
Advocate Reporter

NEWARK — Although raised in Colorado, Michael Coronado has a special love for Licking County, particularly its history and architecture.

"I am from Denver, and I know 10 times as much about Licking County as I do my hometown," he said.

After living here for five years, his admiration for his adopted home is materializing in full color as a 16-foot-tall mural at The Works.

For the past week, the artist has been creating a painting of downtown based upon an 1880s black-and-white photograph in-

cluded in Chance Brockway's "Images of America."

"Visitors to the museum have enjoyed watching Michael create this mural in the shops on the second floor. It is a wonderful perspective piece and a great look back at South Park Place," said Marcia Downes, managing director at The Works.

The 19th century photographer was standing with his lens pointed westward when he captured the street scene filled with signs of the changing times — horse-drawn carriages, automobiles and the tracks for interurban cars, an example of which is on display in today's museum



Michael Coronado, of Heath, paints a cityscape mural from an 1880s photograph of the Courthouse Square. The mural is on the second floor of The Works outside the general store. (Michael Lehmkuhle, *The Advocate*)

courtyard.

When Coronado began to recreate the image in paint, he encountered two design challenges. First

was working with the unique location, a relatively narrow corridor between a second-floor office and the pane-glass win-

dows of the general store exhibition. His second challenge was selecting the colors for buildings that

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were represented in the black-and-white photo.

Coronado liked the photo in part because its perspective lent itself toward anamorphism, an artistic technique in which actual dimensions are distorted but look normal when viewed from a specific vantage point. In addition to being suited to the restricted space, the painting style will provide a resource for museum programmers to discuss with guests mathematical concepts and optical illusions.

The mural remains of course, first and foremost, a work of art. Coronado said he briefly considered painting the mural in shades of grey but decided against it.

"If I had done it in black and white, I think it would have been lost in the corner," he said.

He wanted the mural to depict history in living color, just as the adjacent exhibits do. Coronado selected earthy colors based on the building materials of the time and ones that generated a warm glow consistent with the

painting's sunset.

"The bones of a lot of these buildings are the same (as they used to be), but the facades are different, the colors are different. It would take a keen eye and somebody who knows a lot about Newark to figure out what we're looking at," he said, holding a modern photo next to the historic one.

Coronado himself looks like he stepped out of the mural he is creating. Confessing he usually wears "scrubby clothes" to paint, he said working in the museum and being surrounded by mementos of the time period inspired him to wear suspenders and a newsboy cap while working on the mural.

"I feel a painting will be what I imagine if I get lost in it a little bit," he said. "That's my favorite thing about painting. It's the transcendence. You're escaping but you're producing at the same time."

Coronado, who stepped down as creative director at The Works last week, has been working on the painting for about a week and expects to finish it

within seven to 10 days. His future plans are to teach drawing at Central Ohio Technical College and painting. The 28-year-old artist said working at the museum and meeting local talents such as Curtis Goldstein and Mary Helen Fernandez Stewart have greatly influenced his confidence and style.

Downes said several of the museum's employees have preserved ongoing relationships with The Works after moving on to other ventures.

"I hope that their experience at The Works will help to launch their future careers and show them the value of giving back as volunteers," she said.

"We have pieces of work that have been donated by our artist-in-residence program, but Michael is the first to leave this type of lasting legacy. I know that he will be successful as a working artist because of his passion for creative expression."

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