



Globally Proven
Construction Solutions

CAIRNS, SHIELDS STREET, HEART MOSAIC

Project Spotlight



CONTRACTOR:

The Orchid Group in Collaboration
with Symmetry Mosaics and Artistic
Solutions Group

ARCHITECT / DESIGNER / ENGINEERS:

Cairns Regional Council, Community, Sport and
Cultural Services.

ARTISTS:

Philomena Yeatman, Edna
Ambrym and Valmai Pollard

PHOTOGRAPHER:

Keith Murphy of Artistic
Solutions Group and John
Paul of John Paul Visuals



Situation

Cairns is the most northern regional commercial centre on the Australian eastern seaboard and is the closest mainland city for Australia's neighbours in the Coral Sea. With an international airport, the city hosts nearly 2 million tourists a year who are drawn to the tropical climate and the Great Barrier Reef.

Artists Philomena Yeatman, Edna Ambrym and Valmai Pollard from the nearby Indigenous community of Yarrabah were selected by the Cairns Council to produce artworks for a \$700,000 public art mosaic project to be featured on eight walls around landscaped gardens in the main mall in Cairns. This is proudly the first major public art piece in Cairns by a Yarrabah artist.

Don Macdonald and his Orchid Group[^] Team were appointed as the installing contractors due to their extensive mosaic experience and Artistic Solutions Group as the Creative Consultants to ensure artistic integrity was maintained as the canvas paintings were translated into mosaics and adapted to the vast expanse of the eight walls.

Challenges

Cairns has a tropical climate so working outside came with all of the heat-stress related safety issues as well as requiring the very best installation system to cope with the conditions. The project spanned 12 months and had a demanding schedule to meet Council's completion requirements.

The work was three dimensional and the medium was a very small mosaic requiring the highest standards of substrate preparation.

“ It has been an amazing journey for all involved. Don Macdonald and his team were nothing but accommodating. The team shared with us, all details about the site, the tiles and the processes involved every step of the way. His obvious dedication to his craft is evident. ”

~ Shannon Brett, Manager, Yarrabah Artists Centre.

[^] The Orchid Group is also known as Symmetry Mosaics

A LATICRETE Solution

Don recommended Council to specify LATICRETE as the installation system as he was confident in their range of products, the versatility, superior performance characteristics and the complete system approach offered by LATICRETE, which was what he required to support him in such an iconic artwork, in a difficult climate and in a high exposure public location. This made it an easy choice for Council.

The three-dimensional shape of the curved walls were created using water-jet cut templates mounted on face fitted battens. A bond-coat of **254 Platinum Adhesive** was applied to the cleaned surface onto which **3701 Fortified Mortar Bed** was applied. Once it had started firming-up, the first template run was completed, after which any additional

render was applied to the low areas before a final pull-off and sponge finish. The following day the battens were removed and the faces of the walls completed.

Once cured the rendered walls were waterproofed with **HYDO BAN®** and skim-coated with **335 Premium Flexible Adhesive** to protect it during the team's extended absence from site awaiting the arrival of the mosaics.

The mosaics were installed with a variety of coloured **LATAPOXY® SP-100** for longevity, which, in normal circumstances requires a modest skill-set however in this situation the contractor had to contend with very tiny mosaics including hand-cut slivers with reduced adhesive work time because of the tropical climate.

“ It was the one thing I didn't have to think about. All the products; 254 Platinum, 3701 Fortified Mortar Bed, 335 Premium Flexible Adhesive, HYDO BAN®, LATAPOXY® SP-100 and SPECTRALOCK® PRO Grout†, performed exceptionally well individually and as a complete system. Equally as important to using the right products is the technical support. The team at LATICRETE provided me with all of the essential background and technical understanding for each of the products which allowed me to execute the installation with confidence knowing I was using the very best products and industry best practice with our methodology. ”

~ Don Macdonald, Orchid Group^ Team



Outcome

In summary, the project was a huge success for the entire team; the Shields Street Heart project was a significant undertaking with all of its complexities and challenges, however LATICRETE remained the undeniable constant throughout the whole process for the reliability, dependability and superior performance of their systems approach.



† United States Patent No.: 6,881,768 (and other Patents).

^ The Orchid Group is also known as Symmetry Mosaics

