

# Artists piece together mural

**Project will be mounted at Sanders-Clyde Elementary to promote culture in school**

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*The Post and Courier*

*Monday, October 5, 2009*

Rows eight, nine and 10 are laid out on the long table, a total of 21 tiles each. Cherna Bednarsh applies shades of carefully calibrated glaze, replicating the flowing lines, deep perspective and bright colors of the Jonathan Green painting nearby.

The painting on paper is the miniature version of what soon will be an impressive, richly textured mural, made of 336 glazed and fired clay tiles.

The mural will be mounted near the main entrance of the new Sanders-Clyde Elementary School, now under construction on Charleston's East Side. The school is scheduled to open in January. Green designed the image as part of a broad initiative to promote art and cultural understanding among the school's predominantly black student population.

The Charleston County School District has designated Sanders-Clyde its second school, after Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary, to adopt an arts-infused curriculum.

Local artists Bednarsh, Dan O'Brien, Casimer Kowalski and Reynier Llanes are at work making the mural. Green visits Kowalski's backyard studio on some Fridays to pitch in. The team almost has reached the halfway point: The bottom portion of the tile mural is glazed, fired in kilns and ready for mounting, which probably will happen in December.

On Friday, Green was concentrating on the tile that featured a dog's head. Bednarsh, a multimedia artist and interior designer with expertise in color coordination, was applying glaze to the tiles laid out on the big table, mimicking Green's own brushwork and shading, striving to express 'the essence of his marks.'

"It's important to do a little interpreting," she said. "It's fun to be able to really study a piece someone else has done."

It's inevitable. Acrylic on paper behaves entirely differently than glaze on clay, which thickens and eventually shines to display noticeable texture, depth and color. And the large scale of the fragmented mural demands a different painting technique.

Once fired, the color becomes bold and the glaze becomes glass, sealing the tile and protecting the image.

"It's always exciting to see something come out of the kiln," Bednarsh said.

For the mural, Green has produced the image of children playing under a billowing orange and green quilt. The quilt was among the first forms of artistic expression for blacks in the United States. Deprived of African identity, language, music and education, slave women made quilts whose images told stories and relayed messages across generations.

Green said the effort has been going well.

"I'm in ecstasy about the project," he said. "I'm working with professionals, Charleston's finest."

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