

Mural #3: Hermosa Beach West Coast Jazz

Location: 1007 Hermosa Avenue at 11th Court, North Facing Wall



ABOUT THE ARTIST:

John Pugh

I am a trompe l'oeil artist focusing primarily on mural painting. I have found that the "language" of life-size illusions allow me to communicate with a very large audience. It seems almost universal that people take delight in being visually tricked. Once captivated by the illusion, the viewer is lured to cross an artistic threshold and thus seduced into exploring the concept of the piece. I have also found that by creating architectural illusion that integrates with the existing environment both optically and aesthetically, the art transcends the "separateness" that public art sometimes produces.

ABOUT THE MURAL:

The mural West Coast Jazz was created by the renowned muralist, John Pugh, who works in the Trompe L'oeil style. The phrase "narrative illusionism" is often used to describe John's work, giving the illusion of a three-dimensional scene. His studio is in Truckee, NV. In very dramatic fashion the mural reminds viewers of the rich history of jazz in Hermosa Beach particularly as it rolled out of the Lighthouse Cafe from the 1950s to the 1970s. The mural depicts a larger-than-life trumpet with the hands and fingers of a musician on the valves. The bell of the trumpet appears in 3D. Shaped as an ellipsis, the horn's bell measures 10' X 9'6". Reflected on the right hand side of the bell is the great jazz bassist, Howard Rumsey. On the left hand side the mural depicts the trumpet

playing, jazz vocalist, Chet Baker, along with jazz saxophonist, Gerry Mulligan. Rumsey, Baker, and Mulligan were leading representatives of the "cool" West Coast Jazz style. The background shows the soft, aging brick and slowly fading Lighthouse Cafe sign still visible at the cafe's rear entrance about 100 yards to the west. Under the ownership of John Levine and with club manager, Howard Rumsey, the Lighthouse Cafe and West Coast Jazz became synonymous. Howard's often changing, but consistently popular, Lighthouse All Stars played their hearts out night after night, and produced album after album, more than 25 of which were recorded at The Lighthouse Cafe between 1952 and 1989. Other musicians at The Lighthouse Cafe in those days included the biggest names of the era; Shorty Rogers, Bud Shank, Shelly Mann, who went on to open Shelly's Mann Hole, and Max Roach. Under Rumsey's guidance the club became an important venue for musicians like Art Pepper, Lee Morgan, Cannonball Adderley, Don Ellis, Mose Allison, Ramsey Lewis, the Modern Jazz Quartet and others. The Lighthouse Cafe still serves patrons who want to combine good music with drinks and dinner. Today, jazz is featured on Sunday mornings.