REMOVABLE TILE MURAL

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ABSTRACT

A removable tile mural assembly constructed in such a manner so as to appear to be a part of, or set into, a backsplash or tiled wall, but which is actually removable from the wall surface. The removable tile mural assembly comprises a substantially rigid base member to which is fixed on the front outer peripheral edge thereof a tile frame which defines a framed surface area. A tile mural comprising at least one tile is fixed to the front side of the base member within the defined framed surface area. Mounting means is provided for removably mounting the assembly to a wall surface. The tile mural may include rope lighting and/or the tile mural may be back-lighted.
REMOVABLE TILE MURAL

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims the benefit under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) of earlier filed provisional application Ser. No. 60/573,976 filed May 24, 2004 entitled “Removable Tile Mural” which is incorporated herein in its entirety by reference, including any appendices or other attachments filed therewith.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Tile murals in kitchen backsplashes is becoming increasingly popular among homeowners. These tile murals may comprise artwork painted onto the tile or the artwork may be fired into the tile itself. Alternatively, rather than painted artwork, the tile murals may simply be a design or shape comprising various colored tiles arranged in a unique artistic pattern.

The cost of custom tile murals can be considerable. Unfortunately, when homeowners desire to remodel their kitchens, these costly custom murals may be damaged or destroyed, sometimes accidentally, but often intentionally because the mural has become outdated or no longer fits in with the new, remodeled kitchen design. Additionally, some murals are seasonal and homeowners may desire to change the mural to reflect the present season. The ability to change-out one seasonal tile mural for another is not practical if the tiled mural is constructed in the conventional manner by being grouted or otherwise bonded or adhered to the wall surface.

Accordingly, there is a need for an invention that will allow homeowners to remove or change-out tile murals on their walls as desired, whether seasonally, or during a remodel or design change, or when the homeowner moves.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is a removable tile mural assembly that is constructed in such a manner so as to appear to be a part of, or set into, a backsplash or tiled wall, but which is actually removable from the wall surface. The removable tile mural assembly comprises a substantially rigid base member to which is fixed on the front outer peripheral edge thereof a tile frame, which thereby defines a framed surface area. A tile mural comprising at least one tile is fixed to the front side of the base member within the defined framed surface area. Mounting means is provided for removably mounting the assembly to a wall surface. The tile mural may include rope lighting and/or the tile mural may be back-lighted.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is an elevation view showing one embodiment of the present invention mounted to a wall surface.

FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view of the invention of FIG. 1 as viewed along lines 2-2 of FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is an elevation view showing another embodiment of the present invention incorporating rope lighting as part of the mural.

FIG. 4 is a detailed cross-sectional view of another embodiment of the present invention in which a lighting element is disposed between two plates comprising the base member to achieve a back-lighted effect for the assembly.

FIG. 5 is a side elevation view showing yet another embodiment of the present invention incorporating a recessed light fixture disposed in a wall behind the assembly to achieve a back-lighted effect for the assembly.

FIG. 6 is an exploded perspective view of yet another embodiment of the present invention incorporating a light box to achieve a back-lighted effect for the assembly.

FIG. 7 is a cross-sectional view of yet another embodiment of the present invention incorporating a lighting element to back-light at least a portion of the frame and at least a portion of the mural.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

A preferred embodiment of the assembly 10 comprising the present invention is illustrated in FIG. 1. The assembly 10 includes a tiled mural 12 bordered by a tiled frame 16 fixed to a base member 18. The assembly 10 is removably mountable to a wall 14, such as, for example, a ceramic tiled backsplash of a kitchen as depicted in FIG. 1. The assembly 10, may be any desired size and shape and the tiled mural 12 may comprise multiple tiles or a single tile. In the embodiment of the invention depicted in FIG. 1, the tiled mural 12 comprises six tiles. Around the per meter of the tiled mural 12 is the frame 16 which may be comprised of any desired type of border tile. Preferably, the frame 16 is constructed using V-cap tiles for the reasons discussed in detail later.

The tiles comprising the tiled mural 12 and the frame 16 may be of any suitable or desired material, including, without limitation, ceramic, marble, clay, glass, plastic, concrete, plaster, wood, metal and composite materials or any combination of any of the foregoing materials. Apart from artistic or design considerations, other factors may effect the suitability of the materials used for the tiles, including, the particular location where the assembly 10 is to be located (i.e., humid or wet environments, exposure to high heat, etc.). Further, depending on the materials, the tiles comprising the mural and/or frame may be translucent, transparent, or opaque or have any combination of these characteristics. The tiles comprising the mural and/or frame may also include artwork painted onto the tile or the artwork may be fired into the tiles or the artwork may be sublimated onto the tiles. Rather than applied artwork, the tiled mural 12 may simply be a design or shape comprising an arrangement of colored tiles or tiles of different textures or materials or characteristics arranged in a unique artistic pattern or design.

Referring now to FIG. 2, which is a cross-sectional view of the assembly 10 as viewed along lines 2-2 of FIG. 1, in the preferred embodiment, the assembly 10 comprises a base member 18 that is sufficiently rigid to support the tiled mural 12 but is also preferably light weight to minimize the overall weight of the assembly 10. In addition to weight considerations, other factors that should be considered when selecting a suitable base member 18 including, the type material used for the tiles, the particular location where the assembly 10 is to be located (i.e., humid or wet environ-
ments, exposure to high heat, etc.) and other potential uses for the assembly 10 when not disposed on the wall (i.e., use as a serving tray, etc.). Accordingly, with the foregoing factors taken into consideration, suitable material for the base member 18 may include, without limitation, Plexiglas®, wood, steel, aluminum, plastic, fiber board, and cement board. Hardiboard® cement board has been found to be a suitable base member 18 for most applications.

[0016] The base member 18, includes a front surface 20 and a back surface 22 and an outer peripheral edge 24. The dimensions of the outer peripheral edge 24 of the base member 18 are preferably larger than the outer dimensions of the completed tiled mural 12 so that sufficient surface area projects beyond the outer edge of the tiled mural 12 to receive the frame tiles 16. The tiles comprising the mural 12 are positioned onto and fixed to the front surface 20 of the base member 18 by a suitable bonding material, such as an adhesive, grout, mortar, etc. The tiles comprising the frame 16 are also cut and positioned around the perimeter of the tiled mural 12 and fixed in like manner to the front surface 20 of the base member 18. It should be appreciated that the material and manner used to fix the mural tiles and frame tiles to the front surface 20 of the base member 18 may depend on the material used for the tiles, the base member 18, the desired appearance (i.e., whether the mural and/or frame is to be back lighted as discussed later), the anticipated environmental conditions for the assembly 10 when mounted on the wall and expected uses for the assembly as previously identified.

[0017] As previously identified, the preferred border tiles for the frame 16 are V-cap tiles, the general cross-section of which is illustrated in FIG. 2. As shown, the V-cap tile includes a lip or rim 30 that projects below the bottom surface 32 of the border tile that is adhered to the front surface 20 of the base member 18. As illustrated in FIG. 2, the rim 30 preferably covers the outer peripheral edge 24 of the base member 18 thereby providing a more finished appearance to the assembly 10 and providing the illusion that the entire assembly 10 is part of the actual tiled backsplash or other wall surface 14.

[0018] In the preferred embodiment, the assembly 10 is removably mounted on the wall surface 14 by a hook-and-loop fastener connection 34, commonly known as Velcro®. Preferably secured on the back side 24 and around the perimeter of the base member 18 is a strip of felt 36 or the loop-side of the hook-and-loop fastener. Secured to the wall surface 14 are mating strips 38 of the hook-side of the hook-and-loop fastener connection 34. Those skilled in the art will recognize that the greater the weight of the assembly 10, the more surface area will be required for the hook-and-loop fasteners to securely support the assembly 10. It has been determined that two inch wide strips of industrial strength Velcro® around the outer periphery and in the middle of the base member 18 will support a 16x22 ceramic tiled mural. It should be appreciated that by placing the felt or loop-side 36 of the Velcro® on the back side 24 of the base member 18, the felt 36 prevents scratching of surfaces when the assembly 10 is removed from the wall surface 14, thereby allowing the assembly 10 to also function as a serving tray or the like.

[0019] Rather than using Velcro®, magnet strips may also be used to secure the assembly 10 to the wall surface 14. In which event, the base member 18 may be made of steel or other magnetizable material to which magnets will magnetically bond or attach. Alternatively, the strip magnets may be adhered to the base member and the wall surface 14 may be steel or other material to which magnets will magnetically attach. In yet another alternative embodiment, the assembly 10 may simply be secured to the wall by hooks, brackets, anchors, or any other conventional or well known means of removably mounting an assembly to a wall surface.

[0020] Accordingly, it should be appreciated that the invention 10 allows homeowners to remove or change-out tile murals on their walls as desired, whether seasonally, or during a remodel or design change, or when the homeowner moves.

[0021] The assembly 10 may also incorporate a lighting element—whether for better viewing of the mural 12 or as part of the design or artwork comprising the mural 12. For example, in an embodiment of the invention 10 as illustrated in FIG. 3, rope lighting 40 such as, for example, miniature incandescent rope lights or fluorescent rope lights, or light emitting diode (LED) rope lights and/or “glow sticks” which utilize chemiluminescence, may be incorporated into the mural 12 around its border and/or disposed along the seams or grout lines between adjacent individual tiles comprising the mural 12. Where electrical power is required for the rope lighting 40, such as, for example, with miniature incandescent rope lights, fluorescent rope lights or LED rope lights, an electrical outlet 42 may be disposed behind or in proximity to the assembly 10 for receiving the rope light’s electrical plug end 44. To improve the aesthetic appearance of the assembly 10 with the rope light 40, the electrical plug end 44 preferably extends from the back side of the assembly through an opening (not shown) in the base member 18. If the electrical outlet 42 is not disposed behind the assembly, a small notch (not shown) may be required in the edge of one of the frame tiles to allow the power cord 44 to pass through such that the assembly remains flat against the wall.

[0022] In another alternative embodiment, as illustrated in FIG. 4, a lighting member 50, such as a rope lighting, or the like, as previously described, may be placed between a first plate 52, preferably a transparent or translucent plastic or Plexiglas® diffuse plate, and second plate 54, preferably having a reflective surface, such as, for example a mirrored glass plate. In this example, the first and second plates 52, 54, which together comprise the base member 18, are preferably removably connected, so that the plates 52, 54 may be separated to permit access for replacing or exchanging the lighting member 50 if the lighting member burns out, is damaged, or if a different colored lighting is desired, for example. It should be appreciated that with this embodiment, a thicker V-cap tile for the frame 16 may be required to accommodate the increased depth of the base member 18 that may be required by this embodiment. The tiles comprising the mural 12 and/or the frame 16 may be opaque such that the back-light is only visible between spaced adjacent tiles. Alternatively, and/or in addition, the mural 12 and/or frame 16 may incorporate translucent and/or transparent tiles or tile portions alone or in combination with opaque tiles or opaque tile portions whereby the back-light is visible through all the translucent and/or transparent portions of the mural 12 and/or frame 16.

[0023] In still another alternative embodiment, as illustrated in FIG. 5, the mural 12 and/or frame may be back-
lighted, much like a light box used by artists for tracing. In this embodiment, a conventional recessed incandescent light fixture 60 is mounted in the wall 14 in a conventional manner in a predetermined area over which the assembly 10 is desired to be placed. In the preferred embodiment the base member 18 is translucent such that it acts as a diffuser of the light from the incandescent lamp 62 of the recessed light 60, thereby providing more uniform lighting over the entire surface area of the base member 18. As in the embodiment of FIG. 4, the tiles comprising the mural 12 and/or frame 16 may be opaque such that the back-light is only visible between spaced adjacent tiles. Alternatively, and/or in addition, the mural 12 and/or frame 16 may incorporate translucent and/or transparent tiles or tile portions alone or in combination with opaque tiles or opaque tile portions whereby the back-light is visible through all the translucent and/or transparent portions of the mural 12 and/or frame.

In still yet another alternative back-lighted embodiment, FIG. 6 illustrates an embodiment where the assembly 10 is disposed over a shallow light-box 70 such as the type contemplated in U.S. Pat. No. 5,899,012 issued to Crum, which is incorporated herein in its entirety by reference. In the preferred embodiment, the shallow light-box 70 includes a lamp 72, such as a florescent tube lamp, a socket 74 for receiving the lamp 72 and any other necessary electrical components for proper operation and compliance with electrical codes, such as, for example, a ballast 76 for the florescent lamp. The back surface 78 of the light box 70 is preferably reflective as is common in light boxes to provide a more uniform light over the entirety of the surface area of the diffuser plate 80, which, in this embodiment is also the base member 18 of the assembly 10. As with the previous back-lighted embodiments of FIGS. 4-5, the tiles comprising the mural 12 and/or frame 16 may be opaque such that the back-light is only visible between spaced adjacent tiles. Alternatively, and/or in addition, the mural 12 and/or frame 16 may incorporate translucent and/or transparent tiles or tile portions alone or in combination with opaque tiles or opaque tile portions whereby the back-light is visible through all the translucent and/or transparent portions of the mural 12 and/or frame 16. Again, a thicker v-cap tile for the frame 16 may be required to accommodate the increased depth of the assembly 10 in order to cover the edges of the light box 70 if desired.

In yet still another embodiment as illustrated in FIG. 7, if it is desired to back light only the tiles comprising the frame 16, a lighting element 50, such as a rope light, may be disposed under the border tiles comprising the frame 16. It should also be appreciated that, apertures 80 may be provided through the base member 18 to receive a lamp 82 so as to backlight only those areas of the mural or to provide brighter backlighted areas of the mural 12 than other areas of the mural 12.

Although only certain exemplary embodiments of the invention have been described in detail above, those skilled in the art will readily appreciate that many modifications are possible without materially departing from the novel teachings and advantages of this invention. Accordingly, all such modifications are intended to be included within the scope of this invention.

1. A removable tile mural assembly, comprising:
   a substantially rigid base member having a front side, a back side and an outer peripheral edge,
   a frame comprising at least one frame tile, said frame tile fixed to said front side of said base member around said outer peripheral edge of said base member thereby defining a framed surface area;
   a tile mural comprising at least one mural tile, said mural tile having an outer peripheral edge defining a mural surface area less than said framed surface area, said mural tile fixed to said front side of said base member within said framed surface area;
   mounting means for removably mounting said assembly to a wall surface.

2. The removable tile mural assembly of claim 1 further including rope lighting disposed at least partially around said at least one tile.

3. The removable tile mural assembly of claim 1 wherein at least a portion of said base member is translucent.

4. The removable tile mural assembly of claim 3 further including back-lighting means for back-lighting at least a portion of the assembly.

5. The removable tile mural assembly of claim 4 wherein at least one of said at least one mural tiles and said frame tiles is translucent.

6. The removable tile mural assembly of claim 4 wherein said back-lighting means comprises a lighting element disposed between a first translucent plate and a second reflective plate.

7. The removable tile mural assembly of claim 4 wherein said back-lighting means comprises a light fixture recessed in a wall surface over which the assembly is removably disposed.

8. The removable tile mural assembly of claim 4 wherein said back-lighting means comprises a light box removably secured to said back side of said base member.

9. The removable tile mural assembly of claim 4 wherein said back-lighting means includes a lighting element disposed behind at least one of said at least one of said mural tiles and said frame tiles.

10. A method of making a removable tile mural assembly, said method comprising:

   providing a substantially rigid base member having a front side, a back side and an outer peripheral edge,
   fixing a frame comprising at least one frame tile to said front side of said base member around said outer peripheral edge of said base member thereby defining a framed surface area;
   providing a tile mural comprising at least one mural tile, said tile having an outer peripheral edge defining a mural surface area less than said framed surface area;
   fixing said at least one mural tile to said front side of said base member within said framed surface area.

11. The method of claim 10 further including providing mounting means for removably mounting the assembly to a wall surface.
12. The method of claim 11 further including disposing rope lighting around at least a portion of said at least one mural tile.

13. The method of claim 11 wherein at least a portion of said base member is translucent.

14. The method of claim 13 further including back lighting at least a portion of the assembly.

15. The method of claim 13 wherein at least one of said at least one mural tile and said frame tiles is translucent.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein said step of backlighting at least a portion of the assembly includes disposing a lighting element between a first translucent plate and a second reflective plate.

17. The method of claim 15 wherein said step of backlighting at least a portion of the assembly includes disposing a recessed light fixture in said wall surface over which the assembly is removably disposed.

18. The method of claim 15 wherein said step of backlighting at least a portion of the assembly includes removably securing a light box to said back side of said base member.

19. The method of claim 15 wherein said step of backlighting at least a portion of the assembly includes disposing a lighting element behind at least one of said at least one of said mural tiles and said frame tiles.

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