

# HOW WE FISH: A Mural About Work

City of Philadelphia  
MuralArtsProgram

Citizens Bank  
Foundation

## Artists' Narrative Highlights

The *How We Fish* mural began with a city-wide conversation. Through multiple community-based meetings, the artist team, expert facilitators and people throughout Philadelphia explored the meaning, purpose and vision of “work” and how it makes an impact on all of our lives. Here are some details about how the mural reflects the power of this exploration:

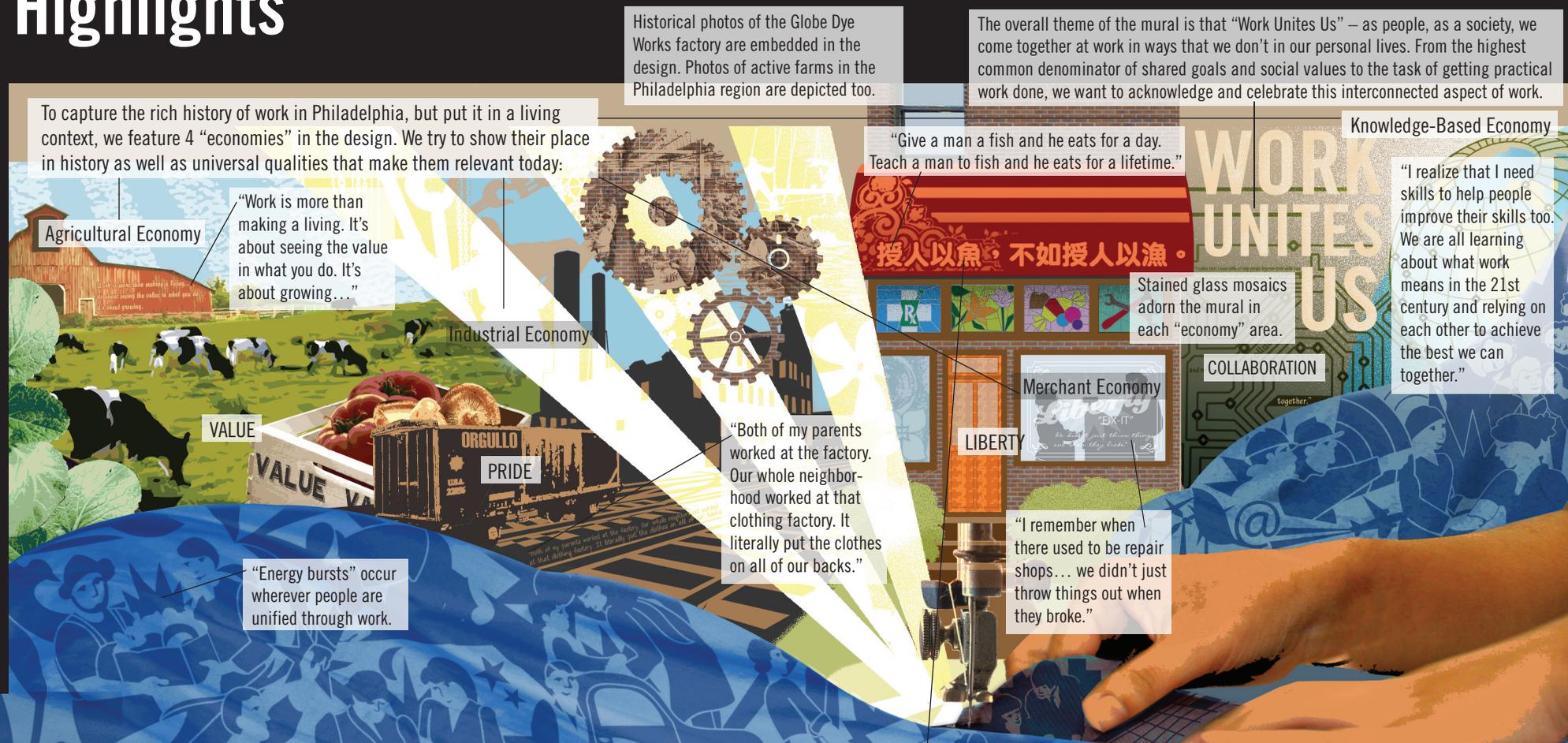
- The design reflects both an individual experience and the social and communal need for work. It was important for us to portray a unified message that highlights common values and goals associated with work.

- The history of work in our city is depicted through four primary “economies:” Agricultural, Industrial, Merchant, Knowledge-Based.

- Within each “economy,” we feature one of many “value” words we heard from the community: Value, Pride, Liberty & Collaboration.

- A personal quote from every community meeting is highlighted in the mural, including words from workers, employers, workforce development specialists, youth and children.

Read about more details throughout the mural and online!



Philadelphia’s long history of textile and garment manufacturing forms a base for the mural. Through central depiction of sewing and the symbol of the “fabric of society,” we found a way to connect the industry to our unifying, aspirational message of interdependence. Along the cloth, we depict people coming together through work. Historical photos represent actual factories from Philadelphia. From North Philadelphia to Chinatown to Germantown, people talked about how their neighborhoods revolved around a clothing factory. They told their own personal stories of working a life-long job making clothes. They explained how garment-making today is a common “stepping stone” job for people coming to Philadelphia – giving them a base from which to grow and transition professionally. Finally, we learned that Children’s Village – located in the mural’s building – was opened in 1976 by garment worker unions to care for the children of people in their training center and factory.

This mural has always been called “How We Fish” as a reference to the proverb: “Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach a man to fish and he eats for a lifetime.” Local residents of Chinatown found this aspect of the mural particularly meaningful. The importance of helping the next generation learn to prepare for work and how important it is for their future resonated deeply. The proverb can be spotted in several places throughout the mural – in Chinese, in English and in the visual representation of the two rivers of Philadelphia, fish and nets.

Artist Team: Social Impact Studios & Eric Okdeh

[www.HowWeFish.MuralArts.org](http://www.HowWeFish.MuralArts.org)