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Muralist adds life, color to eatery
A Portland artist is re-creating a painting on the side of El Sombrero on Oak Street.

By ALFRED DIAZ of the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

WALLA WALLA -- Artist Senen Angon, who prefers plaster over canvas, is making his local debut this week on the south side of the downtown Mexican restaurant El Sombrero.

"I don't have paintings (on canvas), it's all about restaurants, and I enjoy them," Angon said, while taking a break from his latest artistic re-creation.



A restaurant patron walks toward El Sombrero for lunch and looks for a moment at Portland-based artist Senen Angon's work on a large mural on the West Oak Street side of the restaurant Thursday morning. Angon said he has been in Walla Walla for two weeks and would spend another week painting the mural based on an original piece called "Despedida Campestre" to replace an old mural on the entryway side of El Sombrero. U-B photo by Matthew B. Zimmerman

Angon, a Mexican born artist who immigrated to the United States in the 1980s, has been painting for a living in the Northwest for about eight years.

But his love for and creation of art goes back to his early childhood, when in grade school he repeatedly won awards for his drawings.

As a young man, Angon regularly worked in churches to paint religious murals and, on rare occasion, created frescos. Eventually he ran his own commercial sign business, until he immigrated to Fresno, Calif., to work in the grape industry.

"I never thought I would paint. I came to bring a change for my family. I never thought I would get to work with what I am doing today," Angon said.

He is currently painting a re-creation of Mexica painter Jesus Helguera's "Despedida Campestre," a country farewell. The mural, expected to be completed within a week, will cost somewhere in the neighborhood of \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Alfred Diaz can be reached at alfreddiaz@wwub.com or 526-8325.

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