PROJECT HOPE, UNITY, AND COMPASSION

JANUARY 8 - 23, 2020

GALLERY PACKET
EXHIBITION STATEMENT

Throughout history, downtowns and town squares have served as the foundation of society’s freedom of expression and the center of community discourse. Downtown Tulsa is certainly no different. At an incredibly tense time in our community, and in the midst of planning for unprecedented events, the Downtown Coordinating Council found an opportunity to showcase Downtown Tulsa’s core values on temporary canvases throughout Downtown.

More than 300 artists responded to a last-minute call for art on June 18, 2020. Within hours, commissioned artists began painting storefronts thanks to permission from businesses and the generosity of an anonymous donor. Within two days, the Downtown Coordinating Council was able to mobilize more than a dozen artists to paint murals and messages inspiring hope, unity, and compassion throughout Downtown.

While the storefronts were restored and businesses reopened the following week, the conversations sparked by this art and the core values it represents continue.
“Project Hope, Unity, and Compassion” showcases a range of artistic expression from artists at a very crucial and tense time in Tulsa’s recent history. With downtown Tulsa businesses boarded up in preparation for the Trump rally taking place during a pandemic, and the unknown in anticipation of large groups gathering and/or rioting, plywood boards became canvases for messages of encouragement and to inspire a higher consciousness in what the city should truly stand for. To come together. Not in a cliché way, but a reckoning in Tulsa as a city on a global stage and the posture towards its citizens. That unity is found not by choosing sides in opposition to be right or wrong, but to remind Tulsans of the value we have in each other as a community. To actively listen, correct and change for the better, and to respect each other as human beings.

The plywood boards themselves are massive in size and a word to describe this exhibition is puzzling. Literally and figuratively, placing the boards according to the artists’ design was like putting a puzzle together. Placing the pieces of art strategically to fill up the space appropriately while considering each piece in relation to one another in terms of imagery, color, line work and use of words. The raw and bold nature of this exhibition strikes a new definition and direction of street art and lends itself to argue the importance of street art and the positive yet unique potential it provides.

- Tina Henley
ORIGINAL LOCATION OF BOARD MURALS & PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

DGX
Chris Sker Rogers

Vast Bank Parking Garage
Terren Zinbi

Vast Bank
Clean Hands

Juniper
Krystie Bunch

Amelia’s Wood Fired Cuisine
Cody Edwards
Lucas Wisner

Bank of Oklahoma ATM
Antonio Andrews

PRHYME: Downtown Steakhouse
Annie Kate Jones, David Reed James, Amanda January, and Mark Southerland

Vintage Wine Bar
Greg Stivers

DECOPOLIS
Todd Edwards, Tania Garza, Andrea Pemberton, Brandi Ross on behalf of the TYPROS Arts & Entertainment Crew
**TYPROS**

**Artist Names:** Todd Edwards, Tania Garza, Andrea Pemberton, Brandi Ross on behalf of the TYPROS Arts & Entertainment Crew

**Artist Statement**

Though each of the artists on this project held different experiences and perspectives, we shared a mutual vision for this piece—to give Tulsa H.O.P.E. during an unprecedented time. From the initial call to artists through the end of that harrowing weekend, we knew we wanted to make a positive impact on our beloved city. Looking back on the individual tasks at hand, such as designing our piece, gathering a team, and purchasing the supplies, we had little idea of the true historical and social consequence of that moment in Tulsa. Our big picture for this project was to create something impactful and beautiful on a simple piece of plywood protecting a local business’ window from the expected destruction of downtown Tulsa. We knew there was a sense of urgency and we knew we had to take action.

We wanted our mural to both physically and symbolically protect our city from the forces of hate. While designing the piece, we specifically included the rainbow color scheme to represent Pride month and honor our LGBTQ community in Tulsa. Other design elements included long, straight lines to help alleviate the stress of our non-artist teammates, which also helped with the time constraint. We knew we were pressed on time with the upcoming events happening that weekend, and even got caught in the rain while working on this piece!

Looking back on the project as a whole, it was such a surreal experience. The team witnessed both extremes of love and hate while working on the mural. In one instance, a pedestrian walking by was so moved by our work they were brought to tears. In another instance, rude and vulgar passersby expressed unpleasant opinions of our art and message. Both extremes represented Tulsa that weekend, and we are so proud to know love won. The weekend was a true test of Tulsa’s character, so it is appropriate that it ultimately ended with no destruction downtown, but rather a dance party in the Historic Greenwood District. We are honored to have contributed to a narrative of resiliency alongside other local artists through this project and to continue to spread the message of H.O.P.E. to all of Tulsa.
ANNIE KATE JONES

Artist Names: Annie Kate Jones, David Reed James, Amanda January, Mark Southerland

Instagram: Annie (@annniekate); David (@davidreedjames)

Artist Statement
“We were never perfect. Yet, the journey we make together is perfect on this earth…” — A Map to the Next World by Joy Harjo

Creating art in dark times is a portal that invites us further down the corridor of shadowed thought. I make art to experience steadiness. I wanted to participate in creating a mural during the weekend of Juneteenth 2020 to contribute peace amidst hatred.

Hope for a more unified city is not foolish; but that hope must be active. We must each understand and reconcile our place in history — and then, leave that individuality for togetherness.

“You will see red cliffs.
They are the heart, contain the ladder.
A white deer will greet you
when the last human climbs from the destruction.”
— Joy Harjo, U.S. Poet Laureate
ANTONIO ANDREWS

Artist Name: No Parking Studios

Artist Statement
I really wanted to make a piece that spoke to the times. I also like to make sure I connect with all my work on a personal level and Live and Let live is something I really live by. Just wanted to spread a positive message with it being so much division.

Links:
noparkingstudios.com
Instagram.com/noParkingstudios

CODY EDWARDS & CAITIN EVERS OLE

Artist Statement
In a world riddled by division and misinformation, the only positive message that triumphs beyond everything is love.

Links:
@senorcoed
@caito_eversoul
Artist Statement

When I heard the news that Trump would be campaigning in Tulsa, during Juneteenth (the annual, national celebration of Black freedom), in the middle of a global pandemic, it stung. Deeply. I became angry and anxious, mostly due to feelings of helplessness. The 99th anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre has just passed and tensions were high.

Tulsa, a melting pot of differing political, religious and social perspectives, felt as if it were about to implode. I know I’m not the only person who felt this way. I began to discuss with friends and coworkers what we could do to be intentional about keeping the focus on the cultural pride of the Black community. A friend tagged me in a post about local artists displaying their support of equity-for-all by creating murals on the boarded windows and corners of downtown businesses. I was elated.

The morning I arrived on-site to Juniper restaurant, I felt nervous because it was supposed to rain. I’d never painted in the rain and felt unsure of my ability. As I began to work I felt my anger began to dissipate and be replaced by creative focus. My cousins Whitney and Metra stopped by to offer verbal as well as hands-on support while discussing our family’s history in Tulsa and how it has shaped who we are. A few out-of-Towners hecklers drove by but we paid them no mind. A few friends stopped by over the next few hours and after being rained out twice, I finally managed to complete most of the vision I had for my mural. As I drove home, feeling physically exhausted but mentally refreshed, I felt comforted by the action I put behind my faith in Tulsa being, one day, united.
Instagram: @terrenzinbi

Website: http://www.terrenzinbi.com

Artist Statement

My vision for this mural was to combine my abstract style of acrylic painting with my love for lettering + weaving words into my art. I wanted to create something that brought love + light + joy, but at the same time I wanted to create something where the message was very clear. My inspiration and overall message for this mural was simple, and taken from Mark 12:31: “love your neighbor as yourself”.

Loving your neighbor as yourself is found eight times in the Bible. Not once. Not twice. Eight times. This is so important to God that He not only repeats Himself, He makes it a command. And not just one in a list of many commands. Jesus coupled the command to love your neighbor as yourself with loving God with all our hearts. Notice how He never said “love your neighbors, but only if they look like you, believe what you do, act like you, etc.” The word neighbor covers ALL people no matter their race, religion, political background, sexual orientation, gender and so on.

I hope my mural can play a small part in what’s happening in Tulsa + all over our country, that it serves as a bold reminder of this great commandment to all who cross it. And I hope that the people who see it, those who know me + those who don’t, know that I am here with you. I will not stop championing you, celebrating you, and fighting for a better world for ALL of my neighbors."
Artist Statement

As an artist I have a strong commitment to community engagement, and I was honored to be invited to participate in this endeavor. I appreciate the opportunity to use graffiti art to convey a positive message.

The timing of the mural being what it was (with Juneteenth and the Trump rally coming up), my focus as an individual then was self-care and positive mental attitude. So I reflected that PMA in my work and decided to paint one bold image of HOPE. My thinking was we can all appreciate a little word of encouragement.

As a creative, painting in the heart of downtown was a great experience. Several passers-by offered words of support as I worked, and the response I received afterward was uplifting. The DCC staff were a pleasure to work with, and I commend them for having created this project to help engage the city in this important time. Kudos to all the other mural artists who participated."
GREG STIVERS

Instagram: @griff.griffordson

Artist Statement

I wanted to create something unifying for the people of Tulsa to enjoy. The face represents the ugliness of our political divisions. It’s easy to forget what really matters so I speckled the mural with hearts, representing love & clouds, representing our thoughts & ideas that help bring us together.

My overall experience was severely positive. I had an amazing time painting and met a lot of great people while doing so.
Tuesdays and Wednesdays, by appointment only
Email info@livingarts.org or Call 918-585-1234

Public Gallery Hours:
Saturday, January 9, 2021 (12:00-4:00pm)
Thursday, January 14, 2021 (12:00-4:00 pm)
Friday, January 15, 2021 (12:00-4:00 pm)
Saturday, January 16, 2021 (12:00-4:00 pm)
Thursday, January 21, 2021 (12:00-4:00 pm)
Friday, January 22, 2021 (12:00-4:00 pm)
Saturday, January 23, 2021 (12:00-4:00 pm)

Photos provided by the Downtown Coordinating Council were taken by Tyler Huffman
Photos provided by Living Arts were taken by Gary Mason

Special Thanks: