



# Street art in the Rock n' Roll capital

*In Cleveland, art appreciation extends beyond the walls of museums. Large blank walls smother a city's vitality. It stifles the public realm and broadcasts loneliness, danger and division. But to an artist, a blank wall can be a giant canvas and an irresistible challenge.*

by Cindy-Lou Dale

Photos: Kathryn Duke of Pickled Pin-Up Photography.

**T**here's a variety of murals throughout the city—selfie backdrops like a larger than life pizza slice, Prince eating a doughnut, a pair of giant doves spreading love, and a giant bookshelf.

## MAGICAL MURALS

This year, the FRONT International Contemporary Art Triennial, a summer-long exhibition of contemporary art happening throughout the city, is reviving a public art effort established in the 70s. Back then, Cleveland, like many urban cities at the time, was greatly impacted by suburbanization and industrial decline. The City Canvases public art project was implemented to help combat this blight, and more than a dozen murals on downtown buildings were created by local artists. Sadly, as time passed, most were erased.

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FRONT considers this situation a pressing reason to reignite this program, recreating famed artist Julian Stanczak's iconic avant-garde abstract mural from 1973 on the same twelve-story wall it once covered in downtown Cleveland. This work will lead a series of new abstract wall paintings by contemporary artists providing additional must-visit sites.

Beyond downtown, the canvas expands still further. The soon-to-open Pop Life Headquarters, a

former Cleveland bank building in the city's Waterloo Arts District, is now covered in an eye-popping installation of vibrant geometric design, thanks to London-based artist Camille Walala. The building will hold an art gallery, yoga and meditation studio, residences and a juice bar and café. The colorful edifice fits into the neighborhood which is already infused with street art.

## ZOETIC WALLS

The Waterloo Arts District is a creative hub of thought-provoking art and design in a neighborhood where talented artists live and work. Giving life to the Waterloo District, an organized public art mural project, Zoetic Walls, recently undertook a major streetscape renovation project, embracing the street art movement, bringing together some of the finest local and international street artists who have turned the walls, the alleyways, and all the nooks and crannies of the district into a canvas.

Cleveland's Hingetown area is home to several public-scale visual art pieces, a legacy of a unique collaboration of international and local artists who spent three months living and working together through the Cleveland Foundation's Creative Fusion program—an international artist residency program. The artworks produced, which include photographic, painted murals and structural sculptures, are centered along the Detroit Avenue corridor.





## Cleveland's art festivals

Cleveland has a rich history of arts and culture. In the summer, art comes to the street in dozens of arts festivals. Some are serious juried shows, some feature up-and-coming local artists—all are interesting and fun.

**From July 14th till September 30th,** FRONT International brings a citywide contemporary arts festival to Cleveland. This citywide art program launches its inaugural edition—An American City: Eleven Cultural Exercises—across museums and civic institutions. More than 70 national, international and area-based artists will examine the ever-changing and politically urgent conditions of an American city through artist commissions, performances, films and public programs.

**On August 18th and 19th,** the Flats Festival of the Arts in the Flats East Bank has hundreds of artists and unique craftsmen displaying their ceramics, woodwork, photography and paintings. The festival also has many of the region's most talented musicians and dancers.

**On August 18th** the SPARX City Hop is a free hop-on, hop-off trolley tour taking visitors from art galleries to studios to live, local music performances.

**A little further out of the city:**

**On August 4th** it's the popular Annual Lakewood Arts Festival with more than 150 painters, photographers, printmakers, ceramists and sculptors, with stalls stretching along Detroit Avenue.

**The Chardon Arts Festival on August 5th** is held on Chardon Village Square. This art festival draws over 100 artists and a variety of media from all around the region.

**August 11th,** it's Art in the Park in Veteran's Park, Painesville, with 45+ local and regional artists.

**August 12th,** it's an Affair on the Square Craft Festival & Vintage Fair in Medina. This festival fills Medina's downtown city square with dozens of artists, in a variety of media. There's also food, live music in the square's gazebo, and activities for kids.

**On August 31st till Sep 2nd,** Hale Farm will host the Made in Ohio Art & Craft Festival. There are over 160 Ohio artisans, local food, jewelry designers, potters, woodworkers, glass artists, soap makers, quilters and other unique artisans.



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