



THE STRING SHOP at Railroad Ave. and Polk St. Here's a perfect example of how best to marry a mural to the building's predominant use — in this case, a shop having everything to do with string instruments. The mural, painted by Amanda Acker and Lauren Kinney, features a variety of violins, cellos and basses hung on a line, being led to the great beyond, where a larger than life string instrument awaits their arrival. It's all very playful and whimsical with a restricted color palette of blues, oranges, reds, yellows, blacks and whites.

WASHINGTON-JEFFERSON PARK
Mmmm ... concrete makes a delicious mural surface. Well, anything is usually better than bare concrete. This park under the freeway has copious concrete and ample opportunities for public displays of art expression. The merry-go-round carnival scene painted around the concrete pillars adds a fun atmosphere near the playground. Opposite this scene is the tongue-in-cheek allure of stage curtains pulling back, revealing ... uh, the dark pit of an overpass underside. Charming.



MURALS, MURALS, EVERYWHERE!

And not a wall left untouched

STORY & PHOTOS BY CHUCK ADAMS

Murals: They're big! They're pictures! They're BIG PICTURES! And Eugene certainly has a hankering for them. We've got murals on the side of tattoo parlors, music shops, auto parts stores and theater buildings; in alleyways; inside post offices, heck, even along the "temporary" panels meant to block Aster's Hole.

As public art, murals can be both a form of community outreach and tasteful marketing. Take, for example, the mountain scene painted as a backdrop for SUVs at the Hyundai dealership on 7th Ave. and Washington St. Grimace all you want at the thought of SUVs in Oregon's backcountry, but the fact is the mural probably paid artist Dan Hitchcock's bills for at least a few months. Or take the 22nd and Garfield Intersection Mural Project, a product of years of group collaboration and fundraising, painted entirely in one day by devout mural (and neighborhood) enthusiasts. The intersection may be sleepy and near a dead-end street, but the mural will live on in tribute to the spirit of community. This is Eugene's strength. In the context of this weekend's 25th Eugene Celebration, we surveyed as many of Eugene's public murals as we could in one day and took stock of the state of murals in the "Greatest City for the Arts and Outdoors."

REST EZ MATTRESS FACTORY at W. 7th Ave. and Fillmore St. This one I stumbled across by accident. But the Japanese woodblock print style of this mural was intriguing enough to warrant a quick stop. I don't know what it all has to do with mattresses, but perhaps the mural has outlasted the string of businesses housed within. Either way, the work stands out along this gray, busy, congested area.



THE JAWBREAKER BUILDING at 4th Ave. and Monroe St. This one just screams "Whiteaker District!" It has all the things that make up a dystopic utopia. Nude and semi-nude tribal folk sitting about smoking a pipe. Terraced gardening. A communal cauldron cooking over an open fire. People reading Tarot cards while their forests are clearcut. A woman overcoming breast cancer. The sun rising over a denuded hillside. Originally painted in the early '90s by muralist Kari Johnson, and then repainted after the activist standoff at Warner Creek, the background has morphed from a lush forest to a clearcut hill with a logging operation in the foreground. Johnson says the building's new renters were threatening to remove the mural but the issue has been resolved, for now. That would have been a huge loss for the greater Eugene mural landscape in general and the Whiteaker community in particular.



PRINCE PÜCKLER'S at 19th Ave. and Agate St. The backside of this ice cream shop faces a children's park. So naturally the mural features every kid's favorite characters from the Maurice Sendak storybook, *Where the Wild Things Are*. Unfortunately, shrubbery and a chain-link fence mar an otherwise delightful mural. Or, wait, maybe the shrubbery and fence *add* to the mystique of the "wild things" as they appear to inhabit a realm off limits to any kid not willing to crawl under the bushes for a sneak peek at the wild side.