

FORMER SITE OF LE PETIT GOURMET

at 25th Ave. and Willamette St.

This mural is the only one featured here that was painted entirely with spray paint. And it dazzles. Glanced at from the furious ratrace along Willamette, its delightful bakery scene of kid-like bakers making cookies, muffins, cakes and other delights has been known to make many a mouth water (and several people to slow the heck down) for a possible visit to Metropol, conveniently located across the street.

5TH ST. PUBLIC MARKET

OK, it's an improvement over the last mural in this space, but still, this one gives me the creeps. Maybe it's the migratory birds in rigid fighter jet formation. Or the goateed guy smiling through the bushes. Or the kid with elvish ears and an extremely long tongue licking his ice cream cone. Or the faces that randomly appear like the spirits of satisfied customers. Or the images that depict the current 5th St. Public Market plaza. This is a montage of schizophrenic proportions.



5TH ST. MARKET



GOODWILL

at River Rd. and Hilliard St.

Another utopian mural, this one depicting a (modest) vision for the River Road area, including dense urban living, light rail system, a local grocery store, a community center, a neighborhood bakery and café — all of it spelled out in big letters at the top (which is entirely unnecessary). A big plus is muralist Jan Spencer's use of the building's concrete support columns as neoclassical columnades. And the people pictured certainly appear nonchalant and secure in their community.



GOODWILL



BIG PICTURE BUILDING

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at 12th Ave. and High St.

Ask most people around town which mural is their favorite, and it invariably boils down to this Italian street scene, painted in film noir grayscale by Jim Evangelista of Cottage Grove. What most people don't realize is that the mural is a reproduction of an actual painting. But no matter the source material, this is truly a heavy-weight. The perspective draws the viewer into the mural, up the narrow street and behind the hunched shoulders of an Italian fellow as he ambles up the nearly deserted street. His double approaches from the distance and the questions arise: Will they greet? Will they ignore each other? What's going to happen? The striking use of grayscale both reflects the common color of a Eugene sky and is a direct challenge to multi-hued murals hell bent on jamming the colors of the rainbow into the work. In this mural, good composition trumps color.

In all, Eugene has a knack for grassroots mural projects. Springfield has its own city-managed and maintained mural program, and Cottage Grove certainly has plenty of murals, but Eugene residents do it all by themselves. Sweat, tears, cash and lots and lots of paint. And, if this article puts you in the mood to get out there and paint a surface, then you'll have a chance at a community mural project at noon Saturday, Sept. 8, at the Salvation Army Community Center on West 7th Ave. As they say, "Dress to get messy."

For more mural stats, imagery and a chance to declare your love (or hate) for a mural in Eugene, see blogs.eugeneweekly.com

KNECHT'S AUTO PARTS

at W. 11th Ave. and City View St.

Stretching over the side and entire back wall of this auto parts store is a mural that will both affect and reflect its surroundings of automobile-related shops and an animal hospital. Alison McNair (pictured right) has been at work on this mural off and on since July, and she still has a lot of work to do. Thankfully, she has a rotating supply of painters willing to volunteer; many of them mere passers-by. One couple wandered over while getting their tires rotated at Les Schwab and ended up spending a week helping out, says McNair. A woman in her nineties painted a series of impressionistic flowers along the back wall. In this way, McNair says, the finished mural will truly be a collaborative community effort.

McNair, who was recently awarded a \$1,500 matching grant from the Lane Arts Council to complete the mural, says she is designing the work with two dominating factors: wheels and animals. Vehicles run along the side wall. Along the back wall are a series of panels, one of which is a memorial to animals that have passed away. Each animal represented was at one point someone's dear pet. Further down the wall, reality gives way to an abstract, spiritual realm where the spirit of the animals live on. Look for the mural to be complete in the coming months. If you have a spare hour or two, stop by and help McNair finish it.

