



PHOTOS BY ATHENA DELENE

BEST ART PROJECT

In a city that completes projects at a snail's pace, it's exciting and refreshing to see the 20X21 Eugene Mural Project take off so fast. The goal: "20 world-class murals in our community by 2021." The mural effort kicked off in the spring and three murals have already been painted — a colorful, figurative dreamscape by Brazilian art collective Acidum Project in the alley between Cowfish and Killer Burger downtown (pictured); L.A. artist Beau Stanton's epic stylized portrait filling an L-shaped strip of wall at the downtown bus station; the glowing honeycombs and apple blossoms surrounding a fuzzy bee at WildCraft Cider Works storage space in the Whiteaker by Eugene-turned-L.A. artist Steven Lopez.

Murals are something that, for relatively cheap, can transform a city into a tourist attraction and an inspiration hub for other artists. Not only that, but the act of painting a mural is the act of creating community. Local artists have already pitched in to help paint, and passersby often stop to chat with the artist.

Isaac Marquez, the city's public art manager as well as 20X21 committee member, tells *EW*: "All of us in this community have an interest in public spaces. If we create the opportunities for the public to shape their own public space, we become a more resilient city."

Eugene will absolutely sparkle when this project is complete.

So no qualms, right? Of course there are qualms; this is Eugene after all.

"The local artist issue comes up pretty consistently," Marquez says. "People don't understand why we aren't commissioning local artists for this work." OK, let's clear something up. The project is commissioning both internationally renowned artists and local artists for the 20 murals, Marquez says. There is a good reason for hiring outside artists: International artists expose Eugene to new ideas, and in return, those artists act as ambassadors, putting Eugene on the map as a city that welcomes high-profile artists and promotes the arts, making the local arts scene even stronger.

