

YOU CAN SEE THIS MURAL BY THE ACIDUM PROJECT MURAL IN THE ALLEY BY COWFISH.



HUA TUNAN'S LARGE MURAL SHOWS TIGERS ATTACKING A DRAGON.



GOOGLE "OREGON STREET ARTIST"

and you get just two results, both seemingly generated by bots. That puts us a bit behind Alabama (7 results) and Kentucky (4), well behind Washington (170,000) and California (161,000), and a nose ahead of Idaho and Wyoming (both 0).

Oregon is not exactly a national center for street art, the subversive guerilla art form that grew out of tagging and other illegal urban graffiti in the 1970s and became popularized by such documentary films as *Exit Through the Gift Shop* and *Style Wars*. We're talking Banksy and Shepherd Fairey here, not cozy New Age murals of whales and owls.

So when the city of Eugene decided to put on a street art festival here this summer, it's no surprise they looked elsewhere for much of the talent.

The festival, dubbed "Eugene Walls," kicks off officially at the end of this month. It is part of a larger

commitment, named the 20x21EUG Mural Project, to commission 20 local murals by leading artists in time for the International Association of Athletics Federations World Championships to be held here in 2021.

"That will be one of the largest sporting events in the world that year," explains Isaac Marquez, the city's interim cultural services director, who is leading Eugene Walls and is on the 20x21EUG committee. "So the context for this [art] project is the world. The track and field championships created an opportunity to do something bold. Strategically, I used that as the pivot point to run with this initiative."

This will be the biggest community visual arts undertaking here since the summer of 1974, when University of Oregon art professor Jan Zach brought a half dozen internationally known sculptors to town to create art in public for the Oregon International Sculpture Symposium. Works done that summer include Bruce Beasley's Big Red

metal installation next to the Washington-Jefferson Street Bridge and the tall, flat, friendly looking concrete space-alien-like creatures, created by Hugh Townley, that can be seen in Alton Baker Park.

Marquez talked to Eugene art consultant Tommie Griffin when planning the mural project. Griffin, who was involved with the 1974 symposium, gave this advice: "Go big!"

And so, Marquez did. The street artists arriving here to create work in the coming week are known around the world. They come from Paris, from Argentina and Brazil, from London and from Spain. They have long resumes. They show work in international galleries and command high prices. And they'll be working in public on murals that will stay here for years after they, the artists, are gone.

Among the muralists who will be here is New Yorker **DAN WITZ**. He's made a name for himself over the past four decades in both the street art scene and the art

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ARTIST STEVEN LOPEZ STUDIED ART AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON.



THE ACIDUM PROJECT'S ROBÉZIO MARQUEZ WORKS IN EUGENE.

