



Art, Justice and Opportunity



Portland artist Jose Ruiz Valentine reflects on Chicano history and culture with his mural "Venerated Mother" on the side of Open Signal's building on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

Emerging artists get paid for work

Every day thousands of people pass by Open Signal's building on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard at Graham Street. Pass by the building today, and you'll get to see the latest temporary mural created by Jose Ruiz Valentine, a 20-year old Portland artist who graduated from Rosemary Anderson High School in 2019.

The mural design reflects Val-

entine's Chicano history and culture. The large, colorful design depicting a serpent and catholic imagery is titled Venerated Mother.

In a partnership between Open Signal and another nonprofit, the Regional Arts & Culture Council, called Fresh Paint, the artists are selected for this professional development opportunity. The initiative provides emerging artists of color with a paid opportunity to paint a public mural for the first time in Portland.

With a focus on graffiti and various forms of illustrative art,

Valentine has been involved with local youth and artistic groups including the Red Stone Collective and Morpheus Youth Project for years. He uses art as a way to seek restorative justice in his life and works to help youth make positive changes in their own lives.

"I feel blessed to have the opportunity to share this iconography on a large public mural," Valentine explains in his artist statement. "I want to make this type of artwork and cultural iconography accessible for everyone to see. I'm especially excited to share it with those whose roots

relate with this work."

The Fresh Paint partnership is designed to support artists like Valentine, who don't have experience with publicly funded commissions.

"We want to get up-and-coming artists like Jose the support and resources they need to develop a new skill set and build their portfolio," explains Salvador Mayoral, who facilitates RACC's Public Art Murals Program. "For many of the selected artists, the mural projects have led to other public commissions or funding opportunities."