

Creating an artistic culture

Carlsbad has always been a destination for beach-goers, pleasant-weather seekers and anyone looking to explore a vibrant assortment of restaurants and boutiques. But over the recent years, the ever-growing collection of murals has helped paint the

Carlsbad Village as a hotbed for creativity, community and a blossoming mural culture.

The murals that have helped create this culture are more than colors on walls. Each one is a supporting character within a story of a Village—a Village

that continues to explore its artistic identity. I am very excited to share that the Carlsbad Village is now known as a mural destination with visitors entering our community with cameras charged, social media accounts at the ready and mural maps in hand.

The painted characters, imaginative scenes and local identities have transformed the urban landscape of our Village by the Sea, but at one time, not too long ago, the walls were predominantly blank.

Back in 2005, I began envisioning a colorful collection of murals becoming an attraction for locals and visitors alike—ultimately uniting the community, stimulating local economic growth, and adding to Carlsbad’s already impressive collection of amenities.

Communities all around the world have benefited from murals—I pondered if Carlsbad could too. Could local businesses be convinced to house murals? Could local artists be inspired to paint in public space? Would the community support this type of expression? Would it be possible to shift the urban landscape paradigm?

In 2008, I began approaching local businesses with mural proposals. I imagined these early murals laying the visual groundwork for the growth of a flourishing artistic culture, but without the backing of the community, this vision would not be possible.

The current mural culture can be directly credited to the local businesses who supported this early vision including **The Boys and Girls Club**, Paul Henry Furniture, The Glass and Mirror Shoppe, **Señor Grubby’s**, Mas Fina Cantina, Skylar’s Furniture, Paradise Pizza and Cessey’s Taco Shop.

Today, the Carlsbad Village has more than 30 murals by established artists including Sean Dominguez, Skye Walker, Kris Markovich, Jason Markow, James Haunt, Ron Juncal, Phyllis Swanson, Michael Summers, Matty Davis and the historical mural originally painted in 1984 by Victor Ochoa.

In addition to curating the many per-



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manent Village murals, In 2015, I founded the Carlsbad Art Wall (CAW), a rotating urban canvas that brings new murals to our community every two months. The goal of the CAW is to provide an educational opportunity for aspiring muralists, facilitate conversation between artists and the community and introduce new art. To date, the CAW has brought 26 murals to our community.

The mural culture is just one component of the thriving artistic culture we are experiencing today thanks to the amazing productions at the **New Village Arts Theatre**, the creative honeycomb of art studios at the NVA Foundry, the adventurous music brought to our Village each year by the **Carlsbad Music Festival** and all the passion of local creatives sharing ideas. Together, we are creating an artistic culture—we are creating a masterpiece!

Bryan is a local mural artist and currently serves as the vice-chair of the Carlsbad Arts Commission.

