

## West Broadway self-guided art walk

Thank you to Tallest Poppy, West Broadway BIZ, Thom Barga Coffee & Tea, Art City, Michel St Hilaire, Manitoba Historical Society, all the featured artists, Murals of Winnipeg, and Synonym Art Consultation.

## #1

Andrew Eastman and Chloe Chafe started the Synonym Art Consultation initiative in 2013 with the aim of getting local art out on the street to engage with the public.

Their Wall-to-Wall Mural and Cultural Festival has now become an annual September-long event, with communities like West Broadway benefitting from an enhanced streetscape of murals, adding beauty, interest, and colour.



The first piece is from 2017 by artist Jill Stanton. She's an Edmonton-based artist who likes to explore themes of dreams, nature, technology, and the future. She took inspiration from the colours of the building, 1970s signage and still-lives hinting at vintage sci-fi novels. The objects straddle a river, referencing the overhead text by local poet/author Katherina Vermette (North End Love Songs, The Break).

The next two pieces are from 2018 and are by two Winnipeg-based sisters originally from Nigeria.

Ekeme Maduka's work is often centred on the female figure, commenting on the depiction of Black women, self-representation and popular culture. Her illustrations are inspired by fashion and the representation of powerful, black bodies.

Working with her sister, Mercedes Emeka-Maduka uses her art to explore ethics, cultural dominance, and her relationship to society.

The last mural is also the earliest, from 2015 entitled 'Happy Painting'. It's by artist Gibril Bangura, a painter from Sierra Leone. He has been a full-time artist for the last 26 years. He fled his country in 2014 with his wife and three children, arriving homeless in Winnipeg in February. He says he loves the city and the winter – it gives him more time to stay indoors and paint.

## #2

We're in the parking area of Charisma Plaza, which recently did a complete makeover of its exterior. Unfortunately, it resulted in painting over of some existing murals, one done by community art participants working with Art City on the south-facing wall, and another mural from 2004 by artist Tiff Seymour facing the parking lot behind the Salvation Army Store.

It's the nature sometimes of public art, such as the continually changing graffiti on the Handsome Daughter building up the street, or the massive Exchange-district mural entitled 'Nibaa' done by local artist Mike Valcourt on the side of the recently demolished former Winnipeg public safety building. That mural brought attention to and highlighted concerns around missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and as Mike explained: "The inner meaning behind the mural is that the disappearance of the women and girls coincides with the disappearance of the mural as well."

The temporary nature of outdoor murals can make a tour like this more poignant when we recognize that beautiful public art is often impermanent.

This mural is from 2016. It depicts a cow and was intentionally painted on the north-facing wall of Boon Burger, a vegetarian restaurant. Nereo II (also known as Nereo Eugenio) is the artist who has been active in the local hip-hop and spoken word scene, currently working for Graffiti Art Programming while running a hip-hop studio for youth in the Point Douglas neighbourhood.

### #3

Walking through the narrow space between Bistro Dansk and the Handsome Daughter and into the back lane is a great way to see directly the scale, design, and vibrant colours used on the exterior of the building and a nearby garage. This is at least the third complete, aerosol paint-over of the exterior and I expect it may well change again.



### #4

This 2011 mural is entitled 'A Look at The Nook' by artist Sarah Collard. Originally from Burlington Ontario, Sarah first moved to Altona and then to Winnipeg. She says that murals are a "natural outlet of expression" for her. She likes the size, the social aspect of it, and the interaction with the public.

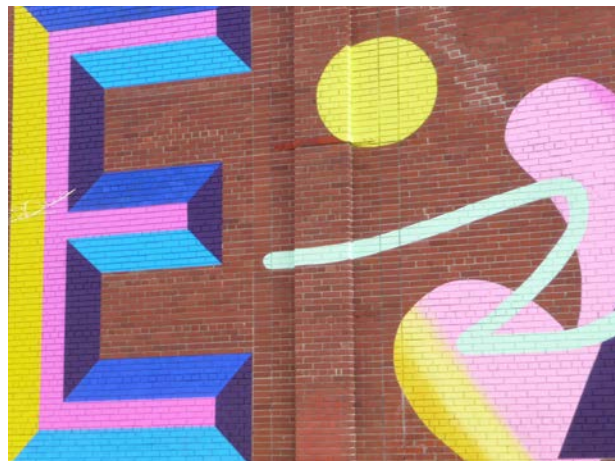
This was a commissioned work in collaboration with The Nook Restaurant who had just re-stuccoed their wall to address chronic graffiti concerns. Bill and Athena Paradis are the brother and sister owners of the restaurant first started by their parents who can be seen in the doorway and also through the window playing cards with their friends. Bill and Athena can be seen on the left, along with the Alba Brothers playfully stepping on each other's feet. They had a restaurant here prior to The Nook, as did Salisbury House and The Queen's Tea Room.

An early Sherbrook Street streetscape is also featured, including on the left what was known as the 1898 'Single Mother's Birthing Hospital' – an early initiative of the Sisters of the Misericorde of Montreal, later founding the Misericordia Hospital.

This mural is unique in that it tells a story about both the business it's located on as well as some of West Broadway's history.

As you cross the street and head north on Sherbrook Street, look back across the street at The Handsome Daughter. Its façade includes a beautiful black and white mural from 2015 courtesy of artist Ben Kroeker, created as part of Synonym's Wall-to Wall festival that year.

Head north to Decadence Chocolates, and then west into the parking lot.



#5

Winnipeg artist and West Broadway resident Michel St Hilaire created this 2011 mural entitled 'Land in Motion' – one of a number of commissioned artworks in partnership with the local BIZ association. Michel excels at creating large-scale murals, often blending elements of architecture and natural landscapes. His work often comments on global and environmental issues while striving to represent balance, flow, beauty, and symmetry. This mural offers a snapshot of the distant past and a possible future. The wall facing the back lane also includes an homage to the family-run camera shop that previously occupied the building.

The north end of this back lane (where it meets Westminster) provides a great view of one of four murals painted on the Food Fare building.

‘Smile’ was painted in 2019 by artists Tierney Milne and John Park in collaboration with Synonym Art Consultation and members of Studio 393, a local youth-led artist studio. The artists are both based out of Vancouver and explain that this large, colourful, text-based mural was a result of, “thinking about the best way we could leave a lot of colour and something to feel bright and evergreen even in the cold months.”

As you make your way to the parking lot north of the Food Fare, take a minute to appreciate the 2013 mural by Michel St Hilaire that wraps around the southwest corner of the building.

## #6

Across the street is the Westminster Church. A fine example of English Gothic style, its rough-cut stone contrasts with the smooth surfaces of the buttresses and windows. Towers of unequal length flank the two central doors with their Tudor arches. There is an impressive rose window on the front and five other stained glass windows in the church. Designed by John HG Russell, a leading Winnipeg architect at the time, it opened on June 16, 1912. Its inaugural service hosted 1300 people.

Before it was a Food Fare, the building on this side of the street operated as the Tivoli Movie Theatre between 1927 and 1958. A theatre with 824 seats, it also served as overflow seating for the church using remote sound to transit the service.





The north-facing wall of the Food Fare features two interesting murals.

Artist Dorothy Streilein's 1998 historical streetscape is of an imagined street market, likely representative of housing along Maryland at the time.

'Puppy Love' by artists Gabrielle Funk and Takashi Iwasaki was the result of a Synonym Wall-to -Wall event in 2014. Gabrielle is a local visual artist and muralist. She likes to beckon you into a world of quiet tension where she explores the dynamics of wild and domesticated beings. Her dogs may seem hostile at first glance until you notice their animated interaction is generating a flurry of hearts ascending above their heads. Gabrielle's focus is often on animals and she wanted to incorporate dogs, which a lot of people in the neighbourhood have as companions.

The balance of the mural is by Takashi Iwasaki who moved to Winnipeg from Hokkaido, Japan in 2002. He says that his work is either a visual recording of his daily life or a visualization of his imaginary worlds or landscapes. They may appear to be abstract but the shapes and colours are significant and reflect his state of mind while also wanting to brighten the neighbourhood with brightness and colour. A story about this mural is that the artist's mother was here for the unveiling and asked him why he'd made no effort to acknowledge the adjacent mural. Prompted by her comment, he repainted one of the shapes to represent a watermelon.

Walk through the pass-way outside Stella's outdoor tables and return to Sherbrook Street. You will walk past a 2018 mural entitled 'Love Birds' by Edmonton-based Trevor Peters and Annaliza Toledo, and happy to collaborate with Stella's who were wanting to refresh their wall in a dynamic manner. Inspired by travel, fashion, pop culture, and a shared love of graffiti, the resulting mural contains a mix of vibrant colours, shapes, and patterns. The artists also paint and curate works for Edmonton's annual 'Rust Magic' international street mural festival. Walk north on Sherbrook.



## #7

Vancouver-based Sandeep Johal created this evocative mural in 2018. Inspired by her south Asian background, she believes deeply in the power of art to spark conversations around culture, gender, and human rights. She uses geometric forms and intricate black and white lines to express her vision. Apparently, she, her partner, and their son liked Winnipeg so much when they visited that they talked about moving here.

Closer to the back lane is another piece by Nerio II entitled 'Gaia (Mother Earth)'. This mural was painted on site during the 2016 Sherbrook Street Festival. It refers to a Greek myth, the ancestral mother of all life, and the artist personalized it by basing the central image on his own mother, Angel. He prefers to paint in a style of realism, using a technique called 'cutting' to achieve sharp lines and depth with aerosol's versatility and ability to dry quickly.





Head north up the back lane, taking note of the unsigned mural on the back of the garage, featuring a number of Indigenous spirit animals. Walk across Sara and into the parking area for Fountain Springs, a beautiful 6-story, 30 suite building. One suite is for the permanent live-in caretaker, and 18 suites are specifically for adults navigating mental health issues. Walk through its causeway towards Sherbrook, for a great view across the street of yet another Michel St Hilaire mural.

## #8

This 2012 mural, entitled 'Taking Flight' is another by Michel St Hilaire, a prairie landscape intersected by soaring bridges and roads. A stylized female figure emerges on the left, holding a large sphere, suggesting a seed being transported to a new destination and generating new ideas. The bold colours, architectural details and dramatic band of clouds are strategic in trying to engage the most viewers, many of whom will be driving by. A major renovation of the building has significantly altered the mural, one more public artwork that is slowly disappearing from the neighbourhood.

## #9

This 2017 mural, 'Sun Ice Spirit Level' is courtesy of a Calgary-based art duo known as Nasarimba. They took their cue from the architecture of the building, and were partly inspired by the art deco movement of the 1920s and 30s. The mural experiments with colour fades, transitions and the use of

vibrant fluorescent paint. The circular shapes, columns, and stripes are echoed in many Winnipeg buildings. The artists' main objective was to add positive energy and a point of reflection as a gift to Winnipeg from their heads and minds.



## #10

Artist Ilana Pichon created 'Fragments' in 2017. She grew up in Switzerland, holds a degree in architecture, and now lives in Quebec. A lover of colour and geometric shapes, she is a printmaker and designer of artist books who likes to transcribe what she sees digitally into textures and patterns specific to the nature and scale of the site. Fabrics used by this clothing business and the daily movements of the two sliding doors inspired her to create the four colourful rocks on the building's façade.

## #11

The north wall of the building next to 137 Sherbrook has a beautiful 2017 mural entitled 'Sweetgrass' by Winnipeg-based artist Jackie Traverse. She began drawing as a child but it wasn't until she was 32 years old that she submitted a portfolio of work to University of Manitoba School of Art, graduating in 2009. Her work is women-centred, inspired by her Indigenous culture and her experience as a Native woman living in Winnipeg. She is deeply moved by injustices faced by First Nation people and strives to inspire dialogue through her art. This mural was included as part of a Mentoring Artists for Women's Art project called 'Resilience', a national showcase of 50 Indigenous female artists on 167 billboards from Sidney, Nova Scotia to Victoria, British

Columbia and on large-scale posters on reserves and northern communities, a massive project undertaken in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 'Call to Action'.

Traverse is also the artist behind 'Medicine Wheel' at Broadway & Young on the east-facing wall of Pal's Supermarket. More than 100 community members participated in Art City workshops, painting more than 100 panels to create a mural full of Aboriginal imagery, including a giant medicine wheel made out of grandfather stories and the animals from the Seven Sacred Teachings.



## #12

The final artwork on our tour is 'Untitled' from 2018 by artist Kailey Sheppard. This piece was co-sponsored by the Winnipeg Art Gallery, in celebration of the its new 4-story, 40,00 square foot Inuit Art Centre.

Sheppard is an emerging Inuit artist, originally from Winkler, Manitoba. Stating that her main objective was to create something light and hopeful by incorporating northern sea creatures on colourful, serpentine waves, Sheppard has created a mural similar in theme and aesthetic on the site of what will become the Inuit Art Centre on Memorial Boulevard. Painted on plywood and running the full length of the site, it will remain in place for the next year and a half during construction of the \$65M art centre.

## **The End**

We hope you enjoyed your walk and learned some fun things about the neighbourhood!

Thank you for practicing social distancing and for taking care of yourself and everyone else.

Thank you for supporting local artists and businesses!

Mural Tour assembled by local West Broadway resident, Rob Shaw. Any errors or omissions are entirely my own. Contact: [shawkraw@mymts.net](mailto:shawkraw@mymts.net)