

ISTHMUS

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The plywood canvas

When windows were boarded up on State Street, an activist art gallery opened

BY ISTHMUS STAFF

JUNE 6, 2020

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State Street looked bleak for a day or so last week, but that did not last long. When storefronts became plywood, plywood became canvas and State Street became an art gallery. Inspiration and consolation are side by side with anger and revolution in this virtual gallery of images that represent only a fraction of the creation that stretches the length of the street.

Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway came up with the idea for the murals and tasked city arts administrator Karin Wolf with the job. Wolf says she reached out to community cultural partners the city already has a relationship with in order to tap local artists.

“We definitely wanted to amplify the voices of people who have been directly impacted by racial injustice,” she says. Wolf also worked with Downtown Madison, which represents State Street businesses, to coordinate the project.

Not all the murals are part of the city program, says Wolf. Some store owners arranged for their own art and others artists went rogue. “People didn’t know better,” says Wolf. “A lot of people wanted to help and didn’t know how.”

Unfortunately we were only able to identify through Wolf the artists associated with the murals commissioned by the city. If additional artists wish to be identified please leave a comment with the information at the end of this article.

Click on the first image to begin a slideshow. Photos are by Bob Koch and Chelsey Dequaine-Jerabek.



See no evil



No person is your friend...
 friend...



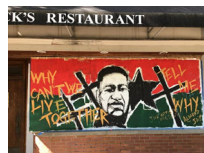
Work, in progress



Be true



Queer Black lives matter



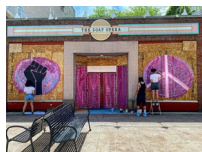
Tell me why



Your future matters



Sing a song full of faith



Black power/Peace, artist Sapphina Roller



Black lives matter



Handshake, by Charlotte Bizoe



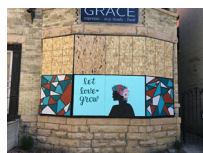
Our existence is resistance, artist Sirena Kilfoy-Flores



Happy birthday BT



Say their name



Let love grow



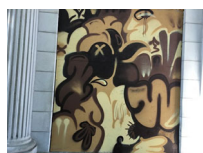
Our lives begin to end



Black love matters



Darkness cannot drive out darkness, artists Jay Ramirez and Ryan Hartman



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DYLAN BROGAN

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