



“IT’S REPLETE WITH THE HISTORY OF THE STREET, THE BUSINESS DISTRICT, THE CULTURE, THE DIVERSITY, THE DIGNITY WE FELT THERE. IT REPRESENTS US AS A PEOPLE. IT’S OUR PLACE.” **MOSES FREEMAN - CITY COUNCILMAN**



IMAGERY IN THE MURAL

The imagery in the mural represents the past, present and future of M.L. King Boulevard. Much of the imagery in the mural was inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream Speech”. Key inspirations include:

- “symbolic shadow”
- “Joyous daybreak to end the long night”
- “rise from the dark and desolate valley”
- “sunlit path of racial justice”
- “solid rock of brotherhood”
- “bright day of justice emerges”
- “rise to the majestic heights”
- “justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream”
- “every hill and mountain shall be made low”
- “rough places will be made plain”
- “a stone of hope”
- “jangling discords”
- “beautiful symphony of brotherhood”
- “a dream”

MURAL BY THE NUMBERS

This painting is 42,179 ft², the largest mural in the Southeastern U.S. and one of the top 5 largest in the nation. It is the first ever painted mural to wrap an entire city block.

The mural required 1 year of planning and research and 6 months of painting.

From first sketch to final stroke, the artists averaged 2,400 ft² of painting each week. That is equivalent to completing a 5-story square canvas every 7 days, for 5 months straight.

The 20 individuals depicted in the mural are either historic or living people who represent aspects of M.L. King Boulevard and Chattanooga.

Over 420 gallons of colored paint, 120 brushes, 5 paint sprayers and 120 yards of acrylic fabric were used to complete the mural.

The artists logged over 6,100 hours painting the mural. The team worked in shifts from sun up to sun down, 7 days a week.

565 volunteers from the community helped paint the portraits in the mural on an acrylic cloth using a paint-by-numbers method that was then applied onto the wall.

The mural’s life expectancy is 25-30 years.

There are four hidden number 9s throughout the mural. Can you spot them? They pay homage to the glory days of the past, when M.L. King Blvd was called Ninth Street, or “the Big Nine.”

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The M.L. King Mural is a visual depiction of the past, present and future vision for Chattanooga. It is a tribute to the rich culture of the African American community that was long-anchored on M.L. King Boulevard. The mural serves as a significant icon for the city and reinforces the critical role that public art plays in telling the stories of the people and places in our community.

In 2015, Public Art Chattanooga commissioned world-renowned artist, Meg Saligman, to create a monumental mural located in the heart of the M.L. King District. It is one of the largest murals in the country, gracefully transforming all four walls of a stark building on the Boulevard with lush color and

imagery. The mural covers over 42,000 square feet and took six months to paint by a team of 11 artists. The work has brought new promise and life to this important gateway.

TITLE: The M.L. King Mural: “We Will Not Be Satisfied Until”

ARTIST: Meg Saligman Studios

MEDIUM: Sher-Cryl High Performance Acrylic, non-woven media

DATE CREATED: 2015

PROCESS

All elements of the mural’s design came from hours of research and community engagement. The mural team used a three-step process. First, public sessions and interviews with neighborhood residents and businesses informed the imagery and helped the artists gain an understanding of the community. Second, a computer-aided grid was created to allow artists to draw the design in proper scale directly onto the walls. Paint was then directly applied on the walls. Lastly, city-wide community paint sessions were held allowing over 565 citizens to paint the mural portraits on a special fabric in a “paint-by-numbers” method. The fabric was applied to the walls with an acrylic gel and blended with the surrounding images.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Meg Saligman Studios is a world-class public art studio created and led by Meg Saligman. For 25+ years, Meg has traveled throughout the U.S. and abroad to invigorate the built environment with paint and light. Her studio specializes in producing the largest murals in the country, always site specific and socially engaged. As innovators within the field, Meg and her team have been recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Smithsonian Institute, among others. Saligman was recognized by Public Art Review as one of the ten most influential muralists in the nation. The studio is based in Philadelphia. Through a competitive application process, six local Chattanooga artists were selected to join Meg’s team on this project.

ARTIST TEAM

Mural by Meg Saligman Studios
Co-Principal Artists: Meg Saligman and Lizzie Kripke
Lead Artists: Hollie Berry and James Tafel Shuster
Core Team Artists: Anier Fernandez, Rondell Crier, Anna Carl, Mercedes Llanos, Efrain Herrera, E. E. Yates. Project Advisor: Shaun LaRose

PROJECT MANAGER:

Lizzie Kripke

PROJECT ORGANIZER:

Public Art Chattanooga | City of Chattanooga
Peggy Wood Townsend, Director
Ana May, Program Assistant

THE M.L. KING MURAL:
WE WILL NOT BE SATISFIED UNTIL



PROJECT SPONSORS

This project was made possible through an unprecedented partnership with AT&T.

Funding was made possible with generous grants from the Benwood Foundation and Lyndhurst Foundation. We are grateful for support from our sponsors and partners, NES Rentals, Sherwin Williams, Stanley Smith, Wafflez Factory and the 565 citizens who provided their input and helped paint the mural in the summer of 2015.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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M.L. KING BOULEVARD WALL

This wall reimagines present-day Chattanooga as it looks toward the future. There are hundreds of streets across the U.S. named for Dr. King, and many share similar stories to this one – here, segregation was the time of prosperity and desegregation was the time of decline. This wall reclaims Dr. King's vision of

an economically and socially integrated society in the heart of Chattanooga.

HOUSTON STREET WALL

This wall represents transformation in Chattanooga's past and future.



M.L. KING BLVD

1. Barbershop Pole

Barbershops are some of the few businesses that have survived and thrived along the Boulevard for decades. They are reminders of resilience and community.

2. Empty Room

This represents present-day M.L. King Boulevard. It is in a state of transition - waiting and ripe for change.

3. Night Sky

"A joyous daybreak to end the long night..."

4. Landscape

"Every hill and mountain shall be made low..." A glimpse of Chattanooga scenery at night.

5. Rope Fraying

The fraying rope signifies contention during desegregation.

6. River

Chattanooga's vitality stems from the meandering Tennessee River. Here, flowing water represents fluidity and transformation.

7. Pulley

Pulleys enable the lifting of loads, the changing of direction, and the transmission of power. They reflect what is needed as Chattanooga reinvents itself.

8. Rope

Ropes represent racial tension, going from separate black and white strands to integrated strands, at times in tension and at times loose and free. They often connect to pulleys, which symbolize change of direction and transmission of power.

9. Flipping Figure

Seen on each wall, flipping figures are turning and revolving, just like the city is repeatedly transforming itself. They capture Chattanooga's exuberant spirit.

10-14. Looking Out, The Coming Generation, Standing Tall and Proud, Learning and Planning Together

10-14: "Beautiful Symphony of Brotherhood..." Diverse, everyday Chattanoogaans are arranged in a classic composition seen in many American paintings. This composition reimagines "Coney Island" by George Tooker.

15. Book

An object for learning, planning, and spiritual connection, it enables spreading of ideas, study of the past, and ownership of the future.

16. Lookout Mountain

"Solid rock of brotherhood..." Atop it stands a diverse group of Chattanoogaans.

17. Landscape

"Rough places will be made plain..."

18. Balance Rock Block

A nearby natural landmark, the balance of weighty subjects is central in the Boulevard's development.

19. Day Sky

"A joyous daybreak to end the long night..."

HOUSTON STREET

20. Cloud

"Bright day of justice emerges..." Color and energy bursts around the corner.

21. Great Blue Heron

This native bird's comeback from endangerment as a species speaks to cultural endangerment and the need for thoughtful preservation.

22. Landscape

"Every hill and mountain shall be made low..."

23. City of Chattanooga

A distant view of Chattanooga calls for seeing things from different perspectives.

24. Flipping Figure

Seen on each wall, flipping figures are turning and revolving, just like the city is repeatedly transforming itself. They capture Chattanooga's exuberant spirit.

25-26. Working Together

Two gentlemen of different races working together to revolve a pulley.

27. Pulley

Chattanooga is often reinventing itself. This pulley is attached to turning blocks, each one depicts a transformation that has taken place in Chattanooga.

28. One Way to Bi-directional Sign

In 1957, M.L. King Boulevard was changed to a one-way street, going out of the city. Many residents cite this as precipitating the economic downturn. In 2003, grassroots efforts succeeded in converting the street back to two-way traffic.

29. Pollution to Clean Air

Chattanooga overcame serious pollution during industrialization and is now revered for its clean outdoors.

30. Citico Mound

Originally a Native American mound, this landmark has been repurposed numerous times.

10TH STREET

31. Vine

The vine represents new growth and connection, while alluding to religious faith.

32. Pixelated Sky

Pixelation represents Chattanooga as an innovator in the field of technology.

33. Flipping Figure

Seen on each wall, flipping figures are turning and revolving, just like the city is repeatedly transforming itself. They capture Chattanooga's exuberant spirit.

34. Paperboy

The paperboy symbolizes reimagination of race. As a child, City Councilman Moses Freeman's paper route enabled him to travel across all parts of town, despite segregation at the time. He gained exposure to the parallel existence of his peers, and learned that all people are equal.

35. Block

While mirroring the architecture of the building, blocks moving in and out of the building are signs of simultaneous construction and destruction.

KING STREET

36. Bessie Smith Record

Ninth Street was a major hub for music and entertainment. Highly influential blues and jazz artists performed along the street, including Chattanooga native Bessie Smith.

37. Awning

Awnings once lined the majority of Ninth Street. Today, only tattered remnants of a few remain.

38. Tassels

Curtain tassels pay homage to Liberty Theater, a popular theater on Ninth Street. The mural now stands in the exact spot of the former theater.

39. Night Sky

Ninth Street was renowned for its nightlife.

40. Flipping Figure

Seen on each wall, flipping figures are turning and revolving, just like the city is repeatedly transforming itself. They capture Chattanooga's exuberant spirit.

41. Flag

The waving of the flag is a symbol of pride and resilience.

42. Standing Proud

42, 44, 46, 50, 51: Multiple generations represent family and progress of culture. These people are arranged in a classic composition seen in many American paintings. This composition reimagines Bo Bartlett's "Homeland."

43. Bessie Smith

Chattanooga native, Bessie Smith, is one of the most highly influential blues singers of all time. She started performing as a child on Ninth Street. She

was known for pushing boundaries and expressing deep emotion through her music.

44. Dancing Woman

A contemporary woman dances with Bessie Smith. This shows active embrace of past culture.

45. First Baptist Church

One of the oldest churches still standing nearby M.L. King Blvd.

46. Helping

A young man who worked in the neighborhood, represents the young workforce and the creation of new businesses.

47. Newspaper

The *Chattanooga Observer* was in print from 1933 to 1968, and was the only circulated print to celebrate local black culture and achievements.

48. Bag

Ninth Street was a travel destination in the American South. It was a hub of business and commerce.

49. Hat

Ninth Street is remembered as a place "to see and be seen," a place where people would dress up to visit.

50. Younger Generation

This figure represents a creative and bright future for the younger generation in Chattanooga.

51. Older Generation

This represents the importance of connecting with and never forgetting the knowledge and wisdom of our elders.

52. Sleeping Boy

A young boy is wrapped in the comfort and safety of home. Those who grew up on Ninth Street, remember it as safe and abound with the warmth of home and community.

53. Brick Building

A nod to the original architecture of Ninth Street.

54. Tuba Player

A Howard High School student playing the tuba. Music of all forms thrived on Ninth Street.

55. Choir Girl

Gospel choirs represent the prominent force of music and religion.

56. Barber Silhouette

The gospel singer is sewing a patch to represent the keeping of memories. This patch is of a local, third-generation barber at work in his family's shop.



10TH STREET WALL

This wall bridges the future with the past, rejoicing over remembrance, growth, and freedom.

black identity and resilience in what was one of the most thriving black communities during the Jim Crow era.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Visit www.PublicArtChattanooga.com



KING STREET