

New murals celebrate Latino heritage in Cleveland



Designed by Dante Rodriguez and painted by Mike Sobeck, the murals at Meyer Pool transform the concrete and building into a colorful summer oasis.

Nine new murals by various local artists add bright colors and imagery to several buildings in Cleveland's Clark-Fulton neighborhood.

Many of the murals reflect the area's vibrant Latino culture and community.

The artwork was recently unveiled on buildings along West 25th Street near the MetroHealth campus, as well as other locations on Clark Avenue, Fulton Road and at Roberto Clemente Park.

"It was a big collaborative effort between Metro West Community Development Organization, LAND studio and MetroHealth," said Erin Guido, project manager for LAND studio.

The \$235,000 project also received some additional grant support.

Part of the planning for the murals came from larger discussions between the organizations in previous years about how to develop gathering spaces and create more public art around Clark-Fulton.

A resident stakeholder committee was also formed to give input on potential locations for murals and what other kinds of public art people wanted to see in the neighborhood.

"Once we knew the ideal locations, we also had

to have the building owner buy in and make sure they will be good stewards of these public artworks," Guido said. "So there was also a lot of engagement in the business community to get the right locations for these artworks."

Cleveland-based artist Bruno Casiano created the mural on the building that houses Esperanza, Inc., on the corner of West 25th Street and Clark Avenue. Casiano's piece, "Vida Importan! / Black Lives Matter," features bold, bright solid colors, a reflection of his Afro-Caribbean style and Puerto Rican background.

"That piece was created on a computer," Casiano said. "I hand-draw these patterns then scan these patterns and put them into the designs in many cases."

The digital artwork was then increased in scale and printed on vinyl.

For Casiano, being part of a larger project highlighting the diverse community of the Clark-Fulton neighborhood is, in a word, "uplifting."

"It does uplift me in so many colors of the spectrum to be able to participate directly," Casiano said. "And in many ways as an artist, as a human being, as a Puerto Rican living in the United States... it brings a sense of 'inclusive.' I count. I'm here."

Several of the participating artists had created large-scale public art before, while for others, this was their first mural.

"I'm really proud to be part of the project," Guido said. "And I think working with that whole range of artists with lots of different backgrounds and everything, I feel like makes the project stronger."