

THESE DETROIT MURALS WILL MOVE YOU

BY: MELANIE GRINNELL | JULY 1, 2022



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The heat of another Detroit summer has arrived. On those days, when you have that melted, listless feeling and you're wondering how to fill an afternoon that won't leave you dripping with sweat, here's the perfect activity: a DIY Detroit mural tour. Hop into the car and see some of the city's best art from the blissfully temperature-controlled refuge of your vehicle.

Wander the city like an open-air museum with its buildings serving as enormous canvases. Combine the creative fulfillment of an afternoon at the DIA with the fun and grandiosity of the Ford-Wyoming drive-in. And (besides the gas), it's free!

Here's your DIY guide to seeing some of Detroit's best murals:

THE NORTH END AND MILWAUKEE JUNCTION

It's not just viewers who enjoy the benefits of murals. Neighborhoods get spruced up, businesses open and thrive, and the city gains notoriety and worldwide attention from artists and admirers. Case in point, the BLKOUT Walls Mural Festival started last summer by Detroit artist Sydney G. James, Thomas "Detour" Evans of Denver, and Max Sansing of Chicago. In the North End and Milwaukee Junction neighborhoods surrounding Oakland Ave. and E. Grand Blvd, artists painted over 20 new murals over the course of the week as the neighborhood celebrated and watched the metamorphosis.

75% of the festival artists and producers are Black and/or people of color and much of the art depicts the faces and experiences of Detroit. It's a great way to visually "listen" to the stories being told by Black and brown voices in our city.

Murals can be found along Oakland and E. Grand Blvd, as well as the side streets (you can find all the locations on the [website](#)). Head south on Oakland and you'll be greeted by J Dilla at Holbrook, dreamy and ready to take flight (artist, Marka 27). On the other side of that building, stop at MJ's North End Ice Cream Parlor and cool off with some ice cream as you pause to admire the image of an older woman in a bright, fantastical head-wrap set against a stark black background (artists, Sydney G. James, Bakpak Durden). On E. Grand Blvd., you can wind your way along the blocks between the boulevard and Milwaukee and see many impressive stunners.

Wrap up your trek with an East African meal at [Baobab Fare](#) at the corner of E. Grand Blvd and Woodward. Or stop for cocktails at [Dragonfly](#) and admire the "Kid's Got Heart" mural (artist, Immanuel Ahiable) as you enter. Owner Sandy Levine noted that, as they were trying to open, "there were a lot of question marks. Going in and seeing that mural every day was a big thing for us." Art is powerful.

EASTERN MARKET

[Eastern Market](#) has been Detroit's mural Mecca for years and hosts the annual festival, [Murals in the Market](#). It was named one of the best mural festivals in the world by the Smithsonian. There are over 100 murals throughout the market district. Art is everywhere you look, but meander through the side streets of the market, and you'll be rewarded with even more surprises adorning walls around every corner.

If you want to stick to a driving tour, you'll probably want to avoid weekends. Otherwise, you can park and stroll the blocks of the market by foot, or you can bring or rent bikes. Better still, you can book a bike tour with [RiDetroit](#).

Download the Electrify app and see some murals in augmented reality and enhance your viewing experience with sound and animation. You can wrap up your excursion with one of Detroit's best Bloody Marys at [Vivio's](#) or have lunch at [Cutter's](#) and enjoy one of the city's most outstanding burgers. If you need more art, extend your journey down to the Dequindre Cut.

THE DEQUINDRE CUT

In Eastern Market, park in the lot at Wilkins and Riopelle. In the far corner of the lot, at the corner of Orleans and Wilkins, you will see the ramp to go down to the [Dequindre Cut](#), the paved trail of the old Grand Trunk Railroad line. Head down to the subterranean level and enjoy a wildly illustrated walk or bike ride along a scenic greenway studded with old overpasses that now serve as urban canvases in a park setting, perfect for a family outing. Graffiti from older times still exists in perfect harmony with the newer murals. The 2-mile path will take you all the way down to the river with something to awe and impress you all along the way.

SOUTHWEST DETROIT

Get down to Southwest Detroit and [Mexicantown](#) to see the story of the area and the history of its people illustrated in vibrant color, larger than life, on its walls all around you. Dozens of murals can be found throughout the area as you wind through the streets on your journey to discover the best taco in town. Pick up some tamales to take home from Evie's Tamales and grab some sweets at La Gloria Bakery while you're at it. Then wind your way over to the railroad overpass on Springwells and the adjacent wall to see some more images that will haunt and delight.

DETROIT'S MURALS WILL MOVE YOU

Far too often, life can be serious, dull, monotonous...we have bills to pay, meetings to attend, errands to run. These murals will make you gasp with awe and smile with bemusement. You'll feel your heart moved. How often in life do you encounter things that can have that effect? Whenever you should be lucky enough to happen upon a creative gift—some color and spark, a soul laid bare upon a wall—leap to embrace it.

This one did really well on the Metro Detroit Chevy Dealership's Facebook page with lots of likes and 14 shares, which is a lot more than they usually get:

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These are the murals inspiring Detroiters.



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