

ESPN Action Sports

Fairey to unveil largest mural to date

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Skateboarder turned internationally acclaimed artist Shepard Fairey recently put the finishing touches on his biggest mural yet as part of a street art collaboration between Vanity Fair and Cadillac in partnership with the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art and the City of West Hollywood.

The artist's "West Hollywood Peace Elephant" is 70 feet tall and 106 feet wide across an exterior wall of the new West Hollywood Library, which is scheduled to open next month. Fairey's work joins additional exterior murals by Kenny Scharf and RETNA (AKA Marquis Lewis) as part of "The West Hollywood Library Murals" project, underwritten by Cadillac.



West Hollywood Flickr Shepard Fairey recently put the finishing touches on his biggest mural yet as part of a street art collaboration between Vanity Fair and Cadillac in partnership with the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art and the City of West Hollywood.

"Calm down taxpayers," Fairey wrote on his website, obeygiant.com. "I was not paid to do the mural and paid for my own supplies and labor. Thanks for the wall space though."

All three artists were also featured in MOCA's "Art in the Streets" exhibit, which attracted more than 200,000 visitors from April 17-August 8, the highest exhibition attendance in the museum's history.

For Fairey, his popular ascension has been a huge leap from his artistic beginnings as an upstart skateboarder in 1984.

"Skateboarding in the mid-'80s was super do-it-yourself," he told fecalface.com. "That was what got me into making t-shirts and screen printing. At first I just cut stencils and spray painted shirts. Then I realized my art teacher had a real primitive screen print rig in the back room that no one was using. Then I started screen printing some shirts for myself and couple extra for friends. You could see that in a short time in 1984-1985 my whole career was beginning to form based on that stuff."

Fairey never departed too far from his skate roots. During the 1990s, he launched Alternate Graphics, offering skateboards, stickers, shirts, and posters, and also produced a team video, Attention Deficit Disorder. Later he teamed up with pro skater Blaize Blouin to form Subliminal Projects and partnered with Andy Howell at Giant Distribution. Even today, his most famous and perhaps ubiquitous brand, OBEY GIANT, offers a run of skate decks.

Along with his exterior mural, Fairey also recently completed a commissioned art piece inside the new West Hollywood Library.

The official unveiling is slated for October 12.