

THE WEST HOLLYWOOD LIBRARY MURALS

The three public murals displayed on the exterior walls of the new West Hollywood Library are the fruits of an innovative collaboration between *Vanity Fair* and Cadillac in partnership with The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA), and the City of West Hollywood. Known as "The West Hollywood Library Murals," the project features work from three of the biggest names working in the visual arts today: Shepard Fairey, RETNA (a.k.a. Marquis Lewis), and Kenny Scharf.

The West Hollywood Library Murals is an extension of MOCA's wildly popular *Art in the Streets* exhibition which was on view at The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA from April 17 to August 8, 2011. *Art in the Streets* traced the evolution of graffiti and street art from the 1970s to the global movement it has become today. Renowned photographer David LaChapelle captured the artists and their murals for a custom portfolio, presented by Cadillac, for the November 2011 issue of *Vanity Fair*.

For Cadillac, trusting in and persistently following its creative instincts was the notion that led the brand to champion this extraordinary project. Indeed, there is an authentic convergence point between the values of the Cadillac brand and what drives these artists to create their work—recognizing risks as opportunities is a hallmark of Cadillac, just as the street artists, through their creations, break down and rebuild new paradigms every day. To further this connection, Cadillac provided each artist with points of inspiration based on the tenets of its ideology: bold creativity that surpasses expectation, and daring ingenuity that breaks all boundaries. Cadillac approached *Vanity Fair* with the task of translating its vision into an idea that could be shared with the public. This led to the partnership with MOCA and the artists, which ultimately resulted in the three powerful works of art that enrich the City of West Hollywood and the experience of every member of this diverse community.

THE ARTISTS: RETNA (a.k.a. Marquis Lewis) · SHEPARD FAIREY · KENNY SCHARF

RETNA (a.k.a. Marquis Lewis)

RETNA, a.k.a. Marquis Lewis, began writing graffiti as a child, and by high school, he was a member of the storied graffiti crew LTS (Last to Serve) and executing pieces that broke with graffiti conventions, incorporating mixed media, drips, and nods to calligraphic traditions from around the world. In the early 2000s, RETNA started painting on advertising posters and developing his calligraphic work in screenprints, in textile design, and on furniture. RETNA's loose, painterly brushwork simultaneously recalls ancient writing from Mayan, Egyptian, Hebrew, Chinese, and Japanese traditions as well as Los Angeles's cholo writing, combining these influences to form his own contemporary take on graffiti.

"LITERATURE IS WHERE I GO TO EXPLORE THE HIGHEST AND LOWEST PLACES IN HUMAN SOCIETY AND IN THE HUMAN SPIRIT, WHERE I HOPE TO FIND NOT ABSOLUTE TRUTH BUT THE TRUTH OF THE TALE, OF THE IMAGINATION AND OF THE HEART." — SALMAN RUSHDIE



RETNA (a.k.a. Marquis Lewis)



Shepard Fairey

Shepard Fairey

As a 19-year-old Rhode Island School of Design student, Shepard Fairey showed a friend how to make a stencil, using an image of wrestler Andre the Giant as a tutorial. The resulting “Andre the Giant has a Posse” sticker was initially an in-joke between Fairey and his skateboarder friends, but after he put the enigmatic image around Providence, public interest was piqued. He began a street campaign of stickers, stencils, and posters, posting the Andre image whenever he traveled and mailing stickers to friends and fans in other cities. Inspired by the use of slogans in John Carpenter’s 1988 movie *They Live*, Fairey paired the command “Obey” with images from tabloids to produce an iconic combination that has since been reworked in countless other forms. In 1995, Fairey introduced the “Obey Giant” face icon, an abstraction of the wrestler’s face, and used it as the core image in his street poster campaign. The following year, he moved to the West Coast and began to exhibit his work in galleries, creating portraits of pop and counterculture icons in addition to his “Obey” iconography. His iconic “Hope” poster for presidential candidate Barack Obama brought the artist international fame. In 2009, the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston mounted the first-ever museum survey of Fairey’s work.

Kenny Scharf

In the late 1970s, Kenny Scharf studied at the School of Visual Arts in New York, where he was exposed to subway graffiti and the downtown art scene. He began to work in spray paint, combining it with the traditional media he used in art school. Scharf graduated from SVA in 1980, and a year later he was given a solo show at the famed FUN Gallery in New York. He became one of the principal figures on the East Village art scene, painting both in the streets and for galleries such as Tony Shafrazi, which showed Scharf's work in 1983. The following year, the Whitney Museum of American Art included Scharf in its biennial. Scharf's cartoonish renditions of Jetsons and Flintstones characters, distorted into lava lamp-like shapes and floating on wild, outer-space backgrounds, are often painted on huge, wall-size canvases. His aesthetic has lent itself to popular applications, as well, including nightclub décor, clothing, toys, and album covers for pop groups such as the B-52s. Scharf recently returned to the streets of New York, painting a series of store gates with his signature characters and a large mural at the corner of Houston Street and the Bowery—a wall he first painted in collaboration with other FUN Gallery artists in the early 1980s.



Kenny Scharf

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VANITY FAIR

With its mix of muscular journalism, stunning photography, in-depth reporting, and memorable profiles of the movers and shakers of the age, *Vanity Fair* has become, by many estimates, the magazine world's acknowledged arbiter of modern society, power, and personality. Since Graydon Carter became editor in 1992, the magazine has won numerous awards, has assembled a group of A-list contributors, and expanded the magazine's mandate to cover politics, business, and world affairs. For more information, please visit vanityfair.com.



Founded in 1979, MOCA's mission is to be the defining museum of contemporary art. The institution has achieved astonishing growth in its brief history—with three Los Angeles locations of architectural renown; more than 14,500 members; a world-class permanent collection of nearly 6,000 works international in scope and among the finest in the nation; hallmark education programs that are widely emulated; award-winning publications that present original scholarship; and groundbreaking monographic, touring, and thematic exhibitions of international repute that survey the art of our time. MOCA is a private not-for-profit institution supported by its members, corporate and foundation support, government grants, and retail and admission revenues. For 24-hour information on current exhibitions, education programs, and special events, call **213.626.6222** or access MOCA online at moca.org.



Cadillac has been a leading luxury auto brand since 1902. In recent years, Cadillac has engineered a historic renaissance led by artful engineering and advanced technology. More information on Cadillac can be found at cadillac.com.



After two years of construction and many years of planning, the City of West Hollywood completed Phase I of the West Hollywood Park Master Plan which included the building of the highly anticipated new West Hollywood Library, City Council Chambers and public meeting rooms, CATV facilities, 2.5 acres of expanded parkland and open space, new tennis courts, and 400 parking spaces in two municipal garages. The City Council Chambers, which accommodate more than 150 people, is also used for special performances and presentations. The new 32,000-square-foot, LEED-certified West Hollywood Library serves as the centerpiece of the West Hollywood community. It is designed to showcase the City's rich intellectual, literary, and cultural diversity and provide a landmark facility for the community's passionate commitment to lifelong learning.

The West Hollywood Library Murals collaboration is part of the City's Art on the Outside program. Guided by the City of West Hollywood's Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission, Art on the Outside brings art into the public realm to enhance the City's lively pedestrian-friendly culture.

For more information on arts and culture programming in the City of West Hollywood, visit www.weho.org/arts.