



Street Art

The Making of a Mural

by Lauren Doyle on March 15, 2010 at 03:06AM



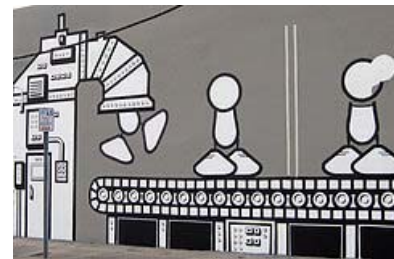
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The London Police has been around for more than a decade. In that time, they've painted a lot of murals, and done a lot of gallery shows, all around the world. Still, the thrill never dies. Five days into their latest project – a mural on an anonymous side street in Miami – after a long day's work, Bob Gibson is giddy.

The scaffolding has already been wheeled off the sidewalk and tucked behind the building; the paint brushes already cleaned and left out to dry somewhere else. There is no evidence that anything had gone on there that day. Except for Gibson, who rolls up on a bicycle and stops in the middle of the street. He looks up at the mural and beams. "It's really coming along then, isn't it?" he says in his perfect English lilt. It really, really is.

Which is surprising because, when they arrived in Miami on Saturday, they had no idea of what they were going to do. All they knew was that Primary Flight had a large wall available next to the wall that Chaz, Gibson's artistic other half, had painted in December during Art Basel.

"When I was in Amsterdam and thinking about the piece, I couldn't envision what we were going to make until we got here," Gibson says. "And once we got here, and I saw how long the wall was, I felt like we really had to tell a story. And then the left to right reading of the wall meant that there had to be some kind of movement, or some kind of suggestion of movement, so the conveyor belt was the suggestion for the work."



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But knowing how long the wall was wouldn't have helped them to plan. They had to be there, to see it. "If we had done a wall of exactly the same size somewhere else it would have been completely different," Gibson says, noting the way a cooling grate was integrated in with the mural. "We just borrowed a lot from the space...It designed itself really."



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It's that Zen-like approach that keeps the two grounded in what they're doing, when they're doing it. If they're thinking about the tunnel they're scheduled to paint in New York in a week's time, or the gallery show that's set to take place in Kentucky just days from now, you'd never know it.

"I try not to have anxiety about anything," Chaz says about the time crunch. "Life's about enjoying things, so you don't need to be anxious about stuff – if you are then why are you doing it?"

Still, on Thursday when Chaz hears a weather report for Friday (not just rain, but violent storms) he calls across to Gibson to say that he's "Not allowed to leave Miami until this thing is done."

Mid-day Friday, it's looking like they're going to make it. The storms have held off all morning, and as it begins to drizzle, Chaz is touching up the areas where black spray paint from the stencils bled into the white background. Meanwhile, Gibson is busy sketching a portrait into one of two boxes – the "heads" that appear to be in control of the machine. It's a portrait of Jill, one of the local artists who has been helping them all week. As Gibson sketches her image, Jill continues to work just to the left of him.

Chaz likens the mood to that of the last half hour of a long road trip. "You're excited but you've still got this little bit to go."

What started as a sketch made over drinks on Saturday has quickly come to fruition. The last elements – roughed in days ago with a pen and yardstick - are being filled in with black and white paint. You can really tell not only what it is, but that their vision for the mural has been perfectly realized.

"It's the father or mother of all of these characters, [which are] dropped down. Then they move their way across this conveyor belt. When the characters are finished, they get carried away, and the rejects end up in this bin here. And when the gate is closed, it's like they're in jail," Gibson says, sliding the black wrought iron gate in front of the wall to demonstrate.



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Hours later, the rain, which came down in torrents, has delayed them quite a bit. As good as the piece looks, there are still parts that obviously need finishing. Chaz and Gibson are scheduled to leave Miami in a few short hours and they're trying to see if they can get another flight. Which is the worst part of the end of a long road trip – unexpected traffic delays.

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Love this.



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It's on NW 25 St (between Miami and NW 1st Avenues.)



Chris @ 03:16PM on March 15, 2010

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Where exactly is this?



Chris @ 03:13PM on March 15, 2010

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It's really great to see local businesses embrace an art scene so much in the way it was done here. This mural adds a bit more color to an already colorful city in a very tasteful fashion. Great interview with the artists too! The mention of how they handle anxiety is especially noteworthy because how to balance creativity and working towards a deadline is something artists (and many others) struggle with all the time. I can't wait to check this out in person during the next trip to Miami.