

Have You Voted for Your Favorite Deep Ellum Murals? Last Day Is Tomorrow

by [Leah Shafer](#)



The “Deep Rawlins” mural by Steve Hunter is one of 42 in downtown Dallas commissioned by 42 Properties in 2015. A contest will determine which three of these murals gets to stay, and which are painted over to make way for new art. This mural currently has 1,280 votes. Photo: Can Turkyilmaz

Back in 2014, folks at real estate company [42 Deep Ellum](#) had an ambitious idea: to paint 42 new Deep Ellum murals on the walls of the properties they owned in downtown Dallas.

This project, called [42 Murals](#), allowed artists to show off their talent through murals painted on many of the historic buildings in the area. The mural project also provides free public art to thousands of visitors and residents.

“We made a conscious effort to focus mostly on local artists and not look at an artist’s reputation experience or resume — we judged entries pretty much solely on the submission,” said Scott Rohrman, manager of 42 Real Estate, LLC, and manager of general 42 Deep Ellum. “What we got is something we are really proud of.”

From the beginning, artists knew the murals would likely be temporary. Two years later, and 42 Murals is once again [calling for submissions](#) to create new Deep Ellum murals. That means painting over most of the old ones.

“You don’t go into the Dallas Museum of Art over a 20-year period and every painting is sitting on the same wall,” Rohrman said. “Art galleries change their art and when we went into the project, we told the artists their art might only be up for a short time, two year now, all the artists signed a contract before they started painting that we could not and would not guarantee their art would stay up forever.”

To decide which of the art stays and which get painted over, there’s an Instagram contest [@42murals](#). The three most popular murals — the ones that get the most “likes” — will be preserved, with the artists receiving a cash prize. Voting ends tomorrow.



The “Viva Deep Ellum” mural by Jorge Gutierrez currently has 1,971 votes.



“Social Worship” by Jeremy Biggers is a leader with 2,948 votes.



Michael McPheeters' "Deep Elm" mural leads the pack with 5,417 likes on Instagram

Steve Hunter of [Hunter Creates](#) is one of the original artists who painted Dallas poet Rawlins Gilliland on his mural, located at 2801 Elm St. It is based on a photo taken by Can Turkyilmaz. Gilliland wrote an original poem, "Ode to Deep Ellum," which Hunter painted onto the mural, as well.

"While I realize murals come and go over time, I'd dearly love to see my Rawlins mural preserved as Rawlins Gilliland is such a true icon of Dallas past and present," Hunter said. "We always talk about preserving the past, but I'd like to preserve the present as well."

Gilliland said the mural has taken on a life of its own.

"I have watched people of all ages and every color being photographed in front of it — I was asked to marry two women in front of it last year. Others messaged me that 'he proposed to me at your mural,'" he said. "It is a positive project even though the nature of painting over murals is always a painful one."

Rohrman further explained the concept of the public art project.

"The concept is that it's a living, breathing exhibition of public art and we hope to make a coffee table book out of these and any proceeds would go to the artists or a charity — the goal is to document art over time," he said. "Over time, [public art] creates its own history of what's going on in the world."

To see all the Deep Ellum murals in this contest, go to the Instagram page [@42murals](#), and vote.