



## **RACVB Brings Back CRE8IV, Expands Region-wide 2021 to Include Twelve New Murals, Three New Cities** *Transformation set to begin June 1*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**May 21, 2021**

**Rockford, IL** – The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, together with community leaders from Rockford, Loves Park, Pecatonica and Rockton, participating artists and sponsors, announced the return of **CRE8IV: transformational ART**. After a one-year hiatus, the RACVB-led public art festival will take place beginning June 1, 2021 at various locations in the Rockford region.

Eleven local and visiting lead artists will work with teams of artists throughout the summer to create twelve large-scale, vibrant murals in the Rockford region. In addition to murals in downtown Rockford, artists will create museum-quality murals on big walls in Rockton, Loves Park and Pecatonica and in Rockford's South Main Street business district.

"We are so grateful to everyone who is helping to make the return of the CRE8IV: transformational ART possible. Having murals and public art displayed throughout Rockford and now Rockton, Loves Park and Pecatonica is a bold way to tell and share our destination's story," said Kristen Paul, RACVB's director of destination development. "The twelve new murals will add to an already incredible lineup of public art in our region and is yet one more way we can differentiate, enhance and build up our neighborhoods while inspiring our residents and visitors."

The new murals will spotlight scenes and imagery portraying natural beauty, hope, peace and love; diversity and inclusion; youth education, historic symbolism rooted in our Midwestern hometowns; and inspirational leaders who have made an impact in our communities.

### **Partnerships Key to Success**

"**Painters District Council 30, Local 607** will continue to bring help, hope, and inspiration this year with the next phase of CRE8IV murals that will touch downtown Rockford and several corners of our county. After seeing the major impact made in 2019, we are excited to help bring that positivity back to our region again through beauty, history, and life in the form of art and murals," said **John Penney**, Painters District Council No. 30, Local 607 business representative/organizer.

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Partnering with the **Rockford Area Arts Council** is a natural fit, especially for an initiative of this caliber and impact. At the beginning of the pandemic, the Arts Council initiated a mural installment on the wall of Jumpin' Joes—at the intersection of W. State St. and Winnebago St. A team of local artists was assembled and a dynamic composition planned, however, the funding for the project fell through due to COVID-related challenges. Since March of 2020, the Arts Council and the RACVB have collaborated on a variety of community-centered projects and initiatives, so when the RACVB invited the Arts Council to participate in CR8IV in an effort to help realize a mural on that wall, they jumped at the chance.

“The Arts Council is committed to working with local artists—and after reviewing the submissions for the 2021 CRE8IV installment, we felt strongly about working with local artist, Stuk One. His portraiture and Rockford-centered submission gave us confidence that his final composition will meet the Arts Council’s goal of accessibility and inclusion” said Mary McNamara Bernsten, Rockford Area Arts Council executive director. “Public art reflects and reveals those who live in our community; Stuk One is a talented, nationally known artist. The Arts Council is proud to showcase his work, and our community, in the CRE8IV initiative.”

### **Mural Locations and Artists**

“Large scale murals have an awesome ability to transform spaces. People are drawn to places and communities that are vibrant, inviting and alive with creativity. As we considered bringing CRE8IV back for a second year, it was important to our team at RACVB to consider new areas in Rockford and new cities in our region that could also benefit from infusions of public art and creativity,” said **John Groh**, RACVB president/CEO. “We are thrilled to be working with residents and leaders Loves Park, Rockton and Pecatonica as well as along S. Main Street in Rockford to bring vibrancy to new parts of Winnebago County.”

Artists were selected through an open Call for Artists process. More than 40 local and visiting artists from around the country submitted proposals. A curatorial review committee comprised of partner organization representatives and residents reviewed the submitted proposals and concepts, considered the artists’ experiences with similar projects and then selected the artists for this year’s CRE8IV festival. The selected artists represent a diverse group of local and visiting artists with varied backgrounds and artistic approaches.

### ***The list of mural locations and artists includes:***

1. Jumping Joe Inc., 603 W. State Street, Rockford (west facing)  
Artist: **Fatherless**, Rockford, <https://www.wearefatherless.com/>
2. Jumping Joe Inc., 603 W. State Street, Rockford (east facing)  
Artist: **Stuk One**, Rockford, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/stuk-one-72a8b6b3>  
Sponsor: Rockford Area Arts Council
3. J-Bears Place, 311 S. Main Street, Rockford (south facing)  
Artist: **Yulia Avgustinovich**, Denver, <http://yulia-art.com/>  
Sponsor: Brubaker Charitable Trust

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4. Resale Shop, 1019 S. Main Street, Rockford (north facing)  
Artist: **Rafael Blanco**, Chicago, <https://rafael-blanco.com/home>  
Sponsor: Collins Aerospace
5. Magpie, 126 N. Madison, Rockford (south facing)  
Artist: **Thomas Agran**, Iowa City, <https://www.thomasagran.com/>  
Sponsor: Kjellstrom Family Foundation
6. Luna Datura's Curious Gifts, 117 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Rockford (north facing)  
Artist: **Sam Kirk**, Chicago, <http://iamsamkirk.com/#sewellestate>  
Sponsors: Illinois Lottery and UPS
7. Social Urban Bar & Restaurant, 509 E. State Street, Rockford  
Artist: **Fatherless**, Rockford, <https://www.wearefatherless.com/>
8. La Chiquita, 1108 S. Main Street, Rockford (north facing)  
Artists: **Jenny Roesel Ustick**, Cincinnati and **Atalie Gagnet**, Dayton,  
<https://www.jennyroeselustick.com/> and <http://www.ataliegagnet.com/>  
Sponsor: The Workplace
9. CD Source, 5723 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Loves Park  
Artist: **Brett Whitacre**, Rockford, <https://www.facebook.com/brettwhitacreat/>  
Sponsor: City of Loves Park, David & Colleen Anderson Family
10. Rockton Food & Spirits, 121 W. Main Street, Rockton (west facing)  
Artists: **Lisa Frost** and **Libbie Frost**, Rockford, <https://www.lisafrost.com>  
Sponsor: City of Rockton, community sponsors, actively seeking additional support
11. Michael Freier - COUNTRY Financial, 515 Main Street, Pecatonica  
Artist: **Brett Whitacre**, Rockford, <https://www.facebook.com/brettwhitacreat/>  
Sponsor: Village of Pecatonica, private donations, actively seeking additional support
12. Everything Store, 101 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Pecatonica  
Artist: **Brett Whitacre**, Rockford, <https://www.facebook.com/brettwhitacreat/>  
Sponsor: Village of Pecatonica, private donations, actively seeking additional support

### **Mural Sponsors and Supporters**

This RACVB-led initiative is made possible with the help of the aforementioned CRE8IV sponsors and funding partners and in collaboration with the **City of Rockford** and **Painters District Council 30, Local 607**. We would also like to recognize and thank all artists, local and visiting, for their creativity and days of hard work to help elevate our beautification efforts in the region.

Businesses, organizations and individuals interested in sponsoring this initiative or a specific mural are invited to contact **Martasha Brown**, RACVB Director of Advancement, at 815.489.1655 or [mbrown@gorockford.com](mailto:mbrown@gorockford.com).

**About RACVB:** RACVB is responsible for promoting the Rockford region as an attractive travel destination and enhancing its public image as a dynamic place to live and work. Through the impact of travel, RACVB strengthens the economic position of the region and provides opportunities for people in our communities. [www.gorockford.com](http://www.gorockford.com)

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