

Painting Hope and Joy in the Movement

By Meredith Aby-Keirstead

If you have been by the WAMM office lately, you may have noticed it getting a new coat of paint—in the form of an art mural! Last year artists started painting a giant mural on the 42nd Street side of 4200 Cedar Ave. South in Minneapolis with a giant Cedar tree. This summer the mural is expanding and community members have been organized to help paint the rest of the wall. Olivia Levin Holden has brought together a team of youth artists and designers from Courageous HeARTS and a team of mural artists including Atzin Ketter, Neil Peirce, and Donald Thomas to lead this project with her. The 4200 mural project is supported by a public arts grant from Forecast Public Art.

Levin Holden has guided community members in expanding the Cedar Tree mural to the entire north face of the building through community painting days in June and July. Volunteers are helping paint a mural representing the people's movements struggling for their own liberation and the liberation of the planet. This is a fitting artistic mission for 4200 Cedar, which is home to many peace and justice groups including Women Against Military Madness, the Anti-War Committee, the Welfare Rights Committee, Communities United Against Police Brutality, Jewish Voices for Peace, and the Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee.

Misty Rowan, an assistant muralista and an Anti-War Committee activist explains, "We wanted this mural to show our movement at work. Minneapolis has a rich history of involvement in many interrelated struggles and social causes, all working hand-in-hand to create a better world. We wanted to show that connection, and how by continuing the struggle together, we are building a future with hope and love for everyone. It is about strengthening our community bonds, returning to nature, creating positive change around us, and last but not least of all, creating beauty with art. I've enjoyed this project immensely, and I hope lots of people come to the final community painting day July 11th, and the after party on August 1st."

WAMM helped with outreach for the painting days in June and July and encouraged members to come out to be a part of making political art happen. Future painting days will also be publicized through the WAMM email calendar. Please stop by the WAMM office to see the mural in progress!



*Minneapolis mural representing the people's movements. Come by to admire.
Photo: Meredith Aby-Keirstead*