

OCTOBER 28 & 29, 2023

14TH FESTIVAL FOR ALL SKID ROW ARTISTS



By Tom Grode --- October, 2023

--- The time arrived for this Festival for All Skid Row Artists during a special moment. Time to continue to recover from the Trauma of Covid. Time to honor General Jeff and the process of renaming Gladys Park. Time like every Festival for Skid Row Artists to honor and celebrate the incredible creativity of Skid Row as a neighborhood. Time to address the challenges we all face in the world today with hope and resilience. There are two Greek words for time: chronos and kairos. Chronos is chronology, the passage of time, today is Monday and tomorrow is Tuesday. Kairos is opportunity - now is a good time to talk about this.

Let's unpack those sentences.....

Wearing a mask and staying six feet away from all other people. Hey, that sure sounds healthy! Can't imagine that being stressful or triggering trauma. And while we were truly all in it together, Covid and health care and front-line workers also showed the disparity and need for equity in Los Angeles and all of America. In many ways, Skid Row came together to face the fear and confusion of Covid and so we have reasons to celebrate and to grieve. To not lose sight of lessons learned.

General Jeff Page left his mark with many people and with Skid Row as a Community - a Neighborhood. A West Coast hip hop pioneer, General Jeff became perhaps the highest profile Skid Row resident advocate/activist Los Angeles has ever seen. He passed away two years ago in October with his heart condition and since then there has been a community focused effort to rename Gladys Park after him. What is the status of that effort? Great question and so to help the process of answering it, a major highlight of this year's Festival was an appearance of the General Jeff Community Mural. Much more to come.

Like every Festival for All Skid Row Artists, we celebrated and enjoyed the creative expression of the Neighborhood of Skid Row. For Skid Row folks, Skid Row as a Neighborhood is saying one plus one equals two. But for folks not connected to the Neighborhood, that simple math is a revelation. A revelation to those who see Skid Row as a Downtown problem to be fixed. Or see nothing beyond individual people needing increased individualized health care services (yes, I'm looking at you County Skid Row Action Plan). Just listen to what the performers on stage had to say: Adam Smith, Bhold da General, Charles Porter, Big Faith, Christopher Mack, James Birdsong, Lyrical Storm, Maurice Marshal, Lee & Candy singing their love song, Lorraine Morland, Natosha Smith, Iron Donato, Ray Lewis and the Skid Row Drummers, Sunny Black, Olusheyi Adeeko Banjo, Damion Mikol Wagner, Crushow, Robin Hoodloom, Mark Phillips, John Chase and Stephanie Bell, Phelene, Rosa Miller, Valkor Slator, La Ronda, Queen Mama Tabia, Marla, Tyson, Lloyd Marks III, Charli-Sonic XSX, Michelle Autry, Jay, and our M.C. Lorinda Hawkins-Smith and many more.

Facing this time of challenges in the world was seen with preparing for Walking With Little Amal and a chance to share your innermost thoughts with your future self. Day One of the Festival we built a house for Little Amal, a 12-foot puppet named after a ten-year-old girl, a Syrian refugee. Amal means hope in Arabic and so we built a home for Little Amal's walk the following week through Skid Row and the Arts District called "Looking for Home." During the Festival in the center of the basketball court was a carefully designed and crafted table and chairs, by Michele Lorusso where you could write a letter to yourself and drop it in a box to be opened up and send back to you in two years. Studio 526, Would Works, Piece by Piece, Creative I, and Hayk with the Doodles Without Borders were back with workshops and exhibitions. Kaniah Chapman and Ron Jett exhibited their works of art, Coach Ron showcased his Skid Row T-shirts and Raquel offered Yoga classes.

Chronos and kairos. The days go by, the chronology of time, and each day brings joy, love, pain, disappointment. As unhoused photographer/artist Bumdog Torres recently said - if you're on the street and you don't have a project, you'll go nuts. And so, each day can be a step forward where Baby Steps can be just as important as what seems to be bigger steps. In fact, those Baby Steps help set the stage for those bigger steps. It's chronos that makes kairos possible. And every Festival in October is a kairos moment of time. The opportunity to get reconnected and discover new connections. To celebrate recent accomplishments and be inspired to move towards the next ones.

But to truly understand this year's Festival for All Skid Row Artists, and all those in the past and all those in the future, simply ponder the photograph. The smiles, the joy, the sense of belonging. The community. Perhaps you know the majority of the people in this photograph. Perhaps you are in it yourself. Perhaps you know very few of them because this was your first time attending the Festival and it was like entering a whole new world. None of that matters. What matters is what this photograph captures the universal desire for family and community. For creativity, love, joy, peace, hope. Those desires are in the Middle East. They are in Ukraine. They are universal. And so, are they in Skid Row? OF COURSE THEY ARE. They are in Skid Row in ways that take your breath away. And so perhaps 2024 is when something new, something truly extraordinary takes place.

We are in a special moment of time.

14TH FESTIVAL FOR ALL SKID ROW ARTISTS

ALL ARTISTS:

QUEEN MAMA TABIA
COACH RON
GARY BROWN
LORRAINE MORLAND
THE TOILET LADY
CRUSHOW
MELLO-BLUEZ
SWAMI DONI
NATOSHA SMITH
LINDA LEIGH
CHARLI-SONIC XSX
BIG FAITH
YOUNG MI CHI
PHELENE
JOHN ADAMS
VALKOR SLAYTER
CRUSHOW
JOHN MALPEDE
MARLA GIGGI
JAYE KAMSOM
MARILYN IRZARRY
RONALD JETT
KANNIAH CHAPMAN
LARONDA HARTFIELD
ROBIN HOODLOOM
TONEYONE TAYLOR
TOM GRODE
STEPHANIE BELL
HENRIETTE BROUWERS
SKID ROW DRUMMERS
RAY LEWIS
JOHN CHASE
OMAR LEWIS
DONALD REESE
DARIUS DOBSON
MACK FLOYD
NANCY GROSS
URBAN VOICES PROJECT
LORINDA HAWKINS-SMITH
KATE RICHARDS-BELLER
CHRISTOPHER MACK
DAMION WAGNER
ROSA MILLER
IRON DONATO
GERALDO CRUZ
MAURICE MARSHALL
RANDY BELLFIELD
CEDRIC
TYSON
RAQUEL BARRANTES
LLOYD MARKS II
AYOO DUCE
YOUNG KILO
LEE MAUPIN
CANDY SMITH
LYRICAL STORM
JAY
MARK PHILLIPS
CHARLES PORTER
ALICE CORONA
HAYK MAKHMURYAN
YVONNE MICHELLE AUTRY
FOOTIE
FRANKLIN EARN
B-HOLD DA GENERAL
JAMES NEWMAN
JAMES BIRDSONG
DAWN MENDELSON
JACIE ROW
OLUSHEYI ADEEKO BANJO
DJ
RAQUEL BARRANTES
JUNE CIGAR
NET
BELLANOMI
MICHELE LORUSSO
JEN HOFER
ANTOINE SMITH
FRISHER
CHRISTINE M. MARTINEZ
JAMES JUNIOUS
LLOYD MARKS
RITA JAYNE
SHANDORA
SUNNY BLACK
YVONNE MICHELE AUTRY
MICHELE LIU
AUTOMATA ARTS
PEPPI

BIG FAITH

I DO CHRISTIAN HIP HOP. I WORK WITH A MINISTRY ON 5TH AND CROCKER EVERY SATURDAY FROM 10 TO 12.

I'VE BEEN COMING OUT HERE FOR YEARS, AND I SEE A LOT OF THE SAME PEOPLE. IT IS LIKE ITS OWN LITTLE COMMUNITY WITHIN A COMMUNITY.



NATOSHA SMITH

IT'S NOT VERY OFTEN THAT PEOPLE GET TO FULLY EXPRESS THEMSELVES. AND SO ANYTIME THERE'S A MOMENT WHERE I CAN DO THAT, I DO.

2024 IS THE YEAR OF THE BLING, BLING, BLING. EVERYTHING I WEAR HAS TO BLING OUT.



CHARLI SONIC XSX

I AM A RECORDING ARTIST & SONGWRITER. I PLAY THE GUITAR AND WRITE CONTEMPORARY ROCK.

SONIC XSX GAVE AN ENERGETIC PERFORMANCE WITH MUSIC MIXED WITH OTHERWORLDLY AUTO-TUNED RAP VOCALS, HEAVY METAL GUITAR, DRONING SOUNDS AND RHYTHMIC BEATS.



PHELENE

PHELENE THE COMEDIAN LED OFF A SHORT COMEDY LINEUP

INCLUDING JACIE ROW AND JAMES BIRDSONG

--- ALL THREE COMEDIANS BROUGHT MUCH LAUGHTER TO THE DAY WITH THEIR OWN DIFFERENT COMEDIC STYLES.



LEE MAUPIN & CANDY SMITH

SINGING: YOU'RE AS SMOOTH AS TENNESSEE WHISKEY...



SUNNY BLACK RAY ROBINSON

I MAKE HIP-HOP. SKID ROW HAS ITS OWN ENERGY - IT HAS A POSITIVE ENERGY.

WE NEED A BREAK FROM THE STRUGGLE, SO I THOUGHT I WOULD HAVE A GOOD TIME. IT'S NICE BEING OUT WHEN EVERYONE IS HAVING A GOOD TIME.



ADAM SMITH

I'M A HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZER AT LA CAN AND I SANG A SONG FOR KEVIN DE LEON: CALLED 'GO HOME'.

I'M REALLY HONORED TO BE HERE TODAY, KNOWING THAT THIS PARK IS BEING NAMED AFTER GENERAL JEFF. I GOT TO KNOW GENERAL JEFF FOR MORE THAN THE LAST SIX OR SEVEN YEARS OF HIS LIFE.



LOS ANGELES POVERTY DEPARTMENT



L.A. POVERTY DEPARTMENT performed a scene about GENERAL JEFF and how he jumpstarted the regeneration of Gladys park.

LAPD created the performance in 2014, when the General was honored in WALK THE TALK – a parade with site-specific performances that acknowledge Skid Row residents and workers who have done transformative work in the community. At the festival people could nominate the next 8 Skid Row visionaries who will be honored in the Walk the Talk parade/performance on May 25, 2024. Watch all the interviews with 78 honorees and the performances about them at <https://app.reduct.video/lapd/walk-the-talk/#>



LITTLE AMAL - LOOKING FOR HOME



On the first day of the festival through the puppetry prowess of Automata Art we built a house for Little Amal, a 12-foot puppet representing a young Syrian refugee girl on an international search for her mother. A few days later, on November 2, LAPD'ers were involved in the performance and participated in **Looking for Home**, a First Amendment Rights march from ICA LA to Gladys Park where Little Amal found a home, drawing attention to the rights of refugees, migrants, immigrants, the unhoused, and all who need a home. Little Amal has become an international human rights symbol for displaced people.

DAMION MIKOL WAGNER / JENS MIDTHUN



Damion Mikol and Jens spend both days at the festival representing DLANC (the Downtown Neighborhood Council) and wearing their DTLA Tshirts. Damion: "I've been a performer for years and years. I just embraced the acoustic guitar. I've had scalable bands. We've grown up to seven people on stage, so it can be a big ensemble. You experiment when you're an artist. You try new things, you go dangerous. I have a studio on Winston and Main Street. I've lived in this neighborhood for many years. I've been skateboarding and riding my bike in Skid Row and I volunteer at the School on Wheels. I tutor a lot of the kids that are coming in and out of this neighborhood. The blue on the **I Heart DTLA** T-shirt is intentionally the blue for the neighborhood council. We are DLANC, but everybody knows (downtown) Los Angeles as DTLA. I want to house everybody. How about that? Get some education for all the kids without private funding. Let's get some actual boots on the ground for the city. Housing first. Personally, I like the idea of solving problems. People are coming here as refugees. I feel like maybe the source of the problem is something we can concern ourselves with, too."

GENERAL JEFF MURAL / CRUSHOW



CRUSHOW. I'm a virtuoso. Art is life. From designing, to painting, writing, cooking... I have an art studio. I make art in the streets, corners, buildings... on beautiful women. I first heard about this festival 14 years ago. I've been here since the first one.

LA Commons donated funds to put a brand-new mural inside General Jeff Memorial Park. Since this is an artist festival, I thought it would be a good idea to bring the mural out -its supposed to be unveiled when we change the name of Gladys Park- so the artists can show their work and what they've been doing for General Jeff. The mural is showing all the people that General Jeff encountered while he was pushing projects from Skid Row and Gladys Park. Gen. Jeff was a mentor, he was one of the reasons why I organize in Skid Row. He pushed me to step forward to take up responsibilities here.

14TH FESTIVAL FOR ALL SKID ROW ARTISTS



WOULD WORKS



DOODLES WITHOUT BORDERS



STUDIO 526



CREATIVE I WITH YOUNG MI



YOGA WITH RAQUEL BARRANTES



WRITING/DRAWING WITH MICHELE LORUSSO



PIECE BY PIECE



GERALDO CRUZ



JEN HOFER



SKID ROW ADVOCATES



SKID ROW ACTION PLAN
AND THE LA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
getting input about housing Skid Row residents



LEE MAUPIN AND ADAM JOHNS
interviewed Iron Donato
and all Skid Row Artists



TERESA Y. HILLERY AND CAMPAIGN MANAGER RAE BALL
"...letting everyone know that she's running for the Los Angeles City
Council, for CD 14, which is this beautiful community of Skid Row."

EXHIBITIONS



KANIAN CHAPMAN
I make different types of art. I do a lot of painting. I do a lot of digital art. And I also like doing a lot of resin pieces. It's a lot of fun, though it's fairly messy. I make it whenever the occasion comes, because I just want to just randomly create something whenever I feel like it.



NATOSHIA SMITH
This is just one of my multi-expressions. Me showing other people that you can dress however you want to dress on whatever day of the week you want to be. It doesn't have to be a special holiday. It doesn't have to be a special occasion. It just has to be because you feel like it and it makes you happy. That's one of the biggest messages I want to get to people. To be fully open and accepting of themselves for who they are.



RON JETT
I make glitter portraits. This one is my favorite work. It is my only abstract glitter piece. I created it by accident because I spilled the glitter and then I had this shape to work with and I just went with it and worked with the colors and shapes. It looks like a tree in Japan. I like it.

14TH FESTIVAL FOR ALL SKID ROW ARTISTS



SEAN GREGORY - ZACH RUTLAND



LORINDA HAWKINS SMITH - SEAN - HENRY APODACA



SIGNING UP SKID ROW ARTISTS



CLANCEY - AZAD - EMILY - DONALD



FESTIVAL FOR ALL SKID ROW ARTISTS - HOW IT STARTED...

In 2010, Animating Democracy, a program of Americans for the Arts, released "Making a Case for Skid Row Culture: Findings from a Collaborative Inquiry by the Los Angeles Poverty Department and the Urban Institute".

This study by John Malpede (Los Angeles Poverty Department) and Mario Rosario Jackson (Urban Institute) documents the role of arts and culture in Skid Row. This study found that culture comes from the ground up in Skid Row and is often initiated by residents and resident driven initiatives. This festival is undertaken to recognize these people and initiatives and to stimulate a new way of envisioning and talking about this neighborhood.



RANDY BELFIELD AND HIS BAND

ABOUT LOS ANGELES POVERTY DEPARTMENT

LAPD's MISSION: Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD) creates performances and multi-disciplinary artworks that connect the experience of people living in poverty to the social forces that shape their lives and communities. LAPD's works express the realities, hopes, dreams and rights of people who live and work in L.A.'s Skid Row.

LAPD's VISION: LAPD makes artistic work to change the narrative about Skid Row and people living in poverty. In doing so, LAPD aims to create a community of compassion, change individual lives and inspire the next generation of artists.

LAPD's HISTORY: The Los Angeles Poverty Department has been working in LA's Skid Row since 1985, hosting free performance workshops and creating art. LAPD was the first theater company for and by homeless people in the nation, as well as the first arts program for homeless people in Los Angeles. Our original goals remain the same: to create community in Skid Row and to amplify the voices of the people who live in Skid Row, in order to share the lived experience of our company and community members with the entire city of Los Angeles and the nation.



SKID ROW DRUMMERS

The 14th Festival for All Skid Row Artists is produced by Los Angeles Poverty Department with support from United Coalition East Prevention Project (UCEPP) and Studio 526. This year's festival is made possible with the support of Department of the Cultural Affairs of the City of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, The Kindle Project, the Department of Recreation and Parks, Council District 14 and the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council (DLANC).



ENORMOUS THANKS TO...

* OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

United Coalition East Prevention Project (UCEPP), Studio 526, Piece by Piece, Creative I, Skid Row Brigade, Skid Row Action Plan, and our 'house band' the Skid Row Drummers.

* THE LOS ANGELES POVERTY DEPARTMENT CREW:

Henry Apodaca, Zach Rutland, Sean Gregory, Clancey Cornell, Stephanie Bell, Henriëtte Brouwers, Iron Donato, Keith Johnson, Tom Grode, Lorinda Hawkins, John Malpede, Hayk Makhmuryan, Lee Maupin, Lorraine Morland, Jaiye Kamson, Anthony Taylor.

* **VOLUNTEERS:** David de Rozas, Andreea Lacatus, Adam Johns, Emily Benoff, Shawne West, Franny Alfano, Victoria Romano, Azad Namzie, Candy Navarrete, Veronica Dominguez, Jonathan Luna, Andriana Zepeda, Joana Partida, Emely Corona, Jannel Balina, Darren Alvarez, Gema Barrios, Ingrid Reyes, Evelia Serrano, Maggie Gutierrez, Jairo Sanchez, Fernanda Franco, Dani Vazquez, Ivan Leguizamo, Ruby, Veronica Dominguez.

* **CREATIVITY STATIONS BY:** Automata Arts and ICL LA, Would Works, Creative I, Studio 526, Piece by Piece, Doodles Without Borders, Raquel Barrantes, Jen Hofer, Michele Lorusso and Crushow and the community muralists working on the Genral Jeff mural.

* **SOUND** Henry Apodaca * **STAGE MANAGER** Sean Gregory * **ARTIST LINEUP** Zach Rutland

GET READY FOR LOS ANGELES POVERTY DEPARTMENT'S

15TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL FOR ALL SKID ROW ARTISTS

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, 12-4PM, OCTOBER 26 & 27, 2024

The Festival is 2 afternoons of non-stop performances created and performed by Skid Row talents. We're talking about performance of all kinds: music, dance, spoken word, poetry, theater and visual artists will display their work. We'll have workshops and creativity stations - so anyone can make some work on the spot. If you want to perform or exhibit your work, contact us anytime before October and get your spot at the festival.



MELLO BLUEZ AND SWAMI DONI

VISIT OR WRITE US!

Los Angeles Poverty Department
Skid Row History Museum & Archive
250 S. Broadway, LA CA 90012
PO Box 26190
Los Angeles, CA 90026

FIND LAPD ONLINE:

info@lapovertydept.org
www.lapovertydept.org
youtube.com/lapovertydepartment
facebook.com/lapovertydepartment
instagram.com/lapovertydepartment

