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LIFESTYLE / VISUAL ART

# READ NOW: ∞ MILE ONLINE ART JOURNAL RELEASES ISSUE #5 EXPLORING ARTISTS & THE CITY

by PLAYGROUND DETROIT on Apr 17, 2014 • 8:11 am

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∞ mile (*infinite mile*) is a recently launched monthly online Detroit-based art journal. Through reviews, interviews, articles, writings and photo essays, ∞ mile fosters critical discourse in support of art and culture in Detroit. Infecting on Detroit and its nuanced, experimental and diverse art scene, ∞ mile seeks to proliferate and formalize discussions and critique. The release of issue #5 contains contributions by [stephen garrett dewyer](#), [Jennifer Junkermeier](#), [Osman Khan](#) with special guests [Greg Baise](#) [of MOCAD] and [Joe Scanlan](#), [Marie Buck](#), [Katie Grace McGowan](#), [Sarah Nesbitt](#), [Cedric Tai](#), and [Rachel Yezbick](#).

According to co-founder [Jennifer Junkermeier](#), ∞ mile is...

*Everyone who has signed on to be involved with ∞ mile has varying ideas of exactly what it is and what it should be. I think this is a good thing. ∞ mile is a forum. Its online occupation is concerned with providing a structure for people to publicly and formally exchange views and ideas on art and culture in Detroit and abroad.*

*Currently, few publications contain text or images of Detroit's scene outside institutionally initiated or social-media dictated formats of information exchange. ∞ mile is an accessible, public record of happenings, climate, and context for select art in Detroit. With the amount of work created and shown in Detroit as well as a growing interest from both inside and outside the city in its happenings, a sizable gap of sources attempts to define and contextualize what the scene is and what it looks like. ∞ mile will provide an*

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**Best Up-And-Coming Visual Artists In Detroit - CBS Detroit**  
detroit.cbslocal.com

Detroit's creative scene has drawn artists from down the street and around the world to establish themselves in the **PLAYGROUND DETROIT** best.

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*alternative record of the art scene that, albeit curated, takes its cues from its contributors and audience as seen in monthly text, photo essays, letters and "citings".*

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RECENT COMMENTS

LISTEN NOW: WDET INTERVIEWS HAUTE TO DEATH, TAKEAWAYS FROM A DETROIT ART SHOW IN MANHATTAN | PLAYGROUND DETROIT on PD PRESENTS: EMERGENCY NOTHING GROUP EXHIBITION FEATURING HAUTE TO DEATH & DETROIT ARTISTS  
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ABR on LISTEN UP: OG TRIBE MEMBER MIKE MELINOE BREAKS ONTO THE SCENE AS UP-AND-COMER  
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ONLINE RESOURCES

- 323East Gallery
- 555 Gallery
- Art Detroit Now
- Art X Detroit
- Blight Busters
- College for Creative Studies
- Creative Rights
- Detroit Creative Corridor Center
- Detroit Design Festival
- Detroit Free Press
- Detroit Institute of Arts Museum
- Detroit Metro Times
- Detroit Music Magazine
- DetroitExposure
- Hell Yeah Detroit!
- I Am Young Detroit
- Michigan F.A.S.H. Fest
- MLIVE.COM
- Motor City Ragers
- Motor City Rocks
- Ponyride
- Positive Detroit
- Practice Space
- Real Detroit
- Secret Project Robot
- SELECT Art Fair
- Spread Art
- Street Culture Mash
- The Detroit News
- The Detroitier
- The L Magazine
- Whitdel Arts

One article that got our attention was *The Use of Artists* by Rachel Yezbick, which examines the use of Detroit artists "for re-branding and revitalization efforts within the city." Yezbick points out *The Knight Foundation* along with the *The Kresge Fellowship* for "mobilizing artists as tools of gentrification, using artists to fill in the gaps of a failing social sector or create events that make the city more enticing to developers." When do these arts funding programs cross the line between supporting the arts and pushing agendas onto the artists themselves, who may feel pressure to help 'save the city'? She explains,

*For artists to see themselves and their artwork as serving a social purpose is to take on a daunting responsibility, to take on social ills that they are ill equipped to successfully tackle."*

Regarding artist reception to the rest of the world, she argues that "artistic practice in Detroit is so closely aligned with a narrative of the city, artists simultaneously forfeit artistic merit in national and international art scenes, often valued not for the work they create but for the insight and voyeurism they provide into a highly mythologized and misunderstood city." This is particularly interesting, as artwork coming from Detroit is in fact looked at as an insight to those who live there more than the merit of the art itself, increasingly more of public interest than the previous years of 'ruin porn.'

Many points in her argument are valid. These concepts are important to consider and discuss, but there are of course other sides to the conversation. The growing Detroit artist community and corresponding media attention is not the sole result of the entities or organizations incentives or underlying agendas. Art does not always need to support communal endeavors, but it can be a powerful tool for positive changes. Street art in the form of large-scale murals, bus benches, and re-invigorated parks around Detroit have invigorated parts of the decayed urban environment and help transform blight-stricken communities. Detroit is not a Utopian dream - but- the city's strange, uniqueness does provide artists with inspiration and ample space to create artwork. The city itself often influences or becomes the subject of art, in a similar way that Paris was the subject of many Surrealism and Impressionism works. Ultimately, it remains up to the individual artist to "focus on making the best work possible rather than making work that is in service of a promoted communal ideal."

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Tags: detroit art, Detroit artists, infinite mile, Kresge Fellows, Rachel Yezbick, The Knight Foundation, The Use of Artists, ∞ mile

Previous post

PARTY ON: BORN & RAISED DETROIT FOUNDATION HOLDS NYC BENEFIT TO SHOW LOVE FOR THE CITY

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