

## THREESIXTY JOURNALISM

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Artist Cadex Herrera

# Artist hopes mural reactions will spark change

By RYAN STOLTZ  
Eden Prairie High School

As Black Lives Matter protests spread throughout the world, a 45-year-old Belizean artist hopes his art will inspire people to consider the big and complicated picture of racial injustice.

Cadex Herrera recently worked on a mural near Cup Foods in Minneapolis, where George Floyd took his final breath.

Herrera, along with two other artists, created the mural spanning 20 feet across and nearly 7 feet tall to honor Floyd at the site of the killing.

Herrera's work quickly turned into a central meeting place for people to show their respect to Floyd and express their outrage about police brutality. It became the backdrop of news conferences and memorials.

Herrera wanted to create a place where people could stop, reflect, think and come together.

“Murals are supposed to do that in a way. ... It gives you a sense of place, a sense of community, a sense of belonging,” he said, adding, “the job of that piece is to move the viewer to have them emotionally react to it and through that reaction create change.”

The mural has become a fundamental symbol of the



Photo by Dymanh Chhoun

The George Floyd mural that Cadex Herrera assisted in creating near Cup Foods in Minneapolis.

Black Lives Matter movement, something Herrera did not expect.

He incorporated several symbols in the mural. Floyd's image is showcased in the center of “a sunflower to represent loyalty and life,” said

Herrera. The black center of the sunflower contains names of Black Americans killed during altercations with police in recent years.

“They're sort of representing the people who never got to be flowers ... those seeds

never got to grow,” Herrera said. “Part of the movement is to remember the names of people of color who have been killed by police officers. I wanted to make that a visual element of part of the mural and wanted to show that, you

know, that there's support in the community.”

Herrera described why his mural features many people with raised fists.

“The people ... don't have any sort of color or features so I wanted to make a statement,”

he said. “It's all of us, right? It's people, every sort of denomination, every race.”

Ever since Herrera was able to hold a pencil, art has empowered him to express his feelings in ways words could not.

“[Artwork] really allows you to ... get involved within yourself and also allows you to process information differently,” he said.

“I hope people use their creative talents and skills to bring awareness to whatever they're passionate about. I think that you can truly use art as an amplifier,” he said. “You can use any skill to amplify what you feel passionate about is right, and that's what I think that social justice is all about.”

Herrera frequently shares his most recent work about social injustice, immigration and the environment on social media. His Instagram account is @cadexherrera.

Herrera said he hopes artists of all kinds will deliver their unique messages.

“It's more important than ever that you get the word out there because the more people start talking about the things that they're seeing happening, the more we can consolidate that information and amplify it,” he said. “This is what's happening; we need change.”

## Food forests grow to help feed community

By SARA GAINES  
Homeschool

As a 19-year-old environmental studies student, Kim Rockman was diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome. For two years, she had been thinking about sustainability and the effect she had on the planet. She saw a connection between her diagnosis and her passion.

“When I got sick, it kind of led me down the continued path of, ‘OK, something's wrong with my body, but how does that connect with things that are going on in the environment?’” she said.

Rockman is now the executive director of Project Food Forest, an organization that works to “empower people through agroforestry, design, and education,” according to the mission statement on its website, projectfoodforest.org.

But what exactly is a food forest? How does it work? A food forest uses edible plants, fruits and vegetables that are planted in a way that mimics the ecosystem. It's designed so that the food forest returns



Courtesy Diana Hensley

Prairie Ally Outdoor Center is a Project Food Forest host site in Luverne, Minn.

each year. Therefore, it becomes a diverse ecosystem that not only helps the community but also different species of animals.

Rockman became involved with Project Food Forest in 2017. In February 2020, she took over as executive director after managing the food forest Prairie Ally in Luverne, Minn., where she grew up.

During the pandemic, Project Food Forest has been affected by the loss of volun-

teers and group events that help maintain it. But Rockman said they've also seen lots of generosity. Project Food Forest partners with the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota, the University of Minnesota, A Healthier Southwest and others.

“Growing food is a good thing — mind, body, spirit — and to approach it from a place of nurturing, and providing yourself and others with nutrient-dense food,” Rock-

man said.

During the pandemic, Project Food Forest has been helping people by connecting them with food forests, which eases concerns about food security. Rockman said one of the first steps you can take to begin food foresting for the greater good is turning your yard into a garden and then selling the food it produces at your local farmers market. She also suggests sharing the food with friends or family and preserving the food for winter.

One of the ways that Project Food Forest began was by seeing the potential of an empty lawn or lot, then turning it into a community food forest, Rockman said.

Rockman hopes to influence and encourage young people to take care of the environment through food foresting.

“When all of the youth recognize that power in themselves, that they are change-makers, that they are capable of living intentionally and learning, failing and being forgiven. That's where it goes,” she said.



Courtesy Heather Shirey

The Urban Art Mapping Project team is staffed by three professors, five students and a handful of volunteers.

## Mapping project documents street art

By KENNEDY RANCE  
Patrick Henry High School

The iconic George Floyd mural resides on the intersection of 38th Street and Chicago Avenue in Minneapolis. Floyd is engulfed in hues of blue, orange and yellow with reddish undertones. Behind him, in white lettering, are the names of people wrongfully killed by law enforcement officers.

The mural was photographed and archived by the Urban Art Mapping Research Project. The project was founded by University of St. Thomas professors Todd Lawrence, Heather Shirey and Paul Lorah. It is part of an initiative started by the College of Arts and Sciences at the St. Paul university.

Two years ago, Lawrence, Shirey and Lorah, alongside St. Thomas students and in partnership with the Midway Murals Project, began documenting street art around Midway, a residential neighborhood in St. Paul.

Shirey, an art history professor, has been involved with street art for years.

“I felt like street art expresses something that we don't see in our museums,” she said. “It expresses the voice and experiences of people who are often marginalized from institutionalized presentations of art.”

Floyd's death sparked a movement of street art in the Twin Cities and around the world. In response to the eruption of street art and racial injustice, the Urban Art Mapping Research Project created the George Floyd and Anti-Racist Street Art Database. It allows people

to upload and access art that illustrates the racial disparities within their communities.

The project captures art addressing Floyd's murder and the ongoing movement of demanding social justice and equality.

“The work we're doing with the art is not just because it's a research project,” Shirey said. “It feels like it can be active in some way and play a part in helping solve some of the problems.”

In the past months, people have expressed themselves through protests, food drives and prayer circles. Documenting protest art has become Lawrence's form of expression.

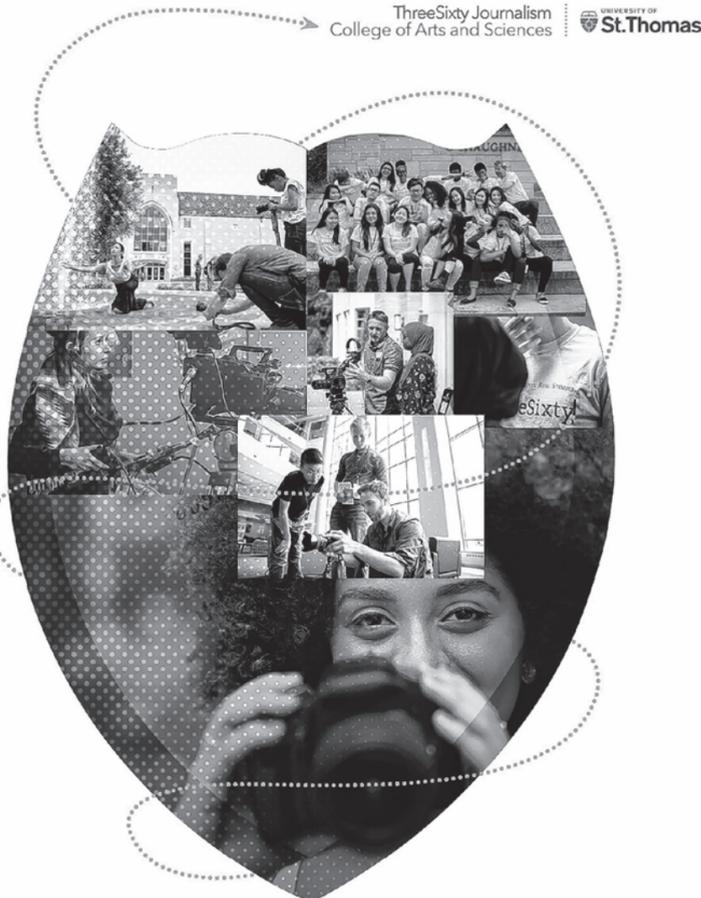
“Through these photos and through talking about it, I'm thinking about George Floyd every day. I'm thinking about the uprising and people's pain and anger and everything that goes along with that every day,” he said.

More than 1,000 images of art have been uploaded to the database, the majority of which were submitted by the public. The Urban Mapping Project is staffed with the three professors and five students, as well as a handful of volunteers who help with data entry. However, Minnesota locals have begun to document street art themselves.

Through the process of documenting street art, Lawrence, Shirey and Lorah have illustrated the importance of preserving history and hardship we face as a society. Street art is untethered, belonging to anyone who views it, and fresh paint, bleach or spray paint will not diminish the significance behind the art itself.

### About ThreeSixty Journalism

ThreeSixty Journalism is leading the way in developing multicultural storytellers in the media arts industry. The program is a loudspeaker for underheard voices, where highly motivated high school students discover the power of voice and develop their own within ThreeSixty's immersive college success programming. Launched in 1971 as an Urban Journalism Workshop chapter, since 2001 the program has been part of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of St. Thomas. To learn more about ThreeSixty Journalism, visit [threesixty.stthomas.edu](http://threesixty.stthomas.edu).



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