

PICTORIAL INSCRIPTIONS



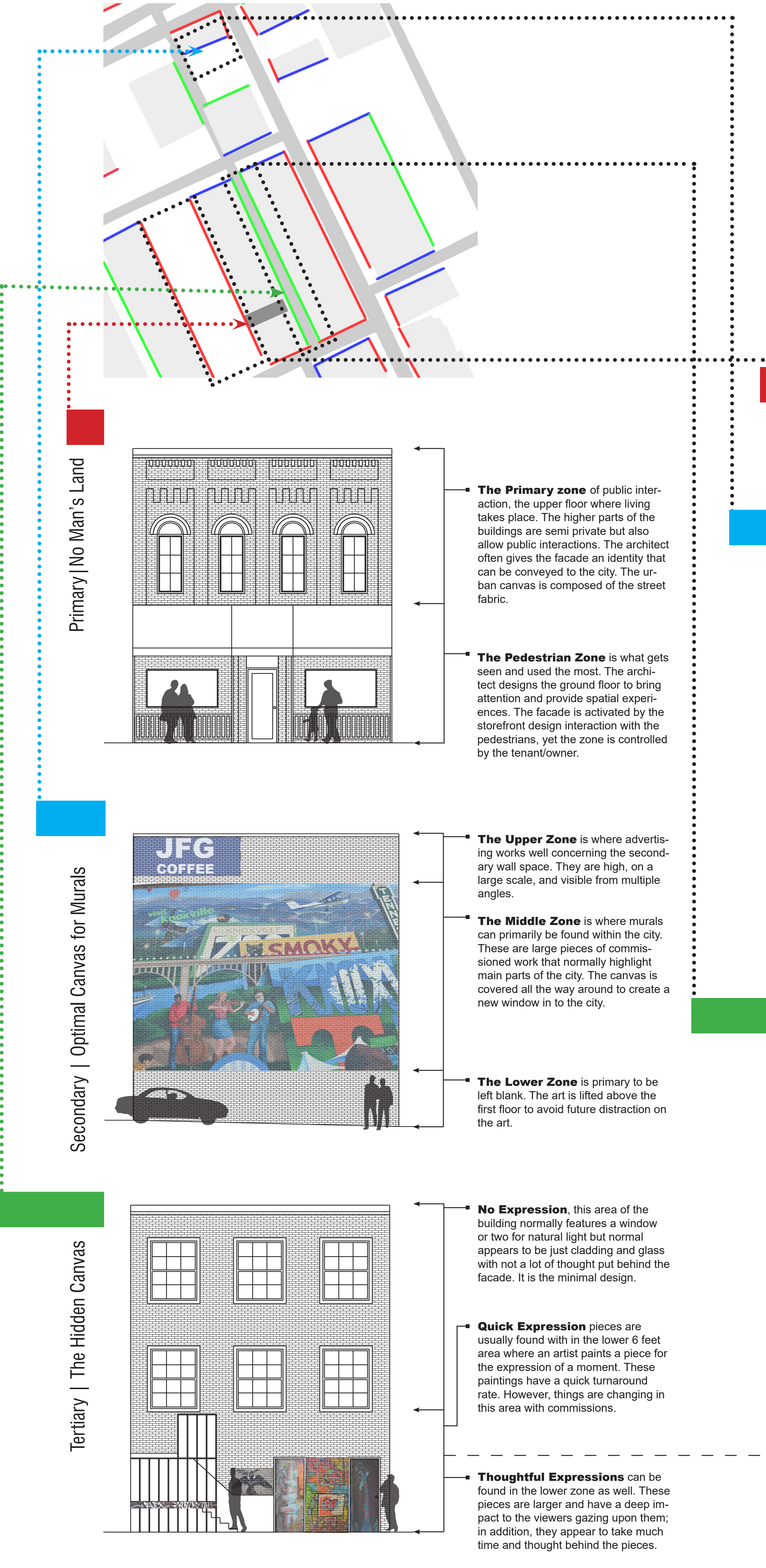
PICTORIAL INSCRIPTIONS is an exploration into the nature of paint graffiti and street art and its contribution to the character of the city. Art has been used as a prevalent and effective means of communicating ideas throughout human existence. As it has evolved to present day, street art has become a way to display ideas that people are passionate about, voice opinions on social and economic events or even as a canvas that pop culture has extended onto. These displays can reflect the pride, hate, love, frustration or joy that the artists have in their work. It can voice the excitement the citizens have for their city, personal passions or even display new ideas boldly in a large confrontational format. These types of street art can be found in spaces that are defined as primary, secondary and tertiary spaces. In research, it was found that the genre of content may depend on the location of the piece and whether it was a preemptively desired result. No matter the level of acceptance or permanence, street art has become an intriguing and prevalent display in each city that can serve as meaningful legacy to the artist.



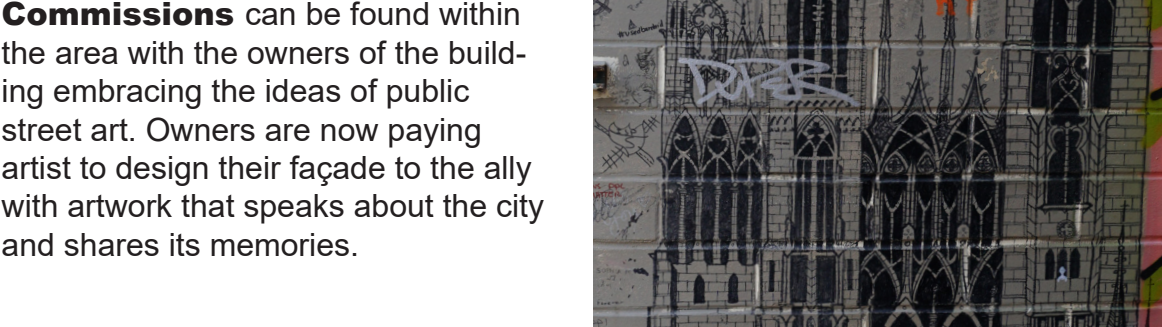
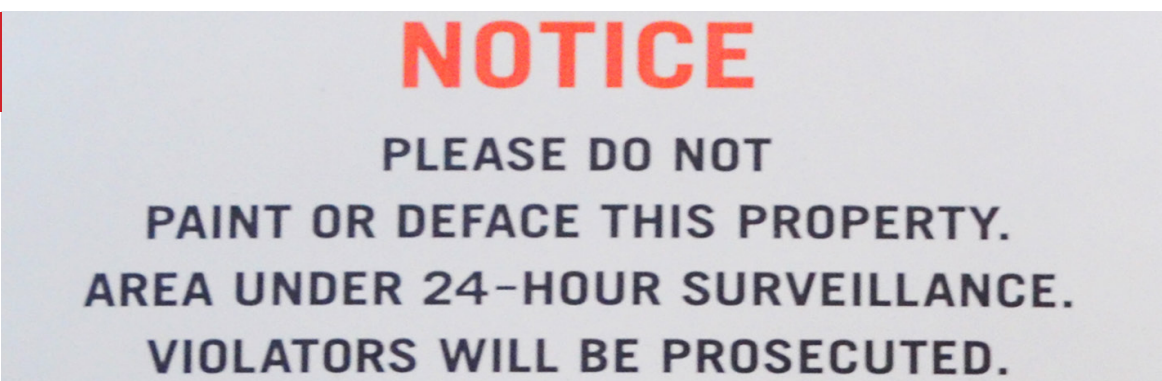
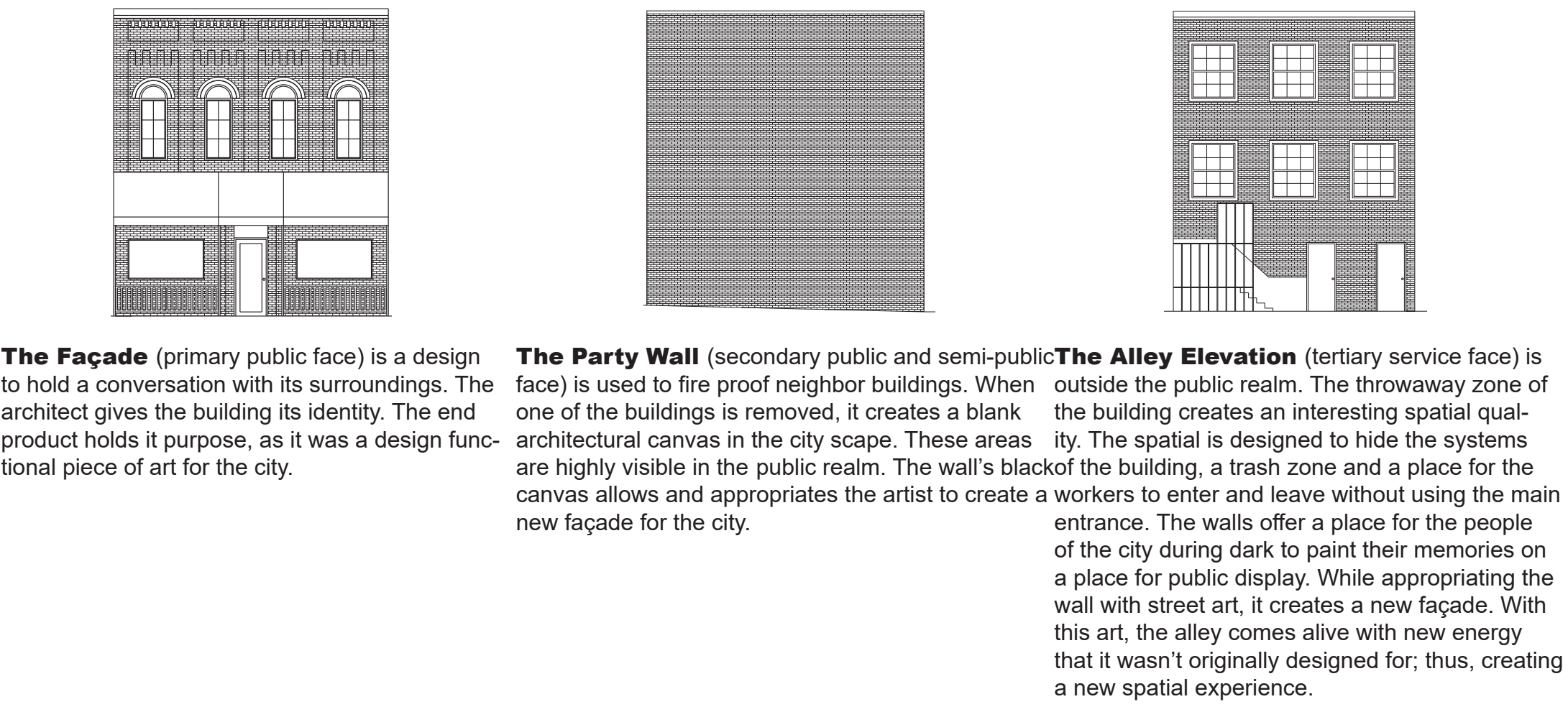
OUR EXPERIENCE, The Rock, the heart of street art on campus, is the everyday messages seen by the mass of the students, faculty, alumni and visitors at UT. The Rock has been a tradition at the university since 1980; in which, it has been used to share the life of the university students to the rest of campus and Knoxville. As our semester came to an end we came up with the idea to do something none of us have done before, paint the rock. We wanted to end the year with a reflection of our memories that we created this year with one last big thing that we would remember for a life time. Our art mural piece was of the Knoxville skyline, which paid homage to our year as freshman designers. This mural made us think about and remember all that we encountered in the past year, such as moving to Knoxville, making friends, understanding more about one self, and embarking on our journey as architects. The mural was inspired by our previous floor mural we created during the year before of the New York City skyline. This one however related to the family of Morrill 8 a group of students who came in as strangers and left as a design family. The experience was quick and exciting, there was a lot of energy going around as we painted our master piece for the public to see. We painted the rock with our expression of our new family in our city. We still think about the moment when all the paint was gone and we step back as a group and gazed upon our memorial to our year and remember all the good times we shared and a looked to a moment of hope for our future.

With this experience, we begin to question the Urban Canvas of the city. We painted on a sanctioned surface that is encouraged to create a place for free expressions on campus; however, we thought about what we did in the context of the urban fabric of the city. We began to question how public art in the city is controlled or how it is not controlled? With the ball rolling we started to think more about the public art of the city in the notion of who participates in these pictorial inscriptions? Who is there target audience to share the art with? Where are these pieces located within the city? How do these pieces create a spatial condition and how do they interact with the city; as well as, how do the spatial conditions and visibility relate to the type of art? With these questions we began to research and formulate our project of pictorial inscriptions the architectural memory canvas of Knoxville street art.

The Urban Canvas: Surface Categories and Public Access



The Urban Canvas: Relationship of Space to Content of Expression



In this study, **Primary** wall spaces were defined as storefronts building facades that met busy streets. In result of this, there was almost no graffiti, tagging or street art found on these surfaces. This may have been because of the general respect for the establishment or possibly a quick cover up of the store owners not wanting their facades to be "littered" with street art that would distract from the business itself. The reason behind this is that the architect has already given the identity of the building to the city to create a line of communication with the public for the tenant/owner of the building.

Secondary spaces are recognized as the sides of buildings that people would likely see but may not consider the entry or face of the building. These installations are sanctioned pieces of artwork. As these areas were explored we found that street art became more plentiful and accepted. These "canvases" seemed to be prime for murals and larger displays for the visitors and citizens alike that communicate ideas of pride in the city or a push toward more creativity. These murals are often commissioned as large projects to local artists which contributes to the community economically and artistically. Art on massive walls identify the city as a window into its memories. Murals like this attract people to visit this part of the city and take photos to boast of their location. Pictured to the left is a mural featured on the side of the Knoxville visitors center, placed on a main wall in the center's parking lot. This mural is painted at a scale that even those driving by will be able to recognize its components. The mural is a collage that features all the components of Knoxville that people recognize, take part, and have pride in. The visitor center and the mural together capture the urban space created in the city. The below features a mural done by multiple high schools in Knoxville, memorializing the art and music cultures found within the city. This donated mural from the schools can be found on the wall facing market square of the region bank building who wanted a mural for the wall. This art puts it on public display in the city and makes people more aware and think about these aspects in the city. Both pieces are about trying to present a controlled message with an agenda to

The place that street art and graffiti became extremely prominent in a variety of forms was in alley ways and side streets that a pedestrian would have to intentionally walk through to see this art. These spaces are **Tertiary** as they tended to be somewhat hidden away or easily dismissed in passing. These spaces are more populated with art because of their lack of population in street life providing for an optimal setting for performing an act, which has always had a criminal connotation. This is mainly because these tertiary spaces are unsanctioned and generally subversive. As the art evolved it has taken on a form that does not imply vandalism, but rather open expression. The popularity of street art has increased as the association with the criminal activity has decreased, liberating it from being limited to the canvas that graffiti had been associated with only a decade ago. This art has now moved to busy urban areas where it can be observed and appreciated at large scales.

In this exploration, a side alleyway near Market Square in Knoxville became the main site due to its large variety of representation. Artists took every available space on the human scale and turned the surfaces into a collage of words and images, which spoke on different subjects whether they wanted to express their religious beliefs or represent part of pop culture on the walls. These murals and scribbles become a constantly changing storybook of the city, the artists, and the people in them. The popularity of this site to natives and foreigners directs traffic through an alley that would otherwise not be publicly used. It has become an icon to the city although it is tucked away behind storefronts and sandwiched between buildings, thus creating a compressed spatial experience of a public art or monuments.

As this alleyway has become more popular, there are some pieces that are more composed. These pieces look to be the building owner's response to the increasing back alley traffic. These highly designed pieces contrast the work of amateurs, diversifying the experience. All in all, these pieces are a way for artists to leave a legacy of themselves and their interests and passions. As one proceeds down the alley way there are pieces that memorialize popular figures such as the image shown at the left, while the below images show how pop culture is represented with a personal twist as well as simple messages.

Public art has come to tell stories for itself as well as the city that it is in. These pieces have become dynamic characters in the urban fabric and demand to be recognized.