

iContact Email Marketing **Delivers Results**

Get Started for FREE

THE DAILY CALIFORNIAN
Thursday, May 28, 2015

A&E

365 DataCenters
Proudly hosts DailyCal.org

News Sports **Arts** Opinion Blogs Multimedia Weekender Featured DEALS APPLY DONATE ABOUT

MUSIC FILM & TELEVISION FASHION THEATER VISUAL ART VIDEO GAMES LITERATURE VOICES COLUMNS BEST OF BERKELEY CULTURE SHOT

VISUAL ART

THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2015

Oakland artist R. Black invigorates UC Theatre facade with vibrant mural



SOFIA RAIMONDI/STAFF

BY [SOFIA RAIMONDI](#) | STAFF

LAST UPDATED 4 HOURS AGO

People turned their heads to watch as R. Black slowly layered yellow paint to fill in the letters of his mural. "It becomes a spectacle," he said in an interview with The Daily Californian about covering with his art the previously blank wall outside the UC Theatre.

Open spaces are often fair game to tagging and other artistic defacement, as seen frequently at the construction sites peppered around Berkeley. The UC Theatre, which is currently undergoing renovations, will reopen as a live music venue in fall 2015. In an effort to productively utilize the space rather than leave it open for graffiti, the UC Theatre asked R. Black to create a mural with a message. After three days of work, R. Black finished up his mural Monday afternoon.

Black is an artist who has been working out of Oakland for the past decade. His art can be found throughout Berkeley at establishments such as Industrial Tattoo & Piercing and the Shotgun Players theater, where he updates a mural every time a new play comes to town. His latest piece is located outside the UC

2 Tweet 0 Comment

RELATED POSTS



Student art spotlighted in Honor's Studio Exhibition

UCPD Berkeley *A fun ride for a good cause*
Bike the Bridges '15 on June 14th, 2015
Help UCPD, Berkeley raise money for Special Olympics Northern California. Interested in riding? Join us!
Contact Officer Michael Wyckoff at 510-642-676

MOST POPULAR MOST RECENT

CITY

Hidden Homeless: a quiet search for refuge among Berkeley's youth



THE DAILY CLOG

Things to remember when checking your final exam grades



THE DAILY CLOG

Emojis that perfectly describe life as a UC Berkeley student



RESEARCH & IDEAS

UC Berkeley graduate, doctoral student find irregularities in same-sex marriage study

CAMPUS

Berkeley Lab opens solar research facility renamed after former director



EATING BERKELEY

Best of healthy eating apps



Theatre, located at 2036 University Ave.

According to a media advisory released by the Berkeley Music Group — the organization tasked with running the theater — “the UC Theatre’s facade has been boarded up since 2001.” When the group decided it would use the blank space as an opportunity to advance a message, R. Black helped create a plan for the exterior.

“They wanted to make a message, so I gave them ideas on how to say the most with the least amount of words,” he said.

Four words, to be exact. From far away, the mural reads, “Support,” and upon a closer glance, the stems of the letters “P” and “R” are formed by the words “music,” “education” and “employment.” The lines that make up the yellow block letters are clean and meticulously graphed, making the message look as if it were stenciled onto the black wall behind it. With each of its letters looming taller than the average Berkeley resident, the mural catches the eye of anyone walking past.

The message is equally attention grabbing. Aptly placed in Downtown Berkeley, home to many music and performance venues, academic institutions, and countless workplaces, the mural demands support for the components of a healthy community. The UC Theatre itself, upon its reopening in fall 2015, promises to “provide community revitalization that will have a broad and diverse impact on music, culture, education and quality of life in our community, while creating 150 new jobs,” according to the Berkeley Music Group.

The theme of revitalization is mirrored by the functionality of the mural itself. The form is simple and features two basic colors, black and yellow, making it easy to retouch in case of occasional tagging. R. Black acknowledged that graffiti could accumulate on the mural but was not bothered by the thought.

“Generally, when you put something up on a wall, (taggers) tend to leave it alone,” he explained. This is especially true for art that has a loud presence on its own. The piece certainly stands out from any distance: Passersby across the street slowed down to take in the full picture, while people in their cars strained their necks to catch a quick glance as they passed.

The simplicity of the piece and the clarity of its message create a compelling call for action to support music, education and employment. The mural itself sets an example by serving as a reminder of the Berkeley Music Group’s efforts toward revitalizing the space and the surrounding community. As noted on the theater’s website, the UC Theatre will join other performance venues to “expand Berkeley’s Art & Entertainment District with a vibrant new music venue serving the local community and beyond” and “will serve as an entertainment and economic catalyst to downtown Berkeley.”

As far as the act of creating the mural itself, R. Black enjoyed the community’s reaction.

“People just dig it — someone painting on a wall, it makes them happy,” he said. “It makes me happy, too, so it works out.”

Contact Sofia Raimondi at sraimondi@dailycal.org.



Art blooms at de Young Museum’s annual Bouquets to Art exhibit

AdChoices

Please keep our community civil. Comments should remain on topic and be respectful.
[Read our full comment policy](#)

DC A&E Daily Cal Arts & Entertainment
Like

1,379 people like Daily Cal Arts & Entertainment.

Facebook social plugin