

# PENN TRACKS

## WEST PHILLY MURAL TOUR

### Overview:

West Philadelphia's rich cultures and histories shape the neighborhood's dynamics. The West Philly Mural Tours offer a glimpse into how murals highlight the community's values and histories. Join us to see how Philadelphia's murals reflect its people and their experiences. Be prepared for some walking!

### Transportation:

Public Transit: Take SEPTA's Market-Frankford Line to 52nd Street Station, then walk south on 52nd Street to Baltimore Avenue.

### 1 Colorful Legacy 4008 Chestnut St

The "Colorful Legacy" mural, created by Willis Humphrey and Keir Johnson on November 16, 2015, is part of the Building Brotherhood initiative inspired by President Obama's My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge. This initiative engages men and boys of color in North and South Philadelphia through workshops, theater, and town hall meetings to address education, job access, mental health stigmas, and community wellness, fostering dialogue, resilience, and community values.

### 2 The Tuskegee Airmen: They Met the Challenge 16S 39th St

"The Tuskegee Airmen: They Met the Challenge," created by Marcus Akinlana on July 31, 2008, honors the Tuskegee Airmen's determination to overcome unfair training, racism, and adversity. Formed in 1941 under Benjamin O. Davis Jr., they were the first African-American airmen. Akinlana collaborated with the Philadelphia Chapter to depict their experiences, featuring images of them as young men, uniformed pilots, and their childhood dreams of flying.

### 3 The Silent Watcher 3911 Market Street

"The Silent Watcher," created by Faith XLVII on September 24, 2019, uplifts the strong neighborhood identities within West Philadelphia. This 11,000-square-foot mural stands 19 stories tall at the gateway to the University City area, adorned with lights for night visibility. Inspired by the area's historical, cultural, and social aspects, the artist incorporated color gradients, gold accents, geometric lines, and the words "Philadelphia Maneto" from the city's seal to signify enduring strength, hope, and community.

### 4 The Legacy of Bishop Richard Allen and the A.M.E Church African Methodist Episcopal Church

"The Legacy of Bishop Richard Allen and the A.M.E Church," created by Willis Humphrey on July 4, 2016, honors the minister and activist Richard Allen. In collaboration with the African Methodist Episcopal Church and First District Plaza, the mural stimulates dialogue about Richard and Sarah Allen's significance in American history. Born into slavery in 1760, Allen gained his freedom in 1780 and went on to lead early civil rights efforts, form the Free African Society, and establish the African Methodist Episcopal Church, becoming its first bishop.

### 5 Soul of the Black Bottom Market St & N Preston St Presbyterian

"Soul of the Black Bottom," created by eL Seed on November 18, 2017, explores themes of home, identity, and displacement through "calligraffiti." The mural addresses the Black Bottom community's destruction from university expansion and urban renewal, displacing thousands with little compensation. Created with Mural Arts Art Education and Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture, it features Arabic script, the "Soul of the Black Bottom," and a W.E.B. Du Bois quote, highlighting the community's cultural heritage and shared humanity.

### 6 "Transformation" Northwest corner of the Elwyn building at 4040 Market Street Center Parking Garage

"Transformation," created by Eric Okdeh in 2008 with the Department of Behavioral Health and Mental Retardation Services in Philadelphia, addresses overcoming the stigma of mental illness through transformation and recovery. Workshops across the city and at Graterford Prison contributed text, ideas, and imagery, including a mosaic glass sunflower symbolizing personal growth. The mural reflects the work of Elwyn, an organization providing health programs for seniors and disabled individuals.

### 7 Boy with Raised Arm N 40th St & Powelton Ave

The "Boy With Raised Arm" was originally designed by Sidney Goodman on December 1, 1990, and recreated by Brian Sentf in 2002 at N 40th St & Powelton Ave. The mural explores multiple identities, experiences, and possibilities, with the boy's raised arm echoing the Statue of Liberty. It includes the quote "I am large, I contain multitudes" from Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself."





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 **Boy with Raised Arm**  
N 40th St & Powelton Ave

Presbyterian Medical Center...

Penn Presbyterian Medical Ctr

 **Virasat Haveli**  
Indian • \$\$


 **Soul of the Black Bottom**  
Market St & N Preston St

 **The Silent Watcher**  
3911 Market St

Presbyterian Medical Center Parking Garage

 **The Legacy of Bishop Richard Allen and the A...**

 **"Transformation"**  
4040 Market St

 **40th Street Station**

 **Han Chinese**

 **Tuskegee Airmen mural**

 **Colorful Legacy mural**

St. Leonard's Complex

# West Philly Mural Tour





# FUN FACTS

## NSOAI Interns '24



- 1. Many of Philadelphia's most prominent and influential citizens have also been honored with murals.**
- 2. In 1997 under the administration of Mayor Ed Rendell, the Mural Arts Program was established, evolving from the Anti-Graffiti Network's successful mural-making initiatives.**

