



simply Munich

Destination Information



For the love of spraying – Graffiti, urban art and street art in Munich

(21 January 2018) Believe it or not, Munich was a pioneer of the German graffiti scene. As the graffiti wave arrived from New York and swept through Europe during the early '80s, it was Munich that rode that wave even before Berlin. Some of today's leading figures in the international graffiti scene were immortalised by their legally-painted murals in what was, at the time, the largest Hall of Fame in Europe on the flea market grounds on Dachauer Straße – though the thrill of illegal spraying was also of course a driving force behind the Munich scene. By the late 1990s, Munich was considered a mecca for graffiti artists, alongside New York. Today, there are several sites in Munich displaying a wide variety of urban art, and they have long been considered a boon to the city. Over the years, legends of the street art scene such as BLU, ESCIF, Shepard Fairey and Mark Jenkins have discovered Munich for themselves and, in collaboration with the Positive Propaganda e.V. art association, have used art to breathe new life into public spaces in the city. The first German museum of urban art, MUCA (Museum of Urban and Contemporary Art), doesn't just showcase celebrated artists, but also offers a stage for experimental formats. A whole range of forums, events and guided tours bring these contemporary, quirky, energy-charged art forms to life in Munich.

Someone like Loomit

Seeking the ultimate adrenaline rush, seven young people snuck onto the sidings of Geltendorf train station on the night of the 23rd to 24th March 1985. At the time the station was a terminus for the Munich S-Bahn. Once inside, the group covered an entire train with graffiti, creating Europe's very first wholetrain. Among the group was a Munich schoolboy named Matthias Köhler. His efforts resulted in a hefty fine, though this would prove to be just a bump in the road; as little as ten years later, graffiti had become an accepted art form. Köhler, now better known under his artist's pseudonym, "Loomit", was commissioned to paint the private bathroom of Christian Ude who was mayor of Munich, and subsequently became hugely sought-after internationally as a sprayer. He travelled extensively, leaving murals behind him and setting trends among graffiti sprayers all over the world. He plans projects from his studio in the Kultfabrik, whilst also coordinating community projects such as the subway mural under the Friedensengel (Angel of Peace). In 2011, he invited the great and the good from the national and international graffiti scene to Munich: Flin and Tonik74 from Munich, Daim from Hamburg, Kid Acne and Dotmaster from England, Light and Markus from Russia, Stuko from Japan and Kelp from Chile. 30 litres of colour coating and 300 spray cans created a world-class graffiti hotspot which viewers can enjoy during a stroll, while jogging, on a bike, walking the dog, or even on a guided tour. At Bayerstrasse 69 – not far from the city's main station – Loomit recently created a mural as part of a collaborative project with fellow Munich-based artist Won ABC. The 22-metre-tall mural pays homage to the resistance fighter Georg Elser, who attempted to bring an end to the National Socialist dictatorship with an explosive attack on Hitler on 8 November 1939.

Positive Propaganda

The Munich art association, Positive Propoganda e.V., works to tackle social issues through the media of street art and contemporary art. The association enlists the aid of some of the best-known artists in the international street art scene, including Shepard Fairey, KRIPOE, NoNAME, CYRCLE, Mark Jenkins, Ericailcane, BLU, ESCIF and

SKULLPHONE, to address issues, to stage exhibitions and to create large murals in inner-city areas of Munich. Shepard Fairey's work titled "PAINT IT BLACK" on the front of the building at Landshuter Allee 54 was completed during the summer of 2015. The subject of the US artist's 15 x 13 metre mural is the influence of international oil companies on global politics, and the piece warns against the permanent destruction of nature and the environment. In summer 2011, the association brought the Spanish artist ESCIF to Munich. He produced an image depicting a vase of flowers, titled "Say it with flowers", on the façade of a city building at 20 Paul-Heyse-Straße, which also contains items produced by the arms industry based in Munich. One of the most innovative members of the US street art movement is SKULLPHONE. His large-scale triptych at Dachauer Strasse 90 is inspired by the power of corporations and the media. The façade on a building belonging to Munich public utilities company at Corneliusstrasse 10 is covered in a mural by the Galician artist Liqen. His piece sheds lights on the differences within Munich's urban community. Further information on street art in Munich can be found on the association's website. Together with the Munich Department of Arts and Culture, the association has published a themed map of the city. It is available free of charge from Tourist Information in the Rathaus (Town Hall) on Marienplatz. www.positive-propaganda.org

MUCA – Urban Art goes Museum

The first Museum for Urban and Contemporary Art (MUCA) in Germany opened at the end of 2016, in a former municipal substation in the heart of Munich's old town, a mere stone's throw from the Marienplatz. The façade design was created by the renowned street artist Stohead, and became a work of art in itself. Over a total area of approx. 2,000 m², encompassing several levels, MUCA not only houses works by internationally celebrated artists, but was also designed by the museum's creators to provide a stage for experimental formats and objects of interest. www.muca.eu

Street Art in a Box

Other key sites for enjoying street art in Munich include the Isarbrücken (Isar Bridge) and the former Kultfabrik club near Ostbahnhof (Munich East train station). In the early 1990s, Pfanni – a food manufacturing company – vacated its former production premises near the Ostbahnhof, leaving its walls and exterior walls free to become a regular paradise for urban art and graffiti artists, who travel from across the globe to leave their mark on the building. Now, much of this graffiti will disappear with the ongoing redevelopment of the area as a new district for creative industry (Werksviertel). However, as the era of the Kunstpark and Kultfabrik draws to a close, an exciting new chapter in the story of street art in Munich is unfolding, with the opening of an arts and culture hub in the newly developed Werksviertel, as part of the whiteBOX concept. Loomit is just one of the artists who have already moved into new studios around whiteBOX. Public exhibitions and projects there should open up a perception and understanding of the term “street art” that extends far beyond the generally familiar and visible phenomenon of graffiti. It’s all about the relationship between people and space, the principle of appropriating public space, of interacting with boundaries and tearing down barriers which are erected and accentuated in the structures of our urban spaces. The concept creators want the programme to showcase the common roots of street art, hip-hop, graffiti and street dance.

www.whitebox-muenchen.de

Graffiti in Munich: The top 5 “Halls of Fame”

1. Graffiti gallery at the Friedensengel
2. Graffiti gallery under the Donnersbergerbrücke (Donnersberger Bridge)
3. Graffiti gallery under the Brudermühlbrücke
4. Urban art on the Kultfabrik site
5. Graffiti Hall of Fame on Tumblinger Strasse on the edge of Alter Viehhof

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Guided tours:

Munich street art tour

Positive Propaganda e.V.

www.streetarttour.org

www.positive-propaganda.org

O'gsprüht is!

A street art tour through Munich

www.stattreisen-muenchen.de

Street safari guided tour

www.muenchen-safari.de

Background

München Tourismus is the city's central tourist organisation and is part of the City of Munich's Department of Labour and Economic Development. München Tourismus works with its business partners in the private sector and the tourist organisation München TIM e.V. to develop marketing and PR campaigns and tourism products in a bid to establish Munich as a destination on the international travel market. The strategy for achieving this aim is defined by the Tourismskommission München, a joint undertaking between the city council and the local tourist industry. The objective of the partners involved in this collaboration is to promote quality tourism in Munich. This safeguards the quality of a stay and the quality of life in the city, and ensures acceptance of tourism among the population. München Tourismus acts as a centre of expertise, knowledge and innovation within Munich's tourism industry; as a link to regional and supra-regional tourist organisations (TOM, BayTM, DZT, MC and many more); and as a professional, neutral advisor to the tourist industry.

Pictures: We can provide you with free photographic material to professionally illustrate your reporting on Munich: Please visit: www.simply-munich.com/photoservice

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