

Time Equities brings German mural artist to Milwaukee's 310W

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Sean Ryan

Claudia Chaseling mixes paint for the 310W mural, using a special method developed by artist Milovan DeStil Marković that makes the colors really pop.



The proliferation of public art in downtown Milwaukee continued this past week as German artist Claudia Chaseling painted an indoor mural in the atrium of the 310W building in downtown Milwaukee.

The office building's owner, New York City investor Time Equities Inc., hired Chaseling to paint the walls and ceiling of the second floor near the main connection to its parking structure and a future cafe. It brings a cultural component to the ongoing \$30 million renovation of the building that is intended to attract more office tenants.

"Art really uplifts everything," Chaseling said. "A lot of people may think it is unnecessary, but it is very underestimated because it's really the key signifier of culture in contemporary times."

Owners nationwide are turning to the arts to add life to their apartment and office buildings and make them stand out from the pack, said Tessa Ferreyros, director and curator working with Time Equities' Art-in-Buildings Program. Ferreyros and Eliana Blechman, associate curator, are in talks with more artists to create additional works for the 310W building in Milwaukee.

"It's become more common to include fine art in your amenity spaces, or include it as a selling point," Ferreyros said. "It's not just about hanging a painting on the wall and calling it a day; it's about bringing really important work."

This trend is really taking hold in Milwaukee this summer. Beyond the mural in 310W, August has brought announcements of a new exterior mural facing downtown on the Dye House building at 320 E. Buffalo St. by European street artist Andreas von Chrzanowski, aka CASE. New murals also will be painted on the East North Avenue building that houses Crossroads Collective by Spanish artist Kocxel.

Throughout the summer, there's the public Sculpture Milwaukee exhibit on Wisconsin Avenue, and murals the Milwaukee Downtown Business Improvement District No. 21 is financing, including on the wall of 612 W. Wisconsin Ave. a few blocks from 310W.

Chaseling is a German-born artist who has worked in Europe, Australia and the U.S., but this is her first piece in Wisconsin. She's done work before with Time Equities and its founder, Francis Greenburger through the company's Art-in-Buildings Program. Chaseling, for example, painted a temporary mural in the foyer of Time Equities' 55 Fifth Ave. building in New York.

Chaseling's Milwaukee work, titled "mutopia 2," is her first permanent painting in a building space such as 310W. She painted it starting on Aug. 3, and was to unveil it publicly on Friday. Like her other works, the piece portrays in abstract a future landscape and lifeforms mutated by radiation from depleted uranium, a byproduct of nuclear weapons. The mural includes a past quote from a NATO spokesman regarding use of such weapons: "It is a legal weapon of war. End of story. We used it, it's legal."

Artworks in commercial buildings like 310W have a broader reach than pieces that remain only in a gallery, for example, Chaseling said.

"It's kind of like a jewel," she said. "It's available for everybody. Good art, generally, generate their own atmosphere. Some people will feel it more, others less. I think it's an enrichment of the environment and gives some space for contemplation, thought and inspiration."

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