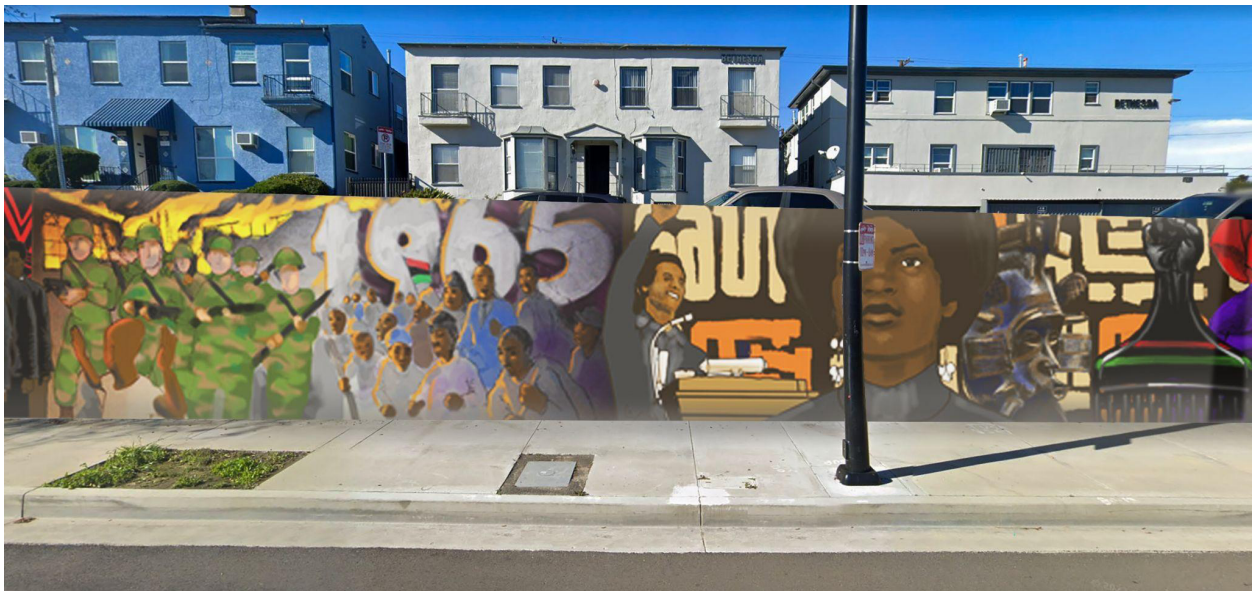




SOUTH LA'S ICONIC CRENSHAW WALL TO RECEIVE A LONG-AWAITED RENOVATION AND NEW MURAL

RTN Crew's proposed mural *The Struggle Continues* to replace the group's 2001 *Our Mighty Contribution* with Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Commission approval secured by Destination Crenshaw



A digital mockup featuring a section of the RTN Crew's new proposed artwork on the site of the current Crenshaw Wall. Additional construction is planned for the Wall, including a viewing platform above it, as part of Destination Crenshaw. Image by Perkins&Will, courtesy of Destination Crenshaw.

LOS ANGELES, CA, September 13, 2023—The Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Commission today approved plans for the legendary RTN Crew, creators of the iconic 787-foot-long mural on South LA's Crenshaw Wall, to replace their decades-old painting with a new artistic panorama, *The Struggle Continues*, under the auspices of the not-for-profit organization Destination Crenshaw.

Structural refurbishment of the Crenshaw Wall, painting of the new mural, and construction of a new viewing platform are signature features of Destination Crenshaw's project to revitalize a 1.3-mile stretch of Crenshaw Boulevard with works by Black artists associated with South LA, new community gathering spaces, culturally significant landscaping, and economic and workforce development.

"Since the beginning of Destination Crenshaw, improving the Wall has been the paramount public art project for residents in the Crenshaw District," said Jason Foster, president and chief operating officer of Destination Crenshaw. "It's an honor for us to undertake this work and give this landmark a second life."

For three decades, the Crenshaw Wall was a place where various local artists spontaneously showcased their skills. Then in 2001, the RTN Crew changed the game by painting *Our Mighty Contribution* along the entire length of the Wall. Part art exhibition and part history lesson, the mural placed images of Martin Luther King Jr., Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and other greats of Black emancipation and the Civil Rights Movement alongside trailblazers in music, dance, film, politics, and sports. To the Crenshaw community, the mural extolled a legacy of Black accomplishment and excellence rarely showcased elsewhere.

LA City Council President Pro Tempore Marqueece Harris-Dawson, representing District 8, who spearheaded the Destination Crenshaw initiative by bringing the community together to advocate for and develop the project, said, “This wall has been the backdrop of our commutes to and from work or school, family gatherings, and church for decades. As residents, we’ve cherished this landmark and we’re excited for this formal recognition of the Wall’s value.” He continued by acknowledging the “RTN Crew and Dr. Joy Simmons for their advocacy and the Cultural Affairs Commission for their approval.”

“We’re all excited—the whole crew,” said Cre8, an original member of the RTN Crew, who attended the Cultural Affairs Commission meeting to witness the vote. “It will be different this time. Last time we painted with what we had, and it took years. We’d start, we’d stop. People would drive by and give us 10 dollars, give us 100 dollars, or hand us 20 dollars to go buy paint.

“We were like young soldiers back then. We were out there day and night, in the rain or all kinds of weather—just determined to get it done.”

The new mural, *The Struggle Continues*, expands on themes in *Our Mighty Contribution* and moves firmly into the present and future. There are depictions of Africa, the Black diaspora, and the Great Migration from the U.S. South to Los Angeles. Pioneers of Black Hollywood, including Billie Holiday, Dorothy Dandridge, and the Nicholas Brothers appear alongside images of the Black struggle against police brutality with the Watts Uprising of 1965 and the Rodney King Uprising of 1992. Also present are images of everyday life in the Crenshaw community, a beautiful city skyline, and classic low-riders.

“It is going to be stunning,” said Dr. V. Joy Simmons, senior art and exhibition advisor for Destination Crenshaw and a nationally recognized collector of Black art. “The narrative is powerful, the images are bold, and the RTN Crew is really to be commended. They have respected their previous work while offering something to the community that is entirely fresh.”

Construction of the viewing platform above the Wall is set to begin in September 2023 and will be completed by the time Destination Crenshaw celebrates its grand opening on February 24, 2024. Work on the mural will also begin during that time, with completion expected by February 2024.

“The best thing is that from 2001 to 2023, our skill level has definitely upgraded and advanced to a supreme level,” Cre8 said. “We’re about to make heads turn.”

About the RTN Crew

Formed in 1989, Rocking the Nation (RTN) originated as one of LA’s only all-Black graffiti crews. From muraling on the Slauson yards to exhibitions curated by the Getty, RTN has had a unique and diverse art practice. Its members have participated in exhibitions and art projects around the world while also teaching noninstitutional art history, giving lectures, and passing on specialized art techniques.

About Destination Crenshaw

Destination Crenshaw is a reparative development project designed to be one of the largest Black public art projects in the U.S. Ultimately, the project will commission more than 100 temporary and permanent works by Black artists who have strong ties to Los Angeles. Over time, works will rotate on and off local buildings and public spaces. The project is creating a pipeline of work for emerging, seasoned, and internationally renowned artists and has commissioned permanent works from artists such as Charles Dickson, Maren Hassinger, Alison Saar, and Kehinde Wiley. The project's mission is nothing less than to place a cultural stamp of Blackness on Crenshaw Boulevard—a stamp akin to other ethnic enclaves in Los Angeles such as Chinatown, Mariachi Plaza, and Koreatown. Destination Crenshaw also provides support and financial and technical assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs in the neighborhood. It functions as both a physically beautifying presence and a strategic economic partner for South LA.

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