



*All of the Above Hip Hop Academy  
and Muralmatics **Below the Stacks**  
**Citywide Mural Festival: Final Report***

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**Below the Stacks (BTS)** was a citywide mural festival featuring 11 artists (regional and international) from Lansing, Detroit, Chicago, New York and beyond. The artists worked to transform highly visible blank walls around the City of Lansing into colorful, vibrant and inspiring works of art. The artists selected represent a wide range of styles and backgrounds, bringing their unique artistic perspectives to share with Lansing's diverse communities. Below The Stacks helped put Lansing on the map as a creative hub, reenergizing the community's desire and determination to cultivate and deepen a love for arts and culture across all ages and beyond the city itself.

The mural festival was held for seven days from September 15-21, 2019. The events throughout the week featured live mural painting at multiple sites across Lansing, family-friendly workshops, tours, artist lectures, live entertainment and more. The culmination of the festival came together at an all ages hip-hop show on September 21, from 6-10PM, celebrating the completion of all murals with the artists and the community. All events were free to the public.

**Please review the [Festival Guide PDF](#) for where the program and events took place throughout the week.**

Below the Stacks intentionally designed a paid apprenticeship for Lansing-area artists to assist in the execution of the murals. Apprentices worked closely with featured artists to support the murals and in return received a stipend of \$500. The apprenticeship not only provided Lansing-area artists with the opportunity to work with established artists in their medium, they were also compensated, redispersing the funds into Lansing's artistic community.

Below the Stacks is a partnership between All of the Above Hip Hop Academy and Muralmatics and is made possible through the support from Ingham County, the City of Lansing, the Arts Council of Greater Lansing, the Community Foundation and several other partners and sponsors.

Due to Below The Stacks citywide mural festival being free and open to the public, it is hard to accurately highlight the broad economic impact of the event. Registration and attendance numbers have been generated to identify people attending from more than [20 zip codes across the state of Michigan and country](#). This alone would generate increased activity at the many small businesses located near the mural sites that attendants would engage with and support (coffee shops, eateries, art galleries, boutiques, etc.). In fact, local restaurants even expressed an increase in sales during the week of BTS.

Other economic outcomes due to the festival's occurrence include BTS team members and apprentices securing creative gigs and jobs after the event. Mural sites are already seeing steady traffic, as noticed through BTS [#belowthestacks](#) on Instagram, and direct community observation. Lansing visitors and residents are going on mural scavenger hunts to find them all, for example. The mural sites are already being used as backdrops for senior photos, wedding photos, etc. by multiple photographers. A vacant lot next to a BTS mural site and directly in front of BTS mural has become a place where people set up and pass out food/hygiene products those experiencing homelessness in our community. There is also conversation happening to turn the Centennial Building vacant lot near a mural into a park.

**For a rich picture of impact, please review the [Below The Stacks Impact Map](#).**

Economic impact aside, the Below the Stacks citywide mural festival has invigorated the Greater Lansing community to quite literally “see” and engage with its spaces and places in a new way. Mayor Andy Schor stated that this event will enhance our city, “We are going to have these Below the Stacks murals all over the city. It builds capacity, shows

the vibrancy of Lansing, makes people want to work here, live here, visit here ... It's all a part of the community, economic development and showcasing of the City of Lansing.”

Its culmination was a manifestation of AOTA's #Build517 motto, as organizers engaged the community and worked together to bring the city to life for seven days, leaving traces of the world on our walls.

From the perspective of All of the Above Hip Hop Academy and Muralmatics, It has truly been a pleasure to serve the City of Lansing in this capacity and we hope to continue to #Build517 in the future.

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