

Common Walls International Mural Festival:

Hogarths - Mural

‘Common Walls - International Mural Festival’ will be held in September as part of Rochdale's Town of Culture Programme. Some of the world’s most celebrated urban artists will descend on the town centre from 7–14 September, creating beautiful artwork on ten buildings, creating new public works of art around the town centre.

The international artists taking part include Insane51, Onur, Smug1, SecaOne, AYLO, Epod and Lei Mai, with a combined fanbase on social media of well over a million followers. From Sunday 7th September residents and visitors will get to experience these world-renowned urban artists up close, for a week, as they create site specific new works that tell the Story of Rochdale, our history, people and culture. The festival culminates on Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 September when in addition to the mural visitors and residents will get to see the finished pieces alongside BMX freestyle stunt shows, street art workshops, a graffiti jam with artists competing live, pop up galleries, live music, artist talks and a series of other fringe events. Everyone is welcome and all activities are free.

Why is 'Common Walls' being held?

The Common Walls International Mural Festival aims to build on the hugely successful 2019 ‘Rochdale Uprising Festival’, which brought over 8000 visitors to Rochdale Town Centre over the festival weekend. The murals created as part of the festival still attract and inspire visitors today, and contribute to a positive image of Rochdale – featuring in many iconic photographs of our town. The success of this festival has inspired our local communities, with engagement showing high demand to see new murals across our town centre. To make sure we maximise the impact of new murals on our town, they will be delivered as part of a wider ‘urban arts festival’, aiming to create a spectacular town centre event, maximise visitor numbers and spend in Rochdale's local businesses.

What measurable effects is the festival aiming to achieve?

- Bringing colour and vitality to the town centre, and supporting a positive image of our town both within Rochdale and to wider audiences.
- Reduced crime rates due to increased footfall.
- Increased tourism through creating long lasting landmarks, mural tours etc, supporting spend in local businesses.
- Giving communities a sense of ownership over their environment and contributing to the wellbeing of neighbourhoods and our communities.

How have buildings and sites been selected?

The sites has been selected for maximum visual impact along the route between the station and the centre, and within the centre itself, on walls with little or no heritage value that would be suitable for murals.

The development and approval process for this mural

- All murals will respond to local themes. A range of local source material (developed through community engagement and research) has been collated by Rochdale Development Agency (RDA).
- The festival curator, internationally renowned local mural artist Hayley Garner from the 'The Butterfly Effect' who curated the 2019 festival as part of Nomad Clan has then matched each site with a suitable artist. The artist for this site is Onor: www.onurpainting.com
- Each artist has then been sent the source material, and has selected a theme to use to develop initial proposals.
- This initial proposal will then be signed by RDA and the building owner (text below, which has been signed off)
- The artist is currently developing this design in full to be approved by the building owner, before being submitted.

Overview of proposal

This mural will take inspiration from Rochdale legend Gracie Fields and her song "Rochdale Hounds." Rather than depicting a portrait, the artwork translates the song's character into a warm, symbolic image: three hounds relaxing on a rug or sofa after a day's outing. Painted in the style of a traditional oil painting, with soft brush texture and a tasteful, classic palette, the piece will blend seamlessly with the building's surroundings. The calm, homely scene will offer a subtle tribute to Gracie's legacy, celebrating Rochdale's cultural heritage in a timeless, family-friendly way that will remain visually appealing for years to come.

Examples of Onor's work

