

Art and Commerce Collide

Since 2006, a bevy of businesses has popped up around the intersection of 40th Street and Piedmont Avenue, all of them owned by young, creative entrepreneurs who sell everything from bikes to zines to tattoos and vintage threads. As a sideline, several of them show local artists' works on their walls, so Oakland curator Obi Kaufmann, who lived in the neighborhood, suggested they all collaborate on an art event.

This past spring, the 40th Street Art Quest was born. It's a walk scheduled semi-regularly where guests stroll from shop to shop with a treasure map that guides them Monopoly board-like through this up-and-coming neighborhood. More than just an Art Murmur north, Art Quest is a combination art walk and shop local campaign where participants who visit each venue get their map stamped for a chance to win a gift certificate.

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Among the shops and galleries are Manifesto where Sam Cunningham and Mackay Gibbs sell new and rebuilt bikes and 1-2-3-4 Go! Records where Steve Stevenson doles out advice on the latest indie and punk vinyl. SubRosa Coffee fuels art strollers with its Four Barrel brew while at Issues, husband-and-wife team Noella Teele and Joe Colley, run a jaw-droppingly

comprehensive international newsstand. At Premium Tattoo and Vintage, artist Matt Decker is famous for his ink while wife Hilary Decker sells vintage threads.

The one true gallery among the bunch — Rowan Morrison Gallery — features exhibits and fine art books curated by Pete and Narangkar Glover. "We want folks to think of 40th Street as more than a way to get from Piedmont to MacArthur BART," Narangkar Glover says. "We're proud of what's happening in the neighborhood and that all the businesses are independently owned and operated."

So who said art and commerce don't mix?

— Jeanne Storck

On Dec. 12, the merchants are hosting a special evening-long simultaneous party in each of their shops to celebrate the holidays and their Oakland-grown products. The next Art Quest is scheduled for spring 2010. Visit rowanmorrison.com for more info.



Obi Kaufman (left) suggested collaboration, and Pete Glover (right), Steve Stevenson (below) and others joined up for 40th Street comradery and commerce.

