



Louisville Downtown Partnership

IDA Downtown Achievement Award Two Page Summary

The following summary of the Alley Gallery program was written for the 2017 IDA Top Issues Council Report, "From Dumpsters to Biergartens: Case Studies in Alley Activations", Case Study Four: Louisville, KY, Project: Alley Gallery.

"Downtown Louisville is still crisscrossed with alleys. But like many undervalued, slightly forgotten areas, these semi-private spaces often suffer from limited maintenance and are informally off-limits to downtown visitors.

Alley Gallery is a program created by the Louisville Downtown Partnership (LDP) to bring these under-recognized spaces back to life, enlivening dingy single and double metal service doors with a vinyl overlay of existing artwork created by metro-area artists. Doors are then surrounded by black paint to simulate a frame. Project organizers have identified more than 300 potential public and private doors in the target area as candidates for the program.

Participating property owners are provided with access to a Dropbox featuring existing artwork by local artists from which to choose. Denoted as sponsors, their cost is \$645 for a single door or \$1200 for a double.

Artists supplying designs retain ownership of the image and are paid \$300 in compensation for use of the work chosen.

The Louisville Downtown Partnership manages the transfer of the design onto vinyl, door surface preparation and art installation. Each design is also accompanied by a title card on the wall identifying the work's title and artist, recognizes the sponsor and states that the Louisville Downtown Partnership manages the project. Because the doors are private property and the applique is flat and free from advertising, only sponsor consent is required.

In addition to per-design title cards, LDP has mounted highly visible location markers in key spots, recognizing that from alley entryways the designs themselves, flat on doorways, will not be readily visible. Location markers are local code compliant, easily mounted and highly distinctive. They are also fundamentally practical, being repurposed highway reflector sign materials appliqued with a project specific sticker.



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“Such creative practicality is evident throughout the project. Both artist and sponsor packets are informative but simple and easy to navigate. The primary obligation of the artist is to enter into a simple agreement and provide applicable designs. All requirements are laid out in a downloadable artist packet from the LDP website.

Sponsors then have an array of designs from which to choose. Once chosen, their principal obligation is to enter into a simple agreement and pay the cost for their door. There is also a sponsor packet on the LDP website.

Production, installation, promotion and all other issues, including payment to artists is handled by LDP. They have also produced an interactive online location map to the doors, distributing it widely throughout downtown Louisville to help create an audience for the project. The online map will allow individuals to create their own self-guided tour either on foot or on bicycle.

As of early summer 2017, 25 doors have been installed and 27 were in the works to be installed by the end of July. The before and after pictures of the project are striking, showing a real reclamation of what might otherwise be both under-recognized and un-kempt space. Response from artists has been very positive, based on the chance to not only showcase existing artwork but also to be paid a stipend for its use and, they anticipate, sales of the original art.

Public and media response has been equally strong. According to Mayor Greg Fischer “We’ve got to give [the doors] a little soul, a little Louisville originality,” he said. “That’s what this project represents, a fun and whimsical way to showcase our fantastic artists and for people to have fun in our city.”

Since this piece was published, another 48 doors have been installed for a total of 100.