

## CREATIVITY

## Montreal Celebrates Native Son Leonard Cohen With Separate, Dueling Murals

5th Annual Mural Festival gets a jump on artwork tied to city's 350th anniversary celebrations

By Richard Horgan | June 14, 2017

There's a funny wrinkle to this year's Mural Festival in Montreal. The event, currently in its fifth year and running June 8-18, features a gaggle of street artists **enlisted** to 'democratize urban art.'

One artist achieving this objective in spades is Kevin Ledo. His Leonard Cohen art, currently in progress, takes up the equivalent of nine storeys on the side of the Cooper Building, on St-Laurent Blvd. This fall, the city of Montreal will erect a much bigger 20-storey Cohen mural at 1420 Crescent Street. The festival had been planning its project for several years and was essentially blindsided by the city project, to be created by the well-respected Gene Pendon.



Montreal Gazette writer Bill Brownstein has been covering this syn-Cohen-icity and is firmly of the **opinion** that Ledo's nine-storey high work (pictured, above) is more in keeping with the artistic and native-son spirit of Cohen than the upcoming 20-storey project. From his latest article:

No question that the Crescent Street mural will be masterfully handled by Montreal artist Pendon—a.k.a. Starship—and American El Mec, but, seriously, the side of a 20-storey building would be more appropriate for a Batman beacon (if our dreamer Mayor Coderre had notions of making Montreal a twin metropolis with Gotham City), but not for an homage to Cohen, a most modest man.

Perhaps even more troubling is that the Mural Festival had been planning its tribute a few years before Cohen had passed away at 82 last November. In fact, fest execs had even applied for a city grant to create its mural before the Crescent mural was announced in April and learned after that announcement they would not receive any city funding.

In the absence of that funding, the Mural Festival's piece has come together with the help of a grassroots local collective encompassing everyone from Moishes Steakhouse to area parking lots. Artist Ledo grew up in the Portuguese Parc du Portugal neighborhood where the art is being created, and where Cohen was a familiar sight before relocating in his later years to Los Angeles.

The city has not specified yet what the art of its billboard will be; the mock-up below, which it released, features a placeholder image. Website Cohentricentric reacted with its idea of what the second Cohen tribute could [look like](#).



The breadth of work being done for the Mural Festival is spectacular. Check out images [here](#).