



Brooklyn Street Art

...loves you more every day.

Flying Squirrels and Houston Toads : Louis Masai in Texas and Tennessee

Posted on December 8, 2016

BSA + LOUIS MASAI & THE ART OF BEEING

NEW YORK DETROIT RENO SACRAMENTO SAN FRANCISCO LOS ANGELES
PHOENIX EL PASO AUSTIN NEW ORLEANS NASHVILLE ATLANTA MIAMI



Austin, Texas

Austin is proud to plead, “[Keep Austin Weird](#).” Street Artist Louis Masai felt like his recent visit to that Texas city was not the only part of the US that one could call weird – it was actually a place to seek refuge.

“After the introduction to Chump and his band of merry men for the next 4 years we definitely saw a massive change in the energy of the areas we were driving through,” he says of his post-election leg of a cross-country trip.



Louis Masai: *The Art of Beeing* USA Tour. Houston Toad. Endangered. Austin, TX. November 2016. (photo © Emil Walker)

He's probably just feeling that brotherly hate that spiked across the US when the primarily white supporters of Donald Trump asserted their vindictiveness and power across the country, registering in a rise of hate crimes, according to this chart from [Forbes magazine by the Southern Poverty Law Center](#).

But here in Austin his “Art of Beeing” tour brought this topic of Houston Toads and their shrinking numbers to the wall in this city that is rich in arts and music and a bit more of that “live and let live” mentality.

The Amphibians Survival Alliance (www.amphibians.org) says that the decreasing population of these toads is only at 3-4,000 in Houston and Bastrop County and if these are killed off by drought, fire ants, disappearing habitat – they will become extinct.

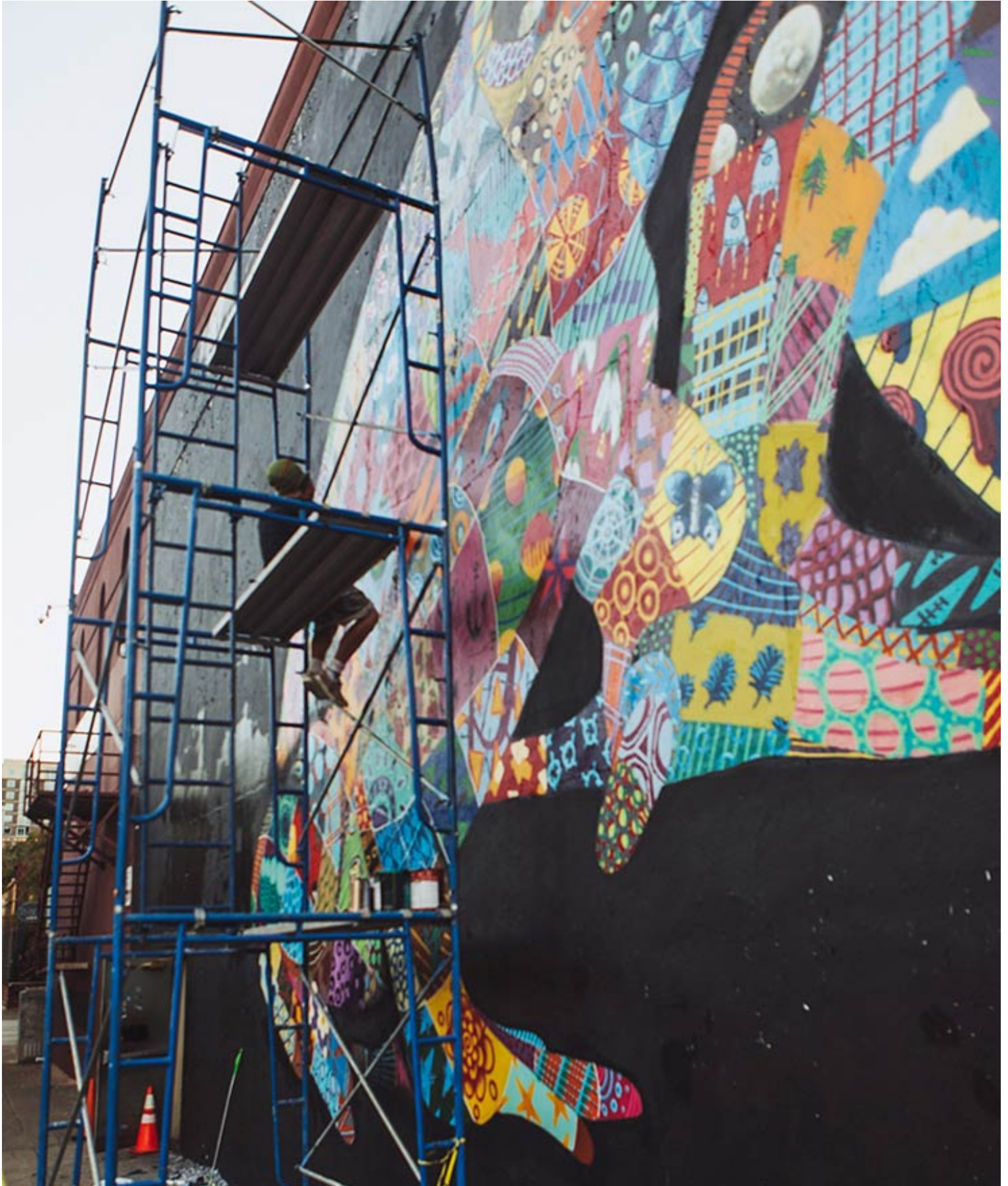


Louis Masai: *The Art of Beeing* USA Tour. Houston Toad. Endangered. Austin, TX. November 2016. (photo © Emil Walker)

And on his wall, Louis says about his Austin experience, “I guess the attraction is the abundance of frats and bar culture in the area. I got to know a handful of these homeless folks over the five days this mural took to complete and I can definitely see that the new mural in their neighborhood gave them some new color and appreciation in their lives. Several vowed to protect its longevity, bless them.”

Will he come back to all this weirdness?

Yes, he tells us. “This wall was painted in conjunction with [Global Wildlife Conservation](#). These guys were amazing and I look forward to working with them again soon.”



Louis Masai: *The Art of Beeing* USA Tour. Houston Toad. Endangered. Austin, TX. November 2016. (photo © Emil Walker)



Louis Masai: *The Art of Beeing* USA Tour. Houston Toad. Endangered. Austin, TX. November 2016. (photo © Emil Walker)



Louis Masai: *The Art of Beeing* USA Tour. Houston Toad. Endangered. Austin, TX. November 2016. (photo © Emil Walker)



Louis Masai: *The Art of Beeing* USA Tour. Houston Toad. Endangered. Austin, TX. November 2016. (photo © Emil Walker)

Nashville, Tennessee

Later the “Art of Beeing” tour travelled to Tennessee and Louis continued to experience some of that southern hospitality, and a few questions about the Carolina Northern Flying Squirrel. He also was surprised to endure some cold temperatures.



Louis Masai: *The Art of Beeing* USA Tour. Northern Flying Squirrel. Endangered. Nashville, TN. November 2016. (photo © Emil Walker)

“I don’t think I have ever experienced such a difference in temperature. from 26 degrees (79 F) in Austin to 2 degrees (36 F) in Nashville. Thank you Ecoalf for those jackets, for without them our team surely would have not made this wall happen,” he says.

The [Nashville Walls Project](#) has brought artists like Niels ‘Shoe’ Meulman, Above, Herakut, and Rone to the city and now Louis added his work to the collection

“I have joined a roster of some of the worlds’ best mural artists and I feel humbled to be a part of this project,” he says. “Nashville is an up and coming city, experiencing a boom in new residents, again more gentrification is weeping into the city and prices are soaring, apparently about 85 new residents move in a week.”



Louis Masai: *The Art of Beeing* USA Tour. Northern Flying Squirrel. Endangered. Nashville, TN. November 2016. (photo © Emil Walker)

“The wall that I painted shadows a section of the city that I am sure will get pushed out. Men hang out on the street not doing much; we met a cowboy inspired gentleman that was proud to admit to eating gopher tortoise – a federally protected species. He said he had three in his freezer...he grew up eating what they hunted, from squirrels to rabbits and tortoise. Hopefully my line of work can help to steer people away from eating these species.”

Did Louis change this fellers’ mind? “I think this guy might be too late to inspire.”



Louis Masai: *The Art of Beeing* USA Tour. Northern Flying Squirrel. Endangered. Nashville, TN. November 2016. (photo © Emil Walker)

But you can help to save one of the rarest species – the Carolina Northern Flying Squirrel, which has been found in North Carolina, east Tennessee, and southwest Virginia. There doesn't appear to be a specific species trust but you can support the [Tennessee Wildlife Federation](#) to protect all local wildlife.



Louis Masai: *The Art of Beeing* USA Tour. Northern Flying Squirrel. Endangered. Nashville, TN. November 2016. (photo © Emil Walker)



Louis Masai: *The Art of Beeing* USA Tour. Northern Flying Squirrel. Endangered. Nashville, TN. November 2016. (photo © Emil Walker)

Click <http://louismasai.com/projects/the-art-of-beeing/> to learn more about the project.

