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Take BART to Oakland's Art Murmur on Friday, August 6

By Xuan Lam

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Art Murmur, a monthly showcase of local artists' work, is one of many cultural events helping to give Oakland a new reputation for urban sophistication.

Art Murmur takes place every first Friday of the month (for full schedule visit www.oaklandartmurmur.com). A group of galleries scattered around downtown Oakland features free exhibitions of artists' works from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. The next Art Murmur takes place on August 6, with participating galleries such as Vessel Gallery, DepARTure Gallery & The Layover, Chandra Cerrito Contemporary, and Johansson Projects.



Photo by [greenkozi](#)

One of the artists showing work at the August event is Emily Morrow, a bubbly extrovert with a knack for creativity. Her multimedia exhibit "Don't Ask. Just Tell" is on display at the DepARTure Gallery at 1517 Franklin Street.

While the art is the main attraction, there's much more at Art Murmur.

"There's something there for everybody," Morrow says. "You can listen to music, you can eat an amazing dinner, just people watch."

The art itself is just one of the sparkling attributes of Art Murmur. There are many other activities; Morrow says she especially enjoys the burlesque shows that have been part of the event.

Local residents enjoy the event as much as the artists: "We have always had fun and enjoy the freeform nature of the event," says Rob Hamner, a native Oaklander who has attended Art Murmur a few times.

Whatever one's preference, anyone can find a good time at Art Murmur.

"The whole experience is really wonderful and fun and lively. It's exciting to talk about art and culture and what's happening in Oakland," says Lonnie Lee, art curator for Vessel Gallery.

And the crowd? Lee depicts the scene as diverse. It's "no longer pigeon-holed into one certain demographic," she says. "I see people who are very interested in art, art collectors, art professionals... I see families bringing kids, too. You don't have a certain age range. It's diverse. Very much like Oakland."

Lee describes the growth of cultural activities in Oakland as a renaissance. She adds that people -- especially those who have resided in Oakland for a long time -- see it as a welcome addition.

"This area's poised to be quite the destination," she says, smiling. Then she adds -- "It already is."

Hamner agrees, "Where else is there this sort of gathering on a regular basis -- of artists, musicians, crafts people, food trucks, fixies, costumes, buses you can dance in? Oakland!"

As for parking, Lee mentions that as attendance has grown, parking has become increasingly limited and that BART is an important means of transportation.

Howe agrees, saying "Driving is horrible."

To avoid the hassles of driving and parking, hop on BART, get off at the 19th St./Oakland station and walk north. Or, get off at MacArthur Station and head east towards Telegraph Avenue. Most Art Murmur spaces are within walking distance (5 to 10 blocks) of the 19th St. and MacArthur BART stations. To plan your trip, use the [BART QuickPlanner](#).

For more information on Art Murmur, check out <http://oaklandartmurmur.com/map/>.

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