

Sarah Cain's Vibrant Site-Specific Painting at Orange Barrel Media Headquarters Lightens the Columbus, Ohio Landscape

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Exterior view of Orange Barrel Media headquarters, Columbus, Ohio.

COURTESY ORANGE BARREL MEDIA

Those driving through Columbus, Ohio, might notice a colorful new intervention amid the otherwise serene landscape. On the facade of Orange Barrel Media

(<https://obm.com/installations/cain/>) (OBM) headquarters, abstract painter Sarah Cain (<https://www.artnews.com/t/sarah-cain/>) has created a public art installation —one that rewards a long look and, frankly, is hard to miss.

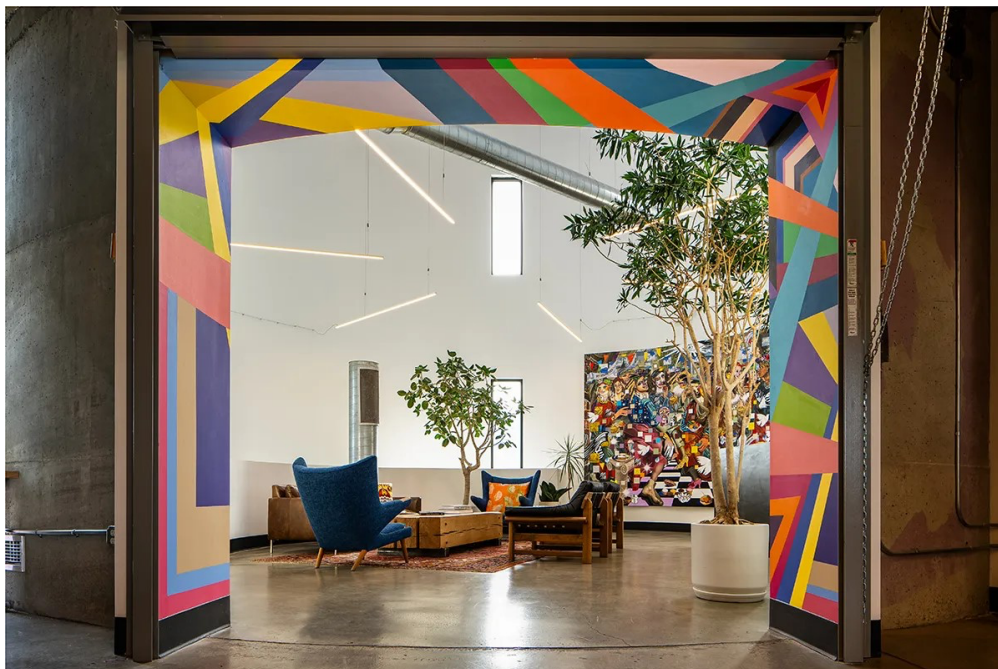
The monumental immersive painting, titled *This is the thing they call life*, wraps around sections of the building’s exterior from ground level to its 70-foot-tall central silos and through its interior spaces. A natural extension of Cain’s established practice, which questions the seriousness of art (<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/30/arts/sarah-cain-national-gallerypainter.html>), *This is the thing they call life* includes both her bold geometrics and fluidly painted marks throughout.

Despite extensive preparatory drawings and planning, Cain told *ARTnews*, “I never really know what I’m getting into.” Cain has created large installations in the past, including painting buildings and furniture as well as creating stained glass windows, but this is her largest to date. (She hopes this project will open the door to more such future projects.)

“It was a really great, fluid process,” Cain said, after seeing a shift in the logistics of her practice during the work. “To let go of control and have help was pretty mind-blowing,” she said, adding, “I learned a lot and it was really a dream project.”

The efforts of a team of artists from the community, who will continue to maintain the work, helped bring this yearlong project together.

“It’s cool to me that it’s in Columbus, because I’ve done so many projects [there],” Cain said. “There’s not another midwest city that I’ve been to that much, but it’s nice because every time I go, I’m at another stage in my career.”



OBM CEO and art collector Pete Scantland acquired the abandoned concrete manufacturing facility, in the underinvested neighborhood of Franklinton, in 2013. Bringing together 17 total acres of property, OBM worked with architect George Acock to reimagine the historic structure and preserve the integrity of the concrete facility and silos while updating the building with glass and steel, before its opening in 2015. Now, it is transformed again with Cain's installation.

Scantland, who has been following and collecting Cain's work for years, noted the artist's ability to move passionately between mediums with ease.

"I saw a project that she did at Frieze in LA back when it was at the Paramount Studios in 2019," Scantland told *ARTnews*. "She took one of the movie set brownstones and did a stained glass work, a floor painting, and a number of multimedia works. What I saw was how she was using all these varied surfaces and how the whole artwork—it was several components—but it kind of really worked together."

This latest intervention seems like a natural extension for the headquarters of a media company that has worked with such artists as Jeffrey Gibson, Barbara Kruger, Pipilotti Rist, and Nari Ward over the years to create public art interventions designed to reach a wide public audience.

"We had to develop commitment and, frankly, the courage to go ahead and paint our entire building with something that's permanent," Scantland explained. "Over time, we think it's going to be an iconic part of the landscape in Columbus."

He noted that among OBM employees and passersby, "it has quickly become a source of interest."

The public is welcome to visit Cain's work on the OBM campus at 250 North Hartford Avenue.

