

# **URBAN WALLS**

Community Revitalization

Michelle Anderson  
Kara Loo  
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## INTRO: CULTURE OF THE ERA

- In the early 1970s, Cincinnati was in need of revitalization/change. The Urban Walls project was about bringing life to the West Fourth Street District and creating a sense of community.
- Period of creativity, most of which was only seen in galleries & museums- "Art for Urban Walls" September 12, 1971, Enquirer
- "What is new is art, for art's sake, on the walls of buildings. There are no... threats and demands that offend their way into our brains. There is just color, design, and an occasional visual pun." - "Art for Urban Walls" September 12, 1971, Enquirer



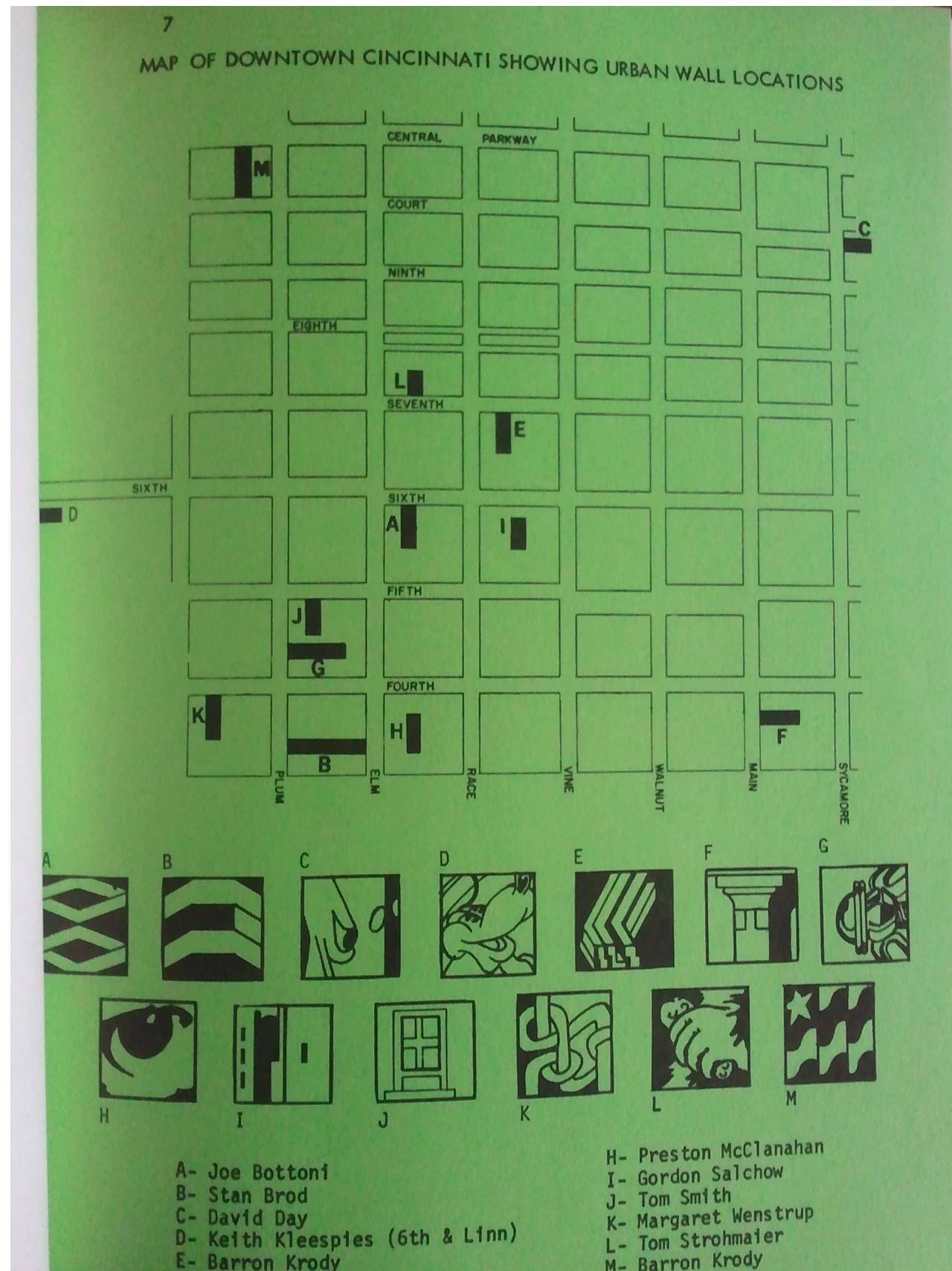
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## BEGINNING OF THE URBAN WALLS PROJECT

- Solway & Boulton came up with the idea while on a trip to sell art
- Wanted to do a community project in the Southwest Quadrant
- Interested in area as a neighborhood
- Art for art's sake/supergraphics replacing advertising
- Wanted to show that outdoor art could supplement urban renewal
- Jack Boulton:
- Art is something which should be available, used and enjoyed by everyone, daily.

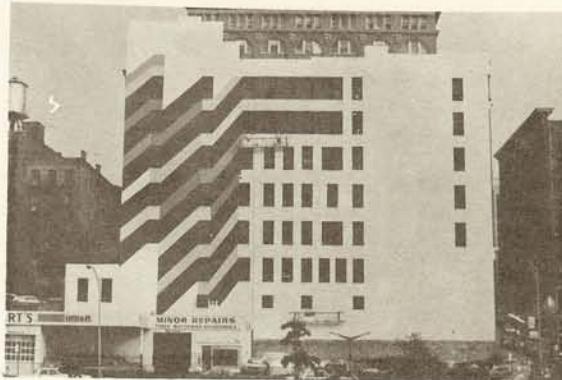


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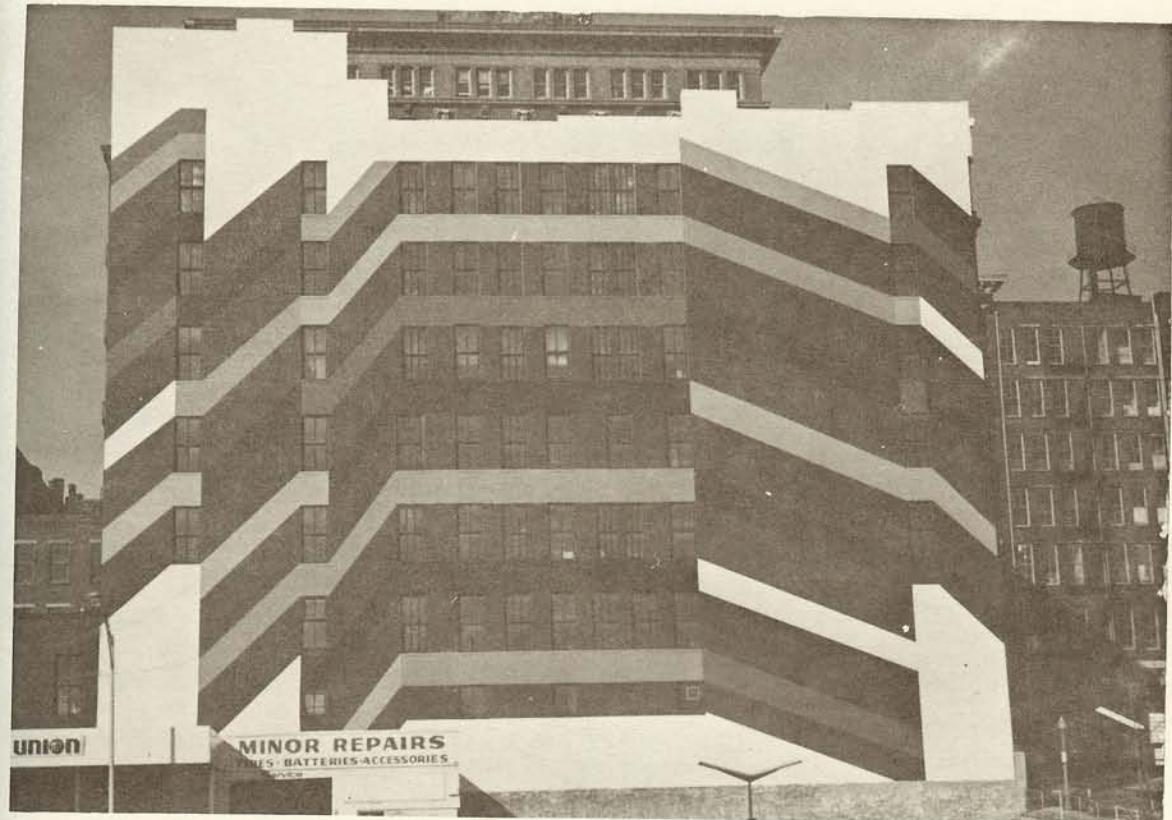
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View of the Zussman Building, 317 Elm Street before painting began on the Brod design



Brod design in-progress



Brod design completed

## URBAN WALLS AS COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

- Causes people to look up, notice other things around them
- Makes art communal and a part of everyone's lives
- makes art less intimidating
- gets it out of museums and galleries
- Capital improvement can help to increase property values of an area
- Gordon Salchow quote on community:
- “ a building owner cannot go into the project expecting the wall imagery to relate to the interests of his own company. He needs to be willing to allow the wall to become a part of the community and not just a part of the building.”



*Elm Street,  
at Sixth,  
looking east*

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sketches submitted in the competition. Meanwhile, the gallery

Among the artists and the walls their designs will enhance are Barron Krody,

artist in the Greater Cincinnati area will submit 30-by-30-inch photo blowups

DEAR WALT: My friend thinks it is very funny to get people talking to him

on the phone a record what they have heard some conversations I would die if they heard. He has getting people their worst side he can arrange the tape anyway to edit them, is worse when I far I haven't negative about I think I sh Don't you?—Le

DEAR LES: a "friend" is then you owe speak up. Tell fixation with side of people's stature in your people win some qu then find him as folks put tance between themselves. him you'll n depth with phone but nerable c you're in f bugging Walt.

DEAR  
this town



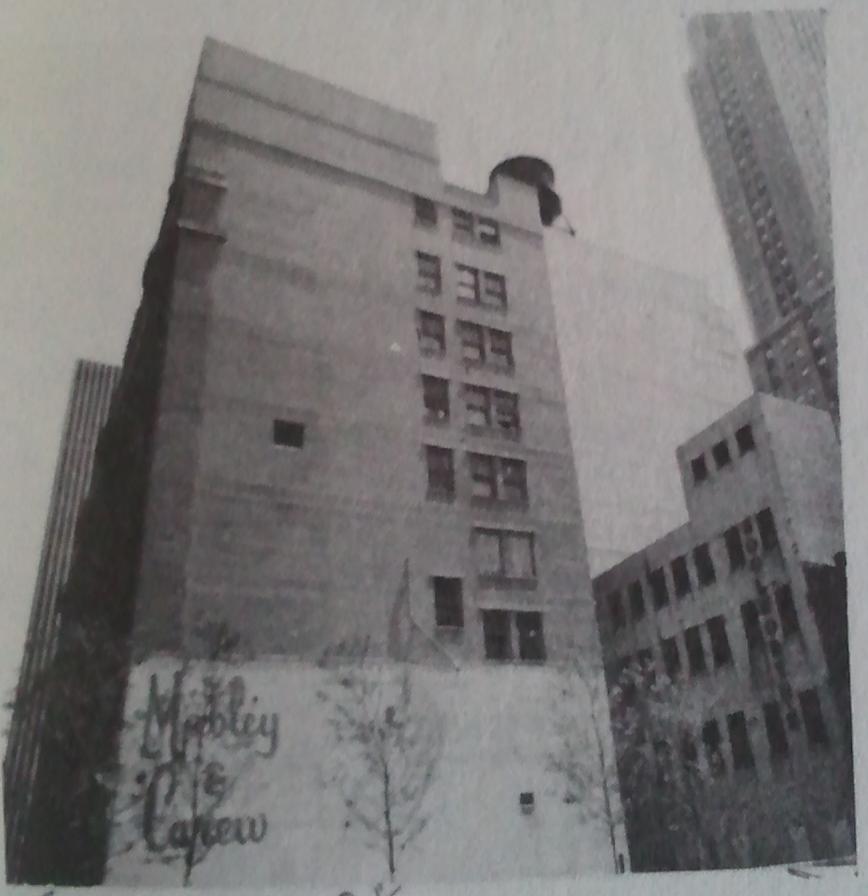
The west wall of Mabley and Carew on Opera place will be painted.

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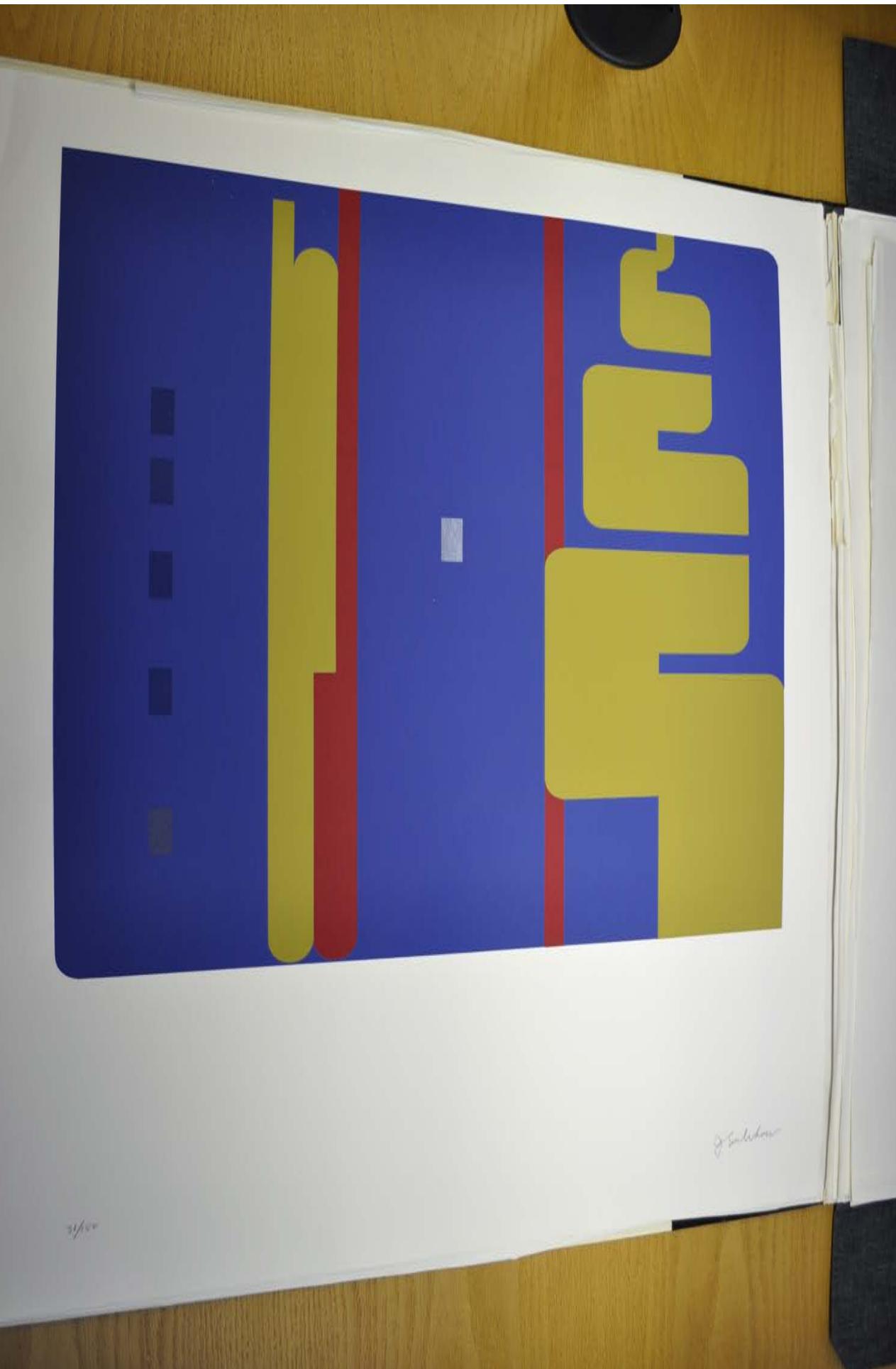
View of rear facade of Mabley and Carew B  
on Salchow design



Model showing Salchow's design for three c  
Skywalk. Only the wall to the left was co  
were to be done in the same tones of blue,

## GORDON'S WALL

- Head of Graphic Design @ DAAP since 1968
- Salchow designed for 3 walls above the skywalk on the back of Mabley & Carew
- Only the left wall was painted. All would have been in the same tones
- blue, red ochre
- Original colors: Red/Black on Gray (too dull, would blend into city)
- Cincinnati Department of Urban Development hired Solway as a consultant for Race Street Beautification Project.
- Only “Urban Walls” design to use more than 1 wall (planned for 3)
- Reasons other 2 walls were completed:
- Money deferred to other wall paintings
- Uncertainties about skywalk’s expansion



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Looking **Northeast** at the corner of Fifth and Vine, from the Carew Tower

**Today's plaza (right) was created when the buildings on the block bordered by Fifth, Sixth, Vine and Walnut were demolished. The six-story Mabley & Carew building (left) stood on this corner.**

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or three of the walls above the  
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Salchow wall completed

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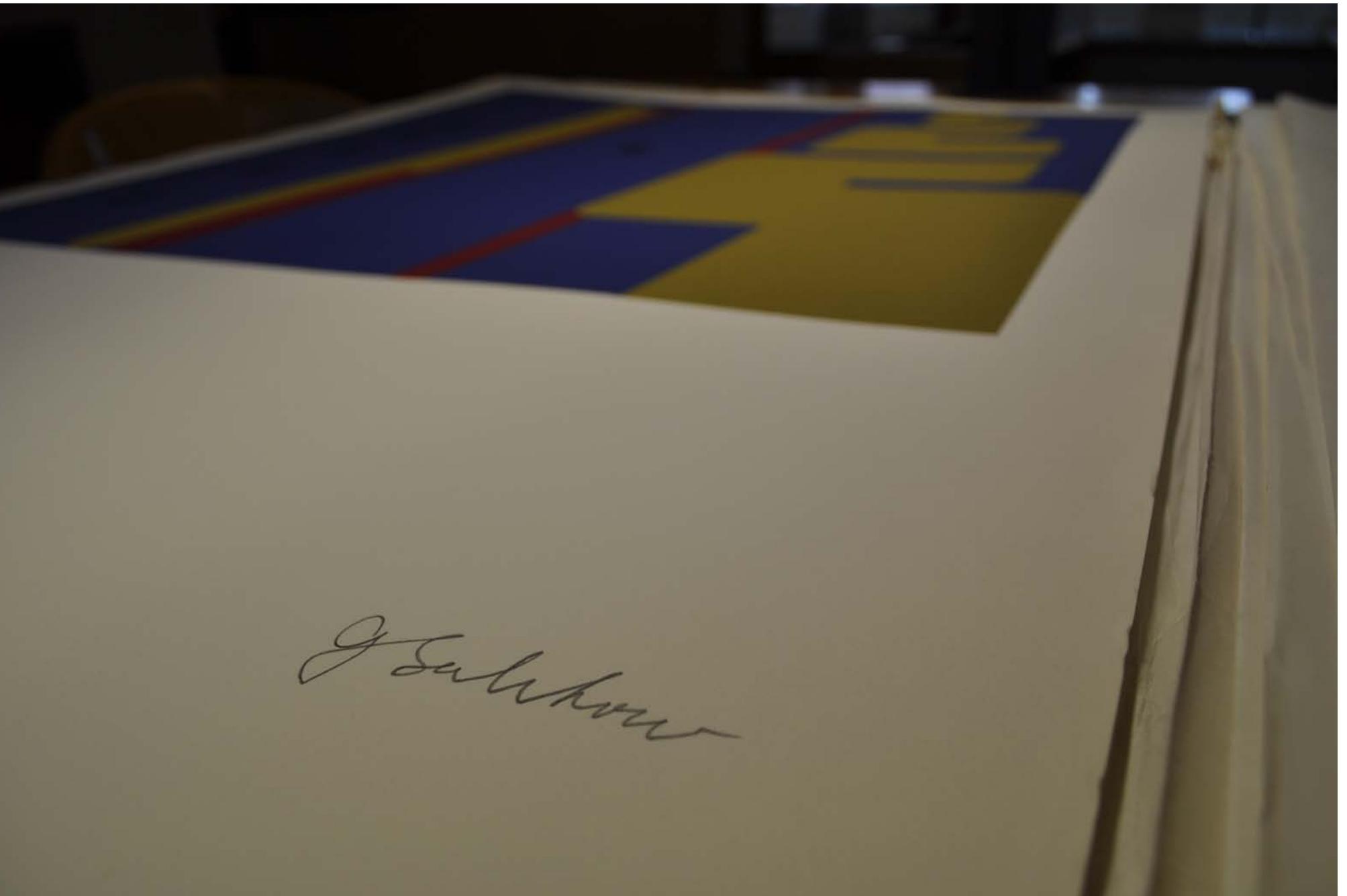
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## DESIGN PHILOSOPHY OF THE URBAN WALLS PROJECT (& OPPOSITION)

- Salchow's Quote on walls
- "Designing urban walls involves a problem solving process a process of analyzing a given space and deciding what the character of that space is or should be. Therefore, it is the professionally-trained designer rather than the fine artist --the painter or sculptor-- who is best suited to design urban walls."
- Urban Walls provide eyes with "visual relief", spatial expanse, and order. Shuts out white noise.
- indie walls mimic the content of "established art"
- can be just as powerful, but often connects only with the people in that neighborhood or community, rather than the public at large
- Salchow thinks they add visual clutter
- "The urban environment is colorful to begin with. Poor neighborhoods are often the most colorful. The city does not need color, or mere color, it needs a kind of chromatic depth that only a few fine artists can provide." -Salchow
- How to accomplish revitalization: Community-based consensus vs artist's singular vision



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## URBAN MURALS: EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT

- “The impact of URBAN WALLS:CINCINNATI has been widespread. Indirectly it stimulates thousands of daily viewers to consider their visual environment and challenges the visual polluters to reconsider their responsibility to the public”- Carl Solway Gallery (back of gallery poster)
- Solway
- “10 years ago we were talking about downtown redevelopment. Now it has been redeveloped. I think there is more interest in downtown now.”
- Solway quote:
- “The project served its purpose. We wanted to add some color to some of the back-door approaches to downtown Cincinnati, to call attention to what was going on in the West Fourth Street district.”



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