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'Reveal' art show features Cleveland LGBTQ artists

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"Reveal" opens to the public on Friday, Dec. 11 at Yards Project Space. (Photo courtesy of Mark Yasenchack)



By [Anne Nickoloff](https://www.cleveland.com/author/anne-nickoloff/), cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio – [West 117 Foundation](https://www.west117.org/) has found a way to "reveal" itself with its first event, an art show featuring local LGBTQ creators.

“We’re revealing ourselves, saying, ‘Here we are,’ to really show up for the community,” said Kyle Kidd, a West 117 Foundation board member. “This is just a taste of what we’re going to be able to do, having the support of our community, the buy-in of our community. It’s finally happening.”

The local foundation formed in 2020, connected to the ongoing Studio West project which is currently revamping Lakewood’s Phantasy music venues into a hub for Cleveland’s LGBTQ community. Studio West plans to host performance spaces for concerts, drag shows, podcast recordings and more, along with a sports bar and dodgeball courts, according to [a 2020 article](#) by cleveland.com reporter Eric Heisig.

Studio West is still under construction. “Reveal” will take over the art gallery space within downtown Cleveland’s Worthington Yards apartment building, located at 725 Johnson Court.

Kidd, who is also a vocalist in acclaimed Cleveland music collective Mourning [A] BLKstar, co-curated the show with local artist and Transformer Station co-owner Laura Ruth Bidwell. Both Bidwell and Kidd are Cleveland Arts Prize recipients; Bidwell won the Martha Joseph Prize in 2013, and Kidd won the Emerging Artist award in 2021 as a member of Mourning [A] BLKstar.

The show will feature more than 30 paintings and prints by local artists, including Aja Joi Grant, Mark Yasenchack, Mikey Silas, Benji Diaz, Denise Astorino and more.

“It’s a very diverse show,” Kidd said. “It’s something we at the West 117 Foundation, we’re trying to define what diversity means to us and how everything that we do reflects what our community looks like. It takes us further into how we as a foundation can show up for our community, because we have a full scope of what diversity looks like and what’s missing and what we can double down with to bring forth with our foundation.”

“Reveal” is just a glimpse at what W 117 has planned, Kidd said. The organization plans on kicking off its all-LGBTQ+ youth sports league in 2022 – the first of its kind in the nation – along with a mural project that will adorn the Studio West complex. The “Reveal” show may become an annual event, too, Kidd said.

“There’s so much coming in the new year. This is just a small taste, so we can get some funders and folks zoned in on what’s happening while it’s early, before it blows up,” Kidd said. “This is the starting moment. The reveal moment.”

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