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New Mural Captures Pro Cyclist T.J. Eisenhart's Passion for Athletics and the Beauty of the Land of Endurance

According to Utah native and professional cyclist T.J. Eisenhart, "when it comes to art, you can say so much." And, T.J. is saying a lot with his new mural that's being created in time for the IRONMAN World Championship in St. George on May 7. The mural, located in downtown St. George on the south side of the Hometown Lenders building at 61 North Main Street, commemorates the competitive spirit of Greater Zion, its athletes and the beauty of the Land of Endurance™.

"I've raced as a world champion; I know the pressure and the energy that athletes put into their sport," said T.J. who is both a world-class artist and professional cyclist. "I wanted to capture that spirit along with the beauty of the area, which inspires me during every ride."

The design for the mural, titled Land of Endurance, is modest with geometric shapes, bright colors and scenes that represent the swimming, biking and running events found in triathlons. The mural also captures the stunning views found throughout Greater Zion with the depiction of a sunset during the run portion of the competition. T.J.'s canvas is one triathletes will see as they near the finish line of the IRONMAN World Championship race this May.

"Iconic athletic events brighten our communities," said Kevin Lewis, Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office Director. "They bring passion and energy into our lives and evoke purpose and meaning. When you merge the creativity of art with the discipline of athletics you create an even deeper level of inspiration. As hosts of the IRONMAN World Championship, we saw an opportunity to enrich our community more fully with the fusion of art and athletics. We're thrilled to commission this mural as a legacy to the World Championship and a lasting contribution to our community that invites us to feel more deeply and to act more valiantly."

City of St. George Deputy Director of Arts and Events Michelle Graves discovered T.J.'s work several months ago when she saw his painting of Justin Williams, a Belizean-American cyclist. The painting of the 32-year-old Williams depicts an iconic moment as he



won the Into the Lion's Den criterium in Sacramento. The painting captures Williams' excitement and enthusiasm after his championship performance.

"One day I saw a bright and dynamic painting he created of a cyclist and thought 'wouldn't it be amazing to have a triathlon mural on the wall on Main Street that the world-class IRONMAN athletes could enjoy as they came into the finish line,'" said Graves. "With the Kona World Championships being held for the first, and maybe only, time in St. George, we will be in the world spotlight. Having another art installation that shows the beauty and art and truly defines us as the land of endurance is a blessing to the downtown area that is truly becoming an art mecca."

"When I'm riding my bike, my mind is constantly thinking about art," added T.J. "It's like preparing for a race or a game. You have to have your mind ready and have your mind in the zone." T.J. referenced one memorable ride up Kolob Terrace Road where he found his saving grace. The sun was setting and he was physically and mentally drained. However, he found his purpose while coasting down the road after his grueling workout. "Riding my bike had a purpose that day. I reconnected with the freedom that riding gives you – it's not about winning; it's about riding my bike for the freedom and love of my surroundings."

"Having this mural painted by a professional, local athlete ties this piece to the event and encapsulates all that we love in St. George – arts, events and outdoors," added Graves. T.J. draws from the outdoors to create many of his pieces; he finds inspiration for his work while on his bike.

Athletics have always been a part of T.J.'s life, as a family trip to Europe sparked something within him that led to a life-long love for cycling. "I was eight years old when we saw a stage of the Tour de France go through the Pyrenees. I got hooked! And, realized that I wanted to do something with bikes."

As T.J. started winning races and excelling in his sport, his family bought a house in St. George. At age 16, he would go to high school in Lehi, Utah and then drive to St. George and stay in his family's home to train over the weekends. He graduated from high school early and moved to St. George full-time to train. Between winters in Southwest Utah and summers in Europe, T.J. was on a year-round training plan to excel in his sport.

However, one thing that was missing in T.J.'s life was his love for art and taking his creative energy out on canvas. "Art was there before athletics," added T.J. "When I was getting burned out and realized my life wasn't balanced (when I was training so much), my mom suggested I take some art classes. I took some basic classes and got back in touch with my passion."



Most recently he's shifted competitively from road racing to mountain biking and currently rides for Imaginary Collective, his cycling brand with fellow athlete and friend Andy Dahlheim. "Our team and brand are the intersection between art and cycling," he said. According to the Imaginary Collective Instagram page, the brand is focused on creativity and drive. Their goal is to redesign cycling.

T.J. has been dubbed "Utah's most colorful pro cyclist." When asked what this means to him, he laughs, "you are probably right! It's taken me a while to get to that place. Through art, I've found my confidence to be my original self."

T.J.'s colorful work now will be on display in downtown St. George for athletes, visitors and locals to enjoy for years to come. "The arts are a big deal in St. George and it warms my heart to know our downtown will be the recipient of a wonderful mural by the highly talented T.J. Eisenhart," said St. George Mayor Michele Randall. "I think this piece will be inspiring to not only the world-class athletes who will be here for the two IRONMAN world championship races in 2022, but to ordinary citizens as well who appreciate art. We consider this a win-win."

When asked what he wants people to take from the mural, T.J. smiles and said, "a flutter of emotion once you first look at it. I want it to take you by surprise with the excitement of the colors and the massive subject matters (athletes swimming, biking and running). I want it to inspire you, ignite some creativity and passion. It's like a pebble in water that ripples and makes you smile later."

About Greater Zion

Located in the southwest corner of Utah, Greater Zion is a destination that offers more than 2,400 square miles of adventure and inspiration. Zion National Park, the fourth most visited National Park in the United States, is the premier attraction, but Zion is only the beginning. Four state parks and a multitude of year-round recreational lands set the stage for a burgeoning mountain biking scene, some of the best off-highway vehicle riding in the country, scenic and challenging play at 13 top-rated golf courses, world-class cultural performances at Tuacahn Center for the Arts and so much more. The vibrant communities of St. George, Springdale, Hurricane, Ivins and towns in between offer a wide range of lodging options, dining experiences and access to outdoor pursuits through local outfitters and tour companies. Home to the 2021 and 2022 IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship, and the 2021 IRONMAN World Championship, Greater Zion also is a world-class destination for sporting events, conferences and meetings. The Greater Zion Convention and Tourism Office is a transient-room-tax-funded entity of Washington County, Utah. For more information, please visit GreaterZion.com.