

FORT GANSEVOORT



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Most Interesting People: Michelangelo Lovelace

By Eric Mull

Why he's interesting • The Cleveland native has been documenting Cleveland life with canvas and acrylics for more than 20 years. In September, his painting "My Home Town" ignited a controversy when Cleveland Clinic removed it from display after complaints of racial bias. It depicts a crowd of Clevelanders, with blacks and whites on opposite sides and a few people meeting in the middle.

In his words • "I wanted to do something for pride, and the way they interpreted that blew me away. This is just how Cleveland is, and that's how I painted it. It was actually the best thing for me, because it gave me name recognition."

Becoming Michelangelo • Though he was born Michael Anthony, childhood friends jokingly called him Michelangelo because of his obsession with art. "I was accepted into the Cleveland Institute [of Art] in 1985, and I decided that's who I was, so I changed [my name] legally to Michelangelo Lovelace."

Dedication • Lovelace estimates he's done almost 400 paintings, many of which hang in his home or are stacked in his basement studio. Others are in the permanent collections of the Cleveland Art Association, the Springfield Art Museum and Progressive. "If I'm not painting, I'm drawing. If I'm not drawing, I'm researching galleries. Every piece is like a diary, a moment in time."

Van Gogh or Picasso? • Picasso. "He knew who he was and took a stand, whereas Van Gogh kind of got in his own way."

His most interesting person • The late Cleveland artist the Rev. Albert Wagner. "He's one of the Cleveland legends. Even in Germany, they celebrate his work."