



## Title

### Outdoor Museum

#### An experience of public space renovation through mural painting by Godoy Cruz (Argentina)

## Basic data

**City:** Godoy Cruz

**Country:** Argentina

**Number of inhabitants:** 197.000

**Topics:** urban art, urban renovation, museums, culture promotion, city knowledge, education in values, urban quality and human rights.

**Principles of the Charter of Educating Cities:** 1, 4, 7, 11

## Summary

**Outdoor Museum** is a public art and mural painting program initiated by the Department of Human Rights of the Municipality of Godoy Cruz in collaboration with the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism, whose goal is to replace the deteriorated or abandoned walls and facades of the city with art instead of scribbles or pasting political posters, with the idea of restoring these surfaces as part of the public space.

In this framework, Godoy Cruz has been organizing annually the **Latin American Mural Painting and Public Art Meeting** since 2009, in which local, national and international artists (Chile, Paraguay, Peru, Mexico, El Salvador, Bolivia, etc.) can participate, all of whom are committed to the political life of their cities.

Through this Program, art is brought closer to the citizenry who, in general, is not used to visiting museums, thus converting public space into a meeting point for artists and the public in general. As an action that fosters the defense of human rights and cultural identity, the messages expressed on facades always refer to social and cultural issues, and, accordingly, murals concerned with native people, conservation of the environment, care of water resources, adequate housing or homage to Latin American writers, etc., can be enjoyed.

In November 2012, the city was declared an "Outdoor Museum", becoming the first municipality in the country to ratify this initiative through a municipal by-law. The city has more than 150 large-scale murals, as well as an entire neighborhood in which a strategic intervention through art has been done, the Sarmiento district. This is why Godoy Cruz has become also the first city in the country to have a quarter whose facades have been completely painted with murals.

## Objectives

- To restore through art city walls and facades as part of the public space.
- To spread the news about human rights, as well as events, key people and related developments.
- To make the citizenry aware of the value of public space and its use and care.
- To promote the city from the point of view of culture, recreation and tourism.



Mural Paintings occupy various walls of the city.

## Methodology

Due to the tremendous impact generated by the first murals, the residents and neighborhood organizations began to suggest that some damaged or graffiti-strewn walls could be restored by having an artist painting a mural. It is because of this demand that the program has found continuity. Since the beginning, the residents have been involved in proposing subjects to be painted by the artists, as well as in the care and conservation of the murals. For their part, some companies have also supported the project. For example, certain paint shops sponsor the initiative by donating paint or giving discounts, as part of their engagement with the community.



**An artist participating in the Godoy Cruz Mural Meetings**

Prior to the Meeting, the available public spaces are selected along with the themes. The messages of the murals are related to the dissemination of Human Rights, bearing in mind their social and cultural impact.

In 2013, the fifth year of the Meeting was held, spotlighting Argentinean cinema in order to pay homage to national actors, directors and films that have left an imprint on the collective consciousness. On this occasion, the murals were painted on the walls along the bicycle path, which forms part of the usual route of citizens who wish to do sport and breathe clean air.

A municipal registry of the murals was set up in order to prepare different municipal policies linked to art and tourism, such as the organization, for example, of guided thematic routes (on foot or bicycle) that foster tourism. These routes are also addressed to the entire citizenry and schools in the department.

## Social and urban context

Godoy Cruz was founded in 1885. It is now one of the most urbanized cities in the province of Mendoza. It has a population of approximately 200,000 inhabitants spread across 6 districts and a surface area of 156 km<sup>2</sup>.



**View of Godoy Cruz**

The Meetings are held in different areas of the city, especially in the marginalized neighbourhoods and crowded spaces.

## Assessment

The Meetings have been growing each year, in terms of numbers and importance, given the experience acquired by the citizenry and the Municipality.

### **Strengths:**

The community has a strong identification with the murals and shows a feeling of ownership towards the paintings and cares for them.

### **Future proposals:**

To continue with this experience and improve each new Meeting.



**The community is strongly identified with the murals of their own buildings.**

## Contact

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