THE ART OF LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL 2018 ISN’T AS SURPRISING AS LAST YEAR, BUT IT STILL ASTOUnDS

The art component of Life is Beautiful is every bit as ambitious as it has been in past years, but it’s lacking the indelible mark that Santa Fe’s art collective Meow Wolf provided last year when it took over the Art Basel space. However, Steve Wolf’s new Vegas landmark—the area’s art, entertainment, retail and dining complex set to open near Palace Station next year—does have a presence: a 26-foot-tall, projection-mapped skull called “Whzzo-Mugs,” created by Juxtaposition studio and sculptor Joshua Miko. To be fair, there are no real disappointments—like the year that flaming sent that underwhelming, unprecedented forest-in-a-public-place, whose biggest visual impact came from the small army of security guards surrounding it. Most of the 2018 installations didn’t quite get to a level where everything that followed was bound to fall a bit short.

That said, there’s a lot to love here. Once again, the Justin Bieber studio has curated a shining assortment of muralists, with a few eye-popping standouts. Edge Zirinsky’s piece at 3rd Street, adjacent to the Power House, is a bold, punchy ode to female empowerment. It’s also proving one of the fest’s most popular Instagram backdrops.