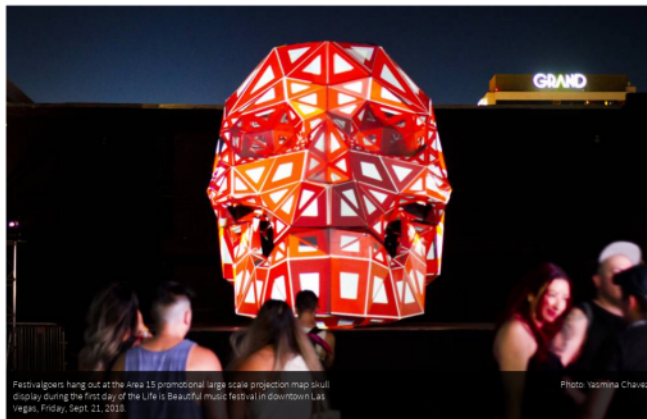


THE ART OF LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL 2018 ISN'T AS SURPRISING AS LAST YEAR, BUT IT STILL ASTOUNDS



Festivalgoers hang out at the Area 15 promotional large scale projection map skull display during the first day of the Life is Beautiful music festival in downtown Las Vegas, Friday, Sept. 21, 2018. Photo: Yachina Chavez

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- 3. Classic Vegas steakhouse Golden Steer celebrates its 60th anniversary
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- 5. The elrow Family aims to bring a one-of-a-kind Brazilian bash to Encore Beach Club

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The art component of Life is Beautiful is every bit as ambitious as it has been in past years, but it's lacking the indescribable wow that Santa Fe art collective Meow Wolf provided last year, when it took over the Art Motel space. (However, Meow Wolf's new Vegas landlord—the Area 15 art, entertainment, retail and dining complex, set to open near Palace Station next year—does have a presence: a 12-foot-tall, projection-mapped skull called "Shogyo Mujo," created by BARTKRESA studio and sculptor Joshua Harker.) To be fair, there are no real disappointments—like the year that Banksy sent that underwhelming, unrepresentative forest-in-a-truck piece, whose biggest visual impact came from the small army of security guards surrounding it—but Meow Wolf elevated LIB's art game 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 JustKids studio has curated a striking assortment of murals, with a few eye-popping standouts. Egle Zvirblyte's piece at 7th Street, adjacent to the Forest House, is a bold, punchy ode to female empowerment; it's also proving one of the fest's most popular Instagram backdrops.

