

## **News Release**

For Immediate Release

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### **Big Car Gallery to end 7-year run in Fountain Square**

*Nonprofit will expand creativity programs, efforts to boost city's livability*

After hosting new art shows on the First Friday of each month for seven years and bringing hundreds of eclectic music shows, readings, film screenings, performances, parties and events to Indianapolis, Big Car Gallery ends its run in Fountain Square in December.

Big Car will celebrate its run of success in this Murphy Art Center upstairs studio — a room previously used for storing coffee — with a closing party on Dec. 14 from 7-9 p.m. The event is free, but donations will be accepted to Big Car, a successful nonprofit creativity organization that has grown well beyond the gallery's four walls.

While the gallery ends its run, Big Car will be as busy as ever, operating the Service Center for Culture and Community — an 11,500-square foot former tire shop in the Lafayette Square neighborhood — and the Made for Each Other community art space on 10<sup>th</sup> Street in the Near East Side. Big Car will also keep an office for its downtown public programming effort, The Department of Yes, at Earth House in the Lockerbie area. Big Car will collaborate with Earth House on some programming at the historic church.

While leaving Fountain Square isn't an easy decision, Big Car's leadership sees the neighborhood as transitioning into more of a commercial district — as seen over the years with Mass Ave. Also, other areas of the city, like Lafayette Square and the Near East are excited about the possibilities that art and creativity can bring to them.

“We have new opportunities to reach new audiences who deserve access to creative and cultural experiences,” said Big Car executive director Jim Walker. “Big Car is going to be doing even more exciting things. Leaving the Murphy will help us focus on what we're really about now — using creativity as a catalyst for a better Indianapolis.”

At Service Center at 3819 Lafayette Rd., Big Car offers regular hours with drop-in creativity programs, attractive murals, a large garden atop the parking lot and events like the recent Think Farm idea party during the Spirit & Place Festival. Big Car also received a grant through the East 10th Street Civic Association to continue programming the Made for Each Other space at 2807 E. 10th St. Michael Runge, also of the Know No Stranger performance collective, will coordinate programs there.

Big Car — started in 2004 by a small collective of writers, artist and thinkers — was the first gallery in Fountain Square to open with new shows each month on the First Friday schedule, eventually drawing as many as 1,500 people through its doors throughout the night of an opening. Big Car’s steady stream of events by national and local performers — including events like Found and Post Secret — helped shape Fountain Square into the thriving arts and entertainment destination it is today.

When Big Car Gallery opened in 2005, most storefronts in the neighborhood just southeast of Downtown stood empty and studio tours of the Murphy took place only a few times per year. Big Car was the first arts nonprofit based in the neighborhood in recent history, followed over the years by iMOCA, Primary Colours, Second Story, Motus and Heartland Truly Moving Pictures.

“Big Car has accomplished its goals in Fountain Square: helping to make it a neighborhood with a strong creative identity where residents can easily access the arts,” said Anne Laker, Big Car’s board chair. “With the completion of The Cultural Trail and new tenants at the Murphy, the neighborhood will continue to flourish. Big Car can now take its model for creative place making to other areas of the city.”

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*Big Car, an Indianapolis-based 501c3 nonprofit, uses creativity as a catalyst to a better city. By providing and supporting unique, educational, participatory, playful and personal experiences, Big Car engages people of all ages and backgrounds in art making and creative problem-solving — inspiring them to be creative thinkers and involved, connected citizens. Big Car is the organization behind the projects Service Center for Culture and Community, Made for Each Other and The Department of Yes.*

*Learn more at [www.bigcar.org](http://www.bigcar.org).*