News

Look Out For This Giant $6,000 Mural Stolen Before Basel

By Allie Conti Thu., Dec. 5 2013 at 7:00 AM   31 Comments

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Phil Fung spent his birthday painting in Wynwood, which is exactly how he wanted it. The well-known Miami artist gleefully sweated over a 6 x 12 foot canvas just north of Panther Coffee from about noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday. He was more than 90 percent complete with the mural when he went home that night, he says, and planned to finish the neutral toned portrait of his friend the following day.

He never got the chance. Around 10 p.m., this text rolled in from Fung's graffiti artist friend: "Yo man, somebody pinched your painting."

Fung's work was the only one to go missing from the series, which was commissioned by the owners of the mixed-use development project Wynwood Central. Sometime after dusk, a thief (or thieves) apparently used power tools to remove the 34 bolts that secured the painting onto the wall. The piece -- which Fung has retroactively titled "Hijack" -- is worth about 6 grand, he says, and was to be sold in his Pinecrest gallery post-Basel.

None of the canvasses was protected by plexiglass or anything, which made them an easy target for bandits. "It would have taken about a minute," Fung says. "I didn't think anyone would steal it, but that's Miami."

The American-Chinese-Jamaican pop painter is scrambling to start from scratch so that he can capitalize on his primo display spot in between NE 24th and 25th Streets on 2nd Avenue. Understandably, though, he'd like the first incarnation of "Hijack" to be returned.

"If it was some random guy from Europe who got drunk and just had to have it, I'll never see it again," he says. "But if it was some local, it'll pop up on Instagram sooner or later."

courtesy of Phil Fung

If you see this mural around town -- shoot us an e-mail. It belongs to artist Phil Fung, who runs a studio in South Miami.