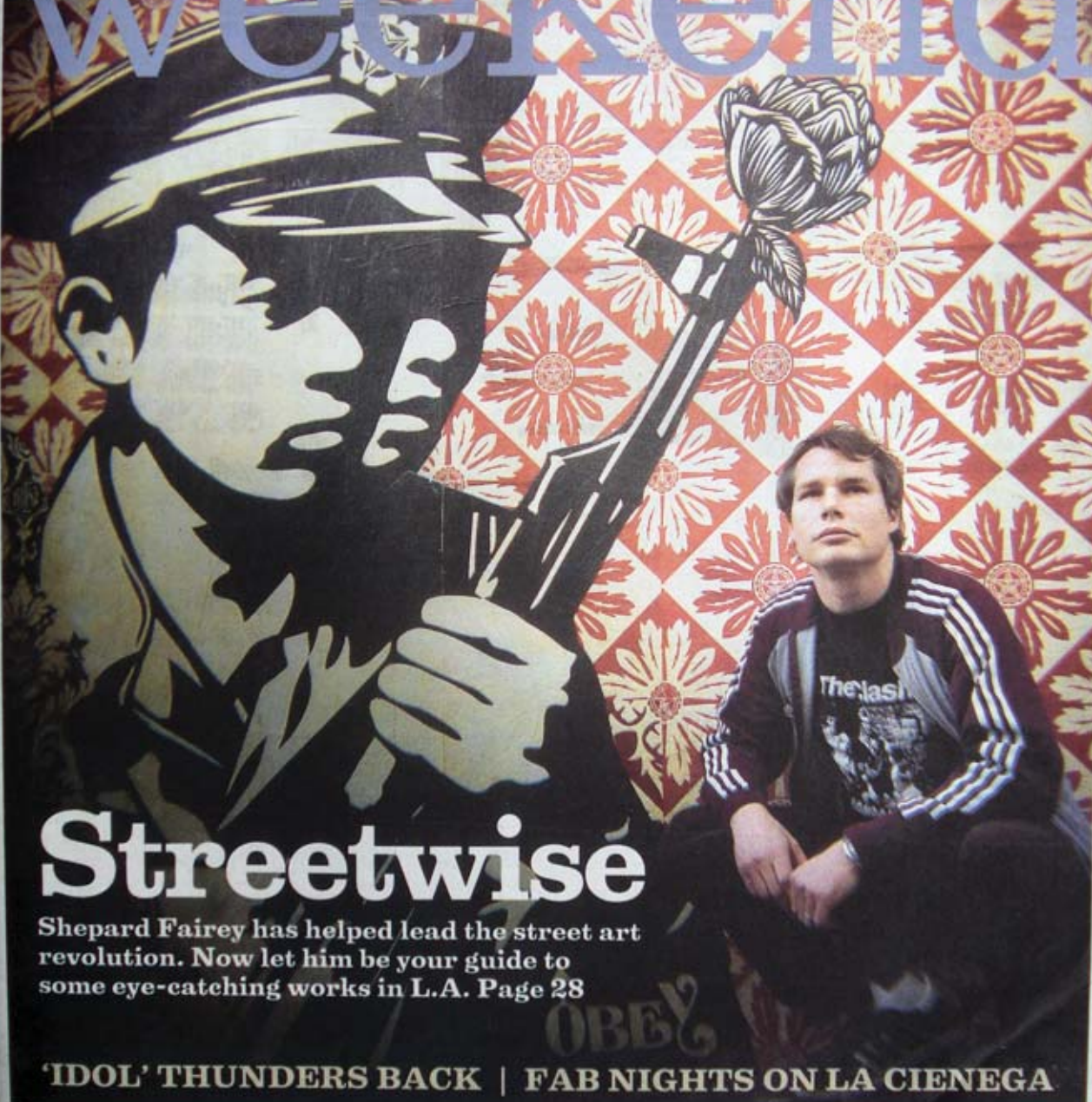


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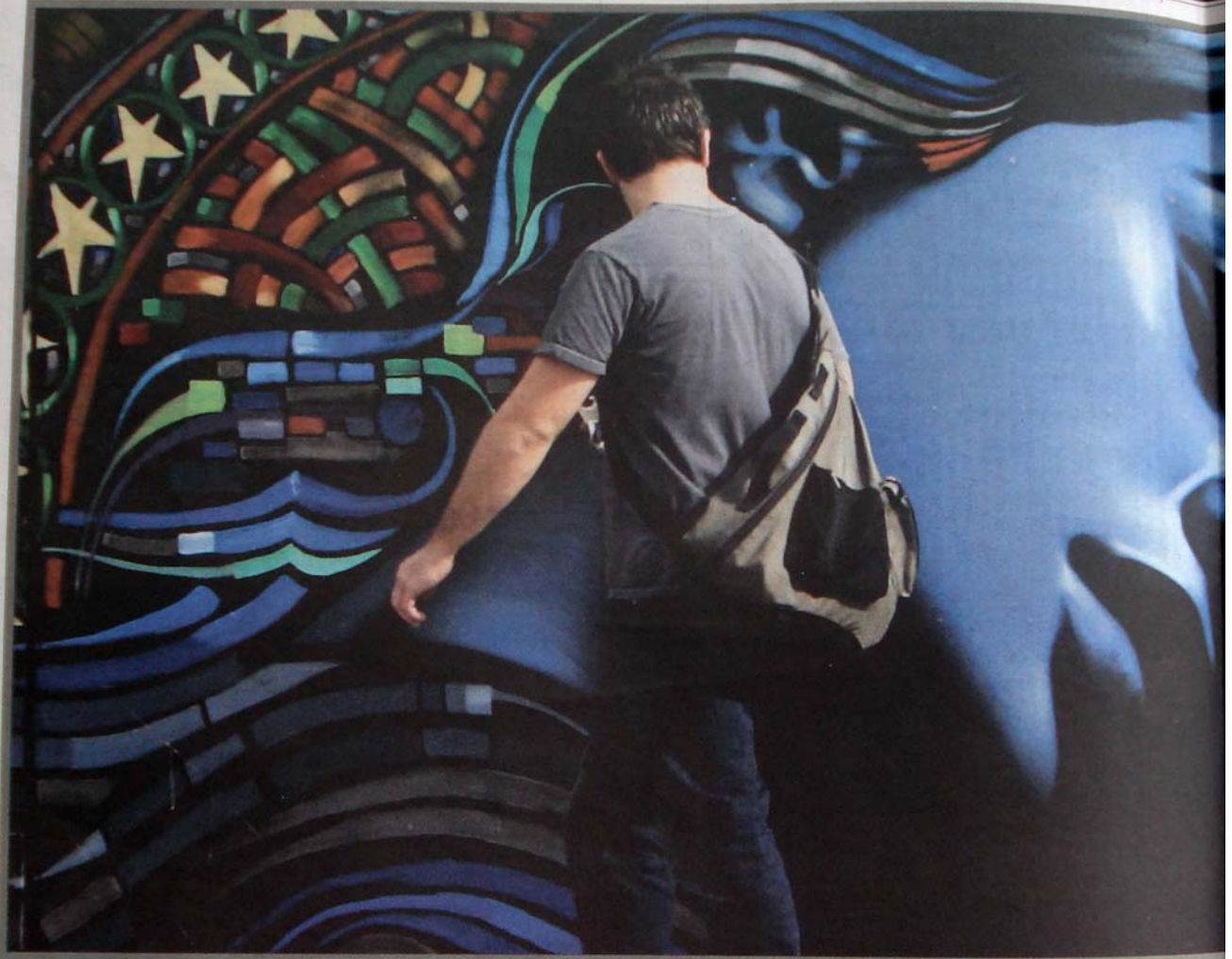
Streetwise

Shepard Fairey has helped lead the street art revolution. Now let him be your guide to some eye-catching works in L.A. Page 28

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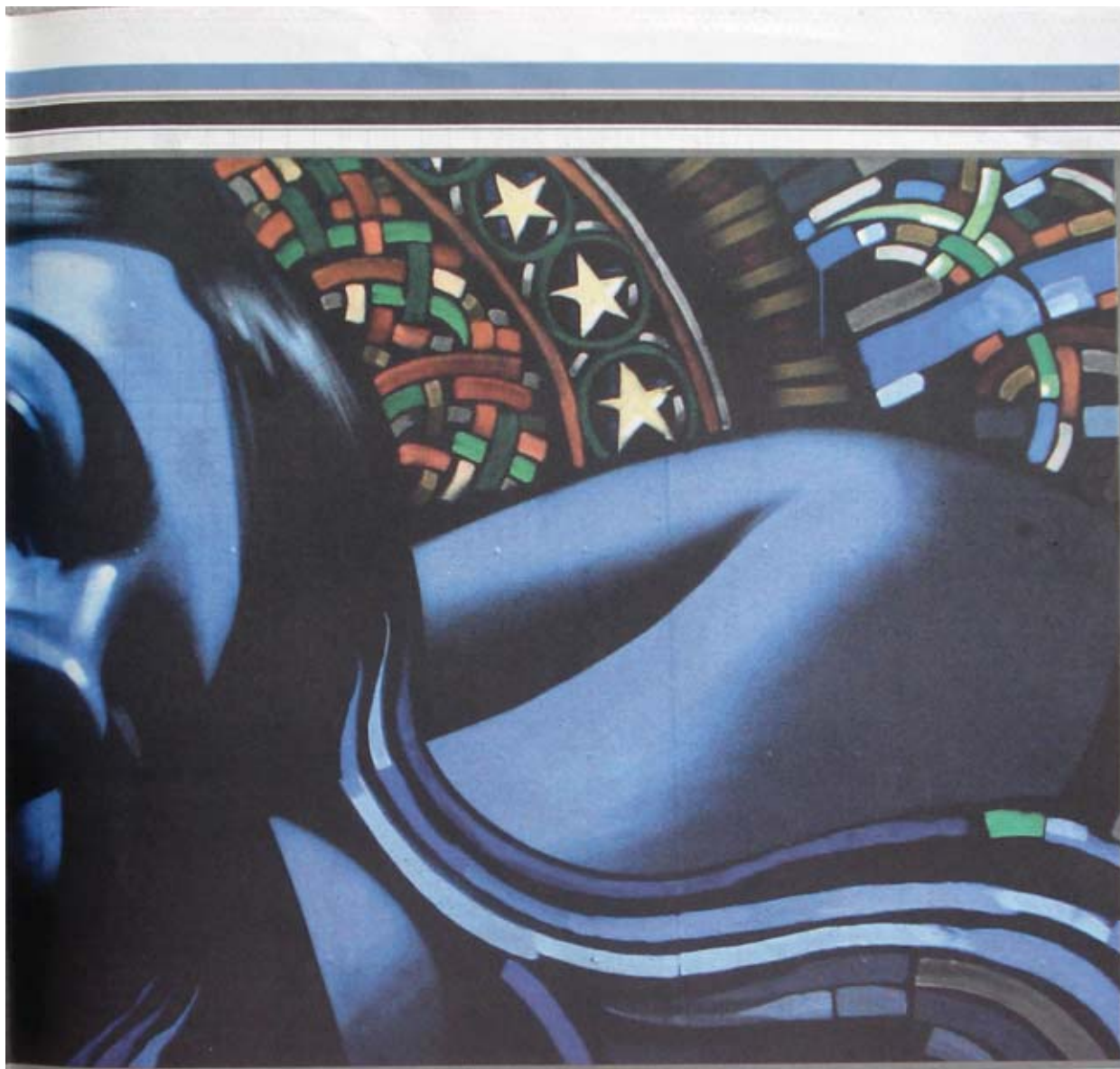
ALFRESCO

Street artist Shepard Fairey is at the wheel on a tour of ad hoc artworks you can judge from the avenues of L.A.

By CYNTHIA DEA
Times Staff Writer

YOU'VE probably never met Shepard Fairey, but chances are you've seen his face on the street more than once. Not his own visage, of course, but that of pro wrestler turned Hollywood actor Andre the Giant, with the word "obey" emblazoned underneath, on posters and stickers Fairey has rendered in red, black and white.

When Fairey first took his "Obey" campaign to the streets of East Coast cities in the early 1990s, he was a student at the Rhode Island School of Design, using the printing equipment on campus and at a Kinko's to make his mark. He gained a following among skate punks, who gladly obliged to deface public property with the image wherever



GERARDO MOLINA FOR ARTIST PUNCH

they went.

More than a decade later, Fairley is the co-founder of a budding L.A.-based design studio and a magazine. Galleries and museums have shown his works. The ominous "Icon Face," as he calls his Andre the Giant piece, can still be seen throughout Los Angeles, San Francisco, Philadelphia, New York, London and Tokyo, as well as on a clothing line.

But on a sunny afternoon last week, the 36-year-old South Carolina native was taking us on a tour of street art in L.A. The goal: to find examples that are legal or, at the very least, tolerated enough by the locals so that the works won't be disappearing any time soon. Planning such an itinerary is not particularly easy, considering that lots of street art

goes up illegally. The images, in the form of spray paint, stencils, posters and stickers, can either enhance or tarnish city life, depending on whom you ask.

"People channel their energy in different ways, and I think that street art is not all positive, but there definitely have been positive things that come out of it," Fairley says. "A lot of it comes down to people want something to show for their existence."

Making a statement

Graphic artist, guerrilla artist or vandal — whatever you want to call him — Fairley is probably the best-known American street artist around. On this day, he is zooming [See *Street art*, Page 30]

SPRAY IT ON:

A portrait of a blue woman with long flowing black hair was painted on a temporary plywood wall on La Brea Avenue near 2nd Street by aerosol artists Reba and El Mac.