



Backgrounder

CowParade is the world's largest and foremost public art event, capturing the hearts and imaginations of hundreds of millions of people around the world over the past 10 years. Through its live gala and Internet auctions, held after each event, CowParade has raised more than \$25 million for worthy charities, including the Special Olympics, Save the Children and the Dana Farber Cancer Institute. To date, more than 5,000 of its three-dimensional fiberglass cow canvases have inspired upwards of 10,000 artists.

In 1997, Walter Knapp, a prominent department store window dresser in Zurich, Switzerland, conceived the idea of a public art exhibit in which artists would practice their creative skills on full size cow-shaped canvases that would be placed on sidewalks and in public areas. He modeled the cow canvas on his native Swiss brown cow and reproduced the likeness of this breed in three clay prototypes. During the summer of 1999, some 800 cow canvases were painted on by mostly Swiss artists, and then put on display throughout the Greater Zurich community.

The cows were seen by hundreds of thousands of enthralled viewers, including Peter Hanig, a fashion shoe store owner from Chicago, who had the foresight to envision herds of cows, painted by Chicago artists, displayed along the length of Chicago's famous Michigan Avenue.

At almost the same time, Jerry Elbaum, then a practicing attorney in Hartford, Connecticut, learned of the Zurich event and immediately became enraptured with the concept. Owing to their mutual interest, Hanig and Elbaum were introduced and proceeded to work together to bring the event to Chicago, debuting on June 15, 1999 and continuing through the end of October of that year. During this first event, 340 incredible cow creations graced the sidewalks and plazas of central Chicago and were seen by upwards of 10 million people. Both the local and national media showcased and reported on what was then called "Cows on Parade."

CowParade, as it is known today throughout the world, was born in the fall of 1999 when Elbaum formed CowParade Holdings Corporation and created the CowParade brand and distinctive logo. An entrepreneur and lawyer, Elbaum could not at that time have any real sense of the global reach and impact which this endeavor would have in just a few short years. While the Chicago event was still in progress, Elbaum was contacted by a prominent individual from New York City who wanted to bring the event to the five boroughs and soon "CowParade New York 2000" was in its formative stages.

Without any great regrets, Elbaum left the practice of law and began to focus all of his attention on CowParade. He was soon joined by his son-in-law, Ron Fox, who also had been an attorney in Elbaum's law office. Elbaum focused on the management of the overall brand, while Fox dealt with the critical issues that had to be resolved in order for the NYC event to open as announced.

On June 13, 2000, more than 2,000 invited guests attended the grand opening celebration for CowParade New York at the FAO Schwarz store on Fifth Avenue. The event offered, for the first time, the production and sale of ceramic and resin figurines of some of the New York sculptures, which has since led to the introduction of what is today a wonderful array of licensed products utilizing the unique CowParade art, including rugs, ceramics, notepads and much more.

Since then, over 50 cities across six continents have hosted the CowParade bovines, including locales such as Denver, London, Paris, Moscow, Cape Town, Tokyo and most recently Costa Rica. Nearly ten years later, the brand continues to expand, with exhibitions planned in Madrid, San Diego, Taipei, Bogotá, Malta and Rome in the next two years.