

MURAL ARTS PROGRAM COMPLETES WORK ON GATEWAY PROJECT AT PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

How Philly Moves *Dedication Scheduled for Mural Arts Month, October 2011*

PHILADELPHIA – September 19, 2011 – The City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program has completed the two-year creation and four-month installation of *How Philly Moves*, a project that places an extraordinary and vibrant new work of community-based public art on the parking decks facing Interstate 95 at the **Philadelphia International Airport**. *How Philly Moves*, a project produced in cooperation with the City of Philadelphia Office of Transportation and Utilities, has transformed the garage into a memorable “gateway” for travelers and visitors to the region, adding spectacular beauty and color to the airport’s landscape and enlivening the travel experience of millions. The official dedication of the *How Philly Moves* mural project will take place at a public event at 5 pm on October 12, 2011 during Mural Arts Month at the Philadelphia International Airport with Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter. (Press interviews available at 4:30 pm.)



How Philly Moves (in progress)

© 2011 Jacques-Jean Tiziou, Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, and the Mural Arts Advocates

Photo credit for all photos: Steve Weinik for Mural Arts Program

The nearly 85,000 square foot mural, incorporating the photographic work of and designed by artist Jacques-Jean “JJ” Tiziou, took two years to complete. The mural is the largest square footage of any project ever completed in the over 3,500 created by the Mural Arts Program, and is among the largest murals created in the United States. The project employed nine artists, including individuals in various Mural Arts Program workforce development and re-entry initiatives. With the full team of artists and assistants, as well as senior-level Mural Arts Program Art Education students and members of the public who participated in community paint days, over 1,000 people have contributed to the painting of this mural. The *How Philly Moves* project builds on Philadelphia’s longstanding commitment to the production of public art and has culminated in the creation of a dynamic and iconic new ‘postcard’ image for the city.

“The completion of the *How Philly Moves* mural is a tremendous addition to the City of Murals,” said **Mayor Nutter**. “*How Philly Moves* provides an inviting gateway to the city. Designed by Philadelphia artists, depicting

dancing Philadelphians, and installed with the help of our citizens, this mural will be one of the first ways we welcome visitors to Philadelphia.”

This project was the brainchild of **Deputy Mayor of Transportation and Utilities Rina Cutler**, who got stuck in traffic near the airport. She kept looking at the airport garages and decided to reach out to Mural Arts to help her achieve the goal of creating a gateway project welcoming travelers to Philadelphia. This will be the first major project of an initiative by the Mural Arts Program to create stunning and exciting gateways into the city, as well as first in a series about art and transportation. “*How Philly Moves* is the perfect launching point for what I hope will be a series of Mural Arts projects that will welcome residents, commuters, and visitors to Philadelphia. Whether you arrive by car, train, transit, or plane, you should be welcomed to our city with a positive inspiring image,” says Cutler.

TIMELINE

In August 2010, a team of five muralists hired to paint the project began setting up shop in vacant retail space in The Gallery at Market East donated by the Pennsylvania Real Estate Investment Trust. The space was used as a studio for the painting of the *How Philly Moves* panels that became the mural. The artists



occupied this space through early April 2011, creating and painting the 1,504 panels of parachute cloth needed to create the mural. Three community paint days were open to the public for public participation in the creation of the mural. In fall 2010, Local 21 prepared the airport’s parking garages C, D, E, and F by power washing, priming, and painting them black. Installation of the mural panels on the facade of the airport garage began in early April 2011, and was completed in late July 2011, with a final dedication to come on October 12, 2011.

How Philly Moves celebrates Philadelphia and welcomes guests from all over the world. This mural gives visitors a first taste of the liveliness that awaits them in the City of Brotherly Love. Across the top decks of the airport parking garages, a diverse range of luminous dancing figures swirl, unified in a rich field of black. At 55 mph, the energy of the movement is unmistakable. The joy of dance is easy to share; it is infectious, universal, and accessible to all. From Philadelphia’s longstanding tradition of tap dance to the traditional Aztec dance brought by more recent immigrants, the variety of the imagery fosters an appreciation for every element of our shared community through the common bond of dance and feature dancers from all over the Philadelphia region.

Philadelphia International Airport is the busiest gateway to the Delaware Valley region, hosting nearly 32 million passengers per year who travel on commuter, national, and international flights. The main visual feature on the Interstate 95 approach to Philadelphia International Airport is the parking garage that stretches from Terminal A to Terminal F – nearly a half-mile-long façade of concrete deck parking in three structures. The parking garages are visible to traffic entering and exiting the airport as well as Interstate 95.

“We are very excited about this spectacular mural,” said **Airport CEO Mark Gale**. “As a gateway to Philadelphia, it creates an uplifting impression of the Airport and our City. This lively mural will provide a visual welcome to our passengers as they travel to and from the Airport.”

A total of 174 dancers of all ages, style, ability, race, and gender were photographed as part of an ongoing series of photo sessions, through spring 2010. Overall, JJ photographed over 18,000 frames -- and the final design for *How Philly Moves* features images of 26 Philadelphians dancing, some over 60 feet high. More information on the project can be found at www.howphillymoves.org.

Jane Golden, Executive Director of the Mural Arts Program said, “The *How Philly Moves* project is a reflection of the diverse communities that make up the Greater Philadelphia region. I love that this reflection is a representation of our city and it will become an iconic image for Philadelphia. This project helps build Philadelphia’s international presence and gives us a fantastic opportunity to greet the world with our most creative foot forward.”

Beyond the Mural

Other aspects of the *How Philly Moves* project include a documentary produced by **The Big Picture Alliance**, and a permanent exhibition inside the airport’s public space which will provide the context of the project as a whole. Like the mural, *GATEWAY* will deliver a universal message about art, culture, diversity, and community. A preliminary trailer for the documentary, which is in progress, can be seen here: <http://youtu.be/HFrNdgjpLhw>. **An early aerial view of the project**, with the first 12 figures installed, can be seen in this brief clip here: <http://bigpicturealliance.org/gateway-footage-sneak-peek/>.

“We are grateful and thrilled that Jane Golden and Deputy Mayor of Transportation Rina Cutler reached to us to collaborate,” says *GATEWAY* Producer and **Big Picture Alliance Executive Director Teri Yago-Ryan**. “Just as Jane reminds us that art ignites change, *GATEWAY* explores the impact of such change, following the people, places, and stories that lie within this meaningful act of public art and civic engagement.”

As part of the project, the Airport’s Exhibitions Program has organized a permanent exhibition, *The How Philly Moves Mural: A Public Art Project by the Mural Arts Program and Photographer Jacques-Jean*

Tiziou, will be installed in the Terminal B-C Baggage Claim area for the public to view beginning on October 12. The exhibition will consist of 162 still images of dancing Philadelphians who were photographed as part of the project, as well as a short video documentary created by the Big Picture Alliance.

ARTISTS

Working alongside **Jonathan Laidacker**, the project's lead muralist, were five assistant muralists: **Charlie Newman**, **Laura Velez**, and **Tom Walton**, all of whom have worked with Mural Arts as assistant muralists and are former classmates of Jonathan's at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; **Efrain Herrera**, another veteran Mural Arts assistant muralist



who frequently works with muralist Meg Saligman (and whose uncle, Cesar Viveros, a veteran Mural Arts muralist who applied to be photographed for the project and was shot by JJ, was one of the 26 figures that made it into the final mural design); and **Tjai Abdullah**, a Mural Arts assistant muralist who began studying art through Mural Arts when she was incarcerated at Riverside Correctional Facility and now gives mural tours as a docent. The two additional assistants were **Anthony Peel**, who began work with Mural Arts through their Youth Violence Reduction Partnership program, and **Virgilio Perez**, who also came to the project through the Mural Arts Program Restorative Justice Re-Entry Program.

Lead muralist Jonathan Laidacker answered a call to artists for a 'Mural Season' sponsored by the SproutFund Organization in Pittsburgh. Little did Laidacker know that in answering this call, a career was being introduced to him. In 2005, after a year gaining experience as a muralist, studying the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, and doggedly pursuing any contacts with them he could, Jon made the decision to move to Philadelphia. In his six years in Philadelphia, Laidacker has earned his Masters in Fine Arts from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts ('07), lead 15 community mural projects, and has developed and conducted a number of community painting workshops. Most recently, he just completed production on *How Philly Moves*.

Lead artist JJ Tiziou is a photographer specializing in portraiture and movement documentation; he has never encountered an un-photogenic person in his life. His images are used both in corporate and editorial contexts as well as arts and activism. Based in West Philly, JJ uses his work to celebrate the beautiful people around him who are working to make the world a better place. Born in Washington, DC, to French parents, he has called Philadelphia home since 1997. Samples of his work can be found at <http://www.jjtiziou.net>.

How Philly Moves is funded by the Philadelphia International Airport, the Philadelphia Parking Authority, Bank of America, PTS Foundation, and US Airways.

PARTNERS

Pennsylvania Real Estate Investment Trust (PREIT) donated over 10,000 square feet of space at The Gallery at Market East to the Mural Arts Program in support of arts in Philadelphia and as part of its long-term community partnership with the organization. Transforming unoccupied retail space into a vibrant art studio gave the muralists the opportunity to create a dynamic piece of art while allowing the public to discover first-hand the unique project and to participate in the mural-making process through a series of paint days. As a central gathering place and highly trafficked venue, The Gallery was an ideal location, and the creative use of available space enhanced the shoppers' experience. The innovative collaboration was also a part of PREIT Cares, the company's springboard for charitable giving and community awareness. The Gallery at Market East is owned and managed by Pennsylvania Real Estate Investment Trust (PREIT).

Philadelphia International Airport is owned and operated by the City of Philadelphia. The Airport is a self-sustaining entity that operates without the use of local tax dollars. It is one of the largest economic engines in Pennsylvania, generating an estimated \$14.2 billion in spending to the regional economy and employing a workforce of nearly 42,000. Visit the official Philadelphia International Airport website at www.phl.org.

The Philadelphia Parking Authority is an integral part of the City's efforts to provide an efficient, well-organized transportation system that serves the needs of the public and encourages economic development. As such, the PPA's responsibilities range from managing parking and related traffic management programs on the streets of Philadelphia, to building and operating parking lots and garages.

The Mural Arts Program is the nation's largest mural program. Since 1984, the Mural Arts Program has created over 3,500 murals and works of public art, earning Philadelphia international recognition as the "City of Murals." The Mural Arts Program engages over 100 communities each year in the transformation of neighborhoods through the mural-making process, while award-winning, free art education programs serve nearly 1,500 youth at sites throughout the city and at-risk teens through education outreach programs. The Mural Arts Program also serves adult offenders in local prisons and rehabilitation centers, using the restorative power of art to break the cycle of crime and violence in our communities. Each year, nearly 10,000 residents and visitors tour the Mural Arts Program's outdoor art gallery, which has become part of Philadelphia's civic landscape and a source of pride and inspiration. For further information, call (215) 685-0750 or visit www.muralarts.org.

###

Editor's Note: High-resolution images are available upon request by emailing cari@reliefcomm.com.