



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 15, 2022

For More Information:

Lauren Coakley Vincent, President + CEO
Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District
(203) 908-3622
lauren.dssd@infobridgeport.com

**DOWNTOWN BRIDGEPORT UNVEILS SIX NEW MURALS
DURING BRIDGEPORT ART TRAIL WEEKEND**

BRIDGEPORT, CT – November 15, 2022 – The Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District (DSSD) celebrated Bridgeport Art Trail weekend by highlighting the success of its collaboration with the City of Bridgeport, local and regional artists, and Downtown Bridgeport property owners to produce a series of public murals. The Bridgeport DSSD unveiled six murals over the Bridgeport Art Trail weekend, which “colored in” corners of the neighborhood and established it as an emerging public art destination.

The installations connect the new sites with other public art works at the famous “Painted Stairway” at the Broad Street Steps, the colorful ground mural at Peacock Alley, a mural honoring Mary & Eliza Freeman at 15 Elm Street, and the “Arrows Weave” mural across Elm street, among others. The Bridgeport DSSD has documented the growing body of public artwork in Downtown Bridgeport on its website at colorfulbridgeport.com/color-it-in-mural.

“We are thrilled to support the expansion of public art in Downtown Bridgeport. This commercial and residential community radiates with diversity. The Color It In series of projects have provided an opportunity to add vibrancy, spread joy, and develop the neighborhood’s identity as one flourishing at the intersection of commerce, community, and culture. Most importantly, these murals were conceived of and implemented by local and regional artists. We are proud of create opportunities for Bridgeport and area artists to grow and thrive. We thank the City of Bridgeport for providing the funding that made this work possible, and thank the artists for their vision and artistic mastery. Together we are creating a destination that welcomes residents and visitors alike to explore” said Lauren Coakley Vincent, President and CEO of the Bridgeport DSSD.

“We have tremendous talent in Bridgeport, artists of ambition and imagination who produce exquisite and powerful works in workshops and studios throughout the city,” said Office of Planning & Economic Development Deputy Director William Coleman. And it’s a real joy to see their talent on display on a larger scale in the public realm. It’s like an explosion; and it showcases all that artists bring – in spirit and in vibrancy – to the economic and community life of this city. We’re lucky to have them here. Through their work, Bridgeport has laid legitimate claim to being the arts capital of Connecticut.”

Now On View

Artist: Rick Shaefer

“Leviathan”

Location: 1198 Main Street, Bridgeport, CT
06604

“Sunlight on Seascape After Squall”

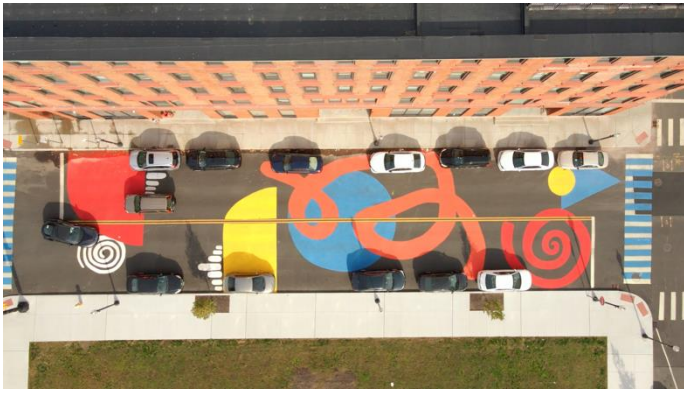
Artist: Rick Shaefer

Location: 179 Middle Street, Bridgeport, CT
06604



“Public art has the potential to inspire, confirm, enliven and invigorate,” said [Rick Shaefer](#), the artist who created the murals at 1198 Main Street and 179 Middle Street. “These are all actions which can also describe a vital and engaging Downtown. To get there, a city needs to affirm, protect, and nurture those aspects of a downtown area that foster cultural and social engagement and enjoyment. People need to feel invested in, and drawn to, this vitality. It takes time, and careful planning and implementation, but it can be done. Bridgeport has begun that process and It's the hope of all of us that it continues to attract thoughtful investment and engagement. The Arts -- galleries, theaters, clubs, studios -- are a crucial element in this mix and can play a very significant role in this revitalization. Nurture the Arts.”

Of these new works, Shaefer shared that his “two murals play off each other with the ocean in both as a unifying theme. As an artist who has a studio in Bridgeport, in a newly renovated old factory building on the South side, I was interested in portraying two historical aspects of the city that are often overlooked or unrecognized by outsiders and residents alike. The first was the emergence of a thriving community of African-Americans in what became known as Little Liberia on the Southside of the city starting in the early quarter of the 19th century. Today, two of the original homes survive only blocks from my studio building, at Metro Art Studios, as a testament to the resilience and ingenuity of this community. The second fact I wished to portray, and something I had not really been aware of myself, was that Bridgeport was a thriving shipbuilding and whaling center from the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth. Both of these historical aspects of the city are incorporated in my piece "Leviathan" which shows a tumultuous encounter between a lone sailor in a small skiff and a breaching whale. Meant as an environmental statement as well -- a call for preserving the Sound and the Oceans while respecting and protecting its inhabitants -- the piece presents this eye-to-eye encounter as a transcendent moment in a sea of tumult. My second mural (on the north wall of the Lofts building), titled " Sunlight on Seascape After Squall," continues this message of hope and resilience in a turbulent time.”



Artist: Razul Branch, assisted by Alicia Cobb, Juliana Harebin, Aisha Nailah, and Jason Streater

“Colorful Crosswalks”

Location: 90 Golden Hill Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604

“As an Artist and Public Art consultant, it was a pleasure to be the lead designer for this Ground Mural on Golden Hill as part of the Skateport programming expansion and Color It in Public Spaces projects,” said [Razul Branch](#), the artist who created the mural at 90 Golden Hill Street. “The design was inspired by the fun, free form organic movements of roller skaters movements across outdoor surfaces. We wanted something energetic, playful, and exciting; yet simple and bold that catches the eye at almost any angle of viewing. I hope people see that so much more is possible in the realm of public art and encourage them to support more projects like this in the near future. Public Art is our modern day hieroglyphics, they not only tell a story about our past but give us direction for the future and the inspiration necessary to keep pressing forward.”

Artist: Billi Kid, assisted by Will Corprew and Luis Lopez

“BSKTBL”

Location: 1163 Main Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604



“It was honor to celebrate the city of Bridgeport by adding my artwork to its landscape,” said [Billi Kid](#), the artist who created the mural at 1163 Main Street. “The NBALAB has been here for three short years, and we love being part of the community in meaningful way.”



Artist: Octavio Logo

“The Great P.T. Barnum Mural Extravaganza”

Location: 52 Fairfield Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604

“P.T. Barnum’s life, influence, and visionary personality inspired me to bring the black and white memories from the past to a full color allegory of grandiose and magical dimensions where imagination and art move powerful and creative energies,” said [Octavio Logo](#), the artist who created the mural at 52 Fairfield Avenue. “I hope when people see the mural that they feel pride for their city, its past, its characters and history, but also for its present and future. I want people to get excited, inspired to pursue artistic expressions to tell their stories, and to embrace the space they live with positive hopes. Mostly, I want people to enjoy their visit to Downtown Bridgeport. To me, public art is more than beautification, more than random art in random places. Location, community, and message – if a piece of art is created considering these three elements, the art can be called public and can create a sense of belonging, care, pride that is vital for cities and towns.”



Artist: Micaela Levesque

“Mediterraneo”

Location: 272 Fairfield Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604

“Public art is important because it gives beautiful artwork the chance out live outside of the traditional gallery, rather in the forefront of our everyday lives,” said [Micaela Levesque](#), the artist who created the “Mediterraneo” mural located at 272 Fairfield Avenue. “Mediterraneo is inspired by the charming island of Procida, which is a cultural center of Italy. Owner of Trattoria ‘A Vucchella, Pasquale di Martino, described it as a special geographical location in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea where all different traders could connect by boats and bridge continents together through a multicultural pathway. This artwork highlights the connections between people and lands which is ever present in Bridgeport. I hope that a calming sensation takes over commuters and pedestrians as they pass by the mural. The warm colors of this mural are intended to serve as a breath of fresh air and evoke a sense of relaxation. I just want people to feel grounded in that very moment.”

Artist: Brad Noble, assisted by James Chantler Brown and Mike Vartuli
“Men in Black”
Location: 211 State Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604



“Public art creates a real space for people, and helps connect and build a real sense of community. In fact, the inspiration to design and paint the Men in Black mural came from the history and relevance surrounding UFO researcher, publisher, and former Bridgeport resident Albert Bender,” said [Brad Noble](#), founder of Art of Everyone and the artist who created the mural at 211 State Street. “Bender claimed that he was contacted multiple times by the Men in Black, who demanded that he cease his investigations into UFO research, or suffer the consequences. Bender lived just two blocks from the mural wall on Broad Street. I hope when people see the mural, that there is an appreciation and a sense of awe about the out-of-this-world phenomena that allegedly took place so many years ago.”

The Bridgeport DSSD felt that it was important to document the process of creating public art, as well as the final product. To that end, a partnership with Gary Judkins, founder of [Pivot Language Media](#), was established to film and photograph the artists at work. “Documenting the artwork being created in Downtown Bridgeport has been an enlightening experience,” said Judkins. “Each artist that was selected approached the assignment with precision, creativity, and fun. Through my videos I hope people will see these things and appreciate the process. Public art is important because it helps provide personality to a city.” The complete series of installation videos will be released on Colorful Bridgeport’s social media later this month. Follow [@colorfulbridgeport](#) on Instagram and YouTube to see the series roll out.

#

Bridgeport
Downtown Special
Services District

DSSD

About Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District

The Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District (DSSD) serves the vibrant and diverse businesses within the 30 blocks in of our heart-shaped neighborhood. Our role at the Bridgeport DSSD is to support the needs of growing businesses in the district, from keeping the Downtown clean and friendly, connecting them to city resources to offering free marketing and advertising, and everything in between. Throughout the year we deliver sanitation services, our friendly team of Ambassadors keep the district clean and safe, we promote the district through the dynamic Colorful Bridgeport campaign, and produce community events including the Downtown Farmers Market.