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CAPITAL WALLS MURAL IN SCHENECTADY TO BE UNVEILED WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 18, 2024

Downtown Revitalization Initiative Award to Capital Walls Mural Project Adds New Mural on Barrett Street

Schenectady, NY Capital Walls, a public art initiative founded in 2016, has completed a new mural in Schenectady on Barrett Street. This is the second of a series of new three murals in the city of Schenectady thanks to a statewide Downtown Revitalization Initiative award of \$67,000. The newest mural, located at 1031 Barrett Street Schenectady, NY on a warehouse owned by The Costumer, is titled "Celestial Dreams-A Youthful Overture," and was created by Scotia-based artists Alicia Lea & Josh Boyark.

Mural Artist Alicia Lea said "I am deeply honored to have the opportunity to contribute to the creation of this new mural, recognizing the significance of public art in uniting and inspiring communities." Alicia is the owner of Paint Cohoes, a gallery and teaching space where "art is for everyone." That spirit is captured in the artists' new Schenectady mural, which Lea says, "strives to transport viewers into a realm of imagination and innovation, symbolizing the vibrant energy of our younger generation."

Mural Artist Josh Boyark said "I am deeply honored to have been a part of this vibrant mural project, which has become a beacon of hope and unity in our community. Witnessing how it has transformed a space and touched hearts, I've seen firsthand how art can make people feel seen, heard, and safe. This mural has become a symbol of our community's resilience and strength, and I am humbled to have played a role in creating a sense of belonging and pride among its residents."

An official unveiling of the mural will take place at 3pm on Wednesday September 18, 2024 at 1031 Barrett Street, Schenectady.

Albany Center Gallery, Albany Barn, and Electric City Barn collaborated in development, management, and execution of the #CapitalWalls mural, with support from The Costumer and Schenectady County Metroplex Development. The DRI award is administered by NYS Homes and Community Renewal. Foundational support for Capital Walls by Albany Parking Authority.

Erik Johnsen, owner of The Costumer said, "This inspiring public art aligns perfectly with The Costumer's core mission, passion, and values. We proudly serve scholastic theatre programs nationwide, providing students with the tools and inspiration for new ways of thinking, doing, and feeling through the performing arts. The fact that this work was brought about by the partnership of local artists and sponsors from around the community makes it all the more gratifying."

Casey Polomaine, Executive Director of Albany Barn & Electric City Barn, said "Capital Walls is thrilled to partner with The Costumer for our newest mural, "Celestial Dreams - A Youthful Overture" and we're so thankful to Alicia and Josh for sharing their time and talent with us in bringing it to life. This mural is beautiful and I couldn't be prouder to add it to our repertoire of public art"

Tony Iadicicco, Executive Director of Albany Center Gallery and curator for the project, said, "From a blank canvas, to a mural that uplifts and inspires. Muralist Alicia Lea & Josh Boyark did just that. From a single idea to seeing it come to life, this piece truly speaks to the idea of how art and artists

can transform places and spaces and the power of collaboration. We have seen the impact artists can have on the community and this mural will further move the conversation along on how public art can make a difference and transform spaces by sharing stories and creative visions. It's remarkable to see the progress Capital Walls has made over the past 8 years and I am excited to see the continued growth to give artists more opportunities and make art more accessible. More art everywhere, together."

About the Downtown Revitalization Initiative:

The Downtown Revitalization Initiative launched in 2016 to accelerate and expand the revitalization of downtowns and neighborhoods to serve as centers of activity and catalysts for investment in all ten regions of the state. The initiative represents an unprecedented and innovative plan-to-act strategy that couples strategic planning with immediate implementation.

In the first five years of the program, the state committed \$600 million to invest in downtowns that are ripe for revitalization and have the potential to become magnets for redevelopment, business, job creation, greater economic and housing diversity, and opportunity. Governor Hochul launched the sixth round of the DRI with \$100 million allocated, along with the first round of New York Forward, a new program for smaller and rural communities. Participating communities are nominated by the state's 10 Regional Economic Development Councils based on the downtown's potential for transformation. Each community is awarded funds to develop a downtown strategic investment plan and implement key catalytic projects that advance the community's vision for revitalization.

The initiative is headed by New York Secretary of State Walter T. Mosley. Communities receive support from private sector experts and a team of state agency staff led by the Department of State in close partnership with Empire State Development, and state Homes and Community Renewal.

About Capital Walls:

#CapitalWalls is a partnership of Albany Center Gallery & Albany Barn, with foundational support from Albany Parking Authority. This endeavor seeks to inspire with uplifting, educational, or thought-provoking works of public art. Starting in 2016, there are now 23 murals by local, regional, national, and international artists. Many are first time muralists, but some are well-established, well-known muralists. #CapitalWalls has worked with local and internationally-renowned artists to elevate the cultural profile of Albany (and now Schenectady!) with uplifting, educational, and thought-provoking murals and works of public art that help create a sense of place that is attractive to a broad audience of residents, commuters, and visitors.