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BROADWAY HOUSING COMMUNITIES AND RIO GALLERIES TO COLLABORATE WITH THE PLYWOOD PROJECT ON LARGE-SCALE PROTEST ART INSTALLATIONS IN UPPER MANHATTAN

(New York, August 3, 2020) — Broadway Housing Communities (BHC), and its cultural and arts advocacy arm, the Rio Galleries, are partnering with The Plywood Project to create two large-scale protest art installations covering the massive glass walls of the Sugar Hill Children’s Museum of Art & Storytelling (SHCMAS), on the corner of 155th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue.

BHC and the Rio Galleries have commissioned the following nine New York city based artists to create the mixed-media murals: Diogenes Abreu, Virginia Ayress, Milagros Batista, Sikolo Brathwaite, Ella Perez Gabriel, Luis Leon, Zahied Tony Mohammed, Moses Ros-Suarez and Black Rose. The installations will be mounted behind the glass walls on both ground-floor sides of the museum, each illustrating its own social justice narrative arc:

- The 40’ by 8’ installation facing 155th Street will commemorate the legacy of Carlos Cooks, the legendary disciple of Marcus Garvey and 60’s era proponent of Black economic independence, through to the current climate of protests against police brutality animated by the Black Lives Matter movement.
- The 30’ by 8’ installation facing the museum plaza will cover the period of hope for racial justice ushered in with the Obama Presidency, through to today’s pandemic health crisis which has hit communities of color with particular ferocity.

The massive Plywood Project murals will debut at an installation ceremony to be held on the Sugar Hill Children’s Museum plaza on August 16th at 4PM, coinciding with the beginning of Harlem Week.

BHC’s Director of Community Engagement, and Founder of the Rio Galleries, Ana-Ofelia Rodriguez, explains the creative intention behind the installations: “Both walls will reflect the reality of life among communities of color, which is a mixture of hope and hardship. Our struggle for freedom from police brutality, equal access to housing, healthcare and economic independence is animated by our belief that, together, we can overcome oppression and injustice. We will make tomorrow better than today.”

**Broadway Housing Communities**

- 
- The Delta
- Benziger-Abraham House
- The Rio
- Dorothy Day Apartments
- Sugar Hill Apartments

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- Dorothy Day Early Childhood Center
- Sugar Hill Museum Preschool

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- Rio Penthouse Gallery
- Rio Gallery II
- Rio Gallery III

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- Sugar Hill Children’s Museum of Art & Storytelling



Plywood Project Co-Founder Eve Moros Ortega says “The Plywood Project is deeply honored to partner with Broadway Housing Communities, the Rio Galleries and Sugar Hill Children’s Museum of Art & Storytelling. This partnership reflects the project’s belief that art can reveal essential truths with unique impact to inspire and galvanize. This beautiful and moving installation speaks to the history underlying the disproportionate impact of today’s crises on communities of color, while educating the public of the equally long history of resistance, struggle, and change.”

Manon Slome, Co-Founder of No Longer Empty, the New York City non-profit arts organization, says “I am thrilled that the Plywood Project has found a new location, with Broadway Housing Communities’ Rio Galleries exhibiting at the Sugar Hill Children’s Museum of Art & Storytelling. The partnership, generously supported by the Malka Fund, highlights the support for artists of color, mentorship for youth, and the power of art to give a voice to the most vulnerable that is in the very DNA of the BHC and this project.”

Broadway Housing Communities is a community-based nonprofit nationally recognized for pioneering cost-effective and compassionate solutions to the challenges of inequality and homelessness in the underserved New York City neighborhoods of West Harlem and Washington Heights. Since 1983, BHC has provided permanent homes for thousands of adults, children and families; high quality early childhood programs that improve outcomes for resident and community children. Its Rio Galleries were among the first art galleries in Harlem, providing opportunities for local artists to exhibit their work and engage the community for over twenty years.

The Plywood Project reimagines our current crises as an opportunity for innovative public-private collaborations between artists, businesses, cultural organizations, and government, placing art and creativity at the center of community dialogue – commissioning new artworks, and working with existing street artists to preserve work that commemorates the historic movement underway. The Plywood Project seeks to both document and preserve today’s burgeoning street art, as well as commission new work – whether on literal plywood or other surfaces. In doing so, the Plywood Project brings support to the communities most deeply impacted by today’s calamities, provides youth opportunities for creative mentorships, and offers the public art that can be safely experienced outdoors.

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Sugar Hill Children’s Museum of Art & Storytelling