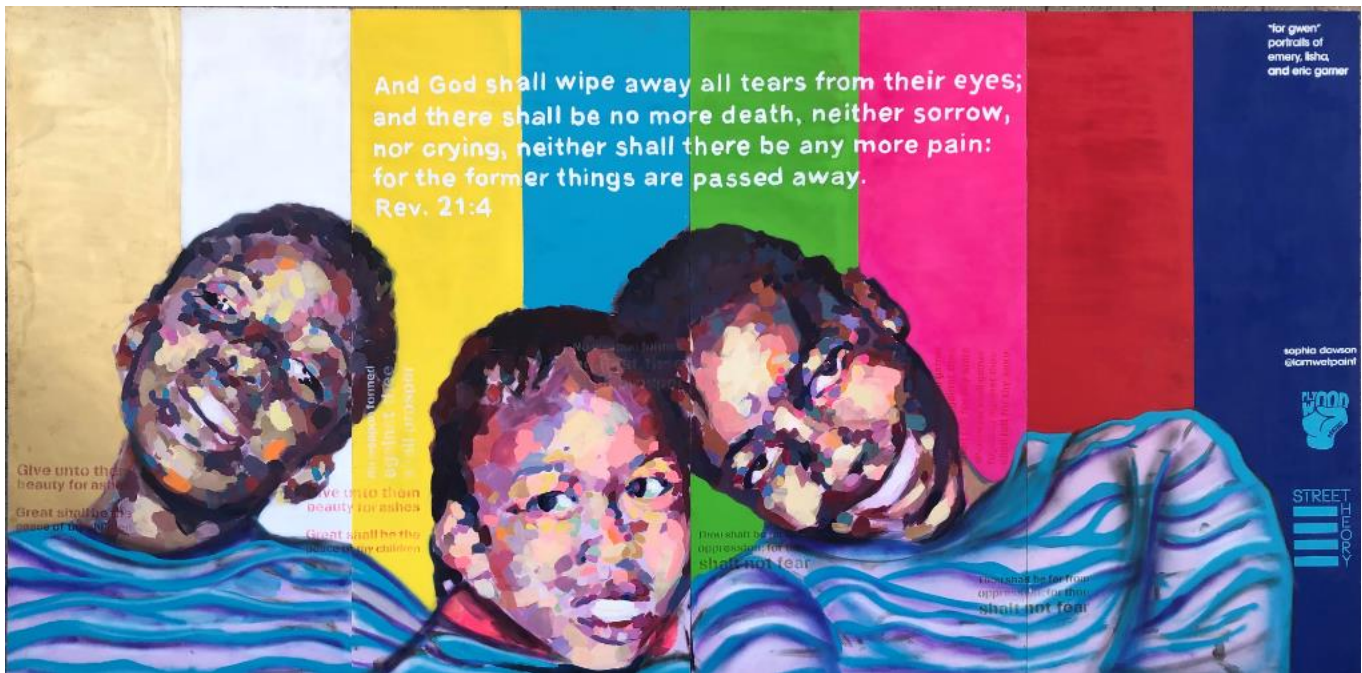


The Plywood Project New Public Art Initiative Launches in Downtown Brooklyn With Black Lives Matter Muralist Sophia Dawson + Carrie Mae Weems



"For Gwen" by Sophia Dawson, July 2020

(New York, July 20, 2020) — **The Plywood Project** —a new public art initiative, inspired by recently boarded storefronts, to transform and empower communities with art— is unveiling its pilot artwork, by Brooklyn based artist [Sophia Dawson](#) in conjunction with Carrie Mae Weems' Covid PSA posters, in the heart of downtown Brooklyn.

The Plywood Project, a growing consortium of partners formed in June 2020, will make its formal public debut on July 20th, with the unveiling of Sophia Dawson's newly commissioned painting at the Modell's Sporting Goods located across the street from Barclay's Center, which was transformed into a spontaneous town square as its plaza became a nexus for demonstrations against police brutality and racial injustice. Dawson was recently chosen by New York City's Department of Cultural Affairs as one of the artists to create the newly minted [Black Lives Matter mural](#) in Foley Square. Alongside Dawson's painting, the Plywood Project Modell's installation will feature wheat pasted posters by MacArthur Award-winning artist [Carrie Mae Weems](#), as part of her [Resist Covid Take 6](#) PSA campaign, in support of communities most impacted by the devastating coronavirus. Dawson's Plywood Project artwork is produced in collaboration with [Street Theory Gallery](#), curators of the Underground Mural Project, and created with youth mentored by Dawson, in collaboration with Artistic Noise, a nonprofit nurturing artistic expression among justice-involved youth.

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. Plywood – a universal symbol of protection against impending disaster, evokes crises ranging from Hurricane Katrina, shantytowns, and New York City in the 1970s, and also represents resilience and strength. Even as stores take down the plywood, this humble material remains the metaphoric tinder for the Plywood Project, which 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.

The Plywood Project models collaboration in its decentralized leadership, currently organized with founding partners Eve Moros Ortega of Lord Cultural Resources, Manon Slome of No Longer Empty, the Brooklyn Arts Council, New Yorkers for Culture and Arts, Artists Rights Society, Groundswell, The Office Performing Arts + Film, Downtown Brooklyn Partnership, Living Trust for the Arts, and Street Theory Gallery. The Plywood Project is growing its consortium of partners to include Human Impacts Institute, Global Action Project, Drim Films, Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art + Storytelling, and others. Seed funding for the Plywood Project has been provided by Stardust Fund and Vallejo Gantner, and pilot project support provided by Brookfield Properties.

As artists rights partner, Artists Rights Society (ARS) will be responsible for licensing all works in the Plywood Project's collection and advocating for participating artists to ensure they receive due credit and income from their creations. ARS will act in an advisory capacity regarding museum accessioning of pieces and on issues related to street art. An additional aspect of ARS support for the Plywood Project will be to advise on a living database of protest and street art from the movement that swept New York City, and communities worldwide, in the wake of George's Floyd's death. This database will be open-source and collaborative: anyone will be able to add to it and help in its attribution.

By collaborating with cultural nonprofits, business partnerships, and city government, and with the help of ARS' guidance, the Plywood Project will preserve history through artworks by Black and Brown artists on the ground, and will commission new art (made in conjunction with mentored youth) throughout the city and metropolitan area. Building on the energy of the recent protests, and the blossoming of the organic street art that followed, the Plywood Project harnesses this energy, organizing key stakeholders in the city to focus attention and resources on historically marginalized communities, capture the public imagination, and inspire necessary conversations. The dream of the Plywood Project is to convert the city to a vast public art project, and new partners are continuing to join to make this dream a reality. By modeling a creative response to crisis, the Plywood Project aims to inspire other cities around the country and the world.

PILOT ARTWORK BY SOPHIA DAWSON + CARRIE MAE WEEMS

Modell's Atlantic Avenue store, 140 Flatbush Avenue Brooklyn, NY 11217

ABOUT ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY

Artists Rights Society (ARS) is the preeminent copyright, licensing, and monitoring organization for visual artists in the United States. Founded in 1987, ARS represents the intellectual property rights interests of over 122,000 visual artists and their estates from around the world. Using the power and prestige of their experience and global network, ARS works as the official agent for our member artists in order to create exciting new projects and collaborations in the worlds of high fashion, mass market consumer goods, film, publications, and more. ARS not only represents artists in matters related to intellectual property, but also works tirelessly to ensure that artists are protected and remunerated for their work. The organization continually lobbies state and federal legislatures for stronger and more effective artists' rights laws.

ABOUT THE PLYWOOD PROJECT

The Plywood Project is an innovative consortium launched by partners starting in New York City - including non-profit art organizations, private businesses, the borough arts councils, and a wide variety of creative workers - to empower artists and communities of color most affected by our triple crises we now face: Covid-19, economic downturn, and racial injustice. The Plywood Project models collaboration, public-private partnership, and concrete action to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion – and creates opportunities for long-term positive impact by generating beauty, dialogue, and income streams resulting from the Plywood Project artworks. Placing art, creativity, and collaboration at the center of today's civic discourse, the Plywood Project asks all of us to transform this moment into an opportunity to offer cultural justice as part of the larger movement towards social justice. Website: theplywoodproject.com Instagram: @plywoodprojectart

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