



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND MENTAL HYGIENE**  
Dave A. Chokshi, MD MSc  
*Commissioner*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **HEALTH DEPARTMENT IN COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY INSTALLS “CONCRETE CONNECTION,” A MURAL IN THE SOUTH BRONX**

*The mural features resident portraits, increases visibility of Concrete Plant Park, and connects the community to public spaces during a time of pandemic*

**December 30, 2020** – The Health Department today, in partnership with the Department of Transportation’s Art Program (DOT Art), announced the installation of *Concrete Connection*, a mural along Westchester Avenue leading to the entrance to Concrete Plant Park in the South Bronx. The mural, created in collaboration with design firm Interboro Partners, the Bronx River Alliance, the local community, and artist Richard Chance, consists of 28 panels featuring neighborhood residents reenacting their favorite park activities. During engagement efforts prior to the development of the mural, residents expressed that the park is sometimes difficult to access and overlooked due to its location. *Concrete Connection* aims to serve as a visual connection along the pedestrian route to Concrete Plant Park and celebrate the recreational opportunities along the Bronx River Greenway. The mural was presented as part of DOT Art’s Arterventions initiative. Through Arterventions, DOT Art partners with galleries, business improvement districts, arts, community, and other non-profit organizations to exhibit temporary artwork on NYC DOT property citywide.



“Living near parks has been associated with better mental health. In a time of pandemic, it is critical that residents have access to quality neighborhood park space and can spend time outdoors safely,” said **Health Commissioner Dave A. Chokshi**. “Concrete Plant Park has been that space for many Bronx residents during this time, and *Concrete Connection* was a way to not only enhance connections to the park, but also celebrate and engage the surrounding community through art.”

Art engagement can be a tool to bring together the community and elevate resident voices in neighborhood planning and decision-making processes. *Concrete Connection* was developed with resident input at every stage of the process, from site identification to artwork development.

Concrete Plant Park was identified as a priority neighborhood site by community residents who wanted greater visibility of the park entrance and safer connections to the Bronx River. A Call for Photographs was then distributed so residents could submit images of themselves for inclusion in the mural.

This initiative was developed as part of and in support of the Southern Boulevard Neighborhood Study, led by the Department of City Planning and in collaboration with other City agencies and local community-based organizations. The initiative aims to pilot the integration of community-led built environment projects that respond to local priorities and promote a vibrant public realm as part of the neighborhood planning process. With the study's goals of preserving and investing in existing community assets, addressing the root causes of health and economic inequities, ensuring the area is a great place for young people and seniors alike, and connecting residents to assets and opportunities, these short-term projects are intended to shape longer term community-driven initiatives throughout the neighborhood that benefit and are reflective of the needs of the current neighborhood residents.

"Interboro Partners was honored help advance the long-standing community desire to improve a crucial gateway to a beloved community resource. Concrete Connection marks the physical connection to Concrete Plant Park with a collection of portraits of community residents. In the mural, neighborhood residents demonstrate how they like to use and inhabit the park. In addition to being a gateway, it is both a portrait of the community and an expression of its members' care and resilience during a challenging time," said **Georgeen Theodore, principal and cofounder of Interboro Partners.**

"It is great to see artwork installed in our community that reflects the faces of people living in our community," said **Edmundo Martinez of Concrete Friends.**

"We, New Yorkers, love our murals — and especially when they grow out of a community-led push for green public spaces as part of the Southern Boulevard study. Bronxites are passionate champions of their communities — and this wonderful new entrance to Concrete Plant Park speaks to their wisdom and their pride," said **Department of City Planning Director Marisa Lago.**

"Parks are vital green spaces that enrich our communities; the installation of a new mural called "Concrete Connection" in the Bronx's Concrete Plant Park is an excellent initiative that will bring newfound vibrancy and collective visualization, gathered by neighboring community members to the South Bronx. I thank the Bronx River Alliance, DOHMH, DOT Art, Interboro Partners, and Concrete Friends for their leadership in creating a safer and more illuminating gateway to our public spaces and Bronx River," said **State Senator Luis Sepùveda.**

"Art uplifts everything it touches, and the installation of Concrete Connection at Concrete Plant Park is no different," said **Assemblymember Kenny Burgos.** "This mural is an amazing, collaborative addition to the Bronx, and will undoubtedly uplift our community in these trying times."

"We are happy to have seen collaboration with community groups including Concrete Friends in ensuring local folks were celebrated in that mural. Since the opening of the park one of the biggest struggles is the visibility of the park and creating a welcoming mural that shows the real faces of our neighbors is really exciting. We hope to see more projects like these led by

community and celebrating local artists in the future,” said **Maria Torres, Chair of Bronx Community Board 2’s Municipality Committee.**

**About the NYCDOT Art Program**

The New York City Department of Transportation’s Art Program (DOT Art) partners with community-based, nonprofit organizations and professional artists to present temporary public art on NYC DOT property throughout the five boroughs for up to eleven months. Artists transform streets with colorful murals, dynamic projections and eye-catching sculptures. Sidewalks, fences, triangles, medians, bridges, jersey barriers, step streets, public plazas and pedestrianized spaces serve as canvases and foundations for temporary art. Over the past 12 years, DOT Art has produced over 300 temporary artworks citywide. For more information, visit [www.nyc.gov/dotart](http://www.nyc.gov/dotart) @nyc\_DOT, @nyc\_DOTArt.

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