



SPRINGFIELD
PUBLIC ART

You Belong Here

A New Community Mural

THE PROJECT

OBJECTIVE:

Create a mural design that is vibrant, eye-catching, and inviting for youth, families, and residents, reflective of the shifts in Springfield's culture and community. The design is driven by the community discussions leading up to the project.

COMMUNITY SESSIONS SUMMARY

THEMES WE HEARD:

- Desire for a bold statement/stance
- Highlight space for opportunity and the potential for community
- Acknowledgment of Springfield's history and growing cultural diversity, while looking to the future
- Create a visual sense of welcoming/belonging through art; bridge the old and the new
- Reflecting the sentiment of the statement "I don't want to make it OUT of Springfield, but make it IN Springfield"

TITLE:

"You Belong Here"

ARTIST'S NOTE ON THE DESIGN:

This geometric design welcomes curiosity and interpretation, drawing in the viewer with a bold color palette and playful composition. You are inclined to feel forward movement from left to right, progressing from the red triangular arrows to the green, with the abstract imagery resembling the word "BELONGING" as the focal point in the center.

Each shape holds its own unique characteristics, and is met with the depiction of the sky where they intersect with others. This is a visual metaphor that there is room for opportunity to be pursued where we intersect with one another, no matter how different.

A prominent detail is the transition of the red line (starting on the left) to the green line (ending on the right), that carries a variation of color in between. The purpose is to acknowledge the historical, political and harmful act of redlining communities, and putting forth the effort to make more unified decisions in the future to continue creating a more welcoming place for all.

A more whimsical detail is the pair of abstract eyes/eye lashes - the first of the two on the green circle on the bottom left, and the second on the top right within the golden-orange square. One eye is closed and one is open. It is another subtle representation of how we can elevate as a community when we are willing to look deeper, past our difference and are open to the possibilities.

Planet-like rings and 3D-like shapes represent the challenges and obstacles we are bound to face in the process of change. My signature tribal triangles are sprinkled throughout as a motif for togetherness and support. The overall takeaway is that you can be the light in the dark; potential lives here, in Springfield, and we are part of the solution and evolution.



Janel Young @jy.originals

Janel is a Pittsburgh native, based in Chicago. She is a painter, muralist and community leader on a mission to inspire through creativity and play. Janel's work has been recognized locally and internationally, from New York City – where she resided for six years – to the coast of Sydney, Australia. Prior to pursuing art full-time, Janel attended Schenley High School in Pittsburgh, PA as an International Baccalaureate student athlete, and went on to study Business Marketing and International Studies at Penn State University as a Bunton-Waller Fellow. Post-graduation, she relocated to NYC in 2013 to work in public relations as a Digital Content Strategist for industries, including healthcare, tech and non-profits for five years.

A year after taking the leap to practice art full-time in NYC, Janel's passions came full circle in 2019 as her love for visual arts brought her back to her childhood neighborhood to install the city's first art basketball court, cleverly coined "The Home Court Advantage Project" in Beltzhoover. The City of Pittsburgh awarded Janel a proclamation for her community-centered effort to wrap the city in color, making October 23, 2019 "JANEL YOUNG DAY" in the City of Pittsburgh. On the anniversary the following year, Janel established the JY Originals Scholarship for Creatives – an annual \$1,000 award for a young adult pursuing the arts.

For three years as the Community Artist in Residence at UrbanKind Institute based in Pittsburgh, Janel utilized visual arts as a communication tool to connect people to equity and justice values and initiatives in Pittsburgh and Chicago. She continues to lead public art projects, youth workshops and speaking opportunities as she expands her art network in different cities of various sizes.

Janel's 2021 public works in Pittsburgh included the "Pathway to Joy" asphalt mural at Allegheny Overlook, (commissioned by Pittsburgh Downtown Partnerships), and "Heroes on the Horizon" at Bakery Square, which is the first three-dimensional mural under her belt. Pathway to Joy is now Young's largest led mural and it kicked off the Dollar Bank Three Rivers Arts Festival serving as the backdrop for the summer 2021 pop-up park experience. Heroes on the Horizon was completed alongside a residency program with students from local schools, Lincoln and Urban Academy. As noted on site, "the owner and developer of Bakery Square chose to permanently install Janel's work to preserve its inaugural public art commission, and to honor the great work and partnership with the community that inspired it."

In New York, Young was selected to exhibit in the "Black Lives to the Front" art showcase during the 2020 U.S. Open tennis tournament. Her canvas titled "Be Open To..." was displayed in the front row of the Arthur Ashe Stadium behind the likes of Serena Williams and Naomi Osaka.

In Chicago, the Safer Foundation commissioned Young for a mural paying tribute to U.S. Representative Danny K. Davis. "Second and Seven" stands as a testament to Rep. Davis' unwavering dedication to prioritizing the successful reentry of citizens with criminal records into society. The 3,500 square foot mural, created by lead artist Janel Young and her team, celebrates Rep. Davis' significant contributions to the rehabilitation and empowerment of individuals seeking a second chance. Janel's brightly-colored symbolism is matched with her fellow artist Thomas "Detour" Evans' portrait of Rep. Davis.

Additional notable accomplishments for Janel's extraordinary work as an artist, painter and muralist include: being named 2021 Person of the Year in Visual Arts by Pittsburgh City Paper, serving on the Pittsburgh Art Commission from 2021-2022, completing a six month-Artist Residency at the Westmoreland Museum of American Art in Pennsylvania in 2022, joining Chicago's pre-qualified public art list in 2022, and receiving her second Pittsburgh city-wide proclamation for "The Jungle" basketball court renovation in 2024.



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A new a 2,500 square foot mural by Janel Young located at The Dome, 700 S. Limestone Street, is a result of partnership between Springfield City School District, Springfield Public Art and the Westcott House.

During the implementation of the mural, Janel Young was supported by local artists Pete Hrinko and Matt Skaggs, and by SCSD high school students. In addition, five community engagement listening sessions included a public gathering at the State Theater, a session with small children at the Clark County Public Library, the Project Jericho influencers youth, 15 students at Springfield High School, as well as Young Black Professionals and Businesses of Springfield. As a result, Janel created a design that acknowledges Springfield history and growing cultural diversity while looking to the future. Her effort was to reflect a sentiment of some powerful statements by participants such as “I don’t want to make it OUT of Springfield but make it IN Springfield.”

This project was made possible by the Ohio Arts Council’s grant funding secured by the Westcott House Foundation. OAC’s ArtsNEXT grant program provides competitive funding for innovative and experimental projects. Westcott is one of the groups serving on Springfield Public Art, a committee that is a partnership of ten organizations: Art Noire, City of Springfield, Greater Springfield Partnership, Hartman Rock Garden, Project Jericho, Springfield Foundation (fiscal sponsor), Springfield Museum of Art, Turner Foundation, Westcott House Foundation and Wilson Sheehan Foundation. Springfield Public Art was responsible for raising funds locally to provide a necessary match for the state grant.

Springfield Public Art and the SCSD worked together to identify the location for the mural. The wall at the Dome was selected for its high visibility and easy access for the general public. Many families and students who attend activities at the Dome and The John Legend Theater will interact with this mural daily.

“We are grateful to the staff and the school board for making this collaboration possible,” said Marta Wojcik, Westcott Executive Director. “There is a lot of good will and hard work generated from many people to make projects like this happen. A shout-out to the Ohio Arts Council for their generous support; to all the colleagues serving on Springfield Public Art for all the work to see this project through and to our community for your input and participation.”

“I am thrilled to announce the unveiling of this new mural, a powerful symbol of our District’s commitment to creativity, diversity and community,” said SCSD Superintendent Dr. Bob Hill. “However, I encourage you to view it as more than just art—but a bold statement of who we are and what we stand for. It represents the collective spirit of our students, staff and families, and I hope it will inspire generations to come. We are proud to have a visual reminder of the values and that define our District.”

Lo Houser, Chair of Springfield Public Art, stated, “What a poignant and powerful message that art belongs to all people and as people, we belong to each other. Throughout this year-long process, Janel has been quick to express pride in having roots tied to our Springfield community—now this wall stands as a vibrant reminder for all of us to do the same. Springfield Public Art is very grateful to Janel for welcoming and valuing the conversations and creativity of Springfield’s youth. Their influence and imprint have been woven throughout this entire process and new piece of public art.”

The artist Janel Young shared, “I am excited and grateful to bring this mural to life after a year of meaningful conversations with the community. From spending much of my youth and holidays with my grandparents and family in Springfield, to creating this mural now – it’s a full-circle moment. I have the opportunity to bring the art to the people in a way that I hope feels accessible and welcoming. I am so thankful to our team, including my family, the local assisting artists, students, community leaders and partnering organizations, who have been a great support system for me and my work since the beginning of this project.”



Special Thanks to: Pete Hrinko @peterhrinko, Matt Skaggs @tookoldarts, Lauren Houser and Project Jericho, Dorian Hunter, Becky Krieger (Courtyard by Marriott), Cherie Moore (Springfield City School District), Joel Murphy (Art Teacher) & Isaac Guest, Abigail Cosby, Isabella Narcelles, Sophia Smith, Amelie Somers (Students, Springfield High School), Rod Hatfield (Photography), Amy Stacy (Springfield City School District), Lazarus Toliver (Videography), Springfield Foundation Staff, State Theater, Visit Greater Springfield Staff, Westcott Board & Staff, Community Engagement Group Participants.



Art Noire



SPRINGFIELD
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The objectives of Springfield Public Art are to:

- Invest in artistically excellent public art.
- Seek and manage funds to create, maintain and preserve existing public art.
- Actively seek involvement of artists of diverse backgrounds.
- Fairly compensate the artists and other experts engaged in the creation of art.
- Collaborate on projects with local, regional, and national organizations.
- Provide engagement opportunities for our community through public art.

Committee: Lauren Houser (Chair), Jessimi Jones (Vice Chair), Susan Carey (Treasurer), Kelley Booze, Karen Graves, Pete Hrinko, Dorian Hunter, Molly Mattin, Ryan Ramirez, Kevin Rose, Chris Schutte, Andrea O'Connor, Marta Wojcik

