Public Art Opportunity on the Esplanade

Spring 2022 | Electrical Box Mural Project

Project Description

The Esplanade Association (EA), in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and Volunteers Incorporating Black Excellence, Inc. (VIBE), seeks up to four (4) qualified artists to design and install murals on electrical boxes along the Charles River Esplanade. The murals are expected to stay on display for up to 3 years. Funding for this project is provided by the Boston Planning & Development Agency’s Fenway Community Benefits grant.

As a historic landscape predominantly renowned for its tree-lined pathways and riverfront views, these electrical boxes afford a rare opportunity to add contemporary art that breathes new life into the park. This arts initiative will help to prevent recurrent graffiti vandalism and contribute to the beauty of Boston’s premier riverfront park, all while highlighting up to 4 local artists on the Esplanade. We welcome artists of all backgrounds, especially artists from groups whose contributions and accomplishments have historically been underrepresented in the park.

The electrical boxes are all located along busy, multi-use pathways. The murals will improve the park experience for millions of annual visitors, who enjoy close nearby park features such as the Esplanade’s Outdoor Gym and riverfront docks. The artwork will also be visible to thousands of cars passing daily on Storrow Drive.

About the Esplanade Association

The Esplanade Association (EA) is a privately-funded nonprofit organization that works to revitalize and enhance the Charles River Esplanade, sustain its natural green space, and build community in the park by providing educational, cultural, and recreational programs for everyone. Working in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the Esplanade Association is dedicated to improving the experiences of the millions of visitors who enjoy Boston’s iconic riverside park.
About Volunteers Incorporating Black Excellence, Inc.

Volunteers Incorporating Black Excellence, Inc. (VIBE) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating volunteering experiences for volunteers who identify with the African Diaspora and volunteers that would like to volunteer alongside us. Our vision is to diversify the volunteering field.

Mural Design Details

The murals will enhance the exterior walls of four electrical boxes (existing conditions seen below). These small structures measure and regulate electricity usage in the park, and are an example of the technological and environmental management tools that make up the utilitarian infrastructure of our state park.

Mural designs can reference any artistic movement, but should be inspired by the park’s landscape, our plant and animal residents, our visitors, and the Charles River. Designs that can be painted with volunteer support and maintained by Esplanade Association staff are appreciated.

In preparation for submitting an Artist Statement of Interest (attached), we encourage prospective artists to visit the Esplanade to garner inspiration from the park’s landscape and existing murals. With three of the four electrical boxes being located next to two of the Esplanade’s Pumphouse Murals, we hope to see Artist Statements of Interest that take advantage of the opportunity to create a complementary installation. See page 4 for a map of the electrical boxes and Pumphouse Murals.

EA and VIBE will review all Artist Statements of Interest and select up to four artists to move forward.

Scope of Services

Design:

- The selected artists will consult with EA and VIBE representatives to discuss design objectives
- Selected artists will attend one site visit with EA and VIBE representatives
- Selected artists will each develop two conceptual designs
- EA and VIBE, in consultation with DCR, will select one of the two conceptual designs provided by each artist
- The four selected designs will be finalized and presented to EA and VIBE with a list of requested paint colors and brushes
Installation:

- EA will acquire all necessary permits with support from the artists
- Artists will coordinate with EA and VIBE to set the installation schedule (see below)
- EA, VIBE, and community volunteers will assist the artists with site preparation, scraping and sanding existing paint, priming, painting the designs, and transporting materials and supplies
- Artists will have two to three days to work on-site to prep the boxes and paint the murals

Maintenance:

- EA will supply materials and volunteers for graffiti removal and touch-ups as needed for the full term of the mural’s installation
- Artists will be asked to provide detailed mural information (including paint colors, brush sizes, design diagram, etc.) to ensure EA can properly maintain the integrity of the original design
- EA may ask that artists be available to assist with touch-ups as needed

Schedule and Budget

EA strongly prefers that the mural installation be complete by Saturday, May 14th, 2022. The proposed schedule below is subject to change based on weather, permitting, and discussions between EA, VIBE, DCR, and the artists:

- January 21, 2022 – Artist Statement of Interest entry period closes
- February 4, 2022 – Winning artists are informed of their selection and plan a site walk
- February 21, 2022 – Each artist delivers two conceptual designs
- March 1, 2022 – EA and VIBE select the final design concepts. EA submits permitting, which can take up to 8 weeks for approval.
- May 12, 2022 – EA, VIBE, artists and volunteers complete site preparation
- May 13 – May 14, 2022 – Artist and volunteers install murals. If more time is needed, artists may continue the project with EA staff during the week of May 16.

The Esplanade Association will cover up to $200 in necessary materials (e.g., paint, paintbrushes, buckets, cloth, and more) for preparation and installation. Artists should be prepared to use exterior acrylic latex paint for their designs. Each selected artist will be provided a $500 stipend in recognition of their contribution to the Esplanade.

Contact

Artists interested in collaborating with EA and VIBE on this project should send their Artist Statement of Interest to Rachel Surette, Esplanade Association Operations Coordinator, at rsurette@esplanade.org by January 21, 2022 to be considered.
Existing Conditions & Project Location

Rain River
Pumphouse Mural
By Solei

Habitation
Pumphouse Mural
By Sophy Tuttle