Art Underneath the Elevated Proposals
By Kristy McCarthy

“Rockaway in Flight”

Proposal description: A hand painted flock of Rockaway’s flying fauna, coasting on the breeze above passerby’s heads. Over 25 local birds and butterflies will be painted onto recycled cardboard cut outs and mounted to overhead wire cables with trolleys, allowing the paintings to fly like a colorful sea of kites.
Proposal: “Rockaway in Flight”

Proposal description: A hand painted flock of over 25 of Rockaway’s local birds and butterflies, including the endangered Piping Plover, painted onto large cut-outs of recycled cardboard, sealed with protective coating, and mounted wire trolleys. The installation will include an educational workshop for the community to hand paint one of their own (smaller) cardboard cut out monarch butterflies to be included as part of the flock. The workshop will include information about the monarch migration and it’s status as an endangered phenomenon.

Length of installation: 3-5 months

This project not only provides an educational visual exhibition of Rockaway’s local wildlife, but beautifies the underpass and transforms the ceiling into a moving flock of artwork and nature. The trolley system allows each piece a range of movement along the elevated ceiling, giving the illusion of a soaring bird or butterfly, coasting through the sky, accompanying each passerby on their journey along the underpass. This presence of art and movement will bring the space to life and transform the bare concrete ceiling into a beautiful flock of flying kites.

In my public art practice, my work aims to harness the power of public art to inspire hope, pride, and positive change. As director of HART, I have seen first hand that community art has a lasting positive impact on it’s members, not only uplifting their daily lives, but inspiring ideas and connecting neighbors. My hope with this installation and workshop is to bring the community together to contribute to the beautification of their public space, while fostering a sense of agency and raising awareness about the environmental challenges that the Rockaways face, including the dwindling monarch butterfly migration and the endangerment of the Piping Plover.

Apart from the positive impact that I hope this project will have, I truly, whole-heartedly enjoy painting birds and wildlife and would love to have an opportunity to bring my work to life and put it into movement. The wonderful breeze and the high ceilings of the walkway underneath the elevated A-train provide an amazing space and ideal conditions to bring this vision to fruition.

Materials: Recycled cardboard, Exterior latex paint, polyurethane sealant, wire leads, mini-trolleys

Installation: Each wire lead will be bolted into the concrete pillars, criss crossing the pathway at 20ft above ground and up, with each cardboard cutout hanging from a 2-10ft long wire cable connected to a pulley, allowing the wind to glide it along the wire lead. Each large card-board cut out will weigh less than 10lbs and will be tightly connected to the wire by multiple anchors points, similar to a kite, allowing it to catch the wind and fly.

The smaller card board butterflies created during the workshop will be hung from individual wire cables and attached to the pillars at 18ft above ground, out of the range of motion of the larger cardboard cutouts (to avoid any tangles).

As all artwork will be below the underpass, it will be sheltered from rain and sun and protected from damage.

Disassembly: All cables and hardware will be removed and all cardboard cut outs will be donated to local organizations for permanent display.
**Image List**

1. **“La Pepa de Oro”** - Provincial Government Office - Zamora Chinchipe, Ecuador  
   Latex and aerosol, 20ft x 40ft  
   November 2018

   This mural was painted as part of Indómita Urban Art Festival. The composition tells the story of the cacao plant, discovered to have been used ceremonially by the Mayo Chinchipe people over 5,000 years ago in the Amazonia of Zamora.

2. **“Deshi Senior Center”** - Brownsville, New York  
   Latex and aerosol, 110ft x 12 ft  
   September 2018

   This mural was designed and painted in collaboration with artist Danielle Mastrion. The design process included interviews with the seniors, who also participated in the actual painting during a community paint day. The mural includes images of seniors enjoying the activities and services that the center offers in hopes of encouraging other seniors who may be suffering from depression or loneliness to come in and join the community.

3. **“The Guerrilla Gallery: La Migración es Beautiful”** - East Harlem, NY  
   Mixed media installation, 48ft x 8ft  
   March 2017

   This installation was designed and completed in collaboration with the Harlem Art Collective and community members of East Harlem and consisted of a collaborative mural, an outdoor community art gallery, and an interactive photo collage of monarch butterfly wings made up of portraits of community members. Each portrait was taken on site during the installation, printed and added to the collage on the last day of painting. The installation also included an onsite workshop for passersby to create a hand painted butterfly out of recycled aluminum cans, which were attached to the wall and hung from the surrounding trees.

4. **“The Guerrilla Gallery: Gentrification”** - East Harlem, NY  
   Mixed media installation, 48ft x 8ft  
   July 2017

   Along with a collaborative mural of a Trojan horse releasing bankers and real estate developers into the streets, this installation also included a color coded map of Harlem showing housing prices compared to average household income, a didactic gallery of articles and information about the proposed rezoning plan, solar powered lighted signs, and an interactive chalk board that encouraged passersby to write how gentrification has affected them personally.

5. **“PS123 Active Design Mural”** - PS123 Elementary School, Brooklyn, NY  
   Concrete stain, 100ft x 100ft  
   May 2018

   This interactive ground mural was designed in collaboration with the 5th graders of the PS123 Health Squad as part of the NYDH Active Design Initiative, with the goal of encouraging students to be more physically active during recess. The mural includes jumbo board games, obstacle courses, a relaxation station, a soccer field, running track, and designated activity areas painted directly onto the PS123 play yard asphalt.
The Guerrilla Gallery: La Migración es Beautiful
Guerrilla Gallery: Dia de los Muertos
PS123 Active Design Mural