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**Mayor Ras J. Baraka and the Newark Downtown District Announce "Gateways to Newark: Portraits"  
Longest Mural on the East Coast and Second Longest Mural in the Nation**

*1.39 mile project along Newark's Route 21 welcomes visitors, residents and commuters*

**Newark, NJ – May 12, 2016** – Mayor Ras J. Baraka, Deputy Mayor Baye Adofo-Wilson City of Newark Department of Economic & Housing Development (EHD), Newark Downtown District (NDD) CEO Anthony McMillan, and Newark Community Economic Development Corporation (Newark Community EDC) Acting President & CEO Scott Blow announced today **the transformation of the walls under the Amtrak train tracks along Route 21 in Newark into the country's second longest mural -- approximately the length of 25 football fields**. Phase I of the *Gateways to Newark* project, "Portraits," is one of several beautification initiatives that will spur economic growth, enhance city views and markedly improve visual aesthetics for travelers entering Newark from both Newark International Airport and Newark Penn Station.

Rebecca Pauline Jampol will serve as curator for this epic, 1.39-mile-long mural. Stretching along the Route 21 (McCarter Highway) Amtrak retention wall, "*Portraits*" will be created by 17 highly-acclaimed local, national, and international artists. Their pieces will reflect the City's rich and diverse culture, foster communal dialogue, and celebrate the arts, while beautifying Route 21 for the 1.1 million monthly-commuters who traverse the highway.

"The Gateways to Newark project—and specifically the *Portraits* mural—will have a monumental impact on people's perceptions of the City," said **Newark Downtown District CEO Anthony McMillan**. "The NDD has worked for nearly two decades to make downtown Newark cleaner, greener and safer. The results of our hard work are evident throughout the district and now along McCarter Highway. *Portraits* represents our continued commitment to our partners, residents, Mayor Baraka and the City to develop downtown Newark."

As the City celebrates its 350th anniversary, the artists have designed pieces that pay homage to Newark's history while also celebrating its present and future. Coming from as far away as Brazil, and as close to home as Newark, the diverse group of male and female artists reflects the ethnic and cultural tapestry of the region.

"*Portraits*" celebrates the uniqueness and oneness of our City," said **Mayor Ras J. Baraka**. "The murals honor our rich history, cultural intersections, and narratives of day-to-day life here in Newark. The images represent a powerful, yet entertaining and spirited, compilation of visual expressions."

"These murals not only enhance our city's entryways, but also serve as strong visual reminders of the creativity, commitment and authenticity of the 330,000 people that work and live in Newark," said **Deputy Mayor Wilson**. "While *Portraits* will be completed in a few short weeks, they are sure to stimulate the City's economy for decades."

"We are proud to partner with the City and the downtown district in cultivating Newark's social and economic capital," said **Newark Community EDC Acting President & CEO Scott A. Blow**. "We understand and value the role of the arts in stimulating economic growth and look forward to supporting future Gateways to Newark."

**-NEWARK-**

**MEDIA NOTE: High resolution images of the mural renderings and details can be found here:**

[www.mediadaynewark.com](http://www.mediadaynewark.com)

**Newark Downtown District:**

The Newark Downtown District (NDD), Newark's special improvement district of the central business area, is a privately funded 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, dedicated to revitalizing downtown Newark by improving the economic viability of the central business district. The NDD also works hard to enhance the quality of life for those who live, labor, and leisure in Newark, by providing supplemental cleaning and safety services, as well as marketing and physical streetscape improvement programs. *Gateways to Newark: Portraits* is the first of several gateways throughout the City that will be renewed.

**Newark Economic and Housing Development:**

The mission of the City's Department of Economic and Housing Development is to create economic opportunity for Newark residents and enhance the vibrancy of the City. To this end, the department seeks to position Newark to take advantage of its unique assets, including its strategic location, a diverse and underutilized workforce, a large amount of developable land, a high concentration of corporate and business service firms, several major universities, and a wealth of arts and cultural assets.

**Newark Community Economic and Development Corporation:**

The Newark Community Economic Development Corporation (Newark Community EDC) is the primary economic development catalyst for the State of New Jersey's largest city, Newark. It is organized to retain, attract, and grow businesses, enhance small and minority business capacity, and spur real estate development. Visit [www.newarkcedc.org](http://www.newarkcedc.org) for more information.

## ARTISTS: GATEWAYS TO NEWARK PORTRAITS MURAL

### \*Denotes Newark Artists

**\*Adrienne Wheeler (New Jersey, USA)** is a multi-media artist, independent curator, arts educator, and advocate for social justice. She lives and works in Newark, NJ. Through her practice, Adrienne addresses the injustices that plague society, particularly those injustices affecting the lives of women and children. Current works in progress are papier-mache Njorowe or "Belly Masks", the body plate of an important female ancestral masquerade belonging to the Makonde People of Southeastern Tanzania and Northern Mozambique.

**\*Akintola Hanif/HYCIDE (New Jersey, USA)** is an artist living and working in Newark, New Jersey. His work is heavily rooted in cross-cultural photojournalism and documentation of quality of life. He is the founder and editor-in-chief of HYCIDE, a photography magazine dedicated to subculture, art, and conflict. His photography has been featured in such venues as the The Guggenheim Museum, RUSH Arts Gallery, Corridor Gallery, Aljira, a Center for Contemporary Art, MoCADA Museum, Princeton University, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

**\*David D. Oquendo (New Jersey, USA)** was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico and raised in New Jersey. His practice revolves around the development of a quasi-spiritual universe. In 2009 he completed his undergraduate degree at Rutgers University - Newark, earning a BFA in Painting and a Minor in Art History. Oquendo has shown work in New Jersey, New York, Florida, United Kingdom; as well as created murals throughout New Jersey, and New York. Currently, Oquendo is an arts educator through The Robeson Galleries at Rutgers University-Newark and an art teacher at Great Oaks Charter School in Newark, NJ.

**Don Rimx (Florida, USA)** was born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico and currently resides in Miami, Florida. He received his diploma from the Central High School of Visual Arts and went on to continue his education at the Escuela de Artes Plasticas (School of Fine Arts). Don Rimx has participated in many notable mural projects and conferences that include Los Muros Hablan NY in Spanish Harlem, Urban Nation Berlin for the UN Museum for Urban Contemporary Art, and the Color Libre Puerto Rico mural project. This is his first mural in Newark, New Jersey.

**El Decertor (PERU)** is from Lima, Peru. He is a painter interested in building weatherproof memories in public spaces. He began his career with no formal studies in art and his first inspiration came from portraits of the common man and woman that make up the human scenery of the Peruvian cities. His work has transcended his hometown borders and can be found in cities such as Cartagena in Colombia, Cochabamba in Bolivia, Mexico City in Mexico, Buenos Aires in Argentina, Azemmour in Morocco, among others.

**GAIA (Maryland, USA)** is a New York native, currently based in Baltimore, Maryland where he completed his education at the Maryland Institute College of Art. His work confronts issues of environmental degradation, gentrification, immigration, segregation, and urban development. His studio work, installations, and gallery projects have been exhibited throughout the world, most notably The Baltimore Museum of Art, Rice Gallery, and Palazzo Collicola Arti Visive. His street work has been documented and featured in several books on urban art, including, most recently, Beyond the Street: The 100 Leading Figures in Urban Art (Berlin, 2010). In 2015, he was featured in Forbes 30 under 30 in Art and Style. This is the third collaboration GAIA has had with the City of Newark.

**\*GERA (New Jersey, USA)** is a cross-disciplinary artist raised in Newark, New Jersey and currently based out of Brooklyn, New York. Her family has a history in Newark, owning several businesses that are staples in the Ironbound section. She works using photo, video performance, books-making, and public art. GERA's public art can be seen in the architecturally integrated art of eco-resin screens set into the bus shelters of BRIO, Sun Metro's new rapid transit system. Her studio work and public art work reflect the spirit of culture and dreams. Her work in the City of Newark will be a collaboration with her partner WERC.

**WERC (Mexico)** is from Mexico and was raised in Texas. His work craft stems from a history in graffiti writing, as well as an extensive cross-media background similar to his partner's Gera. Content circles around ongoing discussions and developments in immigration rights and laws. As a public art team, their means for creation centers around the passion for the beautification of public spaces, community empowerment, and art as a healing tool.

**\*Kevin Darmaine (New Jersey, USA)** originally from Trinidad & Tobago, currently lives and works in Newark, New Jersey. He has produced paintings, murals, installations, comic books, and works on paper. In 2009, Darmanie began working with Newark's City Murals program to create murals throughout. He created three murals with the program: "Wellwisher" at JFK School, "Reaching for the Stars" at North Star Academy, and "Kidults" at Casa de don Pedro. As well as independently creating a piece for the Urban League. This will be his fifth mural with the city of Newark.

**\*Khari Johnson-Ricks (New Jersey, USA)** is a young New Jersey based artist who is working in Newark and identifies as a painter, animator, DJ, and dancer. His work addresses the close relationships that cultures have to movement, as well as the ever changing ideals of what masculinity and manhood are. Johnson-Ricks graduated from Montclair University with a Bachelors of Fine Art. This is his first mural in the City of Newark.

**\*Manuel Acevedo (New York, USA)** was born in Newark where he has worked for many years. Manuel Acevedo's work combines projected image, wall drawing, animation, and photography to explore how light and movement shape experience. Through various media, he employs visual language in ways that transform flat, static images into active spaces of experimentation. Acevedo's work has been exhibited extensively within the US and abroad. Acevedo has been a pioneer in the Newark art scene and has produced a large amount of work about the City for the City.

**\*MataRuda (New Jersey, USA)** is an artist, activist, and archivist who currently lives in Newark, NJ. He was born in San Jose, Costa Rica and lived in Caracas, Venezuela until he was 11, then immigrated to the USA. Using iconography from both regions, he has painted a variety of murals and paintings that empower immigrant, and overlooked communities and cultures. His work has been part of the Newark Museum, El Museo Barrio, The Painted Desert Project, and Calle 13's Multi\_Viral. MataRuda currently has one mural in the City of Newark.

**Nanook (Maryland, USA)** is a muralist and fine artist. His work weaves contemporary social issues with local history and folklore to create site-specific installations. His work has been part of the N.V Massaquoi school rebuild in West Point Liberia, The Painted Desert Project, Open Walls Baltimore, and Living Walls Atlanta. Nanook currently lives in Boulder, CO but spends the majority of his time traveling and creating work around the world. This is his first mural in the City of Newark.

**\*Nina Chanel Abney (New Jersey, USA)** is a painter based in Jersey City, NJ whose studio is currently in Newark. As of late, Abney has been exploring collage, layering words, arrows, and faces in a bright mix of references. Abney received her BFA from Augustana College, Rock Island, IL, and her MFA from Parsons School of Design New York, NY. Abney's work has been exhibited throughout the world including: Detroit, MI; London, UK; San Francisco, CA; New York, NY; Washington, D.C.; Raleigh, NC among others. Her work can be found in the collections of the Brooklyn Museum, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Girls' Club, and The Rubell Family Collection.

**Sonni (New York, USA)** was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he studied graphic design and worked as an Art Director for animation and film companies. He currently resides in Brooklyn, New York. He works with different mediums that include paper and pencil, illustrator, acrylic on canvas, and wooden sculptures. Yet, his passion is to paint murals in public spaces, finding that dialogue with the public through primary colors and playfulness. This is his first mural in the City of Newark.

**Tatyana Fazlalizadeh (New York, USA)** is an African-American and Iranian artist originally from Oklahoma. She has recently been acclaimed for her project, "Stop Telling Women To Smile," which has had an impactful national presence. Her paintings are heartfelt portraits of both herself, and people she has casually encountered throughout her life. Fazlalizadeh's self portraits capture her strength as a woman, an attribute that originally provoked her to create the "Stop Telling Women to Smile" project.

**Zéh Palito (Brazil)** is an artist who is living and working in Limeira -São Paulo, Brazil. His practice involves the potential of urban non-spaces, creating large-scale, site-specific works. His work has been shown throughout the world in places ranging from Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Spain, Germany, Poland, United States, South Korea, Thailand, Zambia, and others more. This is his first mural in the City of Newark.

## BEHIND THE GATEWAY TO NEWARK PORTRAITS MURAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT, CURATOR TEAM, AND SUPPORTERS

### **Project Managed by: The Newark Downtown District**

#### **Curator: Rebecca Pauline Jampol**

Rebecca Jampol is an arts educator, gallery director and independent curator based in Newark, New Jersey. Graduating from Rutgers University-Newark in 2008, she became the driving force in a myriad of cultural and educational initiatives including: Jajo Art Gallery, Glocally Newark, The 239 Collective, Rutgers Future Scholars "I am" Program; The NewWalls Newark Public Art Conference, The Gateway Project Public Art Initiative, and Portals, Newark.

Her work revolves around positive activation of private and public spaces, creating happenings, exhibitions, and programming that provide a platform for social discourse and engagement. Ms. Jampol is the founder and director of the alternative gallery space & studio residence, Solo(s) Project House (SPH). Artists are invited annually from all over the world to work in Newark. She is the founder and co-director of Gateway Project Spaces, a hub for multidisciplinary creative engagement located in 2 Gateway Center, Newark. The three-level facility is split between a highly competitive and curated residency program, a project-based gallery in collaboration with Project For Empty Space, and rentable artist studio/work spaces. She is also the co-director of Project For Empty Space, a not-for-profit organization that creates socially engaging, multidisciplinary art exhibitions and programming that encourage social dialogue, education, and systemic change for cultural tolerance.

Ms. Jampol and her many endeavors have received press from a bevy of outlets including The Wall Street Journal, The Huffington Post, Hyperallergic, Juxtapoz Magazine, Forbes Magazine, ArtNews, BlouinArtInfo, VICE, Vanity Fair, WhiteHot Magazine, and The Star-Ledger.

#### **Artist Coordinator: Lunar New Year (New Jersey, USA)**

Lunar New Year (LNY) is an artist, muralist and interloper defined by borders and hybridity. His artwork and murals question politics, injustice and cross-cultural identity by making visible the stories that are often left invisible and silenced. LNY is also an educator, organizer and public speaker for such projects as Young New Yorkers in Brooklyn, Yollocalli Arts Reach in Chicago, and City Without Walls in Newark. He was raised within the duality of Ecuador and the USA, currently living and working in Newark, NJ, as well as around the world.

**Sherwin Williams** has been an industry leader in the development of technologically advanced paint and coatings for nearly 150 years. As the nation's largest specialty retailer of paint and painting supplies, Sherwin-Williams is dedicated to supporting both do-it-yourselfers and painting professionals with exceptional and exclusive products, resources to make confident color selections and expert, personalized service at its more than 4,000 neighborhood stores across North America. Sherwin-Williams has been ranked "Highest in Customer Satisfaction among Paint Retailers, Three Years in a Row" in the J.D. Power 2015 Paint Satisfaction Study<sup>SM</sup>.

**Panasonic Corporation of North America** provides a broad line of digital and other electronics products and solutions for consumer, business and industrial use. As part of its continuing sustainability efforts, Panasonic Corporation of NA relocated its headquarters in 2013 to a new facility, adjacent to Newark Penn Station. It is the first newly constructed office tower in Newark to earn both LEED Platinum and Gold certifications from the U.S. Green Building Council.

**Amtrak** – America's Railroad® – is dedicated to safe and reliable mobility as the nation's intercity passenger rail service provider and its high-speed rail operator. With their state and commuter partners, they move people, the economy and the nation forward, carrying more than 30 million Amtrak passengers for each of the past five years. Formally known as the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, Amtrak is governed by a nine-member board of directors appointed by the President of the United States and confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Anthony R. Coscia is board chairman and Jeffrey R. Moreland is vice chairman. Amtrak operates more than 300 trains daily – at speeds up to 150 mph (241 kph) – connecting more than 500 destinations in 46 states, the District of Columbia and three Canadian Provinces.



Detail, Rendering for "Portal Flow": GERA (NJ, USA) & WERC (MEXICO)

## Gateways to Newark: Portraits Fact Sheet

**Gateways to Newark: Portraits** is the first of several entryways that will be renewed and beautified throughout the City of Newark

**Mural Length:** 1.39 miles; Approximately the length of 25 football fields or the length of the Lincoln Tunnel

**Mural Size:** Approximately 85,000 square-feet

**Average Height:** 15 feet

**Painting Hours:** Most painting will be done between 9:00 pm and 6:00 am due to Rt. 21 lane closures

**Stadium Lights:** 35 Sunbelt stadium lights will be used at night while the artists paint

**Projectors:** 7 High-lumen, short-throw, Panasonic 3D Professional projectors will project artwork onto the mural during the night. Donated by Panasonic.

**Paint:** Over 1,500 gallons of Sherwin Williams Loxon Primer, Resilience Exterior Paint and Anti-Graffiti Sealer are anticipated to be used. Donated by Sherwin Williams.

**Number of People Working on Portraits:** Nearly 100 people including 17 artists plus assistants, Newark Downtown District Ambassadors, and volunteers.

**Number of Newark Residents Working on Portraits:** 70

**Number of Autos Passing Mural Monthly:** 1.1 Million

**Local Residents Within One Mile of Mural:** 50,335

**Newark Businesses Within One Mile of Mural:** 4,677

**Record Breaking:** *Portraits* will be the longest mural on the East Coast and the second longest mural in the United States, according to current statistics and research

**Sponsors and Partners:** The City of Newark, Newark Community Economic Development Corporation, Sherwin Williams, Panasonic, Amtrak and Edison Properties