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Photo: Sunny Nagpaul. Artist Isabelle Garbani's mural of tiles handmade from plastic collected from the streets in Hunts Point.

ART FOR CLIMATE ACTION AT BRONX ART SPACE

By Sunny Nagpaul / December 13, 2022

Can art be used to generate public interest in climate action?

That's the hope of Bronx Art Space gallery and The Point CDC in Hunts Point.

The gallery's current "ART ACTIONS" exhibition features the work of artists who have completed artist residencies funded by THE POINT over the past decade to highlight local environmental issues.

Flood zones, pesticide use and littered streets are among the environmental justice issues addressed in the gallery's exhibit.

“We live in Hunts Point, it’s egregiously polluted,” said Carey Clark, the visual arts director at THE POINT. “There’s 20,000 trucks that go through this residential area every day.”

The dream of a cleaner neighborhood inspired artist Isabelle Garbani, who created a mural of tiles hand-made from plastics collected from the streets in Hunts Point. She then made a mobile art cart, which was essentially a shopping cart equipped with a table, umbrella and chairs, and wheeled the tiles around to ask people directly if they wanted to make art for the Bronx.

“I stopped anyone who looked stationary, people on their stoop, sitting on public benches, families waiting for their laundry to dry,” Garbani said. “The biggest lesson I have learned from these projects is that the most vulnerable populations may not have the time and energy to think about creativity as part of their daily lives.”

The artist residencies aim to elevate the voices of people who live in Hunts Point. A local graffiti group, Girls Write Too, held a series of outdoor workshops with residents ranging in age from toddlers to seniors, asking how they wanted to see the Bronx in 30 years.

Their ideas can be seen on display in the gallery on posters made in those workshops. Eventually, those ideas were incorporated into a large mural titled “Whose Bronx? Our Bronx!” which is located at THE POINT’s campus at 1980 Lafayette Ave.

Kay Love, one of the artists in the group, said having conversations about issues that plague the Bronx while creating art at the same time was important to her.

“Through these discussions, they drew and painted freely,” Love said. “Being a lifelong resident myself, I shared most of what they said and could relate.”

One exhibit is outside the Art Space walls: five brightly colored benches line a 600-foot pathway on the Hunts Point Peninsula overlooking revitalized wetlands that are part of the borough’s efforts to protect flood zones in the area. Artists from Bronx River Art Center collaborated with three designers from the Rudlings Collective at Cornell University on the design and installation.

Bronx Art Space is open on Thursdays and Fridays from 2-6pm, and Saturdays 12-5pm, and admission is free. The exhibition will close on Thursday, Dec. 15, when a closing party will be held.

View original article at: <https://huntspointexpress.com/2022/12/13/art-for-climate-action-at-bronx-art-space/>