



Piano Bench by Katherine Miranda and GeAnn Stephan

## **THE McINNIS CEMENT BENCH ART PROJECT**

for

### **THE OAK POINT GREENWAY**

**50 Oak Point Avenue, Bronx, New York**

**Contact: Carey Clark, Visual Arts Director, THE POINT C.D.C.**

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### **STORY - INDUSTRY/COMMUNITY/ART AND HOW THEY CONNECT:**

Two years ago THE POINT, an arts-based community center in Hunts Point, was commissioned by McInnis Cement (McInnis) and Oak Point Property LLC (OPP) to manage a call for artists to design a series of benches along a 600' public pathway on the southern shore of the Hunts Point Peninsula, overlooking an ecologically revitalized wetlands and with views of the East River, North Brother Island and a sweeping waterscape to the South — a delicate rendering of the Hunts Point/Port Morris Industrial district flowing into the Manhattan skyline. Fast forward to today and the public art project has culminated in five extraordinary benches, each a unique site-specific design born out the imagination of two artists groups: the Rudlings Col-lective, comprised of three artists from the MFA Program at Cornell University, Sasha Phylars-Burgess, Kaleb Hunkele, and Richard Zimmerman; and the Teen Project Studio +2.0 of the Bronx River Art Center, comprised of Ukari Bakosi, Mykerine Vincent, Katherine Miranda, GeAnn Stephan, Fernanda Carvalho Santos, and Chuxi Guo.

This public art project is the product of an ongoing collaboration between local business and community stakeholders in the Bronx aiming to provide public access to the scenic Hunts Point waterfront and will involve future upgrades, including additional art installations and infrastructure improvements.

As one of the last bastions of a noble tradition of manufacturing and industry in NYC, Hunts Point is also home to a vibrant cultural community that has given rise to Latin Jazz and Hip Hop. In this way the McInnis Cement Bench Project celebrates the confluence of shared values connecting community, industry, and art.



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## **BACKGROUND**

Steve Smith, engineer and visionary, purchased 28 acres of land along the East River in Hunts Point, in the South Bronx in 2002. After staving off the wolves that came with the property, including pending bankruptcy and a polluted waterfront, he pulled it out of the hat over the next decade restoring financial viability and, more notably, the waterfront to a much needed marshland. The marshland was wiped out with Storm Sandy in 2012.

In 2015, Steve and Paul Lipson, President of Barretto Bay Strategies, started collaborating to identify best practices for industrial waterfront development/restoration, putting them on a path toward establishing enduring relationships with community partners. When OPP leased the site to McInnis, a cement manufacturing and distribution company based in Montreal and dedicated to a high standard of environmental justice and community engagement, the team engaged THE POINT's Visual Arts Director, Carey Clark, and its Community Development Director, Fernando Burgos, to manage this public art project. Following a year-long planning process, during which submissions of final designs by selected artists teams were evaluated and prepared for implementation, the project moved forward through the on-site execution stages, with the benches being completed in December 2020.

All photos taken by Carey Clark

## PROJECT PARTNERS

### THE POINT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

THE POINT is dedicated to youth development and the cultural and economic revitalization of the Hunts Point section of the South Bronx. Celebrating over 20 years of service, THE POINT offers a multi-faceted approach to asset-based community development. Its programming falls within three main branches, all aimed at the comprehensive revitalization of the Hunts Point community: Youth Development, Arts and Culture and Community Development. The McInnis Cement Bench Art Project is part of a larger public art initiative in Hunts Point, the Village of Murals, where murals and public space interventions of all kinds are fostered by the values on which THE POINT stands: where creativity and community connect and where content is fueled by a keen awareness of social and environmental injustices, but is also shaped by the imagination and a search for beauty.

Maria Torres: President

Carey Clark: Visual Arts Director and McInnis Cement Bench Project Manager

Fernando Ortiz: Community Development

Harry Whitney: Documentarian

Mikhail Neudachin-Greer and Arturo Lopez: Volunteers

<https://thepoint.org/>

# BRAC

### BRONX RIVER ART CENTER AND TEEN PROJECT STUDIO +2.0

Bronx River Art Center (BRAC) was founded in 1987 to bring professional arts programming to a culturally underserved population. For more than 30 years (including several years of arts programming under the umbrella of the first Bronx River Restoration project), this multi-arts center has filled the West Farms community of the Bronx with art and environmental experiences. BRAC'S programs are designed to encourage residents to engage in creative activism towards the revitalization and future of their neighborhood.

Teen Project Studio + 2.0 is an intensive, project based, digital and design program for teens and young adults, ages 15-26. This free program is limited to 15 students and is available by application only. TPS+2.0 is a unique opportunity to experience and learn about the arts and design and career opportunities in the creative industries in an interactive and challenging way.

Artists from TPS +2.0:

Ukari Bakosi - Teaching Assistant

Mykerine Vincent - Sofa Bench

Fernanda Carvalho Santos - Pebble Bench

Katherine Miranda - Piano Bench

GeAnn Stephan - Piano Bench

Chuxi Guo - Production Assistant

STAFF:

Art Jones: Teaching Artist

Michele Brody: Special Projects Manager

Gail Nathan: Executive Director



The BRAC benches are made possible in part by ConEdison/Power of Giving, the NY State Council on the Arts and the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs.

<http://bronxriverart.org/>

## THE RUDLINGS COLLECTIVE

The Rudlings Collective is an artistic alliance of three artists from the graduate MFA program at Cornell University, Sasha Phyers-Burgess, Kaleb Hunkele, and Richard Zimmerman, who joined forces to design the Semi-Circle and Aperture Benches for the McInnis Cement Bench Art Project.

<https://aap.cornell.edu/news-events/group-show-lot-good-things-lot-bad-things>

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## OAK POINT PROPERTY LLC

Once home to the largest undeveloped parcel of land in NYC, the property was acquired by in 2002 by Steve Smith, who spent decades remediating and revitalizing the 21.4 acre land and the adjacent waterfront which is now home to healthy wetlands and thriving businesses.

Steven Smith, President

<https://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/06/nyregion/steven-smith-developer-hopes-to-restore-a-fleet-ing-paradise-in-the-bronx.html>

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## McINNIS CEMENT

A new entrant in the global cement marketplace, McInnis engaged Barretto Bay Strategies to help craft an approach to its proposed NYC maritime terminal that balanced the needs of industry with those of the nearby community and the imperatives of habitat protection in adjacent wetlands.

Dennis Burns - Engineer, Site Development Manager

Stan Sisson - Terminal Manager

Maryse Tremblay - Director, Communications and Corporate Social Responsibility

<https://mcinniscement.com>



## BARRETTO BAY STRATEGIES

Barretto Bay Strategies is an urban solutions consulting firm that provides strategic advising to public agencies, community development organizations, and start-ups in the areas of renewable energy and clean transportation; urban manufacturing and distribution; and neighborhood revitalization. The firm special-

izes in projects positioned at the interface of public policy and market development in these spaces.

Barretto Bay's recent clients have included a global automaker seeking to develop and deploy a zero-emission car share program in dense East Coast metropolitan areas, a national developer of affordable housing pursuing a strategy of industrial job creation in a new mixed-use development, the owner of a 120 acre former shipyard in search of a repurposing strategy for a location that once employed over 50,000 workers, and an economic development organization looking to procurement localization as an approach to address poverty in an historically under-

served area. Barretto Bay has advised three NYS Brownfield Opportunity Area studies as well as six NYS Energy Research and Development Authority projects. Barretto Bay's involvement in the project led to the development of a 9-acre terminal that includes a ¼ mile greenway segment, a 3 acre wetlands, a community "eco-dock", greenwalls, roof-mounted photovoltaics, shorepower, and public art.

Paul Lipson - Founder and Chief Consultant

<https://www.barrettobay.com/>



#### AAL CONSTRUCTION SERVICES LLC

AAL Construction Services, a NYS certified WBE company, offers a full scope of civil site work services, including but not limited to land clearing and grading, excavation, shoreline restoration, asphalt & concrete, and erosion and sediment control. AAL provided significant assistance in the implementation of the McInnis Cement Bench Project, facilitating the cement pours for the benches.

Ana Lavdas, President

<https://aalconstructionservices.com/>

#### **OTHER CONTRIBUTORS:**

Joe D'Agostino - General Contractor - Form Building and Cement pours

Jeff Wilson - Contractor - Form Building and Cement pours

Salvo Scalia, AAL Construction Contractor - donated services

The J Team: Jeff, Juan, Johnny, Jonathan from AAL Construction - donated services

Casa Redi-Mix- donated services (<https://www.casaredimix.com/>)

Acme Awning (<http://www.acmeawn.com/contact.html>)

Rosenzweig Lumber (<https://www.rosenzweiglumber.com/>)