



BID on Culture Announces Artists/Unveils New Banners to Hang Throughout Harlem

*BID ON CULTURE 2011 Project Unveils New Banner Designs
Selected in Third Annual Banner Competition*

HARLEM, NY, June 23, 2011 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- There is always something exciting to see on the streets of Harlem, but few sights are more magnificent than the 36 new banners that are now flying on streetlight poles along the world-renowned 125th Street corridor. Today at the Dwyer Cultural Center, the BID ON CULTURE 2011 project, in conjunction with its celebration of Black Music Month, unveiled the six winning designs that were selected from 41 submissions in the 125th Street Business Improvement District's (the 125th Street BID) third annual BID ON CULTURE banner design competition. The double-sided banners are displayed from Fifth Avenue to Morningside Avenue and from Broadway to 12th Avenue, and along 12th Avenue up to 138th Street.

The winning banner designs are the work of five professional New York visual artists who responded to a Request for Proposals (RFP) released in April. The RFP sought banner designs that celebrate Harlem's musical legacy as well as personalities and venues closely associated with Harlem's contribution to the history and development of music in America.

The selected artists and banners are:

- Corine Campbell: Billie Holiday
- Misha McGlown: Jimi Hendrix and Josephine Baker
- Tomo Mori: Somos la Musica
- Soyca Mphahlele: New Colors
- Hubert Williams: True Colours

Barbara Askins, President and CEO of 125th Street BID, said, "The designs, the colors, the creativity and concepts all began to define the culturally sensitive streetscape improvements that the BID is seeking to bring to Harlem's major commercial corridor. We are pleased to exhibit the work of great artists and, and we believe these banners will enhance the pedestrian experience of those who are walking across 125th Street over the coming year."

Voza Rivers, Harlem Arts Alliance (HAA) Chairman of the Board, said, "There is certainly no dearth of talent throughout New York. The fact that all five of the BID ON CULTURE 2011 banner winners reside in New York, and four of the five live in this community, is testament to the many exceptional artists who make Harlem their home," said. "The panel of judges had a difficult job, but we are confident that the selections are dynamic and beautiful depictions of what Harlem is all about."

Wayne Benjamin, Director of Residential Development for Harlem Community Development Corporation (Harlem CDC) said, "The BID ON CULTURE project gets better each year. The banner design competition continues to evolve and is an exciting way to showcase Harlem, its culture, its people, and its businesses. Harlem CDC is proud to partner with the 125th Street BID, the Harlem Arts Alliance, the talented artists and the diverse group of Harlem businesses and stakeholders who stepped forward to sponsor this initiative."

The annual BID ON CULTURE competition is spearheaded by a partnership of The 125th Street Business Improvement District, the Harlem Arts Alliance and Harlem Community Development Corporation to showcase the cultural vitality of Harlem along 125th Street, its primary commercial thoroughfare. Its objective is to promote recognition and understanding of Harlem's unique and authentic heritage, its role as a vibrant center of culture and to help promote the continued revitalization of 125th Street as the economic and artistic heart of Harlem.

The sponsors of the BID ON CULTURE 2011 project are Aloft Harlem, Applebee's, The College of New Rochelle, The City College of New York, Columbia University, Con Edison, Hip-Hop Culture Center and The Mama Foundation.

This BID ON CULTURE 2011 project is supported by NYC & Company. "Cultural activity is a major attraction for visitors to New York City, drawing more than 21 million individuals last year who enjoyed our City's history and arts," said NYC & Company CEO George Fertitta. "We are proud to support the BID ON CULTURE initiative which celebrates heritage, showcases local talent and spotlights one of the most vibrant destinations in our five boroughs."

125th STREET BID 18th ANNUAL MEETING

Following the introduction of the winning artists and unveiling of the BID ON CULTURE 2011 banners, the 125th Street BID held its 18th Annual Meeting, also at the Dwyer Cultural Center. New York City Comptroller John Liu discussed his office, the city's economy and local business issues and Brian Morris spoke about ESmith's Legacy's vision for the southwest corner of 125th Street and Lenox Avenue.

THE ARTISTS

Harlem resident Corine Campbell says her creativity usually starts from a simple place like spotting a color combination that she wants to incorporate into a painting, expressing feelings with lines indescribable to words or finding attractive shapes to produce a portrait. She usually depicts women - for the competition Billie Holiday - while experimenting with different media, such as, paint, ink, pencils, yarn, fabric, and computer software. "It has been that way ever since I was a child drawing in my sketchbook in Harlem. Art allows me to escape somewhere fun while discovering numerous possibilities," Campbell said.

A native of Detroit, MI, Misha McGlown attended Wayne State University and Center for Creative Studies. Although she began painting professionally in 2006 and has since exhibited throughout the New York area, she is best known for her jewelry collection, under the Omo Misha brand. She was awarded her first solo exhibit by Columbia University in 2008 and on behalf of artHARLEM, she curated EVOLUTION: The Changing Face of Harlem - an exhibit, hosted by Columbia University, featuring the works of 25 Harlem artists. She is currently Curator-in-Residence for Harlem's Cafe One and has worked in programming and development for The Children's Art Carnival, and led residencies and youth workshops for numerous organizations in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. A multi-faceted artist and visionary, Misha is a published author and creator of The Omo Misha Times - a webzine covering art, fashion, politics, fun and social awareness. She has been the recipient of artistic awards by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the Puffin Foundation and Harlem Arts Alliance. Her designs in the 2011 banner competition feature Josephine Baker and Jimi Hendrix.

Tomo Mori was born in Shijonawate in the countryside of Osaka, Japan, and later moved to Tokyo. There, she discovered a severe affliction with allergies that kept her house-bound, but allowed her to find a new freedom: art. At 15, she enrolled in the Tokyo Metropolitan High School for Music and Fine Arts and a year later traveled to California to study English. She returned to Japan, where her first large scale painting, "Scream," was exhibited at the prestigious Metropolitan Museum in Ueno. In 1991, she moved to Atlanta, and studied at the Atlanta College of Art. Tomo worked as a graphic designer for 16 years but last year, she decided to focus on her art. She has found her artistic home in Harlem where she says she thrives from the creative energy. Inspiration struck while she was taking a dance class in Mali. She realized that her life experience among different cultures combined with her boundless curiosity fuels the engine that makes her art original. Her focus on music/dance, process and color are the catalysts for her submission of the vibrant dancers, Somos la Musica, which will find a stage along 125th Street.

Born in Zambia, Soyca Mphahlele grew up in the Parkside Projects in the Bronx and went on to attend the Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music and Art and Performing Arts and later graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Communication from the Maryland Institute College of Art. He has lived, worked and worshipped in Harlem since he was a child. Soyca says his work "represents the tone of the real New York and his enduring respect for the art of the streets." His banner design, New Colors, does just that.

Hubert Williams was born in Fort Lauderdale, FL, but moved to New York in 1964. A versatile photographer, filmmaker and visual artist as well as a musician (organist), he submitted the vivid True Colours in the banner competition. He had his first encounter with a camera in 1976, and has since gone on to photograph his viewpoint of people, places and structures as well as weddings, fashion events, opera and jazz concerts. "I live to shoot," Williams says of his passion for photography.

In addition to the banner competition, BID ON CULTURE presents Black Music Month in Harlem featuring nearly 100 events at nine venues throughout the area. The month-long celebration features Jazz, Blues, Gospel, R & B, Classical, Caribbean, Salsa, Afro-Cuban, Funk and Soul music performances as well as spoken word, art and other entertainment. Known worldwide as the epicenter of Black culture, Harlem's contribution to American music and all the arts is legendary. Upcoming concerts include Michael C. Lewis Jazz Experience tonight at Aloft, 6:00 pm, Nate Lucas Organ Trio, Lenox Lounge, June 22, 8:00 pm; Paul Mooney "Live In Harlem", Lenox Lounge, June 23, 8:00 pm; Danny Mixon Trio, Showman's, June 24, 9:30 pm, 11:30 pm, 1:30 am; Oral Tradition of Gospel Music in Harlem, Dwyer Cultural Center, June 28, 7:00 pm; Ben Williams & Sound Effect, Harlem Stage Gatehouse, June 29, 7:30 pm; and Karaoke & Martini Thursday, Sylvia's Also Lounge, June 30, 7:00 pm.

BID ON CULTURE is also a participant in Make Music New York, a live, free musical celebration across the city that takes place each June 21 - the longest day of the year. Today, hundreds of public spaces throughout the five boroughs - sidewalks, parks, community gardens and more - become impromptu stages for more than 1, 000 free concerts. Musicians of all ages, creeds, and musical genres perform for new audiences, who come out to experience unfamiliar groups on the first day of summer.

THE PARTNERS

The 125th Street BID is a non-profit organization funded primarily from an additional tax assessment collected from the property owners within the defined boundaries. Organized in compliance with state and city laws, the property and business and business owners determine the services and programs needed for the district. The BID will utilize the competition to bring visibility to its streetscape improvement efforts and to enliven the community's central business district.

www.125thstreetbid.com.

Harlem Arts Alliance: As Harlem's arts service organization, HAA nurtures the artistic growth and organizational development of artists and arts organizations in Harlem and surrounding areas, and serves as a strong advocate for the health and vitality of the Harlem cultural community. www.harlemmaa.org.

Harlem Community Development Corporation, a subsidiary of Empire State Development Corporation, serves the greater Harlem community including East Harlem, Central Harlem, West Harlem and Washington Heights, through planning, promoting and implementing a range of community development initiatives for revitalizing economic activity in Upper Manhattan and enhancing its cultural vibrancy. For more information on Harlem CDC please visit its web site at <http://www.harlemcdc.org>.

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