



EXECUTIVE OFFICES
280 BROADWAY, 7th FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007
(212) 566-5000, TTY: (212) 566-4769



For Immediate Release:
June 22, 2010

NEW YORK CITY LAUNCHES URBANCANVAS DESIGN COMPETITION TO BEAUTIFY CONSTRUCTION SITES WITH TEMPORARY ART

Innovative Competition Seeks Designs for Construction Fences, Sidewalk Sheds, Supported Scaffolds and Cocoon Systems

Public Can Vote for Winning Designs to Be Displayed at Construction Sites

Buildings Commissioner Robert LiMandri and Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Kate D. Levin today launched the urbancanvas Design Competition, a unique contest seeking to challenge professional artists and designers to use temporary protective structures throughout New York City as blank canvases on which to express their creativity through public art. Supported by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, the competition asks participants to create designs for construction fences, sidewalk sheds, supported scaffolds and cocoon systems, which are used to protect New Yorkers during construction. In a dense urban environment such as New York City with a high volume of construction, temporary protective structures are installed at thousands of buildings and storefronts as a safety measure during construction operations. But these structures obstruct the City's streetscapes and can become an eyesore to residents and pedestrians. This competition is designed to beautify these structures with creative and compelling public art on or over City-owned property and encourage their maintenance to enhance public safety.

"This exciting competition will transform any construction site into an artist's canvas, and as a result, this City's landscape will look better than ever before," said Commissioner LiMandri. "Construction is vital to keeping our City's economic engines running, but the temporary structures needed to protect New Yorkers during construction can become a nuisance to neighbors. This contest is designed to bring the beauty back to our buildings and encourage developers to maintain their sites in a safe manner."

"The urbancanvas Design Competition builds on this administration's commitment to public art as a source of pleasure and interest to New Yorkers, and an affirmation of New York City's identity as the place for creative people and ideas," said Commissioner Levin. "We welcome artists from across the street and around the country to engage in making our neighborhoods inviting and inspiring."

“The Rockefeller Foundation is thrilled to be a part of the urban canvas Design Competition, to support a new and innovative way to bring forward the work of national artists while simultaneously improving New York City's urban landscape,” said Rockefeller Foundation President Judith Rodin. “The Rockefeller Foundation has long believed that creative expression is central to both New York City's identity and economy, and we are excited to seize on this opportunity to further enhance New York City's image by combining that unique and cherished creativity with the building, construction and architecture that is a vital economic engine.”

As part of the competition, artists must develop individual designs for each temporary protective structure that are compatible in a variety of possible combinations and that represent a cohesive artistic vision. Submissions must include designs that can stand alone or be displayed together on combinations of temporary protective structures at the same location. Submissions will be judged on artistic merit, creativity and originality, as well as flexibility to adapt to various temporary protective structures, sizes, configurations and locations. The winning designs will reflect an understanding of New York City's diverse population and complement multiple streetscapes within residential, commercial and industrial areas.

A jury of world-renowned artists, designers and civic decision makers has been selected to evaluate the urban canvas Design Competition submissions. The Jury includes: **Polly Apfelbaum**, artist ; **Dan Brodsky**, President of the Brodsky Organization and of the Real Estate Board of New York; **Ignacio Ciocchini**, IDSA, Director of Design and Streetscape Development, Bryant Park Corporation; **Carl Galioto**, FAIA, Senior Principal, HOK and of the New York Building Congress; **Sagi Haviv**, Partner, Chermayeff & Geismar; **Jennifer McGregor**, Director of Arts & Senior Curator, Wave Hill; **Eddie Torres**, Associate Director, the Rockefeller Foundation; NYC Department of Buildings Commissioner **Robert LiMandri**; and NYC Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner **Kate D. Levin**. The Public Design Commission of the City of New York will be represented by **Paula Scher**, a Principal at Pentagram Design, who will serve in an advisory capacity. **Susanna Sirefman** of Dovetail Design Strategists is the competition advisor overseeing the development and management of the competition.

The urban canvas Design Competition Jury will recommend six to eight proposals to the Design Commission for review. Upon approval by the Design Commission, the finalists' designs will be featured on www.nyc.gov/urbancanvas for a public vote. Up to four winning designs will each be awarded \$7,500, courtesy of the Rockefeller Foundation grant to the Mayor's Fund. The Mayor's Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting innovative public-private partnerships such as urban canvas.

Under a pilot program conducted by the Department of Buildings, property owners, contractors and businesses will have the opportunity to select one of the winning designs to feature on a temporary protective structure located on or over City-owned property. At sites with an eligible scaffold, property owners have the option to place a pictorial rendering of the exterior of the project being built in lieu of art. Winning designs installed on temporary protective structures can include the name of one art sponsor displayed in accordance with the pilot program specifications. The Department will conduct this pilot program under New York City Charter Section 645(b)(2)(g) which allows the Commissioner “to permit in specific cases

experimental or demonstration construction not in compliance with the building code.” The NYC Construction Codes currently prohibit, with limited exceptions, the posting of any material on temporary protective structures.

Registration for the competition is open until July 19, 2010. Interested participants can visit www.nyc.gov/urbancanvas for more information about the competition and how to participate.

In January, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Commissioner LiMandri announced the winner of the City’s urbanSHED International Design Competition, which was created to design a new standard of sidewalk shed for the City. The winning design, “Urban Umbrella,” was developed by a team consisting of Young-Hwan Choi, who created the initial design; and Sarrah Khan, a professional engineer, and Andres Cortes, a registered architect, both from the New York-based design firm Agencie Group. The winning design was selected from 164 designs submitted by architects, engineers, designers and students from 28 countries around the world and will be built on a construction site in Lower Manhattan later this year.

-30-

Contact:	Tony Sclafani/Ryan FitzGibbon (Buildings)	(212) 566-3473
	Malia Simonds/Danai Pointer (Cultural Affairs)	(212) 513-9322