



Chicago Artists Make History with \$3.5 Million O'Hare Airport Terminal 5 Art Project

By Jo Marquez
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Chicago's O'Hare International Airport's Terminal 5 (T5) is on the verge of completing a significant \$3.5 million public art project. The initiative features the work of over 20 Chicago-based artists, marking the city's largest single acquisition from local talent in 30 years as reported by the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE). The project represents the creativity and operosity of the windy city's artists.

Mayor Brandon Johnson, beaming with pride, shared his enthusiasm on welcoming visitors with Chicago's story told through these art installations. The Mayor believes such unique opportunities strengthen the city's public arts scene not only within its bounds but also for the global audiences.

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Jimmy Castillo, the DCASE director, shared that the T5 project is one of over 60 new art initiatives taking place all over the city. Castillo emphasizes on community engagement as a crucial part of the city's public art program, enriching the lives of all its residents according to an announcement.

The city's strong affinity to public art led to the inception of myriad transformative art installations citywide. Examples include Luftwerk and Gloria Talamantes' light installation "Woven Together" that draws inspiration from the Back of the Yards neighborhood's residents, and Bob Faust's recently finished "Wayfindings" at Austin's Joint Public Safety Training Campus, featuring images of Austin contributed by Community Policing officers and youth.

Besides the T5, O'Hare's Multi-Modal Facility (MMF) also hosts impressive art installations such as "REACH," a sculpture by New York-based artists Hank Willis Thomas and Coby Kennedy, and "Horizon Light" by James Carpenter Design Associates. Chicago artist Nick Cave's "Palimpsest" is also a notable installation as per DCASE.

New installations that testament to Chicago's dedication to public art are also on the rise across various neighborhoods. Leonard Suryajaya has recently installed his five large-scale paintings titled "Riverwalk Banner Kin Link" on Michigan Avenue. Furthermore, Back of the Yards neighborhood is gearing up to light up its streets with "Woven Together" by Luftwerk and Gloria Talamantes, celebrating the area's rich saga, to be completed by October 2023.

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As reported by DCASE, Bob Faust's "Wayfindings" at the Joint Public Safety Training Campus in the Austin neighborhood has been completed in September 2023. The Chicago Public Library is collaborating with three artists who were chosen to create new artworks for its branch locations as part of anti-violence programming. This effort is designed at fostering communal healing and unity.

Moreover, efforts for preserving iconic public art, particularly "Harlem Station" by famed artist Alex Katz at the Harlem (O'Hare Branch) Blue Line CTA station, are ongoing in collaboration with The Conservation Center and the CTA. Such restoration projects plays a significant role in sustaining the lively public art scene and influencing diverse communities across the city.

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