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BIA Name:

South Granville BIA, Robson BIA, Downtown Vancouver BIA

Q2

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Q4

Project Title:

Make Art While Apart

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Category:

Partnerships & Advocacy,
Placemaking

Q6**Project Description:**

In April 2020, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, three Vancouver BIA's partnered with Vancouver Mural Festival to launch the #makeartwhileapart project in response to the increasing presence of boarded up storefronts, which left their commercial streets and neighbourhoods looking neglected and desolate. As many artists were also economically impacted by the pandemic, it was a perfect opportunity to support local artists and also transform the vandalized boards into beautiful pieces of art with positive images and messages that sparked joy, inspired hope, celebrated resilience and brought light to their communities during a dark time. This project resulted in the creation of more than 40 murals across the city and countless social media posts and traditional media stories, support local artists while bringing hope and positivity to the streets in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. With boarded up windows becoming an increasingly common occurrence in neighbourhoods across the city, the BIA's worked with VMF to enlisting a large group of alumni and professional muralists to donate temporary mural work to these locations for a basic honorarium. This resulted in the creation of more than 40 murals across several areas in only a few days. All artists designed imagery and messages to spark joy and/or celebrate the resilience of our communities.

VanCity Credit Union, The City of Vancouver and Goodbye Graffiti stepped up as corporate sponsors to provide paint, anti-graffiti coating, and other funding support.

Q7**Audience:**

Firstly, businesses and property owners within the three BIAs to not only beautify their specific properties, but also enhance the overall appearance of the neighbourhood for the benefit of all businesses/properties. Secondly, as getting outside was an important element in maintaining people's mental health during the shutdown, this public art project provided an opportunity for residents and visitors to enjoy a positive and uplifting neighbourhood experience in real life or digitally. Lastly, this project also reached the artist community, supporting 40 of them directly and inspiring many others who had also reached out to be part of the project.

Q8**Implementation:**

There was already an established relationship with Vancouver Mural Festival and the South Granville, Robson and Downtown BIAs, as all had completed recent projects or were planning future ones. The partnership was a natural fit given the shared challenges and desired outcome. VMF put out the call for artists, negotiated the artist fees, provided curation and painting logistics, as well as brought on additional partners, such as Vancity, Goodbye Graffiti and the City of Vancouver to match artist fees, provide a protective mural coating and supply paint, respectively. The BIAs collectively supported the artist fees, supplies, content creation and obtained approvals from businesses/property owners. All murals were created over a two week period. All three have had recent projects or were in the process of setting up projects in their respective neighbourhoods. The three neighbourhoods agreed to work together with VMF to bring a positive message to the city. VMF negotiated a fair rate with the artists, provided the curation and logistics, while the BIA's provided the honorariums. The paint was provided by the City of Vancouver and the art was applied to hoarding already installed by the businesses.

Q9

Results:

In total, 44 temporary murals were installed in some of the highest pedestrian trafficked neighbourhoods in Vancouver. The #makeartwhileapart project had numerous positive results, including the reduction of unsightly graffiti on hoarding, beautification of the three neighbourhoods, providing meaningful work to local artists, leveraging amazing partnerships, and most importantly it resonated deeply with each of the communities, bringing back hope and positivity during an uncertain time. This project also signified how important arts and culture is and the powerful impact it can have on a community. Because of this, a number of murals were salvaged once stores re-opened and were brought back to life in new and innovative ways. The Downtown Vancouver BIA partnered with the Pendulum Gallery to display a series of still photos of the various murals, as well as a few of the salvaged boards. The Robson Street BIA re-installed five of the murals on the Blue Horizon Parking Garage and created a nightly projection during the Vancouver Mural Festival featuring footage of the #makeartwhileapart murals and artists. The Museum of Vancouver also selected a few pieces for curation of a future exhibit. South Granville?

The murals received positive recognition on traditional and social media, and encouraged people to come back to the neighbourhoods in safe ways to explore the beautiful art.

Media:

- <https://vanmurfest.ca/makeartwhileapart>
- <https://www.insidevancouver.ca/2020/06/03/make-art-while-apart-all-60-of-vancouvers-temporary-murals/>
- <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform/make-art-while-apart#:~:text=Artists%20are%20transforming%20boarded%20up,during%20the%20COVID%2D19%20pandemic.&text=In%20one%20week%2C%20a%20boarded,of%20art%20with%20a%20message.>
- <https://vancouversun.com/entertainment/local-arts/mural-artists-beautify-boarded-up-storefronts-in-hard-hit-areas>
- <https://www.vancouverisawesome.com/featured/35-inspirational-murals-proud-live-vancouver-2320280>
- <https://www.recorder.ca/entertainment/local-arts/mural-artists-beautify-boarded-up-storefronts-in-hard-hit-areas/wcm/4d8c6ad8-7d36-4baa-98cd-eb9bd1c37df0>

Downtown Shopfront Murals Exhibition:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CENEyMIhhSZ/>

Robson St. BIA Projections:

<https://www.instagram.com/stories/robsonstreet/2389781427284972279/>

Salvaged Mural Display:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CEA5esBBu-h/>

Feedback from the web:

"I just came back from a jaunt down Robson St., and I felt like I was vacationing in a different city with all the fabulous murals. I highly recommend strolling Robson: a nice pick-me-up with no crowds at all."

"Love the passion Vancouver artists share to brighten up the downtown."

"In one week, a boarded-up storefront on Howe Street transformed from a bleak reminder of the economic and societal repercussions of the pandemic into a colourful work of art with a message."

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Cost:

Though typically murals can cost thousands of dollars, a partnership with VMF to access their network of partners brought the cost way down in an effort to support our local communities and artists. Cost was \$500 per artist, which was matched by Vancity for a total of \$1,000 for each artist. VMF waived their usual administrative and project fees and the City of Vancouver supported the project through supplying paint. Robson: \$13,000 for 19 murals. \$3000 to salvage, South Granville: \$7,000 for 6 murals, Downtown: \$35,000 for 19 murals
