



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**PRESS CONTACTS:**

For Mural Arts:

Kaitlyn Haney, Signature 57

215-514-6495 or [kaitlynhaneyo@gmail.com](mailto:kaitlynhaneyo@gmail.com)

**MURAL ARTS PHILADELPHIA’S PORCH LIGHT PROGRAM RECEIVES  
GENEROUS GIFT FROM ERIK HIRSCH & MARGARET MCALLISTER  
AHEAD OF NEW COLOR ME BACK MURAL DEDICATION**

**Philadelphia, PA – June 29, 2022** – Mural Arts Philadelphia is thrilled to announce the expansion of its innovative *Color Me Back: Same Day Work and Pay Program*, thanks to a generous gift from philanthropists Erik Hirsch and Margaret McAllister. The announcement will take place at a dedication in partnership with SEPTA, which will debut a new mural at Suburban Station (near the 15th street corridor) on **Tuesday, July 12, from 1:00 – 2:00 pm**. The dedication features a mural created by Mural Arts’ *Color Me Back* program. The mural titled “A Distant Spark: Iterations 1-5” and “A Blinding Light: Iterations 1-5” by artist Andrea Grasso connects with an initiative managed by Mural Arts’ Porch Light community wellness program. The program combines participatory art making and access to social services in a unique model that offers individuals experiencing economic insecurity an opportunity to earn wages.

*Color Me Back*, an initiative managed by Mural Arts’ Porch Light community wellness program, combines participatory art making and access to social services in a unique model offering individuals who are experiencing economic insecurity an opportunity to earn wages. A collaboration with the City of Philadelphia’s Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services, *Color Me Back* received national attention in January 2022 when Mural Arts Founder and Executive Director Jane Golden, joined by program participant Norman Bonk, were featured on *The Kelly Clarkson Show*. Erik and Margaret have been long-standing friends of Jane and of Mural Arts Philadelphia, with Erik having previously served on the Mural Arts board.

“We’re in an environment where people need a helping hand, and they need it with dignity,” said **Erik Hirsch, Vice Chairman & Head of Strategic Initiatives at Hamilton Lane**. “The *Color Me Back* program allows people to receive a helping hand while helping themselves. When you look at who is attracted to this program, it’s people who want to improve their lives but, in some cases, just need someone to open that door –just a crack– and then they’re ready to run through it. It’s tangible, measurable, and scalable. Every city in his country should be doing this because it works.”

“We are so elated by the incredible generosity of Erik Hirsch and Margaret McAllister towards Mural Arts and our *Color Me Back* program,” said **Golden**. “They passionately understand that when it comes to our country’s intractable problems, we can be aspirational and highly pragmatic at the same time and that the role of innovation and creativity to transform lives is profoundly important.”

### **About the Murals & Artists:**

#### **“A Distant Spark: Iterations 1-5” and “A Blinding Light: Iterations 1-5” by Artist Andréa Grasso**

The overarching theme of the project is connectivity, shown through the flowing compositions of the design, the designs adjacent to each other, and the ones across the corridor. The mural piece consists of 10 panels, 5 on each side of the concourse along 15th Street. The designs on one wall come directly from work with participants, who did workshops on abstract geometric collages. The second wall is also inspired by participants but also includes shapes that add complexity and chaos, reminiscent of the present and future of the city. They represent the development of the city over time and the layering and overlapping of infrastructure, including the subterranean work of the subway system. The central design in the series is reminiscent of the city center, a hub from which everything radiates.

- About Artist Andréa Grasso  
Andréa Grasso has been working in various aspects of public art for nearly a decade. This work is driven by a passion for the accessibility of public art projects, as well as an acknowledgement about the importance of beautifying public spaces in our cities. He studied social practice art and painting at Portland State University and went on to get a master's in City Planning from Temple University. His geometric abstract style is a product of the desire to bring dynamic energy and vibrant colors into our increasingly muted, gray, and box-like cityscapes.

### **About Mural Arts Philadelphia**

Mural Arts Philadelphia is the nation’s largest public art program, dedicated to the belief that art ignites change. For over 35 years, Mural Arts has united artists and communities through a collaborative and equitable process, creating over 4,000 artworks that have transformed public spaces and individual lives. Mural Arts aims to empower people, stimulate dialogue, and build bridges to mutual understanding through projects that attract artists from Philadelphia and around the world, and programs that focus on youth education, restorative justice, mental health and wellness, and public art and its preservation. Popular mural tours offer a firsthand glimpse into the inspiring stories behind Mural Arts' iconic and unparalleled collection, which has earned Philadelphia worldwide recognition as the "Mural Capital of the World." For more information, call 215-685-0750 or visit [muralarts.org](http://muralarts.org). Follow us on social media: @muralarts on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), [MuralArtsPhiladelphia](#) on Facebook, and [phillymuralarts](#) on YouTube.

###