



LIONS & RABBITS
CENTER FOR THE ARTS



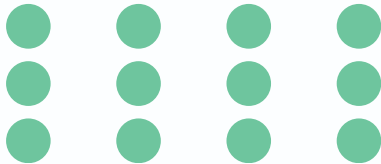
CORKTOWN X HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MARCH 2026



WHO IS LIONS & RABBITS CENTER FOR THE ARTS

We are a Michigan-based nonprofit organization that cultivates creative leadership and expands community capacity through public art and cultural strategy. We believe communities are built when creativity drives equitable social and economic growth. By centering local artists and fostering collaboration between sectors, we help communities shape their environments with intention and purpose.

As a recognized thought leader in creative placemaking, we guide cities, neighborhoods, and cultural organizations through projects that include murals, interactive installations, and capacity-building programs for artists and arts workers. Our approach is hands-on, equity-centered, and grounded in the belief that creativity should be a part of every corner of public life. We work closely with artists and residents to ensure that their voices shape both the process and the outcome.



THE STATISTICS SAY ONE IN THREE.

But in reality, cancer touches all of us.

We carry these stories—your mother’s diagnosis, your coworker’s chemo, your scan. Yet when it comes time to speak honestly, we freeze. We say “fine” when we’re terrified, “okay” when we’re unraveling.

This silence isolates us when we most need connection. Patients often discover that no one has warned them about the effects of treatment on the body. Survivors find their fears don’t fit a culture that demands either triumph or tragedy. Families break under pressures they can’t name. Hard-won wisdom stays locked behind polite smiles.

No wonder it’s hard to talk: you don’t want to scare your kids, endure pity, or become “the cancer person.” The terms are confusing, the body is embarrassing, and voicing fears feels like tempting fate.

How do you say that surviving feels nothing like winning? That you’re jealous, furious, terrified? That your pain has no words, your fear no end?

The only voices we hear belong to those with the privilege to speak—while so many remain invisible: Black women dismissed, the working poor without time, and immigrants navigating illness in another language.

Let’s make it easier to tell the truth.



A. SURVIVOR PORTRAIT PANELS INSTALLATION; LOCAL CREATIVES

- The 112 high-resolution printed portraits are stretched on canvas (see next page) and attached to preinstalled 2X4s in the windows on the south, east, and north sides of the building after removing weathered boards
- No drilling or alterations to the historic building materials will occur
- NO LED strip lighting will be installed
- Neons will be restored to their original state by a neon specialist

GENERATED EXAMPLE OF NEON LIGHTING MOCK UP



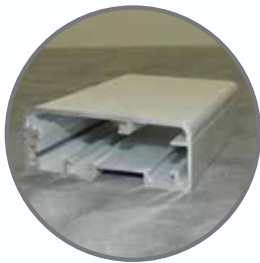
CURRENT IMAGES



EXAMPLE PORTRAIT: SATI SMITH CREATED BY SETH SHARP
PHOTOGRAPH BY LAMAR DUPREE



EXAMPLE OF PRINTED CANVAS INSTALLATION PROCESS AND SPECS FOR OF PORTRAIT HANGING SYSTEM



Frame detail
(shown closed)



Frame decal
(shown open)



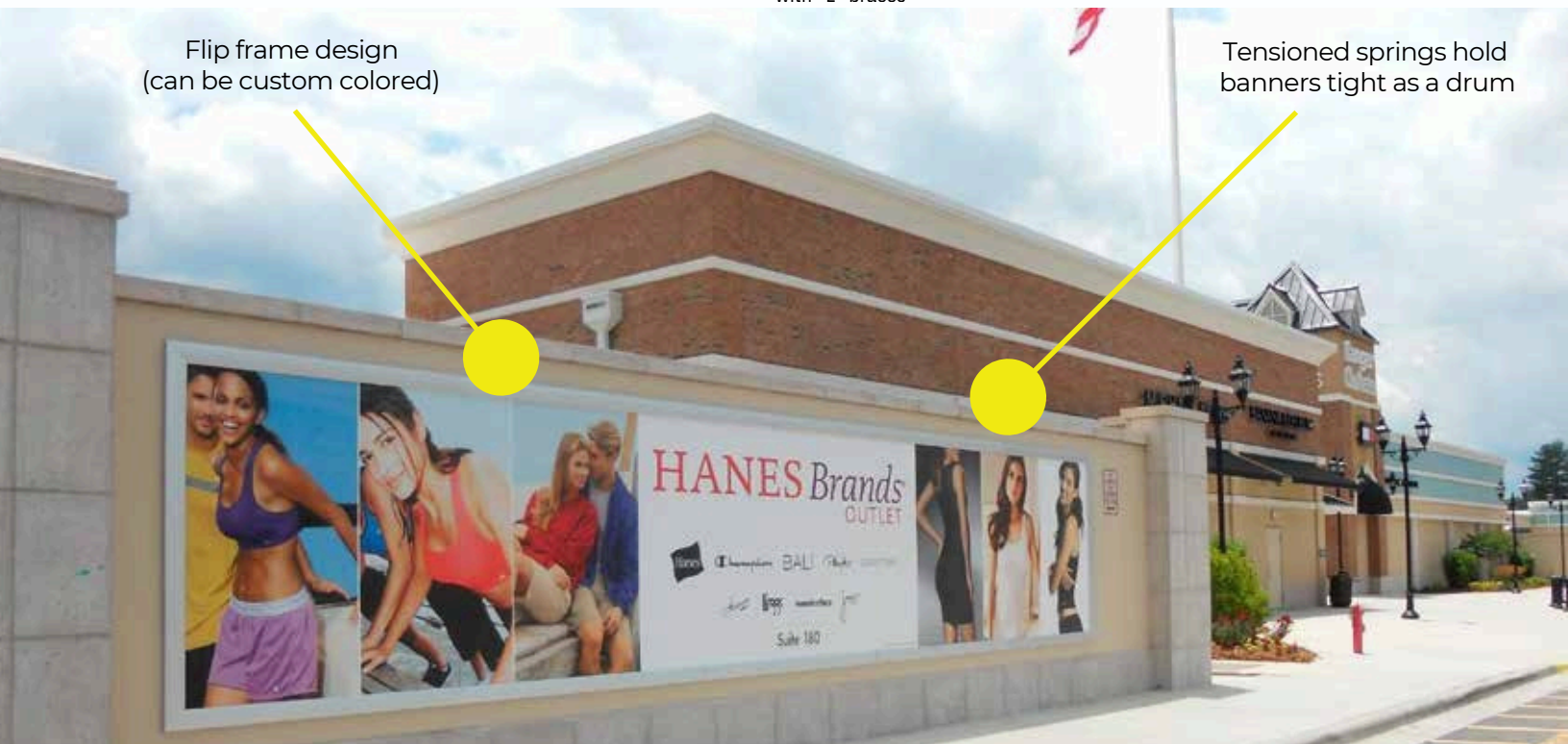
Mitered edges
connect and fasten
with "L" braces



Tensioning springs
connect to grommets
and hold banners taut

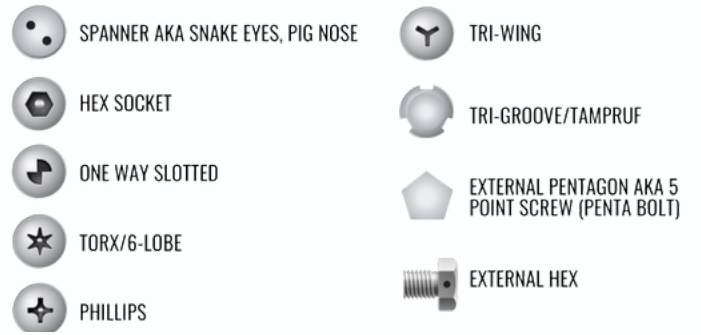
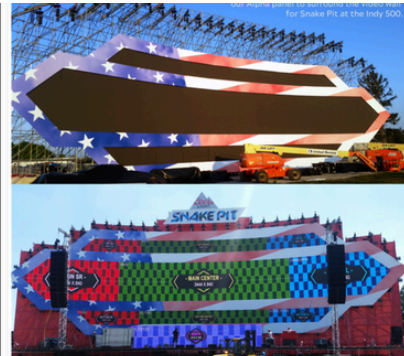
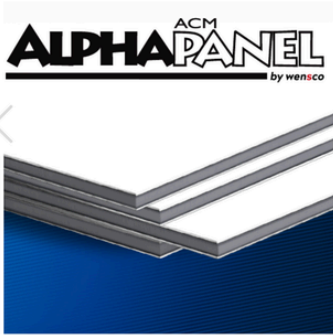
Flip frame design
(can be custom colored)

Tensioned springs hold
banners tight as a drum



B. COMMUNITY PAINT-BY-NUMBERS MURALS

- New Alpha Panels will be affixed to the current 2x4 installed frames, removing the weathered boards.
- Painting will occur on alpha panels after installation.

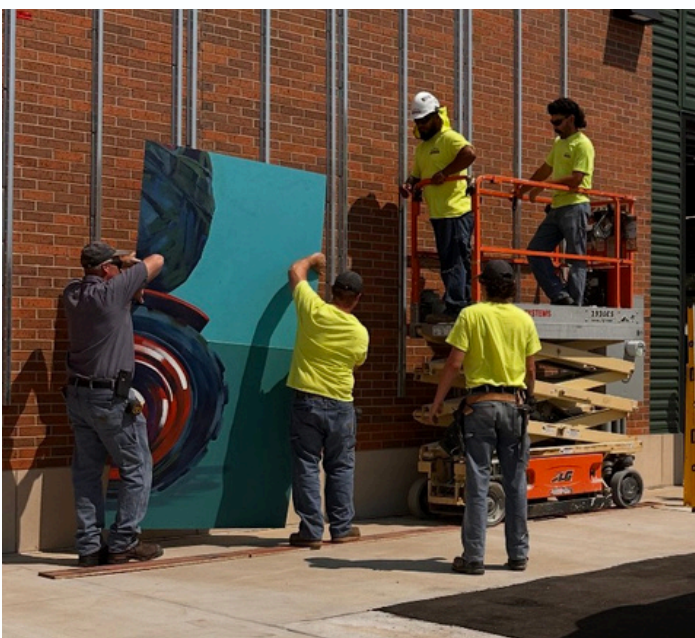


ALPHA PANELING - 10X8FT SHEETS ATTACHMENT SCREWS

PAINT BY NUMBERS EXAMPLE

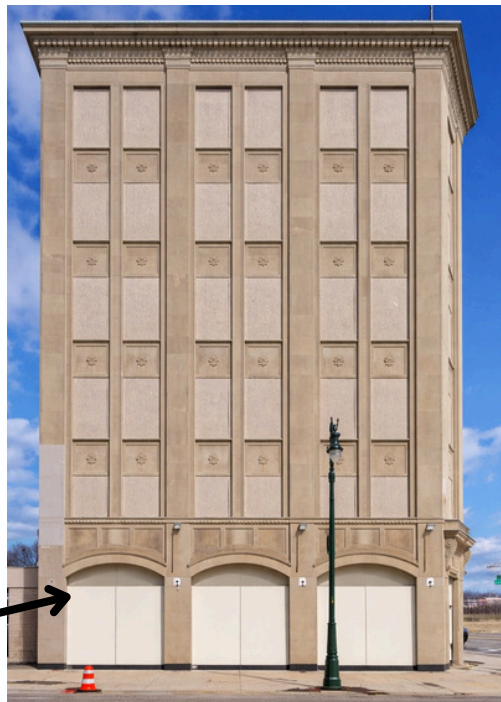


ALPHA PANEL INSTALL EXAMPLE



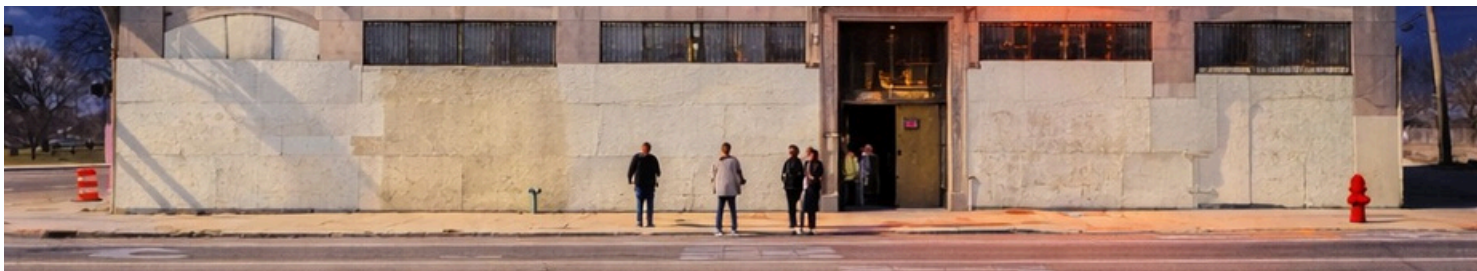
EXAMPLE MOCK UP WITH ALPHA PANELS - REMOVE ALL PLYWOOD AND REPLACE WITH ALPHA PANELS FIXED INTO THE SPACES. REMOVE ALL WOOD FIXED TO COLUMNS AND ONLY HAVE ALPHA PANEL SET IN THE WINDOWS.

CURRENT CONDITIONS



EXAMPLE OF REPLACEMENT BEFORE PAINT BY NUMBERS

CURRENT CONDITIONS



EXAMPLE OF REPLACEMENT BEFORE PAINT BY NUMBERS
NO CHANGE TO FRONT DOOR

C. WEST WALL MURAL: IVAN MONTOYA & APPRENTICE

- The mural will span the entire west elevation of the building.
- The wall has been previously modified through multiple layers of paint. Before new work begins, all flaking or unstable paint will be hand-scraped using preservation-safe methods.
- The surface will be cleaned and primed using artist-grade, pH-neutral primer.
- Painting will be executed with high-quality, weather-resistant materials such as Montana Cans and O’Leary’s Paint to ensure durability and protection from the elements.
- After painting, the mural will be sealed with a UV-resistant matte varnish.
- No masonry restoration, tuckpointing, or alteration will occur as part of this project.
- Additional hanging conduit will be removed.

D. INTERACTIVE “PAYPHONE” INSTALLATIONS: INTERACTIVE PARTICIPATION

- The concept involves a freestanding, self-contained “payphone-style” kiosk with pre-recorded oral histories of each survivor and an additional phone to leave a message for others.
- In the phone booth, there will be additional QR codes for guests to scan on their smartphones so they can walk around the building instead of staying in the booth.
- This unit will be placed independently of the building but underneath the awning. It will be bolted to the ground

PHONE BOOTH LOCATED IN
FRONT OF THE DOOR NEXT
TO THE AWNING



MURAL TITLE: ARBOL DE VIDA / TREE OF LIFE



MURAL SKETCH: IVAN MONTOYA
MARCH 16, 2026

MOCK UP OF THE PHONE
BOOTH WITH MURAL

MURAL NARRATIVE: IVAN MONTOYA

ÁRBOL DE VIDA / TREE OF LIFE

As an archetypal symbol found within our world's mythological and spiritual stories, this mural is a reinterpretation of the Tree of Life. As in those traditions, this tree is a reminder of the interconnected ecosystem that we play a part of - both in life as in death. Each branch is a path taken, each leaf a memory made, unanimously growing larger and more beautiful with every experience.

This mural intends to weave Celtic and American Indigenous (pre-hispanic and North American) symbolism as a way to honor the people that have inhabited Corktown and the land that it exists on. My intention with this mural is to decorate the landscape with symbols and icons that remind us of the joy and beauty of the human spirit.

In this version of the tree of life, a large, proud oak stems from the ground stretching upwards to the sky. Below the surface, its roots weave continuously, much like in the Celtic interpretation of the tree of life. The roots are knotted around a face and a monarch butterfly. The Butterfly, a symbol of beauty and brevity of life, is equal in size to the face. This serves as a reminder that like the butterfly, our life is beautiful and fleeting. Like the butterfly, our life contains an individual journey that colors the path in which it travels.

Above ground, Man, Woman, and Child bring the native wildflowers of Michigan. Bouquets of Goldenrods, Asters, and Coneflowers to name a few. These offerings are meant to adorn the tree of life as a sign of planting beauty and hope throughout our life. They reflect the patient nurturing of the things we cherish, and act as a symbol of gratitude. Gratitude for the memories made, gratitude for the opportunities and experiences granted to us in life.

The sun will rise behind the mural and set facing it. The illusion of light and color in the mural will ideally work in harmony with the way the sun interacts with the mural surface.

TIMELINE

2025	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PILOTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 13 portraits created• Drains and manhole covers printmade with creatives• Historical designation for building• Community engagement and other necessary logistics
MAY 2026	INSTALLATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Portraits, phone station and neon installed• Historical designation• Site clean up including board removal and panel installation
JUN 2025	PLACEMAKING WEEK	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community meal with stakeholders onsite.• Paint-by-numbers mural installation (1 of 3)
SEP 2025	DETROIT MONTH OF DESIGN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community meal with stakeholders onsite.• Paint-by-numbers mural installation (2 of 3)
OCT 11, 20...	ACS MAKING STRIDES WALK / WOMEN & TECH CONVENTION (FEMOLOGY)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community meal with stakeholders onsite.• Paint-by-numbers mural installation (3 of 3)



PHOTOS: JASON HALL, 3/2026



PHOTOS: HANNAH BERRY, 2025

MARCH 2026- WINDOWS

(INTERIOR VIEW, HANNAH BERRY)

