

Arrivals Public Art + Infrastructure Project

CARYN BRAUSE

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

JOSEPH KRUPCZYNSKI

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Winner of an open public competition, “Arrivals” is a public art + infrastructure project at the Mosher St. Underpass in Holyoke, Massachusetts. The project transforms a key gateway between downtown Holyoke and an adjacent residential neighborhood into a safe, inviting, and creative attraction. The intention of the project is to contrast the singular image of the city with the multiple voices of residents’ arrival stories, and in doing so, capture Holyoke’s rich immigrant and migrant experience. The \$35,000, CDBG-funded creative placemaking project is a direct response to the immediate context of its site, which is adjacent to the historic gateway to the city—H.H. Richardson’s former train station.

Completed in August 2015, the project consists of a thirty-foot long LED-lit wall of digitally fabricated perforated panels that depict a historic Main Street scene which represents Holyoke’s past as an industrial city producing textiles and paper. Set within the wall are three “story boxes” comprising excerpts of Holyoke resident’s arrival stories. The stories, gathered through a series of public engagement sessions at different venues throughout the city, capture a diverse cross section of residents—from those who were born here in the

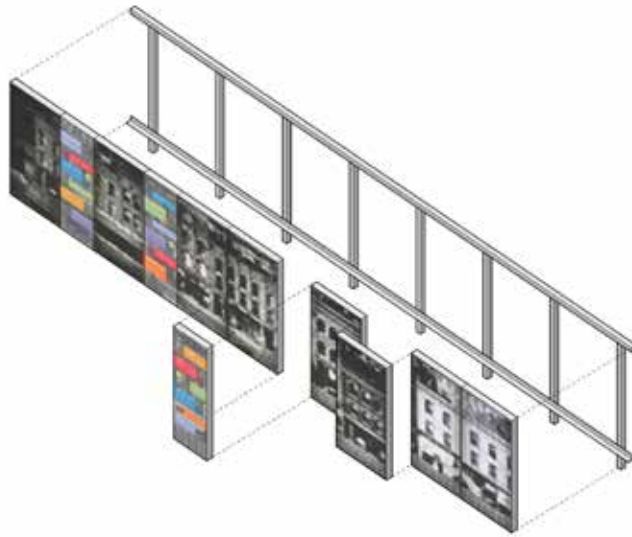
early part of the twentieth century to those who have recently arrived. Importantly, the story panels’ are in Spanish and English, which speaks to the current Latino/a demographics of adjacent neighborhoods, inviting participation in the public domain of a city that has not always been accessible.

“Arrivals” operates in many ways. As public infrastructure, it lights a formerly desolate underpass, providing a safe physical connection between a lower income neighborhood and the city’s central business district. As public art, it reflects the many voices and the many cultures that have shaped, and continue to shape, Holyoke’s past, present and future. As a public engagement process, it provides a model for creating community receptivity for creative placemaking—and the collected stories included on the project website create the capacity to be an ever-evolving archive as a community resource. As a local production, its perforated panels and LED lighting highlight the advanced capabilities of regional fabricators. Finally, the project also signals municipal commitment to reinvestment in the neighborhood and aims to galvanize support for the future development of the historic, but now unused, H. H. Richardson train station.

Since its founding in 1848, Holyoke has long been home to successive waves of immigrants and migrants. For over 150 years, people from Ireland, Canada, Italy, Germany, Poland and Puerto Rico have flocked to the “Paper City” to create a better life for themselves and their families, and with each successive wave of immigrants and migrants, its new inhabitants have redefined Holyoke. This project acknowledges that those diverse voices influence both the historic and the contemporary understanding of public space in the city. The work seeks not to simply beautify the underpass site, but to use art as a means to connect the aesthetic, historic, social and everyday perceptions of public art and public life.



VIEW OF "ARRIVALS" INSTALLED IN THE MOSHER STREET UNDERPASS



ARRIVALS

PUBLIC ART + INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

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"Arrivals" operates in a number of ways:

- As public infrastructure,** it lights a formerly desolate underpass, providing a safe physical connection between a lower income neighborhood and the city's central business district.
- As public art,** it reflects the many voices and the many cultures that have shaped, and continue to shape, Holyoke's past, present and future.
- As a public engagement process,** it provides a model for creating community receptivity for creative placemaking—and the collected stories included on the project website create the capacity to be an ever-evolving archive as a community resource.
- As a local production,** its perforated panels and LED lighting highlight the advanced capabilities of regional fabricators.
- As an economic catalyst,** the project signals municipal commitment to reinvestment in the neighborhood and aims to galvanize support for the future development of the historic, but now unused, H. H. Richardson train station.