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City of Houston Unveils Six Public Art Installations that Challenge Perceptions of Homelessness, Provide Career Opportunities and Bring Art to Public Spaces

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and Celebration on September 18th at Career Recovery Resources Headquarters



***HueMan:Shelter* selected artists, pictured from left to right: Sherman Finch, Chris Robinson, Cam Shot First, Marlon Hall, Reginald Adams, and Melissa Aytenfis.**

Houston, TX – September 10th, 2025 – The City of Houston, and **Midtown Houston** are proud to announce the official unveiling of ***HueMan:Shelter***, a temporary public art project challenging traditional narratives surrounding homelessness. Supported by a \$1 million grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies, *HueMan:Shelter*, now on view, developed six public art installations aimed at challenging traditional narratives surrounding homelessness and brings art to public spaces while creating employment opportunities for unhoused individuals. This initiative is a joint effort of the City of Houston, Career and Recovery Resources, Inc. (CRR), and the Midtown Cultural Arts and Entertainment District (MMD).

Unhoused participants hired for the project received training through Career and Recovery Resources (CRR), along with hands-on, on-the-job experience designed to support their path toward economic stability. Each of the six installations, co-created by artists in collaboration with individuals currently experiencing homelessness, reflects lived experiences through immersive, community-centered art. There will be a ribbon cutting and celebration on September 18th from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at Career and Recovery Resources, located at 2525 San Jacinto St, Houston TX 77002.

The six works will remain on view through January 2026 and include:

- Featured artworks at **METRO** bus shelters located at Milam & Webster, Milam & Tuam, and Milam & Elgin.
- A large-scale mural at 2525 San Jacinto
- Two multimedia sculptural installations beneath underpass installations at Spur 527 & Milam and I-45 at Pierce & Mila

Participating artists included **Marlon Hall, Peter Merwin, Sherman Finch, Joel Zika, Jacobi Green, Cris Rocha, Reginald Adams, Cam Shot First, Melissa Aytenfisu, Emanuelee Bean, and Chris Robinson**. And Social Media & Storytellers: **Emanuelee Bean, Zainob Amao, and Mathew Usoro**.

Career and Recovery Resources, Inc. (CRR), and the **Midtown Cultural Arts and Entertainment District (MMD)**. Houston is one of eight cities nationwide selected for the Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge. Unhoused participants were employed and trained through Career and Recovery Resources, combining paid work with wraparound social services. “We’re proud to launch *HueMan:Shelter* here in Houston,” said Mayor Pro Tem Martha Castex- Tatum. “This is bigger than public art. It’s a community driven effort that supports jobs, tells real stories, and reimagines public spaces in a way that respects everyone who calls Houston home.”

HueMan:Shelter reimagines Houston’s public spaces through collaborative storytelling, visual art, and civic engagement. Local artists including Marlon Hall, Melissa Aytenfisu, and Reginald Adams worked alongside more than 40 unhoused participants to create art that reflects the humanity, resilience, and creative power of the city’s most vulnerable population.

“*HueMan:Shelter* demonstrates what’s possible when creative vision is paired with purpose,” said Cynthia Alvarado, Founding Director of Cultural Arts and Entertainment for the Midtown Management District. “This initiative goes beyond traditional public art; it amplifies and creates opportunities for unheard voices and helps us think differently about how we design and share public space”

Participants in the project were engaged through CRR’s UpRise Enterprise, a paid workforce development program designed to remove barriers to employment while helping individuals build confidence, skills, and community.

“UpRise Enterprise is about meeting people where they are and helping them take the next steps whether that’s learning new skills, earning income, or gaining the confidence to get back on their feet,” said Nkechi Agwuenu, CEO of Career and Recovery Resources, Inc.

HueMan:Shelter will also host community engagement programs in Midtown, encouraging participants to foster understanding and empathy around homelessness by connecting the public with the powerful stories behind the art.

These events will celebrate the collaborative work between artists and individuals with lived experience, spark meaningful dialogue, and showcase Houston’s leadership in addressing homelessness through creativity and compassion. By transforming public spaces into platforms for storytelling, the initiative aims to inspire action, strengthen neighborhood pride, and deepen connections within the Midtown community.

A documentary element is also being filmed by our project storytellers, capturing both the artistic process and the personal journeys of the project’s cohorts. This visual narrative will culminate in a preview screening at MATCH (Midtown Arts & Theater Center Houston) in January of 2026. The film will be released later in the year.

IMAGES FOR PRESS USE: For photos, [click here to access image gallery](#).

Follow *HueMan:Shelter* on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), and learn more at www.huemanshelter.com

For media inquiries, contact **Madison Walkes** at mwalkes@midtownhouston.com or **832-652-8023**.

About Midtown Houston

Midtown Houston is a vibrant, culturally diverse, walkable community centrally located in the heart of the city. With its combination of mixed-use development, dynamic public spaces, cultural arts and entertainment, Midtown offers an authentic urban experience. Home to more than 14,000 residents, Midtown Houston is led by three partner organizations—the Midtown Redevelopment Authority (TIRZ Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone 2), Midtown Management District, and Midtown Parks Conservancy—which work collectively to facilitate economic growth, enhance public safety, improve public infrastructure, and promote inclusive urban development.

Designated as a Cultural Arts and Entertainment District by the Texas Commission on the Arts, Midtown Houston celebrates its history through public art, community events, and placemaking initiatives. With ongoing investment in economic development, public safety, and innovation, Midtown continues to evolve as one of Houston’s most creative and connected neighborhoods. For more information, visit midtownhouston.com.

About the Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge

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The Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge brings together cities and their leaders, residents, and artists to develop temporary public art projects that address important civic issues in their communities. In 2022, Bloomberg Philanthropies invited U.S. cities with 30,000 residents or more to apply for up to \$1 million in funding to create temporary public art projects that address important civic issues and demonstrate an ability to generate public-private collaborations, celebrate creativity and urban identity,

and strengthen local economies. More than 150 cities from 40 U.S. states applied. Bloomberg Philanthropies selected eight winning cities to develop projects focused on local challenges. Since launching in 2014, the Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge has spurred more than \$100 million in economic benefits for participating cities and action across a range of civic issues. For more information, please visit publicartchallenge.bloomberg.org.