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**The National Post**

**This time the bus graffiti is supposed to be there: Art on the Move**

by Sarah B. Hood

June 26, 2009

One of the earliest casualties of the Toronto City workers' strike was the promised appearance of Mayor David Miller at the Distillery District to launch a community art project called Art on the Move on Monday. Nothing daunted, other dignitaries -- MPP Laurel Broten (Etobicoke-Lakeshore), **City Councillor Suzan Hall (Etobicoke North)** and Anne-Marie Beneteau of the Ontario Trillium Foundation -- bravely brandished Champagne bottles to christen three art-wrapped vehicles, the first in a planned fleet of 15 that will be rolled out over the course of the next three years.

The brainchild of Arts Etobicoke and Lakeshore Arts, this project is designed to bring art to the streets, quite literally. Artist Beata Kruszynski partnered with FoodShare, the agency that promotes healthy food in the city, to create a cube van emblazoned with cheerful faces and cartoon-like animated fruits and vegetables. A second van, contributed by kitchen cabinetry company White Knight Kitchens, was designed by Amir Akbari with seniors from the Geriatric Admission Unit at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. It features a giant pair of hands cupped protectively around a seedling on the front panel over the cab, with abstract imagery on both sides that suggests, perhaps, the collection of memories from a long life.

Third and most impressive was a decommissioned TTC bus conceived by graffiti artist Patrick Thompson and Jenifer Rudski, Gwich'in mural painter and clothing designer. Thompson was recently featured in Housepaint, the street art exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum's Institute for Contemporary Culture; Rudski has worked on numerous mural projects through 7th Generation Image Makers, an Aboriginal project that introduces youth to film and mural production. To design the bus, the pair worked with young people aged 10 to 18 from the Belka Enrichment Centre, a youth outreach agency.

Thompson and Rudski first scrounged beach driftwood and gave their young collaborators the task of painting it. Then the artists photographed the youth in motion and at play, and each participant was given a photograph of themselves to collage with pictures cut out of old magazines. Finally, the collages were incorporated into Thompson's semi-abstract painting of a tree to create a vibrant yet unified whole that evokes people integrated into nature, or even being transformed into natural elements like birds and trees.

The bus, outfitted with computers, will travel around the Jane/Finch neighbourhood offering homework support to youth in the area. "We were really adamant that it be beautiful," Rudski says. "It might not show people sitting and reading books, but I think it will really get people excited." - Arts Etobicoke and Lakeshore Arts are still seeking partners to provide and design some of the remaining 12 vehicles; they invite interested parties to contact them via [info@artsetobicoke.com](mailto:info@artsetobicoke.com).