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New Art Coming to Site of Former NYPD 'Murderers' Mural

By Lindsay Armstrong ([//www.dnainfo.com/new-york/about-us/our-team/editorial-team/lindsay-armstrong](http://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/about-us/our-team/editorial-team/lindsay-armstrong)) | August 28, 2015 9:46am

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INWOOD — An Uptown wall that was once the site of a controversial mural critical of the NYPD is getting a new look courtesy of some young artists. **Creative Art Works**, a nonprofit that employs more than 100 young people each year to create and install public art pieces, is painting a mural on the side of New Edition Cleaners, which borders Isham Park. C.A.W. Teaching Artist **Jocelyn Goode-Morgan** designed the new mural, which features a large tree and people performing different activities in a park.

“We’re hoping to unite people by painting something that everyone can celebrate,” Goode-Morgan said.

She noted that the final design was influenced by an earlier proposal for the site.

In 2014, a local Girl Scout troop came up with a plan to paint a mural on the wall featuring a large tree. The space had been largely blank since police painted over a piece there by graffiti artist **Alan Ket**.

That mural, titled “Murderers,” featured a row of tombstones and coffins marked with the names of several corporations and government agencies, including the NYPD.

After a transition in leadership at the Girl Scout troop, the troop decided to have C.A.W. take the reins on the project because of its many years of experience with public art projects. However, Goode-Morgan still wanted to honor **Alyssa Fermin**, the Girl Scout who came up with the initial design.

“It was very important to me to maintain the idea of her design,” she said. “So you see this tree in the center of our piece and then there are hands holding it up and supporting the park.”



Lindsay Armstrong · DNAinfo Reporter

What do you think of the new mural design for the wall near Isham Park?

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Fermin joined some of C.A.W.'s youth employees this summer to survey the neighborhood about what they might like to see in the mural.

"We asked people what makes this community special, what they enjoy about the park, what they want people to know about the neighborhood," Goode-Morgan explained.

She noted that many respondents emphasized the diversity of the area, represented in the mural by people of many different skin tones.

Goode-Morgan said she was aware going into the project that some residents could be sensitive to a new painting at this site, which many felt was unfairly censored by the police. She added that passersby have had different reactions to the piece as she and the youth artists have worked on installing it this week. Some people felt the message should be more similar to Ket's work.

"One woman was really expressive about her feelings," Goode-Morgan said. "She said, 'This isn't representing our people.'"

However, she hoped the community could still find a way to appreciate it.

"Hopefully it's something that will bring people together," she said.

Trevonna Hepburn, one of the youth artists, had just moved to Inwood around the time the original mural was painted over and remembered the incident.

"Everybody was really upset and uptight about it," she said. "They were asking, 'How could they do this? What about freedom of speech?'"

Hepburn, 18, said she was proud to be part of a project that would bring art back to the site.

"To be honest, I'm excited that my name will be on it and it's in my neighborhood," she said. "But it's also great to know that we could build back from what happened a few years ago and create something beautiful."

C.A.W.'s director of development, **Karen Jolicoeur**, said that is exactly what the organization is working toward.

"We're all about empowering New York City youth through art," said the Inwood resident. "Through that process, we connect them to their communities and show them that they can have a voice in their communities and influence what happens there."