



## City Canvas Pre-Approved Art Portfolio

Bayeté Ross Smith, *Our Kind Of People* and *Mirrors*, 2024

# City Canvas

## Pre-Approved Art

There are more than 300 miles of construction fences, sidewalk sheds, and scaffolding in New York City. While these temporary protective structures are important for pedestrian safety, they are often unappealing components of the urban landscape. City Canvas is a program of the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) which allows the installation of temporary visual art on eligible temporary protective structures. City Canvas both improves the pedestrian experience for NYC residents and visitors across the five boroughs, while providing opportunities for local artists to display their work in prominent locations across the five boroughs.

City Canvas was initiated as a temporary pilot program in 2018 and made permanent in September 2023 through a local law which amended the New York City Charter and Building Code to permit the display of artwork on temporary protective structures (i.e., construction sheds, fences, and scaffolding). When filing an initial application permit for a temporary protective structure, property owners are automatically enrolled in the program and are offered an opt out option. Under the City Canvas program, there are two avenues for property owners to install artwork on temporary protective structures, Site-Specific Artwork and Pre-Approved Artwork.

Pre-Approved Artwork (one example of which is featured in this document) is commissioned directly by DCLA through periodic open calls pursuant to section 2508 of Chapter 67 of the New York City charter. Each commission complies with all expected standards and may be licensed by property owners for a fee to be negotiated with artists. Visit our Licensing and Fee Guidelines online at [nyc.gov/citycanvas](https://nyc.gov/citycanvas)

Each Pre-Approved Artwork includes a suite of three components designed for each type of temporary protective structure: construction sheds, fences, and scaffolding. Each component can be used discretely or in ensembles. All Pre-Approved Artworks are designed to be highly flexible and can adapt to a wide range of construction site contexts and conditions. The mockups presented here are for a 100 foot wide construction site that is nine stories tall. Each component mockup is accompanied by a verbal description written by the artist.

For questions and inquiries email: [citycanvas@culture.nyc.gov](mailto:citycanvas@culture.nyc.gov)

### Step by Step Process

- Select a piece from the Pre-Approved Artwork Portfolio.
- Review the Licensing and Fee Guidelines online at [nyc.gov/citycanvas](https://nyc.gov/citycanvas)
- Email [citycanvas@culture.nyc.gov](mailto:citycanvas@culture.nyc.gov) a request to use selected Pre-Approved Artwork.
- DCLA will liaise a connection with Artist.
- Negotiate and complete a licensing agreement with Artist.
- Artist will provide the art files.
- Prepare a print layout with a fabricator.
- Confirm print layout with Artist.
- Send DCLA final layout and completed license agreement.
- DCLA will review, sign, and send back an approval notice.
- Upload the approval notice to DOB NOW.

### Other Artworks in The Pre-Approved Art Portfolio

Ebony Bolt, *The Jungle and The City*, 2024

Lauren Camara, *Paper Stories*, 2024

Venazir Hannah Martinez, *The Shaping of New York*, 2024

Neko Jiang, *Hidden Forest*, 2024

Denae N. Howard, *Little Titans Run New York*, 2024

Dennis RedMoon Darkeem, *Travelers*, 2024

Bayeté Ross Smith, *Our Kind Of People and Mirrors*, 2024

Nikki Scioscia, *Plant Walk*, 2024

Zazu Swistel, *The Urbanite's Clinic For Decadence and Decay*, 2024

Annette Weintraub, *The Myrtle Walks*, 2024



## Bayeté Ross Smith, *Our Kind Of People* and *Mirrors*, 2024

### Artist Statement

Bayeté Ross Smith is a multidisciplinary artist, visual journalist, photographer, and education worker. He is Columbia Law School's inaugural Artist-In-Residence, a Presidential Leadership Scholar, and a TED Resident and speaker. His work explores often unvoiced histories, the concepts of identity, beauty, and reciprocity, and their impact on human interactions and our social systems. He uses the arts to question our preexisting beliefs and the cultural framework for how we see, what we fail to see, and what we are capable of discerning.

### Project Description

Bayeté Ross Smith's *Our Kind Of People* and *Mirrors* series examine the impact of perception based on appearance, its relationship to identity and how they impact how we socialize and our social systems. These portraits are of everyday people, in their own clothing, on a uniform background, with the same facial expression and lighting. They highlight how drastically we can perceive the same person based on our personal interpretations of fashion in combination with gender, ethnicity, social class, nationality and race. These works question why certain ideas come into our minds, based on a person's appearance and our personal associations with that appearance. It also visually showcases that none of us are one thing but that we are all a myriad of things on a daily basis. Additionally the images question where our fundamental notions come from and push us to reflect on how we know, what we think we know.



## Bayeté Ross Smith, *Our Kind Of People* and *Mirrors*, 2024

### Supported Scaffold / Netting Artwork Description

The *Our Kind of People* series examines how perception about someone’s identity, value, and character is affected by appearance—such as clothing, race/ethnicity, gender, complexion and class signifiers—and how that then informs our daily interactions and social systems. The subjects in this work are dressed in clothing from their own wardrobes. The outfits are worn in a style similar to how each person would wear them in their daily lives. The lighting and facial expressions throughout the series have been kept the same, from one photograph to the next. The only changes from image to image are the person’s clothing, gender, race/ethnicity, and in some cases their hair. Devoid of any other context for assessing the personality of the individual in the photograph, the viewer projects their own cultural perceptions—and most likely biases—onto each image.

### Supported Scaffold / Netting

Scaffold is a temporary elevated platform, including its supporting structure, erected at a construction site to support workers and/or materials and providing aboveground access to the building’s exterior. A scaffold may also serve as a frame for installing safety netting. Artwork displayed on supportive scaffolds will be printed directly onto netting and secured using zip ties that loop directly through it. More information is available on the [Department of Building’s website](#).



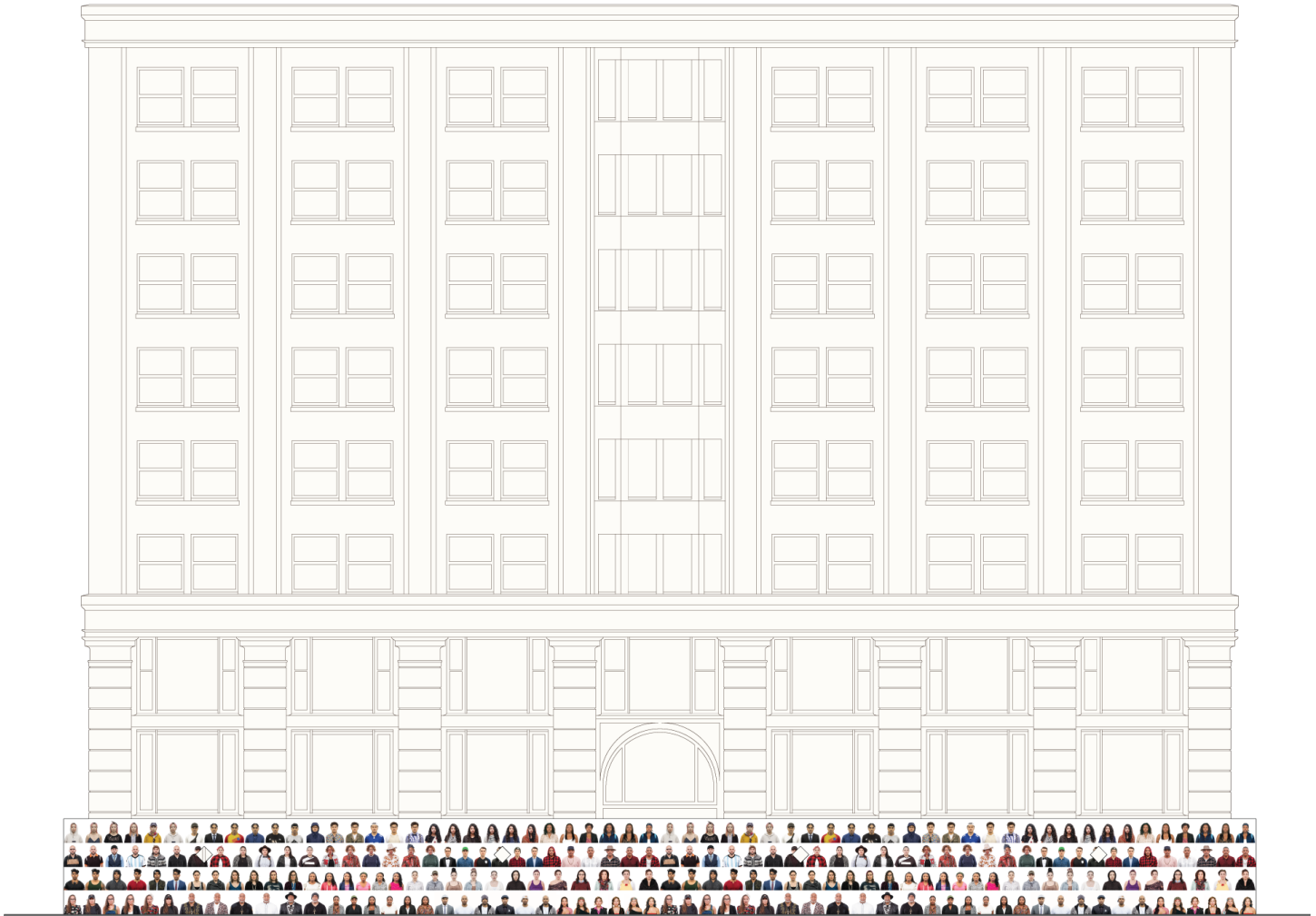
## Bayeté Ross Smith, *Our Kind Of People and Mirrors*, 2024

### Sidewalk Shed Artwork Description

The *Mirrors* series examines the idea of multiple personas and alter egos coexisting within one person and shifts the gaze from being external to being internal. Following the same aesthetic approach as *Our Kind of People*, the *Mirrors* features real people in various clothing that they own and pairs them in different outfits as profiles, facing each other. This represents the interaction and tension that often exists internally between the multiple aspects of all of our personalities. Furthermore it explores the complexity that exists in how we feel and how we respond to both personal challenges and societal challenges. We often want to be a certain way, but upon further reflection we are not always able to be the version of ourselves we ideally would like to be. Additionally we are often conflicted when it comes to moral and ethical issues and do not have a clear and definitive resolution within ourselves.

### About Sidewalk Sheds

The most common temporary protective structures are sidewalk sheds which are made of wood and must be a minimum of 5 feet wide, 4 feet tall, and provide a minimum of 8 feet clearance. Artwork displayed on a sidewalk shed will be printed on vinyl that will be fastened to the outer sides and ends of sheds either by stretching it over the shed and fastening to the back or by affixing such material to self-adhesive panels that adhere directly to the shed. More information is available on the [Department of Building's website](#).



## Bayeté Ross Smith, *Our Kind Of People and Mirrors*, 2024

### Construction Fence Artwork Description

The *Our Kind of People* series examines how perception about someone’s identity, value, and character is affected by appearance—such as clothing, race/ethnicity, gender, complexion and class signifiers—and how that then informs our daily interactions and social systems. The subjects in this work are dressed in clothing from their own wardrobes. The outfits are worn in a style similar to how each person would wear them in their daily lives. The lighting and facial expressions throughout the series have been kept the same, from one photograph to the next. The only changes from image to image are the person’s clothing, gender, race/ethnicity, and in some cases their hair. Devoid of any other context for assessing the personality of the individual in the photograph, the viewer projects their own cultural perceptions—and most likely biases—onto each image.

### About Construction Fences

Construction fences are at least 8 feet high and may be made of wood, corrugated metal, or chain link materials. Fences made of solid materials include 1 x 1 foot plexi-glass viewing panels every 25 feet and are installed between three and six feet above ground level. Artwork displayed on a construction fence will be printed on vinyl that will be fastened to the outer sides and ends of fence either by stretching it over the fence and fastening to the back or by affixing such material to self-adhesive panels that adhere directly to the surface. Chain link fencing may require the vinyl print to include grommets in order to secure the art using zip-ties. More information is available on the [Department of Building’s website](#).

Bayeté Ross Smith, *Our Kind Of People and Mirrors*, 2024



Supported Scaffold / Netting Artwork

Bayeté Ross Smith, *Our Kind Of People and Mirrors*, 2024



Sidewalk Shed Artwork



Sidewalk Shed Artwork, detail



Sidewalk Shed Artwork, detail



# Bayeté Ross Smith, *Our Kind Of People and Mirrors*, 2024



Construction Fence Artwork



Construction Fence Artwork, detail



Construction Fence Artwork, detail