



# CITYarts®

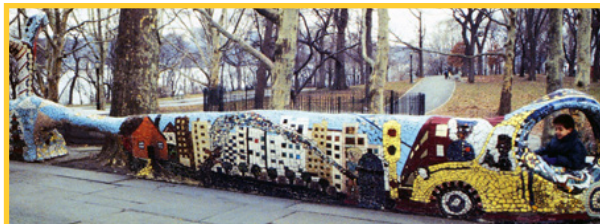
## MISSION STATEMENT

CITYarts engages youth with professional artists in the creation of public art, including murals and mosaic. Through this creative process, CITYarts empowers, educates, and connects youth and children locally and around the world to become active participants in realizing their potential and transforming communities.

## CITYarts HISTORY

Founded in 1989 by Tsipi Ben-Haim, Executive & Creative Director, CITYarts is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public art organization that has been successfully using arts education, creative thinking, and artist-guided collaborations with youth ages 12-20 for the past 34 years, creating and producing projects that strengthen underserved and underrepresented communities.

To date, CITYarts has produced over 350 projects that have transformed communities and impacted over 100,000 youth. In the process, we have collaborated with more than 600 artists, partnered with over 1,500 sponsors, and engaged over 200,000 volunteers. Moreover, since 9/11, we have been connecting youth locally and globally through art workshops under the CITYarts *Young Minds Build Bridges* program to encourage youth to form modes of cultural understanding at crucial moments in learning. This has led to collaborations with schools and partners internationally to produce *Pieces for Peace* workshops in 117 countries and the creation of 7 *Peace Wall* murals and mosaics around the world. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, we feel the need to unite our youth more than ever, leading us to create the CITYarts *50 States of Peace* initiative, which aims to engage youth in *Pieces for Peace* workshops and build *Peace Walls* in all 50 U.S. states.



# CITYarts®

## THE MOSAIC ROLLING BENCH at the General Grant National Memorial



## HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Volunteer at our yearly restoration as an individual, group, company, or foundation
- Donate to CITYarts
- Post photos & videos – tag us! @CITYartsinc
- Press contacts/reviews
- Have any other ideas? Contact us!

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Email: [projects@cityarts.org](mailto:projects@cityarts.org)



Point Your Camera

CITYarts, Inc.  
77 Bleecker St, Suite C2-18  
New York, NY 10012  
(212) 966-0377

   @CITYartsinc

[www.cityarts.org](http://www.cityarts.org)

# THE MOSAIC ROLLING BENCH

## Why the CITYarts Mosaic Rolling Bench was Created

The 400-foot-long series of mosaic tile benches surrounding the General Grant National Memorial was created between 1972 and 1974. At the time, it was the largest single public art project in the United States. The Mosaic Rolling Bench was commissioned by the National Park Service to commemorate the 100th anniversary of President Ulysses S. Grant's designation of Yellowstone as the first National Park.

The project sought to raise community awareness of President Grant's historical significance and to beautify the area around the Memorial, which saw very few visitors in the then-dilapidated neighborhood. It offered the community an opportunity to participate in a creative endeavor that brought together local families, Columbia University students, graffiti crews, and professional artists, with the common goal of making a lasting positive impact on the neighborhood.

Chilean-born Pedro Silva led the team of professional artists, including Nelson Mercado, Alan Okada, Warren Fox, as well as architects Moshe Shaw and Philip Danzig. Thousands of community volunteers pitched in.

In 1994, CITYarts, Inc., under Founder, Creative & Executive Director Tsipi Ben-Haim, invited Silva to help restore the Mosaic Rolling Bench with his son, community youth, Disney volunteers, and people who worked on the original project.



After restoring the Mosaic Rolling Bench again in 2008, CITYarts recognized the need for a yearly restoration due to recurrent decay and damage from the elements. Now, restoring the Mosaic Bench has become an ongoing act of stewardship and care that brings the community together year after year.

**"CITYarts enables youth to contribute positively to their neighborhood, by creating and restoring a mosaic that gives them a sense of ownership and pride."**

- Tsipi Ben-Haim, Founder, Executive & Creative Director, CITYarts



## WHAT THE BENCHES REPRESENT

Inspired by Gaudi and his beautiful mosaics in Barcelona, each bench has a unifying theme. One evokes the ocean, complete with a tower in the form of an octopus and underwater creatures on a blue background. Another, informally titled **Ice Bench**, depicts polar scenes, while the **Spanish Bench** includes a flamenco dancer and guitar. Among the most popular is the **New York Bench**, featuring a taxi with a real window, as well as such familiar city sights as buildings, traffic lights, and an open fire hydrant. Other benches feature the Caribbean islands, lovers, cowboys, symbols of peace, and dinosaurs.

Of the hundreds of spontaneous designs adorning The Benches, about one-third of them interpret the achievements of President Grant through contemporary eyes. These include the **Stars and Stripes**, a 90-foot-long flag incorporating the General's four stars; two benches that pay tribute to his role in founding the National Park Service and displaying such images as the NPS shield and Smokey the Bear; and three portraits of the General himself. The backs of several benches are covered with images of animals, recalling Grant's triumphal post-Presidential voyages around the world, and his favorite horse, Cincinnatus.

## PAST CONTRIBUTORS INCLUDE:

Columbia University, the International House, Riverside Church, the Theological Seminary, Manhattan School of Music, and Morningside Heights Community Organizations.

The National Parks Service, the New York State Council on the Arts, Canada Dry Inc., and the J.M. Kaplan Foundation helped fund the original project.

# ABOUT THE RESTORATION of the CITYarts Mosaic Rolling Bench

In the Summer of 2023, CITYarts is restoring its 400-foot-long **Mosaic Rolling Bench at General Grant National Memorial** in New York City. The Mosaic Rolling Bench adds a whimsical and playful space to an otherwise somber environment. This project has engaged thousands of community volunteers since its creation.

We are continuing this community involvement with a new generation of families, schools, and volunteers, led by professional artists, laying the groundwork for generations to come.



## WHY

- Revitalize a staple of the landmark created by the community, for the community.

- Engage neighborhood youth and residents to become actively involved in transforming their community.

- Create a neighborhood space to make it more welcoming and enjoyable for the people who live and visit there.

- Bring together youth and families to collaborate on a project that will improve a significant communal space and their quality of life.

- Empower youth to take leadership roles in acting as a positive force in their community while learning practical skills.

## WHERE

General Grant National Memorial  
122nd & Riverside Park  
New York, NY 10027

## WHEN

Ongoing yearly

## WHO

- CITYarts, Inc.
- Community Volunteers
- CITYarts Artists

### SPONSORED IN PART BY

- The Joseph Robert Foundation
- The Jacob & Eugenie Bucky Memorial Foundation
- Henry Nias Foundation