

Revolution, by Miles Halpern

Project Concept:

As the artist, I sought to represent balance between different areas of diversity, considering diverse backgrounds and perspectives, considering socioeconomic, ability, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, cultural, political, and religious association. The circular format influenced a design where all have equal compositional placement showing as little hierarchical preference as possible. The painting has hanging hardware designed to allow the painting to be hung in five different orientations, allowing different figures to be highlighted depending on the month of heritage/cultural/identity awareness allowing for dynamic presentation possibilities. 5 women, and 5 men are represented, each are role model representatives from diverse communities, such as Native American (Jim Thorpe), Asian (I. M. Pei, Kalpana Chawla, Malala Yousafzai), African American (Marsha P. Johnson, Harriet Tubman, James Baldwin), Latinx (Frida Kahlo, Lin-Manuel Miranda), LGBTQIA (Marsha P. Johnson, James Baldwin, Frida Kahlo), persons with disabilities (Frida Kahlo and Stephen Hawking). These representatives are famous for their activism, contributions to culture, fighting intolerance, contributions to science, fighting poverty, education, women's and human rights. Some of these representatives are American, and many are not. This is intentional, because it is important for a mural that represents Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to not just highlight American values, ideas, and people, but to educate, bring awareness, and honor the greatness that humans can aspire to, from wherever they come from. To do otherwise would risk a nationalistic attitude of American superiority, "Us versus the World", and this would be the opposite of my intention for this design.

Diversity is what makes us great.

I. M. Pei (b. 1917-2019)

Pei was Chinese American architect, and one of the most revered architects in the world. Best known for designing the East Building of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, the glass pyramid at the entrance to the Louvre in Paris, as well as the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland. And all of his work — from his commercial skyscrapers to his art museums — represented a careful balance of the cutting edge and the conservative. His particular brand of modernism — clean, reserved, sharp-edged and unapologetic in its use of simple geometries and its aspirations to monumentality, desired for his structures to "stand the test of time." Mr. Pei never played down his connections to China. His children were all given Chinese names, and when he won the Pritzker Prize in 1983, widely viewed as the highest honor a living architect can receive, he used the \$100,000 award to establish a scholarship fund for Chinese architecture students.

Harriet Tubman (1882-1913)

Tubman was an American abolitionist and political activist. Born into slavery, Tubman escaped and subsequently made some 13 missions to rescue approximately 70 enslaved people, including family and friends, using the network of antislavery activists and safe houses known as the Underground Railroad. Tubman was never caught and never lost a "passenger." Tubman also served as a scout, spy, guerrilla soldier, and nurse for the Union Army during the Civil War. She is considered the first African American woman to serve in the military. After the war, Tubman raised funds to aid freedmen, joined Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in their quest for women's suffrage.

Jim Thorpe (1887-1953)

Jim Thorpe, an American athlete and Olympic gold medalist. A member of the Sac and Fox Nation, Thorpe became the first Native American to win a gold medal for the United States. Considered one of the most versatile athletes of modern sports, he won two Olympic gold medals in the 1912 Summer Olympics (one in classic pentathlon and the other in decathlon), and played American football (collegiate and professional), professional baseball, and basketball.

Frida Kahlo (1907-1954)

One of the most well-known artists in the world, Mexican artist Frida Kahlo is remembered for her self-portraits, pain and passion, and bold, vibrant colors. She is celebrated in Mexico for her attention to Mexican and indigenous culture and by feminists for her depiction of the female experience and form. In addition to representing the Latinx community, she also represents LGBTQIA as a bisexual woman.

James Baldwin (1924-1987)

An American novelist, playwright, essayist, poet, and activist whose eloquence and passion on the subject of race in America made him an important voice, particularly in the late 1950s and early 1960s, in the United States and, later, through much of western Europe. In addition to experiencing the struggles of racism as a Black man, he also identified as a Gay man during a time when being Gay was also exposed one to sexual discrimination.

Malala Yousafzai (b. 1997)

A Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate. She is known for human rights advocacy, especially the education of women and children in her native Swat Valley in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, northwest Pakistan, where the local Pakistani Taliban had at times banned girls from attending school. Her advocacy has grown into an international movement, and according to former Pakistani Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, she has become "the most prominent citizen" of the country.

Marsha P. Johnson (1945-1992)

Marsha "Pay it No Mind" Johnson was a Black trans woman who was a force behind the Stonewall Riots and surrounding activism that sparked a new phase of the LGBTQ+ movement in 1969. Along with Sylvia Rivera, she established the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) in 1970—a group committed to supporting transgender youth experiencing homelessness in New York City. Marsha P. Johnson was tragically murdered on July 6, 1992 at the age of forty-six. Her case was originally closed by the NYPD as an alleged suicide, but transgender activist Mariah Lopez fought for it to be reopened for investigation in 2012. Marsha P. Johnson is now one of the most venerated icons in LGBTQ+ history, has been celebrated in a series of books, documentaries, and films. Her actions and words continue to inspire trans activism and resistance, and will continue to do so well into the future.

Stephen Hawking (1942-2018)

Stephen Hawking was a scientist known for his work with black holes and relativity, and the author of popular science books like 'A Brief History of Time.' Hawking discovered what might prove to be the key clue to the theory of everything, advanced our understanding of space and time, helped shape the course of physics for the last four decades and whose insight continues to drive progress in fundamental physics today. In 1962, Hawking was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a degenerative motor neurone disease that quickly robs people of the ability to voluntarily move their muscles. He was told he had two years to live. He continued his groundbreaking research and lived another 56 years.

Kalpana Chawla (1961-2003)

an American astronaut, engineer, and the first woman of Indian origin to go to space. She first flew on Space Shuttle Columbia in 1997 as a mission specialist and primary robotic arm operator. In 2003, Chawla was one of the seven crew members who died in the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster when the spacecraft disintegrated during its re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere. Chawla was posthumously awarded the Congressional Space Medal of Honor, and several streets, universities, and institutions have been named in her honor. She is regarded as a national hero in India.

Lin-Manuel Miranda (b. 1980)

An American Pulitzer Prize, Grammy, Emmy, Tony Award-winning composer, lyricist, and actor, of Puerto Rican descent. Lin-Manuel is the creator and original star of Broadway's Hamilton and In the Heights, and the recipient of the 2015 MacArthur Foundation Award and 2018 Kennedy Center Honors. He has been an active supporter of relief efforts in Puerto Rico post-Hurricane Maria.

