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Korean American Artist Awarded $165,000 for Innovative Public Art Project in Koreatown

Korean American Artist Suzy Taekyung Kim was awarded $165,000 from the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture for a unique public art project that will welcome visitors to a new 21-story building coming to Koreatown.

This new building will serve as headquarters for the Los Angeles County Departments of Mental Health and Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services. The lobby where Suzy Taekyung Kim’s artwork will be showcased, will host a peer resource center and walk-in mental health services, utilizing a ground-floor clinic and office space. With access to the Metro Vermont/Wilshire Red Line Station, Los Angeles County residents will be able to access an array of mental health services.

The civic art project, entitled Canopy of Blooms uses a base layer of old Korean script which will be sealed and covered by photos and flowers from Koreatown, embracing the fragility and strength of those who will pass through the future lobby.

“This civic art project represents our commitment to supporting Korean American artists, as we work to revitalize the communities that are home to the County facilities and services,” said Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas whose office was actively involved in the
selection panel. “This unique work of art will be seen by thousands of local residents as County staff help deliver vital services – from prevention to recovery – and assist clients to take the first steps on a journey toward healing and self-sufficiency.”

*Canopy of Blooms* is a multilayered painting that celebrates hope and healing. Situated in the grand lobby of the Vermont Corridor Building, this 53 x 10-foot artwork is at the entry point of the Department of Mental Health and Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services and warmly welcomes all. The painting reflects the unique identity of Koreatown through the analogy of an infinity loop of blooming motifs native to Los Angeles County. This artwork celebrates multi-generational life stories through the metaphor of natural elements. Throughout the artwork, the cascading waterfall background gradually changes colors mirroring the changing seasons. The imagery starts as a bubbling seed of dreams that become buds of growth, twisting vines, blooming flowers, and, finally, fallen petals and foliage. This change is rhythmic with improvisational elements forming an infinity loop, symbolizing the endless cycle of life. Conceived by Suzy Taekyung Kim, the painting highlights life's journey through the metaphor of nature's birth, growth, and death.

Suzy Taekyung Kim was born in Daegu, South Korea. She is the recipient of several national and international awards including the Scholarship for North American Scholars. Her works can be found in a select number of private and corporate collections in Canada, Great Britain, South Korea and the United Arab Emirates. In 2016, she completed a permanent public art commission awarded from the New York City (NYC) Department of Cultural Affairs, Percent for Art Program in collaboration with the NYC School Construction Authority.

In addition to the new County Administrative Office Building, future phases of the Vermont Corridor Project will include a 72-unit affordable housing development and supportive services reserved for seniors with limited means and formerly homeless seniors, as well as market-rate housing in Koreatown.

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