

DAILY

# CHALLENGE

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# MURALS RESTORED TO VIBRANCY



Even as a winter-like gloom settles on the city, one cherished outdoor garden is bursting with colors, thanks to the restoration of decades-old murals. Years of city grit and the elements had combined to dull the vibrancy of the murals painted at both ends of Hope Stevens Garden, a block-long

green space. Among officials celebrating the murals' restoration were (from left) Erica Packard (Manhattan Land Trust), Kyle Scott and Genevieve Outlaw (Hope Steven Garden), Councilmember Robert Jackson, Lawrence Reger, president, Rescue Public Murals.

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# Murals restored to vibrancy in community garden

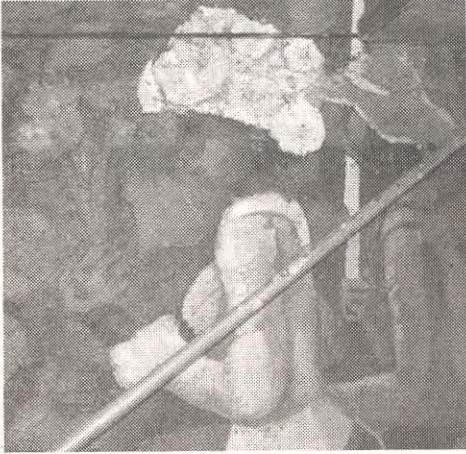


Photo: Jane Weissman

Even as a winter-like gloom settles on the city, one cherished outdoor garden is bursting with colors, thanks to the restoration of decades-old murals.

Years of city grit and the elements had combined to dull the vibrancy of the murals painted at both ends of Hope Stevens Garden, a block-long green space. "Now they're gorgeous," exclaimed Genevieve Outlaw, a resident of the Hamilton Heights neighborhood where the garden is located.

Completed in 1986, the murals were inspired by a French painting that shows Parisians enjoying a day in a park. But the setting was changed to reflect life in the West Harlem community, including



**Homage to Seurat: La Grande Jatte in Harlem, originally painted by Eva Cockcroft, 1986, restored in Fall 2009 by Rescue Public Murals**

Photo: Jane Weissman

images of a woman with her children and a trumpeter playing in the street.

"But it wasn't bright and beautiful as it once was," recalled Outlaw, a member of the Hope Stevens Garden group that helped coordinate the restoration efforts.

The murals, located at the Amsterdam Avenue and Hamilton Place ends



Photo by Camille Perrotet, courtesy of Rescue Public Mural

of the West 142nd Street garden, were painted by the late Eva Cockcroft, a prominent visual artist and social commentator during the activist 1960s. It is her only remaining work in New York.

Among the obstacles Cockcroft faced were the heavily textured stucco walls where the murals were to appear. But she used the stucco to enhance her work, painting the hands, elbows and faces of the fig-

ures on the raised surface to give them a three-dimensional look.

The restoration work started in August and was unveiled to the public recently at a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The project was made possible by Rescue Public Murals, a Washington, D.C.-based agency, and funded by Friends of Heritage Preservation, a group that seeks to save endangered artistic and historic works, artifacts.