

9 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT...

CONSTRUCTION SITE ART

The Gordie Howe International Bridge Community Benefits Plan includes innovative initiatives that provide opportunities for local community members to contribute to the project in a meaningful way. One such initiative is a commitment to engage an Indigenous artist in Canada to participate in the development of a project-related art piece. When implementing this commitment, Bridging North America recognized that the outside panels of the tower crane climbing system provided perfect canvasses for painting. With four climbing systems in place – two on each side of the bridge – this initiative was expanded to the US site. The project team partnered with artists from Walpole Island First Nation, Caldwell First Nation and Southwest Detroit to deliver this art in the form of murals that represent rich and diverse cultures.

1

NUMBER

There are four murals on the US side and six murals on the Canadian side. The largest mural measures 15 metres by 12 metres/49 feet by 29 feet.

2

ARTIST SELECTION

The Canadian and US artists were engaged based on their ability to design and fabricate the artwork.

3

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

First Nations youth were involved in the painting of the Canadian artwork. On the US side of the project, the artist involved his son.

4

TIME/HOURS

The artists created the murals over a two-month time period.

5

IMAGERY & SYMBOLISM - CANADA

- Bear - represents determination in the bridge project and presented in the sacred colours of white, black, red and yellow
- Eagle – represents the believe of First Nations peoples in Canada that eagles communicate directly with the Creator
- Hoop Dancer – represents the artist's Pottawatomi and Chippewa culture
- Turtle – represents the First Peoples' creation story
- Maple Leaf – represents a symbol synonymous with Canada

6

IMAGERY & SYMBOLISM - US

- Silhouette of Workers – represents ironworkers in the region and equality in the industry
- American Eagle – represents the Mexican culture and heritage of the region through the use of different colours
- Spirit of Detroit - represents the large bronze statue located in downtown Detroit with the sunset and the waterfront in a stripe pattern that is taken from the artist's Mexican culture
- American Flag - represents a symbol synonymous with the country

7

PROCESS

Sketch outlines of the images were first applied to the individual panels and then colour was added by brush and spray paint.

8

VISIBILITY

As construction progresses and the bridge towers begin to rise, the murals will be visible to the public by land and from the Detroit River. The systems currently stand at the ground level and will be 'jumped' every few months before reaching their final height of 220 metres/822 feet. The murals will be visible to workers on the sites.

9

DURATION

The murals will remain on the climbing structures for approximately two years before being repurposed once the bridge is complete.

