

## **Rob “ProBlak” Gibbs commissioned as 2022 Greenway Muralist**

*Greenway Conservancy announces first 2022 public art installation  
and commitment to local creative communities*

**February 3, 2022 – Boston, MA** – The [Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy](#) today announced the commission and upcoming May 2022 installation of new public artwork from artist [Rob “ProBlak” Gibbs](#) for the Greenway mural at Dewey Square.

Well-known for his joyful, cosmic, and powerful depictions of Black youth in the [Breathe Life](#) mural series across Boston, Rob “ProBlak” Gibbs is a visual artist and organizer who has transformed the cultural landscape of Boston through graffiti art since the early 90’s. Gibbs is the first Black Boston-native artist to be commissioned for the mural by the Conservancy’s Public Art Program.

"I'm really honored to partner with the Greenway Conservancy as the first Black Boston-based artist on the Dewey Square mural," said Gibbs. "My vision is to add to Boston’s skyline in a way that elevates the voices and work of those who’ve come before us as well as our future generations. It’s about taking this space to a higher frequency of love and understanding."

The tenth iteration of the Dewey Square mural also comes as the Conservancy’s Public Art Program builds new strategies to engage and support Greater Boston’s local creative communities in just and inclusive ways. As one step in this process, the Conservancy’s Public Art Program is proud to announce its new commitment to feature the work of local artists on the Dewey Square mural at least once every three years, in addition to national or international artists.

Growing up in Roxbury, during the Hip-Hop Golden Age, Gibbs was in his teens when he found graffiti to be a powerful tool of self-expression. "Graffiti is a tool for me and others in my community, to chronicle and immortalize our culture and history. It's a contemporary form of hieroglyphs, a way to document and pay homage to under-heard people in my community," he shared. Gibbs' vision – to beautify and represent the predominantly Black and Brown communities of Boston where he's from – is a driving force behind his artistic practice.

“Rob engages with and brings critical conversations of representation, voice, and agency to the forefront of Boston’s public realm with his exceptional capacity for storytelling through traditional muralism and contemporary street art,” said Audrey Lopez, Director and Curator of Public Art at the Greenway Conservancy. Gibb's new commission for the Greenway mural at Dewey Square coincides with recent and upcoming shows highlighting Black portraiture across the country, including at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art ([Black American Portraits](#)), the Met ([Before](#)



MEDIA CONTACT: Rachel Lake  
617-603-7738; [rlake@rosekennedygreenway.org](mailto:rlake@rosekennedygreenway.org)

[Yesterday We Could Fly: Afrofuturist Period Room](#)), and Boston's ICA ([A Place for Me: Figurative Painting Now](#)), among others.

Throughout his work, ProBlak draws upon Black portraiture, Afrofuturism, and non-Western cosmologies to create a celebration of the intergenerational strength, collective imagination, and joy of Black life. His large-scale public artworks can be found across Boston and, most recently, on Madison Park Technical Vocational High School, Gibbs' alma mater, as part of Boston's [Museum of Fine Arts Mural Project](#).

As a father and long-time arts educator, Gibbs' practice also manifests itself through the multiple generations of young Boston artists he has mentored across Boston for the past three decades. In 1991, Gibbs co-founded Artists for Humanity (AFH), an arts non-profit that hires and teaches youth creative skills, where he currently directs the Paint Studio. Most recently, Rob served as a guest lecturer at Northeastern University for their "Foundations of Black Culture: Hip-Hop" course, curated the 2019 BAMS Fest's "Rep Your City" exhibition, and was invited to be one of two inaugural Artists-in-Residence with Boston's Museum of Fine Arts.

"Rob's work elevates and celebrates. He has a voice that is authentically Boston, decisively joyous and critically engaged," said Chris Cook, Executive Director at the Greenway Conservancy. "The Greenway is about connecting people – to neighborhoods and to each other. We are honored that an artist of Rob's skill and talent will share his vision from The Greenway for everyone to see."

### **About Rob "ProBlak" Gibbs**

ProBlak has received a number of awards, including the 2006 Graffiti Artist of the Year award from the Mass Industry Committee and the Goodnight Initiative's Civic Artist Award. In 2020, he was honored with the Hero Among Us award by the Boston Celtics and was awarded Artist of the Year for 2020's Best of Boston. He was a Brother Thomas Fellow in 2019 and a recipient of the MLK Drum Major Award in 2021. His work has been covered by a wide range of publications and media outlets, including PBS NewsHour, Forbes Magazine, WBUR's the ARTery, the Boston Art Review, Boston Magazine, the Boston Globe, the Bay State Banner, and many others.

To learn more about Rob and his practice, check out his [website](#) and [Instagram](#), or join in for Artists for Humanity's upcoming in-person studio visit with ProBlak, "[Breathe Life - A Look Inside The Series](#)" on Wednesday, February 23, from 5:00pm to 7:00pm at 100 West 2nd Street, Boston.



MEDIA CONTACT: Rachel Lake  
617-603-7738; [rlake@rosekennedygreenway.org](mailto:rlake@rosekennedygreenway.org)

### **A Special Thank You to Our Supporters**

The Greenway Wall at Dewey Square commission and installation is exclusively funded through grants and private sources, including the generous support of The Barr Foundation and Robert and Doris Gordon.

### **About The Greenway and the Greenway Conservancy ([rosekennedygreenway.org](http://rosekennedygreenway.org))**

The Greenway is a contemporary public park in the heart of Boston. The Greenway welcomes millions of visitors annually to gather, play, unwind, and explore. The Greenway Conservancy is the non-profit responsible for the management and care of The Greenway. The majority of the public park's annual budget is generously provided by private sources.

The Greenway Conservancy Public Art Program brings innovative and contemporary art to Boston through free, seasonal exhibitions that engage people in meaningful experiences, interactions, and dialogue with art, each other, and the most pressing issues of our time. Past Greenway exhibitions can be viewed on [the Conservancy's website](#).

Gibb's upcoming 2022 mural at Dewey Square will be the tenth mural The Greenway has commissioned in this space. Previous murals and artists have included Daniel Gordon's [Summer Still Life with Lobsters and Fern](#) (2021), Super A's (Stefan Thelen) [Resonance](#) (2019), Shara Hughes's [Carving Out Fresh Options](#) (2018), Mehdi Ghadyanloo's [Spaces Of Hope](#) (2016), Lawrence Weiner's [A TRANSLATION FROM ONE LANGUAGE TO ANOTHER](#) (2015), Shinique Smith's [Seven Moon Junction](#) (2014), Matthew Ritchie's [Remanence: Salt and Light \(Part II\)](#) (2013), and Os Gemeos' [The Giant of Boston](#) (2012).

Photo requests may be forwarded to [rlake@rosekennedygreenway.org](mailto:rlake@rosekennedygreenway.org).

###