

For Immediate Release
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‘Making Space’ announces mural artist and new t-shirt fundraiser

Elgin, IL- The Elgin Social Justice Collective announces selected mural artist and a new t-shirt fundraiser for “Making Space: a mural and documentary project.”

Pablo Serrano of the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago submitted a proposal for the Call for Art for the Making Space project. As an established artist with a vibrant arts and education background, he is well equipped for the challenge of creating a mural in a still-healing community. His proposal, a community mural “reflecting the diversity of Elgin in the fullest sense” will be located in the pocket park in downtown Elgin where “American Nocturne” was previously installed.

The new mural will be based on the many community engagements that Pablo will be hosting in a variety of mediums and locations to hear from Elginites and learn their stories. “Community members will be asked to reflect and share on the histories that brought them to this community in order to activate the actual lived experiences of Elgin residents as the foundation for the mural.” These engagements include everything from healing circles and open mic nights to zoom sessions and school visits.

“Every mural I’ve worked on is based on a deep faith in the power of people to say what they need to say if we create the spaces for that communication and listen sincerely. These conversations and connections guide the entire process, and blossom throughout the creative process into the mural I will help create with the community.”

Community members will be invited to help paint the mural on community paint days. The finished mural will be installed with signage and a QR code for visitors to access the accompanying documentary being filmed now. The documentary covers the protests and subsequent boarding up that took place in Elgin during the summer of 2020 as part of the nation-wide Black Lives Matter movement as well as the creation of the mural and scholarship which are also a part of the Making Space project.

Images of the board-ups that were installed in downtown during the protests this past summer were taken to assist with documenting the project. One of those images was used to create a t-shirt fundraiser for the project. The image, created by artists Melissa Alvarez, Deiby Guzman, and Bernardo Nunez, depicts a multicolored fist. [Shirts are available for purchase \(https://www.customink.com/fundraising/makingspace.\)](https://www.customink.com/fundraising/makingspace) Proceeds from this fundraiser help fund the mural and a new scholarship for local students that have demonstrated an active interest and meaningful involvement in the areas of human rights, civil rights, and social justice.

About Pablo Serrano:

Born in Chicago to Mexican immigrants who came from Durango Mexico in 1979, his work has focused on using the creative potential of art to explore different aspects of citizenship, education, and politics. Constantly seeking to engage different members of the broader community about important questions and concerns through his art classes, music and art shows, he believes that every creative means possible should be used to find and make meaning in this complicated world.

All his life he's engaged in social art experiences as an artist, teacher and music event organizer. He studied Graphic Design at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign then became a High School art teacher at Farragut Career Academy. He got his Master of Arts in Teaching from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and pursued a PhD in Art Education from Northern Illinois University. Mid PhD program he left to establish The People's Stage Karaoke and co-found Kombi Chicago which provide meaningful musical experiences to the Latino community of Chicago.

Throughout it all, his interest in facilitating meaningful social experiences that deepen both a sense of self and a sense community among strangers, has been his focus. He believes that every experience has the potential to reveal something about ourselves and our world and is eager to collaborate with everyone who shares this belief.

To learn more about Pablo Serrano and his artwork, visit pabloserranoart.com.

"Making Space: a mural and documentary project" was announced in late 2020 under the leadership of the Elgin Social Justice Collective and is sponsored by the Elgin Cultural Arts Commission, the Elgin Human Relations Commission, Side Street Studio Arts, and the Downtown Neighborhood Association as well as a grant from the Illinois Department of Public Health in partnership with The Chicago Community Trust, thanks to the assistance of fiscal sponsor and partner, the Elgin History Museum.

The project consists of 4 components: a permanent mural based on the board-ups that adorned the downtown during the summer of 2020, a documentary about the historic summer of 2020 and the project itself, a new scholarship program, and a Juneteenth partnership.

The Elgin Social Justice Collective is a group of community volunteers that came together to identify and develop a project that would address questions that arose during protests of this past summer.

Keep up to date and find out how you can support the project by liking and following us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/ElginMakingSpace](https://www.facebook.com/ElginMakingSpace) or checking the webpage (<https://elginhistory.org/making-space/>) for updates. For more information about the project as well as sponsorship information, contact Amanda Harris at makingspace@elginhistory.org.