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Press Secretary

*** *PRESS RELEASE* ***

Jersey City's Youth Mural Arts Program Celebrates 11 Years with Art Exhibition & Documentary Premiere at Mana Contemporary

JERSEY CITY, NJ — Mayor Steven M. Fulop joins the **Office of Cultural Affairs**, the **Department of Recreation and Youth Development**, and the **Jersey City arts community** to celebrate the **11th anniversary of the Jersey City Youth Mural Arts Program (JCYMAP)**. Founded in 2013 as an extension of the Jersey City Mural Arts Program (JCMAP), JCYMAP has grown into New Jersey's largest youth mural arts initiative, transforming the city into a vibrant outdoor gallery while empowering young artists.

The **2025 celebration** will feature the opening of a gallery exhibition and the premiere of the short documentary ***"Discover the Artist Within"***, directed by **Duda Penteado** and produced by **Unshakeable Productions**. The film highlights the creativity and impact of this year's participants and their contributions to the latest JCYMAP mural project. The event takes place on **Thursday, October 16, 2025, from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. at Mana Contemporary (888 Newark Ave).**

This year marks a new chapter for JCYMAP, with **Mana Contemporary** providing a dynamic environment that blends museum and gallery spaces with active artist studios. Through this collaboration, JCYMAP students benefited from unique opportunities such as internships, residencies, and mentorships that expanded both their artistic and professional horizons.

Led by **Creative Director and Filmmaker Duda Penteado**, who serves as the **Lead Art Instructor**, the six-week intensive program trains students ages 15 to 23 in every stage of mural-making: concept development, design scaling, surface preparation, paint application, and long-term preservation. Students also engage in community dialogue, gaining knowledge beyond artistic skills to include a deeper sense of civic pride and cultural understanding.

"For over a decade, JCYMAP has empowered our youth to see themselves as cultural leaders," said **Mayor Steven M. Fulop**. "This program is proof that investing in the arts is an investment in the future of our city."

“Discover the Artist Within is more than a theme — it’s a call to action for young people to unlock their creative voices,” said **Duda Penteado**, JCYMAP Creative Director. “By merging art, education, and community engagement, we are shaping the next generation of artists and change-makers.”

Event Details:

Mana Contemporary (888 Newark Ave)
Opening Reception with Art Exhibit and
Documentary Screening
Thursday, October 16, 2025
5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

2025 Student Artists:

Maya Navarro, Rocky Gardner, Jayla Smith, Ren Miceli, Diana Olivo, Hiraeth Obanda, Rubitha Balasubraman, Deepthi Sachi, Cheyne Ali Anderson, Milan Zhu, Barbara Gochis, Siobhian Williams, Naomi Gay-Faniel, Arianna Moyon

2025 Film Crew - Unshakeable Productions:

Misael Romero, Director of Photography and Editor, Josue Johnson, Camera and Drone, Dawson Anderson, Camera, Drone and Production Assistant



This program was made possible through a partnership with the Jersey City Department of Recreation and Youth Development’s summer works program. The program team includes **Duda Penteado, Fine Artist, Filmmaker, Creative Director, and Lead Art Instructor at JCYMAP; Imani Anighoro, Assistant Project Coordinator at JCYMAP; Coda Camaya, Assistant Project Coordinator at JCYMAP.**

A special thanks to the Mana artists who participated in the JCYMAP 2025 program: **Cheryl Gross, Rebecca Graves, Abhishek Tuiwala, Danielle Scott, Omar Lawson, Erica Rose Levine, Eric Nadler of JC Fab Labs, and Daniel Sacks, the Editor, Photographer, and Curator of the Mana Public Arts Book Project.** Their mentorship and collaboration greatly elevated the students’ artistic practice and professional growth.

We also extend our gratitude to **Kele McComsey, Director of Mana Contemporary in Jersey City; Kristin DeAngelis, Senior Director of Strategies and Operations at Mana Contemporary; Ysabel Pinyol Blasi, Executive Director and Co-Founder of the Monira Foundation at Mana Contemporary, and Selig Sacks, Senior Advisor at Mana Contemporary.** Their vision and support, alongside the Department of Cultural Affairs of the City of Jersey City, made this partnership possible.

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About the Jersey City Youth Mural Arts Program

Each year, JCMAP offers artistically inclined Jersey City youth an opportunity to apply their skills to creating public art in various locations around Jersey City. Youth are led by professional mural artists who provide step-by-step instructions on public art techniques, including concept development, design enlargement and coherence, and spray paint techniques.

Students engage in research workshops and community engagement to foster a greater cultural and historical understanding of their work contexts. The project culminates in a collaborative, large-scale mural designed and painted by participating youth. The JCMAP Youth Program strengthens design, drawing, and painting skills while enhancing the professionalism and employability of Jersey City's emerging young artists. This program also aims to promote interdisciplinary art history education and provide opportunities for young people to engage in the interactive processes inherent in producing public art.

All media inquiries should be directed to Kimberly Wallace-Scalcione at KScalcione@jcnj.org.