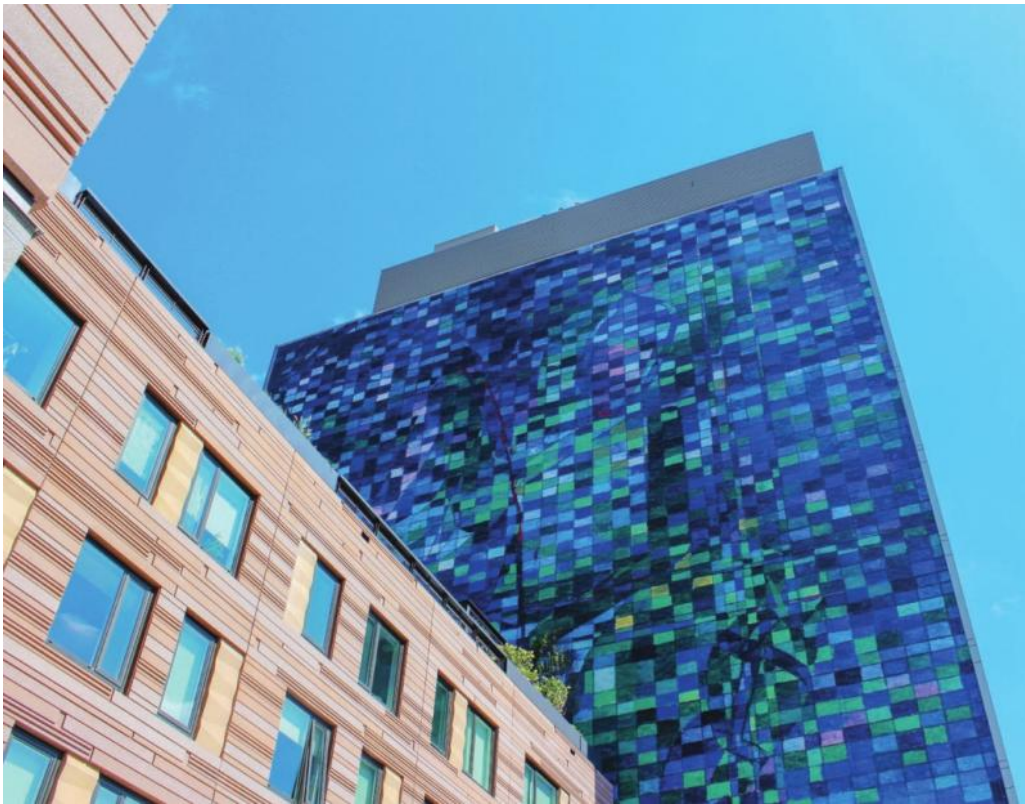


The Bay State Banner

Dragon Slayer: New Fenway mural encourages collective action

Celina Colby | Arts & Culture | September 6th, 2018



Raúl de Nieves' "All Is One" is a mosaic-style painting on the side of Fenway Health's Ansin Visa, inspired by the tale of George and the Dragon. Photo: Celina Colby

In early August, a new 106-foot mural by Raúl de Nieves debuted on the side of Fenway Health's Ansin Building in the Fenway neighborhood. Originally a watercolor on paper piece, "All Is One" applies the historic myth of Saint George and the Dragon to a contemporary world. Now, as a building wrap, the abstract, mosaic-style painting in cool colors grounds the now-bustling Fenway neighborhood in calm. It's a piece that requires multiple viewings; abstract enough for ambience, but narrative enough for viewers to seek shapes and stories within the colors.

For more information about the mural and its residential sponsor, visit:

www.theharlo.com/art

Traditionally, the tale of Saint George and the Dragon describes the hero slaying a dragon that demands human sacrifices and saving the princess who would have been killed next. In his artist statement, de Nieves says, “Saint George and the Dragon is a theme upon which I have composed many paintings. Its iconography has been the source of healing, strength, and self-revelation during my personal and artistic evolution.” In today’s world, the metaphorical dragon could be any destructive force to individuals or the community around them.

Because of the mural’s position on the Fenway Health building, disease, or even limited access to healthcare, could be interpreted as one of those destructive forces. The fable of the hero overcoming obstacles to create a better world is meant to inspire citizens to vanquish collective challenges. The message of coming together to solve problems is more relevant than ever in a continually divided political climate.

De Nieves is a Mexican-American artist living in New York. “All Is One” presents only a small, muted part of his repertoire. In addition to narrative visual works, he’s known for elaborate multi-media performances with his rock band, Haribo.

Often in public performances he wears lavish costumes reminiscent of Nick Cave’s “Soundsuits.” His art blurs boundaries between cultures, genders and realities. De Nieves’ work has been shown at MoMA PS1, the Whitney Biennial, Documenta 14, The Museum of Art and Design and many others.

The mural joins a continually growing collection of public art in Fenway, including the temporary Fog x FLO sculptures by Fujiko Nakaya and the Art Resource Collaborative for Kids (ARCK) mural near Lansdowne Street. “All Is One” was underwritten by Skanska USA, developer of the neighboring Harlo luxury residential building. Though given approval by the city of Boston and the Fenway CDC, the piece represents a new kind of public art in which the work, however pioneering, is inextricably linked to the gentrification of a neighborhood.