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Caltrans Announces Selection of Muralists for Art Project as part of the Clean California Program in Alisal Neighborhood

A vibrant transformation is coming to the Alisal neighborhood next spring! Caltrans, the City of Salinas, and the Arts Council for Monterey County (Arts4MC) are pleased to announce that three California-based artist teams have been selected to create colorful large-scale murals on the Highway 101 underpasses at East Market Street, Alisal Street and Sanborn Road.

This project is part of the Clean California State Highway Beautification Program, launched by Governor Newsom. Clean California is investing \$1.1 billion statewide to clean up trash and debris, beautify community gateways and public areas along highways, and to provide good jobs to thousands of Californians. The public art budget for the Salinas enhancement project is \$748,000 and is funded through Clean California.

After receiving input from a community survey specifying realistic representation in the artwork depicting local stories and histories in warm colors, over 40 applications were received from artists throughout the state. A diverse panel of evaluators, including representatives from the City of Salinas, Alisal Vibrancy Plan Committee, Salinas Unified Business Association, art historians and community residents, reviewed all applications and narrowed the list to nine semi-finalists who were invited to present detailed proposals to the panel.

Each team awarded a mural will be responsible for a community engagement component including collaboration with local youth and artists.

La Neta, a team of local artists including Arsenio Baca, Sea Sevilla, Avelino Sanher, Gerardo Zambrano, and Natalia Corazza, was selected to expand upon and complement the existing artwork at Alisal Street. Their expressionism/realism style will integrate portraits of historical heroes such as Cesar Chavez, Larry Itliong, Dolores Huerta, and other figures and events prominent to the Salinas area. They will also bring focus to Salinas' agricultural heritage by framing this neighborhood gateway with dramatic decorative images of Chicomecōatl, agricultural energy, and Chalchiuhtlicue, water energy.

Larger-than-life faces and figures, representative of agricultural growers and workers, and architectural landmarks that evoke the Alisal's historic roots, will appear to fly off the walls of the Sanborn Road underpass, creating an immersive, cinematic experience. Timothy Robert Smith an LA-born oil painter and muralist, was selected to create distinctive photo-realistic style murals, combining the illusion of three-dimensional depth and extreme perspective angles. This unique and memorable viewpoint, showcased by new brighter lighting in the underpass, will transform a drab urban space into a source of community pride.



Tim Smith is also an experienced art teacher and he will be holding a mural workshop for aspiring local artists and muralists.

The East Market Street underpass will be transformed by lushly colored murals created by the artist team of MJ Lindo-Lawyer and Joshua Lawyer. Images will portray the human experience paired with local folklore to celebrate the layered histories of the surrounding neighborhood and a vision for the future generations. The murals will also highlight natural elements of Salinas ecology such as Alisal's namesake Sycamore trees, California poppies, and local birds. The artists will engage with the local community through a special art event.

"Clean California is such an innovative new program for Caltrans, and this is the first time we have directly funded public art as part of a transportation project. Caltrans District 5 is very excited to be working with the local Salinas community and such talented professional artists to transform these visually unremarkable structures into vibrant beautiful works of art that will enhance the livability and prosperity of the Alisal neighborhood," said Caltrans Senior Landscape Architect Corby Kilmer.