

Sheppard Mullin Represents Artists In Visual Artists Rights Act Action

05.12.2022

Sheppard Mullin is representing pro bono Kit-Yin Snyder and Richard Haas in the lawsuit they filed on May 12, 2022 against Mayor Adams, The City of New York, New York City Department of Design and Construction, New York City Department of Cultural affairs, New York City Department of Correction and New York City Public Design Commission. The lawsuit derives from the City's violation of the Visual Artists Rights Act in demolishing portions of the artwork Ms. Snyder and Mr. Haas installed pursuant to the City's Percent for Art law in the 1990s. The demolition of the existing Municipal Detention Center and expansion of the jail as part of the Borough Based Jail plan has far-reaching impacts on the Chinatown community, including the destruction of Ms. Snyder and Mr. Haas' artwork.

Ms. Snyder and Mr. Haas are internationally acclaimed artists who spent seven years dedicating their craft to the public installation near the Municipal Detention Center and the artwork is homage to the neighborhood, featuring themes of civic justice, the Chinese community, and the plights of the immigrant groups of the Lower East Side. The artwork slated to be destroyed during the City's construction project include Snyder's "Upright," a geometric labyrinth of colored pavers including two Chinese characters meaning "upright" and "righteousness" located in a plaza on White Street, and Haas' "Immigration on the Lower East Side," a seven panel mural painted directly on the second story cement wall of the Municipal Detention Center depicting the successive waves of immigration in the 19th and 20th centuries to the Lower East Side.

The City previously contractually agreed: 'The City agrees that it will not intentionally destroy, damage, alter, modify or change the Art Work in any way. . .' Yet, that is exactly what is happening now in violation of the Visual Artists Rights Act, in violation of the City's contract with the artists, and contrary to the spirit of the Percent for Art law and promises made by the City to the community.

The Sheppard Mullin team, led by partner Rob Friedman, includes partner Dan Brown, associates Emily Anderson and Chloe Chung, special counsel Sarah Aberg and law clerk Nina Orteza.

Attorneys

Emily D. Anderson

Daniel L. Brown

Chloe Chung

Robert S. Friedman

Nina Orteza

Practice Areas

Litigation