



## **Vietnamese American Initiative for Development**

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### **RENOWNED ARTIST CHOSEN TO CREATE PUBLIC ART CELEBRATING FREEDOM IN FIELDS CORNER**

DORCHESTER – Juanjo Novella, an internationally-recognized sculptor of public art, has been selected to create a permanent artwork in Doherty-Gibson Park (also known as Town Field) in Dorchester’s Fields Corner neighborhood that celebrates and commemorates journeys to freedom. Commissioned by the Fields Corner-based community development corporation Vietnamese American Initiative for Development, Inc. (VietAID) in collaboration with the City of Boston Parks Department, the Boston Art Commission, and the Edward Ingersoll Browne Fund, a public charitable trust administered by the City of Boston Boston Trust Office, the artwork will create a focal point in the park’s plaza along Dorchester Avenue.

A ten-member selection committee composed of residents, community leaders, artists, a university professor, and representatives from the Boston Art Commission and the Boston Parks Department made the decision following a lengthy process involving intensive public feedback on the design proposals of three competing finalists. The committee selected the finalists from a pool of 144 artists who applied for the public art commission from 27 states and 9 countries.

The artist proposes a tall, curved sculpture called “Freedom Home” built with a steel membrane comprised of the word “freedom” repeated in multiple languages that will be lit up at night. Inspired by the mountainous island cliffs in Vietnam’s Ha Long Bay as well as the shapes of the roads circumscribing Fields Corner, Novella seeks to integrate the piece with the community. The sculpture has an open door and will sit in the center of the plaza currently occupied by a circular plantings bed. This placement will recover more space in the plaza for people to interact with the piece and traverse through and around it.

"Through “Freedom Home,” we honor those who have sacrificed their lives for our freedom," said Mayor Martin J. Walsh. "Mr. Novella has thoughtfully represented the universal experience of those who came to Boston seeking hope and equality. We are grateful to VietAID for their work to bring important artwork to our neighborhoods.”

The selection committee and public input conveyed great excitement with the scale and use of the entire plaza. The selection also was based on the transparency of the work, durability of materials, the elegant use of language, and the message of inclusion. Additionally compelling was the artist's willingness to continue to modify his design based on community input, including the important element of color.

“This unique sculpture will create an icon for Fields Corner and will help to establish Fields Corner as a destination for business and culture” said Nam Pham, VietAID’s Executive Director. “As a refugee who, like many, came to America in search of freedom, I am very moved by Novella's use of Ha Long Bay as inspiration for the form. Our goal also is for this artwork not only to appeal to my Vietnamese experience but also to speak to all people who call Fields Corner home, regardless of where they came from.”

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Award-winning Spanish artist Juanjo Novella has commissioned artworks installed across Europe, Asia, North America, and New Zealand, including in Madrid, Spain; Asan-Si, South Korea; Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; and Lubbock, Texas. He also has had many exhibitions of his work, including at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. While his artistic career began simultaneously with painting and sculpture, he now works exclusively in the field of public art. He has extensive experience working in urban environments and has participated in several master plans for improving urban landscapes integrating systems of sculpture, painting, and landscape design.

VietAID is grateful for all of the public interest and support for the Freedom Public Art Project and for the financial support of the City of Boston's Edward Ingersoll Browne Trust Fund that made the planning and artist selection process possible. Construction of a finalized design of the sculpture will depend on the success of future fundraising initiatives to offset the anticipated \$500,000 total cost of the project.

For more information about the Freedom Public Art Project and about how to contribute to the artwork, visit [www.vietaid.org](http://www.vietaid.org) or contact VietAID at 617-822-3717.

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The Vietnamese American Initiative for Development (VietAID) was founded in 1994 to provide comprehensive economic development programs and services to alleviate poverty and advance civic participation in the Vietnamese American community of Dorchester, Boston. VietAID's mission is to build a strong Vietnamese American community and a vibrant Fields Corner neighborhood by: promoting civic engagement and community building; developing affordable housing and commercial space; providing small business technical assistance and micro-enterprise development; offering high quality child care services and after school programs; and developing community youth leadership.

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