



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 20, 2020

Contact:
Richard A. Hooper
rhooper@downtownpittsburgh.com

**PUBLIC ART INSTALLATION ‘DOWNTOWN RENOWN’ SHOWCASES 14
PITTSBURGH SPORTS ICONS ON DOWNTOWN WINDOWS**

- **‘Downtown Renown’** showcases 14 Pittsburgh athletes who call Pittsburgh home, and represent exemplary accomplishments and groundbreaking achievements in their chosen sport.
- Artist, Gavin Benjamin, was commissioned to create the artworks using his distinctive style that combines original analog photography and appropriated images with collage, paint and varnish.
- The project was developed in partnership with The Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum at the Heinz History Center, and will be displayed Downtown until the New Year
 - This is the third public artwork commission by the PDP as part of their **‘REFORGE Downtown’** Initiative

DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH, PA – Sports is a serious subject for the Pittsburgh region, with a well-recognized fan base that reaches across the entire country. A long legacy of sports achievement has been well forged into the hearts of every Pittsburgher, and steadfastly remains wherever they may roam. The PDP, in collaboration with the Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum at the Heinz History Center, felt that those feelings offered a great opportunity to combine that enduring love of sports with a unique public art experience called **‘Downtown Renown’**.

The **‘Downtown Renown’** installation features 14 artworks and stories that celebrate the careers of Pittsburgh sports icons and athletic groundbreakers. From household names like Mario Lemieux and Franco Harris, to the less familiar, but equally talented, Swin Cash and Dan McCoy, the athletes included showcase a breadth of talent and accomplishments that is truly inspirational.

The artwork is that of Gavin Benjamin, who developed the unique pieces using a style that combines original analog photography and appropriated images with collage, paint and varnish techniques, resulting in a non-traditional, but highly vivid representation of his subjects. Commissioned under the PDP’s **‘REFORGE’** initiative that invites the community to safely revisit and reengage with Downtown through unique events, activations, and programs, it’s a powerful reminder of the vibrancy that public art can bring to the inner city, and especially one as sports-minded as Pittsburgh.

“I am very inspired by the works of Dutch and Italian masters and their use of deep luxurious colors, intense light and dark shadows,” said Gavin Benjamin, the artist who developed the collection. “The juxtaposition of objects and composition of forms that tell a compelling story are something I try to integrate in every piece. This installation offered a great opportunity for me to explore my passion for culture, media, fashion, and design, as well as being able to visually interpret these athletes in a non-traditional way. I believe these pieces are honest and curious and bright and thoughtful – all of the things that made me want to be a professional artist in the first place.”

Benjamin was born in Guyana, South America and raised in Brooklyn, New York, receiving his BFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York City. A background working in photography, production, and editing, with stints at Kenneth Cole productions, Esquire Magazine, Hachette Filipacchi Media, and Good Housekeeping magazine led him to forge his own unique artistic style. Now based in Pittsburgh, his work has appeared at the Slick Paris, Sotheby's NY, Architectural Digest Home Design Show, Art Hampton, Affordable Art Fair, Scope Miami, Palm Beach Modern, Context Miami, Context NY, Art Silicon Valley, and the LA Art Fair.

“**‘Downtown Renown’** continues a long legacy of PDP support for public art, while also introducing a sports theme that really resonates with the community,” said Jeremy Waldrup, President and CEO of the PDP. “Each of these artistic works is visually compelling and unique, and the athletes and stories that they display are similarly compelling. These athletes are so worthy of this kind of recognition given their commitment, endurance, and talents, and their stories are exceptional. We hope that people are inspired by the art, but also learn more about the rich heritage of Pittsburgh sports.”

Besides the dramatic visuals, each window also offers a brief career outline of the athlete, and a QR code to take you to a more detailed bio on the PDP website provided by the Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum at the Heinz History Center.

“We have been excited to partner with the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership on **‘Downtown Renown’** to showcase some of the dynamic athletes who have contributed to Pittsburgh’s identity as the ‘City of Champions’ through the years,” said Anne Madarasz, director of the Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum at the Heinz History Center. “We worked hard to select stories that would demonstrate the relevance of sports to larger issues. These athletes are ground breakers and door openers. They demonstrate dedication to community and their country, or teach us life lessons about hard work, perseverance, and drive. Many fans visit the Sports Museum to relive memories of Pittsburgh’s most legendary sports moments, but they also discover lesser known and almost-forgotten stories of athletes, coaches, and other leaders who made a huge impact on sport and American life. With all we are facing right now, these windows can inspire and unify us, reminding us of the power of sport and individuals to effect positive change.”

The PDP noted that sportscasters Bob Pompeani, Rich Walsh, and Josh Taylor of KDKA-TV News provided helpful insight and recommendations regarding the Downtown Renown athlete selection.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS ABOUT THIS PUBLIC ART INSTALLATION CAN BE FOUND AT:
DowntownPittsburgh.com/Renown

‘DOWNTOWN RENOWN’ ATHLETES AND LOCATIONS:

Pittsburgh Public Theater
Eighth and Penn
Wood Street
Oliver Building
Triangle Building
Piatt Place
Liberty Ave.
Market Square Place
Bank Tower
Penn Ave.
Benedum Center
Liberty Ave. and 6th Street

Arnold Palmer
Roberto Clemente
John Woodruff
Josh Gibson
Joe Greene
Mario Lemieux
Chuck Cooper
Suzie McConnell Serio
Franco Harris
Bill Mazerowski
Sidney Crosby
Swin Cash, Dan McCoy, Honus Wagner

About the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership

Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (PDP) is a dynamic, nonprofit organization comprised of business and community leaders, property owners, civic organizations, foundations, and residents who provide energy, vision, and advocacy for Downtown Pittsburgh. Working collaboratively with its partners, the PDP strives to create a positive Downtown experience for residents, workers and visitors alike. The PDP's strategic initiatives include clean and safe services, transportation, and economic development and advocacy. For more information, visit www.DowntownPittsburgh.com or follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/downtownpitt>

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