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## Haute 100: Aby Rosen Taps Jeff Koons For Showstopping Mural



Last month we announced Haute 100 lister Aby Rosen’s latest business venture—a New York hotel experience driven by fashion, furniture and craftsmanship in SoHo. Yesterday, the real estate tycoon and co-founder of RFR announced the new property will showcase the work of young artists thanks to a partnership with Groundswell, a New York community mural organization that uses creativity as a tool for change, and mentorship from renowned artist Jeff Koons.

The team of artists has created a site-specific mural on the hotel’s 150 foot-by-50-foot South-facing wall that celebrates the history and culture of SoHo. The mural boast images of music, food, fashion and the industries of the past. Of those images, guests will see a bird on an illuminated wire, which reflects the ambiance in and around SoHo; a crown paying homage to Jean-Michel Basquiat, who was part of the artistic movement that made SoHo famous in the 1980s; references to Little Italy and the thriving restaurant scene of the area; and the silhouette of a female figure to symbolize the fashion sense and metropolitan spirit of SoHo.

In order to create the artwork for the property, the budding painters had a chance to visit Rosen’s office to view pieces from his personal art collection. After viewing Rosen’s collection for inspiration, and

keeping in mind the culture of Soho, each artist developed their own design concepts for the mural and then came together to develop a final design. Misha Tyutyunik, Groundswell's lead artist for the project, refined the concepts to produce a single comprehensive design. The team brought this final design into Koons' studio for his personal feedback and a creative discussion about what inspires his art, the historical references in the piece, the creative process and use of color.

Koons, a fellow Haute 100 lister, was elated to work with the emerging artists. He said, "It's my pleasure to work with the youth group from Groundswell on the Howard Street mural. This is a very creative team of young artists, and it's rare to see a group with such a unified vision. I've enjoyed working with the artists during the conception of their idea."

"The design shows the history and culture of SoHo: the music, food, fashion as well as the industries that formerly existed within the neighborhood. It evokes the commercial refinement of present-day SoHo, but also alludes to its spirit of surprise and discovery, encouraging pedestrians to stroll and wander through the winding side streets to window shop, to find new wonders or uncover relics of bygone days. The design is simple yet complex enough to tell the story and capture the energy of the day life and nightlife of SoHo and the surrounding neighborhoods," Tyutyunik said.

The students who designed the mural are Gabriela Balderas, Anayshah Bashier, Durell Baxter, Nafeesa Davis, Claire Haviland, Nathaniel James, and Publio Lantiqua. Overall Murals, Inc. executed the mural design on the wall at 11 Howard.