



**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Angie Bertinot / Downtown District / [angie@downtowndistrict.org](mailto:angie@downtowndistrict.org) / 713-650-3022  
Carey Kirkpatrick / The CKP Group / [carey@theckpgroup.com](mailto:carey@theckpgroup.com) / 832-930-4065 x101  
Whitney Radley / The CKP Group / [whitney@theckpgroup.com](mailto:whitney@theckpgroup.com) / 832-930-4065 x106

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
FRIDAY, MAY 6, 2016**



**DOWNTOWN DISTRICT LAUNCHES STREET BANNER COLLECTION  
CAPTURING HOUSTON'S CREATIVE, ENERGETIC & HUMOROUS SPIRIT**

**Downtown Houston Banner Program highlights Houston's literary scene**

**HOUSTON, TX** – The Downtown District launches an artful street banner program that beautifies the heart of the city with poetry excerpts by notable Houstonians past and present, everyday residents and national celebrities with local roots, including words by Beyoncé, Jesse H. Jones, Z-Ro and Neil Armstrong.

**- MORE -**

## Page 2

### Downtown Houston Banner Program

The series portrays the Bayou City as an energetic destination that values creativity, diversity and individuality, offering commuters and passersby a patchwork of thought-provoking and quirky messages that encourages them to muse on what it means to be a Houstonian.

The 575 large banners are in the process of being installed on utility and light poles in heavy traffic and pedestrian areas of Downtown, including Main Street, Theater District, Minute Maid Park, St. Joseph Medical Center and City Hall, and along Louisiana, Smith, Milam, Travis, McKinney, Lamar and Dallas streets, among other locations.

“We were seeking a design concept that was fresh and vibrant,” says Bob Eury, Houston Downtown Management District executive director. “This beautification project speaks to Houston’s diversity and our progressive nature while giving everyone something to smile about.”

The initiative continues the Downtown District’s efforts to nurture downtown as pedestrian-friendly with active and rich cultural activities and hallmarks.

### The Concept: Figurative Poetics

Titled “Figurative Poetics” to describe the fusion of stylized iconic Houston imagery with poetry, the concept was developed by Houston-based design, art and communications atelier Core Design Studio.

Rather than resorting to clichéd, self-referential banner verbiage that often plagues urban centers with messages such as eat, sleep, work and entertain, Core Design Studio principals Fiona McGettigan and Alan Krathaus conceived an artful alternative that outstretches beyond simplistic site-specific, place-making and way-finding approaches.

“Collectively, the text reveals Houstonians as humorous, with a hint of cynicism that’s punctuated by a positive outlook,” McGettigan says. “Most definitely, the messages show that locals have a pure, honest love for the city.”

The married duo, along with editing assistance of Miah Arnold of Grackle and Grackle Literary Studio, harnessed creativity from Houston’s robust literary scene to offer a collection of bold banners comprising slices of poetry, quotes and lyrics juxtaposed with images of life in Downtown Houston. Contributing local writers include poet laureates Gwendolyn Zepeda and Robin Davidson, youth poet laureate Andrew White, Inprint executive director Rich Levy, Texas Monthly executive editor Mimi Swartz, Chitra Divakaruni and Sarah Cortez.

“And for quesadillas I would trade a skyline,” writes fourth grade student Caoilin. Author Melissa Studdard contributes, “Concrete lush as cream filled eggs.” Houston Chronicle columnist Lisa Gray pens, “And other places seem off-kilter.”

Core Design Studio also worked with Writers in the Schools, Inprint Poetry Buskers, The High School for the Performing and Visual Arts and the Creative Writing Program at the University

- MORE -

**Page 3**  
**Downtown Houston Banner Program**

of Houston. Some material was extracted from existing sources.

The anthology evinces Houston's zeitgeist — real and unedited. The selected texts figuratively comment on the city as an organism, poke fun at heat and humidity, quip at traffic issues and explore the region's flora and fauna where oak trees abound and the sweet smell of barbecue suffuses the air.

An additional design element further brings attention to a descriptive word in each banner.

"We used a singular frame around one word to punctuate and create a more immediate secondary narrative describing the city," Krathaus explains. "Some example of these include lush, flourish, become, be, heart, pulses, mosaic, immortal, stretching, embraced, booming, ebbs and swarms. We love how one word in the context of describing our city can have such simple power."

# # #

**VISUALS:**

High resolution images for web (below) and print (upon request) are available.

Link: [https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ariwgfujmiphg4vu/AAD8nqrnZ3zSJC\\_WvitHAvnZa?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ariwgfujmiphg4vu/AAD8nqrnZ3zSJC_WvitHAvnZa?dl=0)

Credit: Photos by Morris Malakoff

**ABOUT DOWNTOWN DISTRICT**

The Downtown District was formed in 1995 for the purpose of revitalizing the urban core of the country's fourth largest city. Over the past decade, the Downtown District has used a combination of public funds and private resources to catalyze area improvements focusing on the city blocks bordered by Interstate 10, Highway 59 and Interstate 45.

The Downtown District operates under the leadership of a 30-person board of directors who oversee the implementation of the District's strategic initiatives. Funding for the Downtown District comes from a special assessment on all downtown property owners.

For more information, visit [downtowndistrict.org](http://downtowndistrict.org) or [downtownhouston.org](http://downtownhouston.org).

**ABOUT CORE DESIGN STUDIO**

Core Design Studio is a design, art and communications studio founded in 1995 by Fiona McGettigan and Alan Krathaus. The studio focus is in commissions of print, web, exhibit, environmental and multimedia design, as well as, public art projects. The client base is made up of cultural, nonprofit organizations, educational and architectural offices, urban planning groups, restaurants and retail, and a variety of businesses. Many of the firm's projects use a variety of material and media types for their design solutions.

For more information, visit [coredesignstudio.com](http://coredesignstudio.com).