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## ***I "Heart" Philly* Art Installation Welcomes and Celebrates the Return of Philadelphia's In-Person Performing Arts**



PHILADELPHIA – The City of Philadelphia Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy (OACCE), the Kimmel Cultural Campus, and the Avenue of the Arts, Inc. will welcome and celebrate Philadelphia's return of in-person performing arts with the return of the *I "Heart" Philly* temporary art installation.

The return of *I "Heart" Philly* will welcome people back to enjoy in-person performing

arts and invite people to place stickers representing their culture and heritage on the heart. *I “Heart” Philly* will be installed on Friday, September 17, 2021 at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts at 300 S. Broad Street along the Avenue of the Arts. The temporary art installation will remain at this location through October 30, 2021. More details about the install, including an invitation for the press and public to attend this photo op, will be distributed next week. Currently, *I “Heart” Philly* is being repainted and restored before delivery and install by Materials Conservation, the largest conservation firm in the Philadelphia region.

“The OACCE is proud to be part this collaboration to welcome the *I ‘Heart’ Philly* installation back to public display along the Avenue of the Arts. The sculpture was so popular with the public when originally installed at LOVE Park and was wonderful symbol of the diversity of Philadelphia with the stickers on the heart representing so many cultures in our communities,” said Kelly Lee, Chief Cultural Officer and Executive Director of OACCE. “The arts are the heart of Philadelphia and are a uniquely unifying force that brings people and cultures together.”

The installation of *I “Heart” Philly* is happening as part of [Arts Launch 2021](#) at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts on Saturday, September 18 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. After an 18-month closure of in-person performances, this free festival-style event will mark the Kimmel Cultural Campus’ reopening by shining the limelight on the rich and diverse arts and culture scene across the City of Brotherly and Sisterly Love. *Arts Launch 2021* will feature dozens of regional cultural organizations presenting performances, activities, demonstrations, and giveaways. Activities will showcase a variety of genres ranging from spoken word and hip-hop dance, to jazz and classical. The celebration will culminate with a grand finale performance by The Philadelphia Orchestra. [Learn more about the planned performances.](#)

“We are honored to host the return of the *I “Heart” Philly* installation, not only because of the excitement and genuine city pride it generates as we reopen on September 18 – bringing in-person arts back to our Campus with our festival-style event Arts Launch 2021 – but because of what this art represents,” said Anne Ewers, President & CEO of the Kimmel Cultural Campus. “The installation embodies collaboration & the welcoming spirit our city stands for. As the preeminent performing arts center in this region, our mission is to be a place for everyone to experience art, feel welcome, and see their stories reflected on our stages.”

“This installation is a reminder that the arts are still very much alive on the Avenue,” says Avenue of the Arts, Inc. (AAI) Executive Director Laura Burkhardt. “AAI is delighted to see the energy of live performances return to the heart of the city and to partner with our stakeholders to welcome visitors and residents back.”

*I “Heart” Philly* will be installed at the Kimmel Cultural Campus during [Welcoming Week](#), September 10-19, 2021, a national initiative that brings together immigrants, refugees, and those born in the United States and celebrates the contributions of neighbors of all backgrounds to build inclusive places and achieve collective prosperity. In Philadelphia, the Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA) helps organize these events and activities across the city. The *I “Heart” Philly* sculpture was originally commissioned by OIA, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation, and FWD.us in June 2019 when it was on

display in Love Park. The commission was part of the FWD.us / *Am An Immigrant* campaign that empowers immigrants and their allies to share stories and drive action that demonstrate immigration is good for our communities, economy, and country.

### **About the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy**

The Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy closes the gap in access to quality cultural experiences and creative expression through the support and promotion of arts, culture and the creative industries; connecting Philadelphians to enriching, arts-infused experiences; linking local artists and cultural organizations to resources and opportunities; and preserving the City's public art assets. For more information about the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy, visit [CreativePHL.org](https://CreativePHL.org) and follow @CreativePHL on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

### **About the Kimmel Cultural Campus**

Located in the heart of Center City, Philadelphia, our mission is to engage the region's diverse communities with art through performance and education. Our Cultural Campus serves more than 1-million guests per year and includes Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, the Academy of Music, and the Merriam Theater – representing more than 160 years of rich history for the performing arts along Philadelphia's Avenue of the Arts. We are home to eight esteemed Resident Companies: The Philadelphia Orchestra, Opera Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Ballet, The Philly POPS, PHILADANCO, The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, The Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and Curtis Institute of Music. With nearly 9,000 seats per night, we are the region's most impactful performing arts center, and the second largest in the country. Our Cultural Campus serves as a preeminent and inclusive place to enjoy exceptional experiences that reflect the spirit of our region by cultivating a creative and socially responsible environment where our community shares experiences that are delivered with pride, integrity, and respect. As a 501 c 3 nonprofit organization, we collaborate on, present, and produce a broad range of relevant and meaningful events, we serve as an active gathering space for social and community events, we educate the region's young people through access to quality arts experiences, and we provide support to artists in the creation of new work. TD Bank, America's Most Convenient Bank, is the proud Kimmel Cultural Campus Season Sponsor. Read Kimmel Cultural Campus' vision statement, world view, and mission statement [here](#). Learn more about our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and how it encompasses our mission, co-workers, and programs [here](#).

### **About the Avenue of the Arts**

[Avenue of the Arts, Inc.](#) is the organization that champions investment on the Avenue of the Arts, the center of Philadelphia's theater and cultural arts district. One of America's great streets, the Avenue is an economic engine for both the city and the region, drawing 2.8 million visitors a year and generating over \$1 billion annually in economic impact from performance venues, hotels, restaurants, schools, and residents. AAI and its associated organization, Friends of the Avenue of the Arts, work to promote investment, beautification, and marketing of the Avenue to make it a great place to live, work, shop and play and help keep Philadelphia's cultural community vibrant and thriving.