

# Artistic neighborhood face-lift

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Scaffolding in New York is as ubiquitous as it is ugly. Artist Rodney Durso decided to do something about the latter issue.

His organization, ArtBridge, is displaying the works of 26 local artists for the next six months around West Chelsea's historic London Terrace Gardens apartment complex.

"I wanted to find a way for artists to get their work out there in a highly visible area," said Durso, 44. He lives in London Terrace

and hatched the idea about a year ago, when the current round of construction started.

He put out a call for entries for his show, "ArtBridge 2009: First Exposure," via the Web and got replies from about 100 interested candidates. The list was narrowed

down to 26 by a seven-person panel of gallery owners, architects, artists and Durso.

The judges were looking for modern, abstract pieces, which they thought would complement the brick of London Terrace.



Workmen putting up the installation (PHOTOS: RJ MICKELSON)



ArtBridge both beautifies the trappings of construction and provides a new venue for up-and-coming local artists.

Artist Jennifer Bell, 28, kept that sentiment in mind when she submitted "Good Life" — a confetti-like, heavily patterned painting.

"Chelsea is stark and hard," said Bell, a student at the Fashion Institute of Technology. "This painting

has so much energy. Hopefully it'll add a sense of life to the neighborhood."

Painter Jacob Gossett describes his piece "Strobe" as architectural, with geometric forms and bands of color.

"I thought it would fit in

with the aesthetic of the streets and the building," said Gossett, 25.

The total cost of producing ArtBridge was about \$50,000, Durso said. Funding came from London Terrace, Spring Scaffolding and the artists, who paid

\$195 each to have their work displayed.

After the current art is taken down, Durso said he'd like to open up the contest again to new entries.

"I want to somehow beautify the neighborhood," Durso said.

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## Rose Associates launches scaffolding art project

Rose Associates, Inc., a developer, manager and marketer of premium residential, commercial and retail properties, in conjunction with London Terrace Gardens LP, has launched an initiative with visual arts organization ArtBridge that will bring original art to temporary scaffolding at London Terrace Gardens, a residential building in Chelsea.

Entitled, "ArtBridge 2009: First Exposure," the installation will feature large format artwork by several emerging artists. Artists are currently submitting works to ArtBridge for consideration, and selected pieces will be installed in spring of 2009.

"We're excited at the prospect of displaying the work of up-and-coming New York City artists on our sidewalk bridge at London Terrace," said Ellen Gribben Borne, Rose Associates' on-site General Manager. "The galleries of Chelsea are recognized throughout the world, and ArtBridge has identified a unique

for our client, London Terrace Gardens LP to advance the arts scene in Chelsea. We are all pleased to participate."

Created by artists for artists, ArtBridge is an organization whose purpose is to curate and showcase works of large format art for public display and enjoyment. All projects are large-scale, oftentimes taking the artists into unfamiliar territories and bringing new and interesting influences to communities.

"Our city is constantly undergoing construction and redevelopment, and these kinds of installations allow pedestrians to interact with art in a new way, bringing light, color, and beauty to an otherwise utilitarian item," said Rodney Durso, director of ArtBridge. "We also hope this initiative opens the door for artists who find the gallery world somewhat impenetrable."

With the exception of the four corners, London Ter-

race Gardens occupies the entire block between 23rd and 24th Streets and Ninth and Tenth Avenues. As the building performs routine maintenance to its exterior walls, sidewalk bridging will be present. The pieces selected by ArtBridge will wrap the sidewalk bridge and will be seen by building residents and passersby — many of them art enthusiasts visiting the neighborhood's galleries. The artwork will span an area of nearly 500 feet on two sides of the building, totaling 1,000 feet in length.

ArtBridge continues to accept submissions from emerging New York City-based artists up to the December 15, 2008 deadline. A committee comprised of local gallery owners and artists will review each submission and choose up to 36 unique works to include in the installation. For more information visit [www.art-bridge.org](http://www.art-bridge.org).