

A Season of Hope in Downtown Santa Monica

By Melonie Magruder
for the Lookout News

December 3, 210 -- Bayside District is adding a new layer of artistry to this year's holiday festivities by inviting celebrated public art maestro Ed Massey to work his magic at ICE at Santa Monica, the Bayside-sponsored skating rink opening November 5.

For several years now, Massey's Portraits of Hope project has rendered colorful kaleidescopic designs in urban landscapes on some of the most unlikely surfaces -- taxi cabs, a blimp, the silo tower on the campus of Beverly Hills High School, and even lifeguard towers up and down the coast.

"We are very excited about the partnership between ICE at Santa Monica and Portraits of Hope this year," said Debbie Lee, Bayside's Director of Marketing and Communications. "Having an artist of the caliber of Ed Massey paint our rink will bring an extra layer of experience to this beloved winter tradition."

Massey's pop-art images have a retro hint of flower power and serve as creative therapy for children suffering from cancer, burn trauma, spinal injuries and other serious medical problems. The children paint images and patterns on Massey-designed panels that are then mounted on visually arresting surfaces.

Massey's work is a bold and hopeful expression of pride and accomplishment, Bayside officials said. The artist insisted that all children be able to participate -- even those who might be so constrained physically. The Masseys have created specially adapted paintbrushes to hold in mouths, shoes that have sponges on the soles, and hockey sticks with paintbrushes for children in wheelchairs.

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Massey, who holds a masters degree in fine arts from Columbia University, has created a number of large-scale public art installations that explore or highlight social ills -- from child abuse to drug addiction to the lack of corporate ethics. He works closely with his brother, Bernie Massey, to develop the framework for his social issues campaigns, public messaging and public education productions.

"Involving the children of the community in an art project that they can skate on is not only creative but exudes the brand image of Santa Monica as being a place of cutting-edge culture and activity," Lee said. "It's just another way that Bayside is bringing unique, enhanced programming to Downtown Santa Monica."