



**“Fancy Animal Carnival”  
2018 Downtown Achievement Award Submission: Events and Programming  
DowntownDC BID**

For six months in 2017, the streets of DowntownDC were filled with larger-than-life colorful animal sculptures due to the persistent and ingenious efforts of the DowntownDC Business Improvement District (BID), which harnessed support for a “Fancy Animal Carnival” event from major federal agencies, the Mayor and city of the District of Columbia, as well as essential private sector organizations and individuals.

Lively, colorful and thought-provoking works from Taiwanese contemporary artist Hung Yi adorned the streets of DowntownDC, surprising passersby, delighting the public and augmenting public space in creative ways. The sculptures helped augment public space, including Chinatown Park, which required a major intervention to return it to an active and usable space. The animals were embraced by the community but also gained national and international attention for DowntownDC as an arts-friendly location and a place that has moved far beyond its federal government-heavy stereotype into a lively, vibrant and engaging place to live, work and play.

**Event Details**

Five sculptures were installed in DowntownDC from May 4-Oct. 5, 2017 at the following locations: the *Dromedary Camel* and *Bactrian Camel* were located in the Plaza at CityCenter and the *American Eagle and Buffalo* at the Park at CityCenter (825 10<sup>th</sup> Street NW); the *Auspicious Triple Sheep* was installed at Herald Square (13<sup>th</sup> & New York Avenue NW); and the *Dragon Sheep* was displayed in Chinatown Park (6<sup>th</sup> & Massachusetts Avenue NW). Each giant animal sculpture was adorned with Taiwanese symbols and motifs which created painted patterns that reflected folk culture and religion as well as the artist’s personal experiences and observations.

The Fancy Animal Carnival event kicked off with a press conference May 4 featuring Hung Yi and DC Mayor Muriel Bowser. “We are thrilled to have Hung Yi’s sculptures here in Washington, DC – his imaginative forms and lively use of color enliven the already spirited streets of downtown DC,” said Bowser. “The Fancy Animal Carnival will benefit residents and visitors alike and will inspire all of us to support creative artists and entrepreneurs who continue to make Washington, DC a tremendous place to live and to visit.”

The BID created an online walking tour of the animals, identifying each location via ArcGIS and designing an aesthetically-pleasing way to showcase the animals and offer details about each sculpture. In public space, the BID identified each sculpture with a plaque that included the tour’s hashtag #fancyanimalcarnival so guests could easily connect over social media and locate online resources.

International and national news coverage (which ranged from Taiwanese newspapers to The Washington Post) and the social media surrounding the event (a reach of 2 million on Facebook, 798,000 on Twitter, and 294,000 on Instagram) placed new and welcome creative focus on DowntownDC and helped establish the BID as a supporter of the arts and creativity on an international scale.

**Additional Events and Programming**

*Social Media Hunt:* The BID circulated miniature Fancy Animals by Hung Yi, *Golden Mandarin Ducks*, to local and federal partners to increase community involvement in the project, extending the social media presence of the installation and showcasing the DowntownDC community. Partners took turns snapping fun photos of the ducks in their location or on the job and shared them on social media.

*Walking Tours:* The BID engaged the city's official marketing organization, Destination DC, to help market the BID's walking tour of the animals on its website to tourists and to convention-goers including to its 6,400 attendees for the 2017 IPW conference June 3-7, which included a large proportion of overseas journalists from Asia who IPW said would be interested in contemporary Taiwanese artist Hung Yi. Additionally, Cultural Tourism DC (a nonprofit promoting arts and culture) developed and hosted its own walking tour of the animals as part of its WalkingTown DC 2017 summer program, the series for which draws thousands of participants.

*Movie Nights:* The BID kicked off a new, outdoor movie series on June 6 screening "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" at Freedom Plaza, within walking distance of the sculptures. The series, "DowntownDC Summer Flicks Presents: Can I Kick It?" offered a unique experience combining classic and cult martial arts movies with an original music soundtrack curated by a DJ and spun live on site. The June 6 movie and the animals were packaged together and promoted directly to IPW attendees and the public.

*Coloring Contest:* The BID in the fall of 2017 hosted a coloring contest in which the BID contracted an artist to create coloring pages of the animals. The pages were posted online on the BID's website and on social media for users to download and print. Entrants colored and submitted their pages and one junior and one adult winner were chosen and awarded an art supply kit from Blick and movie tickets.

*Calligraphy:* For the Mayor's Office of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs' Mid-Autumn Festival in Chinatown Park, Sept. 29, the BID hosted a calligrapher to teach children and adults how to write "Dragon Horse."

### **Partnerships**

Partnerships created by the BID made the project possible and created a wider network of support for the event. CityCenterDC, a Hines property, served as the co-host and co-sponsor of the project. The installation required approval from the U.S. National Park Service, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, the National Capital Planning Commission and the DC government. The BID received financial support from Oxford Properties and Gould Property Company for the sculpture in Chinatown Park. The InSian Gallery shared the artwork with DowntownDC.

The mini sculptures were lent to the following: the Mayor's executive office, the Mayor's Office on Asian & Pacific Islander Affairs, the Ronald Reagan Building & International Trade Center (a GSA property), DC Public Library, the Grand Hyatt, FRESHFARM Farmers Markets, Mount Vernon Triangle CID and the National Building Museum.

### **Conclusion**

DowntownDC is an area full of many successes, but also challenges. Chinatown Park was a public space in need of support: it had become a place in which individuals experiencing homelessness and other individuals had begun to set up encampments and neighborhood residents and workers were no longer using the park and crime was a concern. The addition of the Dragon Sheep sculpture to the park, combined with programming offered 6 days a week by the BID and partners and the addition of bistro table and chairs, rehabbed this park and turned it back into a place where the community wanted to be active.

Another challenge for the BID includes competition with newer neighboring areas that are home to more residents, more nightlife and more activity 24 hours a day. The bold decision to place giant, whimsical animals in public space through the Fancy Animal Carnival event supported the BID's mission to market DowntownDC as an active, vibrant and innovative 24-hour a day destination and that message reached a countless number of in-person visitors and millions of news readers and social media users.

The BID's successful endeavor of the Fancy Animal Carnival established a new precedent for DowntownDC and the District in securing federal and city support for public art in National Park Service locations and paved the way for even greater projects in the future.