

BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY

PHILADELPHIA, PA – Gallery artist Rebecca Rutstein recently joined Mural Arts Philadelphia, Broad Street Ministry, the Philadelphia Department of Health and Human Services, Project HOME, and Muslims Serve in an initiative to promote safe distancing in public places by designing colorful “space pads.” Rutstein designed five different space pads featuring positive messages overlaid on some of her most iconic paintings. The decals were placed at outdoor sites around the city that provide food and medical services to Philadelphia’s vulnerable populations as an uplifting reminder to all to maintain a six foot distance.



About the Project

Together apart seems to be the general theme of this pandemic. Leaning in to the isolation, and taking comfort that we are all alone. Seeming more like an existential crisis than a physical one (why not both?), we are still forced into the reality that we cannot even pass near a stranger in the grocery store without worrying for our health and the health of our loved ones. The guidelines to remain six feet apart are simple to understand, but difficult to implement.

Collaborating with local businesses and organizations, Mural Arts is giving back and helping Philadelphians practice safe distancing. Space Pads, temporary vinyl floor tiles set at six foot intervals, are each designed by a local Philadelphia artist. The brightly-colored tiles, designed in sets of 5 or 10, are a mix of abstract patterns, affirmations like “we got this,” and some proffer health guidelines like “wash your hands” and, the very literal, “stand six feet apart.”

Illustrating how important art is for strategic and effective communication, Space Pads are another concrete example of how the arts are foundational to a functioning society. In lieu of the impersonal arrows or clinical signs that read “STOP. Stay six feet apart!,” this project adds a personal touch and encouragement to continue following these health guidelines until we’re all safe and healthy again.