

May 28, 2019

Skanska Announces Collaboration with Sawyer Yards to Bring Art Installations by Local Artists to Understory at Bank of America Tower

Leading Global Developer Taps One of the Nation's Largest Creative Communities for Rotating Exhibitions in Downtown Houston's New Community Hub

HOUSTON – Skanska, a leading global development and construction firm, announces a new collaboration with Houston's Sawyer Yards, one of the largest creative communities in the nation, to bring rotating art installations to [Understory](#), the 35,000-square-foot community hub and culinary market at its premier [Bank of America Tower](#) office development.

"Our partnership with Sawyer Yards underscores Skanska's commitment to reimagining Houston's tunnel experience downtown. We are creating an engaging community destination that will reinvent the tunnel network in a way not seen before in its near 90-year history," said Matt Damborsky, executive vice president for Skanska USA Commercial Development in Houston. "Houston's world-class art scene is starting to rise to the same level of prominence as our globally-renowned culinary scene and this trend – combining art and food – will culminate in Understory at Bank of America Tower. Showcasing the work of artists from this vibrant local creative community will complement the unique flavors of Understory with an equally unique visual experience."

Damborsky added that, like Sawyer Yards, Skanska is focused on creating dynamic destinations that offer a wide range of amenities and allow the community to share special experiences. "It will be a prime example of how Skanska approaches place making for our communities. We look forward to the opening of this first installation and to continuing to program Understory with diverse offerings that reflect the vibrant cultural fabric of Houston," he said.

Curated by Grace Zuñiga, Sawyer Yards creative director, the inaugural installation, titled *Natural Abstraction*, will feature eight women and include paintings, ceramics and a mural, all exploring the human connection to natural environments while deepening one's understanding of 'home'. Sawyer Yards artists participating in the inaugural exhibition include Celan Bouillet, Luisa Duarte, Leslie Gaworecki, Hedwige Jacobs, Ami Mehta and Falon Mihalic, as well as Houston-based ceramist Jessica Phillips and muralist Jessica Rice.

"This unique concentration of artists, who create dynamic and inspirational pieces to share with the community, is truly what makes Sawyer Yards the creative heart of Houston," said Steve Gibson, one of the developers of Sawyer Yards. "We are excited to collaborate with Skanska to share work from our part of Houston's vibrant arts and culture scene with the downtown community and look forward to our artists being part of this high-energy destination."

Pieces will be on view from June 1 through Dec. 30, 2019. Every six months, the 100-foot glass wall lining Milam Street, known as the Milam Art Wall, will feature work from Sawyer Yards artists curated by Zuñiga. Curated themes will vary with each installation.

Located on more than 55 acres, Sawyer Yards is one of the largest creative communities in the nation, complemented by creative businesses, public galleries, unique dining and entertainment venues that are all brought to life through an active schedule of special events. The campus' renovated industrial buildings including Sabine Street Studios, Winter Street Studios, Spring Street Studios, Silver Street Studios, The Silos at Sawyer Yards and Summer Street Studios together provide creative workspaces for over 350 local artists. On the second Saturday of every month, Sawyer Yards hosts open studios for visitors to explore and meet artists throughout campus and announces exhibitions and events at its SawyerYards.com website.

Designed by the Michael Hsu Office of Architecture, Understory will be a dynamic experience-based destination that brings the community together through culture, commerce and cuisine. In addition to an abundance of naturally lit community space and a full-service restaurant, Understory will include a culinary market with seven concepts and a cocktail bar. A central feature of Understory is the open-air blending of the street and tunnel levels, facilitated by the "Great Steps," a 30-foot-wide monumental staircase and gathering place that creates the first true street level gateway to the tunnel network.

Situated at 800 Capitol St. on a prime block in Houston's Central Business District, Understory's location near cultural landmarks such as Jones Hall for the Performing Arts, the Alley Theatre, Revention Music Center, Market Square Park and Wortham ideally positions the space to become part of downtown's vibrant cultural life. When Understory opens in June 2019, it will be the first space in the tunnel network to be active seven days a week, from morning to night, with a wide variety of culinary, retail, and cultural offerings. In addition to engaging local art, the community will enjoy access to high-speed Wi-Fi, mobile device charging stations, games and thoughtful furniture arrangements, as well as a state-of-the-art fitness center for the exclusive use of building tenants.

When Bank of America Tower opens next month, it will be the most sustainable office tower in Houston, using 25 percent less energy than typical baseline facilities. Pre-certified under LEED v4 Platinum, one of only four core-and-shell projects nationwide, the 754,000-square-foot sustainable office development will feature a number of green amenities, including SkyPark, the first and largest green roof in Downtown Houston to be open to all building tenants.

Skanska's other developments in Houston include the first LEED Platinum campus in the Energy Corridor – the two-building [West Memorial Place project](#) - which offers direct access to the Terry Hershey Park hike and bike trails. Skanska also developed 3009 Post Oak, a 302,000-square-foot office building in the premier Uptown Houston location at Post Oak Blvd and Hidalgo.

Skanska has built and restored local landmarks in Houston for decades — from historic renovations, like San Jacinto Memorial Building on the Houston Community College campus, to the new construction of world-class sports facilities, including NRG Stadium, and invaluable healthcare resources like the expansion of LBJ General Hospital's emergency department. Skanska continues to leverage its local knowledge and global expertise to shape the region's commercial, healthcare, sports and entertainment facilities.

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Skanska is one of the world's leading construction and development companies. In the U.S., Skanska's core operations include building construction, civil infrastructure and developing self-financed commercial properties, which together generated \$8 billion in revenue in 2018. As a developer in the U.S., Skanska has invested a total of \$2.3 billion in commercial and multi-family projects. With U.S. headquarters in New York City, Skanska has offices in 28 metro areas with 9,000 employees nationwide. Skanska is an industry-leading innovator in both safety and project execution, and offers competitive solutions for both traditional and complex assignments to help build a more sustainable future for our customers and communities. Global revenue of parent company Skanska AB, headquartered in Stockholm and listed on the Stockholm Stock Exchange, totaled approximately \$20 billion in 2018.