

Art + Design Faculty Member Sophia Ainslie Leads Downtown Mural Installation as Part of HUBweek



Sophia Ainslie, HUBweek. Photo by Matthew MODOONO/Northeastern University

Art + Design



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For her latest public art installation, Art + Design faculty [Sophia Ainslie](#) and a group of Northeastern students transformed a shipping container by Boston City Hall into a vibrant mural, as part of Boston's annual [HUBweek](#), where "Art, Science and Technology Collide."

"This was a great way to still feel connected to Northeastern, working alongside fellow students and one of my favorite professors," said Fernanda Hurtado Ortiz, a fifth year Journalism student, who described how the installation helped her feel involved and in-touch with the Northeastern community as she completes her final co-op. "All of us who joined together to assist Sophia are of different majors and have busy lives, especially on the weekend," she continued, "but you could feel that no one wanted to be anywhere else."

Ainslie was one of ten artists selected to contribute to HUBweek's shipping container art installation, entitled "[HUBweek Walls](#)." Other artists featured included Okuda San Miguel, Sneha Shrestha, and Boston's own Silvia Lopez Chavez, who recently created a [beautiful mural](#) on Northeastern's campus.



"Although I've done other public murals, they've been indoors; this is the first mural I've done outside in the public," explained Sophia Ainslie. "Working at City Hall Plaza was invigorating because of the wide variety of people that constantly worked by and stopped to talk to us. They came from far and wide, and from all different walks of life – from the homeless, to businesspeople, to veterans, to tourists, to activist, to nurses, to technologists and so on. Working in this environment reminded me of the importance of art and creativity as a means of bringing people together in conversation, and not only about art, but also about politics, the personal and professional. It brought out of individuals the dreamer, the curious and a sense of wonderment that too often get lost in our efficient busy-ness."



Ainslie took the installation as an opportunity to involve and collaborate with her students from Northeastern, an experience they describe as incredibly meaningful.

"It was really inspiring for me to not only be part of a project with an artist I look up to, but also to see their process and hear about the inspiration behind their work," said Roya Paydarfar, a design student who also assisted with the installation. "She [Ainslie] gave us instruction and advice, but also asked for our opinion and looked to collaborate with us."

Fernanda felt similarly, explaining that "working with Sophia is always such a great learning experience. No matter what she does she is always teaching, always inspiring."

Ainslie and her team installed the mural over the course of a week, spending many hours carefully planning and implementing Ainslie's design. As with the final product, the artistic process was public and open to observation, and the passersby were very engaged and intrigued by Ainslie's work.

"Throughout our shifts painting, people would come up to us to thank us for our work, wondering what we were doing or trying to guess what it was going to be," Fernanda explained. "My favorite answer Sophia gave to a passerby was, 'It is what it is. It is whatever you want it to be.'"