



## PRESS RELEASE

### Toronto's Riverside BIA Celebrates Local Vitality with Mural Launch and New Pollinator Garden

**Toronto, September 23, 2019-** The Riverside Business Improvement Area (BIA) launched its newest mural 'Alquimia', on Saturday, September 21, 2019 at Pizza Nova, 714 Queen Street East, with a public celebration including the planting of a Pollinator Garden.

"At Pizza Nova one of the core values we strive to honour every day is community. We are thrilled to be part of this wonderful initiative in Riverside, a mural that will showcase the vibrancy and diversity of this great neighbourhood to residents and visitors alike for years to come," said Domenic Primucci, President of Pizza Nova.

Artist Jacquie Comrie, a multidisciplinary artist and mental health advocate, developed the mural concept by collaborating with local businesses and community members.

The mural, Alquimia (spanish for alchemy), is in a semi-abstract style. Paying homage to the Riverside neighbourhood, the mural is an interpretation of the iconic quote atop the Riverside Bridge/Queen Street Viaduct: "This river I step in is not the river I stand in" that speaks to the inevitable nature of all things: alchemy and change.

The mural moves beyond animating the walls of Pizza Nova's 714 Queen Street East location:

"As a vibrant and neighbourhood-oriented district, with this mural the Riverside BIA is helping celebrate the change and vitality of the local community," said Riverside BIA Co-Chair, Rosie Little Jeffares.

Through the use of vibrant colour palettes, the mural's aim is to inject light and energy, hoping to make everyone feel welcome and uplifted, while transforming the corner into a space of mental elevation for everyone.

"Everything moves. Everything transforms into something else. The mural is a connection to the past while celebrating the future, progress and growth of the community," said artist Jacquie Comrie.

As a recipient of the City of Toronto's Outdoor Mural & Street Art Program grant, "this mural continues the City's support of vibrant and meaningful public art. It celebrates the positive life and change in Riverside and the east end of Toronto," said Councillor Paula Fletcher, Ward 14, Toronto-Danforth.

To celebrate the official launch of the mural's completion, the public joined in the outdoor festivities to view the mural and take part in the planting of a Pollinator Garden in nearby Joel Weeks Park with the Pollinator Partnership, while enjoying food from local businesses and project partners Brickworks Ciderhouse and Pizza Nova.

The Pollinator Garden planting was a fitting connection with the mural, as gardening provides both mental health benefits and environmental benefits. Thanks to support from the Pollinator Partnership and local BIA member Brickworks Ciderhouse, the Riverside Community Pollinator Garden contains local native perennial plants that will attract and provide food for pollinators, while helping conserve local genetic diversity. The garden is located within the Riverside Community Garden, a local community space in Joel Weeks Park since 2012. Community Garden members will care for and be stewards of the garden for years to come.

Thanks to the key partners who supported the mural project: City of Toronto, Pizza Nova, and Riverside BIA. Thank you also to the partners of the Pollinator Garden project: Brickworks Ciderhouse, the Pollinator Project, and Riverside Green Initiative.

Learn more about the mural and garden at [riverside-to.com](http://riverside-to.com)

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#### Media Contacts

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## About the Mural Artist

Jacque Comrie

<http://jacquiecomrie.com/>

Jacque Comrie is a Toronto-based multidisciplinary artist whose vibrant body of work intersects contemporary art and wellness at a global scale, using colour as a medium of social impact and mental health. Whether as murals on buildings, large scale structures, or canvases, her body of work is a dynamic exploration of the science of colour as the universal language of human emotion.

## About the Riverside BIA

[www.riverside-to.com](http://www.riverside-to.com)

The Riverside Business Improvement Area (BIA), established in 1980, is one of the first BIAs in Canada. The Riverside BIA is a community-oriented not-for-profit association of local business people, organizations and property owners who work in partnership with the City of Toronto to enhance the Riverside business district, located along Toronto's Queen Street East from the DVP to Empire Avenue. The BIA's mandate is to improve, beautify and promote Riverside district through marketing, public programming and streetscape improvements.