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Art 'passing through' Milwaukee

By Sarah Milnar
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October leaves crunch under your feet as you walk routinely down the street. You look up and see a peculiar sight: a door on the side of the road. Curiosity piques, and you venture over to investigate.

You come upon a full-size door speckled with peepholes. Some of the holes lead to the real world on the other side while additional capsules provide images of placid lakes and cityscapes.

The door was created by Heather Wiedeman and is entitled "Perspective." It is part of an installation that opened Friday put together by the Art Corps of the Milwaukee Community Service Corps called "Passing Through." Corps members and local grassroots artists were called upon to design a series of doors to be seen as metaphors for life's opportunities.

The peepholes in Wiedeman's door characterize the exploring of different prospects and the capsules represent the perception of familiar environments, according to the MCSC Art Corps.

The objective of the installation is "to make Milwaukee beautiful," said MCSC Program Manager Nicole Albrecht. According to Albrecht, the MCSC's initiative is to use public art as a tool to develop and enhance the Milwaukee community. This installation is the group's second.

Three doors, including "Perspective," are currently placed in the roundabout on Sixth and Virginia streets, and five are placed on Sherman Boulevard between North Avenue and Capital Drive.

The doors will remain until Dec. 1.

The MCSC hopes to put together a new installation every eight weeks.

Becky Franklin, a featured artist in the exhibit, said she likes the concept of public art for its ability to "open discussion about the community." Franklin's piece, "A Milwaukee-Sized Effort," is comprised of teddy bears symbolic of Milwaukee's youth reaching up to a door secured with padlocks, deadbolts and a coin slot.

Franklin said because of these barriers, it takes "a group effort to make opportunities available to the youth to do something great."

Public art "is an important way of expressing oneself that shouldn't be overlooked," Franklin said. "It is a great way to open discussion and visual expression through ideas."

MCSC Field Crew Supervisor Coey Sephus said she wants "to give people a different idea with what to do with the green space" around Milwaukee. Sephus designed a door called "Outside the Box," which at first glance appears white but gives way to a vibrant world of color when opened.

"There are so many different standards out there," Sephus said. When every option appears black and white, Sephus encourages people to see that "there's gray out there too."

"I hope everyone in the city enjoys ("Passing Through") and is moved to do something on their own," Sephus said.

Outdoor art



Photo by Mike Eoloff/michael.eoloff@marquette.edu

This door, N. Sherman Blvd, in between Meineke and North avenues, is part of a city-wide public art display titled "Passing Through."