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For More Information
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The Milwaukee Arts Board Promotes a Citywide Effort to Document Milwaukee's Public Art

WikiProject Public Art allows the community to take ownership of its artwork

The Milwaukee Arts Board, in collaboration with WikiProject Public Art, is documenting the city's public art through Wikipedia, the popular online encyclopedia. The project is an attempt to create a comprehensive listing of the city's public sculptures by working with community members to write articles for the interactive website. This is the first effort organized at the municipal level to encourage citizens to take ownership of the artwork surrounding them by sharing information through this technology.

Unlike a static web site, Wikipedia is completely dynamic, allowing many individuals and groups to participate and input information. "Public art needs to be accessible and Milwaukee has cultivated so many pieces that cataloging them in this way seems a perfect marriage of the art and the online opportunities for sharing," Alderman Murphy said. "This is a great opportunity for community members to get to know Milwaukee and its public art, to take ownership of the pieces and to increase the city's visibility as a place where public art flourishes and is appreciated."

In 2010, the Milwaukee Arts Board allocated part of its public art funding to support a coordinator to organize the project and to mobilize people of all ages to document public sculpture. The project is designed to identify public art in the City of Milwaukee; to create accurate, informative and up-to-date articles on Milwaukee's public art; to raise local and global awareness of the existence and meaning of Milwaukee's public art; and to encourage the community to care for public art.

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Arts Board Begins WikiProject/ADD ONE

“We hope that neighborhoods and individuals adopt artworks and continue to update the information in Wikipedia,” Alderman Murphy said. “In the long run, the project will not only provide an inventory of public art in the city, it will alert us to conservation issues and changing community response to artworks.”

Since the project began in 2010, 48 articles about individual public artworks in Milwaukee have been added to Wikipedia. In addition, the project has created a comprehensive, geographically organized list of artworks. Three of Milwaukee’s sculptures have been featured on Wikipedia’s front page in the “Did You Know?” section: Helaine Blumenfeld’s “Family,” Gerald Sawyer’s “Bronze Fonz” and James H. Mahoney’s statue of Henry Bergh.

The Milwaukee project builds on successful pilots coordinated by members of WikiProject Public Art, a global effort initiated in 2009 by Indianapolis Museum of Art conservator Richard McCoy and Alverno College professor Jennifer Geigel Mikulay.

The Milwaukee Arts Board would like to involve as many people as possible in the project, with the goal of documenting all of the city’s public art works. Claudia Mooney, the project coordinator, at Claudia.arzeno@gmail.com, is available to provide training to groups that are interested in participating. The project also offers a series of templates and content guides accessible through WikiProject Public Art. There is also a curriculum available for teachers who wish to involve high school or college students in the project.

- For more information please visit the WikiProject Public Art page:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Wikipedia_Saves_Public_Art
- Milwaukee’s project can be found here:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Public_art/Milwaukee
- The list of public art in Milwaukee is here:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_public_art_in_Milwaukee