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New Public Art Installations in Burlington

Burlington, VT: Several new public art installations have graced the streets of downtown Burlington this summer. Artists Janet Van Fleet, Donna Miller, Jean Cannon, Dan Lefrancois and Kat Clear were all selected by a public art review panel to complete four murals and a sculpture, all works made possible by the collaboration between four city departments, Burlington City Arts, Burlington Telecom, the Department of Public Works and the Burlington Electric Department.

Burlington's Department of Public Works (DPW) spends a great deal of time cleaning graffiti off of its property, and the gray traffic control boxes scattered throughout downtown Burlington, with their large, blank surfaces have been an ideal target for vandals. As an experiment, DPW sponsored the commissioning of 3 traffic control box murals in the downtown area this summer. Each artist received \$500 for his or her time and materials. Dave Garen, signal technician for DPW, hopes that the new murals will deter "taggers," and the artists will each receive an additional stipend of \$250 to keep their mural free of graffiti for a year. If the program is successful, Garen may look to expand the number of boxes painted by artists next year. The boxes currently on display are at the corner of Pearl and Battery Street by Jean Cannon, a simple image of the sun setting near the lake; at Bank and South Winooski by Dan Lefrancois, a scene depicting a

farmer harvesting peanut butter and jelly sandwiches; and at Pearl and South Winooski by Janet Van Fleet, an abstract series of colorful circles derived from themes present in her three-dimensional work.

Burlington Telecom was looking for a way to improve their front entrance and provide a bike rack for employees and building tenants. Also, the electrical box in front of the building was an eyesore, covered with graffiti. After seeing Burlington City Arts' presentation on public art, Telecom director Tim Nulty recognized an opportunity not only to make improvements, but also to give the building a strong identity through art. The Burlington Electric Department is actually in charge of maintaining the electrical box, so collaboration between Telecom, BED and Burlington City Arts ensued to make sure the artist selected had proper information and access to the site. Donna Miller's mural plays off of the brick building and the inner mechanics of the box; Kat Clear's bike rack sculpture is modeled after a padlock. Her first bike rack sculpture, also a clever rendition of a bike lock, can be seen (used) on North Winooski Ave, in front of Radio Bean.

BCA works to increase opportunities for the creation of public art in Burlington and acts as the corresponding agency for the public art process within the city government. BCA convenes Public Art Review Panels (PARP) to review proposals and coordinates project development with other city departments. Public Art Review Panels are comprised of members of the art and design community (artists, architects, landscape architects, designers, curators, etc.), members of the neighborhood in which the project is proposed, and staff of appropriate city departments. For more information about gallery exhibitions, special events, classes and workshops, please call 802.865.7166 or visit BURLINGTONCITYARTS.COM.

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