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Winning artwork features giant postcards

by Lauren Wells



Once yearly, the Charlotte Street Foundation holds a competition for artists to design a work for the Post Office window at City Center Square on 12th Street, just west of Main.

This year's winner is "Panoramic Postcards" by Kansas City artist Judith Levy.

The work, which consists of four large-scale digital composites of antique postcards from the artist's collection, registers slowly.

Each postcard cleverly amalgamates real places to create a fictional scene. The parts are real, but the whole — though it looks authentic — actually is false. It can take a bit of time, and a few synapse firings, to figure out.

Each piece addresses a slightly nuanced social issue, which one might expect from an artist who also holds a master's in social work and whose work is consistently preoccupied with how society chooses to remember (or forget) the past.

"Albertson Square, Hopeland, MO" depicts a theme park, swimming pool and train adjacent to a tree-lined street and walking path reminiscent of Boston's Commonwealth Avenue.

Levy says the piece is about “how cities grew to accommodate the recreational needs of working class people who lived in those cities.”

It is displayed next to the politically charged “Splendid Country Roads, Refuge Co., South Dakota,” showing an Indian settlement and the Statue of Liberty on opposite sides of a wide, paved road traversed by old-fashioned cars.

Levy’s piece, which follows installations by Kati Toivanen and Adolfo Martinez, will be on display until fall 2011.