

Kaity Martin's exhibit at Salem State creates public art, remembers a friend

By Keith Powers / Correspondent

Posted Nov 16, 2017 at 3:41 PM

Updated Nov 16, 2017 at 3:41 PM

For Kaity Martin, whose honors-in-art exhibition, “Public Art: Planting a Seed of Civility,” is on view through Nov. 29 at the Winfisky Gallery at Salem State University, the memory of a lost classmate became the impetus for more than a year’s worth of activity. “Planting a Seed of Civility” shows work that envisions the presence of art in public spaces, coupled with intense notions of environmental awareness and responsibility.

If you go...

WHAT: Kaity Martin: “Public Art: Planting a Seed of Civility”

WHERE: Winfisky Gallery, 352 Lafayette St., Salem State University campus

WHEN: through Nov. 29

TICKETS: Free. For info: call 978-542-6365 or visit www.salemstate.edu/arts.

The way we remember says as much as what is being remembered.

Friends pass away, and we hold on to them by thinking about them. By doing things. By creating things, and involving others in that creation.

For Kaity Martin, whose honors-in-art exhibition, “Public Art: Planting a Seed of Civility,” is on view through Nov. 29 at the Winfisky Gallery at Salem State University, the memory of a lost classmate became the impetus for more than a year’s worth of activity. “Planting a Seed of Civility”

shows work that envisions the presence of art in public spaces, coupled with intense notions of environmental awareness and responsibility.

The exhibition clogs the small Winfisky space with ideas for recycling bins, for public bus shelters, for memorial benches and sidewalks. All are interactive, filled with intention, but also — perhaps unintentionally — playful. Martin presents them as works-in-progress, although that premise also seems like part of the memorial. Any completed memory is soon forgotten.

This is a tribute, but not any morbid dwelling on an untimely death. Although some of Alex Jacobowitz's artwork is included in the exhibition, in fact, little in the way of eulogy is present.

Alex Jacobowitz's death — he and Martin were classmates and casual friends, as she describes it — was the driving force. The work in this exhibition — models of a bus shelter (two conjoined figures that provide a temporary roof); multiple mock-ups of benches, with drawings and materials supporting them; a goofy trash container, intended to engage the user in whatever is being considered waste — all of it feels like slightly different version of the same idea.

Those ideas encompass companionship, the toxic or neglectful treatment being dealt to the planet, and a sense of personal awareness.

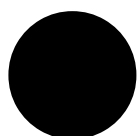
A “message sidewalk” reveals the words “Can I Help?” hidden in cement, visible only when it rains (viewers can activate this with a spray bottle). The trash can “tells” you when it is full (and visitors are encouraged to fill it with trash). Drawings, in watercolor and pencil mainly, trace the arc of these ideas.

Along with the ideas that are directly presented in “Planting a Seed of Civility,” the notion of work-in-progress also propels this exhibition forward. Indeed, a separate corner of the exhibition, entitled “Work Space,” has a wacky amalgam of children's tools, a mini-work bench, and a table saw. None of the “works” in this exhibition could possibly have been fabricated with these tools, but they comment on it anyway.

Any work-in-progress being shown in a gallery is no longer such; it is complete, at least in this iteration. Coupled with the fact that this entire, multifaceted presentation was inspired by the death of a friend, it mingles the ideas of remembrance and temporality into the artist's intentions.

Kaity Martin's "Public Art: Planting a Seed of Civility" remains on view at the Winfisky Gallery, 352 Lafayette St., in the Ellison Campus Center at Salem State University through Nov. 29. Call 978-542-6365 or visit www.salemstate.edu/arts.

Keith Powers covers music and the arts for GateHouse Media and WBUR's ARTery. Follow [@PowersKeith](https://twitter.com/PowersKeith); email to keithmichaelpowers@gmail.com



SIGN UP FOR DAILY E-MAIL

Wake up to the day's top news, delivered to your inbox

Kaity Martin's exhibit at Salem State creates public art, remembers a friend

By Keith Powers / Correspondent

Posted Nov 16, 2017 at 3:41 PM

Updated Nov 16, 2017 at 3:41 PM

For Kaity Martin, whose honors-in-art exhibition, "Public Art: Planting a Seed of Civility," is on view through Nov. 29 at the Winfisky Gallery at Salem State University, the memory of a lost classmate became the impetus for more than a year's worth of activity. "Planting a Seed of Civility" shows work that envisions the presence of art in public spaces, coupled with intense notions of environmental awareness and responsibility.

If you go...

WHAT: Kaity Martin: "Public Art: Planting a Seed of Civility"

WHERE: Winfisky Gallery, 352 Lafayette St., Salem State University campus

WHEN: through Nov. 29

TICKETS: Free. For info: call 978-542-6365 or visit www.salemstate.edu/arts.

The way we remember says as much as what is being remembered.

Friends pass away, and we hold on to them by thinking about them. By doing things. By creating things, and involving others in that creation.

For Kaity Martin, whose honors-in-art exhibition, “Public Art: Planting a Seed of Civility,” is on view through Nov. 29 at the Winfisky Gallery at Salem State University, the memory of a lost classmate became the impetus for more than a year’s worth of activity. “Planting a Seed of Civility” shows work that envisions the presence of art in public spaces, coupled with intense notions of environmental awareness and responsibility.

The exhibition clogs the small Winfisky space with ideas for recycling bins, for public bus shelters, for memorial benches and sidewalks. All are interactive, filled with intention, but also — perhaps unintentionally — playful. Martin presents them as works-in-progress, although that premise also seems like part of the memorial. Any completed memory is soon forgotten.

This is a tribute, but not any morbid dwelling on an untimely death. Although some of Alex Jacobowitz’s artwork is included in the exhibition, in fact, little in the way of eulogy is present.

Alex Jacobowitz’s death — he and Martin were classmates and casual friends, as she describes it — was the driving force. The work in this exhibition — models of a bus shelter (two conjoined figures that provide a temporary roof); multiple mock-ups of benches, with drawings and materials supporting them; a goofy trash container, intended to engage the user in whatever is being considered waste — all of it feels like slightly different version of the same idea.

Those ideas encompass companionship, the toxic or neglectful treatment being dealt to the planet, and a sense of personal awareness.

A “message sidewalk” reveals the words “Can I Help?” hidden in cement, visible only when it rains (viewers can activate this with a spray bottle). The trash can “tells” you when it is full (and visitors are encouraged to fill it with trash). Drawings, in watercolor and pencil mainly, trace the arc of these ideas.

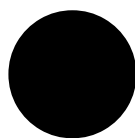
Along with the ideas that are directly presented in “Planting a Seed of Civility,” the notion of work-in-progress also propels this exhibition forward. Indeed, a separate corner of the exhibition, entitled “Work Space,” has a wacky amalgam of children’s tools, a mini-work bench, and a table

saw. None of the “works” in this exhibition could possibly have been fabricated with these tools, but they comment on it anyway.

Any work-in-progress being shown in a gallery is no longer such; it is complete, at least in this iteration. Coupled with the fact that this entire, multifaceted presentation was inspired by the death of a friend, it mingles the ideas of remembrance and temporality into the artist’s intentions.

Kaity Martin’s “Public Art: Planting a Seed of Civility” remains on view at the Winfisky Gallery, 352 Lafayette St., in the Ellison Campus Center at Salem State University through Nov. 29. Call 978-542-6365 or visit www.salemstate.edu/arts.

Keith Powers covers music and the arts for GateHouse Media and WBUR’s ARTery. Follow [@PowersKeith](https://twitter.com/PowersKeith); email to keithmichaelpowers@gmail.com



SIGN UP FOR DAILY E-MAIL

Wake up to the day’s top news, delivered to your inbox
