

DOWNTOWN MURAL BECOMES A SEASONAL LANDMARK

DESIGN STUDIO CREATES WINTER MURAL AS A WISH FOR ‘PEACE’

AND A TYPOGRAPHICAL SALUTE TO A BLOOMINGTON NATIVE

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — At a busy corner in downtown Bloomington, a large typographic mural proclaiming “PEACE” has inspired imaginative responses from surprised passersby and those who make the wall a photographic destination. Created by Osborn & Delong, a design studio located at 102 W. Washington Street, the painted installation communicates a message of hope for the season while adding visual interest to downtown Bloomington by celebrating typography as an art form.

Doug Delong, owner of Osborn & Delong, said that while brainstorming about lettering for a new mural for the building, he remembered that prolific typographer Fredrick Goudy was a Bloomington native. His design team decided to use what is perhaps Goudy’s most recognizable font, the eponymous “Goudy” typeface.

Delong and designer Rachel Lapp Whitt built large plywood stencils based on Goudy letters to paint the 6-foot-high silver letters. They then decided to perch a bird atop the “C” - a whimsical nod to the holidays. A commemorative plaque to explain the choice in lettering includes a printer’s sample of the Goudy typeface that comes from the McLean County Historical Museum’s archive of Goudy material.

Delong said that the idea for the mural began in a wish to use his building’s north-facing wall — previously home to a giant summertime watermelon — to depict a spirited seasonal expression. “As a downtown Bloomington business and building owner of many years, I love using our wall to celebrate both what we do and where do it,” he said. “And by having fun creating this mural with its multi-layered meanings, we’re inviting people in our area to be creative in sending their own messages for peace. It seemed like the perfect time for this mural.”

Dozens and dozens of people have stopped to take photos with the mural, which is flanked by giant snowflakes scattered across the exterior wall between the entrance to the design studio and the windows of Crossroads Fair Trade.

“We’ve enjoyed seeing many people taking photos in front of ‘PEACE’ and the snowflakes — from selfies and pics of friends to professional Christmas photo shoots,” said DeLong. “I even watched a film crew do a scene in front of the ‘PEACE’ letters. And we’ve seen quite a few people post these photos on social media. It’s fantastic.”

Delong said a favorite photo op sighting came one snowy day when he watched a car pull up on the opposite side of W. Market Street. “Two teenaged-girls and their father jumped out of the car and ran to stand in front of the mural. The girls tried to catch snowflakes on their tongues as their dad was taking photos with his cell phone. Then they got back in their car and drove away!” Delong recalled. “I have no idea whether they planned it or if they just saw the mural and decided to stop. Either way, I love that the mural inspired that kind of playful experience.”

Even the design studio itself decided to do something more with the mural than originally planned, creating a short, animated video as a seasonal greeting. The video, animated by Austin Hourigan of Osborn & Delong, can be found on Osborn & Delong's YouTube channel (or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1sbO__7Nkh8); the channel also features a three-minute video about the making of their previous mural, the giant watermelon.

Osborn & Delong is a multimedia design studio making creative impact through thoughtful storytelling for a wide range of regional and national clients.

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