

Professor's public art providing 'Lost + Found' experiences at Pittsburgh festival

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A project by M. Michelle Illuminato, associate professor in the Freshman Foundation art program, School of Art and Design at Alfred University (AU), is one of four featured public art works on view through Sunday, June 14, at the Three Rivers Arts Festival, Pittsburgh.

Exhibition notes explain Illuminato's "Lost + Found Factory" project, commissioned by the festival: "We have all lost something that we wish we hadn't. Sometimes we wish it so much that the object is etched in our minds, a memory that materializes when we see a similar item or recall a particular time or place. The Lost + Found Factory will work to return that lost article to you.

"During the Festival, the public is invited to visit the Lost & Found Factory and to share descriptions of favorite items they have lost. Then they can watch as artists work to recreate these items and return them back to the original owners."

The "Factory" will be open from noon-7 p.m. each day of the festival. The project can be found in downtown Pittsburgh in the former Visitor's Center kiosk. Illuminato and workers, including several AU students, alumni, and Laurel Jay Carpenter, associate professor of art, will facilitate the process of recording descriptions of lost items, remaking the items, displaying the objects, and finally redistributing them to the "original owners." As the project unfolds over the course of the festival, the images of the recreated "found" objects will be documented alongside their stories online.

The Three Rivers Arts Festival includes numerous art, dance, music, and theater events.

Illuminato earned a master of fine arts degree in sculpture, public art, and social practice from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a bachelor of fine arts degree, in sculpture, site, and public art from Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh.