

Area's first Art-o-mat® coming to AU

3/13/14



All are invited to witness the unveiling of the area's first Art-o-mat® on Wednesday, March 19 at 12:20 p.m. on the ground floor of Alfred University's Powell Campus Center in the Center for Student Involvement offices. Free lunch will be served for students and community members, who will also have the opportunity to meet the machine's creator and buy some art.

The Art-o-mat® is the brainchild of artist Clark Whittington, who restores vintage cigarette machines and transforms them into art-vending machines featuring handmade, affordable art. Later in the afternoon, at 4, Whittington will discuss his project in Nevins Theater, Powell Campus Center, sharing the scope of these machines which have homes in more than 100 locations and feature works by "artists in cellophane (AIC)," a collective of more than 200 artists who sell their original pieces in the machines.

What does the buyer get? According to the company website: "The experience of pulling the knob alone is quite a thrill, but you also walk away with an original work of art. What an easy way to become an art collector."

Established in 1997, the Art-o-mat® original art vending machine project is based in Winston-Salem, NC. The business was created and is solely owned and operated by Whittington.

In June 1997, Whittington was set to have a solo art show at a local café. He used a recently banned cigarette machine to create the first Art-o-mat®. The machine sold his black & white photographs mounted on blocks for \$1.

The show was scheduled to be dismantled the following month but the café owner loved the machine and asked that it stay permanently. At that point it was clear that the involvement of other artists was needed if the project was going to continue. The café owner introduced Whittington to a handful of other local artists and the group, calling themselves Artists in Cellophane (AIC), was formed. That first machine remained unaltered in its original location until 2010.

AIC is the sponsoring organization of Art-o-mat®. AIC's mission is to encourage art consumption by expanding access to artists' work. Art-o-mat® has created an opportunity to purchase original artwork while providing exposure and promotional support for artists. The Art-o-mat® combines the worlds of art and commerce in an innovative form. AIC believes that art should be progressing yet personal and approachable.

Art-o-mat® is a federal/international registered trademark for use in connection with original art vending machines.

The only other Art-o-mats® in New York State are located at the State University of New York at Cortland, the Rochester Contemporary Art Center, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, Manhattan.

More information about Art-o-mat® can be found at www.artomat.org and questions regarding the unveiling can be

directed to csi@alfred.edu.