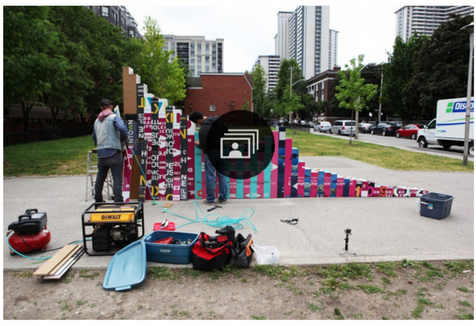
Culture_arts



WELLESLEY & PARLIAMENT

_PHOTOS: ERIN SEAMAN/THE GRID

Eoin Murphy (left) and Kyle Wong (right) work on installing "Toronto Housing Price Index," one piece in /// *Re-ply* \\\.

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WED JUN 6, 2012

ARTS

Public art, on the up and up

For /// Re-ply \\\, a series of pieces popping up around Toronto's downtown east side, Dan Bergeron is turning condo ads into art.

BY: DAVID TOPPING

On Monday, Hailey Shouldice, 11, stared at the half-finished sculpture that showed up in the park outside her school that morning. "I think it's cool," she said, surrounded by the rest of her gawking Grade 4 and 5 Winchester Public School class. "It's like an actual staircase. But it's all different colours. It's like a bar graph."

That's the idea. The 19-foot-long, nine-foot-tall piece, bolted into a slice of cement in Winchester Square Park by artist Dan Bergeron—also known as Fauxreel—as part of his Luminato exhibit /// *Re-ply* \\\, is called "Toronto Housing Price Index," and it charts the average price that Toronto houses have sold for from all the way back in 1966 (when that number was $21,360) to now (22 times that) [PDF]. It looks a lot like a staircase.

"It affects everyone," said Bergeron, gesturing behind him at the looming Hugh Garner Housing Co-Operative, a bulky nine-storey-tall building bordering St. James Town that has several units set aside for residents whose modest incomes wouldn't otherwise give them a chance to live there. Near the other end of the park that day, meanwhile, a six-bedroom, seven-bathroom Cabbagetown mansion was selling for $1,888,800. And sandwich boards pointing the way to sales centres for pricey new condo buildings have become so commonplace everywhere else in Toronto that they served as the raw material Bergeron carved up, stacked, stapled, or glued together to make the pieces that comprise /// *Re-ply* \\\. (There's also a chair, chess board, and a massive "house of cards." Bergeron won't say where he got the condo sandwich boards from, other than to say that they're "ubiquitous.")

The kids from Winchester Public had other concerns, though. After the class that had wandered over started retreating to the school, Hailey and classmate Madina Hassan snuck back towards "Toronto Housing Price Index," and then, in unison, asked Bergeron for his autograph; they were trailed by three more 10-year-olds—Garrett Ruttloff, and twin sisters Keymara Miller and Kayanna Miller—who thought it prudent to do the same. Might as well: As their teacher Laura McCoy noticed earlier about the artwork, "the kids are interested in the possibilities of climbing it."

/// Re-ply \\\ *runs from June 8 to June 17 around Parliament Street between Wellesley and Gerrard, as part of Luminato.*

TAGS *advertising, Bulletins, condos, Dan Bergeron, Hugh Garner Housing Co-Operative, Luminato, Photo Gallery, Real Estate, street art, Visual Art*

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jp

Many of these signs aren't being placed in conformance with the by-law and owners often leave them out 24/7.

Plus they're a safety risk when it's windy. I've seen many blow over in high winds at Yonge and Eglinton, one almost took out an elderly woman waiting at the corner 10 feet away.

They're a blight, and the bylaw that controls them isn't being effectively enforced so the fewer the better. Let the marketers buy ads like everyone else. Marketing a condo development isn't the same as a 6-hour real-estate openhouse.

4 3

10:45 am on June 6, 2012 Reply Report

Anthony

So they just stole sandwich boards from street corners and used them for their own gain? Really?

4 0

10:26 am on July 16, 2012 Report

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