

## New Outdoor Sculpture at St. Mary's High School Created in Collaboration with Students

June 12, 2008 - *Kitchener, Ontario, Canada* - St. Mary's High School and Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery's *ArtsAccess* program are excited to unveil a public sculpture on the school's grounds on June 17th. The sculpture, titled *Passage*, began in February 2007, when administrators at St. Mary's High School invited *ArtsAccess* to their school to initiate an art project.

*ArtsAccess* is a community arts outreach initiative of the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery (KW|AG) in partnership with the Art Gallery of Ontario, which focuses on building relationships with cultural organizations, schools, libraries and community centres. Devon Mordell, an *ArtsAccess* Community Artist-Facilitator, met with a group of grade 10 students every two weeks to explore the artistic possibilities of a large-scale school project. A year later, the project has evolved into an eight-foot steel sculpture that will stand on the west side of the school grounds. An unveiling of the new sculpture takes place June 17 at 1:45 p.m. at the school.

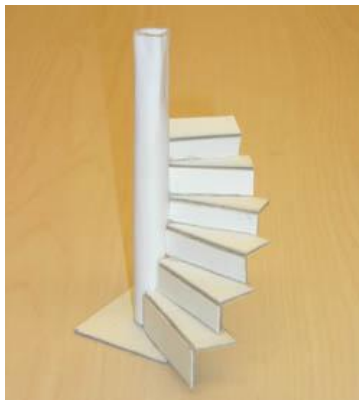
"The project provided a unique opportunity for the students to experience the different logistic and artistic considerations involved in designing and implementing a sculpture in a public space," explains Mordell. "In keeping with a community arts practice, the concept for the sculpture, its theme and design, was developed collaboratively with the group of students, so it resonates and reflects their experiences authentically."

The students were encouraged to think of the sculpture as part of the region's communal environment rather than as an isolated object. They discussed how the proposed site for the sculpture is used by students, and how restrictions and safety limitations are important considerations for sculptures in public spaces. Through brainstorming sessions, the "passage of time" surfaced as a recurring, meaningful theme for the students. They believe many people in the community will identify with high school being a period of growth, transformation and transition.

Since the students had limited experience creating three-dimensional art, Mordell introduced a process of creating maquettes and critiquing them as a group, in an effort to progressively refine the design. They returned to the proposed site of the sculpture, sketched ideas, and repeated the creation-critique process several times, each time discussing how to they could strengthen the conceptual theme and the aesthetics of the sculpture further.

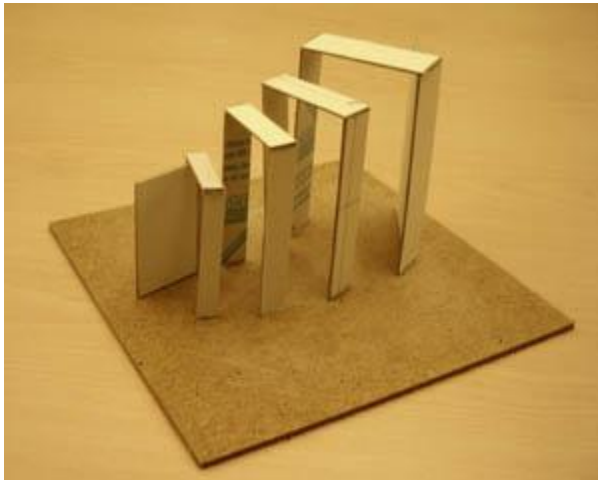


One of the early clay maquettes created by a student as they explored different sculptural themes and ideas.



A model of a staircase, one of the original concepts to denote the passage of time and transformation.

They also examined the work of public sculpture artists such as Maya Lin, Martin Puryear and Louise Bourgeois. The students concluded that a "doorway" motif best exemplified a passage or progression over time.



A model of the "Passage" sculpture at St. Mary's High School to be unveiled on June 17, 2008.

The students assessed their design concepts for safety, strength, feasibility, its success in communicating the theme of the passage of time, and its ability to either resist or embrace vandalism over time. They also had the opportunity to orally present and defend their artistic design, and address logistic and conceptual questions with a student-teacher panel.

"We wanted the students to experience what it is like to have to explain the rationale behind such a large-scale art project, and defend the artistic and design merits of their decisions," explains Mordell.

The sculpture's design is comprised of four steel door frames of varying heights. The doors are 8-feet, 7-feet, 6-feet and 5-feet high, and are spaced apart to create a passage way, inviting participants to walk through from either side. The two doors on the ends have an open door to mark the entry and exit points of the passage.

"*Passage* has long-term significance for the student artists, St. Mary's High School and the Kitchener community," said Jeannie McCarroll, Visual Arts Teacher and Student Activities Director, St. Mary's High School. "Because the idea and design for the sculpture came from the students' experiences and is being constructed and installed by students, it has a truly meaningful place here at the school and in the students' hearts. The sculpture represents the ability of art to transcend time, cultures and disciplines, not only in its theme, but also through the process of its creation. The sculpture is something that the students can be proud of for years to come, and it would not have been possible without this experience with *ArtAccess*."

### **Event Details**

Unveiling of *Passage*, a public sculpture designed and created by St. Mary's High School

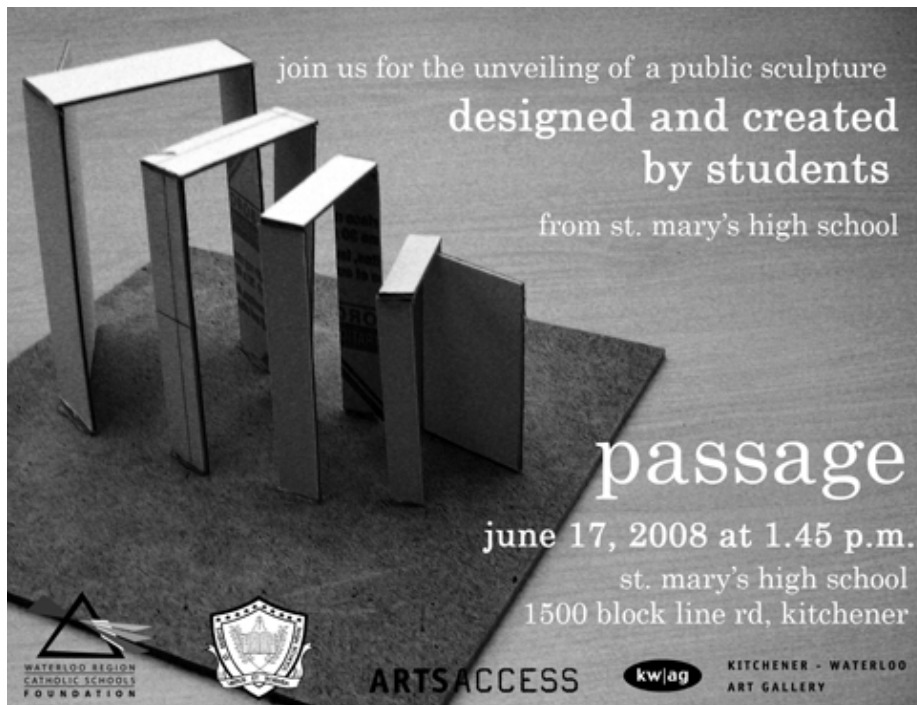
**When:** June 17, 2008, 1:45 p.m.



KITCHENER - WATERLOO  
ART GALLERY

**Where:** St. Mary's High School, 1500 Block Line Road, Kitchener; west side of the high school beside Country Hills Library

St. Mary's School and *ArtsAccess* gratefully acknowledge the support of the Waterloo Region Catholic Schools Foundation for this project.



**About *ArtsAccess***

Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery's (KW|AG) participation in *ArtsAccess*, a three year provincial partnership between KW|AG, the Art Gallery of Ontario, Thunder Bay Art Gallery, and Woodland Cultural Centre, provides an alternative approach to programming that draws from community arts practice, with values congruent to the Gallery's goal of transforming the "institutional box" into a catalyst for community development. Over 6300 people have already participated in initiatives through *ArtsAccess*, the majority of whom represent new audiences for KW|AG. Current community partners include: Anishnabeg Outreach, The Children's Museum, Downtown Community Centre, Forest Heights Collegiate Institute, Kitchener Public Library, Kitchener Youth Action Council, the Kitchener Waterloo Multicultural Centre, Open Sesame, St. John's Catholic School, St. Mary's High School, University of Waterloo, and The Working Centre.

**About the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery**

Through thoughtful and engaging programs, the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery (KW|AG) connects people and ideas through art. The Gallery's exhibits and programs are built on the mission that art is the catalyst for shared experience, dialogue and imagination. The Gallery emphasizes contemporary art, often premiering works by Canadian and international artists. Exhibitions frequently draw upon selections from the 4 000 work permanent collection to provide a forum for dialogue. KW|AG plays a vital educational role in the community, offering a full spectrum of artistic experience for adults, children and families



KITCHENER - WATERLOO  
ART GALLERY

alike. Established in 1956 and operating within Centre In The Square, KW|AG is the oldest and largest public gallery in Waterloo region: roots in the community, eyes on the world. For more information, contact [mail@kwag.on.ca](mailto:mail@kwag.on.ca) or visit [www.kwag.on.ca](http://www.kwag.on.ca).

### **Media Contact**

Tracy Smith  
Communications Coordinator  
Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery  
101 Queen Street North  
Kitchener, Ontario  
N2H 6P7  
[tsmith@kwag.on.ca](mailto:tsmith@kwag.on.ca)  
519.579.5860 X222

**Connecting people and ideas through art.**