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Office of University
Communications

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Display Showcases Work From GWU Staff Member Richard Horsley

By Alice Byrd '18, Intern for Communications

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—An exhibit in Tucker Student Center at Gardner-Webb University features pictures of

Once around the block exhibition

everyday items that often go unnoticed. "Once Around The Block" by Richard Horsley is on display in Tucker Gallery through March 23 and is free and open to the public. The collection consists largely of graphite impressions of manhole covers and metal plates ordinarily found in streets and sidewalks. Through the textures, patterns, and various designs on the manholes and metal plates, no one impression is exactly alike.

As technical director for the GWU Theatre Arts Department and the Dover Theatre, Horsley is no stranger to creativity. Spending most of his career as a commercial cabinet builder, he transitioned to the world of theatre to express his creative side. He has since worked backstage, been a prop creator for the "Hunger Games" films, and even took an acting role as Andre in the GWU Theatre production of "Is He Dead?"

Horsley became inspired to start this project six years ago on a family vacation to New York City. While spending time in the Tribeca neighborhood, the family had been sightseeing all day. Once they returned, the question was, "What are we going to do now, dad?" recalled Horsley. His answer was to take the family down to a local art store, buy rolls of paper and graphite, and take to the streets to begin making impressions of the ordinary things right under their feet.

The exhibit also features impressions from Baltimore, Md., Boston, Mass., and other North Carolina cities, including Asheville, Shelby, and Boiling Springs. Through the years, the project evolved into something more than making impressions of manhole covers. As Horsley continued the work, he began to explore the history of the towns and stories of the people in the places he visited.

“When you’re down on your hands and knees, people come up and talk to you and start telling their stories,” Horsley shared. “It

Second photo of Once around the Block

is also an interesting way to look at travelling and bringing back souvenirs. By making an impression, you are ‘taking a piece of the town with you.’”

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university that prepares students to become critical thinkers, effective leaders and compassionate servants in the global community. Emphasizing a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics, Gardner-Webb ignites learning and service opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.