

Using art and Indy's blight to confront mortality

Scott Hocking's found object art is coming to The Tube Factory

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BABEL is site-specific installation created in the Gare Saint Sauveur (*photo Scott Hocking*)

Shauna Marsh, chief curator for Big Car's Tube Factory, took a leap of faith when she brought in the artist for their next show, considering she has no idea what it will look like.

It's not as strange as it sounds. Marsh found artist Scott Hocking when he was showing at the contemporary museum in his hometown of Detroit. All of his work is unknown until he gets to the city where he is making it.

Hocking made the drive south last week and will be working in Indy for the next two, in order to create a rather unique installation at the Tube Factory; one that will literally be unlike anything in existence. But that's where most of Hocking's pieces unfold — somewhere between trust and wild dogs.

Hocking is a found object artist who cut his teeth in Detroit's abandoned factories (hence the frequent encounters with stray canines). And on Wednesday of last week, Hocking started scouting Indy's industrial

decay for building materials to make a sculpture at Big Car's Garfield Park space, and likely one on site at whichever industrial space he uses to harvest material.

"Scrappers will go into a buildings and take anything they can sell," says Hocking. "I am going into buildings to take out things that nobody wants."

He often bases his installation on what materials he finds, the history of the place or his experience there.

While part of the installation in Indy will be somewhere around the Tube Factory for the public to view, part of it you may only ever see in a photo.



He often works inside blighted buildings, and usually those spaces are destroyed within weeks or months — leaving in their wake only a memory of whatever Hocking has made. To him, letting go and confronting a process — where he pours his time and energy into something that's fleeting — is the nucleus of his work.

"One of my goals is that I can make something that will tap into our collective unconscious archetypes," says Hocking. "I am interested in using symbology that I feel like connects with me on some level, and I am hoping that if other people discover that object or installation they will also have a moment of, 'Huh, I am not sure why, but I am interested in this.'"

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For Hocking, there is beauty in jarring viewers away from their own thoughts and forcing them to reconsider the space around them.

^ ZIGGURAT is a site-specific sculptural installation made from 6,201 wooden floor-blocks within Detroit's abandoned Fisher Body Plant 21 (*photo Scott Hocking*)

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Based on his past work, he has reason to be happy. Things like giant pyramids in between crumbling support pillars, or making skeleton sculptures in the Australian outback. He notes that he wants his work to be somewhat like a Zen Koans.

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"Zen Koans were supposedly nonsense sentences or nonsense passages to try and shake you out of whatever thought process you were in and jog your mind and make you think differently for a second," says Hocking. "I am interested in shaking up perspectives I think, especially when it comes to people's perceived notions of abandonment and decay, death. To me, one of the main reasons people don't like blight and abandoned buildings and decay is because it reminds them of mortality and how we are all connected to it.

"Part of the duty of life is that everything transitions," says Hocking, speaking about mortality and impermanence. "To me there is beauty in decay, there is beauty in transformation. We should be thinking about that. We should be thinking about our own death and see the beauty of life in that."

"I like the idea of making connections to things that we don't fully understand," says Hocking.