



TALK OF THE TOWNS

by bill begs jr.

U. CITY >>

U City in Bloom's latest project has nothing to do with flowers and gardens, although the goal is beautification, indeed. Six artists painted six benches for installation at Metro stops along Olive Boulevard that don't have bus shelters. The sturdy wooden benches are protected from the elements (and, hopefully, hooligans) with a clear, impervious coating developed for the automotive industry. The 'people's choice' award went to resident Sophie

Binder, whose bench cleverly incorporates names of the city's four districts vibrantly in a pop art style (Parkway, International, Industrial and Interchange). (It's in the foreground of our photo, which does not do it justice.) Stephanie Gobby and Gayatri Seetharaman each painted a bench, Yuko Suga and Nicole Cooper collaborated on one, and Genevieve Esson painted two. The benches are languishing in storage while the city awaits a green light from MoDOT. Gobby was chosen for a previous project painting the utility boxes at intersections with traffic signals, from Sutter west to McKnight/Woodson. The box she painted at Kingsland and Olive belongs to St. Louis County, not MoDOT. Of course, one day a county crew painted over it in the nondescript, drab color of steel bridge girders. Could have been that the crew was humorless. Some workers for government entities are like that. Anyhow, we hope Gobby had the last laugh—as she did on the utility box, she painted her bench with outlines of diverse, happy faces on a background of warm colors. Perfect for the metro's 'Neighborhood to the World.'

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