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Maren Hassinger's 'Steel Bodies' on display on Kelly Drive through November 12

By Steph Walton
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PHILADELPHIA (WPVI) -- Maren Hassinger's Steel Bodies now sits on Kelly Drive's Ellen Phillips Samuel Memorial.

The Association for Public Art (aPA) brought this temporary exhibition to Philadelphia with Laura Griffith serving as aPA's deputy director. "Maren Hassinger is a phenomenal artist that's been working since the 1970s," says Griffith. "And we're very fortunate to be able to bring her work to Philadelphia."

It's the first contemporary art exhibition at the memorial, which tells the history of the United States. Griffith says displaying Hassinger's work was a great opportunity to exhibit a new perspective and voice in the outdoor space. She says it's part of the Association for Public Art's efforts to revitalize this historic site.

There are 10 large steel sculptures on display. "They're all based on iconic, archetypal vessel forms," says Griffith. She says Hassinger also based the vessel forms on the human body as well.

"I consider us as humans, vessels," says Hassinger. "We all come in different sizes and shapes and are different, but we all share our humanity in common," says Griffith. "I make work that attempts to carry the message that we are all related," says Hassinger.

QR codes provide 'Museum without Walls' audio, so visitors can hear from the artist herself. They'll get information about the specific works in the exhibition," says Griffith. "Anytime it falls in front of one of the existing sculptures, it encompasses that sculpture, because you can see through mine to it," says Hassinger. Griffith says they felt the juxtaposition of those two works would really engage well with one another. "I hope that people will have an opportunity to come to this site and experience it in a different way than they have in the past," says Griffith.

Maren Hassinger's Steel Bodies is on view through November 12.

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Kelly Drive along the Schuylkill River, south of the Girard Avenue Bridge, Philadelphia, PA 19130