

Main Street's public art connects family, community

By Sherry Lucas

In Olde Towne Clinton, bicycles stationed at storefronts, corners and offices tell a story of a friendly small town where a slower pace, a gentler spirit and a fondness for nostalgia roll into an engaging package with brick streets and historic charm.

For some of these public art fixtures, the story goes even deeper. Main Street Clinton's Bike Art Project started in 2015 and expanded with a second phase in 2016, for a total of sixteen vintage and cruiser style bicycles, pumped up with artistic flourish, enhancing the heart of downtown.

The project caught the eye of Stuart Lassetter, who grew up in Clinton, and resettled in his hometown following retirement decades later. The topic came up in conversation between the retired college professor and his daughter, figurative sculptor and Mississippi College art professor, Carrie Lassetter Reeves.

"I kind of toyed with the idea," he said, "if she's going to do one, I'm going to do one, too."

"It was just a fun thing for both of us."

Their creations share that playful spirit. Hers, "Terra Cotta Bike" on



Clockwise from top:
An Albert Smathers-designed mural marks the west entry to Main Street Clinton's Boulevard Business District.

Wyatt Waters works on the Olde Towne mural in this file photo, around 2012.

Carrie Lassetter Reeves, with the bike she designed

Father-daughter duo Judy Gore Gearhart and Sam Gore, with the Main Street Clinton bicycle they designed.

Stuart Lassetter and the bike of his design

A file photo of Wyatt Waters in the early stages of the Olde Towne mural that highlights some of the main elements of the city's history.



Jefferson Street, is a nod to a material she uses in sculpting. Covered in a rich reddish coating that shows the artist's handwork, her bike has ad-



ditional whimsical touches of a planter basket on its handlebars and tiny terra cotta pots atop the rear fender, with plastic greenery

that catches the breeze.

Lassetter's bike on West Leake Street taps his memories from childhood.

"I wasn't inspired to paint another bike with polka dots and make it pretty," he said. "I wanted to add action to it." That, he did with "Look! No Hands!" in the form of a lanky, grinning figure made of galvanized stovepipe and sheet metal, waving his cap in the air.

"A bicycle is meant to ride and go places on. I wanted to convey that."

Tinsnips gave the figure a crew cut, the little ridges bent back as if blown by the rushing wind. Two sheets form his face and, set perpendicular to each other, provide a view of his happy smile from the front and the side. By coincidence, it's installed across the street from the house where Lassetter lived as a child.

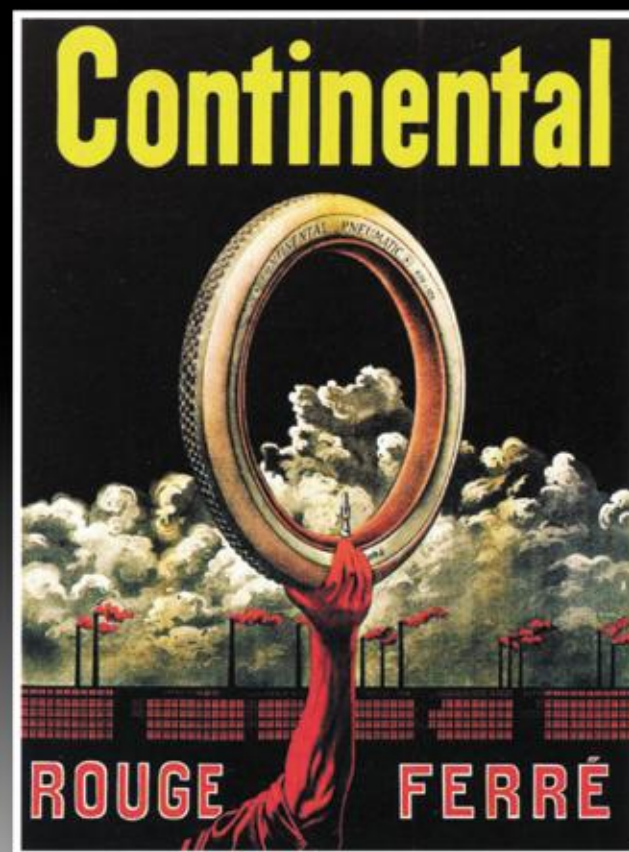
The Bike Art Project has another father-daughter contribution. The bike at the entrance to the Baptist Healthplex at Mississippi College, "1 For All," was completed by renowned Mississippi sculptor and longtime MC professor Samuel Gore and his daughter, Judy Gore Gearhart, a retired family physician and artist. In even more connections, Gore was

cont. on page 35

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