

CAMPUS

'Mobius Houston' first temporary art piece in new program

By McKenzie Misiaszek | October 7, 2019



"Mobius Houston" consists of three large pieces of acrylic glass, combining light cast through them into new colors. | McKenzie Misiaszek/The Cougar

A new art piece will be officially unveiled Oct. 11, but students can already go by Wilhelmina's Grove, outside the Moore's School of Music, and view the colorful display.

The piece consists of three large pieces of acrylic glass of different colors, which the sun shines through to create varying colored shadows.

The sculpture is 11-feet tall and 22-feet wide, and students are allowed to walk through the acrylic pieces.

“I think public art is really important, and there should be more of it,” Uruguayan artist Marta Chilindrón said, “not just at universities but all over the city.”

The Public Art of the UH System commissioned Chilindrón in fall 2018 to recreate her collapsible, colorful and significantly smaller sculptures at a level she had never done before.

The work is called “Mobius Houston,” because it is reflective of her other pieces, which are **mobius strips**, even though this one technically isn’t.

“It symbolizes infinite,” Chilindrón said. “It’s almost like it symbolizes everything we don’t know. I thought maybe in the university it is a good idea because the idea of knowledge and you can always keep learning.”

The sculpture was made in Houston and the site where it will sit for the next six months has been under preparation for the 5,000 pound sculpture since the summer.

“Public art is actually Public Art of the University of Houston System, so that gives us the opportunity to tour the work in our other campuses as well,” said María C. Gaztambide, Public Art UHS director and chief curator. “So we’re hoping it will reside, at least temporarily, in one of our other system-wide campuses.”

Gaztambide specializes in Latin American art and said she has known about Chilindrón’s work for a while.

“There’s a strong legacy of geometric art in Latin America, and there’s a number of contemporary artists that continue to revisit that tradition and expand and build on that,” Gaztambide said. “Marta is the most highly regarded artist working in that vein.”

Gaztambide and Chilindrón are not sure about how the sculpture will hold up, as Chilindrón has never made a sculpture that will stay outside as long as “Mobius Houston,” but they are confident students will enjoy it.

If the piece does not hold up well, after the six months is done, it can be moved inside.

When the sculpture is officially revealed on Oct 11 it will have six months until it is moved to another part of the UH System. They do not yet know where it will go next.

When it leaves, another art piece will replace it as part of the new temporary public art program.

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