

Giant cart turns heads



Cart of Nephilim is 22'x7'x5', steel, paint, strapping, rims, tires and rubber.

A handcart is the workhorse of industry. At Johnson County Community College, it is a work of art.

The 2,000-pound *Cart of the Nephilim* by artist Michael Schonoff was installed July 9 at the JCCC Warehouse on the west side of campus, giving passers-by a reason to smile.

The 22-foot-high red handcart is sited next to the Warehouse at a slight angle, suggesting that a giant left it there while taking a rest from his moving task. Nephilims, in fact, are legendary giants.

"This is a fun piece. It's a humorous piece. A handcart is something people overlook most of the time," Schonoff said. "This is a piece of public art that I hope makes people smile."

Imbued with a sense of humor, Schonoff is also a serious artist. Trained as a printmaker and painter, he has adapted to other media. The *Cart of Nephilim* was first seen at the 2005 Avenue of the Arts.

Schonoff earned his BFA at Iowa State University and an MFA in visual art at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Currently he serves as assistant curator, Community Outreach and Exhibition Management, at the H&R Block Artspace, Kansas City Art Institute. He currently works out of Muddauber Studio, Kansas City, Mo.

Schonoff's creative practice includes being an artist, musician

and arts professional. His work has been presented in solo and group exhibitions locally, nationally and internationally, and his works appear in numerous public and private collections, including the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art in Kansas, John and Maxine Belger Family Foundation in Missouri, AGB Graphics Collection in Wisconsin, and the Studio Place Arts in Vermont. Schonoff completed a studio residency at takt kunstprojektraum in Berlin, Germany, in 2008.

He also has interests in soccer and archaeology – giving rise to his fascination with handcarts. When Schonoff conceived this sculpture for the Avenue of the Arts, he had in mind how the handcart relates to the building of cities, how the environment of a city is constantly built and changed. *Cart of the Nephilim* is Schonoff's first venture into public art.

"I feel honored to be in the company of the many highly recognized artists who are part of the JCCC sculpture collection," Schonoff said.

"This monumental work by a regional artist extends our sculpture collection to the western side of campus," said Bruce Hartman, executive director, Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art. "*Cart of Nephilim*, Laura DeAngelis's *Eagle* at the Johnson County Regional Police Academy and a proposed earthwork by artist Stan Herd will energize the west campus." **Im**



Artist Michael Schonoff (center, T-shirt) oversees the installation of his sculpture at the campus Warehouse.