

Midland DAILY NEWS

April 29, 2016

Ziibiwing Center hosts Walking With Our Sisters art installation focusing on missing native women

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- Apr 25, 2016



A free art exhibit featuring 1,781 pairs of moccasin vamps (tops) and 200 pairs of children's vamps will be at the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways through May 7.

More than 1,781 native women and girls in Canada have been reported missing or have been murdered in the last 30 years. Many vanished without a trace with inadequate inquiry into their disappearance or murders from the media, the general public, politicians and even law enforcement, exhibit organizers stated.

Walking With Our Sisters is a massive commemorative art installation donated by hundreds of caring and concerned individuals to draw attention to this injustice, organizers stated.

The work exists as a floor installation made up of beaded vamps arranged in a winding path formation on fabric and includes cedar boughs. Viewers remove their shoes to walk on a path of cloth alongside the vamps.

The vamps (or “uppers” as they are also called) represent missing and/or murdered Indigenous women. The first call-out for vamps was accomplished through social media in 2012 and generated an overwhelming response from all over the world. The unfinished moccasins represent the unfinished lives of the women whose lives were cut short. The children’s vamps are dedicated to children who never returned home from residential (boarding) schools. Together the installation represents all these women and children; paying respect to their lives and existence on this earth.

“They are not forgotten,” a spokesperson stated. “They are sisters, mothers, aunts, daughters, cousins, grandmothers, wives and partners. They have been cared for, they have been loved, they are missing and they are not forgotten.”

Walking With Our Sisters has been traveling to various communities in Canada since 2013 and is scheduled to continue touring through 2019. The Ziibiwing Center is hosting its only appearance in the United States. The Saginaw Chippewa community has been holding biweekly Community Conversations since Jan. 7 in preparation to honor this ground-breaking memorial and movement.

Ziibiwing Center hours are from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information about Walking With Our Sisters visit www.walkingwithoursisters.ca or the Ziibiwing Center’s website www.sagchip.org/ziiwiwing. You also can find the Walking With Our Sisters – Ziibiwing Facebook page or call the Ziibiwing Center’s main line at (989) 775-4750.