

Wallace Fountain at the Kansas City Art Institute



Kansas City Art Institute
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On 25 September 2013 the Janet K. Meyer Miller Terrace on the campus of the Kansas City Art Institute (KCAI) was dedicated to the memory of a long time trustee, Janet K. Meyer Miller. The terrace is located in the courtyard east of Cafe Nerman and the design added a 5,000-square-foot brick terrace, new tables, moveable chairs and four Frontier Elms, a new variety of elm tree planted to provide shade.

The centerpiece of the terrace is a Wallace Fountain, described as “an elaborate cast-iron drinking fountain”. It is unknown whether it was the landscape architect for the project, institute officials or KCAI trustees who suggested a Wallace Fountain be included in the new design, but there is little doubt the fountain adds to the charm of the student gathering place.

This fountain was purchased new from GHM, the foundry that continues to fabricate the fountains in the old decorative cast iron method in Sommevoire, France. It is painted the traditional Paris green and is fitted with a large push button on the west side of the fountain to dispense water on demand, which flows from the top of the dome. The fountain pays tribute to its original sculptor, Charles Lebourg, a French artist from Nantes who turned Richard Wallace’s rough design sketches into a work of art. Wallace donated the first 40 of these fountains to the City of Paris in 1872 to provide equal access to clean drinking water.

Appropriately, a painting of KCAI’s new Wallace Fountain was presented at the dedication ceremony to the donors that made the new terrace possible. Sergio Rangel (KCAI ’13 painting) was commissioned to create the work. Rangel presented the painting to then-KCAI president Jacqueline Chanda, Ph.D., prior to the dedication so that the piece could be framed in time for the dedication event.

Research: Suzanne Vyvyan
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