

# Gigantic books to be showcased in Johnson County

BY [KATIE HEINE](#) | MAY 11, 2011 7:20 AM

Camille Marlow traded a pen for a paintbrush, composing scenes on a 5-foot-tall fiberglass book. The 20-year-old sat in the basement of the IMU on Tuesday, applying the finishing touches to her book sculpture — Train to Nowhere — one of up to 60 gigantic open books being crafted for an upcoming artistic installation throughout Johnson County.

"It will be cool to tell other people, 'Yeah, I helped work on those,' " said Marlow, a junior art major at the University of Iowa.

Starting in June, the 5-foot-tall book statues will be located throughout the area as part of the "[Bookmarks](#)" project. They will remain on display until October as a fundraiser to support the [Iowa City UNESCO City of Literature](#) and the public libraries of Iowa City, Coralville, and North Liberty.

A similar project had success in 2004, when the University of Iowa generated support from a parade of Herky statues to remodel Kinnick Stadium.

"We figured our community would be as fanatic about literature as they are about football," said Jeanette Pilak, the local City of Literature executive director.

Officials have designated three levels of sponsorship. The highest level, \$6,000, allows sponsors to keep the sculpture at the end of the project. All of the remaining installations will be auctioned to benefit local libraries and the Iowa City UNESCO City of Literature.

"It's a really fun project," said Jennie Garner, an assistant director at North Liberty Community Library. "I love community projects, and projects that pull us all together [as a community]."

Garner said she was immediately on board with the idea when she heard about it. The fundraiser was timely for the North Liberty Library, and officials plan to use the funds to expand and renovate their building in the near future.

While most of the funds for the expansion — which will nearly triple the current space of 6,500 square feet — have been allocated, the extra money will help "supplement" the goals, Garner said.

A private preview reception on April 28 unveiled a few of the finished Bookmarks and recognized the sponsors. And Garner said she was impressed with what she saw.

"I think people who were on the edge of participating are going to regret not being involved," she said.

But for Mark Ginsberg, owner of M.C. Ginsberg Objects of Fine Art, 110 E. Washington St., getting involved was an easy decision.

"There aren't any solutions without the arts," he said.

The Bookmark sponsored by M.C. Ginsberg is titled Desire Defines Reason, and it will resemble a chalkboard on which passersby will be able to write. Though he said he hopes people will express themselves in a way that's thoughtful, the point is that no one is "pre-defining what you're writing," Ginsberg said.

"Anything that raises awareness and attention like this on a local, state-wide, national, and international level will make our community a desirable destination," he said.

While the final locations of the bookmarks are a surprise, they will be displayed across the county, and they will hopefully act as a tourist destination to bring people into the community, Pilak said.

"What could be better than having people come into the community?" she said.