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Murals at the Currier Honor Manchester's Working Class Roots

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PETER BIELLO



This week, the Currier Museum of Art in Manchester is welcoming art-lovers to its gallery for a [new show](#). Boston-based artist and Tufts Professor Ethan Murrow has created wall drawings and a sculpture honoring Manchester's working class roots. Last week, ahead of the show's opening, he and a team of art students put the finishing touches on the drawings.

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On the gallery walls, the 42-year-old artist and these students have drawn murals about fifteen feet high. The images are of piles of tools and people pulling, pushing, and lifting them. The show is called "Hauling."

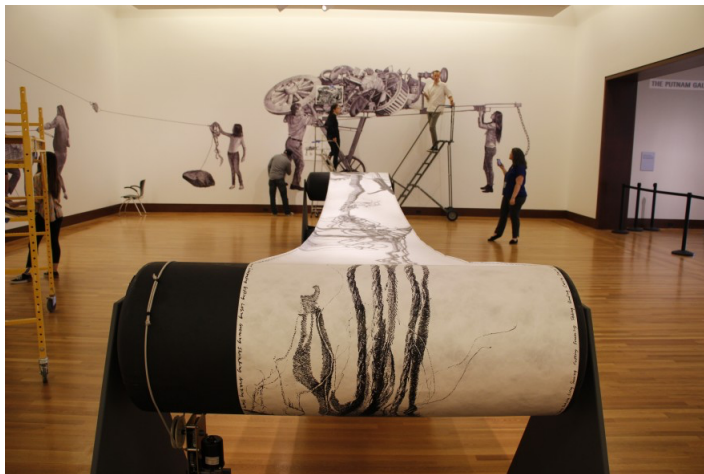


The artist, Murrow, wears a brace on his forearm, and it's easy to see why: each one of these enormous murals is composed of thin strokes of the common black Sharpie pen.

"I've used Sharpie in a bunch of different wall drawings. It does have a staying power that I'm attracted to. It has a nice rich black, and it's

relatable, hopefully, to people who come in," Murrow says.

Those who come in will also encounter a conveyor belt made of Tyvek paper, a building material. On that paper is a 53-foot Sharpie drawing of a rope, and words referring to work: cutting, framing, binding, carving. The belt slowly rolls, powered by a rotisserie chicken motor.



Murrow says the show comments on parts of the Manchester economy that have come and gone, such as the native fishing communities, colonial farmers, and the textile mills. "Hauling" is meant to honor Manchester, a city where, through the changes, work has been the constant.

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For more of Ethan Murrow's thoughts on the exhibit, what he calls a "subjective history" of Manchester, listen to the audio version of the story above. NHPR's Peter Biello spoke with the artist as he finalized the installation.

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