

The Statues of Davis Squares

During the early 1980's, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority decided to extend the Red Line from Harvard Square to Porter, Davis, and Alewife Square. Along with the extension, they decided to incorporate art into the stations through the "Arts on the Line" program. According to Steven Post, former Executive Director of the Office of Housing and Community Development (of Somerville), "it was important to make art part of the new station design and construction." This can be seen not only at Davis Square, but at various other subway stations, such as the embedded bronze gloves scattered throughout Porter Square Station. In the beginning, the MBTA was afraid that people would be outraged that the money would be spent on art as part of the construction, but according to Pallas Lombardi, Executive Director of the Cambridge Arts Council, "as pieces got integrated into the system, people started to let us know what they thought, and it was overwhelming...People loved it...the feedback, the response to it, was incredible" (Lombardi).

Originally, the statues, which are actually based on real people who lived around Davis Square, were all placed in the brick plaza in front of J.P. Licks and Store 24. However, around 1996, the City and the Somerville Arts Council decided to space out the statues in order to increase their influence around the square, thus placing them in their locations today. Also, have you ever noticed how the faces of the statues are darker than the rest of their bodies, as if they're wearing some kind of Halloween masks? As stated by Steven Post, "the statues were meant to be 'temporary' in that they were not made of bronze. Vandals destroyed some of the faces of the statues over the years, so the artist and the City decided to replace the faces with the bronze 'mask' that the statues all now 'wear'."

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Works Cited

Lombardi, Pallas. "Can Art Change Society?" Greater Boston Arts. WGBH Boston. 1 Dec. 2003
Post, Steven. "Re: Davis Square Statues" E-mail to Executive Director of the Office of Housing and Community Development. 24 Nov. 2003.