

# GUIDE



## Art Street Window



### GUIDE

*Guide* is a public art project initiated by artist, Paul Druecke. This flyer is the first component of the project that will also consist of bus billboards that circulate the names of landmarks, and a supplemental brochure with images, maps and an essay. Using bus billboards to pair the public transit system with our public landmarks, the project connects Milwaukee's

historic past with its present use. *Guide* uproots the static landmarks and sets them in motion through the city. The project taps into our system of landmarks to re-evaluate these markers, their connection to one another, and their relevance in today's society. Funds are currently being raised for the bus billboards, which are scheduled for the summer of 2007.

### Images

Prehistoric Burial Mound, Lake Park... Front Cover  
Guide, Field Research, Photo-montage... Essay page  
Erastus B. Wolcott, Lake Park... Back Cover  
Guide, Field Research, Photo-montage... Back Cover  
St Joan of Arc Temple, Marquette University... Back Cover

All photographs: Paul Druecke

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In Partnership with Bad Soviet Habits



### Two excerpts from the forthcoming essay The Future of Giants Past

Paul Druecke

(From the Intro) Wisconsin State Historical marker #412 stands outside of Marquette University's Law School in the city of Milwaukee. The marker, with a physical presence as unassuming as its subject matter is heroic, honors Mabel Wanda Raimey. I pause in front of the cast aluminum sign—painted brown to look natural, woody, like something with roots—to learn that Mabel Wanda Raimey was the first African-American woman attorney in Wisconsin (1927). Reading Mabel's mark upon posterity while everyone else passed without so much as a sideways-glance, I was struck by this disparity of response. Why am I so fascinated with these markers while others seem so apathetic? Are landmarks just for the old-fashioned and sentimental?

I have, I confess, a soft-spot for the type of nostalgia that landmarks exude, and for the contrast between the landmark's stolidness and today's phrenetic pace. (I should clarify that I use the term "landmark" to refer to a variety of forms for publicly honoring someone or something: memorial statues, historical plaques, and both informal and official markers.) But my attraction to Landmarks' trivial side combines with more critical interests; landmarks also chart a city's power structure. If we look past these markers' genteel stories and patina of nostalgia, we'll see they're part of a vigorous, ongoing cultural competition for public visibility and social acceptance. The breadth of our landmarks gauge democracy's continuing struggle for equal opportunity and truly public spaces.

(From section 3) Leif Erikson and Erastus Wolcott share the fact that each had the requisite local patronage to erect their memorials in Milwaukee. Other than this not-so-trifling detail, they share little else. Their backgrounds, their impact on the city, their path to distinction—separated by centuries—could not be more dissimilar. The extreme disconnect between Leif and Erastus is what makes their memorials interesting as a system. (I use these two as an example, but we could add Golda Meir, Captain Frederick Pabst, the typewriter, the stone from Tepeyac, and so on.) The common denominator for all of these markers is location, a former Native American village known as the "gathering place by the waters."<sup>1</sup> To understand the relevance of Leif or Mr. Wolcott to Milwaukee and to each other is to understand the underlying success of this tract of land. Simply by their presence, these markers tell us that people prospered off the land and had the resources to erect monuments. Beyond pointing to this successful settlement of a place—which is obvious, but remains interesting because not every place flourishes—landmarks detail the who, how, and why of this success. The markers recount the stories of industrious pioneers, shrewd politicians, horrible miscalculations, and heroic benevolence particular to Milwaukee. They allude to the patrons who had the wealth and organizational ability to erect landmarks and influence our the city's shared history.

1. "Gathering Place by the Waters" and the "Good Land" are the two most common definitions for the Native American Milleoke. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milwaukee](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milwaukee)