

An Artist's Mark

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Gillian Brinnand-Nannestad started her artistic career with photography before finding a love for sculptures. (Photo courtesy: Brinnand-Nannestad)



Each piece was cut out by a CNC machine before they were individually sanded, painted and hung.



In all, 326 strings were used to hang each mini sculpture that make up My Left Thumb. (Photo courtesy: Brinnand-Nannestad)

In mid-June, a fingerprint began to undergo analysis at the Department of Public Safety's Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory. Unlike most prints found in the lab, this print is not related to any crime, and it is found in the lobby for all to see. The suspension sculpture, called My Left Thumb, was donated by local artist Gillian Brinnand-Nannestad.

Brinnand-Nannestad created the piece earlier this year as a part of a class at the University of Alaska Anchorage. She wanted to explore the possibilities of creating art using a Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Machine. A CNC machine is an automated milling device that uses coded-instruction to fabricate items.

"Basically, I built it on a computer, and the CNC drilled out the design," said Brinnand-Nannestad. "But don't let that fool you; it was after the piece was cut that the real work began. Each piece was hand formed, sanded and painted. Then I drilled 326 holes into it and threaded acrylic string through each hole. The whole process was very time consuming and definitely tested my patience."

She conceived the original idea for a large scale fingerprint back in 2011. She did a drawing of her left thumb and in the lines of the print wrote her life story. When trying to come up with an idea for this sculpture she spied the original drawing, noticed the sculptural qualities of a fingerprint and wanted to recreate the piece in 3-D form, without the words.

When the sculpture was completed in March she submitted it to be considered for the Student Juried Art Show 2017 at the Hugh McPeck Gallery. It not only was selected to be a part of the show, My Left Thumb received an honorable mention.

How did the piece end up at the Crime Lab? After the show Brinnand-Nannestad wanted to find a home that was a good fit. She and her husband queried a friend of theirs who happens to be the District Attorney. The contact ultimately led the suspension sculpture to its permanent place in the middle of the fingerprint inspired flooring of the Crime Lab Lobby.

A perfect match

