

PostSecret confesses in Fountain Square

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Secret feelings of self-doubt flood from the stark-white walls filled with colorful postcards all written to Frank Warren, "the most trusted stranger in America," as part of his PostSecret exhibit "Confessions on Life, Death, and God." It is currently being displayed at the Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art (iMOCA) in downtown's Fountain Square.

Warren's "confessors" have contributed to a diverse collection of hand-made postcards disclosing some of their deepest, innermost thoughts about life's many questions, all written anonymously to be displayed on his Web site for the world to see. Warren is delivered around 1,000 postcards a week to his residence just outside of Washington, D.C. He chooses 10-20 to place *Postsecret.com* every Sunday.

While the Web site displays postcards that are both comical and concerning, the iMOCA exhibit takes on a more solemn mood as it reveals feelings of hope, doubt and fear illustrated within the postcards, featuring secrets of infidelity, sexuality and molestation.

One postcard presenting a picture of a church steeple read "I hate to go back to the place I LOVE because you hurt me so much," another reveals a conflict of ideas as it announces "I don't believe in God anymore but I talk to my Grandpa a lot. He lives in heaven."

The project is a confessional of sorts, allowing people to realize there are strangers who share in the same feelings.

What started out as an art project for his local community in 2004 has now become a worldwide phenomenon.

The idea for PostSecret first came after a dream Warren had while visiting Paris. Sleeping next to a drawer housing a few postcards he had just bought from a local vendor, Warren dreamed that the words on the postcards had been rearranged to display new messages which he later tried to recreate. He then handed out 3,000 self-addressed postcards to strangers of which he had asked to mail him their secrets.

Warren soon used the idea for his local art project to raise support for suicide prevention; he lost a family member to suicide. The project eventually became the larger world of PostSecret.

"We think we're keeping secrets, but the secrets are actually keeping us," Warren said in an article on CNN.com. "With one courageous decision, you've freed a part of your life."

In recent months, PostSecret has been at the forefront of the news (featured by *Time Magazine* and CNN) when a San Francisco resident revealed through PostSecret that they planned to jump off of the Golden Gate bridge.

"I have lived in San Francisco since I was young.... I am illegal ... I am not wanted here. I don't belong anywhere. This summer I plan to jump off the Golden Gate."

Within 24 hours concerned city residents created a Facebook group, "Please Don't Jump," pleading with the creator of the card to not go through with the act.

In addition, a rally at the Golden Gate bridge was held and messages of hope were written in the pavement. Warren hopes that the message will also be sent out to those who are still considering jumping, according to an article on *Time.com*.

PostSecret was awarded a *Web Blog of the Year* award along with an award from the Mental Health Association in which it said PostSecret is "moving the cause of mental health forward."

Its concept can be seen in the All-American Rejects music video "Dirty Little Secrets" and has been made into five *New York Times* bestselling books. The latest edition is "Confessions on Life, Death, and God."

Warren hides a PostSecret of his own within the hard binding of each of his books and he speaks to college campuses about the project.

The PostSecret exhibit opened at iMOCA Aug. 6 and will remain open through Sept. 18th.

The iMOCA is open Thursday-Saturday, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and has free admission.

It is located in the Fountain Square district at 1043 Virginia Ave.