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In the Money:
IWU Artist-in-Residence Exhibit Brings ATM Cards to Life

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Although most people wonder what it would be like to have more money, few people have explored the question of what it would be like to actually *be* money.

With the opening of Illinois Wesleyan University artist-in-residence Jeff DeCastro's "24th Hour Banking" exhibit, the question has been answered.

DeCastro's installation, which transforms visitors into Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) cards, opens from 4-6 p.m. Saturday, April 18, at the McLean County Arts Center, 601 N. East St., Bloomington. The exhibition, which continues through May 23rd, is open to the public and free of charge.

The McLean County Arts Center hours are Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Saturdays from noon to 4 p.m. The Arts Center is closed on Sundays and Mondays.

"24th Hour Banking" is a multimedia installation which proposes an alternative view of finance. Visitors will enter the exhibit, as an ATM card does, through a 30-foot slot of white tile and gauze and electronic "sensors."

"The installation explores an end-of-the-century befuddlement over the rapidly disappearing presence of cold, hard cash," DeCastro explains. "Even though the electronic sensors are sculptures, they are intended to 'read' the visitor's identity, so you will know what it feels like to be an ATM card."

Inside the "slot," the audience will encounter collaborative text by DeCastro and wife Sandra Steingraber, an IWU author-in-residence, capturing the "mood" of finance within modern technology.

"I wanted to investigate how finance affects all of our lives, including those who don't have access to the technology it now involves," says DeCastro.

DeCastro, an installation artist from Boston, has displayed exhibits at cultural and public locations throughout New England, New York, and Delaware. He is a board member of the Revolving Museum, a public art and community based organization in Boston.

DeCastro has also received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New England Foundation for the Arts, and the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

(more)

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"My roots are in public art," DeCastro comments. "I believe the real process of making art involves being part of the world and putting yourself and your ideas into the public arena."

DeCastro adds that "an important part of being an artist is recognition," and credits multiple people with assistance on the project. Among those involved were IWU students Kim DeLuca and Dan Geasie, local artist Rick Harney, and Mindy Davison. Companies contributing to the exhibit were Cotter's Bakery, Computer Renaissance, and Vital Signs, Inc.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 2,000 students in a College of Liberal Arts, College of Fine Arts, and a four-year professional School of Nursing. A \$15 million athletics and recreation center opened in the fall of 1994; and a \$25 million science building opened in the fall of 1995. The \$5.1 million Center for Liberal Arts—a facility housing 60 faculty offices, six classrooms, and other facilities for social science, humanities, business and economics, and interdisciplinary studies' faculty--opened in August, 1997, as well as a new \$6.8 million residence hall. The Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching promoted Illinois Wesleyan to a "Baccalaureate I" institution in 1994, a classification that places it among 159 highly selective National Liberal Arts Colleges in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*, another respected college guide, rated IWU "highly competitive (+)" in its latest edition.