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## **Colorful art exhibit puts lights, lumber, kids to use**

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Adults walking into James Woodfill's new exhibit at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts last weekend often seemed confused.

Was this an art exhibition? Or was it perhaps a carpentry project that had gone awry?

Children, on the other hand, knew exactly what to do once they entered Woodfill's "Stations," which runs at the Bemis through May 8. They explored all the nooks and crannies of Woodfill's plywood platforms and structures as if they were a kind of backyard tree fort. They marveled at the video screens and stood in front of multicolored projectors, casting their shadows on the walls.

"Kids relate to this art for what it is," Woodfill said. "They have no preconceived notions about experiencing it, just as I had no preconceived notions about building it."

A Kansas City-based artist, Woodfill makes sculptures, installations and public art that are a mix of high- and low-tech materials. State-of-the-art video screens, lights and projectors are often attached to plywood platforms and two-by-fours.

The result is art that often looks at first blush like an unfinished architectural renovation project. In fact, Woodfill describes "Stations" as a cross between a "constructivist painting and a fireworks stand."

The painting part comes from Woodfill's sensitive use of color and texture. He uses painted wood — red, yellow, aqua green — to create subtle color contrasts in his designs. He is even sensitive to different colors in plywood, attaching lighter shades of brown to darker ones.

Woodfill also projects colored lights onto the walls, turning the gallery space itself into part of his installation.

"When people walk in front of the projectors and cast their shadows on the walls, I consider that to be a beautiful part of the exhibit," Woodfill said.

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