

YouZeum sculpture shows the doctor-patient bond



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"The Touch," a collaboration between Columbia artists Tammy Atkins and Mark Mueller, was unveiled Thursday outside the main entrance of the YouZeum. Atkins died in 2006, before she could complete the piece, and Mueller stepped in to finish the statue in her memory.

BY ALEX LEWIS

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COLUMBIA — With the YouZeum's scheduled opening a few weeks away, the museum designed to teach patrons about health and the human body unveiled a sculpture on Thursday near its entrance on Cherry Street near Sixth Street.

"The Touch" was conceived by Columbia artist Tammy Atkins in 2005. However, Atkins died in 2006 — and that's when her colleague Mark Mueller, also of Columbia, stepped in to finish the project.

The bronze work depicts a young girl feeling the heartbeat of her doctor; its intent is to show the bond between patients and doctors.

The models for both the doctor and little girl were present at the unveiling. Ira Hubbell, Atkins' stepfather and a doctor, lent his likeness to the project, while Kelsey Knorr was the model for the girl.

After seeing the finished product, Hubbell commented that he admired Mueller's attention to detail: the artist had even included the doctor's Masonic ring.

People are encouraged to come see the statue outside of the YouZeum, which is scheduled to open May 1.



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The little girl feeling her doctor's heartbeat in "The Touch" symbolizes the special bond between doctor and patient.



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Ira Hubbell and Kelsey Knorr admire their bronze counterparts after a statue with their likenesses, "The Touch," was unveiled on Thursday.