

The Whitney Biennial: MK Guth's braid project becomes an NYC sensation

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NEW YORK CITY -- It's been a blur of activity for Portland artist [MK Guth](#) during the rainy opening weekend of the [2008 Whitney Biennial](#). Guth, whose interactive work "Ties of Protection and Safekeeping" is one of the featured works in the prestigious showcase of emerging American artists, generated plenty of attention. There was the big photo on the cover of one of the [New York Times'](#) Friday arts sections, and there was the steady stream of interested art fans streaming into the Silver Room of the [Seventh Regiment Park Avenue Armory](#), an off-site venue where Guth's braid project continued to be a work-in-progress. For most of the day Friday, Guth and a team of braiding assistants continued to add red velvet ribbons to a 600-foot-plus braid of artificial golden hair, that moved through the silver room like strands of a delicate web. Guth's work often explores themes of myth and contrasts of identities, and the contrast between the very masculine setting of the armory (and the incredibly dark room, seemingly illuminated by a single 40 watt bulb) and the beautiful femininity of the braid was striking. It took a place with an established identity, and gave it entirely new context -- a hallmark theme for the artist. Guth and her crew continue work on the braid through the 15th. At the rate it's growing, it could end up being 1,000- to 1,500-feet-long.

Check this space Monday for a full report of the Biennial's opening weekend.

-Grant Butler