

By C.J. Cote, The StarPhoenix, October 3, 2012

Anyone who drives past the Mendel Art Gallery can't help but notice on light posts the banners soliciting donations for the new art gallery.

Yet, if one were to drive anywhere in the vicinity of the preferred, and glorified, River Landing location of the Remai Art Gallery of Saskatchewan, all that is evidenced is construction vehicles, weeds, a parking lot, some white poles that represent waving wheat in the wind, and a lonely, out-of-place entrance gate to nothing.

We had a media barrage last week about the generosity of Ellen Remai, in the form of a very valuable Picasso linocut collection to be housed in the new RAGS. Interestingly, city traffic statistics indicate that the Mendel site has higher volume than 19th Street and Second Avenue, which run past River Landing. Is this why the spin doctors chose the Mendel location to post their advertisements for donations?

Has it occurred to anyone that perhaps the present Mendel is the better venue for such a prestigious and valuable Picasso collection, rather than a new gallery that will be sandwiched among multiple buildings and hard to find? After all, the Mendel, with its easy access and can't-miss location, has always had as its sole purpose to showcase art rather than being billed first as a community events centre that - by the way - has a gallery on the third floor.

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