

A Utility Box Never Looked So Good

by Melina Schuler

A utility box in Downtown Crossing has a new look. Instead of the usual hard-edged, urban gray, it features the bold colors of a weeping cherry tree in autumn.

The mural at the intersection of Washington and Summer Streets was painted by South End artist Christos Hamawi. The piece is titled *Urban Renewal*.

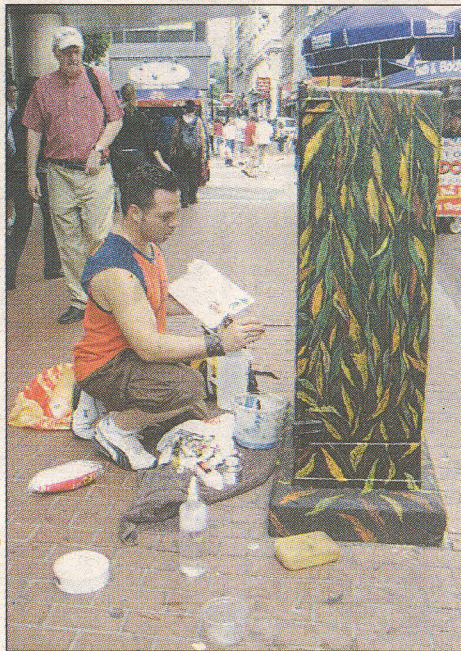
"The leaves on the trees are changing, showing the change in Downtown Crossing," Hamawi said.

It took the artist three days to paint and an additional three days to varnish. Curious pedestrians stopped to ask questions and admire his work.

"To be able to make something with everyone watching that can be shared is a thrill," Hamawi said.

"We love having the artwork in the neighborhood and look forward to more. He's a great artist, and we were lucky to have him spend time with us as he created this beautiful visual presence on Summer Street," said Rosemarie Sansone, president of the Downtown Crossing Partnership.

The mural is part of the Boston Art Commission's PaintBox program. Its goal is to bring vitality and attractiveness to the urban streetscape and deter graffiti. Artists are encouraged to apply to the program



Urban Renewal

with designs for their chance to paint a Boston utility box.

This is the second mural Hamawi has completed for the city. The first mural is called "*Urban Oasis*" and is at the corner of Massachusetts and Harrison Avenues. If the weather is good, Hamawi plans to begin his next PaintBox mural in Copley Square on Sunday.