



HOMELESS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Statue in Santa Monica aims at bringing awareness to homeless crisis

By Anabel Munoz

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The artist behind the statue of the bearded homeless man hopes his art will inspire conversations and action.

Ed Massey is the artist behind the sculpture.

"I met this man 20 years ago now and at first glance, he was so imposing, that I misjudged him because I feared for my life," he said.

But fear turned into compassion.

"I misinterpreted him because he was basically a silent giant," Massey said.

Massey was compelled by the man experiencing homelessness and created the sculpture called "In the Image." The sculpture is of a bearded homeless man with long hair, wearing a hoodie and baggy pants. A red blanket drapes over his shoulder.

"I didn't think 20 years ago that I would be bringing out a piece like this," Massey said. "So many of us forget about the homeless men and women because we live such busy lives."

The installation was unveiled at the corner of Wilshire Boulevard and 26th Street and will stand for six weeks, but Massey hopes the sculpture can travel to different cities across the country.

He's hoping people will stop and put themselves in the shoes of those who don't have shelter.

"We don't really learn too much about the homeless men and women because we don't discuss and we don't engage them in conversation," Massey said.

Some are displeased by the statue and others call it a reality.

"It really does represent what's going on in the streets here in Santa Monica and all around the world," Gil Trester of Santa Monica said.

The dark figures stands in contrast with Massey's popular work through the non-profit Portraits of Hope, which are bright images that bring color to cities around the world.

Massey hopes the statue will inspire conversations and action.

"This person is a real person that's living in our city streets and we have to take care of our men and women out on the city streets," Massey said.