

# Salem Public Art Commission

~ 2020 ~

Established March 2010

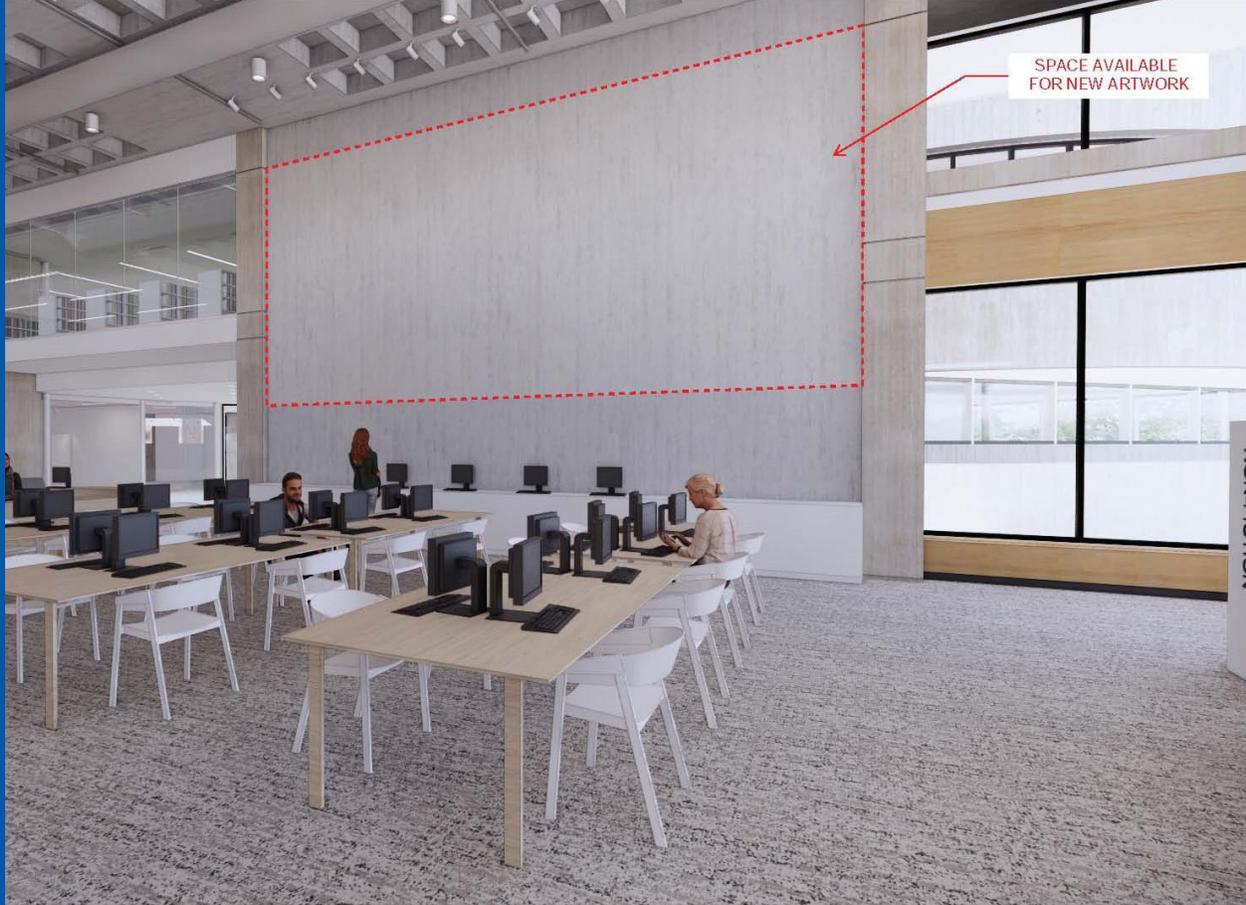


## *General Commission Information*

**Meetings:** Second Wednesday of each month at 9:30 a.m. at the Civic Center in the Public Works Traffic Control Center, Room 325

**Members:** Chris D'Arcy, Eileen Cotter Howell, Paula Booth, Rachel Bucci, Michael Hernandez, Kelly James, Spencer Emerick

**City Staff:** Heather Dimke



## Welcoming and Livable Community

Providing and encouraging equitable access to historic, cultural, and artistic resources can help to fuel and foster a sense of pride and connection to a community. Salem's diverse neighborhoods and park system provide ample opportunities for the integration of art. The Salem Public Art Commission (SPAC) promotes community awareness and access to artworks in the Public Collection and endeavors to further facilitate artistic expression in Salem.

### Salem Public Art Commission

The Salem Public Art Commission is comprised of seven members with expertise in art, art curation and art management, as appointed by the City Council. Chaired by Chris D'Arcy, Commissioner Eileen Cotter Howell serves as Vice Chair. Commissioners include Paula Booth, Rachel Bucci, Michael Hernandez, Kelly James, and Spencer Emerick. The Commission meets monthly and has formed a separate Collection Subcommittee to address needs directly associated with the Public Art Collection (e.g., ensuring the Collection inventory and related documentation is accurate and up to date, gathering supplemental information on the artists and artworks, identifying and prioritizing maintenance needs).

The Public Art Commission oversees the Public Art Collection, approves new art acquisition, and manages, maintains, and deaccessions current artwork in the collection. Salem's Public Art Collection is valuable. It includes highly respected local and northwest artists and reflects a historical progression of the Salem area. Salem's public art brings beauty and unique character to our public spaces, and positively impacts quality of life for Salem residents and visitors alike.



## The Public Art Collection

The City's Public Art Collection includes nearly 100 diverse works of art with a focus on local and Northwest artists. The Collection was appraised in FY 2016-17 for insurance purposes and holds an estimated value of \$1.37M. This figure does not include the newest additions to the Collection. A majority of works in the collection were acquired in 1972 and 1974 as part of the Civic Center's opening and the First Mayor's Art Invitational. In general, the Salem Public Art Collection is valuable, in fairly good shape, and reflects a historical progression of the Salem area. The Public Art Collection is featured on the City's website along with an interactive map of the artwork locations. At present, much of the collection is housed within the downtown core of Salem. The Commission is interested in expanding the placement of public art across the community.

## Public Art Fund

The Public Art Fund supports the Public Art Collection and is funded by donations and grants, and through the dedication of one-half of one percent of eligible publicly funded capital improvement project costs. As part of the City of Salem's 2020-21 Budget, the Public Art Fund was allocated \$10,000 from the Transient Occupancy Tax fund to help support future acquisition, management and maintenance of art in the City's Public Art Collection.

On November 23, 2020, City Council approved Ordinance Bill 13-20 to amend Salem Revised Code 15.030 and remove the prescribed percent allocations for acquisition, management, and maintenance within the Public Art Fund. This amendment frees up existing public art funds for improved management, and maintenance of the existing collection.

*The adopted Public Art Fund Budget for FY 2020-21 is \$62,910.*

## Fiscal Year 2020-21 Commission Highlights

### ½ Percent for Public Art – Building the Collection

In Salem, one-half of one percent of the funding for a public improvement project is dedicated to public art.

- Salem Police Station. Salem's newest addition to the Public Art Collection, *Equitas* by artist Blessing Hancock, was installed at the Salem's new Police Station in October. Standing 12' high by 18' wide, *Equitas* represents justice, fairness, and equity, and incorporates words and phrases collected from the Salem community at number of public events in 2019. LED lighting within the sculpture illuminates these messages through a dynamic color spectrum at night. *Equitas* is the largest artwork to-date that has been acquired through Salem's half-a-percent for public art program. This artwork was selected for Salem by members of the Police Facility Design Team and members of the Salem Public Art Commission from more than 30 concepts submitted by artists across the country.
- Salem Public Library Seismic & Safety Upgrade. New public art for the Salem Public Library has been funded through the Seismic and Safety Upgrades project. In early 2020, a Library Art Selection Committee (with members from the Art Commission, Library Advisory Board, the Library



Foundation, Hacker Architects, and library staff) reviewed design submittals from 33 artists that responded to an open Request for Qualifications (RFQ). Artist Amanda Wojick (Department Head at U of O School of Art & Design) was ultimately selected through this process to complete the new artwork that will be displayed on a large shear wall that will be above the new reference desk in the library. Completion of this new artwork is anticipated to coincide with completion of the library upgrades in early Summer 2021.

- A kitchen remodel at the Salem Convention Center was completed this summer that generated \$ 9,000 for new public art. The Center is in the Riverfront Downtown Urban Renewal Area, so the percent for art generated by this project falls under the Urban Renewal Agency Policy and will remain at the Convention Center. Members of SPAC and the Oregon Artist Series Foundation (OASF) formed an Art Selection Committee for this project. The OASF expressed an interest in and subsequently contributed \$6,000 in additional funds to acquire a new public artwork for a total purchase price of \$15,000. After reviewing existing artwork from 12 local/regional artists, the Committee selected a painting titled *Home Pool* (78" x 108" oil on canvas) by artist Richard Thompson of Dayton. SPAC looks forward to sharing this new painting with the community as soon as the Convention Center reopens.

## Caring for the Collection

One of SPAC's primary responsibilities is maintenance of the artwork within the Collection. Over time, the costs associated with maintaining existing artwork in the collection have grown. There is currently an expanding list of artworks in need of repair or cleaning.

- Artworks in the Salem Public Library. In preparation for the seismic and safety upgrades in the library, members of the Commission collaborated closely with the Library Foundation to secure professional wrapping and temporary storage of all artworks in the library. As a part of this effort, members of SPAC coordinated with Facilities to have the large welded metal sculpture *Birds* by Tom Hardy removed from the Library ceiling, where it has rested since 1972. SPAC members volunteered their time to clean and wrap this piece for safe storage elsewhere in the library. A Public Art Loan Agreement was completed with the Willamette University Law Library to provide temporary storage and display of the large Open *Teakwood Screen* by Leroy Setziol. As the construction in the library nears completion, SPAC will take the lead on returning pieces from the Public Collection to the newly renovated space.
- A condition assessment of the *Eco-Earth* was completed in 2017. Following that assessment, high level cost estimates for rehabilitation of the globe were compiled in-house. To better refine these costs and determine appropriate steps forward, the present consultant on record for art conservation (Architectural Resources Group) was retained to provide an up-to-date and comprehensive evaluation of the conditions causing disrepair, to recommend an appropriate restoration approach,

and to provide a refined cost estimate for the repairs. The updated condition assessment and associated report with cost estimations was completed in November.

- Council Chambers *Monumental Doors*. The Council Chambers Monumental Doors are included in the City's Public Art Collection and contain intricate bronze plaques by artist Wayne Taysom. It was brought to the Commission's attention in 2018 that these doors, due to their excessive weight, will need to be replaced to address safety and other concerns. This process required consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) as City Hall has been nominated for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2020, SHPO approved the City's request for replacement with a recommendation that the door panels be displayed elsewhere at City Hall. SPAC will be determining display and coordinating with Facilities on appropriate placement options for this artwork in the coming year.

## Public Art Outreach & Education

Scavenger Hunt. At the request of the Commission, a pocket-sized Scavenger Hunt brochure produced in 2019 was converted to an online interactive experience for 2020. This virtual activity is now accessible at: [egov.cityofsalem.net/ArtTreasureHunt/](http://egov.cityofsalem.net/ArtTreasureHunt/). Salem residents and visitors interested in learning more about public art in Salem can now participate using their laptop or phone. This online activity offers a playful way for the Salem community and visitors to connect with downtown artwork that is part of the City's Public Art Collection.



Left to Right

*Equitas*, by artist Blessing Hancock • *Home Pool*, by artist Richard Thompson

*Library renovation, large wall for new art* • *Teakwood Screen*, by Leroy Setziol

*The Receptacle*, by artist Mel Katz • *Eco-Earth Globe* • *Council Chambers Monumental Doors*