

Salem Public Art Commission

~ 2021 ~

Established March 2010



General Commission Information

Meetings: Second Wednesday of each month at 9:30 a.m.

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. The Salem Public Art Commission (SPAC) promotes community awareness and access to artworks in the Public Collection, leads the selection and acquisition of public art across the City, 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, architecture, design and arts management. One member serves from the community at-large. All seven members to the Commission are appointed by the City Council. Since 2018, the Commission has been chaired by Chris D'Arcy, with Commissioner Eileen Cotter Howell serving as Vice Chair. Commissioners include Paula Booth, Rachel Bucci, Michael Hernandez, Kelly James, and Spencer Emerick. A separate Collection Subcommittee convenes periodically to address special needs that arise with the Public Art Collection. (e.g., coordinate label updates, determine new artwork placement options, assess maintenance needs).

The Public Art Commission stewards the Public Art Collection, approves new art acquisitions, and manages, maintains, and periodically deaccessions 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 is diverse and includes nearly 100 works of art with a focus on local and Northwest artists. The Collection was appraised for insurance purposes in FY 2016-17 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 reasonable condition, and reflects Salem's cultural history. 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 all wards in the City.

PUBLIC ART FUND

The Public Art Fund supports the Public Art Collection and is funded by periodic donations and grants, and through the dedication of one-half of one percent of eligible publicly funded capital improvement project costs. In recent budget years, the Public Art Fund was allocated up to \$15,000 from the Transient Occupancy Tax fund to help support future acquisition, management and maintenance of art in the City's Public Art Collection. These additional funds were not available for the 2021-22 Fiscal Year.

On November 23, 2020, City Council approved Ordinance Bill 13-20 to amend Salem Revised Code 15.030 and remove 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 2021-22 is \$42,370.

2021 COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS

Building the Collection

½ Percent for Public Art Program:

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

- **Call Number Cascade - Salem Public Library.** Salem's newest half-percent for public art commission was funded through the Library 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 who responded to an open Request for Qualifications (RFQ). Artist Amanda Wojick (Department Head at U of O School of Art & Design) was ultimately selected and Call Number Cascade is now on display in the Salem Library. This colorfully painted steel sculpture was inspired by the artist's love of public libraries and an actual series of waterfalls in the Santiam Watershed east of Salem. The artwork has been sited on a new double-height concrete sheer wall and has been designed to be seen differently from various vantage points across the library.



New Artwork Donation:

- **Trees of Life by artist Betty LaDuke.** Ashland artist Betty LaDuke generously gifted *Trees of Life*, a large three panel painting, to the City this year. This richly colored addition to the Public Collection has been installed on the plaza level of the Salem Library, directly across from the stairs to the main level. Betty LaDuke, a nationally renowned artist and former longtime faculty member at Southern Oregon University, has created works throughout her career that focus on socially engaged multicultural themes.

Managing the Collection

- **Artworks in the Salem Public Library.** Members of the Commission collaborated closely with the Library Foundation to provide for the professional wrapping and temporary storage of all library artworks before the seismic upgrades were initiated at the library in 2020. The return of this artwork required many hours of extra volunteer time as the “Library Re-Installation Team” worked to determine new placement locations in the renovated space, ensure safe and appropriate installation of larger pieces (e.g., large hanging sculpture *Birds* by Tom Hardy), and to completely rewrite labels for all of the artwork in the library. This team consisted of members from the Art Commission as well as members of the Salem Public Library Foundation (Eileen Cotter Howell, Paula Booth, Rachel Bucci, Kate Van Ummersen, Eric Wuest, and Gretchen Coppedge).
- **Artwork Loan.** At the request of the Bush House Museum, the Commission has agreed to loan two artworks from the Public Collection to the museum for temporary display. The two paintings (*A Summer Vista* by Frederick Ballard Williams and *Landscape* by Anthony Henderson Euwer) date back to the early 1900’s and had originally been on display in Salem’s Andrew Carnegie funded Library that stood at State and Winter Streets from 1912 to 1972.

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 continues to be an expanding list of artworks in need of repair or cleaning, especially some that date from the development of the Civic Center which will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2022.

- **Eco-Earth Globe.** Architectural Resources Group (conservator on record) was retained in 2020 to complete an up-to-date condition assessment of the Eco-Earth Globe, provide recommendations on an appropriate restoration approach forward, and to provide a refined cost estimate for this effort. The final report (completed November 2020), provides a detailed description of the recommended repairs for an estimated cost just under \$250,000. Project administration and contingency costs for construction bring the total estimate up to \$400,000. The Commission is very pleased that the Salem Parks Foundation has stepped up and offered to coordinate a community fundraising campaign for up to \$300,000. This iconic piece of public art has become a prominent fixture of Riverfront Park, engaging Salem residents and visitors alike since it was unveiled to the community in 2003.



- **Completed & In-Process Artwork Repairs for 2021.** Multiple artworks were prioritized for maintenance this last year.
 - The Pastoral Mural (artist Jennifer Joyce) that is located in the alley off of Court Street (between Liberty and High Street) was vandalized with graffiti. The tagged section was repainted promptly in order to discourage additional damage. It has been noted that this entire mural is in need of repair or replacement.
 - Structural repairs and restoration work were completed on three framed paintings (artist Constance Fowler) before these pieces were returned to the renovated library this summer.
 - The 5-foot tall steel sculpture titled *Drummer* (artist Robert Hess) recently broke and fell off its base due to undetected rust at the point of attachment. This artwork has been situated indoors at the Salem Convention Center since 2011 but had previously been sited outdoors. Staff are working to identify options for repair of this highly valued piece of art.

Public Art Outreach & Education

- **Wojick Exhibition.** The Commission worked with Amanda Wojick (who created Call Number Cascade at the Library) to curate a small exhibition of her works on paper that is now on display in the Library. This exhibition was designed to provide additional insight and context into Wojick's work, and the inspiration behind Salem's newest public art piece. This exhibition will run through January of 2022.
- **Learning About the Collection.** Salem's collection of public art represents a wide range of artistic styles, genres, and time periods that date back to the early 1900's. Interested library patrons can now learn more about these artists thanks to the painstaking efforts of the Library "Reinstallation Team". Simple name plates for all of the artwork in the library were rewritten in 2021 to include new information about the artists, their background, and the artwork on display. This effort required hundreds of hours of research, time, and commitment from dedicated volunteers.

LOOKING AHEAD – 2022 AND BEYOND

- **New Public Works Operations Building.** With a total project cost estimated at \$28 Million, the new Public Works Operations Building should generate approximately \$140,000 in funds for public art. This large project is presently in the design development phase with construction anticipated to begin in early 2022. Two members from the Commission will participate in an Art Selection Committee that will include representation from Hacker Architects as well as from Public Works. Selection Committee meetings are expected to be initiated the building designs have been finalized and before the end of the calendar year. This project will be a catalyst for expanding public art to a new ward in the community.
- **Civic Center 50th Anniversary.** August of 2022 will mark the 50th Anniversary of City Hall. Staff from the City Manager's Office have initiated conversations about a potential celebration and the potential for new public art at City Hall. This effort has generated renewed support for repairs to the James Lee Hansen sculpture/fountain that now sits quiet in the Peace Plaza. Onsite activities and/or artistic performances onsite and leading up to the celebration



could further generate engage the community. The Commission has a number of ideas for this celebration and will be very supportive of any efforts to re-activate the Peace Plaza as part of this important milestone.

- **Council Chamber Monumental Doors.** The Council Chamber Monumental Doors are included in the City's Public Art Collection and contain intricate bronze plaques by artist Wayne Taysom. These doors were removed from the Council Chambers in 2020 due to their excessive weight and the need to address safety 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. The doors have since been placed in a temporary storage space at City Hall and members of the Commission have continued to research the history of the artwork and artist. Options for the reintegrating the doors and/or panels back into City Hall will be considered as part of the re-design efforts for the first floor and Municipal Court areas of City Hall.
- **Continued Maintenance Concerns.** A number of additional maintenance needs from within the Public Art Collection were identified this year. As the collection continues to grow and to age so too will these needs. Without a dedicated funding source, it will become increasingly difficult to care for the City's valued collection, with delayed maintenance costs expanding over time. Routine inspections, cleaning, and care of the artwork should be prioritized. Dedicated funding is needed to support the collection and a healthy public art program in Salem.



Top Left – *Bronze Panels* by Wayne Taysom

Top Right – *Call Number Cascade* by Amanda Wojick

Middle Left – *Trees of Life* by Betty LaDuke

Middle Right – *Birds* by Tom Hardy,

Lower Left – *Works on Paper* by Amanda Wojick
(Temporary Exhibition)