

COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE

Article 83 of the Constitution of New Hampshire includes phrases that speak directly to all of us who are concerned with the cultural health of our state:

“Knowledge and learning, generally diffused through a community, being essential to the preservation of a free government...it shall (therefore) be the duty of the legislators and magistrates, in all future periods of this government, to cherish the interest of literature and the sciences...to encourage private and public institutions, rewards and immunities for the promotion of agriculture, arts, science....”

In the spirit of the founding fathers, our legislators of this century have responded to Article 83 by establishing the Department of Libraries, Arts and Historical Resources to identify, preserve, and promote the interests of literature, New Hampshire's heritage, and the visual and performing arts.

Within this cultural agency, the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts administers the splendid Percent for Art Program. The provisions of RSA 19-A:9, the legislation which governs the Council, establishes a non-lapsing art fund to bring the work of professional artists into the State of New Hampshire's buildings. The vision of the makers of our constitution is thus amplified and made real by today's farsighted citizen legislators.

The program is celebrating 10 years of bringing significant art works by the artists of New Hampshire and the northeast to the people of New Hampshire. We look ahead to many more years in which the arts community will continue to make lasting contributions that enhance our New Hampshire way of life.

Shirley Gray Adamovich,
Commissioner
Department of Libraries,
Arts and Historical Resources

ART IN PUBLIC PLACES: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The artist of ancient Greece, Rome and Egypt worked with the knowledge that his art would be common property as part of the churches and government buildings which formed the center of daily life in the urban centers. The anonymous sculptors who created images of Christian iconography in stone worked closely with the architects of the medieval cathedrals. The alliance of artist and architect continued through the Renaissance, but the public role of the artist declined in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Sculpture, in particular, fell to a position of relative unimportance. If it had any role at all, it was generally as ornament for gardens or parks.

There was, however, a strong regard for commemorating public figures, particularly military heroes and their victories. Public statuary of the nineteenth and early twentieth century was intended to be a symbol of civic and national virtue and thus an elevating experience for the public. In the words of Oliver Larkin, "Legislators up and down the land were in a mood to commission stone reminders of those who had made the republic." In New Hampshire, citizens and elected officials erected statues of John P. Hale, Daniel Webster, John Stark and Franklin Pierce on the plaza before the State House in Concord, while from their pedestals, Generals Stark and Pulaski maintain an eternal vigilance in Manchester.

It was during the period of the 1930's, when Federal support for public art was significant, that the General Pulaski monument was created by Manchester artist, Lucien H. Gosselin. The sculpture was funded through a collaboration of private citizens, the City of Manchester, and the State of New Hampshire.

Federal funds channeled through the Works Progress Administration supported many forms of art during the troubled decade of 1930.

Under the directorship of Omer T. Lassonde of Manchester, Federal funds were used to subsidize the work of printmakers and painters. Herbert Waters was paid to teach landscape and art history in the public schools in Concord and Bradford and also to experiment with wood engraving and linoleum block printing techniques. Gladys Brannigan produced four large murals depicting the history of local events such as the visits of George Washington and General Lafayette, and historical Portsmouth buildings for the Portsmouth Junior High School auditorium. Among other New Hampshire artists were Albert Quigley, Francis W. P. Tolman, and Alice Ericson Cosgrove, who later became an artist for the New Hampshire State Planning and Development Commission. These artists primarily depicted scenes in New Hampshire which reflected the American faith in hard work as a solution for all problems.

By the mid-sixties, a new generation of American artists, and several of the older sculptors, began to exhibit work devoid of humanist concerns and dependent on a highly rational regard for materials and construction methods—derived from industrial techniques. They questioned the function of the pedestal and many preferred to do away with it altogether, allowing the work to interact directly with the spectator in a mutual space. The choice of materials expanded, with painted steel and aluminum becoming more and more evident. This change was due both to aesthetic reasons, bright, primary colors were finding increasing favor, and economic reasons, sheet metal was less costly than the traditional method of casting in bronze. A new service industry was created, the art fabricator who understood both the techniques of handling, crafting and finishing large pieces of metal, and could also provide expertise in transport and installation.

The major monuments of the Western world have resulted from the formation of a coalition between artist and patron, someone who was willing to assume the burden of cost. Wealthy individuals with a predilection for immortality have always played a role as backer for the artist. The state and church also provided the funds necessary for the creation of monumental art.

Commercial interests have been involved with arts for many years, but in recent decades their participation has intensified. The Federal government is no longer concerned only with building monuments for the nation's capitol. Its Arts-in-Architecture Program commissions art for new federal construction throughout the country. The National Endowment for the Arts actively supports and aids the placing of public art through several grants programs. Many states and cities have public art programs that set aside a percent of construction costs for art.

In metropolitan areas such as Cambridge, Massachusetts, art has been incorporated into public transportation systems as subway revitalization projects created new lines from the city's center to outlying areas. Numerous artists have created art as diverse as mobiles from high tech materials, cast bronze figures, poetry imbedded in flooring brick, stained glass, and clay wall tiles fabricated by a professional artist who used imagery produced by children from the area in which the station was built. Several museums have run projects which enable the artist to work with local industries which provide materials and manpower for works created to be placed in their own cities. Hawaii, the first state

in the nation to establish a Percent for Art Program, set aside one percent of state construction budgets for commissioning or purchase of artwork, a precedent which has found ever wider acceptance in government practice. Government on all levels, business large and small, universities and other educational institutions, all have become leading patrons of the arts as commissioning agents.

The expansion of opportunity for patronage in the last two decades is unparalleled. It has resulted in a huge stabile by the late Alexander Calder for Grand Rapids, Michigan, works by George Sugarman for Akron, Ohio and Baltimore, Maryland, and a massive baseball bat by Claes Oldenburg, commissioned by the federal office of the General Services Administration for the City of Chicago, home of the Cubs and the White Sox, to mention only a few pieces in the Midwest alone. In fact, the city without some monu-

mental work of art in a public site is becoming the exception rather than the rule. The patronage that makes public art a reality is often a partnership of government, business and private citizens. The result is the planning and production of more urban and sometimes rural monuments than at any other time in the history of the nation, and a greater possibility that art and the people will have the chance to interact in daily life.

The art commissioned by the State of New Hampshire for its public buildings not only enhances those centers of government, but also makes them an open gallery for the art of our time. They become places in which art and architecture work together to bring about an environment designed to meet the needs and interests of its citizens. Many works of art were commissioned and all were selected for a particular site. All were chosen for their ability to stimulate the hearts and minds of the spectator. The selections of type of artwork and imagery were made through a collaboration of building users and arts professionals.

The growing art collection for the people of New Hampshire is for all who enjoy the arts. But it also serves a greater

need, the eternal affirmation of commitment to hard work, faith, patience, imagination and aesthetic integrity—all those factors which take place in the act of creation and assure the survival of human values. The works of art in New Hampshire's public buildings symbolize the spirit of free inquiry and creative integrity which are so vital to modern society and the duty of governments to protect and promote the right of the creative individual to live and work in freedom.

Robert M. Doty, Director
The Currier Gallery of Art
from 1977 to 1987

NEW HAMPSHIRE'S PERCENT FOR ART PROGRAM: THE FIRST 10 YEARS

The first 10 years of the Percent for Art Program were a period of risk taking and problem solving that led everyone who participated to learn and grow. Each player or set of players in the art selection process had to stretch the limits of his/her own knowledge, shift perceptions, develop negotiating and communicating skills, and create solutions for new and uncharted territories.

Artists had to learn to work with committees, grapple with budget limitations, and find creative solutions not only in making their art or craft, but also in fulfilling their role as artist on construction sites. In some cases, artists had to learn about fund-raising and politics.

Art experts on the Art Selection Committees had to consider new public responsibilities in selecting the artists. Users of the buildings on Site Advisory Committees were challenged by new visions as they reviewed works by the 500 artists in the Artists' Slide Registry. In the process of sifting through the images, both committees learned more about what kind of art they liked and why. They also grew to respect each other's choices.

Construction foremen had to accommodate unusual projects within their spaces and work with artists who were accustomed to working alone and independently. Architects, as they collaborated with artists, had to learn restraint to keep from taking over the artists' designs and making them their own. State agencies responsible for housing the art had to learn new skills while cooperating with the arts agency to provide lighting, manpower and materials for installations of artwork. Maintenance crews within state buildings inherited new kinds of objects with unfamiliar and challenging curatorial needs.

The state arts agency had to hone negotiating skills in the political arena and even within the governing board itself, when the concept that "art is

for everyone" was challenged by a mandate to provide art for the New Hampshire State Prison. With each project, arts administrators had to invent new ways of meeting the sometimes conflicting needs of artists, art selectors, and board members as the process took shape.

As everyone boarded the same train it sometimes seemed that everyone was getting off at a different station to reach the same destination.

The evolution of the Percent for Art Program began with the drafting of House Bill 430, which proposed that a percentage of state construction appropriations be used to purchase artwork for state buildings and facilities. Nine sponsors signed on to the bill: James V. Bibbo, Jr; Mary B. Chambers; Marshall French; Ruth Griffin; Mary Louise Hancock; Peter Hildreth; Elaine Krasker; Paul LaMott; and Vesta M. Roy. The sponsors originally had hoped that

the percentage for art would be one percent. Jim Bibbo said of the process, "It was tough. But, anything out of my committee was tough." Eventually, the one percent became one-half percent.

Thanks to the hard work of the sponsors and many others who gave testimony at hearings, the bill passed into law in 1979. When the law was passed, New Hampshire became one of only 13 states with similar legislation. Each of these states had to experiment with finding their own ways of implementing these new laws. New Hampshire's law allows a small percentage of funds to be used to purchase art and historical objects for existing state buildings as well as to commission works for new buildings. The law restricts certain entities from generating funds: e.g., the University System of New Hampshire and self-liquidating projects. The responsibility for managing the program was given to the New Hampshire Commission on the Arts.

The fledgling program was watched anxiously by diverse groups within the state, some of whom had never collaborated before. As Elaine Krasker (a prime sponsor of the legislation) and Calvin J. Libby (Co-chairman of the Percent for Art Task Force) wrote in 1979, "Just how this

art is selected is...a matter of great interest and concern of many artists, craftsmen, state agencies, legislators and the New Hampshire Commission on the Arts."

The Commission established a Task Force to hammer out guidelines for the art selection process. Attending these early meetings were representatives from the Arts Commission, Citizens for the Arts, League of New Hampshire Craftsmen, New Hampshire Art Association, New Hampshire Chapter of American Institute of Architects, New Hampshire Department of Public Works, New Hampshire Historical Society, and the New Hampshire Visual Arts Coalition. In April of 1980 the administrative rules for the State Art Fund were adopted.

Two committees were to develop the art plan for each building: A Site Advisory Committee to represent the views and needs of the resident agency or agencies and an Art Selection Committee of arts professionals to determine the scope, direction, and particular aesthetic needs of each site. Together they would make the choices. The Art Selection Committee would relay decisions to the Arts Commission, which would issue artists' contracts and submit them to the Governor and Executive Council for approval.

A pilot project, funded at \$25,000, was designed for the first building, Health and Welfare (later renamed Health and Human Services). Committee members felt awed by the responsibility with which they were entrusted. Each person experienced an added concern since private decisions would be scrutinized by the public. After two years of deliberations over the needs of the agency, how to create harmony within the space, the dilemma of having 17 spaces which could benefit from artwork, and a budget which could not possibly "do it all," and furthermore, resolving what types of images and what kinds of materials would be most appropriate, the group tentatively made its choices. Much to the surprise of the individuals present, there was unanimous agreement on the artists to recommend. It had been a long process, one where no one had been certain whether or not the process would, in fact, work.

From 1979 to 1989, 45 arts professionals and 100 representatives from 13 buildings struggled with these questions. Seventy-two artists prepared sketches, models, and ideas for competitions. Of these, 29 were commissioned to create site-specific works. Additional works from 45 other artists were purchased for permanent installations. The state's collection grew to 120 artworks chosen for particular sites. Paintings; drawings; photographs; prints; tapestries; architectural constructions in glass and in wood; sculptures in bronze, mosaic, Coreten steel, granite, travertine, aluminum, native woods; and painted and clay tile murals make up this far-flung collection, spread among 13 sites.

The artwork for each site is distinctive and represents the diversity of viewpoints of those who participated in the choices. Within each building there is a cohesiveness of imagery which gives the building a special identity.

A unique opportunity arose for the Arts Commission when new prison construction provided enough funds to introduce an additional means of circulating artwork around the state. The Arts Commission met the challenge of choosing artwork for the

public spaces in the prison while channeling remaining funds into the purchase of a touring collection representing artists who, in the main, were not represented in the state's site-related collection. Known as Arts Bank, the collection traveled 5,000 miles to 22 public buildings throughout New Hampshire. Arts Bank exhibited 181 artworks from 103 artists.

From the beginning, the state arts agency was sensitive to its public responsibility for state funds. It was aware that the public sometimes worried about the cost of artwork, for example, for a large outdoor sculpture; but it also recognized that to bring some projects to their fullest potential, additional funds were needed.

In 1986 the agency, which the year before had been renamed the New Hampshire State

Council on the Arts, began to seek contributions from sources outside the agency. The first project financed collaboratively was a sculpture for Mount Sunapee State Park. Private agencies (The League of New Hampshire Craftsmen Foundation, Inc., and the Lake Sunapee Business Association) joined with another state agency, the New Hampshire Division of Parks and Recreation, to assume some of the project's costs.

The Council sought an even greater commitment from another state agency when the Arts Center on Brickyard Pond at Keene State College wanted a large-scale stone sculpture for a public entry in the theater complex. The college matched Arts Council funds to commission the artwork. In addition, it paid for shipping the artwork and provided materials and manpower for the installation.

As Percent for Art completes its tenth year, the program's goal of integrating art and architecture has been met with great success in the psychiatric hospital project. With this project, the design of arts spaces and artwork began in the early stages of architectural planning. The artists and architects worked together throughout design and construction phases. Communication among hospital, Arts Council, and project construction administrators grew from awkward encounters into productive, exciting, working relationships.

The participation of so many individuals in the Percent for Art process, once seen as cumbersome, turned out to be one of its greatest strengths. The program will continue to depend on the good will of many, especially the artists, who continue to share their talents with the State of New Hampshire.

The images that follow in this book document the state's permanent collection, art that is in unexpected places, not confined in museum or gallery walls but woven into the fabric of the daily life of New Hampshire's people.

Audrey V. Sylvester
Coordinator, Percent for
Art Program