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Exhibition website: <https://willamette.edu/arts/hfma/exhibitions/library/2020-21/forgotten-stories.html>



“Forgotten Stories: Northwest Public Art in the 1930s” opening in November at the Hallie Ford Museum of Art

SALEM, Ore. — The Hallie Ford Museum of Art will present the major exhibition “Forgotten Stories: Northwest Public Art of the 1930s” opening November 28, 2020 in the Melvin Henderson-Rubio Gallery and the Maribeth Collins Lobby, and continuing through March 27, 2021.

The exhibition features an extensive overview of the largely “forgotten stories” of the bounty and variety of work created in our region during the economic hard times of the 1930s through nationally supported art projects, and features approximately 72 artworks created in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana. Works include paintings, murals, prints, drawings, photographs, and sculptures, as well as furniture created for Timberline Lodge. “Forgotten Stories” reintroduces a number of talented figures whose names are now unknown, and also includes early work by prominent figures like painter Morris Graves and photographer Minor White.

During the Great Depression in the 1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his administration launched a number of programs designed to put millions of Americans who were unemployed back to work. U.S. government art projects under the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and other agencies, employed artists who created a wide variety of public art that included a range of subjects and styles. Many of the works were created for public institutions such as schools, universities, post offices, and hospitals as well as government buildings of all kinds. In addition, the government also established community art centers such as the Salem Federal Art Center, which offered free classes, art making opportunities and traveling exhibitions.

The exhibition has been organized by the Tacoma Art Museum’s interim Chief Curator and Curator of Collections and Special Exhibitions Margaret Bullock. Bullock says, “The extent of the federal art projects in the Northwest is surprising. We’ve long thought that the impact of the work was limited, but research has now shown that the projects in the Northwest were widespread and highly productive, employing over 600 artists, resulting

in thousands of artworks and offering art making opportunities to hundreds of thousands of Northwesterners.”

“We are fortunate to be able to exhibit a number of works that have not been seen since their creation and also to borrow several large-scale murals that normally never leave their permanent locations in schools and post offices,” noted Bullock. “For our region, this exhibition is a celebration of a time when government support for art and artists not only nurtured talent but made long-lasting impacts on the art community and raised the importance of public art in a way that has yet to be matched.”

The public is invited to enjoy a variety of online events including a 360° virtual tour of the exhibition, a lecture series, and a film series, as well as more resources to delve further into the fascinating history of this time period. Visit willamette.edu/go/forgotten-stories for more information.

Works and stories from these projects continue to surface. As the exhibition is taking place, the museum hopes that it sparks memories for people that may bring new information and additional “forgotten stories” to light. If you have a story to share that is related to these federal art projects that took place in the Pacific Northwest, please email museum-art@willamette.edu.

The exhibition is also accompanied by the catalogue “New Deal Art in the Northwest: The WPA and Beyond,” the first comprehensive survey of the federal art projects in the Pacific Northwest, authored by Bullock with contributions by notable New Deal art scholars.

Financial Support

This exhibition was organized by Tacoma Art Museum and generously supported in part by ArtsFund and Tacoma Arts Commission. The publication is made possible by the Henry Luce Foundation. Both the publication and exhibition have been thoughtfully supported by associate sponsors Matthew and Kimberly Bergman.

Support for the the virtual lecture series and virtual tour has been made possible in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities: Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Sponsorship at the Hallie Ford Museum of Art has been provided by gifts from the BJS Family Trust, the Ric and Suzanne Kane Living Trust, the Lawrence and Sandra Post Family Foundation, the Allan Rappaport Charitable Foundation, the Wyss Foundation, Kathy Belfer Cypres, Bonnie and Ronald Fein, and an anonymous donor, as well as by general operating support grants from the City of Salem's Transient Occupancy Tax funds and the Oregon Arts Commission. Advertising support has been provided by the Oregon ArtsWatch Full Circle Fund.

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Exhibition Related Events

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virtual lecture series has been provided by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Visit willamette.edu/go/forgotten-stories.

LECTURE SERIES

The following lectures will be available online in January at willamette.edu/go/fs-lectures

“Wonders, Blunders, and Everything in Between: The New Deal Art Projects in the Northwest” presented by Margaret Bullock, Interim Chief Curator of Collections and Special Exhibitions, at the Tacoma Art Museum.

“A New Deal for (some) Americans: Innovation and its Limits during the Great Depression” presented by [Ellen Eisenberg](#), the Dwight and Margaret Lear Professor of American History at Willamette University.

“The Culture and Politics of American Literature during the Great Depression” presented by [Mike Chasar](#), Associate Professor of English at Willamette University.

“Brilliance in Dark Times: Transformative Innovations in Science and Technology during the Great Depression” presented by [Karen McFarlane Holman](#), Professor of Chemistry at Willamette University.

FILM SERIES

“The Forgotten Man,” 1939-1940: Four American Movies from the Decade of the Great Depression

Available online at willamette.edu/go/fs-films

This self-guided film series has been curated by artist and film historian Robert Bibler and features “The Grapes of Wrath,” “My Man Godfrey,” “Our Daily Bread,” and “I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang.” Streaming options are provided. Bibler says “Whether comedic or tragic, the movies in this series are a reflection of the suffering and the ideals of the decade during which they were made, the extraordinarily difficult years of the Great Depression.”

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

About the Hallie Ford Museum of Art at Willamette University

As one of the finest academic art museums in the Northwest, the museum features works by Pacific Northwest and Native American artists, and includes a diverse collection of traditional European, American and Asian art, as well as artifacts that date from antiquity. Frequently changing exhibitions include lectures, special events, tours, artist demonstrations, educational opportunities for children and adults, as well as important publications.

The museum is located at 700 State St. in Salem. Hours are Tuesday through Saturday from noon to 5 p.m. The galleries are closed on Sunday and Monday. Timed entry tickets are required and can be purchased online starting Monday, February 22 at

www.willamette.edu/go/hfma. General admission is \$6, \$4 for seniors and \$3 for students 18 and older. Students 17 and under and children are admitted free. Admission is free for everyone on Tuesdays but timed entry tickets are still required.

PLEASE NOTE: Due to Covid-19 the museum's hours and guidelines are subject to change as federal and state guidelines evolve. Please check the museum's website for the latest information willamette.edu/go/hfma or call 503-370-6855.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE



NEW DEAL ART IN THE NORTHWEST

THE WPA AND BEYOND

MARGARET E. BULLOCK

A high-resolution image is available upon request, call 503-881-3396 or email afoust@willamette.edu

Written by Margaret E. Bullock, "New Deal Art in the Northwest: The WPA and Beyond" is published in conjunction with the exhibition "Forgotten Stories: Northwest Public Art of the 1930s," organized by the Tacoma Art Museum. The Directors' Forward is by David Setford, and the book includes contributions by additional scholars including Tiffany Stith Cooper, Roger Hull, David F. Martin, Mindy J. Morgan, Sarah Baker Munro, Sharon Ann Musher, Nina Olsson, Philip Stevens, and Roger Van Oosten.

During the economic hard times of the 1930s, U.S. government art projects under the WPA and other agencies created a wealth of public art and supported art communities across the country. In the Northwest hundreds of artists were employed and thousands of artworks created but their story is almost unknown. *New Deal Art in the Northwest: The WPA and Beyond* and its accompanying show offer an extensive overview of the bounty of work created in the Northwest and bring forgotten treasures back to view. This exhibition catalogue features fourteen essays from a variety of contributors, appendices details artists and commissions, and extensive archival notes.

2020

Hardcover: 240 pages, 196 illustrations and photographs

Published by University of Washington in association with Tacoma Art Museum

This publication will be available at the Hallie Ford Museum of Art store during the exhibition

To order, call: 503-370-6855

Also available at the Hallie Ford Museum of Art

\$34.95

HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGES

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Elizabeth Colborne (born Chamberlain, South Dakota, 1885; died Seattle, Washington, 1948), "*Mossy Wood, Washington*," 1934, color lithograph, 13 ½ x 9 inches, Seattle Public Library Special Collections

A high-resolution image is available upon request, call 503-881-3396 or email afoust@willamette.edu



Virginia Darcé (born Portland, Oregon, 1910; died Los Angeles, California, 1985), "*The Market*," 1938, tempera on board, 22 ½ x 30 ½ inches, Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon, Courtesy of the Fine Arts Collection, US General Services Administration, New Deal Art Project, L45.3.2

A high-resolution image is available upon request, call 503-881-3396 or email afoust@willamette.edu



Jacob Elshin (born St. Petersburg, Russia, 1892; died Seattle, Washington, 1976), "Miners at Work," 1937-38, oil on canvas, 5 x 12 feet, collection of the City of Renton, Washington, courtesy of United States Postal Service. ©2019 USPS

A high-resolution image is available upon request, call 503-881-3396 or email afoust@willamette.edu



Bue Kee (born Portland, Oregon, 1893; died Multnomah County, Oregon, 1985), "Owl," 1939, clay, 15 1/8 x 6 1/4 x 14 inches, Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon, Courtesy of the Fine Arts Collection, US General Services Administration, New Deal Art Project, L42.28

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Charlotte Mish (born Lebanon, Pennsylvania, 1896; died Portland, Oregon, 1974), *Map of Oregon Flora*, 1939, oil and tempera on canvas, 54 x 72 inches, State Library of Oregon, Salem

A high-resolution image is available upon request, call 503-881-3396 or email afoust@willamette.edu



Kamekichi Tokita (born Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan, 1897; died Seattle, Washington, 1948)

Backyard, 1934, oil on canvas, 26 11/16 x 21 9/16 inches, Seattle Art Museum, Public Works of Art Project, Washington State, 33.231

A high-resolution image is available upon request, call 503-881-3396 or email afoust@willamette.edu



Aimee Gorham (born St. Paul, Minnesota, 1883; died Seattle, Washington, 1974), "*Solomon*," 1937, wood marquetry, 61³/₈ × 37¹/₄ inches, Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon, Loan from the Fine Arts Program, US General Services Administration, WPA, Federal Art Project, 1935–1943, with Gratitude to Edsel Colvin, Mark Humpal, and Bill Rhoades, L2013.14.1

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INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY

Interviews can be arranged with the Tacoma Art Museum's interim Chief Curator and Curator of Collections and Special Exhibitions Margaret Bullock Margaret Bullock by emailing museum-art@willamette.edu or by calling 503-881-3396.