



AUGUST 24, 2015

SURVEY OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE COLLECTION OF GRANT HIGH SCHOOL, PORTLAND, OREGON

1. Introduction

This document presents an overview of the cultural heritage holdings in Grant High School, Portland, Oregon. The survey was conducted in collaboration with Peter Meijer Architect, Portland, in the context of the current study of Grant High School for upcoming design and renovation work.

The aim of this initial survey is to identify those cultural heritage objects that are currently housed in the building, and provide recommendations for possible next steps in safeguarding of the collection during renovation, the conservation of the collection, and how to best utilize and present the visual art holdings in order to enhance the cultural heritage assets of Grant High School.

Multiple on site visits were made to identify and examine the works, referencing the PPS art inventory compiled by Caryl Waters in 1989, and referencing earlier on site review conducted by Nina Olsson at the request of Doug Capps in 2007 for the PPS Magellan Study, with further research conducted in consultation with the art historian Ginny Allen. Cameron Vaughn Tyler was interviewed regarding stewardship and tracking of the collection.

The survey formulates proposals and options on how to best approach the collection from a cultural heritage preservation perspective, from best practices in art conservation to improving and acknowledging the historical significance of the pieces.

2.1 The Collection

The visual arts holdings in the Grant High School building represent a wide range of works, from paintings on canvas and murals, to works on paper such as prints, photographs and books. While

The Grant High School Cultural Heritage Collection may be divided into following four groups:

- Progressive Era** (described in section 2.2)
- New Deal Era** (described in section 2.3)
- **1940-1970** (described in section 2.4)
- Artist-in-the-Schools generated work** (described in section 2.5)
- Photo memorabilia** (described in section 2.6)



2.2 Progressive Era

1) Carl Hoeckner (b. 1883 Munich, Germany–d. 1978 Hayward, CA), *The Ideals of Education*, 1932.

The two large format murals embellish the proscenium walls of the Auditorium. The murals are known as the Fletcher Memorial Murals, in commemoration of William Thomas Fletcher, the first principal of Grant High School, and were dedicated September 24, 1932.

BACKGROUND

In 1883, Carl Hoeckner was born into a long family line of engravers, etchers and lithographers in Munich, Germany. Hoeckner studied at art academies in Hamburg, Cologne, Munich, Berlin and Brussels. He arrived in the United States in 1910 and worked in Marshall Field's Department store's advertising department throughout WWI. During this time, Hoeckner pursued fine art and became deeply political. His paintings express his feelings at the horror of WWI and the rise of Fascism. His work is best described as a synthesis between Social-Realism and Expressionism. He aligned himself with the radical and avant-garde artists of the day, founding a group called the Cor Ardens (Ardent Hearts). In 1929, he became an instructor at the Art Institute of Chicago where he taught industrial design. He also served as the Director of the Graphics Division of the Illinois Art Project of the WPA. He exhibited at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Society of Independent Artists, NY, the Pennsylvania Academy, Philadelphia, PA and the National Academy of Design, NY. He died in Hayward, CA in 1972. (bio by Richard Norton Gallery, Chicago).



Left: Carl Hoeckner, "Cleopatra", 1915, painted while he was a member of the Palette and Chisel Club, Chicago; Right: Cover of 1922 No-Jury Society of Artists Exhibition, designed by Carl Hoeckner.

In 1922, Hoeckner was co-founder of the No-Jury Society of Artists, whose first shows were held at the Marshall Field & Co. Department Store.

It is unknown how Hoeckner received the commission for the Fletcher Memorial murals at Grant High School.

DESCRIPTION

Hoeckner painted the two large scenes in oil on canvas, probably off site, and they were subsequently adhered to the unpainted plaster wall (marouflage). Once in place, the murals were then patched and retouched where the canvas sections join. Each mural is composed of four sections of canvas, each shaped to follow the *ductus* of the composition, and measures

approximately 20' x 25'. The Auditorium had been a secondary addition to the original building, dating to 1925-1927, and is embellished with Egyptian Revival architectural details in the column capitals both outside the entrance and within the Auditorium. Hoeckner continued this decorative theme in his rendering of the mural scenes: on the left, male youths ascend steps towards a figure (Prometheus?) haloed in light, bearing a hammer and a staff; on the right female youths ascend steps towards a figure (Athena?), haloed in light, bearing a flame or lamp. The figures are painted in a stylized manner with strong blue contours, robes that suggest ancient costume, figures often in profile, that recall the Egyptian style of painting that had become such a strong part of the Art Deco vernacular. In the extreme upper corners, figures of modern American history emerge above fields of figures: on the left, Ulysses S. Grant, and on the right Susan B. Anthony. The overall theme is strongly influenced by the Progressive movement's commitment to education and egalitarianism. Grant represents the victory of the Anti-slavery Union over the Confederacy, while Susan B. Anthony represents the recently victorious Suffragist movement. Along the bottom edge of the composition are two groups of figures that are of more recent times: on the left, a group of Native American warriors, bearing rifles, spears and bows, and on the right, a group of pioneers, men and women bearing rifles, and children. The groups greet each other with their weapons not drawn.



The scenes are framed by strips of canvas, painted black with thin gold painted stripes. Along the bottom edges, thicker bands of black marouflaged canvas are present bearing epitaphs, also painted in gold on a black background, that read as follows:

Left:

IN+MEMORY+OF+WILLIAM+THOMAS+FLETCHER+++BORN+XXVII+MARCH+MDCCCXXVI+++DIED
IX+JULY+MCMXXVIII+++FIRST+PRINCIPAL+OF+ULYSSES+S+GRANT+HIGH+SCHOOL
MCMXXIV+TEACHERS+AND+STUDENTS+WERE+HIS+FRIENDS+++HE+TRUSTED+THEM
AND+THEY+TRUSTED+HIM+++BY+PRECEPT+AND+EXAMPLE+HE+TAUGHT+THAT+GOOD
CITIZENS+ARE+THE+NATIONS+STRENGTH+AND+THAT+LIFE+ITSELF+IS+A+SACRED+TRUST

Right:

THE+MEMORIAL+OF+VIRTUE+IS+IMMORTAL++BECAUSE+IT+IS+KNOWN+WITH+GOD+AND+WITH
MEN+++WHEN+IT+IS+PRESENT+MEN+TAKE+EXAMPLE+OF+IT+AND+WHEN+IT+IS+GONE+THEY
DESIRE+IT: IT+WEARETH+A+CROWN+AND+TRIUMPH+FOREVER+HAVING+GOTTEN+THE
VICTORY+STRIVING+FOR+UNDEFILED+REWARDS+++HONOURABLE+AGE+IS+NOT+THAT+WHICH
STANDETH+IN+LENGTH+OF+TIME+NOR+THAT+IS+ENSURED+BY+NUMBER+OF+YEARS+

CONDITION



The two murals are located on the east end of the Auditorium, and are the only site specific works in the Grant High School cultural heritage collection.

The blue lines denote the sections of canvas that compose each mural.

The right hand mural is located adjacent to a large bank of south facing windows. Although the windows have curtains to keep light out of the Auditorium, it appears that the windows are generally left uncovered. Consequently, the overall condition of the right hand mural has been affected by light damage, specifically the UV and Infra Red spectra. The chromatic rendering of the right hand mural is slightly faded, due to light damage, and the surface coating appears darkened, again from the effects of UV that accelerates aging of the varnish layer. The paintings were examined under natural light exclusively.

Delamination of the marouflaged canvas from the substrate plaster wall is evident along the edges, and some blisters appear on the surface.

The red sections identify areas that are damaged.

Much of the damage is due to a previous treatment, when coarse incisions were made through the paint, ground and canvas layers, and appear to have been done in an attempt to resolve the blistered delamination of the mural from the wall. The edges of the incisions are raised and out of plane, and are particularly frequent in the lower sections of the murals. This may be due to the higher incidence of blistering along the lower sections of the mural caused by the angle of incoming light and IR (heat) from the window, or may have been caused by heat generated by stage lights.

In addition, some abrasions, burns and other surface damages are visible in the lower half of the compositions, perhaps due to the greater accessibility to surface.

Some accretions, such as large splatter from vandalism are also present on the surface.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fletcher Memorial Murals constitute the most significant and valuable cultural heritage asset at Grant High School. The painter, Carl Hoeckner, is considered historically significant, especially in the context of early 20th century Chicago, where mural painting as a genre flourished and was influential throughout the USA. The murals were conceived and produced specifically for the Grant High School space. Since the murals were coeval with the construction of the Auditorium, and not a later addition, the optimal conservation approach would leave the murals in their current site, and treatment would be conducted *in situ*.

During renovation, the surfaces should be adequately protected with a barrier to keep dust and humidity out, yet should also provide protection from surface damage from accidental impact.

Should the design process generate a plan to remove the proscenium walls, the murals could be removed, conserved off site, and reinstalled in a newly designed space. Removal of the murals would require custom scaffolding, a crew of trained assistants working under a conservator that acts as project manager, and 1-2 months time for testing and to safely remove murals.

In terms of costs, the treatment *in situ* would be a significantly less expensive budget with respect to the removal, and reinstallation of the murals.



2) Louise Hahn (b. 1857, Indiana-d.1922 Los Angeles, CA), *Portrait of Thomas Fletcher*, 1937?, oil on canvas, Grant H.S. Library. (1989 Inv. Number 071035).



The painting is signed Louise Hahn in paint in the lower right corner. The date in the lower right corner of the painting has been vandalized, and appears to be 1937.

The work is in fair condition, with some surface accretions visible.

The work should be wrapped in protective film with a rigid front protection and backing board for storage during renovation. The work requires light conservation treatment.

2.3 New Deal era

Grant High School was recipient of several New Deal era commissions, each recorded in the 1989 PPS inventory as having been located in the Library. None of the works were found at Grant High School in 2015.

1) Darrel Austin (b. 1907, Raymond, WA), #3 *Fisherman*, 1936, oil on canvas, (1989 Inv. Number 071036)



In 2007, Ginny Allen and Nina Olsson examined of the piece, during which G. Allen recognized labels bearing the title and the number 3 on the *verso*, which identified the piece as one of a series of five that Austin had painted under the WPA: *The Musicians*, *The Dishwashers*, *The Skier*, *Woodcutters*.

Two had been placed at Timberline Lodge, one was at the Portland Art Museum (on loan to Timberline), one at Jefferson High School (on loan to Timberline), and one at Tongue Point Naval Academy (labeled as *Fish Story*), later placed at Grant High School.

In 2011, *Fish Story* was loaned by PPS to Timberline Lodge to be reunited the other paintings in the series.

2) Clayton Sumner Price (b.1874, Bedford, IA- d.1950, Portland, OR), *Landscape with House*, 1937, 34" x 44".
(1989 Inv. Number 959732)

In 2007, Ginny Allen and Nina Olsson examined of the piece in the conference room of the Library. The work is signed in the lower left corner C.S. PRICE; on the bottom edge of the frame is a brass plaque that identifies the piece as an Oregon WPA Art Project Center commission. A label on *verso* states ownership from Portland School Art League, also a conservation sticker from Portland Art Museum that says conversation was completed on June 3, 1970.

During the 2015 survey, the piece was no longer in the conference room, and neither the librarian, nor the secretary in the main office knew where the piece currently is.

3) Ray Neuffer, Three-paneled carved wood screen, 1936, 61" x 29" each.

The screen was located in the Vice-Principal's office in 1989, yet we were not able to locate the screen in 2007, nor 2015. This screen is one of 4 identical replicas made during the WPA for PPS schools, and were found in 1989 at Jefferson High School (seen 2007), Alameda Elementary School, Woodstock Elementary.

Ray Neuffer oversaw the wood working shop set up by the WPA, that began by making carved wood objects for the schools. Neuffer's workshop went on to produce all of the furniture for Timberline Lodge. (See Sarah Baker Munro, *Timberline Lodge, The History, Art and Craft of an American Icon*, 2009, pg. 100)



4) WPA prints.

Included in the 1989 Inventory were a series of 13 WPA lithographs, 20 WPA color litho plates, 7 WPA textile samples, and 12 WPA serigraphs, and that were not found in the 2004 Inventory, nor during the 2007 Magellan site review. These include the following works:

- 1) Nelson Poole, *Landscape #2*, lithograph, 1936.
- 2) Joseph Sheridan, *Lyric No.2*, lithograph, 1936.
- 3) Katherine Uhl, *Night Before Nov. 3, 1936*, lithograph, 1937.
- 4) Sebastian Simonet, *William Keith*, lithograph, 1936.
- 5) Chee Chin, *St. Mary's Square*, lithograph, 1936.
- 6) Lloyd Wulf, *Head of a Young Woman*, lithograph, 1937.
- 7) Otis Oldfield, *Bay Bridge Series Sept.*, lithograph, 1936.
- 8) Lloyd Wulf, *Landscape*, lithograph, 1937.
- 9) Pauline Vinson, *Trolley House*, lithograph, 1936.
- 10) Ray Bertrand, *Women's College, San Francisco*, lithograph, 1935.
- 11) Lola Eve Rivol, *Untitled*, color lithograph.
- 12) Paul Rockwood, *Embarcadero from Telegraph Hill*, lithograph.
- 13) Set of 20 color lithograph plates of Egyptian murals.
- 14) Set of 7 textile samples (WPA Milwaukee, WI)
- 15) Kendrick Bell, Set of 12 serigraphs, *At the Zoo*, (WPA, Milwaukee, WI).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The current location, loan agreement terms, and storage condition of all the WPA era pieces must be researched. Where possible, the works could be reintegrated into the renovated space.

2.4 1940-1970

1) Howard Elmer House (b. 1877 Manhattan, KS-d. 1969 Portland, OR), *Portrait of Ulysses S. Grant*, 1948?, oil on canvas, 36" x 24".
(1989 Inv. Cat. Number 072107)

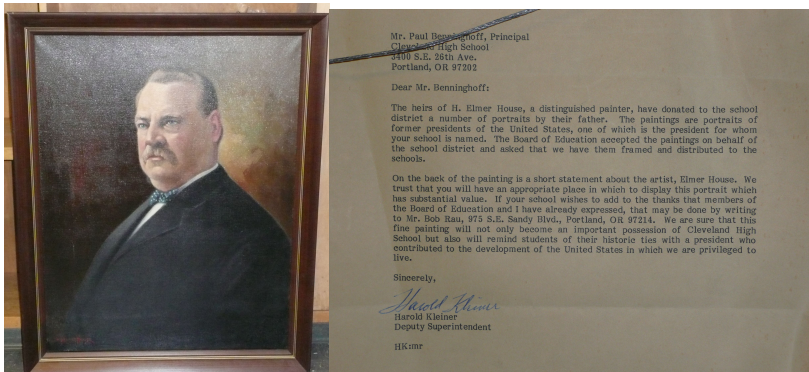


DESCRIPTION

The work is painted in oil on canvas, and is signed H. Elmer House in the lower left corner.

House was educated at the Art Institute of Chicago, and at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts. He came to Portland in the 1930's, and was associated with the Mid West Studios. He was a member of, and exhibited with, the American Artists Professional League and the Oregon Society of Artists. He was one of six artists representing Oregon in the first National Exhibition of American Art in New York in 1936. (From G. Allen, J. Klevitt, *Oregon Painters 1850-1950*, 1999.) His portraits of other prominent historical figures for whom PPS high schools are named are found in Lincoln H.S. and Cleveland H.S. (image below)

The exact date of the PPS portrait series is not known, but appears to have been created in the 1940's. The portraits were donated to the school district by the heirs of H. Elmer House, as documented on the letter mounted to the *verso* of the portrait of Grover Cleveland at Cleveland H.S.



Left: Portrait of G. Cleveland at Cleveland High School; Right: Letter regarding the donation on the verso.



2) Teaching Collection of 19th century Prints
(1989 Inv. Cat. Numbers 072110-072126, 072138)

Listed in the 1989 Inventory is a series of 17 authentic prints of various types (etchings, wood block prints, lithographs), that were stored in the library along with the WPA prints described in section 2.3. Caryl Waters' description also includes authentication by print collector and philanthropist Gordon Gilkey, with associated appraised values from 1985.

Their location was listed at the Metropolitan Arts Council, precursor of the Regional Arts and Culture Council (1995).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Verify the location of the Teaching Collection, and return it to the Grant High School Library, to be stored in a safe location.

3) Teaching Collection of 20th century prints by regional artists

In addition to the collection of 19th century prints, a selection of 11 teaching prints by local artists of 20th century (1937-1957) was available for study in the library. This may be in storage with the WPA and 19th century prints stored the RACC.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Verify the location of the Teaching Collection, and return it to the Grant High School Library, to be stored in a safe location.

2.5 Artist-in-the-Schools generated works

1) Bill Garnett, *Untitled*, 1975, acrylic on plaster, 80" x 90'.
(1989 Inv. Number 072108)



The mural spans the entire width of the east wall of the Library, and was painted on the preexisting plastered wall above the bookcases.

It was created during the Artists-in-the-Schools program, where artists were in re in the mid 1970's, and represents many of the stylistic and subject content that was typical of the period. The stylistic portrayal is clearly part of the Pop art movement that taps into popular culture, influenced by the work of James Rosenquist, Andy Warhol, and Roy Lichtenstein.

CONDITION

The mural is in good condition.

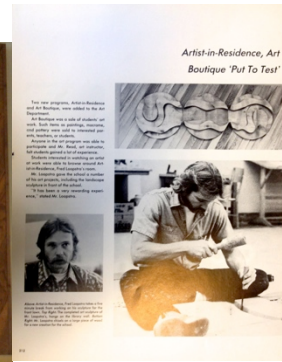
RECOMMENDATIONS

The mural represents the 1970's art, with content that is still current, and still can provide themes for discussion with students. The mural was created for the space, and painted with student involvement.

If the wall will be retained during renovation, a barrier should be put up to protect the surface during the renovation process.

If the wall will be reconfigured during the design process, high-resolution photographs should be taken prior to demolition to document the mural for future didactic use and to allow the image to be reproduced if desired.

2) Fred Loopstra, *Landscape*, 1974-1975, carved and pieced wood assemblage, 52" x 134".
(1989 Inv. Number 071032)



DESCRIPTION

The work was carved on site during the Artist residency program in 1974-75. The work was created for the front of the school, and installed in the library after a temporary installation.

Loopstra studied at the Kansas City Art Institute, and the University of Oregon. He completed a major international commission for Auckland, New Zealand in 1971, titled *Homage to Will*. The artist lives in Cottage Grove, Oregon.

Eugene Register Guard:

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1310&dat=19711017&id=B6FWAAAIBAJ&sjid=3ecDAAAIBAJ&pg=5314,3777942&hl=en>

CONDITION

The work is in good condition.

RECOMMENDATIONS

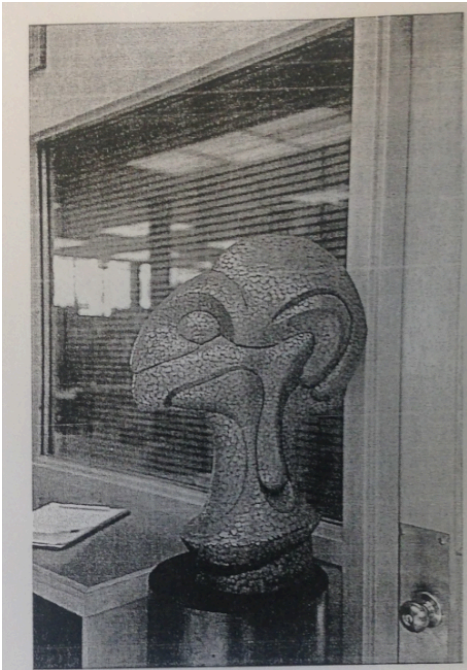
The work is also emblematic of the natural themes of the 1970's. If possible, it would be optimal to reinstall the work with a label in the school.



3) John Redman, *Gladiator's Head*, 1976, acrylic mixed media, 25" high.
(1989 Inv. Number 071034)

This work was listed in the 1989 inventory, and, based on the 1989 photo, was located at the door to the conference room B. The sculpture is not longer visible at Grant H.S.

Oregon native John Redman received his MFA in sculpture from Portland State University in 1976. He is currently represented by the 12x16 Gallery in Sellwood, and resides in Portland, OR.



Neither of the librarians were familiar with the piece.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Determine the location of the piece.



4) Unknown, *Grant High School*, photo etched glass, 1976, 14" x 24.5".
(1989 Inv. Number 071040)

This work hangs in the South window wall of the library.

As described in the 1989 inventory, the artist is unknown, though believed to be an Artist-in-the-Schools generated work. The photos used clearly date to the mid to late 1970's.



2.6 Memorabilia

Hanging in the main hallways are many black and white photos of sports teams, dating to the earliest Grant H.S. teams.



3.0 Access to the Collections

As described in earlier sections of this survey, several pieces of historical interest have been moved since the 1989 survey. This may have been done to safeguard valuable pieces from vandalism or theft. However, the works are of historical nature and were conceived as art that should impact the educational process of students in the building.

When possible, it would be optimal to conserve works and retain their accessibility for students, with adequate security measures to protect the works.



4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT STEPS

4.1 Define the stewardship protocol for the PPS collections

The first step in the evaluation of a collection is to examine the current policies that will affect the preservation of the collection as a whole. The determination of who will manage the inventory, track the location of works that move, and implement a preservation plan is imperative for the future of the collection. In light of the historic nature of the cultural heritage holdings included in this survey, it would be most efficient and indicated for the PPS Facilities to continue to manage the collection.

4.2 Identify and inventory works in a centralized database

An inventory of all the cultural heritage objects in the collection is fundamental for the successful management of the collection. While a database of New Deal era works is in the process of being implemented by PPS Facilities and Asset Manager Cameron Vaughn Tyler, this systematic inventory needs to be extended to all the works belonging to PPS. The Inventory will identify works, their current location, track movements for temporary loan or exhibition, their condition, historical notes, bibliography and include high resolution digital images, and will be the primary reference for ongoing maintenance of the collection. Various systems of identification and tagging may be employed.

4.3 Condition assessment

As described in sections 2.1-2.6 of this survey, Grant High School is a repository of quality and significant cultural heritage objects that reflect the history of the Portland Public Schools, the Pacific Northwest and beyond. An assessment of the condition of works of the paintings, photos, and various objects in the collection would provide a baseline evaluation of the needs of the collection, and create a strategic prioritization for the conservation treatment of the works. Possible threats to the collection that should be considered during the renovation process will be identified, such as light damage, fluctuations in relative humidity, temperature control, and pest management.

4.4 Conservation treatment

Conservation treatment of specific works of the collection will be conducted as determined in the Condition Assessment.

4.5 Long-Range Preservation plan

The Long-Range Preservation plan will be drafted in conjunction with PPS Facilities and Asset Management. The Preservation plan will outline how the collection management policies will balance the conservation needs of the collection with the ongoing growth of the collection through new acquisitions.

4.6 Art historical research on pieces

Research on the collection will be conducted in collaboration with PPS Facilities and Asset Manager and Archivist. The individual works will be photodocumented with high-resolution images suitable for publication or didactic use. Art historical research will be conducted to provide a greater historical context of the pieces.

4.6 Recommendations for Installation of art works



HCG will consult on selection of cultural heritage objects to display, and the new installation of the collection, based on providing both visual and historical context and the best aesthetic configuration.

4.8 Recommendations on lighting

Recommendations will be made on the best and most advanced options for lighting to provide optimal visibility and high chromatic rendering, while conforming to the standards of historic preservation, and the aesthetics of the historic space.

4.9 Recommendation on window treatments

Window treatments provide barriers that minimize light exposure to the objects while also adding versatility and functionality to the conferencing rooms. HCG will work with the design team to provide options and recommendations on technology that is effective and visibly sensitive to the historic context of the building.