

Established March 2010

Salem Public Art Commission 2023 Annual Report



Public Works Operations Building. Sculpture by Brad Rude.



General Commission Information

- Meetings:** Second Wednesday of each month at 3:30 p.m.
- Members:** Zachary Hull (Chair), Susan Napack (Vice-Chair), Spencer Emerick, Eduardo Diaz-Salazar, Krista Lauer
- City Staff:** Keith Bondaug-Winn



Street painting at 2nd St NW and Kingwood Ave NW.

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 and all seven members to the Commission are appointed by the City Council. In September 2022, Commissioner Zachary Hull was selected to replace Chris D'Arcy as Commission Chair and Commissioner Susan Napack was selected as Vice-Chair. Current Commissioners include Spencer Emerick, Eduardo Diaz-Salazar, and Krista Lauer. 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, 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.



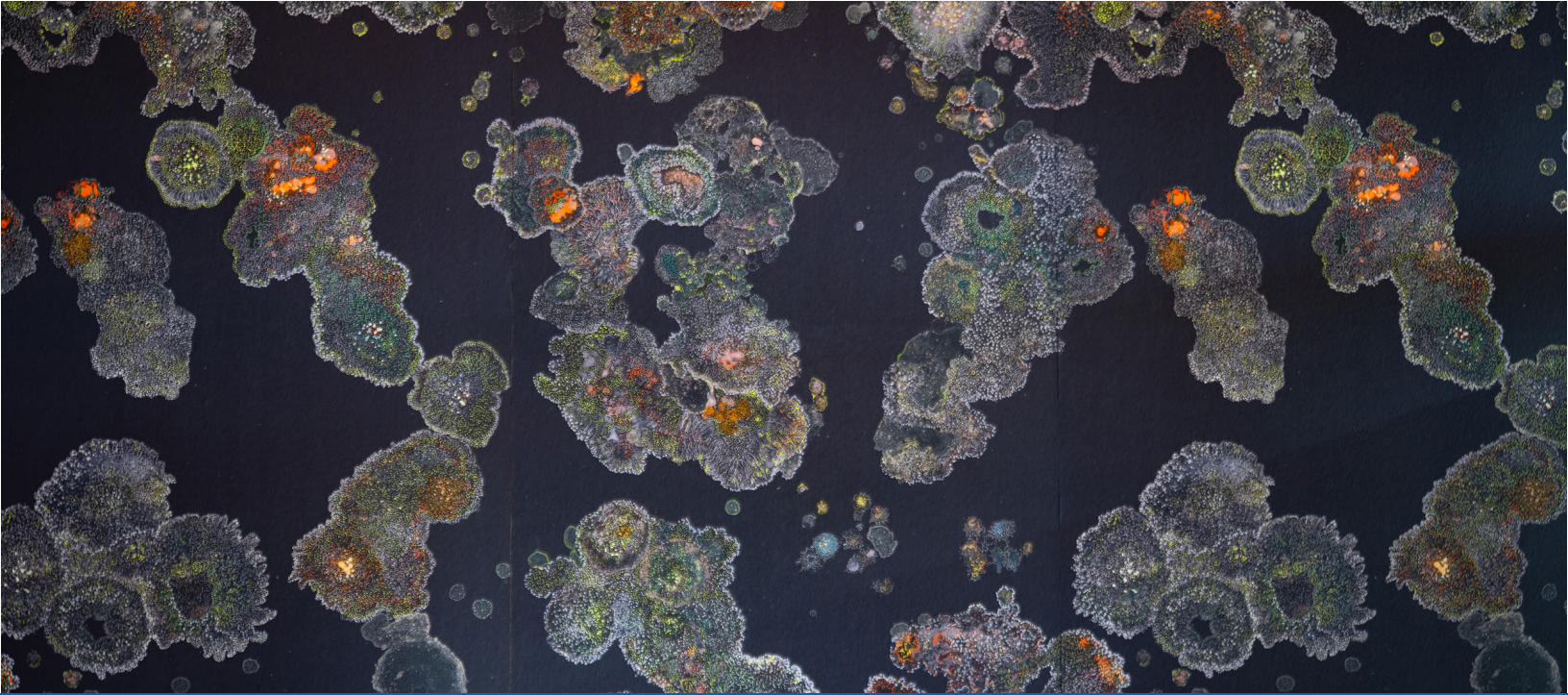
Eco-Earth Globe in Riverfront Park.

The Public Art Collection

The City's Public Art Collection 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 \$1.37 million. 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 (<https://www.cityofsalem.net/government/boards-commissions/commissions/salem-public-art-commission>) along with an interactive story map of the artwork locations and descriptions (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/e086aebd172149cfb38c4a3d1e69d796>). 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 and to make public art accessible.

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. Funding from the Transient Occupancy Tax was restored in the 2022-23 Fiscal Year in the amount of \$25,000, and the amount budgeted for FY 24-25 is yet to be determined.



Wallpaper art by Claire Burbridge in the lobby at the new Public Works Operations Building.

On November 23, 2020, City Council approved Ordinance Bill 13-20 to amend Salem Revised Code 15.030, which removes 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 2023-24 is \$72,350.

2023 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.

New Public Works Operations Building

Renowned artists Claire Burbridge and Brad Rude played pivotal roles in enhancing the aesthetic appeal of Salem's newly unveiled Operations Building. Originating from Walla Walla, Washington, sculptor Brad Rude created a captivating and whimsical bronze sculpture featuring a beaver atop a ram at the building's entrance, extending a warm welcome to employees and visitors. Inside, Ashland-based Claire Burbridge meticulously designed expansive custom wallpaper for the customer lobby and contributed two original drawings near the main conference room, drawing inspiration from her visits to Bush Pasture Park. Their distinctive works not only adorn public spaces but also infuse the building with a unique artistic essence, symbolizing Salem's dedication to cultural



Drawings by Claire Burbridge in the lobby at the new Public Works Operations Building.

enrichment. Salem Public Art Commissioners Michael Hernandez and Paula Booth, crucial in artist selection and design, collaborated with Mark Becketl and Hacker Architects, marking a significant milestone in Salem's commitment to seamlessly integrating art into public infrastructure. Beyond its utilitarian purpose, the new Public Works Operations Building stands as a testament to Salem's dedication to nurturing creativity and enhancing the city's visual landscape through meaningful and accessible art.

Public Mural Program

As stated in the Salem Public Art Commission Guidelines, Policies and Procures, "The Purpose of the Public Mural Program Procedures and Standards is to ensure that the Public Mural Program enhances the aesthetics of the City, provides avenues for original artistic expression in the City provides public edification through access to original works of public art, encourages community participation in the creation of original works of art, and reduces the incidence of graffiti and other crime while increasing community identity and fostering a sense of place.

Changes to Mural Code

On May 17, 2023, the Salem Public Art Commission (SPAC) unanimously supported Councilor Linda Nishioka's proposal to amend the Salem Revised Code, signaling a collective commitment to expanding the scope of public murals. The amendment sought to break free from the constraints of traditional building walls, enabling the adornment of diverse surfaces. The subsequent successful passage of Ordinance Bill No. 8-23, a targeted amendment within Chapter 15 of the Salem Revised Code, marked a pivotal legislative moment. This change, emblematic of SPAC's dedication, notably broadened the artistic canvas to include curvilinear surfaces like silos and water towers. The



Public mural at Pacific Coast Producers, 1520 Woodrow St NE.

amendment underscores SPAC's steadfast commitment to fostering a diverse tapestry of public art, promoting innovation and inclusivity in creative expressions throughout Salem.

Dave's Hot Chicken

On June 14, 2023, the Salem Public Art Commission retrospectively addressed a mural project initiated by Dave's Hot Chicken in Salem's Willamette Towne Center area. Despite the mural being installed prior to commission approval, the collaborative effort between the eatery and artists added a colorful touch to the cityscape. The commission, after meticulous evaluation and a public hearing with overwhelming support through hundreds of positive emails, officially granted approval. This unique situation highlighted the spontaneous nature of the installation, underscoring the importance of aligning community creativity with formal approval processes. The commission's subsequent endorsement reflects its ongoing commitment to balancing artistic expression with regulatory considerations, contributing to the dynamic and visually engaging urban environment in Salem.

Street Painting Program

The development of a street painting program required a series of code revisions that included the addition of a new term and definition. "Street painting" was added to Chapter 15, and an exemption to the City's sign code, Chapter 900, provided an exemption for street paintings. This set of code revisions required City Council approval, which was approved on June 13, 2022, and a subsequent application process was developed and implemented. The first street painting project was funded, in part, by Neighborhood Program Services funds, then Travel Salem provided funding for seven neighborhood associations in the amount of \$1,000 each.

While not directly involved in the Street Painting Program, the Salem Public Art Commission (SPAC) proudly recognizes the impactful contributions of this initiative to the city's artistic vibrancy. In 2023,



Street painting at 2nd St NW and Kingwood Ave NW.

two captivating street paintings graced Salem's streets, showcasing the collaborative efforts between neighborhood associations and the broader artistic community. West Salem Neighborhood Association contributed to the artistic landscape by creating a captivating street painting at the intersection of 2nd St NW and Kingwood Ave NW. This dynamic collaboration added an engaging visual element to the West Salem neighborhood, enhancing its unique character.

Adjacent to Bush Pasture Park, the South-Central Association of Neighbors initiated another captivating street painting at the intersection of Church St SE and Leffelle St SE. This project, nestled near the park's scenic surroundings, became a lively expression of community identity and artistic collaboration.

Looking ahead to 2024, SPAC acknowledges the potential for additional street painting projects initiated by various neighborhood associations. Through collaboration and promotion, SPAC aims to amplify the impact of the Street Painting Program, contributing to the city's vibrant artistic tapestry

Managing the Collection

Library Art Hall

The Art Hall space has been generously provided by the Salem Public Library in collaboration with the Salem Public Library Foundation, the Salem Public Art Commission, and the Oregon Artist Series Foundation to present rotating art exhibitions to the general public throughout the year and free of charge. This new space is dedicated to exploring artwork created by Salem area artists and is located inside the main entrance to the library. Starting in January 2022 the Oregon Artist Series Foundation (OASF), a non-profit organization that works with local partners to secure artwork from northwest artists for display at the Salem Convention Center (SCC) and in downtown Salem, has agreed to help the Salem Library



Library Art Hall in Salem Public Library. Quarterly exhibitions by Oregon Artist Series Foundation.

Foundation secure rotating shows of community art in the Library Art Hall / Exhibition Space. Below is a list of the 2023 exhibitions:

1. **Nic & Sloy Exhibition** (October 31, 2022 – January 16, 2023)
2. **John Colburn Exhibition** (February 27, 2023 – June 23, 2023)
3. **Margaret Coe, Jon Jay Cruson, Matthew Dennison, Nancy Lindburg Exhibition**
(June 26, 2023 – September 15, 2023)
4. **Gary Westford Exhibition** (September 11, 2023 – January 22, 2024)

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.

Completed & In-Process Artwork Repairs for 2023. Multiple artworks were prioritized for maintenance this last year.

- **Good Cents (Artists: Lillian Pitt & Mikkel and Saralyn Hilde):** This iconic sculpture underwent meticulous cleaning, carried out in collaboration with Public Works Stormwater field crews. Notably, the City of Salem Facilities department played a crucial role in facilitating the repositioning of signage. This thoughtful adjustment revealed an intricate bottle image within the negative space of the sculpture's legs, adding a layer of depth and nuance to its artistic narrative.



*Good Cents sculpture by Lillian Pitt,
Mikkel and Saralyn Hilde.*

- **The Drummer and Rooster (Artist: Robert Hess):** Following a unanimous approval during the August 2022 SPAC meeting, the repair project for The Drummer and Rooster has progressed smoothly. Commissioners, recognizing the artwork's significance, instructed engineering staff to work closely with the skilled artisan, Lee Imonen. The repair is currently underway at Lee Imonen's studio in Eugene, with a contracted budget not exceeding \$9,010.
- **Eco-Earth Globe:** The Eco-Earth Globe, a testament to Salem's rich history, received official recognition as a Local Historic Resource through Ordinance Bill NO. 13-22, adopted by the Salem City Council on July 25, 2022. This designation highlights its profound human and cultural significance, linked to the Oregon Pulp and Paper Mill and Boise Cascade. The Globe stands as one of Salem's pioneering community projects, creatively transforming an industrial structure into a symbol of world peace and cultural diversity.

Architectural Resources Group, the appointed conservator, conducted a thorough condition assessment in 2020, offering recommendations for restoration and providing a detailed cost estimate. The total cost is estimated to be \$400,000 and includes approximately \$320,000 for construction (including contingencies for inflation and other unknowns) and \$80,000 for design, permitting, project management and inspection.

In the fiscal year 2022-23 budget, the City Council demonstrated its commitment by allocating an additional \$112,000 from the Transient Occupancy Tax fund for the Eco-Earth Globe Rehabilitation at Riverfront Park. The project has garnered support from the local community, with the foundation raising \$35,000 from individual donations, emphasizing its broad significance.



Eco-Earth Globe in Riverfront Park. Photo by Ron Cooper.

Looking ahead, the Salem Parks Foundation's resilient fundraising campaign has adapted to challenges, expanding the initial goal to \$400,000. Despite a setback in securing a State legislative grant, strategic collaborations, including \$71,000 from the Salem Parks Foundation, showcase the community's involvement. Chair Zach Hull's proactive use of SPAC's social media platforms further amplifies the project, reflecting SPAC's dedication to navigating financial intricacies and ensuring the preservation of impactful public art in Salem.

Public Art Outreach & Education

- **Social Media Plan:** A dynamic 12-month social media plan, spearheaded by Commissioner Krista Lauer, stands at the forefront of SPAC's digital engagement strategy. Weekly Wednesday afternoon posts serve a dual purpose: promoting the City's public art collection and amplifying messages from the vibrant artistic community. This strategic initiative not only ensures consistent online visibility but also cultivates a broader appreciation for Salem's diverse artistic landscape.
- **New SPAC Website:** As a digital hub for all things SPAC, the revamped website offers a user-friendly interface. Home to the Salem Public Art Collection Online Tour, the Street Painting Program, Commission Members' details, Rules and Bylaws, the Public Mural Program, and pertinent Public Notices, Hearings, Staff Reports, and Decisions, the site is a comprehensive resource. Monthly updates, including SPAC meeting minutes and agendas, ensure that visitors have access to the latest information, fostering transparency and accessibility.



Public mural at Dave's Hot Chicken at 3817 Center St NE.

- **Salem Public Art Collection Online Tour:** Collaborating with the City's GIS department, SPAC facilitated the creation of an immersive online story map. This digital tour showcases selected pieces from the Salem Public Art Collection, strategically highlighting artwork in key locations such as Downtown, Civic Center, Library, and Salem Convention Center. The interactive map evolves with regular updates, incorporating newly acquired public murals and street painting projects. Each entry includes detailed information and descriptions, enriching the public's understanding and appreciation of Salem's diverse artistic landscape

Looking Ahead – 2024 and Beyond

- **SPAC Strategic Planning.** In the 2023 draft strategic plan, the Salem Public Art Commission (SPAC) outlined a comprehensive strategy to enhance community engagement with public art. Emphasizing monthly visits to Neighborhood Associations and art groups, SPAC aimed to foster collaborative conversations, ensuring that public art initiatives align with the diverse needs and aspirations of Salem's communities. The commission committed to simplifying the mural application process, exploring impediment revisions, and compiling extensive lists of artists and potential mural sites to diversify and expand the representation of public art throughout the city.

To promote inclusivity, SPAC proposed advising on fund distribution within neighborhoods, launching a utility box art program, and identifying underrepresented areas for future art installations. Outreach initiatives included maintaining an active online presence through social media and newsletters, planning public art tours, and creating presentations for neighborhood association chairs. In tandem with this, SPAC aimed to contribute to a comprehensive Public Art Plan, exploring funding sources and strategic recommendations to fortify Salem's commitment



The Drummer and Rooster by Robert Hess. Currently undergoing repair.

to a vibrant and accessible public art scene. The commission's ambitious agenda for 2024 also encompassed refining the mural application process, commissioning a SPAC-funded public mural, and fostering increased collaboration with local arts organizations through public art walking tours and a social media takeover. Catalog management, including artist bios and provenance information, rounded out SPAC's efforts to enrich the artistic tapestry of Salem.

- **Percent for Art Program and Infrastructure Bond.** In November 2022, Salem voters overwhelmingly approved the Community Improvement Bond, allocating \$300 million for critical infrastructure projects. Significantly, one-half of one percent of eligible project costs related to building infrastructure is earmarked for public art. This groundbreaking initiative covers diverse projects such as new libraries, fire stations, parks restroom facilities, and seismic improvements to the civic center. SPAC is collaborating closely with project engineering staff to seamlessly integrate public art into these infrastructure enhancements, ensuring that the evolving face of Salem is adorned with creative expressions.
 - » **Airport Artwork as Percent for Art.** The Salem Municipal Airport's recent renovations yielded approximately \$5,300 in funds dedicated to artwork. Following the official closure of the project, the project manager will facilitate the transfer of these funds to the Salem Public Art Fund. This infusion of financial support will play a pivotal role in acquiring compelling artwork for the airport, enhancing its aesthetic appeal and contributing to the cultural vibrancy of the community it serves.



Birds by Tom Hardy.



Call Number Cascade by Amanda Wojick.



Open Teakwood Screen by Roy Setziol.

- Library Foundation Sprinkles Grant for Art Kiosk:** The recent approval of the Foundation Sprinkles Grant, spearheaded by IT professional David Muller and greenlit by Salem Public Library Foundation's Executive Director Kate Van Ummersen, marks a significant step toward enhancing accessibility to City-owned art. The pending kiosk delivery, strategically placed near added electrical and data ports during hall renovations, aims to showcase both current and past exhibits. With approvals from Library Administration and City Legal ensuring copyright compliance, the project reflects a collaborative effort. Future collaboration with the Oregon Artist Series Foundation is anticipated, expanding the exhibit to include images from previous displays at the Library Art Hall and the Convention Center.
- Library Foundation Art Collection.** Kate Van Ummersen, Executive Director of the Salem Public Library Foundation, proposed that the Salem Public Library Art Collection be given to the City of Salem to be managed under both the Library Administration and SPAC. The foundation has 44 pieces with regional artists of significance. When the library was under construction, both collections were moved and stored together in Portland. When returned to the library from storage, SPAC commissioners Eileen Cotter Howell and Paula Booth and other volunteers combined the Library Foundation's art collection and the City's art collection housed at the library and hung them together and curated them as if they were one collection. Now that these collections are physically melded, the foundation would like to discuss transfer of ownership. All art in the Library building was reviewed for a condition assessment and all of the repairs that were identified were completed.