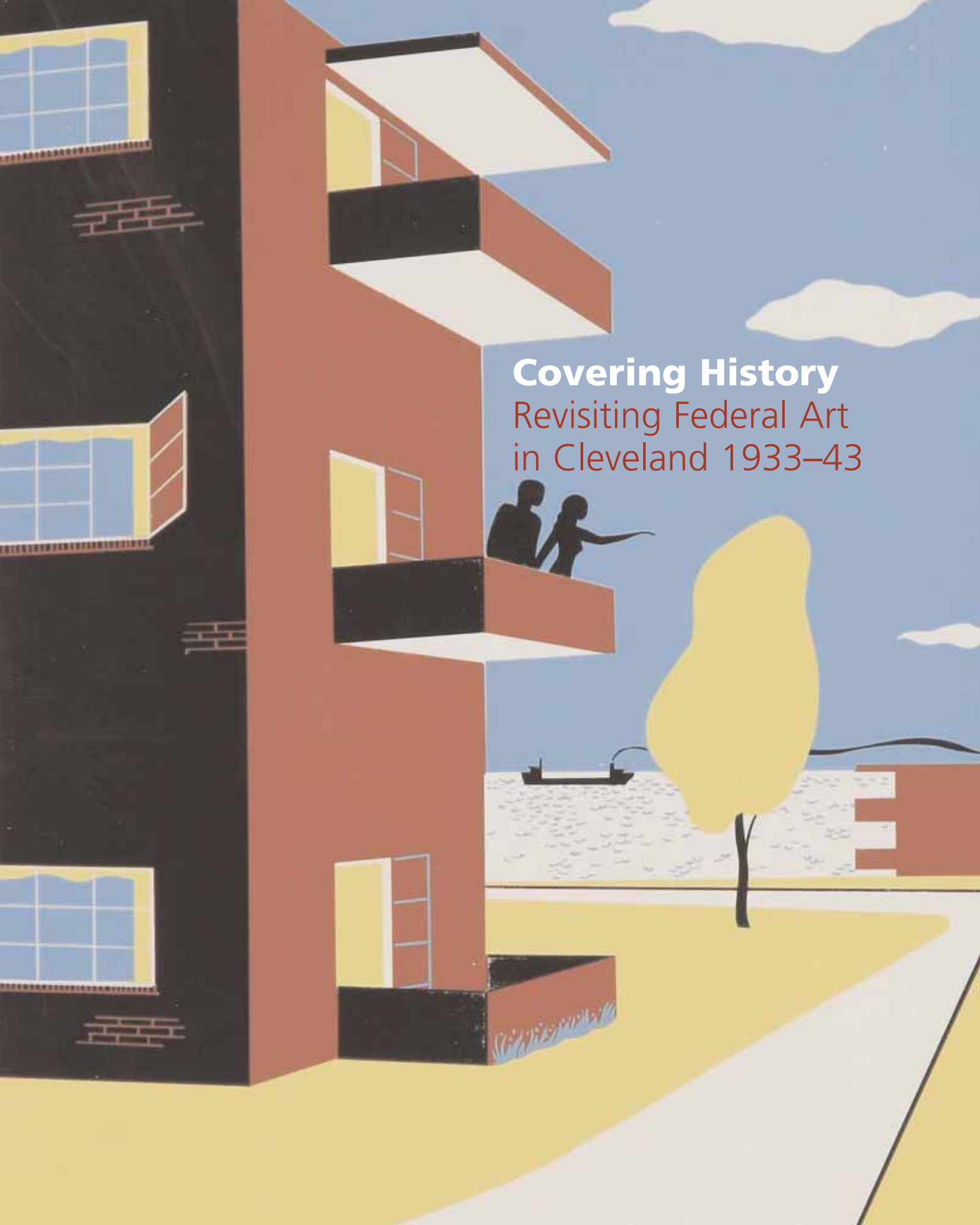

Covering History

Revisiting Federal Art in Cleveland 1933–43

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Cleveland Artists Foundation
September 8–November 25, 2006

Curated by Sharon E. Dean PhD

Introduction by Karal Ann Marling PhD

Published in partnership with the
Cleveland Public Library

Gratitude to the following for their loans and support to the exhibition

Case Western Reserve University,
Kelvin Smith Library
Cleveland Public Art
Cleveland Public Library
Cleveland State University
Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority
Intermuseum Conservation Association
Lakewood Board of Education
Lakewood High School

Special thanks to funders of this important project

Cleveland Public Library
The George Gund Foundation
Ohio Arts Council

ISBN: 0-971-6009-8-8

Design: Richard Sarian

Principal photography: Jerry Mann, Howard Agriesti, Don Snyder

Printing: Modern International Graphics

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Acknowledgments

Sharon E. Dean PhD

Implementing Federal art projects during the New Deal era required substantial community support. On a much smaller scale, producing this exhibition and catalog also needed financial and in-kind support, guidance, and advice.

Foremost, I want to acknowledge the support of our major partner, The Cleveland Public Library (CPL). Thirty-two years ago, CPL had the foresight to support Karal Ann Marling's groundbreaking work that included a major publication and exhibit. Today, that venerable institution again graciously loaned Federal art objects to Cleveland Artists Foundation's (CAF) exhibit and co-published this catalog. Holly Carroll, Deputy Director, and Ann Olszewski, Preservation Librarian, have simply made this project a reality. Ms. Olszewski also made possible the re-binding of Karal Ann Marling's 1974 book, *Federal Art in Cleveland*. Thanks also go to Public Relations Officer David Williams, who facilitated CAF's first public tour of the Federal art murals at the Library.

I am most appreciative of Deena Epstein's guidance in securing a Gund Foundation grant that will support a comprehensive website on Federal art in Cleveland. I am also grateful for the advice and partnership of that website by Greg Peckham, Director of Cleveland Public Art. Thanks to Susan DePasquale and Sally Winters for their encouragement and counsel that enabled CAF to obtain an Ohio Arts Council Innovation grant for this exhibition. Sue Hanson, Head of the Special Collections at the Kelvin Smith Library at Case Western Reserve University, and Indra K. Lacis kindly provided complete access to the Karal Ann Marling papers and the WPA print collection. Sue Hanson and Joanne Eustis, University Librarian, also loaned numerous prints for the exhibition. Jeff Patterson, Deputy Assistant Director of the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority; Nilantha Samarsakera (Sam), Head of Construction; Hector Vega; and William Lowe, as well as Chad Helms of the VIP Restoration Company, all worked together to make possible the loan of public housing WPA material to this exhibition. I thank them all.

Drs. Mark Tibeau and Mark Souther of the Department of History at Cleveland State University (CSU) were very helpful during the research phase of this project. As part of their Euclid Corridor Project, I was able to utilize their research assistants and digital recording equipment to conduct important oral history interviews. They are also partners for our WPA website. Thanks go out to Andrew Glasier, Timothy Mitchell and Sarah Ziemneck, area high school teachers who conducted and logged those interviews. Additionally, I thank Angelo Bulone and Jerry Giunta for sharing their memories of working as WPA artists. Robert Thurmer, Director of the art gallery at CSU, was also very helpful for our exhibit research. Walter Leedy, Professor of Art at CSU, provided invaluable information and advice about Federal art in Cleveland.

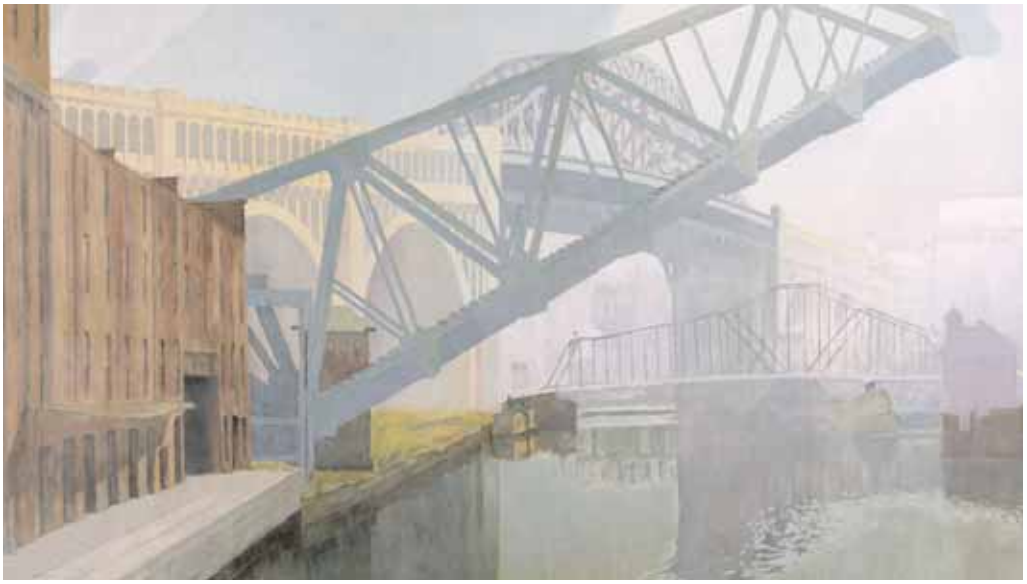
Albert Albano, Director of the Intermuseum Conservation Association, and Andrea Chevalier, Senior Conservator, were kind enough not only to provide their files containing condition reports on post office murals and public housing material, but also supplied important photographs for the catalog. I am also indebted to Mr. Albano for his wonderful talk to CAF's membership on the preservation of Federal art materials at our 2006 Annual Meeting. John Grabowsky and Bethany Migliore of the Western Reserve Historical Society supplied much-needed images of Charles Sallée's recently removed mural from the Outhwaite housing project. I also appreciate the patience and assistance of Marcia Hall, Valerie Sleeper and Jeff Lorince of the Bonfoey Gallery for storing the Earl Neff mural and allowing it to be photographed on their premises. Thanks also to Kathleen Crowther, Director of the Cleveland Restoration Society, and Andrea Morrison, who allowed us access on short notice to pick up two important Elmer Brown prints for the exhibition. Jan Soeder, Superintendent of Lakewood Schools, Dr. William Wagner, Principal of Lakewood High School, and Carol Snyder made possible the loan of important WPA ceramics to this exhibition. Jim McNamara and Noble Elementary School kindly provided access to WPA dolls for exhibit research.

I am also thankful to Rachel Waldron of the Library of Congress for helping us locate WPA posters for this exhibition. Thanks also to William Lipscomb, Board President of CAF, for his assistance during the grant process; Joseph Kisvardai for the loan of his valuable research materials; and Nina Gibans for her enthusiasm and assistance during the research process. Additionally, I want to extend my thanks to CAF staff members Nicole Edwards, Peggy Ratcheson and Thomas Berger for supporting and assisting every aspect of this project; and to David Dean for editing the manuscript. Special thanks go to William Busta who helped with the background research on this project, and did an incredible job hanging the show. Jerry Mann must be commended for the fine photography in this catalog and Richard Sarian for the beautiful layout and design. Finally, I want to express my gratitude to Karal Ann Marling, who wrote an outstanding introduction for the catalog and whose initial research provided the inspiration for this project.

Sharon E. Dean PhD
Executive Director,
Cleveland Artists Foundation

Culture on the Cuyahoga: The New Deal Era

Karal Ann Marling PhD



Ora Coltman
Dominance of the City, 1934
Oil on canvas.
Located in Cleveland Public Library, third floor.

It's hard for me to believe that more than thirty years have passed since I set out for Washington, DC to track down the records of the Federal agencies charged with keeping art alive in Cleveland during the Great Depression.

Back in the early 1970s, it was still possible to believe that government bore a great responsibility for the welfare of its citizens during hard times. It was possible to believe that art was vital to the welfare of the American soul, and furthermore, that art could and should be made anywhere—even in Cleveland, Ohio. The climate of opinion in Cleveland during the 1970s enabled me to examine the local art of the Depression period in hopes that the past might inspire future action based on the models provided by the Federal Art Project, the Section of Fine Arts, the Public Works of Art Project, and the other art-related agencies of the New Deal.

I also hoped that, guided by project documents in the National Archives, it might be possible to locate a significant portion of the artwork listed in those dusty records. So, with an enthusiastic group of students in tow, I set out with great confidence to put the past back together again. And to a considerable extent, we succeeded, thanks to community interest. The housing projects, the branch libraries and the public schools that once served as repositories for much of the public art of the 1930s, took great pains to find what we were looking for. As word spread, artists and former administrators came forward to share their experiences as well. What began as a college course

suddenly became a major civic event—an exhibition that occupied virtually every available wall and display case of the Cleveland Public Library's magnificent downtown headquarters. I continue to believe that as an exercise in turning archival research into tangible material results, the show was a model of its kind. Yet what it really demonstrated was the pride of the community in its ability to surmount its problems with grace and with faith in its own skills.

The Cleveland projects were remarkable in a number of ways. The numbers of African American artists and recent immigrants employed far exceeded the national average. The concern for creating dignified, well-designed housing for those in need made Cleveland's "projects" a national model. The sheer quantity of art created especially for children—for use in the public schools and the public libraries—shows how deeply Cleveland cared for the generations yet to come. Space was made for unemployed industrial workers whose job skills could be translated into the arts. Murals and sculpture appeared in public spaces, showing that art was for everybody. Women who had traditionally been relegated to the fringes of the "art world" rose to positions of prominence. Settlement houses doubled as art centers. It is no exaggeration to say that there was not any part of the greater Cleveland community left untouched by an art movement founded in despair and deprivation.

The emphasis on multiples—prints, figurines, posters—also supports the intention of the local programs to bring art into every household. And while critics might debate the lasting effects of the New Deal projects, the ubiquity of the image in contemporary life owes a great deal to the proliferation of artwork in Cleveland and elsewhere during

the years between 1933 and 1943. In the aftermath of World War II, department stores—Higbee's is a notable example—came into their own as vendors of affordable art. Ceramic sculpture, pioneered in Cleveland, provided the inspiration for the dinnerware and decorative home arts of the 1950s. The poster and the print—especially the silk screen process invented in the WPA's studios—reached a mass audience. And Americans learned to pay closer attention to the "American Scene" which had provided the subject matter for many of the period's greatest artists: in other words, "America the Beautiful" really was!

It is a great pleasure for me to look back on my own little Federal art project of the 1970s and to congratulate Sharon Dean and the Cleveland Artists Foundation for taking a fresh look at New Deal art in Cleveland. The time is ripe, after thirty-odd years, to ask again just what art means in the local community. Does government have a legitimate role in fostering the arts? How can private agencies make sure that the voices of those without political power are heard? That their talents are recognized? If we do manage to find and preserve the art of Cleveland's not-too-long-ago past, what will it tell us in 2006? What do we need to know about the past to guide us toward a just and a beautiful tomorrow?


NOTICE

Covering History: Revisiting Federal Art 1933–43

Sharon E. Dean PhD

Jack J. Greitzer
Post Office Interiors, 1936
Oil on canvas
One of two panels located at the former Cleveland Main post office, now the M.K. Ferguson Federal Building.

From the depths of the Great Depression until the early years of World War II, Federal programs were created under the leadership of President Franklin D. Roosevelt that employed millions of workers, including artists. The intention was not only to put the workforce back on the payroll and stimulate a stagnant economy, but also to motivate a weary public's confidence in the future.

As artists engaged in the process of decorating public buildings, making prints, producing posters, and creating sculpture, they also helped unify the country and created a new understanding of American identity.

This exhibition highlights Federal art in Cleveland of this era as one of the most important assets of our region's cultural and artistic identity. Between 1936 and 1940, for example, heroic efforts by the Treasury Department and local officials succeeded in placing new public art in nearly 60 post offices across Ohio.[1] The themes chosen for these murals generally were tied to the local community in some way, but underlying them was a homogenous quality. Subject matter included the history of the United States, immigration and settlement, farming, the beginnings of industry, and the history of the U.S. mail system. An optimistic view of the past helped paper over the stressful reali-

Richard Zoellner
Ore Docks and Steel Mills, 1938;
oil on canvas.
Located at Cleveland, Pearlbrook
post office.

W. LeRoy Flint
Park Politicians, 1936
Etching and aquatint, 4.25x7."
Collection Cleveland Public
Library.

ties of everyday life during the Depression. Most of the murals were done in a social realist style—a genre that became synonymous with American Scene painting.[2] By all accounts, most of the local populations across the region were very satisfied with the new post office murals—even if they criticized some of the artistic elements.[3]

Prints produced under the aegis of Federal art programs were heavy with social commentary. Yet, they also ignored the nuances, concentrating only on the general human condition. Perhaps these artists were permitted to express their social conscience because the scale and context of prints limited their audience to intentional viewers, whereas murals were placed in a public venue.[4] Posters developed a standardized graphic appeal so that their messages about public health, safety, housing, and art were easily understood by anyone. Ceramics produced at this time focused either on the well-known Germanic form of storytelling, which gradually became American, or on ideas of cultural and racial tolerance.

The standardized or homogeneous quality of this art genre is the focus of this essay. In the 1950s, sociologist Erving Goffman coined the term "covering" and wrote about how people present themselves in the public sphere in a way that "tones down" their stigmatized identities and conforms to societal expectations.[5] More recently, author Kenji Yoshino related this idea to the concepts of appearance, activism, affiliation and association. In the context of Federal art, the term "cover" can be used in a broader sense to suggest not so much the covering up of history, but rather the idea of blurring

Artist unknown
Poster for Cedar-Central Apartments, c 1935–39
Silkscreen print, 27.75x18."
Collection Case Western Reserve University, Kelvin Smith Library.

Grace Luse
Tyrellian Children, c 1935–39
Ceramic, 6.5x2.75x2.25."
Collection Lakewood High School.

distinctions between communities and people to emphasize common national ideals of work, progress, and cultural uniformity. Local peoples and their histories were homogenized in an attempt to define a standardized Middle American identity. Artists, lucky enough to obtain work through Federal art programs, had to create art that fit a narrow field of subject matter and a particular style that curiously appealed to both conservative and liberal audiences.[6] As American Scene painting and its social realist style took hold, much of the artistic experimentation by artists so prevalent in the 1920s faded from view until the end of World War II.

Thirty-two years ago Karal Ann Marling did a groundbreaking study, *Federal Art in Cleveland*. She thoroughly documented the numerous Federal art programs implemented during that period and the genres of art produced. She also interviewed some of the artists who created bodies of work, as well as William Milliken, Director of the Cleveland Museum of Art between 1930 and 1958; and noted the locations of artwork still extant in the early 1970s.[7] Although the Cleveland Artists Foundation attempted to find much of the art documented by Dr. Marling, this study is not as ambitious or exhaustive as her work. Rather, it builds on her project by placing Cleveland's Federal art of the 1930s into a broad cultural context. The art produced in Cleveland between 1933 and 1943 is an important legacy of an extraordinary time in this region's history.

During the Depression, a woman hands out free coffee and rolls to citizens. Photo courtesy Cleveland State University Library.

During the Great Depression, citizens wait in line for relief and surplus commodities. Photo courtesy Cleveland State University Library.

Federal Art Programs

In 1933, the economic news in Cleveland was bleak. One-third of the city's workforce was unemployed. Many of its financial institutions and retail businesses had closed their doors. Building and new construction had fallen off by more than 75%.[8] Worst of all, people were afraid. Cleveland, like many other cities in the United States, was coping with the fifth year of what Franklin Roosevelt termed the "Great Depression."

To Cleveland's credit, city officials began trying several measures to offer relief to its most needy citizens. The Mayor's Office implemented garden relief programs, community work projects, and even shifted tax revenues to welfare relief agencies.[9] These measures helped somewhat, but the need was staggering. The city of Cleveland appealed to the Federal government, pushing for a loan program funded by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, a division chartered by the United States Congress. It was a desperate measure and still proved to be insufficient.[10] Here, as elsewhere in the country, soup and bread lines were long; more than 13 million people were out of work.

Throughout his presidency, Herbert Hoover believed in limited government action and thought that local governments should administer unemployment relief. Hoover was inaugurated as President March 4, 1929, the year of Black Tuesday (October 29) and the stock market crash. Even though much of the economic disaster that was to unfold developed before his term, he seriously underestimated the gravity of the situation. He proclaimed "happy days" ahead just after the crash and did little to stop the downward

economic spiral. In a short time, Hoover became the symbol for an uncaring government; one only devoted to supporting the rich. As the Great Depression deepened in 1930 and 1931, runs on banks, agricultural ruin in the dustbowl, loss of personal savings, and a public sense of hopelessness tested the national character. While Hoover tried to stimulate the economy in some ways, he vetoed most proposals for unemployment relief. In perhaps his worst mistake, he bluntly refused an initiative to give early pensions to World War I veterans. When they came to Washington DC to protest, he directed Federal troops under General Douglas MacArthur to drive them out.[11]

By the 1932 election, energized Democrats had taken advantage of Republican mistakes. The Democratic candidate, Governor Franklin Delano Roosevelt of New York, had a campaign strategy that promised bold action and a "New Deal" for the American public. He won an overwhelming victory at the polls. In his acceptance speech on March 4, 1933, Roosevelt spoke of the "nameless fear" that paralyzed the country. He promised to put Americans back to work. In his first 100 days, Roosevelt started the CWA (Civil Works Administration) and put nearly four million workers back on a payroll. He also formed the Civilian Conservation Corp to employ young men in reforestation and conservation projects. These actions alone put almost one billion dollars back in to the economy between 1933–34.

Within a few months of his election, Roosevelt received a letter from his boyhood friend, George Biddle, proposing the creation of an art program under the New Deal.[12] As an artist, Biddle knew that art could be an important source of inspiration and comfort in times of stress. And, practically speaking, artists were out of work and needed employment like everybody else. While some artists had already been hired under the CWA, most were in desperate straits. Roosevelt was intrigued by the idea and told Biddle to speak to Lawrence Robert, Secretary of the Treasury. Robert responded favorably and called Edward Bruce, a Treasury official and an artist, into the discussion. Over several dinner meetings, the men agreed to start the first Federal art program, the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP).

The PWAP was initiated in December 1933, under the auspices of the CWA. Over the course of the next seven months, the PWAP hired more than 3,700 artists, and produced more than 400 murals, 6,800 easel works, 650 sculptures, and 2,600 print designs. Nine Regional Directors were chosen from prominent museums around the country to oversee the program. William Milliken was selected to head the Federal Art Program's Midwest Region, which included Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan.

In June 1934, the program was discontinued. The PWAP, however, was hailed as a success and a larger art program was initiated under the auspices of Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration (WPA; later the Works Projects Administration) program in early 1935. Roosevelt appointed Harry Hopkins as Director of this program. Within the WPA, there were four sections including the Federal Theater Project (FTP), Writers' (FWP), Music (FMP), and Art Projects (FAP) that put thousands of artists to work. Under the FAP program, more than 5,000 artists created 108,000 easel paintings, 17,700 sculptures, 11,000 print designs, and 2,500 murals.[13]

Also under the auspices of the FAP was the Index of American Design project (IAD), which compiled detailed watercolors of folk art all over the country.[14]

Although people commonly identify WPA as the only Federal art program of the 1930s (perhaps because of how extensive it was), in fact, there were many more Federal initiatives. The Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP) was set up to supervise the decoration of public buildings and was directed at work for which funds had not been previously set aside. It primarily employed workers who were eligible for relief. Another Treasury Department program, the Section of Painting and Sculpture, commissioned post office murals through a competitive process.[15]

Additionally, the Farm Security Administration commissioned photographers to produce documentary photographs on everyday life around the country during the Depression. The Resettlement Administration created documentary films aimed at telling individual stories about living and surviving during the Depression. There were other programs as well, but the following discussion will focus on the fine arts programs.

Artists in Cleveland received news of the formation of the first Federal program (the PWAP) from artist and art critic Grace Kelley, who wrote in a *Plain Dealer* news article:

> The artists, since starving is just as painful for them as it is for the unemployed in all other kinds of endeavor, hail this benevolent plan for their welfare with a happy, but somewhat dazed, surprise, the cry all through the depression has been that people must quit buying art because art was a luxury, but that artists must continue to paint because the unemployed butchers and bakers and bankers needed the visual solace of their efforts.[16]

Artists needed work, and America desperately needed their inspiration. For those who were running the programs—George Biddle, Holger Cahill, Harry Hopkins, Edward Bruce, and Edward Rowan—it was also an opportunity to shape the style and message of the imagery produced. These leaders wanted to avoid depicting a present marked by poverty and hopelessness. They wanted to promote, instead, a sense of lasting order and economic growth.[17] For example, murals should portray neutral, historical topics that were perceived as accepted public fact. Whether or not they were completely accurate was less an issue than keeping the content out of the realm of ideology.[18] However, even apparently neutral topics could excite controversy.

Diego Rivera
Formation of Revolutionary Leadership, 1926–27
Fresco
Collection Universidad Autonoma de Chapingo, Chapel

Thomas Hart Benton
Goin' Home, 1929
Lithograph.
Collection Library of Congress.

Public Art and the American Scene

Mural art is not indigenous to the United States, but it is a common medium in times of social upheaval. During the 1930s, the Mexican influence of Diego Rivera and Social Realist mural style were very strong.[19] Those with either left or right political leanings understood the power of the imagery. John D. Rockefeller Jr. greatly admired Rivera's painting prowess and had commissioned him to paint a mural in his newly constructed Rockefeller Center in New York. However, he objected to Rivera's use of a prominent portrait of Lenin in the artwork and ordered it removed. When Rivera refused, Rockefeller had the mural destroyed.[20] As Nelson Rockefeller explained to Rivera, if the mural were in a private house that would be one thing, but because the image was in such a public place, the image might cause offense to the public.[21]

Nonetheless, the iconographic Mexican style still greatly influenced American Scene painting, or regionalism.[22] Some art historians trace regionalism as a movement first popularized by Thomas Hart Benton, Grant Wood, and John Steuart Curry in the early years of the Depression.[23] Ideologically, it was conceived of local values and plain, uncomplicated, readable imagery. The general style of regionalism tended to lack any sense of development or forward thinking.[24] Emphasis was on nostalgia, the dignity of work, and rural values. Confidence in American values grew, as did a disdain for the modernist movement in Europe.[25]

Benton specifically conceived of his art as an attack on "the aesthetic ideal" and perceived snobbery of eastern museums, dealers, and collectors who espoused European-influenced modernism as the pinnacle of Western art.[26] In a speech given at the John Reed Club in February 1934, Benton pointedly said that

Ora Coltman
Dominance of the City, 1934
Oil on canvas
Located in Cleveland Public
Library, Main Library, third floor.

though he respected Rivera's work very much, he was more interested in developing "…an art that adequately represents the United States—my own art."[27] Underneath the bravado, however, there was a strong attraction to Rivera's style and it was evident in his work. Many others, including George Biddle, who studied in Mexico with Rivera, commented on the applicability of the Mexican mural style to American painting. In a letter to Roosevelt dated May 9, 1933, Biddle wrote, "And, I am convinced that our mural art with a little impetus [from the Mexicans] can soon result, for the first time in our history, in a vital national expression.[28]

In Cleveland, William Milliken lobbied for a regionalist painting style. His brand, however, was slightly different from the national version. He encouraged local artists to interpret their immediate surroundings in ways that contributed toward a rapport with the public and a definition of the character and perceptions of Northeast Ohio.[29] Milliken also worked to change early twentieth century public opinion that artists were not bohemians, but were fulfilling an integral function for society. He proclaimed that art will "elucidate the history and character of the community."[30] Milliken's museum policies, organization of May shows at the Cleveland Museum of Art, and discussions of regionalism and "Cleveland Scene art" preceded the ascendancy of the American Scene by years. Milliken's brand of regionalism was less influenced by popular rhetoric and was community service oriented.[31]

When Milliken was selected to be Regional Director of the PWAP and later helped with the FAP, he set out to convince as many public institutions in Cleveland as possible to allow artists to decorate their buildings and to employ as many artists as he could to handle the assignments. Even when Milliken's term ended in the PWAP, he remained active

William Sommer
The City in 1833, 1933–34
Oil on canvas.
Located in Brett Hall Reading
Room of Cleveland Public Library.

and influential in other Federally funded art programs. In Washington circles, Milliken was considered one of the most successful regional directors of Federal art in the country.[32]

In the first week of the PWAP in December 1933, Milliken was able to employ 72 artists. They immediately began creating work for such public buildings as Cleveland Public Auditorium and the Cleveland Public Library. For these first murals, Milliken and a small committee chose the region's most talented artists. Ora Coltman's mastery of urban scenes earned him the commission of a mural triptych entitled *Dominance in the City*. William Sommer's colorful palette was perfect for the mural, *The City in 1833*, which still decorates Brett Hall in Cleveland Public Library.[33] In the spring of 1934, Milliken put on the largest local display of PWAP work (ceramics, sculpture and paintings) in the Armor Court of the Cleveland Museum of Art. More than one-third of the 150 works displayed were chosen for a national exhibition in Washington DC, the largest percentage chosen from the entire country.[34] Milliken's success was hailed by Edward Rowan, who said the Director took care of more artists in his Midwest region than any other and that work was done here at the highest standard.[35]

Milliken, could not have accomplished all of this single-handedly. Cooperation by other public officials also played a role in this success. Linda Eastman, Director of the Cleveland Public Library, shared Milliken's taste for regional art and sense of community service. She believed in the value of utilitarian art—that it was not only a source of pleasure for people, but had the potential to be educational as well.[36] Additionally, Milliken encouraged Ernest Bohn, Director of Public Housing, to create murals for community rooms in Valleyview Estates, Outhwaite Homes and Lakeview Terrace, all built in the

Earl Neff
Details, *History of Railroading,*
1937
Oil on canvas, 106x41.75,"
136x41.5." Collection Cleveland
Artists Foundation.

late 1930s. While some concern arose about how to pay for the mural work, Bohn successfully convinced the USHA (United States Housing Authority) to hold aside a small percentage of construction funds (0.5 of 1%) for art expenditures.[37] In addition to these publicly funded murals were a few private commissions stimulated, in part, by the successes of Milliken's efforts and interest in Social Realism. The best known of these commissions is *Freedom of Speech*, a mural at the Cleveland City Club, painted by Elmer Brown in 1942. The robust figures and strong earth tone colors clearly reflect the influence of the Mexican fresco style.

Another lesser known, but notable, project is the *History of Railroading* painted by Earl Neff in 1937 for the entrance lobby of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers Building. This monumental work consists of fifteen panels, each depicting a stage in the development of railroad transportation in the United States. The simple figures, strong compositional patterns, and the sheer size of the mural (approximately 100 running feet) make it quite dramatic. The mural was removed from the Engineers' Building in 1989 when the building was demolished. Gordon Gund had it restored and moved to the Depot Room of Gund Arena (now Quicken Loans Arena). Recently, the new owner of the arena removed the mural during a renovation and it has been donated to the Cleveland Artists Foundation.

The murals created during PWAP were mostly organized by Milliken with the cooperation of public officials like Linda Eastman. Things changed, however, after the Treasury Department Section of Painting and Sculpture (commonly called "The Section") was created in 1934 and the Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP) was formed in 1935. Both commissioned art for Federal buildings: The Section

murals were funded as part of a construction budget for a new building and the artists were selected by competition; TRAP paid for murals in existing Federal buildings, as well as new buildings without an art budget and selected artists (mostly) who were eligible for relief. Milliken still had a role, organizing the processes for the post office mural projects in the region, but there was also considerable public dialogue. Commissions started with a publicly posted call for entries that provided instructions for the submission of work. The posting listed the post office in which the mural was to be placed, the amount of money to be paid; the frequency of payments; the size of the artwork; suggested content; and a deadline for completion. A committee reviewed each proposal and a winner was selected in a blind jury review.

In many cases, however, the local Postmasters and townspeople commented on and sometimes even overrode the committee's decisions, stalling or canceling art projects altogether. The case of Cuyahoga Falls provides a good example of the role local officials could play. The commission process for its post office mural went as planned. A call for entries with specific instructions for size and subject matter was publicly posted. The subject matter called for an "…interest and knowledge of the region of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. It may include landscape, figure painting, local industry, the story of the Post, history of the region, or any other subject which may be of interest to the citizens of Cuyahoga Falls."[38]

Milliken and his committee, including Henry Hunt Clark, President of the Cleveland School of Art; Phillip Adams, Director of the Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts; Grace Kelley, Art Critic for the *Plain Dealer*; and Paul Travis, a respected artist on the faculty of the Cleveland School of Art; reviewed several sketches. After two reviews, the committee

selected the mural proposal by Indiana resident, Clifford Jones, entitled "Arrival of the Mail Train."[39]

From the outset, the Postmaster of Cuyahoga Falls, Elmer E. Eller, adamantly opposed the project. Over the course of two years (1940–1942), he wrote to William Milliken; the Honorable Walter Royce, Fourth Assistant Postmaster General; and Edward Rowan, Assistant Chief of the Section of Fine Arts in Washington DC, complaining about the lack of space for bulletin boards, the "Oriental-looking" figures he thought were included in the mural, and the need to change the mood of the mural figures so that they did not look "as if they had just received bad news."[40] Additionally, Eller complained that too much money was being spent on "just a picture" and that the whole project "just wasn't worth it" and "may justify public condemnation."[41] Each one of his letters was carefully reviewed, received a response, and some changes were made to the proposed mural. Ultimately, Milliken and Rowan stood by their decision. When the artist completed the mural, however, the local Postmaster still had ultimate jurisdiction over the post office and refused to allow its installation. The project was finally abandoned in October 1942.[42]

At first glance, the Postmaster's objections seem rather unreasonable. Every other post office in Ohio made room for both bulletin boards and a mural. The subject matter was not objectionable in other post offices.[43] Additionally, when modest changes to other murals were asked for by local officials and accommodated by the artist, objections ceased. As long as everyone had a say, all were satisfied.

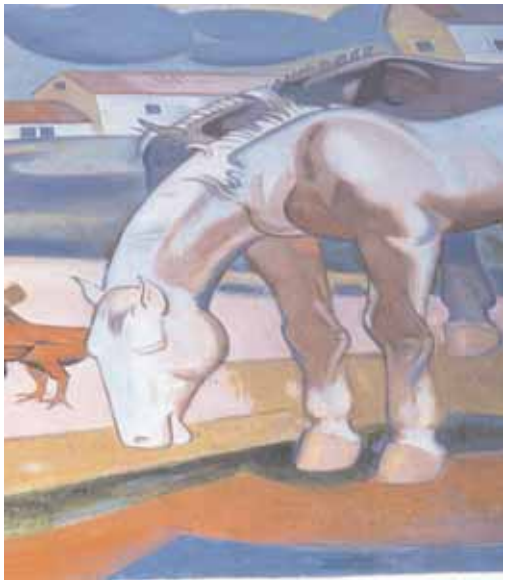
In Cuyahoga Falls, something else was at issue. On July 31, 1940 one of the worst disasters in United States railroad history occurred in the town.[44] At approximately 6 pm on the evening of July 31st, the one-car Doodlebug shuttle train, operated by the Pennsylvania Railroad, was traveling from Hudson to Cuyahoga Falls. Because of a signal mix-up, the shuttle car met an on-coming 73-car freight train head on. Forty-three people were killed, many of who lived in or near the town. The only survivors were the Engineer, the Conductor, and the Brakeman who jumped seconds before the crash.

This tragic accident may have caused the Postmaster to object to the art project on grounds that a mural theme containing any train at all was insensitive to a grieving community. Additionally, Mr. Eller may have believed that celebrating anything on the heels of such a large disaster would have seemed inappropriate. Nonetheless, Milliken, his committee and Edward Rowan thought all of his stated objections were unjustified. In a letter dated October 14, 1942, Rowan wrote to the Fourth Assistant Postmaster General in Washington and argued "… the subject has a certain general applicability which would make it appropriate in any Post Office because it symbolizes the things which have to do with the mail."[45] Two committees had approved the winning sketch. And, it is also highly likely that because of the tight budget constraints, another competition could not be held. According to the contract made with the artist, the $1,600 allocated for the mural was paid in stages for work done.[46] By the time the project was abandoned, the only remaining payment, $400, was to be paid after the mural's installation.

William Sommer
Rural Homestead, 1939, oil on canvas. Located in post office in Geneva.

Other murals painted did not have this level of drama, but still had their controversies. William Sommer's mural, *Rural Homestead*, was chosen as the winner of the competition for the Geneva, Ohio post office. It was a simple design of a family posing in front of their farmhouse, representing American values and a typical Middle American lifestyle. In executing the design, however, Sommer was not as interested in the social realist movement as were many other artists. He was considered the premier representative in Cleveland of modernist tendencies, although he accommodated his style somewhat for this mural.[47] In an article that he wrote on his working methods for a WPA publication, Sommer described the influence of Cezanne's cylinders, cubes, and cones[48] and noted that he did not feel constrained by natural forms and colors.[49] Sommer improvised depending on what he thought was best for the overall design of the work. As such, his work was sometimes at odds with a literally minded public.

This level of disagreement was common. As popular culture scholar Karal Ann Marling has argued, a small-town perspective sometimes made any artistic license suspect. There were many examples of murals being altered so that either the style would not appear to be condescending to the public, or that the familiar appearance of local sights would not be distorted. Program administrators made every effort to anticipate and remove any cause for potential objection. Particularly in small towns, the result could be bland works of art.[50] When work first began on the Geneva post office mural in 1937, suggestions for modifications were already being sent to Sommer. In a letter



William Sommer
Details, *Rural Homestead*, 1939, oil on canvas. Located in post office in Geneva.

dated December 24, 1937, Edward Rowan wrote:

> Permit me to acknowledge the receipt in this office of your two inch scale color sketch of your proposed mural decoration for the Geneva, Ohio Post Office ... This had been considered by the members of the Section and the Supervising Architect and while we feel that there are elements in the design, which may be used in the decoration, there are others which we feel would have little meaning for the general public. We are asking you to give further study to the sketch.[51]

Sommer dutifully responded and somewhat altered the sketch. In the committee's eyes, however, it was not enough. They asked for other alterations and Sommer did his best until the final sketch was approved in March 1938. When Sommer received his first payment voucher, he began work in earnest on the mural.[52] By early October the mural was finished and a photograph of the completed work was sent to Rowan for approval to install. Rowan suggested more minor changes to the mural, asking Sommer to make the horses legs more realistic and to enhance the shrubbery in front of the farmhouse so that the family would look like they had lived there for a number of years.[53] Again, Sommer tried to comply. However, when an article appeared in the November 3, 1938 issue of the *Geneva Free Press* complaining about the way the mural was painted, Sommer could no longer restrain himself. In a long letter to Rowan, he explained in painstaking detail all of his corrections to the mural and reasons for painting it as he did. He argued:

> The bright colours [sic] on the mural are not splashed here and there, but are carefully adjusted to each other, and the modulation of colour used endlessly throughout the canvas, all done with a small sable brush, no brush marks showing … Why can't a farmer's wife wear a nice cool white shoe in mid-summer? These two white shoes in the mural were used as part of the design. The eye catches these two white spots on the ground and then is led up to the milk pitchers and glasses …

Elsewhere in the newspaper article, local citizens complained about perspective and the use of shadow. Sommer replied:

> The perspective is correct. Our point was on the horizon and we used a piece of chalked string to snap the lines thru the house. What other way could it have been done? Lights and shadows—there are no shadows in the mural, not a single one. They would have cut the mural to shreds… shading yes, but not shadows… when the remarks from *Geneva Free Press* are sifted down very little remains that can be taken serious.[54]

Rowan let the matter go and paid Sommer the remaining money he was owed.

Public controversy wasn't the only difficulty that artists faced. In order to get paid, paperwork had to be filled out, tasks completed and deadlines met. Milliken helped artists produce quality art by protecting them from "the excesses of section procedures," often paying them out of pocket. In the case the Ravenna post office mural, finances were so bad for Clarence Carter that Milliken advanced him $100 to hold him over until the first payment could be sent to him. Milliken wrote to Rowan:

> I find that Clarence Carter is in desperate financial condition. I have loaned him $100 to carry him through until the money comes… It is over two weeks and he has not heard from Washington. Is there any possible way of it being hurried up?[55]

The problems Carter faced were logistical, rather than aesthetic or content-based. In order for artists to get paid, the postmaster needed to approve the mural and it needed to be installed on the wall. For Carter, this process dragged out over a six-month period. To make room for the mural, an electrical outlet and a wall clock needed to be removed. But first the government needed to secure bids from contractors. After the wall was ready, Carter found it difficult to find someone to hang the mural. Milliken finally intervened and with the Museum's help, the mural was installed. However, once the mural was hung, it had to be inspected and photographed before final payment could be issued.[56]

Jack Greitzer, who painted *Post Office Interiors* for the downtown main Cleveland post office, faced problems when he was asked to resubmit sketches for a design that was already approved. Fortunately, Milliken again intervened on the artist's behalf. He also helped Greitzer by getting the mural photographed so that the artist could receive final payment for his work.[57]

Approximately 3,000 post office murals were installed across the United States. Each had its unique circumstances. In the end, however, all the murals served similar purposes: they employed artists, added decoration to mundane settings, and brought the opportunity for an aesthetic experience to a broad public. The fact that 71 murals were successfully completed and installed in Ohio is a

John Csosz
Panel from History of Postal System in the United States, 1937, oil on canvas. Located in Cleveland, University Center (now University Circle) post office.

testament to Milliken's sense of community responsibility and his vision of how art can impact the public during times of social upheaval.

Art survives, however, only if it has the capacity to be meaningful, since functions and audiences change over time. Like everything else, artwork requires cleaning to maintain its appearance. If permanently sited in a building, it also needs some care and protection as adjacent walls are repainted. And as building uses change, the artwork must command enough attention that people are willing to commit the use of public space on an ongoing basis.

When Karal Ann Marling conducted her research in the early 1970s, almost all of the murals and sculpture in Ohio post offices were in their original locations. For the current project, the author revisited the post offices in northeast Ohio for which artwork had been commissioned and found that most of them were no longer operational as post offices. In many cases, new post office buildings have been constructed in recent decades.

In all, artwork was commissioned for 19 post offices in the Cleveland area. In 2006, only eight are still operational. In those eight, the artwork from the Depression era was still present, though almost all needed cleaning and modest restoration. These include Clarence Carter's mural for Ravenna; John Csosz's mural for Cleveland, University Center (newly restored); Richard Zoellner's mural *Ore Docks and Steel Mills* for Cleveland's Pearlbrook post office; Lloyd R. Ney's painting *New London Facets* for New London; W. Bimel Kehm's plaster relief *Citizens for Struthers*; Glen Shaw's two stirring murals

Clarence Carter
Early Ravenna, 1936, oil on canvas. Located in Ravenna post office.

Romance of Steel, Old and *Romance of Steel, Modern* for Warren; Hubert Mesibov's painting *Steel Industry* for Hubbard, and Aldo Lazzarini's painting *Judge Smith Orr and Robert Taggard Planning the New Settlement of Orrville*, in Orrville, Ohio.

Three of the post office buildings had new uses, but retained their Federal artworks: the downtown Cleveland post office had become an office building (two panels; *Post Office Interiors* by Jack J. Greitzer); the Bedford post office is being used by an architectural firm (painting, *Drift toward Industrialism* by Karl Anderson); and the Amherst post office building is now the city's headquarters for a "Main Street" revitalization project (painting, *Pioneers Crossing the Ohio River* by Michael Loew).

Another five artworks were located in good condition, but have been moved from their original locations. Three are in new post offices, including a wood carving, *Stone Quarries*, by Moissaye Marans in Chagrin Falls; the recently restored William Sommer painting *Rural Homestead* that hangs in the lobby of the new Geneva, Ohio, post office; and a terra cotta relief by Joseph Walter, *Iron and Steel Industry*, for Campbell. In Chardon, an accounting firm purchased the building, and the mural—*Maple Sugar Camp* by George A. Picken—was moved to a county office building nearby. F. Thornton Martin's painting, *They Came as Wadsworth's First Settlers after the War of 1812*, now hangs in the Wadsworth City Hall.

Artwork for the Girard, Medina, and Willoughby post offices is either missing or destroyed.

Stanley Thomas Clough
Poster for *Paintings by William Sommer*, 1938. Silkscreen print, approx. 27x18." Collection Library of Congress

Stanley Thomas Clough
Poster for *Lakeview Terrace*, c 1939–42. Silkscreen print, 18x27.5." Collection Case Western Reserve University, Kelvin Smith Library.

Posters: A New Vocabulary

Murals were the most publicly visible works of art that were created by Federal programs in the WPA era. Posters were also visible at that time, but they were never intended to be durable and were certainly expected to be discarded.[58] For example, out of almost 35,000 designs, only 2,000 original posters can be found in known collections—primarily in the Library of Congress.[59] No other large collection is known to exist. Yet, in contemporary reflection, they may be more important than the murals. They were produced in a medium that was new for fine artists—a fresh environment that invited aesthetic experimentation.

The great innovator was Anthony Velonis, a graduate of the New York University School of Fine Arts. He is credited with introducing silkscreen printing techniques to the Poster Division of the FAP in New York City.[60]

When he started to work for the FAP, posters were being hand-copied, a long and tedious process. He suggested that the commercial silkscreen process commonly used to produce display cards for store countertops, could be useful in poster production. The new medium was an immediate success and soon FAP workshops were producing silkscreened posters across the country.

Because of the modest scale of the posters and the need for uncluttered design, the large, robust style of social realism did not work. The poster divisions needed a different contemporary style and a visual vocabulary that appealed to a mass audience. Graphic artists solved the problem by incorporating artistic influences from cubism and design elements from Bauhaus and Italian Futurism.61 The demand for posters was considerable and graphic artists were free to experiment with fonts, colors and visual styles. In Ohio, posters were created to

Stanley Thomas Clough
Poster for *Protect Your Parks*,
1938. Silkscreen print, approx.
18x27." Collection Library of
Congress.

Artist unknown
Poster for *Milk for Summer Thirst,*
1940. Silkscreen print, approx.
18x27." Collection Library of
Congress.

publicize public events, to encourage education, to promote health and safety, and to provide information on the opportunities for public housing.

In Cleveland, Stanley Thomas Clough designed most of the posters that have survived. A graduate of the Cleveland School of Art, Clough was both a book illustrator and easel painter.[62] His training in both commercial and fine arts made him an ideal candidate for the job. His posters contained clean lines, bright colors, and communicated messages clearly. In one poster, *Paintings by William Sommer*, Clough was careful to include important elements of the artist's work, including a horse and farm. More importantly, Clough integrated cubist elements that he knew were big influences on Sommer's work.

In a poster promoting Lakeview Terrace housing, Clough used a simple representation of one of the apartment buildings overlooking Lake Erie. Simple shapes portray a young couple on a balcony enjoying the view. The colors depict a beautiful summer day, evoking a feeling of hope for the future. Ernest Bohn's public housing projects were the first of their kind in the country and offered low-rent, respectable alternatives to poor families. In another Clough poster, *Protect Your Parks*, a lone oak tree stands rooted to surrounding grass in a carefully landscaped area that symbolizes a park. The use of one tree with long roots in the ground tugs at the viewers' sympathy both to protect our natural resources and to provide attractive places for our children to play. Posters were also important at the beginning of government-sponsored health programs. *Drink Milk* and *Swim for Health* stimulated the public to exercise and eat nutritious foods. Other posters promoted occupational arts and a campaign against sexually transmitted diseases.

Artist unknown
Poster for *Swim for Health*, 1940.
Silkscreen print, approx. 18x27."
Collection Library of Congress.

Though the posters were nominally successful in advancing government programs, their biggest impact was as a recognized artistic medium for communication. New uses were found for posters all the time, including the military, airports, world's fairs, and of course, for strikes and protests. Exhibitions of best-designed posters were held all over the country, including Cleveland.[63] Interestingly, as new uses were found during and after World War II, less and less attention was paid to the posters produced during the WPA. Thankfully, some of these posters were collected for future audiences. Others survived by chance or accident. Perhaps the most important legacy of the posters is the short-term power that they had. Their potential was considerable, even if cut short by the War and changing politics.[64]

Sheffield Kagy
American Tragedy, 1935–39
Linoleum cut, 14x9."
Collection Cleveland Public Library.

Social Commentary: The Cleveland Printmakers and Federal Art

Printmaking has a long history in Cleveland. Before prints were produced as part of PWAP (1933) and before the Graphic Arts Division of WPA/FAP (1935) was formed, Cleveland already had two important print clubs. The Print Club of Cleveland, begun by the Cleveland Museum of Art in 1919, had annually commissioned prints by important regional and national artists. Then, in 1932, the Cleveland Printmakers established the "Print-a-Month" series, whose subscribers paid $12 per year to receive monthly etchings, lithographs or woodcuts. Artists received a $50 award for each commission and every print was published in a limited, signed edition of 250. Kalman Kubinyi, George Adomeit, Paul Travis, William Sommer, LeRoy Flint, Frank Wilcox, Elsa Vick Shaw, and Honoré Guilbeau were among the leading Cleveland area artists who participated. This series was the first of its kind and successfully raised revenue for the artists, as well as making original art affordable to the public during the Depression years. The "Print-a-Month" series continued until 1937.[65]

Many of these artists, as well as others, produced prints for Federal art programs, bringing with them their experience and working methods. That influence may have, in part, influenced the working process of the WPA/FAP Graphic Arts Division. Printers in the PWAP worked alone, but were not as productive as expected, probably because they did not have enough resources. When the Graphic Arts Division was organized within the Cleveland WPA/FAP in 1935, printmakers were organized as a workshop.

W. LeRoy Flint
Mob, 1935–39
Lithograph, 10x7.75."
Collection Cleveland Public Library.

Jolan Gross-Bettelheim
In the Employment Office,
1935–39.
Lithograph, 11x8.5."
Collection Case Western Reserve University, Kelvin Smith Library.

As a result, print paper sizes became more standardized and more easily distributed. Printmakers began experimenting with printing techniques. New approaches were developed to create woodcuts, lithographs, and etchings. A notable product of the workshop was the Print Process Portfolio of about 25 prints. Created by a variety of processes, these portfolios were accompanied by explanatory text and were distributed to schools and libraries.

Printmaking was revitalized.[66] Since the prints were so portable, printmakers tended to send their work around the country. Many of these artists felt as if they were part of a national movement. Numerous print shows were held around the country and the print movement reached a peak of popularity.

Within a collegial atmosphere, artists felt free to explore controversial topics of race relations, poverty and unemployment.[67] Their freedom was due, in part, to prints not being as visible as public artworks. While public art was intended to comfort the public in times of stress, the intimacy of prints enabled artists to create a disturbing record of the realities of America at the time. In some respects, this content urged social change and tolerance.

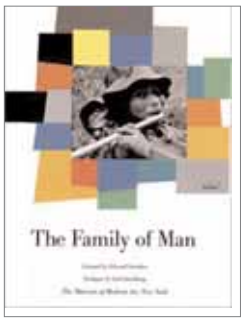
For example, LeRoy Flint's print, *Mob*, is a disturbing portrait of angry White men about to lynch an unseen figure. Flint cleverly positions the irate crowd toward the viewer, making it appear as though the observer could be the victim. As the gun and the rope are raised up in the air, we can feel our fear.

Abraham Jacobs
Competition, 1936.
Crayon and aquatint, 8.25x5.25."
Collection Cleveland Public
Library.

Abraham Jacobs
The Patriots, 1936.
Aquatint, 8.25x5.5."
Collection Cleveland Public
Library.

Poverty and desperation are other recurring themes. Jolan Gross-Bettelheim's lithograph, *Employment Office*, has very little detail except for the hopeless looks on the figures waiting for a job or, more metaphorically, for their lives to get better. Perhaps Abraham Jacobs, a relatively unknown artist, created some of the most compelling statements about life during the Depression. *Competition* shows a man and a cat competing over food from a trashcan under a sign that says "Eat at Jim's." Another Jacobs' print, *The Patriots*, focuses on a Black man who has just been lynched. Behind him are Ku Klux Klan members with an American flag. In the background, a cross is burning in front of a small church.

Jolan Gross-Bettelheim made powerful statements about the Depression landscape through her industrial scenes of mills, bridges, factories, and tenement housing. Repeated patterns done in a cubist style enhance the images' drama. Sheffield Kagy's prints of *Workmen Eating Lunch* and *Workmen Keeping Warm* provide a glimpse into the hardships of manual labor. Some of the prints are humorous, such as LeRoy Flint's aquatint/etching *Park Politicians*. All, however, have a sense of irony to them. For these artists, improving skills and sharing work with other artists and the community provided a sense of purpose and enabled them to hone their social consciences.



Edward Steichen
Cover, *The Family of Man,* 1955.
New York, Museum of
Modern Art.

Emilie Scrivens
Black Madonna, 1935–39
Ceramic, 10.25x5.75x6."
Collection Lakewood Board of
Education.

Ceramics, Dolls and The Family of Man

In 1955, the monumental photographic exhibition *The Family of Man* was mounted at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, was published as a best-selling book, and traveled internationally. Renowned photographer, Edward Steichen, created the show with 503 images gathered from all over the world. He juxtaposed people of all ages, races, ethnicities and cultural traditions with each other, often in environmental context.[68] His point was that all humanity is a family that should live together in peace and harmony. In his prologue to the catalog, American poet Carl Sandberg, the son of immigrant parents, echoes these sentiments.[69] Hailed at the time as a groundbreaking idea, the concept actually had earlier roots in Federal art programs. In fact, some of the photographs were created as part of the Farm Security Administration photographic project.

Cleveland was a nationally important center of activity for ceramic sculpture in the 1930s and 1940s. Not surprisingly, then, the city became the largest center of production of ceramics within the FAP. Figurines and large sculptures were sent to schools, libraries, and public housing units. Edris Eckhardt, sculptor and supervisor of the Ceramics and Sculpture Division of the Cleveland WPA/FAP Project, directed the production of the projects. The overall process, her leadership, and stories of many of the individual pieces created have been fully discussed elsewhere.[70] Of particular interest is the social ideology behind a series of ceramics of different ethnic groups. One set of figurines was distributed to Lakewood schools in the late 1930s and are now housed at the Lakewood Board of Education and at Lakewood High School.

Grace Luse
Green Pastures, 1935–39
Ceramic, 14x7.25x6." Collection Lakewood Board of Education.

Artist unknown
Japanese Miss [doll], 1939
Mixed media, 11x5x1.25."
Collection Cleveland Public Library.

Under the auspices of Federal art programs, Edris Eckhardt and her team produced an enormous number of ceramics. Children's stories, history and imagination provided inspiration. One set of figurines showed people from other parts of the world. Grace Luse designed many of them, with others attributed to Emilie Scrivens, Elizabeth Seaver and Ann Simon. The piece, *Madonna and Child*, portrayed a caring African woman with her child, suggesting that Jesus and his mother could have been African in origin. Luse's *Greener Pastures* shows another African couple in a Biblical setting, caring for a lamb. Other figurines by Luse, including *Apple Girl*, *Farmer Boy*, and *Fish Woman*, show European-type peasants contentedly living off the earth. Today, the characterization of naivete and living close to nature might be considered patronizing, but in a 1930s context it was probably a safe way to present the idea of cultural tolerance.

At Noble School in Cleveland Heights, research for this exhibit turned up a set of handmade dolls in boxes simply labeled WPA. The boxes contained dolls portraying people from different Native American tribes, as well as Japanese and Chinese women, all in presumably authentic costume. A similar set located at the Cleveland Public Library is shown in this exhibition. Like Federal art ceramics, these dolls were supposed to show that people and cultures worldwide are all part of the family of humanity. These representations were probably influenced by anthropologists of the day, whose cultural data gathered from all over the world introduced in the 1930s the ideas of cultural relativity and tolerance at a time when other cultures were still viewed as curiosities.

Charles Sallée Jr
Swingtime, c 1935–39
Etching and aquatint, 5.5x6.75."
Collection Cleveland Public Library.

African American Artists and Women in Federal Art Programs

As Federal art programs promoted the understanding of the world around us, they also created extraordinary employment opportunities for thousands of artists all over the country. In Cleveland, a significant number of the artists were African American and women. How was this possible, particularly in an era of racial intolerance and gender stereotyping? Many African Americans in Cleveland were encouraged and supported by Karamu House, a settlement house that emphasized the arts. Started in 1915 by Rowena and Russell Jelliffe as an interracial concept, Karamu inspired, nurtured and funded the training of many African American artists in Cleveland, including Hughie Lee-Smith, Charles Sallée, Jr, Elmer Brown, Rozell ("Zell") Ingram, and Fred Carlo.[71] The experiences and training that young African American artists received at Karamu was exceptional and helped them develop a level of professionalism.

In 1935, a group of Karamu artists formed an association called Karamu Artists, Incorporated. In 1942, they held their first major group show in New York City at the Associated American Artists Gallery.[72] The exhibition was supported by local patrons and received encouraging reviews. It then traveled to Philadelphia where it was displayed at Temple University.

Their talent and experience earned several Karamu artists jobs in Federal art programs. Thomas Hart Benton and the regionalists influenced some of the Karamu artists, as did Diego Rivera and his social realist style. Work produced by African American artists for the WPA, however, is infused with social commentary reflective of intense personal experience. Hughie Lee-Smith's print, *Wasteland*, is a devastating critique of

Elmer Brown
Wrestlers, c 1935–39
Etching, 9x6."
Collection Cleveland Public Library.

Elmer Brown
Dorie Miller in the Act of Manning the Gun during Pearl Harbor, 1942. Oil on canvas, 34.5x45.5." Collection Cleveland Artists Foundation

society. Trash is scattered about an unkempt cemetery and only two dead trees soften the stark landscape. The print has depth and a mystical quality that underscores the symbolic depiction of remnants of failed attempts at life.

Charles Sallée, also a printmaker for the WPA, produced a print entitled, *Swingtime*. In a small bar, a woman with her back towards us sways to music she hears on a jukebox. The viewer can feel the smoke-filled room late at night. It is a snapshot of life, perhaps from the "Roaring Third District," the Black ghetto of the 1930s in Cleveland. In one more example, Elmer Brown's etching, *Wrestlers*, we see two large men in a ring in the middle of a wrestling match. Each is about to attack the other. The figures are blocky and powerful, defined by thick lines and shapes that are clearly influenced by social realism. The crowd in the background is merely suggested by light and dark tones.

The emotional intensity of the moment gives the print depth and power. Brown's other work, including *Gandy Dancer's Girl* and *Dorie Miller in the Act of Manning the Gun during Pearl Harbor*, also relies on shapes and diagonals to infuse energy into the paintings. Elmer Brown and Charles Sallée were the only African American artists in Cleveland who painted murals for the WPA. Brown's murals for Valleyview Estates and Charles Sallée's mural from Outhwaite are now undergoing restoration.

Many other African American artists participated in Federal art programs. All brought their own experiences and talent to the easel or the printing press. Their important legacy is that, during the height of the Depression, they were given a chance to create and, therefore, to help the African American art scene in Cleveland to flourish.

Edris Eckhardt
Two Children on a Merry-Go-Round, 1935–39
Glazed ceramic; 18.25x12x1.75."
Created for Children's Room, Valleyview Estates. Collection Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority.

Dorothy Rutka
Poverty , 1935–39. Etching and aquatint, 8.75x10.75."
Collection Case Western Reserve University, Kelvin Smith Library.

Women also played significant roles in creating artwork for the WPA program. As Karal Ann Marling's 1974 *Federal Art in Cleveland* exhibition noted, 21 female artists participated in the program. The three most notable women artists were Edris Eckhardt, Dorothy Rutka, and Jolan Gross-Bettelheim. Edris Eckhardt studied at the Cleveland School of Art and then with Alexander Archipenko in New York. Because of her skill and competent administrative abilities, she became Supervisor of the Ceramics and Sculpture Division of the WPA/FAP in Cleveland. Under her guidance, hundreds of figurines were produced for educational and display purposes.[78]

Dorothy Rutka was born and raised in Michigan. She moved to Cleveland at age 22 to enroll in the Cleveland School of Art. She worked as a portrait painter and as an illustrator before joining the WPA Graphic Arts Project in 1936. Her work is social commentary on poverty and hopelessness during the Depression. One poignant example is *Striker's Wife* in which an emaciated woman sits and stares at nothing, while a nude figure looks out a window in the background. The angular shapes and the stark contrast between light and dark give the image depth and power.

Perhaps the most interesting work of the three was created by Jolan Gross-Bettelheim. Born in Hungary, Jolan studied in Budapest, Vienna, Berlin and Paris. She moved to Cleveland in 1925 and studied with Henry Keller at the Cleveland School of Art. She participated in many May Shows and

Jolan Gross-Bettelheim
Dilapidated Section, 1935–39
Lithograph, 9.75x11.75."
Collection Lakewood Board of Education.

became a member of the WPA project in 1936. Gross-Bettelheim produced prints for the WPA for two years before moving to New York. Her work is cubist in design and makes powerful political statements about the industrial scene in Cleveland. In *Yard With Poles*, a dilapidated house in the foreground has a telephone leaning in front of it. Other houses in equally bad condition crowd the lone house in front. The positioning of these homes drives home the reality of overcrowded conditions in poor neighborhoods.

The contributions made by women and African American artists made cannot be underestimated. While all artists brought talent and creativity to the program, the Karamu artists and the women brought an intensity of feeling and energy that often made their art both disturbing and emotional.

Conclusion

In revisiting Federal art in Cleveland, several things become clear. First, the sheer quantity of art produced was a great accomplishment. William Milliken's efforts, along with those of Linda Eastman of the Cleveland Public Library, Ernest Bohn, Director of Public Housing, and other city officials, not only reached out to the community, but also boosted the economy. They enabled artists to continue their work without being stressed by financial pressures. Second, social concerns drove the production of Federal artworks more than aesthetics. Washington administrators, as well as Cleveland officials, made sure that the public art created for the program was non-controversial and reassuring. With some exceptions, public art presented a patriotic and positive view of history, using a narrow range of styles. It homogenized social identities and diminished differences.

designed by Earl Neff, painted by
Michael Rozdilsky.
Oil on canvas
Located in Bain Park Cabin,
Fairview Park.

Covering, in a sense, was instituted to create a feeling of unity and to persuade people they belonged to something greater than themselves. A generic America covered the walls of public buildings, reaffirming national ideals of hard work and rugged individualism, supporting nationalism, and maintaining the myth of a bucolic rural lifestyle.

William Milliken wrote:

> If culture is to go down at a time when the great public is reaching out in search of values that are not of the moment and turning toward those expressions of life which have provedly [sic] lasting qualities, the future of our city is dim. But belief in cultural development does not falter. The past shows conclusively, and an analysis of today reveals as well, that the insignificant and trivial falls away in time of stress. Let the fact be faced that at no time have sacrifices been more needed in order to foster a group who have been too often unconsidered, a group who, in the mass of their production, sum up the cultural tendencies, the creative yearnings, of our city. *That city honors itself which stands behind its artists.*[74]

Around the edges of Cleveland's Federal artworks were sown the seeds of diversity, tolerance, and social change. Graphic artists experimented with style, printmakers explored their social conscience, and African American artists and women began to experience more equitable opportunities in employment. Although those opportunities were intermittent and sometimes short-lived, in many ways Federal art programs set the stage for real social change. Whether Federal art was embraced or rejected, it set the tone for a new direction.

That city honors itself which stands behind its artists.

—William Milliken

Notes

1 For a complete listing of Ohio post office murals, see the Resource Guide below, as well as the website (www.wpamurals.com/ohio.html).

2 Nancy Heller, and Julie Williams, *The Regionalists* (New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 1976).

3 "Horses … in New Oil Painting at Postoffice [sic] Draw Criticism of Farmers." *Geneva Free Press*, November 3, 1938.

4 Charles Campbell's print, *Johnny Get Your Gun*, explores the impact of war on soldiers, while his public mural, *Hoosier Farm* focuses on a more bucolic view of rural life in the Midwest.

5 Kenji Yoshino, *Covering: The Hidden Assault on our Civil Rights*. (New York: Random House, 2006) 18–19.

6 Social realist murals were not a new phenomenon. Diego Rivera had already made the medium and style famous in Mexico. The imagery and social messages were powerful and were needed in a time of social upheaval.

7 Karal Ann Marling, *Federal Art in Cleveland 1933–43* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Cleveland Public Library, 1974).

8 Ibid: 3

9 Ibid:5-6

10 Ibid: 6

11 Bruce Bustard, *A New Deal for the Arts*. (Hong Kong: The National Trust Fund Board and University of Washington Press, 1997) 3.

12 Ibid: 4

13 Ibid: 9

14 Virginia Clayton Tuttle, Elizabeth Stillinger, et al. *Drawing on America's Past: Folk Art, Modernism, and the Index of American Design*. (National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. and The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2003).

15 Marlene Park, and Gerald E. Markowitz, *Democratic Vistas: Post Offices and Public Art in the New Deal*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984) 6.

16 Grace Kelley, *Plain Dealer*, December 12, 1933; quoted in Marling *Federal Art in Cleveland*, 17.

17 Marlene Park, and Gerald E. Markowitz, *Democratic Vistas: Post Offices and Public Art in the New Deal*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984) 29.

18 Karal Ann Marling *Wall-to-Wall America: a Cultural History of Post-Office Murals in the Great Depression*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982) 35.

19 Francis V. O'Connor, "The Influence of Diego Rivera on the Art of the United States During the 1930s and After," in: *Diego Rivera*. (New York: Founders of the Society for the Detroit Institute of Arts in association with W.W. Norton and Company, 1986) 170.

20 Ibid: 31. Interestingly, the mural entitled *Man at Crossroads*, was taken down the very day George Biddle wrote his now famous letter to Franklin Roosevelt.

21 Ibid.

22 Regionalism has been defined as an American style of painting based on a realistic depiction of its land and people. Subject matter was generic towns, farms, and cities around the country that did not come from any particular place, but was considered the essence of Middle America. For a full discussion on the subject, see Nancy Heller, and Julie Williams, *The Regionalists* (New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 1976) 9.

23 One can go further back to trace the roots of American Scene painting to a combination of the "Ashcan" school and early American modernism. But for the purposes of this discussion, we will concentrate on American Scene painting.

24 Nancy Heller and Julie Williams, *The Regionalists* (New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 1976) 175.

25 Baigell, Matthew *The American Scene: American Painting of the 1930's*. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974).18.

26 Karal Ann Marling, "William M. Milliken and Federal Art Patronage of the Depression Decade," in *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, December. (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1974) 362.

27 O'Connor, *Diego Rivera*, 159.

28 Ibid: 170.

29 Marling, *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, 361.

30 Ibid.

31 Milliken felt his community responsibility strongly and was influenced more by Charles Hutchinson, President of the Art Institute of Chicago, who came to speak at the Cleveland Museum of Art in 1919.

32 Marling, *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, 367.

33 Ibid: 366.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Marling, *Federal Art in Cleveland*, 18.

37 Letter from Charlotte Gowing Cooper, State Supervisor, Ohio Art Project to Florence Kerr, Assistant Administrator, Works Projects Administration, September 12, 1939.

38 "Competition for the Museum Decoration of the Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio Post Office." Karal Ann Marling papers, Kelvin Smith Library, Case Western Reserve University, Box 2, folder 14. Each mural commissioned had a blind competition in which artists submitted designs unsigned.

39 Milliken and his committee reviewed nearly thirty entries before unanimously choosing Clifford Jones' Design. He lived and worked in Kokomo, Indiana.

40 Milliken correspondence (1935–1942), Karal Ann Marling papers, Kelvin Smith Library, Case Western Reserve University, Box 2.

41 Milliken correspondence, September 15, 1942, Karal Ann Marling papers, Kelvin Smith Library , Case Western Reserve University, Box 2.

42 It is not known whether the mural stayed in Kokomo after the abandonment of the project or was placed somewhere else.

43 In fact, the Csosz mural, which still can be seen at the University Circle post office in Cleveland, was much larger than the planned Cuyahoga Falls mural and spans the length and width of the lobby.

44 *Cleveland Press*, August 1, 1940.

45 Milliken correspondence (1935–1942), Karal Ann Marling papers, Kelvin Smith Library, Case Western Reserve University, Box 2.

46 Ibid: Contract for Cuyahoga Falls mural.

47 Marling, *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, 362.

48 Sommer, William "Some of My Working Methods," in: *WPA: Art For the Millions*. (New York: New York Graphic Society, 1973) 129.

49 Ibid: 131.

50 Karal Ann Marling *Wall-to-Wall America: A Cultural History of Post Office Murals in the Great Depression*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982) 69.

51 Letter from Edward B. Rowan, Superintendent, Section of Painting and Sculpture, to William Sommer; December 24, 1937.

52 Letter from Edward B. Rowan, Superintendent, Section of Painting and Sculpture, to William Sommer; March 2, 1938.

53 Letter from Edward B. Rowan, Superintendent, Section of Painting and Sculpture, to William Sommer; October 11, 1938

54 Letter from William Sommer to Edward B. Rowan, Superintendent, Section of Painting and Sculpture, December 2, 1938.

55 Letter from William Milliken to Edward B. Rowan; May 27, 1935.

56 Letter from Edward B. Rowan to William Milliken; December 7, 1935; Letter from Clarence Carter to Edward Rowan; May 25, 1936.

57 Marling, *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, 368.

58 As many of the WPA programs were shutting down in 1943, thousands of posters were most likely thrown out. In Christopher DeNoon *Posters of the WPA 1935–1943*. (Los Angeles: The Wheatley Press, 1987) 32.

59 Ibid: 7

60 Ibid: 22

61 Ibid: 9.

62 Many of his later landscapes were of the Maine coastline.

63 DeNoon, *Posters of the WPA 1935–1943*, 37.

64 Watson, Jane "The Incalculable Record." *Magazine of Art*, August. (Washington, DC: The American Federation of Arts, 1939) 460.

65 William Busta, "Print-a-Month Club in Cleveland," in: *Art All Around the Town*, (exhibition catalog), (Cleveland: Cleveland Artists Foundation, 2006); Margaret Mary Campbell, *Print-A-Month: Cleveland Printmakers, 1932–1936*. University Heights, Ohio: Department of Fine Arts, John Carroll University, 1982; Sabine Kretzschmar, "Art for Everyone: Cleveland Printmakers and the WPA: in: *Transformations in Cleveland Art 1796–1946*, William H. Robinson and David Steinberg, eds. Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1996; Marling, *Federal Art in Cleveland: 1933–1943*.

66 Buckner, Cindy *Medley Art in a Day's Work*. (exhibit catalog) (June 11–24, 2000). (Baltimore: The Baltimore Museum of Art, 2000) 4.

67 Ibid: 2

68 Steichen, Edward *The Family of Man*. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1955).

69 Ibid:4

70 Adams, Henry *Edris Eckhardt: Visionary and Innovator in American Studio Ceramics and Glass*, (Exhibition catalog). (Cleveland: Cleveland Artists Foundation, 2006).

71 Bright, Alfred L. "Cleveland Karamu Artists," in: *Cleveland as a Center of Regional American Art*. (Symposium Presented by the Cleveland Artists Foundation at the Cleveland Museum of Art, November 13–14, 1993) 72.

72 Ibid.

73 Adams, *Edris Eckhardt: Visionary and Innovator in American Studio Ceramics and Glass*.

74 William Milliken, "The Annual Exhibition Foreword," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, May. (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1933) 67.


NOTICE

Northeast Ohio Federal Art Program Resource Guide

Sharon E. Dean PhD
William Busta

Murals: Post Offices
Murals: Other Public Spaces
Cleveland Public Library
Public Housing
Ceramics
Posters
Prints
Federal Art Programs
PWAP Cleveland Artists Directory
Bibliography

The following Resource Guide provides information on various Federal art programs as well as where "New Deal" art can be found in Cleveland. It is not intended to be complete nor exhaustive, but rather suggests the enormity and diversity of material. It is hoped that by revisiting Federal art in Cleveland, there will be a motivation to preserve it. As Albert Albano, Director of the Intermuseum Conservation Association, has so eloquently argued, "At this moment when many works of "New Deal" art are threatened with loss or damage through neglect and indifference, we need to remain vigilant to assure that this vital heritage is protected and preserved."

Jack Greitzer
Post Office Interiors, 1936.
Oil on canvas.
Located in former Main Cleveland post office.

Seventy-one murals were installed in post offices throughout Ohio, 19 of which were done in the Cleveland area. The following list provides the location for each of the murals produced in the metropolitan area. Art created for post offices in Girard, Medina, and Willoughby are either destroyed or missing.

Bedford
Karl Anderson
Drift toward Industrialism [sometimes referred to as *Exodus to the Cities*], 1937
Oil on canvas

Formerly post office, now offices of Doty and Miller Architects, 600 Broadway Avenue

Campbell
Joseph Walter
Iron and Steel Industry, 1941
Terra cotta relief

220 12th Street

Chagrin Falls
Moissaye Marans
Stone Quarries, 1943
Wood carving

160 East Washington Street

Chardon
George A. Picken
Maple Sugar Camp, 1942
Oil on canvas

Formerly at post office, now at Chardon Municipal Center, 111 Water Street

Cleveland, University Center
John Csosz, assisted by Clarence Zuelch
untitled, historical and modern scenes of Cleveland, 1937
Oil on canvas, six panels

Currently University Circle post office, 1950 East 101st Street

Cleveland, Main (Old Office)
Jack J. Greitzer
Post Office Interiors, 1936
Oil on canvas, two panels

Formerly Main post office, now
M.K. Ferguson Plaza, 1500 West 3rd Street

Cleveland, Pearlbrook
Richard Zoellner
Ore Docks and Steel Mills, 1938
Oil on plaster

4160 Pearl Road

Geneva
William Sommer
Detail, *Rural Homestead*, 1939
Oil on canvas

1041 South Broadway

Hubbard
Herbert Mesibov
Detail, *Steel Industry*, 1941
Oil on canvas

44 East Liberty Street

New London
Lloyd Ney
New London Facets, 1940
Oil on canvas

86 East Main Street

Orrville
Aldo Lazzarini
Judge Smith Orr and Robert Taggard Planning the New Settlement of Orrville, 1852, 1937
Oil on canvas

145 North Vine Street

Ravenna
Clarence Carter
Early Ravenna, 1936
Oil on canvas

150 North Chestnut Street

Wadsworth
F. Thorton Martin
They Came as Wadsworth's First Settlers After the War of 1812, 1938
Oil on canvas

Formerly at post office, now at Wadsworth City Hall, 120 Maple Street

Warren
Glen Shaw
Romance of Steel, Old; *Romance of Steel, Modern*, 1938
Oil on canvas, two panels

201 High Street Northeast

Images not available for:

Amherst

Michael Loew
Pioneers Crossing the Ohio River, 1941
Oil on canvas

Formerly post office, now Main Street
Amherst offices, 255 Park Avenue

Struthers

W. Bimel Kehm
Citizens, 1940
Plaster relief

195 South Bridge Street

Murals were created for other public spaces, including public schools, park facilities and office buildings, of which a sampling is shown here, as well as a partial listing.

Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers Building
Earl Neff
Details, *History of Railroading*, 1937
Oil on canvas. Collection Cleveland Artists Foundation.

Two of 15 panels created for the downtown Cleveland building.
Not commissioned through the WPA.

Bain Park Cabin
title unknown
Designed by Earl Neff, painted by Michael Rozdilsky
Oil on canvas

Fairview Park Community Cabin, North Park Drive, Fairview Park

Art not in Federal buildings
Cleveland Public Auditorium
Sixteen mural lunettes on theme "The Resources of the City." PWAP, 1934

Clarence Holbrook Carter, *Farms*
William Sommer, *Bridges*
Stanley T. Clough, *Mills*
Jack J. Greitzer, *Transportation*
Ivor G. Johns, *Markets*
Michael Sarisky, *Open Hearth*
Clara McClean, *Harbor*

Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Perkins Wild Life Enclosure
William McVey, assisted by Joseph Francskin
Bear, 1934
Limestone, 46x51x64"

Cleveland Botanical Garden
William McVey
Awakening, 1934
Marble, 72x42x40"

Originally in Donald Gray Gardens, north of Cleveland Municipal Stadium

Cleveland School District
Bratenahl School, gymnasium
Joseph Haber
Athletics and *Studies*, 1940
Mural panel, catalin plastic mounted on pressed wood, each 50x68"

John Hay High School
Clarence Holbrook Carter
Cultural Cleveland, 1939

Lincoln [Junior] High School
William A. Krusoe
The Spirit of Education, 1939

Locations unknown
Louis Arthur Grebenak
WBOE Mural, 1939
90.5x105"

Donald Duer Bayard
Anthology (Children's Tales), 1936
Oil on canvas backed with Masonite
72x96"

Oxford School, Cleveland Heights
LeRoy Flint
Agriculture, 1940
Mural bas-relief, hydrocal, 38x132."

LeRoy Flint
Industry, 1940
Mural bas-relief, hydrocal, 38x132."

In the Cleveland region, the Cleveland Public Library was the largest recipient of art that was funded by Federal programs in the Depression era. The leadership of Linda Eastman, Library Director from 1918 to 1938, was crucial. She believed in the importance of the arts in supporting learning and she was encouraged by the enthusiasm of her brother, painter William Joseph Eastman.

Three major murals were painted for the Main Library Building; six murals were painted for branch libraries; children's sections were decorated with ceramics and dolls (pg 33) that served as aids during story-telling; numerous easel paintings portrayed historical and literary themes; and prints from the graphics' workshop filled library walls and flat files.

The Library has been an excellent steward of this legacy, and has continued the tradition of incorporating art into its buildings to this day—as new branches have been built over the past several decades, art has always been part of the building project.

Donald Duer Bayard
Early Transportation (Cleveland's Waterfront About 1835), 1934
Oil on canvas, 93x235."

Located in Main Library, second floor corridor.

Ora Coltman
Dominance of the City, 1934
Oil on canvas, Height: 79.25"; Widths: 135.25" (center), 39.75" (sides).

Located in Main Library, third floor. First mural commissioned through the Federal art programs.

William Adelbert Dolwick
Ohio City in 1834, 1934
Oil on canvas, 73x188"

Located in Lorain Branch.

Max Alban Bachofen
Snow and Wind, 1933–34
Oil on canvas, Height: 46"; Widths: 36.25" (left); 59.25" (center); 34.25" (right)

Located in Collinwood Branch.

William Adelbert Dolwick
Ohio City in 1834, 1934
Oil on canvas, 73x188"

Located in Lorain Branch.

Joseph Egan
Old Reservoir Walk, 1933–34
Oil on canvas, 60.5x 84.25"

Located in Main Library, third floor.

August Biehle, Jr.
Mural Map: The Ohio Canal, 1933–34
Oil on canvas, 60x112."

Located in Main Library, third floor.

Stanley Dale
Western Reserve and the Firelands of Ohio (Mural map), 1933–34
Oil on canvas, 60x112.5" (sides).

Located in Main Library, third floor.

Ambrozi Paliwoda
Out of the Past, the Present; Out of the Material, the Spiritual, 1934
Oil on canvas mounted to masonite, 91x106."

Located in Jefferson Branch.

Ernest Bohn helped produce the first quality low-rent public housing units in the country. Working with William Milliken and other city and Federal government officials, Bohn not only provided stable housing, but also insured that these public buildings were enhanced by art that was in keeping with high architectural standards. Below is a list of major works that were created for these housing projects.

Lakeview Terrace Community Center
William McVey
The Founding of Cleveland, 1937
Bas-reliefs, limestone, central figure 132x66"

William McVey
Paul Bunyan Digging the Great Lakes, 1937
Carved brick

Earl J. Neff
How the Bear Lost His Tail, 1937

Joseph Ersek
Lakeview Terrace, 1937–39
Oil on masonite, 47x49.5"

Outhwaite Homes, Management Office
Charles Sallée
Outhwaite, 1940

Woodhill Homes
Edris Eckhardt
Terra cotta plaques, 1939

Woodhill Homes, gymnasium
LeRoy Flint
Seven panels, 1940

Woodhill Homes, terrace above gymnasium
Alexander Blazys
Working Man; Working Woman, 1941
cast stone

Henry Keto
Decorative ceramic relief squares that were applied to building exteriors, each approx 18x18x2"

CMHA, in storage

Elmer Brown
Cleveland's past and present, industry and commerce, 1940
Oil on canvas, 84.5x240," 86x266"
Originally at Valleyview Homes, Community Center, Recreation Room

Henry Keto
24 terra cotta tiles
Originally at Valleyview Homes, breezeway between recreation and office wings

Edris Eckhardt
Decorations in the style of illustration for children's books
Ceramic relief, various sizes
Originally at Valleyview Homes, Recreation Center, basement

Louis Grebenak
Title unknown, 1940
Oil on canvas, 85.5x444"
Originally at Valleyview Homes, Management Building

Artist unknown, but associated with Edris Eckhardt
Playground animals, 1939
Cast stone
Originally at Valleyview Homes

LeRoy Flint, executed by Henry Olmer
Ceramic map, 1940
Originally at Valleyview Homes, Community Center, West 7th Street

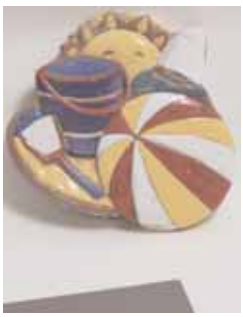
Valleyview Homes
Louis Grebenak
Title unknown, 1940
Oil on canvas, 85.5x444"

Valleyview Homes
Edris Eckhardt
Playground Animals, 1935–39
Cast stone, various sizes

Ceramic production in Cleveland flourished under the WPA and the supervision of Edris Eckhardt. She successfully lobbied for the acceptance of ceramic sculpture as a legitimate art form equal in aesthetic qualities to stone and metal artworks. Eckhardt also adapted ceramic techniques to large-scale decorations of public buildings. At a time when racism and gender stereotyping were common, Eckhardt and her team were promoting ideas of cultural tolerance.

Grace Luse
Farmer Boy and *Apple Girl*, 1935–39
Ceramic bookends, each approx, 13" tall.

Collection Lakewood Board of Education



Edris Eckhardt
Ceramic relief created for Valleyview Homes, in the style of illustration for children's books.

Between 1935 and 1943, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) commissioned graphics artists to produce two million posters for parks, exhibits, plays, public housing and social welfare programs. Although only a small portion survives today (the largest known collection of 2,000 posters is at the Library of Congress), there is much to learn from them.

Kalman Kubinyi
Graphic Processes, 1935–39
Silkscreen print, 17x11.5"
Collection Cleveland Public Library

Artist unknown
Lake Shore Village, 1941–43
Silkscreen print, 20.75x13"
Collection Case Western Reserve University, Kelvin Smith Library

The posters are significant for their creativity, easy-to-understand imagery, and their innovative design qualities. During the WPA the commercial silkscreen process was introduced to the fine arts for the first time. The success of this new technique allowed for mass production, which in turn, allowed poster divisions to flourish all over the country. Artists Stanley Clough and Earl Schuler produced most of the posters for Cleveland. Twenty-nine designs still exist, some of which are reprinted here from the collection of the Library of Congress. Eight original posters were loaned by local sources for the exhibition.

Artist unknown
Cedar Central Apts, 1939–43
Silkscreen print, 275x19"
Collection Case Western Reserve University, Kelvin Smith Library

Artist unknown
Valleyview Homes, 1939–42
Silkscreen print, 275x19"
Collection Case Western Reserve University, Kelvin Smith Library

At a time when etching was the predominant technique, the FAP allowed experimentation with color lithography, wood engravings and screenprints. The freedom from the pressures of having to sell art also allowed artists the opportunity to explore new content including poverty, unemployment, racism, and the impact of industry on city landscapes.

T Gross-Bettelheim

Gates and Bridges,
1935–39
Lithograph,
9.75x11.75"

Collection Lakewood Board of Education

Industrial Scene,
1936
Lithograph,
14x10.25"

Collection Lakewood Board of Education

Elmer W. Brown

Fortune Teller,
1934–38
Linoleum cut,
11.25x8.5"

Collection Cleveland Artists Foundation

The Wrestlers,
1935–39
Etching, 9x6"

Collection Cleveland Public Library

Charles Campbell

Johnny Get Your Gun, 1935–39
Lithograph, 8x10"

Collection Case Western Reserve University, Kelvin Smith Library

Blessed Are the Poor, 1935–39, 1935–39
Lithograph, 8.25x10.25"

Collection Case Western Reserve University, Kelvin Smith Library

Mathew Daniels-Nya

Star Boarder, 1935–39
Lithograph, 7.5x10.25"

Collection Case Western Reserve University, Kelvin Smith Library

W LeRoy Flint

Tourist Camp, 1938–39
Etching, 11x8.5"

Collection Lakewood Board of Education

Shovelers, 1936–37
Etching, 8.75x6"

Collection Cleveland Public Library

Frank Fousek

Lonely Road,
1935–39
Etching and
aquatint, 7x9.75"

Collection Cleveland
Public Library

Michael P Franyin

Solution, 1935–39
Lithograph with
aquatint,
8.75x10.75"

Collection Case
Western Reserve
University, Kelvin
Smith Library

Abraham Jacobs

Lilies of the Field,
1935–39
Crayon aquatint,
5.5x8.25"

Collection Case
Western Reserve
University, Kelvin
Smith Library

Sheffield Kagy

CWA Workers at the City Lakefront, 1934
Linoleum cut, 12x14.5"

Collection Cleveland Public Library

Bridges, 1935–37
Lithograph, 9x13"

Collection of Lakewood Board of Education

Kalman Kubinyi

Work on the Lakefront, 1936
Etching, 7x9"

Collection Lakewood Board of Education

The Farm, 1936
Etching, 7.25x10"

Collection Lakewood Board of Education

Grace Leonard

Across the Flats, 1935–39
Offset soft-ground etching, 10x13"

Collection Case Western Reserve University, Kelvin Smith Library

Russell Limbach

Placing the Cornice of the Cleveland Post Office, 1935–39
Lithograph, 17.5x11.75"

Collection Case Western Reserve University, Kelvin Smith Library

Dorothy Rutka

Poverty, 1935–39
Etching with aquatint, 8.75x6.75"

Collection Cleveland Public Library

Charles Sallée

Emmetta, 1935–39
Etching and aquatint, 7.5x5.5"

Collection Cleveland Public Library

The Postsetters, 1935–39
Etching, 5.5x6.75"

Collection Cleveland Public Library

Civil Works Administration (CWA)
December 1933–June 1934
The CWA provided immediate relief for the unemployed and also underwrote the Treasury Department's Public Work of Arts Project (PWAP).

Public Works of Art Project (PWAP)
December 1933–June 1934
The PWAP was the first Federal art program funded as part of the New Deal during the Depression to give work to unemployed artists. The program emphasized "American Scene" subject matter and produced approximately 700 murals, 7,000 easel paintings and watercolors, 750 sculptures, and 2,500 graphic works of art to decorate non-Federal public buildings and parks.

Works Projects Administration (WPA)
August 1935–1939

Works Progress Administration (WPA)
1939–April 1943
A group of agencies established for the purpose of employing workers for various public projects. Some of these agencies included the Federal Art Project (FAP), and the Index of American Design (IAD).

Farm Security Administration (FSA)
1933–1944
Created within the Department of Agriculture, the program was designed to assist farmers affected by the Dust Bowl during the Depression. Photographers were dispatched to document the hardships farmers and their families faced during this time.

Federal Art Project (FAP)

This program was designed to establish employment opportunities in the arts. Funded by the WPA, 50 percent of workers were directly engaged in creating art, while another 10 to 25 percent were employed in art education. The remainder of employees in this program were involved in art research. By the project's end, the FAP produced more than 40,000 easel paintings, 1,100 murals in public buildings, and thousands of prints, posters and other graphic works.

Index of American Design (IAD)

The Index of American Design was formed to document American folk art through paintings, drawings and photographs. Folk art, traditional furniture, and other American handcrafts were carefully recorded.

Treasury Relief Art Projects (TRAP)

July 1935–June 1939

TRAP was the smallest of the Federal arts projects. It was specifically designed to enhance existing Federal buildings that lacked funding for art decoration. It was funded by the WPA and produced 89 murals, 65 sculptures, and approximately 10,000 easel paintings.

Treasury Section of Painting and Sculpture (SECTION)

October 1934–June 1943

The SECTION is considered the most important of the US Department of Treasury visual arts programs. It was specifically designed to embellish new Federal buildings with murals and sculpture. Art projects were funded by setting aside one percent of monies allocated for construction costs. More than 1,100 murals and 300 sculptures were completed for courthouses, post offices, and other government buildings around the country.

Hundreds of artists in northeast Ohio worked for the various New Deal programs. A complete listing is impossible—some worked for only a few weeks or months and the necessary exhaustive search of records would be, well, exhausting. Fortunately, however, the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP) published a list of all artists who participated.

Names of Artists

Allman, Sara
R.F.D. New Milford Rd
Ravenna

Armstrong, George
819 Vincent St
Cleveland

Atchley, Whitney
3732 Euclid Ave
Cleveland

Bachofen, Max
1973 E 116th St
Cleveland

Bayard, Donald D.
1350 Marlowe Ave
Lakewood

Berwald, William G.
668 E 117th St
Cleveland

Biehle, August F.
6906 Renwood Dr
Parma

Bietz, Hugo H.
R.F.D.
Kent

Black, Lorin
2612 Carnegie Ave
Cleveland

Book, Robert D.
679 E 128th St
Cleveland

Bork, Paul C.
2 South Howard St
Akron

Cahow, Osborn H.
116 South Maple St
Akron

Campbell, Charles
7117 Clark Ave
Cleveland

Carpenter, Wesley M.
1858 E 65th St
Cleveland

Carter, Clarence
2074 E 107th St
Cleveland

Clough, Stanley T.
2024 E 86th St
Cleveland

Clough, Thomas
Route 2
Mentor

Coe, Charles M.
3018 Washington
Cleveland

Collins, Thomas M.
19 McGuffey Rd
Youngstown

Coltman. Ora
11415 Mayfield
Cleveland

Craig, Walter
2022 E 89th St
Cleveland

Cramer, Miriam E.
8210 Carnegie Ave
Cleveland

Csosz, John
3711 Euclid Ave
Cleveland

Dale, Stanley
2053 E 102nd St
Cleveland

Danchuk, George A.
3810 Biddulph Ave
Cleveland

De Marco, Matthew
1600 Lakeland Ave
Cleveland

Dennison, Dorothy D.
33 Scott St
Youngstown

Dolwick, William A.
1178 Gladys Ave
Lakewood

Eckhardt, Edris
6210 Whittier Ave
Cleveland

Egan, Joseph B.
3285 Silsby Rd
Cleveland Heights

Eppink, Norman R.
10125 Clifton Blvd
Cleveland

Farrell, James
Youngstown

Faysash, Julius F.
1337 Brown St
Akron

Franceskin, Joseph
13817 Argus, No. 1
Cleveland

Fox, Milton
2587 Nottinghill Ln
Cleveland Heights

Fritzinger, Lee Roy
Lake Brady
Kent

Grauer, William C
3226 Euclid Ave
Cleveland.

Greitzer, J. J.
3399 Euclid Heights Blvd
Cleveland Heights

Hasz, Charles J.
Poland

Hein, William A.
1044 E 141st St
Cleveland

Ives, Kenneth B.
11601 Euclid Ave
Cleveland

Johns, Ivor G.
1880 Haldane Ave
Cleveland

Kagy, Sheffield
1826 Mount Union
East Cleveland

Kaplan, Philip
1229 East Blvd
Cleveland

Keller, K. K.
238 North Main St
Akron

J.J. King
3920 Euclid, care of Mr. Vago
Cleveland

John Koehler
1031 Packard Dr
Akron

Kreisl, George Louis
5212 Fleet Ave
Cleveland

Krusoe, William E.
12420 Soika Ave
Cleveland

Kubinyi, Kalman
10115 Superior
Cleveland

Kutchin, Lucius
28 South 9th Street
Akron

Lee, Ila May
347 Spalding St
Akron

Lenz, Norbert
706 Prospect-Fourth Building
Cleveland

Limbach, R. T.
10115 Superior Ave
Cleveland

Long, Betty
3226 Euclid Ave
Cleveland

Lyons, Chub
14614 Detroit Ave
Lakewood

Mabry, Frank E.
Medina

Macmillin, Mary Ann
3083 Derbyshire Road
Cleveland Heights

Maibrunn, August
551 Baird St
Akron

Marine, Edmund
9013 Kempton
Cleveland

Marker, Thomas M.
2124 Cornell Rd
Cleveland

McAllister, R. Duncan
710 West Main Street
Conneaut

McClean, Clara
15706 Grovewood Ave NE
Cleveland

McVey, William
14518 Superior Rd
Cleveland Heights

Merkel, Arthur
1888 Wymore Ave
East Cleveland

Morgan, Edward
Hiram

Napoli, James
1259 E 102d St
Cleveland

Neff, Earl, J.
20871 Horthwood Ave
Fairview Village

Neff, Vera O.
11312 Hessler Rd
Cleveland

Novotny, E. L.
3686 W 45th St
Cleveland

Novy, Charles J.
1921 E 85th St
Cleveland

Ollock, Steve
13005 Griffin Ave
Cleveland

Paliwoda, Ambrozi
2415 Fairchild Ave
Cleveland

Parmelee, Ray
1455 E 88th St
Cleveland

Peck, Augustus
1230 E 9th St
Cleveland

Pelliteri, Donald J.
203 Wheeler St
Akron

Porter, John
2836 Edlewood
Youngstown

Procaccio, William M.
1212 Lakeside
Akron

Rahming, Grace Martin
Prospect St
Oberlin

Rahming, Norris
10720 Deering
Cleveland

Rausch, Stella J.
9412 Hough Ave
Cleveland

Rebeck. Steven A.
1028 Roanoke Rd
Cleveland Heights

Riba, Paul
11222 Governor Ave
Cleveland

Roberts, Margaret Vera
160 N Portage Path
Akron

Rogozen, Joseph H.
3608 Euclid Ave
Cleveland

Sarisky, Michael
11225 Parkview Ave
Cleveland

Schlehr, W. Raymond
2128 East 100th St
Cleveland

Schultz, J. S.
545 Brittain Road
Akron

Schweinsburg, Roland A.
2523 Belmont Ave
Youngstown

Shaw, Henry H.
1619 Hugulet St
Akron

Smith, Clyde R.
1203 Sawyer Ave
Akron

Soltys, Ben
6823 Harvard Ave
Cleveland

Sommer, William
Macedonia

Stenberg, Fred R.
Cuyahoga Falls

Sumner, Park E.
291 Gordon Dr
Akron

Suto, Joseph
6709 Euclid Ave
Cleveland

Tenkacs, John
3920 Euclid, care of Mr. Vago
Cleveland

Tilgner, Arthur
2114 E St. Clair Ave
Cleveland

Toth, Stephen C., Jr.
1274 N Main St
Akron

Walsh, Grace A.
11430 Fairchild Ave
Cleveland

Westbrook, Lloyd L.
Olmsted Falls

Willgohs, Melvin J.
931 Dan St
Akron

Witonski, Ted J.
2260 W 7th St
Cleveland

Wolff, Arthur F.
1300 Westlake Ave
Lakewood

Yost, Jeannette E.
Lakewood

Zuelch, Clarence
8903 Superior Ave
Cleveland

We have only listed the Cleveland subcommittee, not subcommittees from Akron or Youngstown.

Angelo Bulone
Zoar Cabinet, 1935–39
Watercolor on paper.

Created as part of the Index of American Design.

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Cleveland Artists Foundation

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Cleveland Artists Foundation programming is made possible by memberships and support from: Anonymous; Ohio Arts Council; The Cleveland Foundation; The David & Inez Meyers Foundation; The Eleanor & Kelvin Smith Foundation; The George Gund Foundation; The Harry K. & Emma R. Fox Charitable Foundation; The John P. Murphy Foundation; The Kulas Foundation; and The Martha Holden Jennings Foundation.

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