New Jersey State House Public Art Tour

njstatehousetours.org
About The Art Tour

In 2018, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Public Buildings Arts Inclusion Act of 1978. The Act stipulates that up to 1.5% of construction costs on new or renovated State buildings may be allocated for commissioned artwork at that site. The program’s goal is to enhance the quality and aesthetic effect of State buildings by incorporating works of art into the architectural design. To mark the anniversary, the Tour Office created a special Art Tour to highlight some of the collection of public art in the State House and Annex.
It is my hope that the viewer will gain a fresh perspective and a sense of civic pride.

— J. KENNETH LEAP
Special artwork was commissioned during the construction of the State House Annex from 1927-31. Newer works credited to the Public Buildings Arts Inclusion Act were installed during the 1990s when the Annex was renovated for legislative committee rooms, committee chair offices, and legislative staff. The building previously housed the Judicial Branch, State Museum, and State Library. During the renovation, new office space was added to the south wing of the capitol.
Our Art Tour begins in the west wing of the State House Annex. In 1929, this wing housed the State Museum, commissioned by the New Jersey Legislature in 1895 to collect and exhibit specimens in natural history and archeology. Remnants of art created for the Museum space remain. In 1992, new artworks were blended with the old as part of the Public Arts Inclusion Act. Today, this space is used by the New Jersey Senate for public committee meetings.
Rae Sloan Bredin

1929 (Committee Room 4)

The main gallery of the former New Jersey State Museum (now Committee Room 4) features works by R. Sloan Bredin, an impressionist from New Hope, Pennsylvania. Bredin was commissioned to create five murals showing the four seasons in New Jersey and a larger mural representing the Delaware Water Gap (pictured above). All but the Summer mural survived until today.
Rae Sloan Bredin

1929 (Committee Room 4)

SPRING

FALL

WINTER
Ani Rosskum and David Lynch of Roosevelt, New Jersey, were commissioned to reproduce Bredin’s lost Summer mural (top photo) and to create a new, larger one depicting New Jersey’s agricultural abundance to mirror Bredin’s Delaware Water Gap.
George Sotter

1929 (Committee Room 4)

Only seven stained-glass panels have survived the original installation by George Sotter of Holicong, Pennsylvania. The original windows line the west wall and depict motifs such as the State seal; flora and fauna of New Jersey; and references to classical mythology, astronomy, and New Jersey industry.
Stained-glass artist J. Kenneth Leap of Runnemed, New Jersey, was commissioned to add stained and painted glass windows to the east wall of the former State Museum main gallery with modern interpretations in an original format. All of Leap’s panes are based on State symbols.
Howard McCormick of Leonia, New Jersey, painted murals to supplement the Museum’s natural history dioramas. They served both an ornamental and educational function. This large lunette pays homage to New Jersey’s indigenous people – the Lenapes. McCormick is best known for his depictions of the indigenous people of the Southwest.
Howard McCormick
1929 (Committee Room 5: former Aviary and Aquarium)

Aviary

Aquarium
The Children's Room is clad in original tile manufactured by the Mueller Mosaic Company of Trenton. During the restoration of the Annex, Lambertville, New Jersey, artist Katherine Hackl was commissioned to integrate new artwork with the existing tiles. All glazes for the project reflected the palette and texture of the 1930s. The themes of the new tiles were taken from Rudyard Kipling's classic *Just So Stories*.
Our Art Tour moves to the east wing of the State House Annex where stained-glass artist J. Kenneth Leap was commissioned to create a skylight called New Jersey – A 360° View. The skylight celebrates New Jersey’s rich and varied geography and history. Folklore, legends, major historical events, and general areas of interest around the State are depicted in this 10’ x 14’ piece.
Livio Saganić created two sections of terrazzo floors (mosaic flooring composed of broken stone and polished to a flat shine) in the pedestrian corridor that connects the Annex to the State House. One of the terrazzo works depicts six stylized goldfinches – the State bird – and the other features a variety of State symbols.
David Ahlsted

1995 (State House Annex)

During the restoration of the Annex, David Ahlsted was commissioned to create six paintings for a committee room. Our Art Tour includes the concept renderings that Ahlsted submitted to the New Jersey State Council of the Arts to earn this commission. Titled The Delaware River Series, his works highlight recreational and industrial activities connected with New Jersey towns along the water.
Hiroshi Murata designed and installed three marquetry murals depicting major buildings and architectural details throughout the State House complex. Marquetry is a technique using inlaid wood to create intricate designs, much like a mosaic. Murata used 89 variously colored woods to construct these masterpieces, titled Resolution.
About the Artists

RAE SLOAN BREDIN (1880-1933). Unlike other New Hope impressionists, Bredin incorporated figures into his landscapes, and his paintings were often interiors. He frequently included women and children arranged in warm amiable groups and arrayed in delicate colors, set against a serene Delaware River Valley backdrop. Bredin was a member of a local organization of landscape painters known as the New Hope Group who exhibited together throughout the United States for several years. One of his most ambitious undertakings was a commission for the New Jersey State Museum in 1928, to paint murals of the four seasons and the Delaware Water Gap.

ANI ROSSKAM (1952-) and BILL LEECH (1951-) These professional artists, in addition to creating individual works, specialize in architectural renderings, color consulting, and mural painting. Ani Rosskam received her training at the Tyler School of Art and Architecture in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, and Les Ecoles d’Art Américaines in Fontainebleau, France. She has been in group and solo shows since 1974, worked as a private instructor of painting and drawing from 1974 to 1980 in Massachusetts, lectured on Renaissance painting at Boston College, and received a fellowship from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Bill Leech, who received his BFA from Kansas City Art Institute, has shown in both solo and group shows in such venues as the Barbara Gillman Gallery, Miami Beach, Florida; Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame; Allan Stone Gallery, New York; and JL Becker Fine Arts, Provincetown, Massachusetts. Bill Leech is also a New Jersey State Council on the Arts fellowship recipient. They live and work in Roosevelt, New Jersey.

GEORGE WILLIAM SOTTER (1879-1953) A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Sotter painted the city’s rivers and mills in his early youth. He apprenticed at several stained-glass studios prior to becoming a partner in the studio of Horace Rudy around 1901. He moved to Bucks County in 1902 to study at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and with Edward W. Redfield, the premier painter of the New Hope School. In 1903, he participated in the annual exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, then continued his studies at the Academy from 1905-07. Sotter taught design and painting at
the Carnegie Institute of Technology before moving to Holicong, Pennsylvania, in 1919. He travelled and painted in Europe and New England, particularly in Rockport, Maine. Sotter opened a stained-glass studio and earned national recognition making windows for churches and monasteries. Lauded for his marine pictures and dramatic landscapes with cloud-filled skies, Sotter was particularly noted for painting winter night scenes.

HOWARD McCORMICK (1875-1943) A painter, muralist, wood engraver, and illustrator, Howard McCormick became best-known for his museum murals depicting the indigenous people of the Southwest. He was born in Hillsboro, Indiana, and attended public schools in Newcastle and Indianapolis. He studied at the Indianapolis School of Art under William Forsyth; at the New York School of Art (now the Parsons School of Design) with William Merritt Chase; and in 1895, at the Académie Julian in Paris with Jean Paul Laurens. He exhibited at the Art Institute of Chicago before establishing studios in New Jersey and New York. A visit to a friend in Arizona stirred his creative focus and led to the production of murals for the American Museum of Natural History, the Museum of Science and Industry in New York, the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, and the Museum of Natural History in New York.

KATHERINE HACKL (1970-) Hackl pursued her studies at the University of Chicago and apprenticed in ceramic arts with the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works in Doylestown, Pennsylvania; with Suehiro Oshio in Nara, Japan; and with internationally-recognized potter Byron Temple. Additional training included glass blowing at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Deer Isle, Maine; mosaic techniques at Urban Glass in Brooklyn, New York; marble mosaic techniques at Centro Internazionale Studi Insegnamento Mosaico in Ravenna, Italy; and blacksmithing in Peters Valley in Layton, New Jersey. Hackl established her ceramic studio in 1993 in Lambertville, New Jersey, and was a founding member of the Covered Bridge Artisans in Stockton, New Jersey. Among her numerous installations are creations for the Batsto Village Visitors Center in Wharton State Forest; Princeton Public Library; Remembrance Park, Moorestown; the War Memorial in Trenton; and several NJ Transit stations. She has been honored with grants from the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.
MUELLER MOSAIC COMPANY (1908-1941) In 1908, Herman Carl Mueller opened the Mueller Mosaic Company at the former location of the Artistic Porcelain Company on Chambers Street and Cedar Lane in Trenton. Under Mueller’s leadership, the company produced tiles for many important buildings and structures throughout the country. Mueller tiles adorned many stations in the New York City Subway system. In Trenton, Mueller furnished tiles for the Crescent Temple and the Kelsey Building at West State and Willow Streets. Many people remember the colorful tile designs at the Rotolactor of the Walker-Gordon Dairy Farm in Plainsboro. The company ceased operations with the death of Mueller in 1941.

J. KENNETH LEAP (1964-) Leap initially enrolled in the Rhode Island School of Design to pursue a degree in illustration, but soon transferred into the glass program where he trained in glassblowing, casting, and stained-glass construction. Additional studies followed at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Parsons School of Design, and the Philadelphia College of Art. After opening his own studio in Runnemede, New Jersey, in 1987, Leap’s work appeared in group shows at Montclair University, Noyes Museum of Art, The Newark Museum of Art, the New Jersey State Museum, and others, before becoming the focus of The Stained Glass of J. Kenneth Leap – A Ten Year Retrospective at the Museum of American Glass in Wheaton Village, Millville, New Jersey. Initially commissioned for private work in Philadelphia and New York City, Leap became involved with highly visible public art projects for Kean University, NJ Transit’s Edison Train Station, and the Historic Atlantic City Convention Hall. Mr. Leap is the recipient of a BENE Visual Arts Award in Stained-Glass from Ministry & Liturgy Magazine and a New Jersey State Council on the Arts Fellowship.

LIVIO SAGANIĆ (1950-) Saganić is an award-winning artist dedicated to working in stone. His art can be found in The Newark Museum of Art, the New Jersey State Museum, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, the Montclair Art Museum, and in private and corporate galleries. In addition to serving as the chair of the Arts Department at Drew University, he has received public art commissions for projects in New York City and New Jersey, as well as private commissions for financial institutions and multinational corporations. Born in Yugoslavia, Saganić obtained his arts training in the United States, earning a BFA from Pratt Institute and an MFA from the Yale School of Art.
DAVID AHLSTED (1943- ) Ahlsted has been featured in numerous solo exhibitions throughout the eastern United States and participated in over 60 group shows including at the New Jersey Arts Annual, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Museum of the City of New York. Born and raised in Minnesota, he received his MFA from Indiana University. Ahlsted is professor emeritus at Stockton University where he helped to create the visual arts program and taught for more than 30 years. His work is in the permanent collections of The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum; Mastercard Incorporated; Noyes Museum of Art; PepsiCo, Inc.; and The Pew Charitable Trusts. In addition to his work at the State House Annex, he completed two more commissioned public art projects, seven large scale paintings for Rutgers University, and an installation at Stockton University. In 1989, he received the Governor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching.

HIROSHI MURATA (1941- ) Murata is a visual artist who has worked on numerous public art commissions in such sites as Newark Penn Station, New York City Port Authority Bus Terminal, and the River LINE. In addition to being featured in solo exhibitions in both Japan and the United States, he is represented in the permanent collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto; the New Jersey State Museum; New York Public Library; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and the Whitney Museum of American Art. He trained at Yale School of Art and the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). Prior to his 19-year tenure at The College of New Jersey, Murata was an Associate Professor of Art at Western Michigan University.

JOHN GOODYEAR (1930-2019) Goodyear’s work is part of the public collections of several internationally important institutions, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Guggenheim Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Museum of American Art, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, as well as 50 other public collections worldwide showcased in England, France, Greece, Italy, and Switzerland. Born in Los Angeles, Goodyear graduated with a Master of Design from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and found artistic inspiration during his two-year military service in Japan. There, the influences from Japanese architecture and Zen Buddhism led to his spare and ambiguous style. After his first solo New York City show in 1964, he was invited to join the Visual Arts faculty at Douglass College, teaching there and at Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University for 33 years.
The Public Art Tour is brought to you by the New Jersey State House Tour Program within the Office of Legislative Services. This tour features a selection of the State House’s overall collection. Not all artists in the collection are represented in this virtual tour.
Thank you for visiting us!

We look forward to having you see these works in person or take any of our free public tours when we reopen. For more information, please contact us below.

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