Virtual Snapshot Series

State House Art
Art to Inspire

In public buildings across New Jersey, artwork adds visual interest to large spaces and celebrates culture, places, people, and history.

The New Jersey Public Arts Inclusion Act of 1975 was created to support the incorporation of artwork in public buildings. Up to 1.5% of a building’s construction or renovation budget can be used for the commission and installation of artwork.

Within the State House and Annex there are a variety of different art forms on display, including, but not limited to:

- Portraiture
- Stained glass
- Reliefs
- Marquetry
- Sculpture
Learn to Look

Analyzing artwork can unveil the stories of people, history, and culture. Artwork inspires creativity and can evoke a range of emotions.

As we start to explore the State House Complex artwork, here are some terms we’ll be referencing:

**Commission:** In art, a commission is the act of requesting the creation of a piece. Artwork may be commissioned by private individuals, the government, or businesses.

**Medium:** The type of art materials and supplies needed to create a piece of artwork.

**Setting:** The place or type of surroundings where something is positioned in a work of art.

**Sitter/Subject:** The person or people featured in a work of art.

**Symbol:** Something representing something else by association. Objects can represent ideas, events, or concepts.
Portraiture is a painted resemblance of a person, particularly of their head and shoulders. Prior to the invention of photography, a painted, drawn, or sculpted image was the only way to capture the likeness of a person. Historically, portraits conveyed a person’s importance, wealth, beauty, power, personality, mood, and education level.

Today, portraits are often captured through photography, but portrait painting continues to flourish and is considered a historical legacy.
Governor Harold G. Hoffman

In the Executive State House, portraits of New Jersey’s governors decorate the walls. A governor’s portrait is commissioned when they transition out of their position.

This is a portrait of Governor Harold G. Hoffman, New Jersey’s 41st governor from 1935-1938. Let’s take a closer look at his portrait:

• Describe what you see around the sitter.
• What objects in the setting provide you with information about where the Governor might be sitting?
• Are there any objects in the portrait that seem unique or out of place?
Take a Closer Look

On Governor Hoffman’s desk sits his infant daughter’s lacquered baby shoe. The shoe, which sat on the Governor’s State House desk, also allows us to tell a deeper story about his involvement in the most famous trial of the early 20th century.

In 1932, the infant son of famous aviator Charles Lindbergh was kidnapped and later found dead. Richard Bruno Hauptman was arrested, convicted, and sentenced to death for the crime.

Governor Hoffman conducted his own private investigation. After interviewing Hauptman in prison, the Governor ordered that his execution be halted. Hoffman believed that others were involved in the crime. Ultimately, the Governor’s stay of execution ended and Richard Bruno Hauptman was put to death on April 3, 1935.
Stained and Painted Glass

Stained and painted glass are art forms that combine pieces of clear or colored glass with strips of metal. Stained glass is most impressive when a light source shines through the glass from behind.

Stained glass is created by mixing metal oxides with molten glass—copper for red, cobalt for blue, manganese for purple, antimony for yellow, and iron for green.
Take a Closer Look

This painted-glass laylight, titled *New Jersey — A 360° View*, measures 10 feet by 14 feet and is the creation of stained glass artist J. Kenneth Leap. Each section of this stained-glass map depicts the folklore, legends, and attractions of geographic areas of the state. On the following page is a detailed image of the laylight:

- What do you feel when you see *New Jersey — A 360° View*?
- Can you find a historical event, person, and landmark?
- The artist, J. Kenneth Leap, depicted himself and his assistant, Deborah Nicholson, drowning in the skylight. Can you find them? Hint: Check out the far southeast corner!
Relief

Relief is a sculptural technique where three-dimensional elements are raised from a flat base. Reliefs can be featured on a variety of materials including metal, stone, plastic, clay, plaster, and wood.

Raised imagery make the reliefs at the State House not only visually striking, but also elicits a feeling of civic pride, history, and whimsy.
Take a Closer Look

These relief panels are incorporated into bronze doors at the central entrance to the State House Annex.

Using visual clues such as language and illustrations, compare the two maps:

• How are they similar?
• How are they different?
• What time periods do the maps symbolize?
• What do you think the artist hoped the viewer would feel or learn from these reliefs?
Marquetry

Marquetry is a decorative art form that uses varying grains, types, shapes, and colors of wood and other materials, such as shell and ivory, to create decorative designs and pictures.

Ancient cultures incorporated marquetry into caskets and religious objects, while examples of modern marquetry are often found in decorative furniture pieces such as chests and tables.
Take a Closer Look

Decorating the walls of the General Assembly majority caucus room is a marquetry installation titled *Resolution*, by artist Hiroshi Murata. Each of the 14 panels of marquetry are 7.5 feet high and are a combined 60 feet in length. The mural includes 87 types of wood veneer, which together create a color scheme that is both cohesive and detailed.

- What is the subject of *Resolution*?
- What words would you use to describe this work of art?
- How did the artist use texture and color to create visual impact?
Sculpture

Sculpture is an art form that uses molding, casting, and carving to create three-dimensional objects. Sculpture can be made from a variety of mediums including marble (Abraham Lincoln), plaster (State Seal), porcelain (eastern goldfinch), wood (eagle), or a temporary material like ice.

Since sculptures are three-dimensional objects, artists often put strong consideration into how they will be seen in a space. An artist must be willing to adjust their sculpture so that it can be viewed at various angles.
Take a Closer Look

Located between the State House Annex and the New Jersey State Library is a four-part sculptural installation by artist Clyde Lynds. Titled *Confluence*, the installation includes a fountain designed with a timed water show, two fiber optic pillars depicting “Liberty” and “Prosperity,” a historic map of Trenton carved in granite, and a sitting wall engraved with the names of every municipality in the state.

- What do you think these sculptures are meant to celebrate? Why?
- What natural elements are both symbolically and/or physically represented in this sculpture?
Explore the World of Art

Art is one of the greatest forms of human expression and can be seen not only in famous museums and galleries, but also in non-traditional forms like graffiti. Here are some ways to expand your world through art:

• Express yourself — Artmaking relieves stress, boosts confidence, and encourages creative thinking and concentration.
• Explore — you can experience public art in your local town, place of worship, or park.
• Go digital — museums, galleries, and artists represent themselves through digital platforms, through social media, and 3-D virtual tours.
Additional Resources

We encourage you to further explore the artists and artwork introduced in this presentation by visiting the following online resources:

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts

The New Jersey Public Art Archive

Slides 4 – 6: The New Jersey State House Portrait Collection is administered by The New Jersey State Museum.

Chen Yanning (Chinese, 1945–)
oil on canvas
59¼” x 43½” x 3¾” (framed)
New Jersey State House Portrait Collection,
Administered by the New Jersey State Museum
SHPC 147

Paul Newton (Australian, 1961–)
oil on canvas
56” x 44”
New Jersey State House Portrait Collection,
Administered by the New Jersey State Museum
SHPC 152

Governor Harold G. Hoffman (1935-1938) (1939)
Henry R. MacGinnis (American, 1875-1962)
oil on canvas
50¼” x 42¾” x 3” (framed)
New Jersey State House Portrait Collection,
Administered by the New Jersey State Museum
SHPC 82

Slides 8 – 10: Artist J. Kenneth Leap, Location key to New Jersey — A 360° View.

Slide 14: Artist Hiroshi Murata.

Slide 17: Artist Clyde Lynds.