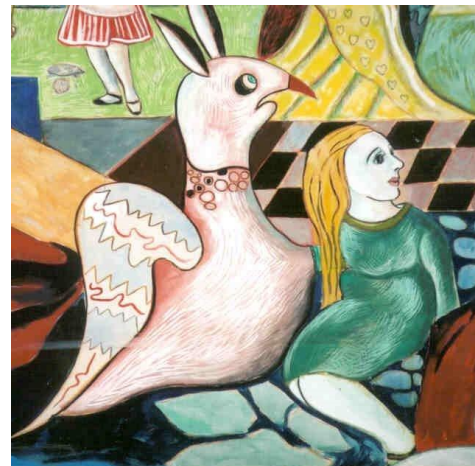


## Labor Arts Forum

Presents a Symposium

# *Oregon Art During the Roosevelt Era: 1933-1945*

A Program of the  
**Oregon Cultural  
Heritage Commission**  
in partnership with  
**Portland Art Museum**  
and  
**Friends of Timberline**



**Whitsell Auditorium  
Portland Art Museum**

October 9, 2004

9:30 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.

**Reception**

5:00 – 6:30 p.m.



## Historical Background

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt took office in January 1933, the nation was in the grip of a severe economic depression, and some 13 million people were out of work. Roosevelt and his administration created a sweeping network of relief programs called the New Deal, ranging from farm subsidies to soup kitchens, resettlement programs to large public works projects, and jobs programs under the Works Progress Administration (or WPA). Those jobs included programs designed to employ visual artists, musicians, actors, and writers. Collectively known as Federal One they included the Federal Art Project, and the associated projects of music, literature, theater and historical records.

These federal projects had a widespread impact on Oregon's artistic communities. They offered many Oregonians their first opportunity to subsist as professional artists. Roosevelt's public arts programs were a revolutionary experiment in government support for the arts. Designed in part to inspire the American people during the Depression's hard times, New Deal arts initiatives promoted the values of work and family.

Under the auspices of federal support, art could be seen in local public buildings of the period, including schools, colleges, post offices, and government buildings. "Art belongs to everyone" wrote Holger Cahill, Director of the Federal Art Project. Rather than construed as an exotic import from another continent or age, art could be "home-grown" and relevant to everyone's lives.

Federal art programs not only supported creation of new work, but provided many educational opportunities for the general public to benefit from the aesthetic return, through exhibitions and art centers established in seventeen states, including three in Oregon. These efforts created new audiences and inspired a whole generation of artists.

The experience of federal Depression-era programs benefited World War II efforts as the nation mobilized to meet a new global threat. Many Northwest artists, earlier supported by federal relief programs, worked as both artists and laborers in the World War II home front shipyards, operated in the Portland area by Henry J. Kaiser.

Today increasing numbers of local collectors, art institutions, and historians are interested in labor art. Yet little has been published, and fewer symposiums held, about this period of Oregon art. The Labor Arts Forum will help to fill this void. Proportionate to other states, a significant amount of Oregon New Deal art remains intact—ranging from works in excellent condition to others sorely needing maintenance and restoration. Unfortunately, too few people remember its meaning and significance.

Revisiting the artistic production of this era, we create a foundation for understanding and preserving this powerful, and tangible, record. Examining this critical era in U. S. history will bring new appreciation for this lasting legacy from our region's creative past.





# Symposium Schedule and Speakers

## *Oregon Art During the Roosevelt Era: 1933-1945*

Margaret Bullock: Welcome and Updates on Morning Sessions – **9:30 am**

### **Session A – 9:35 am — How does Oregon fit into the national picture of the Roosevelt era?**

Sandy Polishuk – Introductions, Comments and Discussion

William Robbins – *Surviving the Great Depression: The New Deal in Oregon*

Carolyn Howe – *Picturing the Times: Political and Ideological Struggle on the Oregon Federal Art Project*

David Horowitz – *People's Art and the New Deal: Radical Artists and Market Planners*

### **Session B – 11:00 am — What was public funding for artists intended to accomplish during the 1930s?**

Sarah Munro – Introductions, Comments and Discussion

Jacqueline Dirks – *Art Becomes Public*

Margaret Bullock – *Oregon's Federal Art Project: History and Results*

Sarah Munro – *Timberline Lodge: Spotlight on a Unique Project*

Brian Booth – *Federal Writer's Project in Oregon*

Christine Calfas – *Oregon's WPA Federal Theater Project*



### **Lunch Break – 12:30 - 1:30 pm**

Margaret Bullock – Welcome and Updates on Afternoon Sessions – **1:30 pm**

### **Session C – 1:35 pm — What experience did artists have on the Oregon Art Project?**

Roger Hull – Introductions, Comments and Discussion

Roger Saydack – *A Brief Look at the Private Art of some Public Painters*

Trisha Kaufman – *Three Oregon Women Artists on the Oregon Federal Art Project*

JulieAnne Poncet – *Shared Legacies: Contemporary Crafts Gallery and the WPA*

Roger Hull – *Charles Heaney: One artist's experience on the Federal Art Project*

### **Session D – 3:30 pm — What is the status of art of the Roosevelt era today?**

David Milholland – Introductions, Comments, Discussion and “Open Mike”

Lois Mack – *Waging War on the Home Front: An illustrated Memoir of the Kaiser Shipyards*

Dr. Katrine Barber, Eliza Jones & Jo Ogden – *Waldport: CPS Camp 56 and its Legacy*

Ginny Allen – *The Art Inventory*

Kerry Jeffrey – *Post Office Murals: Present and Future*

David Milholland – *Oregon Arts of the 1930s: Legacy and Future*

**Reception, Impromptu Ballroom, Portland Art Museum – 5:00 - 6:30 pm**

## Symposium Presenters

**Ginny Allen** is co-author of *Oregon Painters: The First Hundred Years* (Oregon Historical Society Press, 1999). She is currently spearheading the inventory of W.P.A. art in Oregon as part of Labor Arts Forum. She is co-curating an exhibition on Oregon painter Melville Wire for the Hallie Ford Museum at Willamette University in March 2005 and is co-author of an article on the artist to be published in the *Oregon Historical Quarterly* in December. A long-time Portland Art Museum docent, she is a member of the Native American and European and American Art Councils. She is a past manager of the T.W. Fox Gallery in Portland.

**Katrine Barber** is Assistant Professor of History at Portland State University and faculty member for the Center for Columbia River History. Her research focus has been Columbia River Basin history, including her dissertation on the Dalles Dam, a chapter on Celilo Falls in *The Great Northwest: The Search for Regional Identity* (Oregon State University Press, 2001) and *Death of Wyam: The Cultural Consequences of the Building of The Dalles Dam*, a book under review by University of Washington Press. She holds M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in American Studies from Washington State University.

**Brian Booth** is a partner in the Tonkon Torp law firm in Portland. He founded the Oregon Institute of Literary Arts (now Literary Arts, Inc.), served as its President and Chair, and created the Oregon Book Awards and the Oregon Literary Fellowships. Brian is a co-founder of Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission, and has headed the Boards of the Portland Art Museum and the University of Oregon (now Jordan Schnitzer) Museum of Art. He is the editor of *Wildmen, Wobblies and Whistlepunks: Stewart Holbrook's Lowbrow Northwest* (Oregon State University Press, 1992).

**Margaret Bullock** is the Associate Curator of American Art at the Portland Art Museum where she has worked since 1998. She holds a B.A. in art history and English literature and M.A. in anthropology and art history. She earlier worked at the Pioneers' Museum in Colorado Springs, Colorado, the University of Oregon Museum of Art, and the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts in Alabama. She is currently researching the history of the Federal Art Project in Oregon and is on the Steering Committee of Labor Arts Forum.

**Christine Calfas** has worked as a professional actor regionally for fourteen years. She was seen most recently in Portland Center Stage's JAW/West festival 2004, and in Daniel Addy's *44sunset*s for PICA's TBA festival. She is a company member of Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Mass. and a two-time winner of the Portland Drama Critic's Circle Award for Best Actress. Christine is a Fulbright Scholar in Indian Classical Dance. She is currently appearing as Cordelia in *King Lear* for Portland Center Stage, and will play Philomel, a homicidal siren, in *O Lovely Glowworm* for Center Stage this spring.

**Jacqueline Dirks** is the Cornelia Marvin Pierce Associate Professor of History and Humanities in the Reed College Department of History where she has taught since 1991. Her specialty is gender history and the history of consumer culture. She regularly teaches on the 1930s as part of her twentieth-century U.S. history courses including a seminar for history juniors on the Thirties, and a Reed Master of Liberal Arts Studies course on Politics and Culture in the Depression-Era United States. Dr. Dirks holds a B.A. from Reed College and both M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Yale University.

**David Horowitz** is a native of the Bronx, New York and has been a professor of U.S. and 20<sup>th</sup> Century History at Portland State University since 1968. He is coauthor of *On the Edge: The U.S. in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (2004) and the author of *America's Political Class Under Fire: The 20<sup>th</sup> Century's Great Culture War* (2003). He is currently at work on *Confessions of a Faithful Contrarian*, a family chronicle and personal memoir. A founding board member of the Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission, he is a driving force behind Bay City's new Museum of People's Art: Labor, Life, and Landscape of the Pacific Northwest.

**Carolyn Howe** teaches sociology at College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. She received M.A. degrees from the University of Oregon and Portland State University, where she wrote a thesis on the Oregon Federal Art Project. She completed her Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin. Currently Dr. Howe is editing the correspondence of Worcester abolitionist and women's rights activist, Abby Kelley Foster, about whom she recently co-authored a one-woman play performed last summer at the Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, New York. She is a founding member of the Worcester Women's History Project, a non-profit community organization, and is active in her community on issues of Latino education and the arts.

**Roger Hull** is Professor of Art History at Willamette University where he has taught since 1970. He holds a B.A. from Whitman College and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Northwestern University. Professor Hull's honors include Oregon Professor of the Year, the Governor's Arts Award and the Salem City Club Award. His published articles include "The Lure of Pacific Northwest Art," (*American Art Review*, February 1999) and "Region, Expression, and 'Oregon Art' – 1930-1970," (*Oregon Humanities*, Spring 2000). Dr. Hull has curated exhibitions on Carl Hall, Myra Wiggins and Jan Zach at Willamette's Hallie Ford Museum of Art, where he is developing a retrospective exhibition and catalogue on artist Charles Heaney for January 2005.



**Kerry Jeffrey** is Customer Relations Coordinator for the Portland District of the U.S. Postal Service, covering all of Oregon and Southwest Washington. He is responsible for media and public relations with a special focus on workplace environment improvement for the 9200-member Portland District. He studied art and photography at the University of Oregon and Lane Community College before coming to the U.S.P.S. in 1992. He is currently compiling information on the history of the W.P.A. post office murals in Oregon.

**Eliza Jones** is the Rose Tucker Fellow and Editorial Assistant for the Oregon Historical Society Press. She is a founding co-editor of *SlackWater*, a journal published by St. Mary's College, Maryland based on oral history interviews with residents of St. George Island. She has helped direct and teach several oral history projects through the Capstone program at Portland State University. She holds a B.A. in English Literature from St. Mary's College and is working on her M.A. in history at Portland State University.

**Trisha Kauffman** is a devoted advocate of northwest art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly the work of artists who have taken creative inspiration from the labor experience. She is director of the new Museum of People's Art: Labor, Life and Landscape of the Pacific Northwest in Bay City, Oregon, where she runs ArtSpace Gallery with her husband Craig. She has curated several exhibitions and lectured frequently on Northwest artists of the 1930s and '40s. She is an authority on the art and lives of Martina Gangle Curl and Albert and Arthur Runquist.

**Lois Mack** is co-editor of *Waging War on the Home Front: An Illustrated History of World War II*, being released this fall by the Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission and Oregon State University Press. She has worked in the museum field for more than twenty-five years, creating and managing exhibitions, documentary videos and publications. Her more than sixty exhibits include museums for national corporations, historic areas, and a major international exhibition that traveled to the Soviet Far East. Several of these projects received regional and national awards for excellence. A former curator of exhibits at the Oregon Historical Society, she is on the Steering Committee of Labor Arts Forum.

**David Milholland**, a co-founder and President of Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission, is on the Steering Committee of Labor Arts Forum. A multiple award winning filmmaker and journalist, he edited *Clinton St. Quarterly*. His term on the Tri-Met Art Advisory Committee encompassed the Interstate Light Rail project. He will receive the 2004 Stewart Holbrook award for distinguished contributions to Oregon literary arts.

**Sarah Munro** received her B.A. in Anthropology & Art History from Pitzer College and her M.A. in Folklore from the University of California, Berkeley. She has published book reviews and articles on folklore and gathers oral histories for the Oregon Historical Society. She works with several organizations devoted to cultural and historic preservation issues in Portland. Sarah is past president of Friends of Timberline and co-author of a guidebook, art brochure and catalogue on Timberline Lodge. She is currently writing a history of Timberline to be published in 2007. She is on the Steering Committee of Labor Arts Forum.

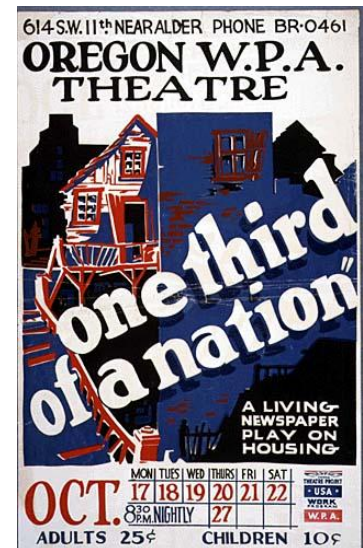
**Johanna Ogden** is a paralegal and law firm office manager who is studying Public History at Portland State University. Her research has included documenting and transcribing the holdings of Latino oral histories in Pacific Northwest historical institutions; tracing the impact of Mexican *bracero* workers on the Hood River community during World War II; and contributing to "Voices of Oregon: Twenty-Five Years of Professional Oral History at the Oregon Historical Society," (*Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Summer 2002). She is working on a book on conscientious objectors at the WWII Civilian Public Service Camp in Waldport.

**Sandy Polishuk** is an activist and oral historian with a special interest in radical women. She is the author of *Sticking the Union: An Oral History of the Life and Times of Julia Ruuttila* (Palgrave Macmillan 2003) and a producer of the video *Good Work Sister! Women Shipyard Workers of World War II*. She teaches oral history at Portland State University where she is a vice president of her union. Polishuk, a former textile artist, radio producer and librarian, has lived in Oregon since 1963.

**JulieAnne Poncet** is the Curatorial Assistant at the Portland Art Museum and an Art History instructor at Portland Community College. She received her A.A. in Fine Arts and a B.A. in Art History from the University of California, Berkeley, and an M.A. in Art History from University College, London, England. She is the guest curator of *Shared Legacies: Contemporary Crafts and the WPA*, an exhibition currently on view at the Contemporary Crafts Museum and Gallery in Portland.

**William G. Robbins** is Emeritus Distinguished Professor of History at Oregon State University where he has taught since 1971. He has been a Hoover Presidential Scholar, twice received National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowships for College Teachers, and was awarded the DeGolyer Fellowship at Southern Methodist University. Dr. Robbins has served on the editorial boards of the *Pacific Historical Review* (1987-1990) and *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* (1994-1997), and has been on the editorial board of *Oregon Historical Quarterly* since 1995. He has authored numerous articles and books on western industry, social history and the historiography of the west including *Lumberjacks and Legislators: Political Economy of the U.S. Lumber Industry, 1890-1941* (Texas A&M, 1982); *Colony and Empire: The Capitalist Transformation of the American West* (Kansas, 1994); *Landscapes of Promise: The Oregon Story, 1800-1940* (University of Washington, 1997); and *Landscapes of Conflict: The Oregon Story, 1940-2000* (forthcoming, Washington, 2004).

**Roger Saydack**, a partner in Arnold Gallagher Saydack Percell Roberts & Potter, P.C., serves as guest lecturer and adjunct professor for the University of Oregon School of Law. His work with a variety of arts organizations in Eugene includes serving on the board of the University of Oregon Museum of Art and the School of Architecture and Allied Arts, as well as the City of Eugene Visual Arts Commission. He has curated exhibitions on artists including C. S. Price, David McCosh, and Nelson Sandgren for the University of Oregon Museum of Art, Karin Clarke Gallery, and Maude Kerns Art Center. His catalogue *C. S. Price: Landscape, Image and Spirit* was published in 1998.





# Labor Arts Forum – Selected Activities

## Affiliated Exhibitions

### *Liberty Ships: Photographs from the Kaiser Shipyards*

Striking photos by 1940's Kaiser Corporation employees Louis Lee and Herald Campbell.  
Rubinstein Gallery, 3rd floor, Center for Northwest Art – Portland Art Museum, 1219 SW Park Avenue  
August 12 – November 14, 2004 Requires admission  
Curator: Margaret Bullock

### *Working People: Labor and Working Life of the Pacific Northwest*

Images from artists of the 1930s and '40s and the present day.  
The Museum of People's Art & ArtSpace, Bay City, Oregon –  
8 miles north of Tillamook on Hwy 101  
September 4 – December, 2004 Free  
Curator: Trisha Kauffman



### *Shared Legacies: Contemporary Crafts and the WPA – Selections from the Permanent Collection*

Features artists involved in Oregon's WPA efforts, the American Craft movement, and the creation of Contemporary Crafts Museum & Gallery.  
Contemporary Crafts Museum and Gallery – 3934 SW Corbett Avenue, Portland  
September 17 – December 31, 2004 Free  
Curator: JulieAnne Poncet

### *The Shipyard Workers of World War II: Labor and Art*

An exhibition of rare artifacts, historic photographs, paintings, ship manuals, books, and ephemera that focus on the three World War II U.S. Maritime shipyards operated by the Kaiser Company in the Portland-Vancouver area.  
Collins Gallery, 3rd floor, Multnomah County Central Library – 801 SW 10<sup>th</sup>, Portland  
December 16, 2004 – February 14, 2005 Free  
Curators: Lois Mack & Douglas Magedanz

### *Charles E. Heaney: Memory, Imagination, and Place*

A retrospective of his distinguished six-decade career, this will be a detailed interpretive study of the artist, his work, and his place in American art. A book of the same title will accompany the exhibition.  
Hallie Ford Museum of Art – Willamette University – 700 State Street, Salem  
January 22 – March 19, 2004 Requires admission  
Curator: Roger Hull

## Walking Tour

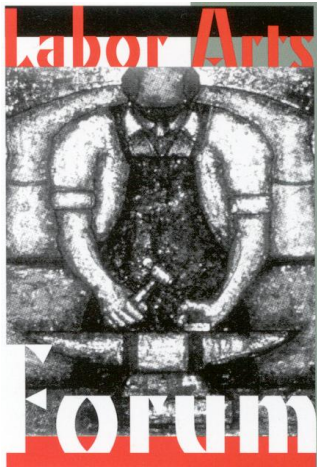
WPA Art at University of Oregon – Pacific Northwest Labor History Association Conference, May 21, 2004

## Film Program

Northwest Film Center – Portland Art Museum, Whitsell Auditorium, October 7, 2004  
*Restoring C. S. Price*  
*Artists at Work: A Film on the New Deal Arts Projects*  
*The Builders of Timberline*

## Events in Development

Tour of WPA art in selected Portland Public Schools – Spring 2005  
Exhibit of PNCA-linked WPA works, Pacific Northwest College of Art – Summer 2005



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