College’s commissioned art spans three decades

Art on campus a positive influence

Two significant additions to the campus art collection are expected to be a part of the college’s new instructional building.

A bronze, lifesize statue, “Reach for the Stars,” by artist Jim Stafford will be placed near the front entrance to the new building.

Artist Robert Calvo is designing a terrazzo floor for the main lobby. The two new works will join a select list of art already on campus which includes:

- A nail sculpture hanging in the Student Center lobby.
- A mixed media mosaic wall located west of Corbet Hall’s main entrance.
- A panel composed of tiles created by former art students on the Art Annex’s patio wall.
- A bronze sculpture located east of the library’s main entrance.
- Two murals suspended from the north and south walls of the Library clerestory.

Of course, there are more art on campus than these works. Murals and diversity posters – even the Clocktower – are part of the campus’s artistic heritage.

College president Hank Kirk believes in the positive influence of art on campus and strongly supports adding to the campus art collection.

“Art is important to all of us. It lifts our spirits, increases our appreciation of beauty, form and color, and makes us think,” he said.

Bob Bauer’s nail sculpture: Student Center lobby

Bauer taught art here for 30 years. He retired in 1982 but left his mark on the campus via his nail sculpture.

Bauer created a series of nail-covered panels depicting people moving across the campus as it then existed.

The panels represent the various buildings, fields and plots of land that comprised the campus in 1963, said Bauer.

Using the architect’s original color specifications, Bauer created a complementary palette of panel colors.

The whole series, plywood panels, angle iron framing, and nails, weighs almost 2,000 pounds, he said.

After 27 years, some of the nails are missing from the sculpture and the colors are dated. However, there are currently no plans for repairs. Bauer, who now lives in California and Michigan, said repairing public art is difficult. This is partly because the original artist has total rights over any modifications or repairs.

Bauer was paid $700 to create his sculpture. Most of that went for supplies, especially nails, he said.

Bauer, who graduated from the University of Washington, remembers Alden Mason, creator of the Library clerestory murals, as one of his instructors.

Bauer’s student assistant on the nail sculpture was Jim Stafford, whose “Reach for the Stars” bronze will be a focal part of the new instructional building.

Gerard Tsutakawa’s Crosscut: front of Library

Gerard Tsutakawa’s bronze sculpture, located east of the Library’s main entrance, was commissioned in 1994 by the Art in Public Places Program from funds generated by building the new Library, finished in 1991, and from the remodeling of the Professional Technology Center, completed in 1993.

Tsutakawa envisioned the college as a link between Lewis County’s past and future. “Crosscut” represents a section of old-growth tree with a window in its middle that resembles a computer screen.

The slab of old-growth symbolizes the country’s past prosperity, which is rooted in logging. The window looks into a library classroom and represents the future of this area based on our ability to make a transition from logging to new technologies.

“Through the education this school will provide, a new age of prosperity will prevail,” said Tsutakawa.

The AIPP allocated $23,030 for the work which was finished and set in place in 1995 during the college’s 70th anniversary.

Tsutakawa was born in 1947. He is the eldest son of renowned sculptor George Tsutakawa. Gerard Tsutakawa began working with his father in the mid-1960s, learning welding and fabrication techniques.

Gerard Tsutakawa eventually assumed the technical production of his father’s metal sculptures and fountains. George Tsutakawa is no longer living, but Gerard Tsutakawa continues on his father’s legacy.

(Crosscut” is found on the cover of this issue.)

Alden Mason’s murals: Library clerestory

Alden Mason’s murals which hang in the Library have a history as colorful as the art itself. Mason, a well-known Northwest artist, originally created the panels for the State Capitol’s Senate chamber.

The panels were installed in 1981 and removed in 1987 when the Legislature voted to remove them because they did not fit the decor.

For two years Mason’s murals were packed away. During this time college president Hank Kirk petitioned to have them hung in the college’s new library, then under construction.

Leavengood Architects, who designed the library, made specific changes to the plans for the reading area with the raised clerestory gallery in order to accommodate the murals.

In 1990 the State Senate approved a resolution to display the murals here. Mason did not believe the space where the murals now hang was adequate for optimum viewing and sued. He filed an affidavit in court in 1990, claiming the State could not arbitrarily place his work because it had been specifically commissioned and created for the Senate chambers.

After more than a year in the courts, a judge ruled in 1991 that the murals could be displayed here. The agreement, signed November 1, 1992, guaranteed the college a 20-year lease. In exchange, the college agreed to pay the cost of transporting and installing the murals, including any necessary repairs and maintenance.

According to the agreement, the lease (SEE MURALS PAGE 11)
ART
New building gets bronze sculpture, terrazzo mural

Son's courage inspired father's sculpture

A life-sized bronze sculpture of a youth reaching upward to touch a star will greet students, staff and visitors at the main entrance of the new instruction building.

Local artist Jim Stafford has been commissioned to create the eight-foot sculpture, as well as a number of smaller ones, designed to complement art projects costing more than $200,000.

Stafford has worked with bronze since 1974. The process is time-consuming. First Stafford creates a original piece using clay or wax or, sometimes, wood or stone. He then forms a rubber mold around this original. He pours hot wax into this rubber mold. When the wax cools and the mold is removed, the wax becomes a duplicate of the original creation.

Stafford takes this duplicate and dips it into a ceramic slurry (which acts as a sort of glue). He then stereos the duplicate with a fine silica sand. Ten to 15 coats of this “lost wax” casting process is required for the bronze. He then reheats the mold to 1,600°F and fills it with molten bronze that is heated to between 1,700°F and 1,800°F. After the bronze cools and hardens, Stafford breaks away the ceramic shell. This leaves a rough casting which he sandblasts and polishes.

Stafford finishes the metal casting by coating it with a vehicle and mixing with water. He then applies a wax or acrylic spray to the surface to seal the wax to bring out the patina. Stafford created his sculpture as a tribute to his son, Chris, a former Centralia College student who was born with a terminal disease called Friedreich’s Ataxia.

Chris Stafford died in 1995 at age 23 from complications related to his disease. Throughout his life Chris never stopped striving for and achieving his best, his father said. Stafford hopes his son’s courage and determination and the sculpture commemorating these qualities can encourage others.

A terrazzo mural that will cover approximately 1,000 square feet of the new building’s lobby is being created by artist Robert Calvo.

The AIPP Program supplies campus with art

When the new instruction building is completed, our campus will have its third work of art funded by the Art in Public Places Program.

The formula applied for colleges and universities also receive a percentage of one percent of any construction budget. The AIPP Program was created by the legislature to provide for the decoration and furnishing of public buildings. It is funded from the state’s capital construction budget.

Half of one percent of any construction budget for state-owned buildings is set aside for art. For state agencies and public schools this half of one percent applies only to new construction.

Colleges and universities also receive art funding allocations from renovation projects. The formula applied for colleges and universities is based on architecture and engineering costs as well as on instructional support costs and equipment cost.

The Washington State Legislature has, in the past, allocated some of the money for art, artists’ expenses and the commission’s administrative expenses.

The code also states: “funds for art may not be used for administrative expenses of the agency or architect, expenses of the agency as agreed upon for the preparation and installation of the work, dedication, and insurance; or for the maintenance of the works of art.”

AIPP artists are selected from an Artistic Resource Bank. Any artist from Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Alaska or British Columbia is eligible to be a part of the bank.

To be included in the bank, artists must submit their work in a competition which is held every two years. Those artists whose submissions are selected by a peer review panel are included in this resource bank.

The review panel is composed of artists, art educators and art professionals. The panel changes each time a competition is held. AIPP participants select their own artists from the resource bank, using an art selection committee that must be representative of the local constituency.

The code states that maintenance is the responsibility of the agency receiving the art and that it must be maintained according to the artist’s specifications. Works of art may be removed and disposed of in the process called deaccessioning if the work has been lost or stolen, presents a safety hazard, is technically unable to be restored or if exhibition or installation costs are disproportionate to the work’s value; or, the environmental and architectural support (for site-specific work) is to be destroyed or modified enough to distort the artist’s initial intent.

Gardner’s mosaic wall will be deaccessioned when Corbet is torn down, said Gil Edel, director of maintenance and construction projects.

Jim Stafford pours hot wax into one of his miniature molds at his studio near Adna.

Mural can hang in Library at least 100 years

The untitled piece is an abstract and multi-stone mural.

Not many people on campus are aware of this piece because of its location on the patio wall between Corbet Hall and the Art Annex.

Created in 1986-87, it is a combined student effort that was a project for former art instructor Claudia Slater’s design class.

The college’s current graphic design instructor, Colleen LaBreck, a 1987 Centralia graduate, was one of those students.

LaBreck said the students in the class were divided into four groups and each group came up with a design. The class as a whole then chose one of the four designs. That is the one that now hangs in the patio. Once the design was selected, each student chose a section of the design to recreate in clay tiles.

The whole process took three to four months,” said LaBreck, noting it was not a daily project. “It was done in stages,” she said, in between plenty of other design assignments.

The untitled piece is an abstract and does not represent anything in particular, she said.

LaBreck does not remember who actually placed the finished tiles on the wall, but hopes the piece can be preserved when the Annex is torn down after the new instruction building’s completion.