

May 2011

Medina Libraries Make Room for Art

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"To touch art is to touch the mind; to touch the mind is to touch a life."
-- J. David Arnold

Even if the state had not mandated that we use a percentage of the funds from our 2007 bond issue to incorporate art into our massive building/renovation project, we would have undoubtedly found a way to do so. Celebrating art – and in particular honoring local artists – is something that Medina County District Library has always valued. The bond issue – combined with very generous donations from our members – has allowed us to make public art accessible at all of our branches to the library members who stream through our doors every day.

It was very important to us that we choose pieces that would stand the test of time and become classics. Partnering with two well-established community art groups that we had worked with in the past, the Medina County Arts Council and the Medina County Art League, we created a five person Art Committee charged with finding pieces that would complement the unique design and feel of each of our library facilities with an emphasis on local artists whenever possible.

Here are a select few of the art offerings that can be found at MCDL



Chippewa Creek. Yulia Hanansen, 2007, glass mosaic. The scale of our main branch in Medina presented some interesting challenges; our entry lobby is large and we knew that it would take something spectacular to act as a focal point. The 8'x14.5' stained glass mosaic mural created by second generation mosaic artist Yulia Hanansen provides the bold color and impact that was necessary to make this space come alive.

Cutting each tiny piece of glass by hand, Hanansen painstakingly created a work that depicts the natural beauty to be found in Medina County.

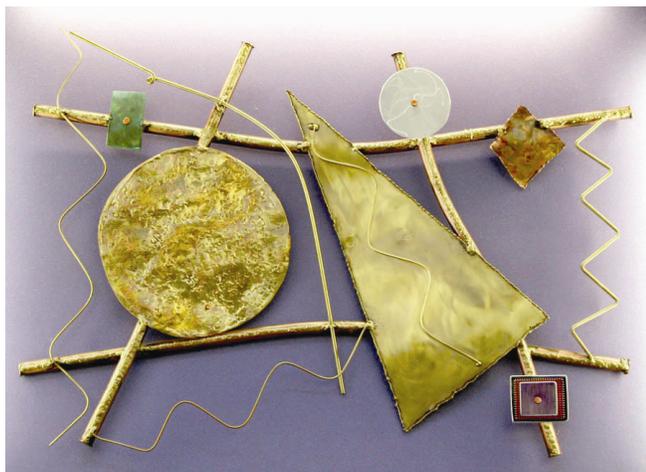
The work was assembled at Mosaic Sphere Studio on 10 separate panels and transported to the library for mounting.



Mapleside. Charles Basham, 2007, oil on canvas. Charles received his B.F.A. and M.F.A. from Kent State University. He still resides on the family farm in Medina, Ohio where he grew up. *Mapleside* is based on the beautiful view from Brunswick's well-known *Mapleside Farms Apple Orchard*.



Unusual Weather. Bob Pozarski, 2008, art glass. After graduating from Kent State University in 1975, Bob taught reading to inner-city children at the Akron library, but found his true calling in the creation of one-of-a-kind art glass pieces. Positioned across from the Brunswick Circulation desk, *Unusual Weather* consists of five leaded art glass panels that celebrate the diversity of Brunswick. They contain many different colors of glass and incorporate kiln formed and blown glass into the composition.



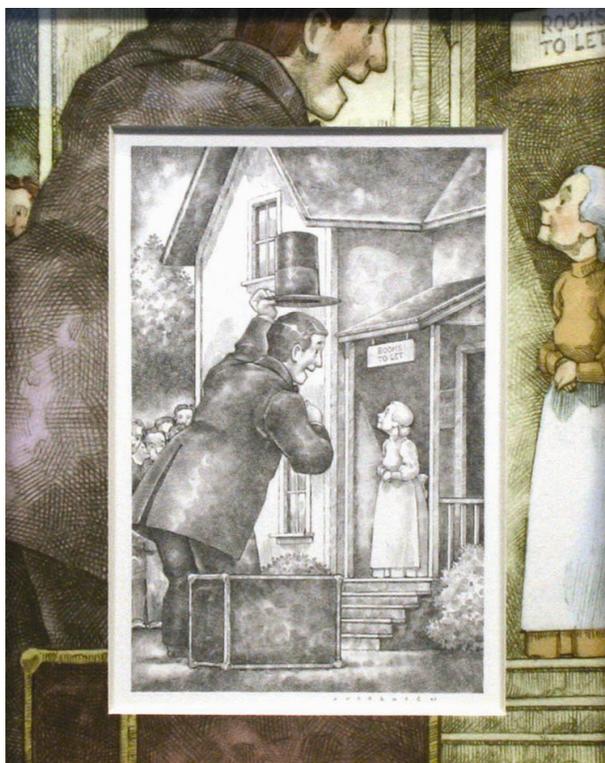
Kathy Lapso, 2006, mixed metals. A second generation metalworker from North Royalton, Ohio, Lapso crafted the signature piece for the Buckeye Library. Her sculpture, created with copper, brass, bronze and aluminum, hangs above the fireplace.



Trees. Pat Livengood, 2008, wrought iron. A professional blacksmith and artist, Medina's Pat Livengood was chosen as one of the top craftsmen in the medium by Early American Life Magazine. Using traditional techniques, he makes ironwork for hearth and camp. Trees is located at the entryway to the Highland Library Children's Section.



Various paintings, Franklin Bates, watercolor. A multifaceted artist, Bates painted in oil and watercolor as well as doing commercial graphics work. His secret watercolor process was very unusual and made it difficult to distinguish from oil painting. Eight of Bates' evocative works are scattered throughout the Lodi Library.



The Giant of Seville. Dan Andreasen, etching on paper, c. 2006.

Andreasen has illustrated more than 25 books over a career spanning a quarter of a century. He generously donated an original illustration from *The Giant of Seville: A Tall Tale Based on a True Story* which now greets visitors to the Seville Library. Andreasen based his book on Seville's most famous residents, Captain and Mrs. Bates – a couple of grand and unusual stature – and the etching is a favorite with visitors.



The Reading Lamp. Elaine Lamb, 2007, ceramic. Elaine Lamb has been a professional potter for over 25 years and owns a studio and gallery in Medina, Ohio. She creates her pieces by hand using a potter's wheel or a slab roller. The pieces are then painted with glaze and fired. Located on the second floor in Medina, Lamb's *The Reading Lamp* is an excellent example of the intricate carving process called sgraffito.

In addition to selecting works for the MCDL permanent collection, we also use our libraries whenever possible as exhibition space for art – from collections of paintings by local students to juried shows. We have made an investment in special art panels as well as a discreet art hanging system on our third floor public area. The Highland Library has partnered with the Sargent-Laessig Museum of Fine Arts at Cliffside, a supporting organization of the Western Reserve Historical Society, to exhibit artwork by Northeast Ohio artists. The artwork, featuring a variety of mediums from a range of artists, changes every two months.

Making art an integral part of our library system has been a source of joy and pride for staff and library members across our county. From the grand expanse of the glass mural in Medina with its glowing greens and reds, to the squat stone sculpture of a frog which adds an element of whimsy to the children's department at our Brunswick Branch, we have, thanks to the generous support of our communities, been able to bring art into the everyday. It is our hope that the MCDL art collection will inspire and delight everyone who comes through our doors.

"I do not want Art for a few any more than education for a few, or freedom for a few."
-- William Morris