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**Tacoma Art Museum presents New Exhibition  
*Forgotten Stories: Northwest Public Art of the 1930s***

**IMAGES AVAILABLE**

November 15, 2019 (Tacoma, WA)— Opening on February 22, 2020, Tacoma Art Museum will present *Forgotten Stories: Northwest Public Art of the 1930s*. During the economic hard times of the 1930s, U.S. government art projects under the WPA and other agencies created a wealth of public art and supported art communities across the country. In the Northwest hundreds of artists were employed and thousands of artworks created but their stories are almost unknown. The exhibition will offer an extensive overview of the bounty and variety of work created in our region and bring forgotten treasures back to view.



**Virginia Darcé (born Portland, Oregon, 1910; died Los Angeles, California, 1985)**

*The Market*, 1938

Tempera on board

22 ½ x 30 ½ inches

Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon, Courtesy of the Fine Arts Collection, US General Services Administration, New Deal Art Project, L45.3.2

“The extent of the federal art projects in the Northwest is surprising,” said Margaret Bullock, TAM’s interim Chief Curator and Curator of Collections and Special Exhibitions. “We’ve long thought that the impact of the work was limited but, research has now shown that the projects in the Northwest were widespread and highly productive employing over 600 artists resulting in thousands of artworks and offering art making opportunities to hundreds of thousands of Northwesterners.”

TAM’s exhibition brings together a wide variety of the artworks created in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. It reintroduces a number of talented figures whose names are now unknown, and also includes early

work by prominent figures (like Morris Graves and photographer Minor White). The exhibition also surveys the subjects, styles, and media employed by Northwest project artists.

During the Great Depression, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his administration launched a number of programs designed to put the millions of Americans who were unemployed back to work. Artists who worked for the federal art programs and projects created a wide variety of artwork for public institutions such as schools, universities, post offices, and hospitals as well as government buildings of all kinds. In addition, the government also established community art centers which offered free classes, art making opportunities and traveling exhibitions.



A photograph of two artists working on a mural at an Oregon Arts Projects Site around 1939-1942. Courtesy of Multnomah County Library, Portland, Oregon.

“TAM is fortunate to be able to exhibit a number of works that have not been seen since their creation and also to borrow several large-scale murals that normally never leave their permanent locations in schools and post offices,” noted Bullock. “For our region, this exhibition is a celebration of a time when government support for art and artists not only nurtured talent but made long-lasting impacts on the art community and raised the importance of public art in a way that has yet to be matched.”

TAM will be publishing an accompanying catalogue *New Deal Art in the Northwest: The WPA and Beyond*, the first comprehensive survey of the federal art projects in the Pacific Northwest, authored by Bullock with contributions by notable New Deal art scholars.

The exhibition was organized by TAM and generously support in part by ArtsFund and Tacoma Arts Commission. The publication is made possible by the Henry Luce Foundation.

### **Exhibition Dates**

February 22- August 16, 2020

## **Events**

### **Press Preview**

Thursday, February 20, 10-11:30 am

Please contact Hillary Ryan at [hryan@tacomaartmuseum.org](mailto:hryan@tacomaartmuseum.org) to reserve your spot.

### **TAM Member Opening**

Friday, February 21, 5-8 pm

## **Educational Programming**

### **No Longer Forgotten: Uncovering the Stories of WPA Artists in the Northwest**

Sunday, February 23, 2 pm

Join TAM's Interim Chief Curator and Curator of Collections and Special Exhibitions, Margaret Bullock, and co-authors and art historians Dr. Roger Hull and David F. Martin for a discussion of Northwest public art of the New Deal era. Long believed that the federal art projects of the Northwest were fairly small and that few works survived, research now shows that the projects in the northwest were widespread and highly productive employing more than 600 artists and creating thousands of artworks. Hear stories about how this work was uncovered and rediscovered from across Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington.

Cost: \$10 (\$5 members/students)

Margaret E. Bullock is Interim Chief Curator and Curator of Collections and Special Exhibitions, Tacoma Art Museum. She holds an MA in Anthropology from Washington State University and an MA in Art History from the University of Oregon. Prior to joining the Tacoma Art Museum in 2007, she was curator at the Harwood Museum of Art in Taos, New Mexico, Associate Curator of American Art at the Portland Art Museum, Oregon and a research fellow in American art at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Alabama. She has curated exhibitions and written articles and books on American and European fine and decorative arts. Her specialty is late 19th and early 20th century American art with a particular focus on the art of the Pacific Northwest.

Dr. Roger Hull is Professor Emeritus of Art History and Senior Faculty Curator, Hallie Ford Museum of Art, at Willamette University, Salem, Oregon. He is a distinguished scholar on Pacific Northwest Regional Art of the Twentieth Century. Dr. Hull holds both an M.A. and a Ph.D. from Northwestern University. He has written nine monographs on significant Northwest artists of the early to middle 20th century and authored articles on American and Northwest art for *Sculpture Magazine*, *American Art Review*, *History of Photography*, and *Oregon Humanities*. He received the Oregon Governor's Art Award in 1999 for his work on the Northwest's art history.

David F. Martin is Curator at the Cascadia Art Museum, Edmonds, Washington and an independent arts researcher and widely published author who has documented the art history of Seattle and the Pacific Northwest since 1986 as well as Western New York State since 1981. He is the leading authority on early Washington State art and artists, particularly women, artists of Asian descent, and LGBTQ artists. Martin served for three years as regional President of the Northwest Chapter of the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C. He is the author of numerous award-winning books and catalogues and

contributes essays and catalogue entries for national and international publications on painting, printmaking and photography.

**Lecture: Roger van Oosten**

Sunday, March 8, 1pm

Join us for this exclusive members-only program. Our special lecturer Roger van Oosten will be focusing on the artworks produced in Washington under the Works Progress Administration (WPA). This program will be a lecture with questions followed by a tour of the exhibition.

Roger van Oosten has had a lifelong love affair with the art produced by the WPA in the 1930s and 40s. For over 30 years, Roger van Oosten has been working to generate awareness and help preserve the arts of the New Deal. Roger van Oosten is a historian and author who has written exhibit catalogues, labels, and magazine articles on American art, and is a frequent lector and guest curator at museums across the country. His mural restoration efforts have been covered in the *Seattle Times* and *ArtsPatron Magazine*, and on KING-TV. Van Oosten is a partner at Action Mary, a public relations firm in Seattle.

Roger van Oosten curated exhibitions and lectured at the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture and the Museum of History and Industry, and has lectured for Tacoma Art Museum, Seattle Art Museum, Frye Art Museum, Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, Museum of History and Industry and for Historic Seattle. Van Oosten has organized and participated in the restoration of public murals in Duarte, Monterey, and Los Angeles, California; Sebring, Florida; Sebeka, Minnesota; Granville, New York; and Seattle, Washington. He graduated from Boston University in 1985 with a degree in journalism. He is currently writing a book about the Public Works of Art Project.

Cost: TAM Member only event, seating limited. Please contact the Membership department for details.

**TAM Teach! Teacher Workshop: WPA Then and Now**

Thursday, March 12

Secondary workshop 3:30 – 6:30 pm, Elementary workshop 4:30 – 7:30 pm

During the Great Depression, the Works Progress Administration and other federally-funded arts projects changed the face of the Pacific Northwest, and inspired artists of many varieties. Explore artwork created for these art projects, investigating the historical and social context of the art and artists. Learn how artwork can support students' learning in social studies classes at all levels.

Cost: \$15 per person for a 3-hour workshop; clock hours provided

## **Homeschool Day: Public Art, Yesterday and Today**

Wednesday, April 22, 10am – 2 pm

Join us for a special day just for homeschool students! Participate in a guided tour of works of art in the museum. Create your own artwork, learning from an expert teaching artist. Spend time exploring the galleries on your own, with self-guided activities and a scavenger hunt. Check out art-making activities in TAM Studio.

\$10 per student; one adult chaperone per family free (\$5 per additional adult); children under 4 free

## **Artist Talk: Public Art in Tacoma**

Thursday, May 7, 6pm

What makes Tacoma a hub for contemporary public art with hundreds of works across the city, both indoors and outdoors? Reflecting on the exhibition *Forgotten Stories: Northwest Public Art of the 1930s* join us for a discussion of some of the city's favorite public art projects, upcoming works, and what the future holds for public art in Tacoma.

Cost: FREE

### **Group Tours:**

Ongoing, during the run of the exhibition

Learn about the hidden history of 1930s public art in the Northwest. Experience larger-than-life murals, detailed prints, charming sculptures, and more in this exploration of how public support for the arts transformed our region.

TAM's interactive group tours provide expanded information about artworks on view in the galleries and the artists who made them, while encouraging groups to investigate art through lively discussions.

These experiences last about 45 minutes and include museum admission for visitors to explore the galleries further on their own. Must be reserved a minimum of two weeks in advance.

Groups of 10 or more: \$12 per person

TAM Members and Military: Free

### **About Tacoma Art Museum**

Celebrating over 80 years, Tacoma Art Museum is an anchor in Tacoma's downtown with a mission of connecting people through art. TAM's collection contains more than 5,000 works, with an emphasis on the art and artists of the Northwest and broader Western region, 25% of which consists of studio glass. The collection includes the largest retrospective museum collection of glass art by Tacoma native Dale Chihuly on permanent view; the most significant collection of studio art jewelry by Northwest artists; key

holdings in 19th century European and 20th century American art; and one of the finest collections of Japanese woodblock prints on the West Coast. In 2012, TAM received a gift of more than 300 works of western American art from the Haub Family Collection, one of the premier such collections in the nation and the first major western American art museum collection in the Northwest. The Haub family also contributed \$20 million for an endowment and expansion completed in 2014. In January 2019, TAM inaugurated the Rebecca and Jack Benaroya Wing which will feature the extensive Benaroya collection of studio glass as well as TAM's own collection of studio glass, which was started in 1971. TAM is located in the heart of Tacoma's vibrant Museum District which consists of six museums including the Museum of Glass, a frequent collaborator.

**HOURS** – Tues–Sun 10 am–5 pm; FREE Neighborhood Nights every Thursday 5–8 pm

**ADMISSION** – \$18 Adult, \$15 Student/Senior (65+), \$40 Family (2 adults and up to four children age 6-18), Children 5 and under free every day. Children 18 and under free every Saturday. TAM Members; active duty military, reservists, veterans, and their families always free.

**CONTACT** – 253-272-4258/ [www.tacomaartmuseum.org](http://www.tacomaartmuseum.org)

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