

The Art Frontier: Transforming Community Through ArtWorks



Hidden Art/Hidden Message,
Rachael Juzeler

The artwork pictured here is one of thirty-two mosaics created by artist, Rachael Juzeler that will be distributed throughout Juneau and Douglas creating two separate scavenger hunts.

The Douglas scavenger hunt will consist of fourteen tool themed mosaic pieces and the Juneau scavenger hunt will consist of eighteen flora and fauna themed pieces.

When each mosaic is found, seekers will piece together the letters in sequence to reveal an uplifting message.

Juzeler is one of 135 locals who received funding through the Juneau CARES ArtWorks grant.

In the spring of 1935, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s “Second New Deal” launched the Works Progress Administration or WPA, a massive employment relief program dedicated to continuing the social justice goals of Roosevelt’s first term in office. According to Adams and Goldberg’s 1986 publication, *New Deal Cultural Programs: Experiments in Cultural Democracy*,

“The WPA philosophy was to put the unemployed back to work in jobs which would serve the public good and conserve the skills and the self-esteem of workers throughout the U.S.”

The WPA’s cultural programs, known as “Federal One,” included the Federal Art Project, the Federal Music Project, the Federal Theatre Project, the Federal Writers Project and the Historical Records Survey and these programs employed over 40,000 cultural workers between 1935 and 1943. Their work came to populate local public spaces with over 150,000 artworks created and many still endure today. Federal One projects also included teaching about art and music and throughout the U.S. close to 182,000 children received art and music lessons. Millions of people tuned into radio programs or picked up a guidebook to one of the U.S. states or territories from the American Guide Series.

While receiving a WPA paycheck may have provided for food and rent, there was also something more culturally significant emerging from these programs. Studs Terkel, who famously interviewed people about their work over the course of his career and also participated in WPA Federal One programs, notes in his book *Working* (1972) that there is a meaning to work that is well over and beyond the reward of a paycheck. In a 1986 discussion on the WPA Arts programs, Terkel and other artists recalled this time in the 1930’s as a key part of American history and a time of equality because artists could get their work out into schools and hospitals and all sorts of public spaces. Artist Max Kahn points out that prior to this there were very few places to exhibit and that the Federal Arts program shifted art into the everyday local public landscape, while artist Eleanor Coen described it as “an intense time of entering professionalism.”

What ended programs like WPA’s Federal One? Terkel and others cited a narrow perception by political decision makers of what constituted real work who subsequently framed these Arts programs as “frills” or as, what became a popular term at the time, a “boondoggle.” Kahn again recalls this sentiment often touted as “Why don’t they give them a pick and a shovel, why do they have to give them a paint brush?”

Director's Letter



Greetings Friends,

As we approach one year since the first COVID-19 case was confirmed in Juneau, the City Museum has continued to work through our mission despite two closures and reduced operating hours. We've also tried to find the silver linings while meeting the challenges of a worldwide pandemic.

In addition to responding to an interest in history, particularly about the 1918 Spanish Flu and how Alaskans dealt with it, we also shifted to a more virtual presence. In doing so we have been able to provide you with a curated look into the City Museum's permanent collection not on exhibit. Through curator video chats and object reveals, our staff has created a whole new library of content.

For nine weeks from mid-March to mid-May 2020, I was redeployed to help as a Public Information Officer (PIO) for the City and Borough of Juneau's (CBJ) Emergency Operations Center. Serving our community in this way gave me a front row seat to see how our leaders quickly adapted and evolved to bring our community factual information, new life saving services, and the distribution of State and Federal resources all while making sense of daily, even hourly changes. This effort has indeed been historic and over this past year, the City Museum has tried to collect those objects which will guide and interpret this event for future generations perhaps 100 years or more from now.

Also in this issue of *Past and Present*, you can learn more about the Juneau ArtWorks Grant Program, one of the many actions our CBJ Assembly took to distribute CARES relief funding to workers facing economic hard times. The art generated from this work-based program captures "the

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Mission and Vision

The Juneau-Douglas City Museum fosters among its diverse audiences an awareness of Juneau's cultural heritage, values and community memory so we may draw strength and perspective from the past, inspire learning, and find purpose for the future.

As a public trust, we collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit those materials that document the cultures and history of the Juneau and Douglas area.



—Juneau Douglas—
CITY MUSEUM

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Director's Letter Continued

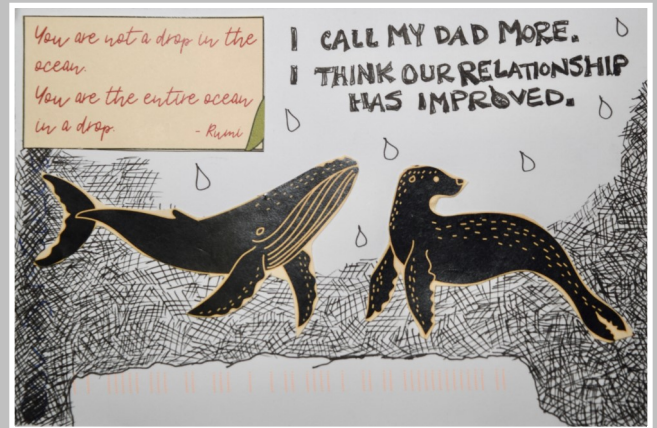


Juneau Covid Quilt, by Mary McEwen



Postcard from the COVID Secrets project by Larisa Manewal

zeitgeist" or spirit of this time we are living through. And although we are physically isolated from each other, art has played an important role in keeping our community connected and helping all of us make sense of things.



Postcard from the COVID Secrets project by Larisa Manewal

Two pieces, which have been added to the permanent collection, that encompass my experience as a PIO are the modern Juneau COVID Quilt by Mary McEwen and the COVID Secrets postcard series by Larisa Manewal. The quilt is a visual reminder of how many Juneau residents contracted or died of the coronavirus between March and December 2020. Her artwork both memorialize those we lost to the virus and humanizes what many of us experienced as updates in a data dashboard. While the postcards reveal how many people were coping during the pandemic, it also reminds me of how our community adapted to not only change how they engaged in the public process but also became significantly more involved whether that meant volunteering or making their voices heard through public testimony.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Past and Present* and I invite you to come visit us at the City Museum or check out one of the many virtual programs.

Collections



A Message from the Curator

As we all know, 2020 was a uniquely difficult year for the world. In some ways I feel as if the pandemic and the lock downs have separated us. With travel restrictions and fearing for the health of our elders, we often chose to remain apart for the good of the larger community. The isolation, particularly around the holidays, was difficult to bear especially in remote and isolated communities. But I also think that there are many ways we have been brought closer together. Personally, with most of my family and friends scattered across the world, I haven't been able to visit or be visited by anyone in about a year. However, I have never had so many people constantly checking in through texts, phone calls, Facebook, Zoom, and just about every other technological method available. I have also grown closer with my friends and neighbors here in town with many of them constantly going out of their way to check in and organize socially distant activities so that no one feels alone, even at a time where most of us feel the most isolated we have ever been. It has been a year of seeing the best and the worst of people, and I am grateful to live and work in a community where I feel kindness and support.

I have seen so much of this support through our work here at the City Museum. We have faced many hurdles in 2020 such as a lack of a tourist season, multiple closures, and overall fears for safety and security. While it would arguably have been easier to turn inward, we value our mission of being an active part of the Juneau-Douglas community. We realized early on that we were going to have to do something different, definitely outside our comfort zones and skill sets. Among other projects, our video series was developed as a way to bring people into our museum while the doors remained closed. I wholeheartedly thank everyone who watches them as they are a window into not only the history of the area, but us at the museum trying something new, having fun, and me seriously geeking out about the amazing collection we steward.

Unlike many other museums, we were able to continue collecting during the pandemic. Perhaps many people, while stuck at home, were finally tackling cleaning out their attics but we have received a number of generous donations to our collections. We were also lucky enough to receive several works through the CBJ Covid-19 Juneau ArtWorks Grant program. These pieces specifically reflect the Covid-19 pandemic and will serve as a unique glimpse into 2020 when future curators and historians look at this period of history.

As many keep saying, it's not over yet. But as we continue to look forward and change the ways that museums can interact with their communities, I must say that I am grateful to have such a supportive community and am keen to see what the future brings for us here at the City Museum.

W. Songinetta

Recent Acquisitions

Abel Ryan

As described by artist Abel Ryan, the designs on the bentwood chest are representative of people. The devil's club on the front panel represents this being part of Medicine, and the process of healing; something we are all going to need to do after all the events and trauma of the last year. It was created to house the *Covid Secrets* project postcards envisioned and organized by Larisa Manewal. The triptych panels of *Recognizable Changes* are one design meant to represent us at a personal level. The differences in the panels show how this year has affected us. Funded in part by a CBJ Covid-19 Juneau ArtWorks Grant.



Bentwood Chest and Recognizable Changes, by Abel Ryan
Photograph by Larisa Manewal

Lily Hope

As described by artist Lily Hope, these three Chilkat Protector Masks lean on the strength of our ancestors, reinstating historical indigenous protection for all members of our community, inclusive of all genders, sexual expressions, and self-identity. This family of masks displayed together highlights the cultural significance of our two-spirit people in Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian history. Historically, we turned our LGBTQIA+ and transgender persons into storytellers and knowledge keepers. Since colonization, our inclusion of two-spirit and transgender tribal members needs remembering. These masks spark a multi-fold contemporary conversation by summoning strength through acknowledging all our ancestors' calling for a reawakening of our cultural commitments to protect and serve our communities, reinstating the significance of ALL our members, and remembering that ALL people are worthy of protection. Funded in part by a CBJ Covid-19 Juneau ArtWorks Grant.



Ancestral Indigenous Protectors, by Lily Hope.
Photograph by Sydney Akagi @SydneyAkagiPhoto
Models: Ricky Tagaban @lituya_art, Raven Natking
@ravenmontgomerymonroe1, and Grace Petersen @the_gracecapade

Continued from page 1: The Art Frontier: Transforming



The artwork shown on this page and the next are two mosaics from Rachael Juzeler's tool series scavenger hunt titled, *Hidden Art/Hidden Message*.

Visit the Juneau Arts and Humanities Council website at www.jahc.org/juneau-cares-artworks/ to view all of the Juneau ArtWorks Grant projects and find links to virtual content.

But it is also important to remember that during this “time of ferment” there was an assertion that America was becoming the center of world art instead of Paris because the WPA’s focus was on creating public works of art and fostering arts education throughout the nation. These projects enlivened communities with diverse perspectives and united people from different cultural backgrounds -- all around the love of making art in all its forms.

We reflect briefly on the history of WPA cultural programs in this issue of *Past and Present* because in late September 2020, the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) Assembly launched the Juneau ArtWorks Grant Program through Ordinance 2020-43 “in the spirit of the Works Projects Administration of the 1930’s.”

The Juneau ArtWorks grant was intended to deliver CARES act funding to artists who had lost gigs or work contracts, were laid off, or who were put into a vulnerable financial position due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The \$330,000 grant was administered through the Juneau Arts and Humanities Council who issued a call for proposals. A selection committee comprised of JAHc staff, community members, and City Museum Director, Beth Weigel, reviewed and selected projects for funding based on artist need and whether projects resulted in a lasting benefit for the community and/or captured the zeitgeist of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Once completed, art works would be owned by CBJ.

And while artists were not provided a paycheck like the WPA workers, the spirit of the Juneau ArtWorks grant program was to acknowledge and provide relief to workers in the creative sector who may not have qualified for other employment relief because they are sole proprietors or dependent on gig work and whose income relies greatly on a cruise ship tourist season that was canceled.

But do these artists in the creative sector actually make up a workforce? According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were 2.55 million artists in the United States workforce in 2017, representing about 1.6 percent of all workers 16 and older. Focusing in on Juneau, according to Alaska Labor and Workforce preliminary data for the second quarter (April, May, June) of 2020, there are on average 203 workers in the Arts out of a total industry workforce of about 14,979 or close to 1.4 percent of all workers. These second quarter statistics also reveal a dramatic drop in employment from the first quarter (Jan, Feb, March) where on average there were 315 workers in the Arts out of a total industry workforce of 16,695 or 1.9 percent of the workforce. Unfortunately, these numbers do not include self-employed artists who are 3.5 times more likely to be self-employed according to a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) report on artists in the workforce between 1990-2005.

While greatly in need of update since the artist workforce has grown by more than a half million since 2005, many of the NEA report findings are still relevant today because of the assertion that “artists play an important role in America’s cultural vitality and economic prosperity.” Artists need not starve or survive on the margins of society, nor should they be stereotyped as “troubled dreamers, footloose bohemians, or charming deadbeats.” Simply put, the NEA report insists that artists are workers.

Community Through ArtWorks

“They make things and perform services, just like other workers, and these goods and services have value—not merely in lofty spiritual terms but also in dollars and cents. “

Recently, the City and Borough of Juneau received a Governor's Arts and Humanities Award for Government Leadership in the Arts citing CBJ's “consistent, impactful support for arts, culture, and heritage work in Alaska's capital city. The CBJ has improved the quality of life and made possible work that has inspired generations of Juneau school children to think of a life in the arts as a real possibility.”

The ArtWorks Grant, which provided funding to 135 artists, is a great example of how CBJ supports the Arts workforce while also investing in our local economy. Again, according to the NEA report, communities that attract creative workers and industries bolster their economies and artists “gravitate to areas where there are employment possibilities from cultural institutions and creative industries.” In a 2017 letter in support of a new arts and culture facility in Juneau, the Juneau Economic Development Council asserted that the arts contribute well in excess of \$50 million to the Southeast regional economy. And with Sealaska Heritage Institute's building of an arts campus, Juneau will become the Northwest Coast arts capital of the world and there's every reason to believe we can also become a leading arts community in the world too with a robust artist workforce.

As the physical artworks are installed in public spaces and buildings, our community and visitors to Juneau will be able to enjoy these ArtWorks for years. While playing at the soon to be renovated Capital Park or walking around downtown Douglas, children and adults will encounter Rachael Juzeler's many mosaics as part of a scavenger hunt. And once discovered and decoded, a secret message of hope will be revealed.

Other artworks, rooted in the zeitgeist of the public health emergency, will remind us of how our community responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our health care workers are honored in the photographic portraits by Marc Mintz and the oil on canvas painting by Louise Miller. The COVID Mask Scrap Quilt by Deb Temple speaks to the hundreds of hours volunteers gave to protect our community by sewing face coverings. All these pieces will be installed at Bartlett Regional Hospital (BRH).

Amidst the confusion and chaos of dealing with a worldwide pandemic, familiar landscapes, comforting colors and tones, and a sense of peace and calm flow through the paintings by MK MacNaughton, Pua Maunu, Constance Baltuck, and Crystal Cudworth whose work will be installed at the Zach Gordon Youth Center, BRH, the Juneau Public Library, City Hall and other public facilities. We can revisit virtual performances on-line that entertained us and feel grateful for artists who not only taught us how to paint, share a story, or perform in drag, but also how to stay sane and connected to each other.

Indigenous artists like Lily Hope, Marissa Truitt, Abel Ryan, Robert Mills and Della Cheney show us that the strength of ancestors and the practice and teaching of ancient arts both honor the past while acknowledging and embracing present changes and difference. These pieces, now part of the permanent collection and on display at the City Museum, fully express our mission to “draw strength and perspective from the past, inspire learning, and find purpose for the future.”

The Arts show us that there are many paths towards resilience, healing, and justice and when we support a workforce of artists, we support an economically and culturally vibrant community.



Museum News

The Morris Art Collection

Towards the end of 2020, the City Museum received on loan the majority of the Morris Alaska Art Collection. This collection includes pieces from artists spanning 150 years and highlights Alaskan artists and Alaskan scenes. Featured artists include Nathan Jackson, Bill Ray, Rie Muñoz, Byron Birdsall, Fred Machentanz, Eustace Paul Ziegler, and Sydney Laurence, just to name a few.

The collection was conceived of and curated by William “Billy” Morris III, former owner of the Juneau Empire. Although not from Alaska himself, he became captivated with its beauty on his first visit in 1968. He began by collecting “Old Masters” such as Laurence and Ziegler, before adding the work of more contemporary artists. When the Juneau Empire Building was being built in 1987, it was designed to not only showcase views of Gastineau Channel but also to act as a showplace for the growing art collection.

When Morris Communications sold the building in 2017, the fate of the artwork was suddenly up in the air. Although another collection of Mr. Morris’ became the basis for the Morris Museum of Art in Augusta, GA, it was important to Mr. Morris that the collection remain in Alaska as an Alaskan collection of Alaskan art to be enjoyed by Alaskans. The challenge stood in finding an appropriate host for the collection. Luckily, the City Museum was able to step in and provide a temporary home for the art.

While what we have been calling the Morris Art Collection is only on loan to us, the artwork supports our mission of telling the story of Juneau and Douglas. The artwork will help supplement our own collection and provide opportunities to highlight different artists and scenes in new and exciting ways. Keep an eye out for new exhibits as we work to integrate and utilize the collection in the future.



Four pieces from the Morris Alaska Art Collection:

Top: *Juneau Courthouse and Waterfront*, by Sydney Laurence.

Above: *Tlingit Chief*, by Bill Ray.

Right: *Galatea*, by Dan DeRoux.

Far Right: *Beach Seiners*, by Eustace Paul Ziegler.



Current Exhibit

Echoes of War: Unanga̋ Internment During WWII



Detail from the *Echoes of War* exhibit illustrating the living conditions for the Unanga̋ in Funter Bay and a response to the ecosystem.

New Touch Table

Our *Echoes of War* exhibit had a new addition this January. This touchscreen is kindly being loaned to us by the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island (ACSPI) for the duration of the exhibit. Created by Ocean Conservancy with generous funding from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, this touchscreen is a collaborative effort between Ocean Conservancy and ACSPI staff. Meant to give visitors a greater insight into life on the Pribilof Islands, this interactive display allows guests to explore different aspects of Pribilof history, culture, and language. It is full of captivating images, interesting videos, and interactive maps that give the viewer a better look at these beautiful and remote islands. Come see it before it makes its way home to St. Paul Island in October.

Extended through summer 2021

Our current temporary exhibit focuses on the Unanga̋ internment camps at Funter Bay on Admiralty Island during WWII. Told in their own words, the exhibit follows the Unanga̋ residents of St. Paul and St. George as they were forcibly removed from their homes and transported 1300 miles to Funter Bay. The internment of Unanga̋ in Southeast Alaska is an event commonly excluded from history books and school curriculums. This exhibit aims to raise awareness, recognize the people who survived the internment camps, and honor those who didn't. *Echoes of War* will be on display through October 2021.



Niko Sanguinetti, Curator of Collections and Exhibits, installs the touch table with the help of Elissa Borges, Curator of Public Programs. The touch table was installed in the Map Case Gallery.

Museum News

City Museum Receives an Award for Excellence



This year the Juneau-Douglas City Museum received the Award for Excellence in the Museum Field by Museums Alaska for their exhibit *Echoes of War: Unanga's Internment during WWII*. This award recognizes exceptional contributions to the museum field. *Echoes of War* focuses on the forced removal and internment of Unanga from the Pribilof Islands and was created through the collaborative work of the Larger Funter Bay Working Group made up of contributors around the state. *Echoes of War: Unanga's Internment during WWII* will be up at the City Museum through October 2021.

Pictured at left: The *Award for Excellence in the Museum Field*.

Volunteers Return after Museum Closures

On March 16th, 2020, the City Museum was closed to the public while COVID-19 mitigation strategies were learned, planned, taught, and implemented. With a strong mitigation plan in place, the museum was able to reopen safely to visitors and volunteers on June 4th, 2020. Several volunteers returned to work at the front desk providing visitor services for a handful of brave travelers. Some of these travelers were tourists from out of state, including a family of four from the East Coast who were eager to learn about Juneau's history. Other visitors came from cities in Alaska in search of something new to experience with family or friends. Due to a second rise in COVID-19 the Museum closed again on October 19th, 2020. When the museum was able to reopen on January 14th, 2021 our volunteers welcomed local families to the museum— a few each week. Overall, fewer visitors meant our volunteers were able to work on projects at the front desk such as cataloguing collections of photographs and other donated items.



Carol Scafturon began volunteering in 2010 and has provided over 1,000 hours of quality visitor service and project support.

2020-2021 Admission & Program Sponsors

As well as providing free admission, our sponsors support all programs including virtual programming during COVID-19 closures. We thank the following donors for helping the City Museum reach the public by providing a wider opportunity for visitation:

Thank You!

Don and Alma Harris (October 2020)
Pioneers of Alaska Igloo #6 (November 2020, March 2021)
Michelle Storer (December 2020, January 2021, February 2021)
In Memory of Marie Darlin (April 2021)

Programs

Going Virtual During the Pandemic

Finding ways to provide public programs during COVID-19 is an on-going creative challenge for museums. Initially, we focused on providing meaningful distraction during the uncertainty of the first quarantine. The goal was to develop fun ways for the public to interact with local history throughout the week, and to take their minds off worrying for a moment each day. Facebook became the vehicle for our numerous local history posts, photos, videos, and downloadable activities. Then in the fall, when the museum acquired a Double Robotics iPad robot, we were able to offer virtual tours to those at home. We also began to create more local history videos, filming on-site around town. An increase in video production led to the creation of our YouTube channel and a new way to deliver programs and workshops. We transformed Zoom interviews and Zoom panel discussions into YouTube videos, and then we branched out to workshops. The *Make a Crankie Workshop* consisted of two videos- one on the history of crankies, and the other on how to make your own crankie. The museum provided a free kit of supplies to make a crankie and access to the YouTube videos. Since COVID-19, no school groups have visited the museum. Instead, we provided local history education kits to teachers and families, were able to work with Museums for Digital Learning to upload our Fish Trap unit to a website for educators and students worldwide.



Museum Director, Beth Weigel, takes a virtual tour of the City Museum with the assistance of a Double Robotics robot on loan from the Juneau School District and the University of Alaska Southeast.



Museum Fun: *Guess that Artifact*

We are adding a new segment to our newsletter this round. In the spirit of our *Guess that Artifact* video series, we thought we would bring it to our readers. If you think you know what this object is, email us at museum.info@juneau.com and keep your eyes peeled for new Object Reveal videos on our Facebook page and YouTube channel. Here are a few clues to get you started:

- This object is used to make something else.
- It is also called a flask but has no relation to alcohol.
- Used in the medical industry.

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Subscribe to our YouTube channel to view these local history videos & more:



Sydney Laurence



St. Nicholas Orthodox Church



Unanga WWII Internment
Camps Memorial

[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

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