



Cultural Fieldwork in Downtown Springfield, Oregon

Fall 2012 • Arts and Administration

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About SCI

The Sustainable Cities Initiative (SCI) is a cross-disciplinary organization at the University of Oregon that promotes education, service, public outreach, and research on the design and development of sustainable cities. We are redefining higher education for the public good and catalyzing community change toward sustainability. Our work addresses sustainability at multiple scales and emerges from the conviction that creating the sustainable city cannot happen within any single discipline. SCI is grounded in cross-disciplinary engagement as the key strategy for improving community sustainability. Our work connects student energy, faculty experience, and community needs to produce innovative, tangible solutions for the creation of a sustainable society.

About SCYP

The Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) is a year-long partnership between SCI and one city in Oregon, in which students and faculty in courses from across the university collaborate with the partner city on sustainability and livability projects. SCYP faculty and students work in collaboration with staff from the partner city through a variety of studio projects and service-learning courses to provide students with real-world projects to investigate. Students bring energy, enthusiasm, and innovative approaches to difficult, persistent problems. SCYP's primary value derives from collaborations resulting in on-the-ground impact and expanded conversations for a community ready to transition to a more sustainable and livable future. SCY 2011-12 includes courses in Architecture; Arts and Administration; Business; Economics; Journalism; Landscape Architecture; Law; Oregon Leadership in Sustainability; and Planning, Public Policy, and Management.

About Springfield, Oregon

The City of Springfield has been a leader in sustainable practices for more than 30 years, tackling local issues ranging from waste and stormwater management to urban and suburban redevelopment. It is the first and only jurisdiction in Oregon to create two separate Urban Renewal Districts by voter approval. Constrained by dramatic hillsides and rivers to the north and south, Springfield has worked tirelessly to develop efficiently and respectfully within its natural boundary as well as the current urban growth boundary. Springfield is proud of its relationships and ability to work with property owners and developers on difficult developments, reaching agreements that are to the benefit of both the project and the affected property owners. These relationships with citizens are what continue to allow Springfield to turn policy and planning into reality. Springfield recruited a strong, diverse set of partners to supplement city staff participation in SCYP. Partners include the Springfield Utility Board, Willamalane Park and Recreation District, Metro Wastewater Management Commission, United Way of Lane County, and Springfield School District 19.

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Executive Summary

This document describes a project carried out for the City of Springfield, Oregon, by graduate students in Art In Society (AAD 450/550), a course offered by the University of Oregon's Arts and Administration Program and taught by Dr. John Fenn during Fall Term 2012. The project's goal was to increase visitor and resident access to background information about the city's cultural offerings. Working in teams, students gathered and organized existing materials that describe selected resources, and developed a set of recommendations for promoting Springfield's cultural amenities.

One student team interviewed artists and community members who contributed to the creation of three public art pieces—the *Jessie Bostelle Memorial Mural*, the *Draft Horse Logging Mural*, and *The Balancing Act* sculpture. The team also gathered supplementary documents about each piece. The collected materials represent ideal types of information for engaging visitors and residents with diverse learning styles. Students also researched cultural amenities in addition to those listed above, but due to time and research constraints, they were unable to gather the same detailed level of information. However, they set up an online compendium of materials that can be supplemented by future researchers.

A second student team researched best practices for promoting the collected background materials. The team investigated public art labeling methods, focusing on the use of plaques and enhanced labels. It determined that the most successful plaques and labels offer a small amount of text in the form of an artist's quote or an interesting fact about the piece. This document includes sample plaque designs by Dorothy Bayern that include quotes and information gathered by student fieldworkers. In addition to investigating public art labeling practices, the student team also explored the advantages and disadvantages of employing companies that provide guided cell phone tours to city governments and other institutions.

Finally, students developed a suggested framework for future gathering of cultural information. As each cultural amenity has its own context and history, recommendations center on the notion of adopting a "story-based perspective." Unique and memorable stories about the artistic process, the artist, and Springfield history can potentially "hook" visitors and residents and encourage them seek out more of Springfield's cultural amenities.

Introduction

Objective

From murals that explore the occupational history of the Pacific Northwest to whimsical sculptures of wild animals, Springfield's downtown district contains one of the most eclectic and unique collections of public art in Oregon. However, there is a lack of easily accessible background information for visitors and community members who want to learn more about specific cultural amenities. In Fall 2012, a group of student enrolled in Art in Society, a course offered by the Arts & Administration Department at the University of Oregon, worked with the City of Springfield to make these resources more available. Over the course of ten weeks, the students conducted ethnographic interviews, gathered and organized existing documentation about the public artwork, and developed recommendations for future research and the promotion of the collected materials.

Overview of Selected Cultural Amenities and Areas of Research

In Springfield's downtown district, murals adorn buildings on Main Street, A Street, Pioneer Parkway, and other nearby streets. There are also sculptures located near prominent buildings such as the Chamber of Commerce (Southern Pacific Railroad Depot) and the City Hall. The murals and sculptures celebrate a variety of subjects and people, including Springfield's pioneer history, revered community activists, and recreational traditions. Local and regional artists created many of the murals and sculptures, and some of the artists are recognized nationally and internationally for their work.

Documentation about Springfield's murals and sculptures is available to the public in the following walking tour brochures:

- *A Walk of Art Tour Brochure* by the Springfield Arts Commission
- *Downtown Springfield Walking Tour* by Travel Lane County
- *Springfield Downtown District Walking Tour Guide* by Paula Guthrie

The scope of this report covers cultural amenities within the general area described by the walking tour brochures. As Springfield has many cultural items of interest outside the downtown district, it is hoped that students in subsequent classes will collect information about other neighborhoods and business areas.

Research Approach and Goals

To effectively organize the research project, students formed research teams based on mutual interests and training. One team explored the histories of the murals and sculptures in the downtown district and another team looked into methods of labeling and promoting the emerging cultural data.

Research Methods

Students relied on the following methods and activities to guide their work:

Ethnographic Fieldwork

- Students recorded interviews with muralists, sculptors, and community members who were involved in the creation of public art in downtown Springfield.
- Students gathered supplementary graphic and textual documents related to public art pieces from artists and community members.

Research

- Students researched public art labeling practices in the United States and abroad.
- Students collected and organized online materials pertaining to public art in Springfield.
- Students explored the integration of cell phone technology into public art walking tours.

Organizational Work

- Students started a web-based inventory of published background information on Springfield's public art, historic architecture, and other cultural amenities.

Due to time constraints and the large amount of public art in Springfield, the work only scratches the surface when it comes to exploring the city's cultural landscape. It is hoped that the general approach will serve as a template for how to collect, organize, and promote background information about all of Springfield's public art pieces.

Downtown Murals and Sculptures

Ethnographic Fieldwork

Process

The goal of the project was to collect interviews and archival material from artists whose work is featured in the downtown area. The students also wanted to meet with community members who had assisted in the funding and placement of art pieces. Students began by touring the downtown area in order to familiarize themselves with the public artwork, and one student team spoke with Carrie Schindele-Cupples, Reference Librarian at the Springfield Public Library. She provided them with artist contact information, as did Niel Laudati, Community Relations Manager for the City of Springfield.

During this initial period of gathering contact information and learning about the public art in downtown Springfield, students realized it would be impossible to meet with all of the artists, city officials, and community members who had contributed their talent, time, and resources to various projects. In the interest of time, they decided to focus on three pieces for which they received quick responses from potential research consultants:

- *Jessie Bostelle Memorial Mural*
- *Draft Horse Logging Mural*
- *The Balancing Act* sculpture

For each piece, students gathered contextual information in a variety of formats, including recorded interviews, graphic documents, and web-based and printed materials. It is likely that similar materials exist for the other public art pieces in downtown Springfield.

Jessie Bostelle Memorial Mural

The *Jessie Bostelle Memorial Mural* is located on the east wall of 448 Main Street. It honors the life, activism, and community spirit of Jessie Bostelle, a



Figure 1: View of the Jessie Bostelle Mural from the east side of 448 Main Street.

labor organizer who passed away in 1999. Unfortunately, there is only a small amount of publicly available information about the woman to whom the mural is dedicated. The Springfield Arts Commission's walking tour brochure includes one sentence about Jessie Bostelle, and Travel Lane County's *Downtown Springfield Walking Tour* provides no biographical or contextual details. Since the mural is one of the most visible and thematically specific pieces of art in downtown Springfield, it fits the description of a cultural amenity that needs to have background information readily accessible.

Meeting with Margaret Hallock

To learn more about the *Jessie Bostelle Memorial Mural*, a student researcher met with Margaret Hallock, the former Director of the Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) at the University of Oregon and the current Director of the Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics. She said that Jessie Bostelle was an organizer for the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), an advocate of women taking leadership roles in unions, and a respected faculty member of LERC. After Bostelle passed away, LERC, the City of Springfield, SEIU, and the Lane Arts Council came together to fund and create a mural honoring Bostelle's dedication to Springfield's working people.

Hallock outlined how the project's stakeholders secured funding and hired an artist to head up the mural's creation. She also explained how LERC developed an educational program for youth artists who were involved in the design and painting of the mural. The recorded interview and an edited audio sample from the interview can be heard at the following site: <https://soundcloud.com/ofn/interview-with-margaret>.



Figure 2: "Jessie Bostelle Memorial Mural" promotional flyer, courtesy of Margaret Hallock.

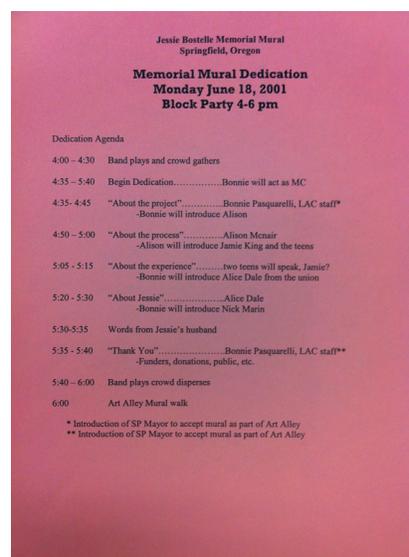


Figure 3: "Jessie Bostelle Memorial Mural Dedication Agenda," courtesy of Margaret Hallock.

In addition to discussing the mural's place in Springfield's history, Margaret Hallock also provided flyers from the mural's opening reception, notes from meetings between project stakeholders, and visual documents of the artistic process. A flyer invitation and a program for the dedication ceremony are featured below. In combination with the recorded audio interview, supplementary documents such as these can be made available in a multimedia format suitable for handheld devices and smartphones.

Meeting with Alison McNair

After meeting with Margaret Hallock, a student team interviewed public artist Alison McNair who supervised the painting of the *Jessie Bostelle Memorial Mural*. Students met her in front of the mural—a location that stimulated an extensive conversation about the artistic process.

During the winter and spring of 2001, McNair and seven Springfield high school students conducted research about the labor movement and mural design, created initial sketches, and presented their designs to the City for approval. According to McNair, some of the youth artists were considered at-risk, and working on the mural gave them a sense of making a positive contribution to the community. To develop thematic ideas, students met with union leaders in Springfield and learned about labor history. As a result, the students titled the three “windows” on the mural Respect, Dignity, and Growth, and they represent Community, Labor and Industry.

The *Jessie Bostelle Memorial Mural* not only celebrates the life and legacy of a local activist, but it also documents the daily activities in the neighborhood where the mural resides. Some of the people who are featured in the mural are neighborhood residents who regularly checked up on the mural's progress. Other figures are business owners and pedestrians out for a walk. In a sense, the *Jessie Bostelle Memorial Mural* is more than a “labor mural;” it is a piece of art that captures the character of a specific corner in downtown Springfield during the spring of 2001.

Like the audio interview with Margaret Hallock, the recorded memories of Alison McNair can potentially be used by the City to offer background information to tourists and community members who want to learn more about the *Jessie Bostelle Memorial Mural*. An edited audio sample from the interview can be heard at the following link: <https://soundcloud.com/ofn/interview-with-alison-mcnair>. The full audio interview along with additional audio samples will be



Figure 4: Public artist Alison McNair in front of the “Jessie Bostelle Memorial Mural.”

added to the online Diigo group (Please see the “Diigo Site for Sustainable Cities Year Program” section of this report for a full discussion of the Diigo group).

Draft Horse Logging Mural

The second artist to be interviewed was D. Brent Burkett, a resident of Springfield who painted the *Draft Horse Logging Mural*, which covers the east wall of 602 Main Street. A student researcher met with him at a local cafe, and he explained the entire process of creating the mural, from submitting a project proposal to the City to transferring his sketches to a much larger canvas. Burkett also discussed how changes in Springfield’s economy over time inspired his choice of subject matter. He described how loggers used to employ horses in their work, and he reminisced about the log trucks that used to roll in and out of the city. Burkett’s interest in Springfield’s history inspired him to memorialize the city’s traditional occupations, and his *Draft Horse Logging Mural* shares this past with new residents and visitors.

Often, participants of an art walk only see the finished product, but the design process can be just as interesting as the end result. In addition to explaining his artistic process and choice of subject matter, Burkett provided a variety of black-and-white and color sketches of the mural. The sketches offer a visually engaging “behind-the-scenes” look at how a mural develops from an idea to a full-fledged piece of art.

When the student researcher told Burkett that his recorded memories and sketches might be included in a future multimedia format that could be accessed using mobile technology, he expressed his support of the idea, even though he does not own a handheld mobile device or a computer.

During the interview, the student researcher also learned that D. Brent Burkett is a well-known illustrator of children’s books and magazines. After conducting further research, the student learned that Burkett has illustrated books written by award-winning and influential children’s authors, including Eve Bunting and Lloyd Alexander.

Although Burkett explained that he has not illustrated any work for children in recent years, his previous work is very well respected within the literary community. By promoting his illustrations in future walking tour brochures and including his books in the public library, the City can generate interest in one of Springfield’s most accomplished and critically-acclaimed artists.

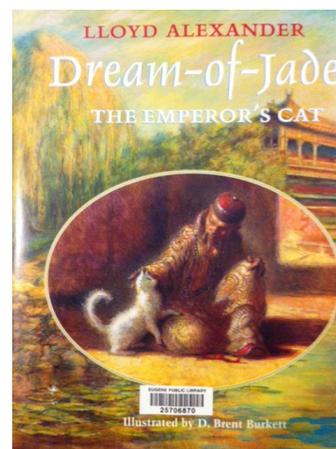


Figure 5: Cover of “*Dream of Jade: The Emperor’s Cat*,” illustrated by D. Brent Burkett.



Figure 6: Early sketch of the Draft Horse Logging Mural, courtesy of D. Brent Burkett.



Figure 7: Color plans of the Draft Horse Logging Mural, courtesy of D. Brent Burkett.

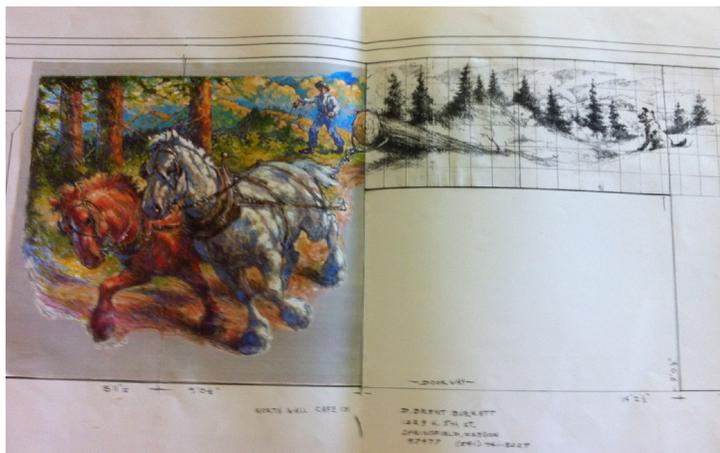


Figure 8: Color plans of the Draft Horse Logging Mural, courtesy of D. Brent Burkett.

The *Jessie Bostelle Memorial Mural* and the *Draft Horse Logging Mural* as Templates

The oral histories and supplementary documents about the *Jessie Bostelle Memorial Mural* and the *Draft Horse Logging Mural* represent materials that can be collected about other cultural amenities in Springfield. It is suggested that the City gather the following materials for each cultural amenity:

- Written documents (announcements, flyers, correspondence, etc.)
- Graphic documents (sketches and photographs)
- Audio recordings of artists and other community members
- Online resources (artist websites, web-based articles, etc.)

Such resources offer background information to people with a wide variety of learning styles. Interviews can be transcribed for the hearing-impaired, and audio and written materials can easily be translated into Spanish and other languages to reach the widest possible audience. It is recognized that not all of these materials may exist for each piece of public art or historic building. The categories mentioned above represent an ideal collection of materials, and this report will offer suggestions for approaching artwork with limited information in a subsequent section.

Embracing Controversy: *The Balancing Act* Sculpture

The third artist to be interviewed was Jerry Williams, a sculptor, painter, and former faculty member of the Department of Theater Arts at the University of Oregon. His sculpture, *The Balancing Act*, is located at 225 Fifth Street Plaza at City Hall. It features a rhinoceros balancing a gymnast who is also balancing an owl on his feet.

According to Williams, an arts committee appointed by the Springfield City Council commissioned the piece, which he completed in 1994. He told the student team that he was left with a free hand to design it, but that a controversy arose about his piece near the installation date. Williams suggested that the controversy might have been caused by the presence of an owl on the sculpture during a period in which many people were blaming the decline of Oregon's timber industry on efforts to save the



Figure 9: View of “*The Balancing Act*” Sculpture, photograph by Stephanie Johnson, 2012.

endangered Spotted Owl. Furthermore, Williams expressed his belief that Springfield's larger political context might have played a role in the controversy as well.

As trained fieldworkers, the students recorded Jerry Williams' opinions with the knowledge that they represent only one side of a complicated story. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, they were unable to meet with City officials and others who had been involved in the funding and creation of *The Balancing Act*, and so this is suggested as a project for students in future classes.

Since controversial art often sparks more interest than "traditional" pieces, *The Balancing Act* can potentially attract new audiences to Springfield's cultural areas. Furthermore, many courses at the University of Oregon explore the politics of art, and *The Balancing Act* offers a concrete starting point for classroom discussions about issues that come up around public art. Thus, a multimedia platform that touches upon the controversy could potentially enrich a future walking tour, and it could also serve an educational purpose as well.

As Dr. John Fenn pointed out during our presentation to the City, the notoriety of controversial works of art often overshadow other characteristics such as the use of unique materials or the application of an experimental artistic process. Keeping this mind, students gathered some background information about the technical aspects of the sculpture. For example, Jerry Williams explained that there is a pipe that runs from the hip of the gymnast and descends about ten feet into the ground, and he explained that the bronze gymnast and the owl weigh about 1000 pounds and are welded to a steel rod.

In addition to describing the characteristics of *The Balancing Act*, Williams also discussed the challenges that he faced when constructing the sculpture. He informed us that it was quite difficult to build a sculpture in which everything was balanced on one arm. Also, the original mold for the rhinoceros was made out of a material that deteriorated quickly and had to be replaced at considerable cost. These challenges might interest other artists or walking tour participants who want to learn more about the arduous process of creating a sculpture. Finally, we researched and collected links to articles on Jerry Williams' other public artwork, including the crucifix that he made for St. Alice's Catholic Church in Springfield. We did not have a chance to research his work as a theater set designer, but we do suggest that as a possible direction for future research.

Fieldwork Roadblocks

As a result of meetings with Margaret Hallock, Alison McNair, D. Brent Burkett, and Jerry Williams, students were able to gather some fascinating oral histories and unique supplementary materials about some of the cultural amenities in the downtown area. As mentioned earlier, they set out with the goal of interviewing as many artists and community members as possible, but only a handful of people responded to initial inquiries. In addition to the four individuals discussed above, students communicated with the following artists:

- Patti Wessman (*Children's Ceramic Tile* mural)
- Kristi Moomey, formerly Kristi Rebeiz (*The Fisherman*)

Kristi Moomey responded enthusiastically to the students' first inquiry, but they were unable to reach her beyond that point. Patti Wessman currently lives out of the state, but she did send documents and links to online resources that describe her artistic vision and feature examples of her work.

Some of the artists did not respond at all to inquiries, and the student team researching the public art lacked contact information for others. Since Anne Woodruff Murray's *Oregon Trail Mural* is the most prominent piece in the historic district, the students put her at the top of their interview list, but they were unsuccessful in reaching her. They were also unable to contact Devin Laurence Field, whose *Welcome to Springfield* sign is one of the most contemporary pieces. Patrick Curtis, creator of *The Moderns* (a cafe scene from the 1900s featuring famous authors and artists) and *American Pride* (a celebration of patriotism), was also at the top of the interview list. As his murals contain very different subject matters, students figured that he would have some interesting stories to tell, but they were unable to find any trace of him. As they based most of their fieldwork on contacts that they received from Library staff or found on their own, it is possible that someone else in the City or on the Springfield Arts Commission has some idea of how to locate Patrick Curtis and some of the other artists who could not be reached. The students have put together an Excel spreadsheet that lists the artists that they interviewed and those that still need to be contacted.

Recommendations for Future Fieldwork

In response to the obstacles that they encountered during the fieldwork process, the students have developed some recommendations for future data collection projects. The following recommendations will make it easier to gather and use cultural information in walking tours and other projects:

- Establish a central database for artist contact information that will be updated on a regular basis.
- Collect audio and/or filmed interviews with artists as they create a piece. Documenting the creative process will provide the City with resources to include in walking tours, and it will ensure that the City has interviews from

artists who may leave the area.

- Conduct recurring interviews with artists about how they feel about their pieces, what they would have done differently, and how creating public art in Springfield affected their lives and careers.
- Engage local students in the process of gathering information about Springfield's cultural amenities. By providing volunteer opportunities or class credit to students who research a particular artist or piece of public art, the City can maintain a growing collection of interviews and supplementary materials.

Recommendations for Artwork with Limited Background Information

Although the student researchers only spoke with a handful of artists, they collected a variety of online resources that provide contextual information for many of the other pieces. Through a simple Google search, they located photo essays, newspaper articles, and YouTube videos featuring Springfield's murals and sculptures. Specific examples include "The Oregon Trail Mural," a webpage that describes important aspects of Anne Woodruff Murray's piece and Herman Krieger's photo essay, "Murals of Lane County."

For art walk participants who may be interested in a certain mural or artist, these resources provide a starting point for future research. They show how the murals and sculptures in the downtown district have garnered local, regional, and even national attention from journalists, art critics, and web bloggers. Students collected approximately 40 online resources, which represent only a small selection of the material that exists. It is hoped that future students will find additional resources to add the inventory.

Promoting Emerging Cultural Data

Cultural Inventory

Diigo Site for Sustainable City Year Program

In the Scope of Work proposal for this project, the City of Springfield asked for a compendium of existing materials that describe selected cultural resources. Students decided to compile their findings using Diigo, an online social bookmarking website that allows users to bookmark, annotate, tag, and share resources. Many researchers, scholars, and cultural workers are now using Diigo as a tool for organizing and sharing a large amount of information. In fact, Dr. John Fenn—instructor of Art & Society—has used it for a number of years as a way to gather and share resources for his Art & Society courses. Diigo is a free resource, and the only requirement is that users sign up for an online account.

In addition to acting as a clearinghouse for web links and other online sources, Diigo also allows users to upload textual and graphic documents such as written reports, photographs, and spreadsheets. Since it is web-based, Diigo also ensures that research materials will not be accidentally discarded or lost over time.

The Diigo group page that students set up for this project is entitled “Sustainable Cities Year Program 2012-2013: Springfield, Oregon,” and it can be viewed at the following web address: http://groups.diigo.com/group/sustainable-cities-year-program-2012_2013

The screenshot shows the Diigo group page for "Sustainable Cities Year Program 2012-2013". The page header includes a group photo and a description: "This group is for students, faculty, city officials, and others involved in the Sustainable Cities Year Program (SCYP), a partnership between the University of Oregon's Sustainable Cities Initiative and the city of Springfield, Oregon." There is also a Shutterfly advertisement for photo books. Below the header, there are navigation options like "Bookmark" and "Topic", and sorting filters such as "Most Recent" and "Popular". The main content area displays two posts:

- Interview with Alison McNair, Edited Audio Sample #3** - 0 views
soundcloud.com/...interview-with-alison-mcnair-1
Tags: Audio, Springfield, art, cities, sustainable, murals, Oregon, public, labor, McNair, community
shared by Nathan Moore about 19 hours ago - Comment - Like - No Cached - More
- "Theme Wasn't Adopted"** - 0 views
news.google.com/newspapers
Tags: Springfield, art, sustainable, cities, sculpture, balancing, act
shared by Nathan Moore about 19 hours ago - Comment - Like - No Cached - More

Figure 10: Image of the “Sustainable Cities Year Program 2012-2013” group page.

As of this writing, the group page contains over 40 links to online resources about Springfield's murals, sculptures, and artists. The page also features links to audio samples of recorded interviews, written reports, tour brochures, and a spreadsheet of artist contact information. Each link is "tagged" in such a way that users can sort and locate resources based on key words. For example, if users want to search the group based on specific themes, they can choose a subject from the "Top 10 Tags" box to the right of all of the links.

If users want to learn only about a specific type of artwork in the downtown district such as sculpture, they can click on "View All" in the "Top 10 Tags" box. The filtered results will reveal all of the resources that are tagged with the word "sculpture."

Top 10 Tags	View All
Springfield	40
art	36
sustainable	26
cities	26
murals	24
Oregon	20
public	15
community	13
sculpture	10
students	7

Figure 11: "Top 10 Tags" box from the "Sustainable Cities Year Program 2012-2013" group page.

Group items tagged

NetApp® Virtualization
 NetApp.com/Cern-Data
 CERN Relies on an Agile Data Infrastructure from NetApp®

AdChoices ▶

Filter: All | Bookmarks | Topics

Ads by Google

[Horchow Clearance Event](#)
 Save up to 50% off already reduced clearance + free ship on \$50 orders
www.horchow.com/ClearanceEvent

 **"Theme Wasn't Adopted"** - 0 views
news.google.com/newspapers
 Springfield art sustainable cities sculpture balancing act
 shared by Nathan Moore about 20 hours ago - Comment - Like - No Cached - More ▼

 **Nathan Moore** about 20 hours ago - Edit - Delete
 Letter to the Register-Guard from Charles Swisher about the controversy surrounding The Balancing Act sculpture.

 **"Sculptor labors over gift of a crucifix"** - 0 views
www.thefreelibrary.com/ft+of+a+crucifix.-a0129654037
 Springfield art sculpture Williams crucifix church
 shared by Nathan Moore on 19 Dec 12 - Comment - Like - No Cached - More ▼

Figure 12: Image of the filtered results for resources tagged "sculpture".

Tag Cloud

[Embed this tag cloud in your blog »](#)



Figure 13: Image of the tag cloud of all searchable terms on the Diigo group page.

If users want to explore all of the “tagged” terms, they can click “View All” in the “Top 10 Tags” box and the site will produce a “Tag Cloud” that shows all of the searchable terms and subjects.

One of the useful aspects of the tagging system is that it points to the types of artwork that have received the most amount of attention from reporters, online bloggers, and others. For example, in the “Tag Cloud,” one of the largest terms is “murals,” indicating that there are more available resources about Springfield’s murals than its sculptures. Therefore, it might be useful for the City to focus on promoting the lesser-known sculptures or gathering more background information about them.

Collaborative Benefits of Using Diigo

One of the main benefits of using Diigo group as a compendium of Springfield’s cultural amenities is that it encourages collaborative, ongoing research and fieldwork. Anyone with a free Diigo account can apply to join the “Sustainable Cities Year Program 2012-2013: Springfield, Oregon.” Furthermore, all group members can add resources to the page. Since students in Dr. Fenn’s Public Folklore course (Spring 2013) will be continuing some of the work that we started, the Diigo compendium will provide them with easily accessible background information, and it will suggest directions for possible fieldwork projects.

Another benefit of the Diigo group page is that it can include artists, members of the Springfield Arts Commission, city officials, and others who have been involved in downtown Springfield’s cultural development. Group members can easily upload links, sketches, photographs, and other items of interest, thus adding to an ever-increasing cultural inventory. Moreover, group members will have access to a large amount of resources that they can use in future projects.

Labeling Considerations and Recommendations

In addition to interviewing artists and gathering background information about Springfield's public artwork, students also investigated ways to promote the collected resources through the use of an appropriate labeling system. This process included researching national and international standards and exploring methods of combining technology with public art labeling practices.

Public Art Plaques

Public art labeling must be done with care. When plaques are placed simply for the sake of having plaques, there is a risk that they will become “blemishes” that distract from the art itself. A critique of the placement of public art labels in Portland, Maine, illustrates the problem:

“Somehow I get the feeling that no one's appreciation of the statue is deepened by what they learn from the five lines of type. Names and dates don't tend to fascinate. In fact, placing the emphasis on names and dates is what gives the study of history a bad rap. This, added to the fact that the visual plane of the piece has been violated by an element foreign to it, namely the plaque, makes me seriously question the wisdom of the whole plaque idea” (Gallant 2012).

This sort of informational label fails because it prompts the patron to examine the artwork on a critical, rather than a personal, level. A more meaningful approach is to create labels that address the importance of the art and its significance to individuals and communities. Label content that focuses on personal, provocative, or emotional material encourages a viewer to engage with the art. If a label draws some personal or emotional connection between the patron and the artist or the artwork, it adds meaning to the visitor's experience (Hein 2006: 16). Kristin Calhoun of Portland Oregon's Regional Arts & Culture Council echoes this when explaining how her organization seeks to provide engaging information about public art. She notes, “Every time we install artwork we install a plaque that has all the identification of who the artist is, what the title of the work is . . .” In regard to supplemental digital material, she indicates, “We try to make sure we have an artist's statement all the time” (Oregon Public Broadcasting: 2011).

Self-Guided Tour Plaques

Sidewalk plaques may be most popularly associated with Hollywood's Walk of Fame or other memorial plaques, but they are also useful as unobtrusive art labeling devices. Plaques appear in a variety of styles ranging from sparse information delivery devices to lavishly illustrated pieces of art, with varying impacts.

San Francisco's Neighborhood Arts Collective Program commemorates the Uptown Tenderloin National Historic District with a series of “Lost Landmarks” plaques (Shaw 2011). Besides simple scrolls around the dates, these informational plaques are entirely text-based, without even a graphic logo.

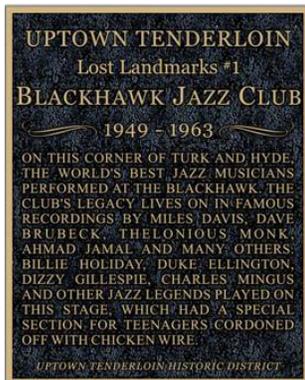


Figure 14: Image of sidewalk plaque in the Uptown Tenderloin National Historical District (Shaw 2011).



Figure 15: Image of sidewalk plaque in the Hyde Park district in Boston, photograph by Deborah Noyes, 2010.



Figure 16: Image of sidewalk plaque featuring Leopold Bloom from *Ulysses*, photograph titled "ULYSSES plaque" by Leo Reynolds, 2006).

Boston's Gregg Lefevre proves that commemorative plaques themselves can be public art. Set into Boston's city squares and sidewalks, his bronze plaques immortalize the area's history and culture in graphical collages (Boston Arts Commission 2010).

In Dublin, Ireland, multiple groups of bronze plaques set into the sidewalk mark cultural resources. Plaques unveiled in October 2011 honor Dublin's status as a UNESCO City of Literature with the face of four honored Irish writers (UNESCO 2011). An earlier project in Dublin used a series of 14 bronze sidewalk plaques to create a walking tour following the footsteps of Leopold Bloom, the protagonist in James Joyce's *Ulysses* (Dublin Tourism).

These plaques all use the same frame with the image and title of "Ulysses" and the logo of the organization that placed them. A blank scroll area takes less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the plaque's surface area for each plaque's unique text. This design emphasizes the continuity of the plaques as a group, while enabling the audience to focus on the short quote selected for each plaque.

Enhanced Labels: Supplemental Information on Paper and Online

Edited interview material gathered from artists and other community members can be added to public art plaques through "enhanced labels," which direct those who are interested in learning more about a piece to additional content available on line or through a phone recording. A Quick Response (QR) code, another code readable by smartphones, or a custom Springfield mobile app could be a gateway to more textual, audio, visual and multilingual content that would be of interest to visitors.

QR Codes

Quick Response (QR) codes are 2-dimensional scan codes first developed by DENSO WAVE in 1994 (DENSO WAVE INCORPORATED 2000). QR codes can be scanned like ordinary bar codes, but can carry several hundred times more information. While QR is an industry standard, other scan code formats exist as well.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Using QR Codes

By embedding a website address in a QR code, it is possible to give visitors and residents a way to easily visit a website on a mobile device without having to type in a long, often complex, web address. One of the benefits of using QR codes is that the materials they direct users to can generally be edited, updated, and expanded without having to alter the physical plaque.

There is a risk of QR codes, or similar enhanced labels, becoming obsolete over time. For the best chance of visitor engagement, experts recommend against posting a “naked” mobile scan code without directions on how to use the code and a link to download a code reading app (Lemanager 2010). As online resources outside of the City’s control, the websites that host reader apps should not be considered permanent resources. On a permanent plaque, this information could quickly become dated as websites lose support or as new code reader apps replace each other. A plaque with an unsupported web link would be a frustration to users and reflect poorly on the City.

There is a possibility that QR codes and other enhanced labels will become more popular in the future, in which case a “naked” code with information would be acceptable, and the City could provide information on how to download a code reader on paper maps rather than on the physical plaque itself. There is also the possibility that the codes themselves will be replaced by new technology, and that in any number of years any plaques with codes will appear dated. The decision to include QR or similar codes into the plaques themselves will have to be carefully considered with these factors in mind.

Google’s Mobile Visual Search (MVS)

Google’s Mobile Visual Search (MVS) may be an early example of the kind of technology that will replace QR and other scan codes (Barocas 2012). A visual search engine bypasses the barcode concept by letting a user simply take a picture of any object with a mobile device. Google picks up on text in the image as well as matching the picture to existing pictures in its database. By matching the user’s photo to online information, it connects the user to a relevant website. MVS is effective enough to work even with pictures taken in different angles and light situations, and this kind of image recognition technology is likely to improve with time.

Custom Apps

Custom apps for mobile devices are currently a great way for cities to compile and share information about cultural resources. Portland Oregon’s Regional Arts



Figure 17: A QR code that directs listeners to an edited audio interview with Margaret Hallock, generated by Nathan Moore through Kaywa QR code, <http://qrcode.kaywa.com/>, 2012.

& Culture Council (RACC) has produced PublicArtPDX, a mobile iPhone app designed to make public art more accessible to visitors by sharing “additional layers” about artwork such as statements from the artists. Furthermore, RACC’s app shows how mobile content online can benefit those without mobile devices. For those without iPhones, RACC provides a printed map of downtown with ID information and an online public art search page. Thus, all of the information gathered for the app can be accessed from any computer with Internet access (Public Art PDX).

Given the direction that mobile technology is moving, a compelling option is for Springfield to commission an app capable of recognizing user photos of each plaque or piece of artwork. If the mobile content stops being supported for any reason, the graphics that remain on the permanent plaque will not give the impression that layered content is missing, in the way that an outdated barcode or phone number would.

Accessibility Considerations

The following accessibility issues and features can be taken into consideration when assessing whether and how to add supplemental material accessible through plaques, paper maps, and enhanced labels connected to online content:

Options: Potential barriers:	Plaque	Paper map	Phone tour	QR or other scan code	Google’s MVS	Custom app with visual recognition
Vision	X	X		X	X	X
Hearing			X			
Phone access			X			
Mobile device with camera and internet				X	X	Optional
Dependent on 3rd party				X	X	
Features: Updateable		X	X	X	(returns current search results)	X
Add any/all languages		X	X	X	X	X

Figure 18: Accessibility issues and features checklist. Image created by Dorothy Bayern, 2012.

Plaque Recommendations

Permanent informational plaques or tiles can be inserted into the sidewalk near Springfield's public art pieces, following the model of the Dublin Ulysses plaques. They can serve as labels, tie the many different pieces of art together for self-guided walking tour visitors, and can also serve as a beautifying feature in Springfield's downtown. Some suggested features are:

- Bronze or ceramic relief design and lettering.
- A strong graphical border, designed by a local artist, which cues the audience in to the public art theme.
- 2-toned City of Springfield drift boat logo.
- A blank space for unique text.
- Large, easily legible font.
- A 10-25-word quote by the artist or about the art, chosen because it evokes a personal or emotional engagement that adds meaning to the artwork.
- Below the quote in slightly smaller text: title of the piece, production date, and artist's name.
- Plenty of "white space" within the blank area to avoid making the labels too heavy with text.
- Some way to access layered information, preferably using a custom Springfield Oregon mobile app with a built-in visual recognition or search capability that does not require a scan code or link to be included on the plaque itself. Other ways to access layered information including scan codes and phone tours can be provided on supplemental maps available from the Visitor's Center or online.
- A strong graphical border, designed by a local artist, which cues the audience in to the public art theme.

As long as the word count stays low, the label format does not need to be absolutely consistent across plaques. Springfield's public art represents a wide diversity of projects created for different reasons, on a variety of topics, in a variety of media, by both individuals and groups of artists. At times different pieces will benefit from very different label information. As most plaques

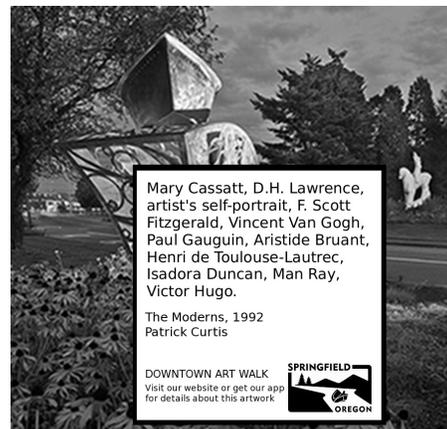


Figure 19: Plaque mockup for *The Moderns* mural. Image created by Dorothy Bayern, 2012.



Figure 20: Plaque mockup for *The Draft Horse Logging* mural. Image created by Dorothy Bayern, 2012.

will be at a distance from each other, providing material relevant to the art and of interest and value to the user is more important than design consistency.

Given the recommendations provided above for documenting existing and future art projects in Springfield, fieldwork with the artists can provide short, compelling quotes for these plaques. To maintain branding for Springfield's various cultural resources, separate but complementary plaque designs can be made for different categories of cultural resources in addition to public art, such as historical buildings. These plaques will enable visitors to explore a variety of Springfield's cultural resources as a seamless self-guided tour experience without distracting from the art itself.

Integration of Cell Phone Technology

Along with exploring current labeling practices, students also looked into the advantages and disadvantages of employing a mobile tour service to present the background information gathered by the fieldwork team. To provide the City of Springfield with a specific case study, students chose to investigate the services offered by OnCell.

OnCell System

According to the company website (www.oncellsystems.com), OnCell personnel are "communication experts who are passionate about the arts and education." OnCell provides local numbers that connect to guided cell phone tours, QR codes, mobile surveys, text messages, custom applications, and analytics.

Advantages

One of the main benefits of employing a service such as OnCell is that it creates a tangible connection between visitors and artists. While artists are generally not available to share their own stories every time a visitor expresses interest in their art, a mobile tour allows artists to prerecord a message ensuring that the visitor will have a more personalized experience. Furthermore, anyone can immediately record a message using a specific recording number assigned to the user. This provides an opportunity for the City to encourage participation from visitors and community members who feel strongly about a piece of art.

In addition to incorporating the voices and thoughts of the artists, the use of a mobile tour also makes public artwork accessible to all age groups. The guided tour using a local or toll free number is accessible and easy for all age groups to use, and the inclusion of QR codes and online resources can engage a younger demographic that is used to participatory, web-based tours. Importantly, OnCell tours do not exclude people who do not own smartphones. Visitors with any kind of cellphone can enjoy learning about Springfield's cultural amenities, which is not possible with tours that offer only QR codes or mobile apps.

Companies like OnCell also provide clients with important information about general usage such as the number visitor calls, downloads, and website views. This makes it easier for the City to determine which cultural aspects are encouraging visitors and community members to explore audio interviews, websites, and other supplementary resources.

Disadvantages

There are some disadvantages with employing OnCell or another company that offers guided cell phone tours and associated services.

- The focus on audio recordings has the potential to exclude visitors and residents with hearing disabilities. To alleviate this problem, the City would need to offer text messaging services and QR codes that link to written and visual materials.
- There are yearly fees associated with OnCell's services.
- Difficulties in collecting background information for some of the murals and sculptures in the downtown district can produce "gaps" in walking tours due to the lack of information about selected pieces.

Students offer this information about OnCell solely as an example of the services that some companies are offering cities and cultural organizations that are seeking to incorporate technology into their walking tours. It is possible that the City of Springfield can provide these services on its own without having to pay the fees associated with employing OnCell or another company.

Recommendations for Gathering and Presenting the Stories Behind Springfield’s Public Art

Background stories, controversies, and little-known facts about Springfield’s murals, sculptures, and buildings offer visitors and residents new ways of thinking about the City’s cultural amenities. Since each amenity has its own history, there is no “one-size-fits-all” template for gathering and presenting contextual information. Also, there are limitations based on the amount of available information for each cultural amenity. Fieldworkers can record interviews with artists and community members who worked on recent murals, but they are limited to archival data when researching historic buildings and neighborhoods.

For each cultural amenity, the details of the artistic process suggest possible approaches for gathering and presenting background information. Some of the murals and sculptures represent collaborative efforts between artists, students, and community members, and others represent the work of a single artist. During the fieldwork process, students found that collaborative projects such as the *Jessie Bostelle Memorial Mural* offer fascinating stories of community building and teamwork between professional artists and amateurs. For less collaborative projects such as the *Draft Horse Logging Mural*, the unique talents and biographies of the artists add to the understanding of the artwork. Although the available information is different for each cultural amenity, students have developed some suggested guidelines for further research into Springfield’s diverse artistic landscape:

- Gather oral histories from artists, City officials, and others who have contributed to the development of Springfield’s cultural spheres. Incorporate short, edited audio or video clips into art walks.
- Gather supplementary materials such as early sketches, photographs, press releases, and other resources that offer valuable insight into local cultural history.
- Gather interesting articles, web links, and other published references to Springfield’s cultural amenities that can be accessed using mobile technology.
- Set up a system for continually gathering oral histories, supplementary materials, and other background information for future public art projects.
- Develop public plaques that personalize each cultural amenity.
- Avoid the permanent placement of QR codes or other enhanced labels that may become obsolete over time.
- Incorporate mobile phone technology in an accessible manner that encourages participation from people of all age groups and learning styles.
- Translate all written and audio materials into Spanish to reach and engage more community members and visitors.

Conclusion

This report describes the fieldwork methods used for gathering background information on Springfield's cultural amenities. Instead of being an exhaustive study, the report focuses on the stories behind three specific public art pieces—the *Jessie Bostelle Memorial Mural*, the *Draft Horse Logging Mural*, and *The Balancing Act* sculpture. The engaging stories that students uncovered represent the type of information that future students and fieldworks can gather about each cultural amenity in Springfield.

After conducting fieldwork, students developed a database of online resources pertaining to Springfield's cultural amenities. The database is set up as an online Diigo group, and it is intended as a searchable compendium of web-based articles, tour brochures, blog posts, and other useful information. The students also investigated best practices for labeling cultural amenities and engaging art walk participants. They compared different types of public art plaques that have been commissioned by major cities, and they explored the advantages and disadvantages of using enhanced labels and employing a mobile tour service provider.

The recommendations in each section of this report are based on the notion that each cultural amenity in Springfield tells a number of stories about the city's history. The stories may be controversial or funny, or they may help us understand how artists navigate the responsibilities and challenges of their occupations. In essence, this report recommends approaching each cultural amenity from a "story-based perspective." By doing this, the City can then choose the appropriate technological and promotional tools for recording and retelling the stories of Springfield's art, architectural, and cultural history in a captivating manner that will attract attention from visitors and community members. It is hoped that this work provides a starting point for future research into Springfield's cultural offerings.

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