



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Art Commission
State House
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

www.mass.gov/orgs/state-house-art-commission

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FY'24 Annual Report

The State House Art Commission is pleased to submit the *Annual Report* for the year ending June 30, 2024. The Commission enjoyed another successful year discharging its responsibilities under G. L. ch. 6, sec. 20 to care for and oversee the growth of the collections at the capitol.

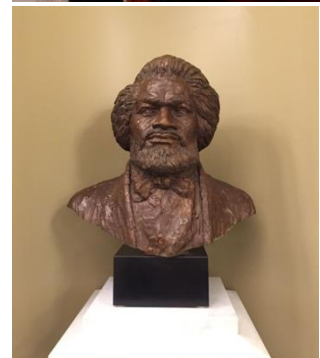
ADDITIONS to the COLLECTION

The board was pleased to approve the addition of several objects to the fine arts collection:

Governor Charlie Baker unveiled his State House portrait, painted by Pennsylvania artist Ellen Cooper, on December 19, 2023. Sitting casually on the corner of his desk in the governor's office, Baker sports his trademark purple necktie and the wristbands he wore daily to support charity and awareness. His iPad and ubiquitous mobile phone are symbols of a technology-driven administration as well as a clear nod to the governor's fondness for taking "selfies" with the public. In addition, a military "challenge" coin received from the father of SFC Jared Monti, a Massachusetts serviceman killed in Afghanistan. The gift of the Baker Committee, this is the 93rd portrait of a governor to be added to the collection. It is installed in the Governor's Reception Room.



Frederick Douglass. On behalf of the Senate, the Art Commission oversaw the commission of a bronze bust of Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), cast from an original sculpture created by Boston artist Lloyd Lillie in 1988. Senate President Karen Spilka dedicated the tribute in the Chamber on February 14, 2024. Lillie's daughter Nina Lillie LeDoyt assisted in the unveiling. The installation of this portrait head fulfills a long-awaited goal to place a likeness of the respected orator and abolitionist leader beneath a quote by him that was installed in 2019 on the tympanum of the room. Douglass is the second person of color to be honored in the collection.



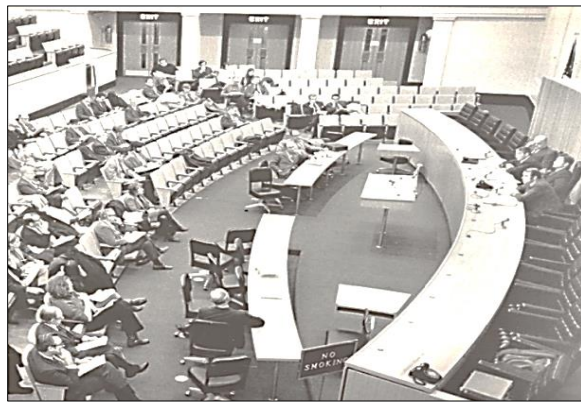
Also to be noted is the installation in the Senate Lobby of a copy print of the pastel portrait of **Abigail Adams** (1744-1818), painted around 1766 by Benjamin Blythe, in the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society. The Society donated the print to the Senate in March 2024. While not inventoried among the fine arts, the copy print is a most welcome addition to the small but growing collection of images of women at the State House.

**Gardner Auditorium renovations:
Architect's rendering, ca. 1968.**

Upon the closing of DCAMM's facility maintenance property in Lancaster, the Curator requested the transfer of the color rendering by Harry Gulesian Associates, of Boston, created for the renovation of the large meeting space constructed in 1918. This is displayed in the auditorium foyer.



Gardner Auditorium, 1965



Gulesian renovations, 1970



Goody-Clancy renovations, 2017

Gulesian's renovations, completed in 1970, survived until 2017 when Gardner was again renovated and updated to provide increased accessibility to the floor, rostrum and public balcony areas as well as upgrades for technology.

Coast Guard Memorial. The Art Commission serves on the committee formed to install a memorial recognizing Massachusetts as the birthplace of the U. S. Coast Guard. Authorized under Acts 2000, chapter 301, the Coast Guard Memorial project lay dormant until resurrected last year by former state representative Ruth Provost, the bill's original sponsor. Having served on the original committee, Paula Morse and Susan Greendyke, along with Art Commission Chair Alison Nolan and State House Superintendent Tammy Kraus, assisted the group in relaunching the project with additional new members. We are pleased to report that the committee has been given a wall on the second floor outside Great Hall for an artwork that celebrates the founding of the modern Coast Guard through its three predecessor organizations – the Massachusetts Human Society (1786), the U. S. Revenue Cutter Service (1790) and the U. S. Lifesaving Service (1878). The Committee will solicit proposals through a limited competition among some of the foremost marine painters in New England with a goal of dedicating the memorial in Summer 2025.

Fallen Firefighter's Memorial. Last year, the memorial committee contacted the Curator with the surprising announcement that spaces for honoring fallen firefighters were completely dedicated, and the memorial would need to be modified to accommodate additional engraved bricks. Robert Shure, sculptor of the original bronze statue, submitted plans to the Art Commission for the placement of more semi-circular rings of the same gray and red brick around the perimeter of the lawn to hold approximately 30% more names. The additions at the garden edges may be made without altering the original layout and will require only small adjustments to the position of the benches. The board reviewed and approved the proposed alterations. Work will take place in late summer and be finished by the annual September 11 ceremony.

LOANS and DISPLAYS

The Curator facilitated the loan of artworks from local institutions including the Massachusetts College of Art Museum, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and Simmons University, and accommodated changes in the display of objects from both the permanent and rotating collections.

In celebration of Women's History Month in March 2024, the Art Commission installed on the fourth floor a temporary exhibit, *Women Subjects/Women Artists in the State House Art Collection*, drawn from our publication of the same name.

The Curator is currently putting the final touches on the initial display of flags from the State House Battle Flag Collection. This rotating display, developed with the Office of the Historian, Massachusetts Army National Guard, will permit the safe display of an historic battle flag in an archival case designed and procured by the National Guard. The first flag to be exhibited will be the state color carried through Baltimore by the 6th Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers, while on route to defend the capitol at the outbreak of the Civil War.

Collections Care

The Art Commission continues to oversee the care and preservation of collections throughout the building, on the grounds and in storage. Daedalus Art Conservation conducted the annual maintenance of all exterior bronzes in September 2023 and returned in June 2024 to erect scaffolding around the Beacon Hill Monument in order to inspect, wash and wax the bronze

eagle at top of the column. Because of its location on the plaza, and the difficulty of gaining access, this maintenance is only conducted every five-six years. The slate plaques, preserved from Bulfinch's original column and reincorporated into the current, 1898 monument, are treated with other sculptures each year.

The Curator continues to work with building maintenance personnel to monitor climate and test all access and emergency detection and notification systems for operational characteristics.

BOARD UPDATES

The Art Commission continues to be composed of experienced and talented volunteers from the architectural, historical, museum and other cultural communities. Since 1910, these members have brought thousands of hours and a wealth of expertise to the shaping of our policies and board discussions. This year, I wish to acknowledge our debt to Donna DePrisco, the Speaker's appointment to the board since August 2016, who resigned in April 2024. Her notable service on numerous boards and non-profits, not to mention her keen eye and ready good humor, added greatly to our deliberations.

Also in April, I stepped down as chair of the Art Commission, a position I have enjoyed since 2004, although my participation on the board dates back to 1984, when the Commission was being newly revived under the creative leadership of Arlene Friedberg. During my tenure, I am most proud of our successful efforts (realized in 2014) to revise our 1924 legislative mandate and create a permanent position of State House Curator. These changes – long overdue - better reflect our increased responsibilities in not only caring for and preserving the State House Art Collection and the historic capitol in which it is housed, but also our role in advising and guiding the administration and legislature as well as the public on the acquisition of new artworks and memorials. Membership in the Art Commission also was increased from five to seven members.

That I had Susan Greendyke Lachevre at my side during all of these past forty years helps to explain how much we accomplished (my favorite, our publications), and always in the best of spirits. I can't think of anyone more committed to her work – no wonder I stayed so long. She has set a gold standard that will be difficult for anyone else to replicate.

I am reassured, however, now that Alison Nolan has become chair, that the Art Commission will remain dedicated to the service of the Commonwealth. Nolan has considerable experience in governance on both corporate and non-profit boards, with an especially strong engagement in maritime and community affairs. This is particularly important as the Art Commission moves forward with a new strategic plan with two new members whose terms begin in fiscal 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Morse

Alison Nolan, elected chair on April 25, 2024, provided the following supplemental to the 2024 annual report:

On behalf of the members of the State House Art Commission, I would like to express our sincerest gratitude and admiration for Paula Morse. Her dedication and volunteer service to the Commonwealth for over 40 years serves as an inspiration to each of us. Paula's service on the SHAC, and as Chair for twenty years, ensured the proper curation and preservation of the art and artifact of the Massachusetts State House. More importantly, Paula has worked to connect the citizens of the Commonwealth to their history, stories and legacy through the State House Art Collection. Her contributions have ensured that our shared history and key figures continue to be honored, and that all are represented in its halls. I am thankful for Paula's mentorship and continued assistance during the transition period. As we look forward to new 2025 strategic plan, the Commission and I look forward to continuing her legacy of preservation, thoughtful exhibition and expansion of the collection.