



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

MASSACHUSETTS ART COMMISSION

STATE HOUSE • ROOM 61-G

BOSTON • 02133

(617) 727-5012

State Library of Massachusetts
State House, Boston

ARLENE E. FRIEDBERG
Chairman

GAIL ROBIN CLARK
PAULA M. KOZOL
EDWARD McMANUS
PETER L. WALSH

ANNUAL REPORT

July 15, 1987

The members of the Massachusetts Art Commission respectfully enclose the following report on FY'87 activities conducted under our administrative account (1102-3290), as a supplement to the bi-annual report of expenditures from our Reserve account (1599-3526).

FY'87 was a productive year for the Art Commission. The Commission published Art in the Massachusetts State House, the first catalogue of the art collection. We proudly presented copies to Governor and Mrs. Dukakis, members of the legislature, and representatives from area art and cultural institutions in March. Proceeds from the sale of 1000 copies of the catalogue (\$8,950) to the State Bookstore, where it is available for purchase, have been reverted to the General Fund.

Funding from our administrative and reserve budgets allowed us to initiate our long-range program for conservation and preservation of the State House art collection. In addition to sculpture conservation and maintenance, the flag storage program implemented at the request of BSOB, and the conservation documentary video funded with our Reserve Budget (please see attached narrative), the Commission was able to undertake the the following conservation projects, as well as provide administrative support for our office:

1) Conservation of murals in Memorial Hall

These four murals were priority objects as their paint surfaces had powdered and were in serious unstable condition. They also suffered from discolored varnish and the accumulation of surface dirt and grime. Each painting was consolidated and cleaned, pinpoint losses were inpainted, and murals were revarnished by the Williamstown Regional Art Conservation Laboratory, April-May, 1987.

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2) Sculpture conservation

In addition to the treatment of the statue of General Hooker (undertaken with the Reserve budget,) the Art Commission contracted the Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, Harvard University Art Museums, to conduct conservation of the statues of Anne Hutchinson, Henry Cabot Lodge, and Mary Dyer, also on the front lawn of the State House. All statues were cleaned by washing and blasting with crushed walnut shells, chemically repatinated, and coated with Inccralac and wax to protect and preserve the treated bronze.

3) Sculpture conservation advisory panel

In conjunction with the conservation treatment of the statue of General Joseph Hooker, an advisory group was formed to review patination tests conducted by conservators for selection of the appropriate color for final patination of the bronze. For this purpose, the Art Commission was joined by Mr. Michael Richman, the leading scholar on the works of sculptor Daniel Chester French, whose consultation services were funded by this account, and by Mr. Arthur Beale, Director of the Research Laboratory, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, who generously donated his time and advice.

4) Emergency mural conservation: Marching Through Baltimore

Due to leaks in the roof of the State House and water migration through the walls of the fourth and third floors, staining of one panel of the Sixth Regiment Memorial mural occurred during a rainstorm in April. Emergency cleaning of plaster and adhesive streaks was conducted by Christy Cunningham, professional wall painting conservator. These mural panels will be completely cleaned and conserved at a later date.

The Art Commission also began the planning of FY'88 conservation efforts which will include treatment of interior sculpture, easel paintings and frames, as we investigate the issues of appraisal, transportation, storage, and insurance. We are collaborating with the State House Project Office for the care of objects during the imminent building renovation proceedings, and will continue to implement our sculpture maintenance program.