

Art & Architecture of the MSU Campus

Numbers refer to location on the map on the back of the brochure

1. MSU Auditorium, 1940



Designed by O.J. Munson, the Gothic-inspired pointed arches and lancet windows and the marble flooring of the lobby interior, reflect a desire for an elaborate structure to suit its cultural purpose.

Murals by Charles Pollock, 1943-44, MSU Auditorium



Three murals in the entrance foyer display themes typical of government-sponsored art of the 1930s and 40s. Political and economic struggles are combined with symbols of technological advances ranging from pioneer days to those contemporary to the 1940s.

2. MSU Livestock Pavilion, 1938



The PWA Livestock Judging Pavilion once stood north of the Engineering Building and south of the International Center on Shaw Lane until it was torn down in 1997. Today, twelve pylons with alternating bands of limestone, concrete, and brick refer to the former site of the Judging Pavilion.

3. Mural, *Natural Resources of Northern Michigan* by Carl H. Frezell, ca. 1936, MSU Museum, 2nd Floor Auditorium



This mural depicts an amalgamated view of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, incorporating many subjects - agriculture, industry, leisure activities, and the positive message of economic recovery. Relocated from the Caspian Community Center.

4. Mural, *America's First Agricultural College* by Henry Bernstein, ca. 1938, MSU Library, First Floor



Originally commissioned by the Treasury Section of Fine Arts of the WPA for the old East Lansing Post Office on Abbott Road (formerly Evergreen Grill), this mural is typical of the emphasis on representational art, scenes of local history, and nostalgia for disappearing rural life.

5. MSU Music Building, 1940



The hipped roof, limestone trim and simple design of the PWA-funded Music Building complement the Collegiate Gothic of this historic section of campus. Samuel Cashwan, supervisor of the Michigan Sculpture Program for the WPA, designed the Art Deco limestone reliefs framing the southwest entrance.



Sculpture, *Three Musicians* by Samuel Cashwan, ca. 1940, Southwest lawn of MSU Music Building

The *Three Musicians* is all that remains of a pair of large angular cast-concrete sculptural group that flanked the 1930s MSU Band Shell. The Cubist sculpture, which depicts a bass player, drummer, and saxophonist, was moved to its present site when the band shell was destroyed in 1959.

6. Jenison Fieldhouse, 1940



Characteristic of early 1940s architecture, the horizontal and vertical elements culminate in a monumental entrance, accentuated by low reliefs. The main entrance hall is embellished with Art Deco details from the brass and wood staircase railing to the streamlined, geometric lighting in the foyer and main lobby.

7. Sculpture, *Children Reading* by Clivia Calder, ca. 1938, Michigan Avenue entrance to Williams Hall



This small yet vibrant glazed terracotta sculpture and fish head fountain spout are part of a garden wall that leads to Sarah Langdon Williams Hall. Completed through the WPA/FAP, the three young girls reading serve as a symbol of education, which is fitting to this once all-female residence hall.

8. Campbell Hall, 1939



Partially funded by the PWA, Campbell Hall is part of a complex of six residence halls originally for women. The Tudor-style design, with its high-pitched gabled roofs, metal casement windows, slate roof, and Renaissance detailing, recalls medieval estates.

9. Abbott Road Entrance Marker by Samuel Cashwan, 1938-39



Created through the WPA/FAP programs and a gift from the Class of 1938, this limestone marker welcomes visitors and students to the MSU campus, then known as Michigan State College. The classical column, reinterpreted in the Art Deco style of the 1930s, along with the man, horse and woman with a sheaf of wheat, recall MSU's agricultural heritage.

10. Mural, *Thomas Edison* by Edgar Yaeger, ca. 1937, MSU Union, Main Floor



For this composition Yaeger chose scenes relating to the history of light including the discovery of fire and Benjamin Franklin's discovery of electricity. This section depicts Thomas Edison, on the right, working with his assistants in his laboratory inventing the incandescent light bulb. Originally hung at the Public Lighting Commission building in Detroit.

11. Olin Health Center, 1939



This PWA building by architect Ralph R. Calder, built in memory of Richard M. Olin, M.D., was considered "modern in every detail." Samuel Cashwan designed the twelve symbolic reliefs that frame the main entryway. He chose the fitting subject of the healing arts, framing the building's name with two Greek goddesses of health, Panacea and Hygeia.

12. Abbot Hall, 1938



Created as the residential complement to the female dormitories in the West Circle Complex, Abbot Hall is similarly Collegiate Gothic in style. The building, named after Theophilus C. Abbot, the third president of the University, features an arched entrance bearing an inscription in old English lettering, semi-hexagonal limestone multistory bay windows, and limestone trim.

13. Giltner Hall, 1938



In 1938 PWA funds were secured to expand the Veterinary Clinic, erected in 1913 on the southeast corner of Farm Lane and East Circle Drive. Designed by the Bowd-Munson architectural firm, the addition blended well with the Collegiate Gothic style of the existing structure.

Introduction to New Deal Art & Architecture

In the 1930s, the United States government, under the leadership of Franklin D. Roosevelt and his "New Deal" social program, emerged as a patron of the arts, assuring the survival of artists, improving public facilities and creating a public art audience. Countrywide, communities large and small, urban and rural, were recipients of this government-sponsored art.

Although all government art of the 1930s is often thought of as "WPA," the Works Progress Administration (1935 - 1942) was just one of the artist relief programs begun by the Roosevelt administration after the stock market crash of 1929. The Public Works Administration (PWA), active from 1933 to 1939, was responsible not only for large construction projects but also for supplementing the cost of many public buildings throughout the 1930s. In contrast, the WPA was more general, sponsoring "smaller useful projects," such as roads, sidewalks and parks, and requiring less skilled labor and less expense. Mural painting, sculpture, and public art education programs were run by the state-administered Federal Art Project (FAP), a WPA subsidiary in existence between 1935 and 1943.

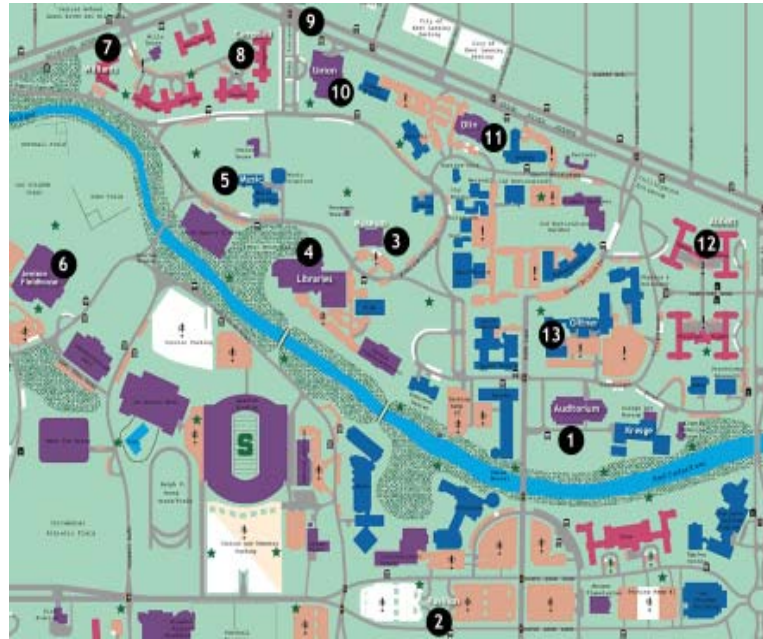
Reflecting the idealism and nationalism of the period, many of the buildings were decorated with bulky, angular free-standing sculpture, low-reliefs, and murals designed to be positive, educational statements. The government's insistence that the art should be immediately comprehensible to a broad audience assured a representational style with stylized renderings of objects and people. Artists tended to utilize contemporary subjects rather than borrow from the classical past or nineteenth-century allegorical traditions. Often the subjects related to local history and to former, more prosperous times.

The Kresge Art Museum created this brochure as a resource for the general public and educators to discover the numerous local examples of art and architecture from this period. The walking tour of Michigan State University's campus takes approximately one hour and fifteen minutes. More information about New Deal Art and Architecture in the East Lansing and Lansing areas can be found at www.artmuseum.msu.edu under Online Exhibitions.

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY



Michigan State University Campus Map



Route of Walking Tour

1. Murals by Charles Pollock - MSU Auditorium
2. MSU Livestock Pavilion
3. Mural by Carl H. Frezell - MSU Museum
4. Mural by Henry Bernstein - MSU Library
5. MSU Music Building & Three Musicians sculpture
6. Jenison Fieldhouse
7. Children Reading sculpture - Williams Hall
8. Campbell Hall
9. Abbott Road Entrance Marker
10. Mural by Edgar Yaeger - MSU Union
11. Olin Health Center
12. Abbot Hall
13. Giltner Hall

Other WPA Examples of Interest

Limestone relief, *Aquarius* by Samuel Cashwan, ca. 1938-39, Front entrance, Lansing Board of Water and Light

Mural, *Michigan's Natural Resources* by Paul Honore, ca. 1933, Michigan Historical Museum

Created by Kresge Art Museum, Michigan State University
For Information: 517/355-7631 www.artmuseum.msu.edu

New Deal Art & Architecture

A Walking Tour
of the MSU Campus, East Lansing



Online Tour available at
www.artmuseum.msu.edu