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# Annual Report 1936

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THE COMMUNITY ART PROJECT IN RHODE ISLAND and  
THE DEPARTMENT OF ART, BROWN UNIVERSITY  
under a grant from the Carnegie Corporation

REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING JULY 1, 1936

The grant from the Carnegie Corporation is administered by the Committee of eight members appointed in 1932: representing Brown University, Dr. A. D. Nead, Vice-President of the University (chairman), Dr. H. C. Bumpus, Secretary of the Corporation of the University, Professor J. P. Adams, Vice-President of the University, Professor W. S. Taylor, Chairman of the Department of Art, and Professor G. E. Downing (secretary); representing the Rhode Island School of Design, Mrs. M. S. Danforth, President of the School of Design, Mr. L. E. Rowe, Director of the Museum of the School of Design, and Dr. R. B. Farnum, Educational Director of the School of Design.

The Committee has proceeded on the understanding that the grant should be used for two general purposes: (a) to advance the work of the Department of Art in the University, and (b) to develop the Art interests of the Community. With respect to this second purpose, it has been the constant policy of the Committee not only to promote new Art Projects in the State, but also to coordinate the Art resources of the Community and to facilitate effective contacts between these resources and the people of the state.

The following report for the year ending July 1, 1936 is respectfully submitted.

THE COMMUNITY ART PROJECT

1. The "Art Caravan".

The most important new project of the year was the experiment during the summer of 1935 with the circulation of art exhibitions through the state. The project was superintended by Professor Downing and was carried out by two students, Mr. F. J. Wallace, Rhode Island School of Design, '36, and Mr. G. C. Bright, Brown, '38. A large Ford truck was purchased for transporting the exhibitions. Before the exhibitions began, a center in each town to be visited by the Truck was chosen for a temporary art gallery; a grange hall, a school building, several libraries, a parish house, and a vacant store were used in the course of the summer. A survey of centers where it was proposed to hold exhibitions showed that the walls were in almost every case unsuited for hanging pictures; the walls were therefore carried in the truck, in the form of specially designed screens which provided for good backgrounds and flexibility of gallery arrangements.

The first exhibition, circulated from June 24 to August 1, was composed of paintings. The nucleus of this exhibition was a group of original paintings lent by members of the Faculty of the Rhode Island School of Design. These pictures were supplemented by selections from the Community Art Project Student Picture Lending Library.

The second exhibition, circulated from August 7 to September 12, included examples of various print media. Again the nucleus of the exhibition was original work by American artists, mostly Rhode Islanders; to this nucleus was added a small group of reproductions of drawings and prints by masters of the past. In connection with this exhibition, a demonstration of linoleum-block printing was given by Mr. Wallace in nine of the twelve places of exhibition; a local scene was in each case the subject of the demonstration block. Prints from these demonstration blocks are appended to this report.

Statistics on the experiment follow:

**First Exhibition (Paintings), June 24 - August 1.**

Towns visited ..... 9  
 Length of stay in each ..... 3 days  
 Total attendance ..... c. 1900  
 (Towns visited were Westerly, Hope Valley, Phenix, Tiverton, Warren, East Greenwich, Chepachet, Woonsocket, Greene.)

**Second Exhibition (Prints and Drawings), August 7 - September 12.**

Towns visited ..... 12  
 Length of stay in each ..... 2 to 4 days  
 Total attendance .. ..... c. 2300  
 (Towns visited were those of the first exhibition; in addition, as a result of requests received while the first exhibition was in progress, Jamestown, Conimicut, and Harrisville were also visited by the second exhibition. The length of stay was regulated during this exhibition by the size of the towns involved.)

**General statistics:**

Rhode Island Communities represented by visitors .....40  
 Communities outside of Rhode Island represented by visitors .....30  
 Total hours during which exhibitions were open .....500  
 Miles of travel by the Truck .....2000

Photographs and newspaper publicity are appended to this report. An article on the Truck will be found in the Calendar of Art Events for October, 1936, appended to this report.

The "Art Caravan" is again on the road in the summer of 1936. Two exhibitions are planned to run simultaneously: (1) An exhibition of Old Rhode Island Architecture, including models of 17th century houses executed in the Department of Art, Brown University, under the direction of Professor Taylor, and including also photographs and drawings from the Handbook of Rhode Island Architecture, by Antoinette F. Downing (see part III); this exhibition is arranged in cooperation with the Rhode Island Tercentenary Committee which has contributed part of the expenses, (2) Modern Landscape Painting and its Origins (from the 12th century), in 36 color reproductions, arranged by Professors Taylor and Downing of Brown University and annotated by Professor Downing. One of these exhibitions will immediately follow the other in each of fifteen towns. Three students, Messrs. F. J. Wallace, R. I. School of Design, '36, J. W. Noble, R. I. School of Design, '36, and W. H. Kahler, Brown, '36 are accompanying the exhibition. The itinerary includes showings in the downtown section of Providence and at the Kingston State Fair.



## II. The Institute of Art.

The fourth annual Institute of Art was held in Providence on October 31 and November 1-3, 1935. Invitations were sent to more than two thousand persons and organizations, and the attendance was greater than at any previous Institute; it is estimated that the total attendance at the various sessions and at the recital of American Chamber Music was between two thousand and twenty-five hundred. A program for the Institute, and newspaper publicity, are appended to this report.

The Institute was organized, as in 1934, around the theme "Contemporary Trends in American Art". The theme was chosen for its application to the Tercentenary Celebration in Rhode Island in 1936, with a view to balancing, by emphasis upon contemporary art, the retrospective tendencies of such a celebration. It is planned to bring this theme to a climax in the Institute of 1936. In outline, the sessions of the Institute of 1935 were held as follows:

- First Session: Art, Economics, and Our American Future, address by Dr. H. A. Overstreet, College of the City of New York.
- Second Session: The Machine and Good Taste, address by Mr. M. D. C. Crawford, Fairchild Publications.
- Third Session: Mural Art in America, address by Mr. George Biddle, National Society of Mural Painters.
- Fourth Session: American Music Today, address by Dr. Howard Hanson, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester.

A recital of Contemporary American Chamber Music was given by Mr. Nicholas Slonimsky and members of the Boston Chamber Orchestra. An exhibition of projects for Mural Painting for the New York area under the W.P.A. was held in Faunce House Art Gallery, Brown University.

## III. Publications.

Volume III of the Calendar of Art Events included nine numbers, from October to June. This Calendar has been conceived as a medium for coordinating the various Art interests of the State, and for bringing them to the attention of the public. Through the Calendar, seventeen organizations and established activities (in the fields of art, music, literature, the drama) in the State were given regular publicity. Exhibitions at fourteen centers in Rhode Island were announced. The policy of listing exhibitions not only in Rhode Island but throughout New England was continued, and seventeen galleries and museums in the New England states and New York City regularly made their exhibitions known to Rhode Islanders through the Calendar. The June issue of the Calendar included the annual list of summer art exhibitions in New England. The mailing list of the Calendar now includes about 1800 names, representing an increase of some two hundred over last year. Many of the new names were added as a result of the work of the "Art Caravan" last summer. The Calendar has been sent this year only to persons who returned the request card included in the October issue

of the Calendar. (A file of Volume III of the Calendar is appended to this report.)

The following articles on subjects of artistic interest to the people of Rhode Island appeared in the Calendar:

- October -- The "Art Caravan", Summer of 1935
- November -- Shakespeare's Head, a 17th century Providence building, badly in need of rehabilitation; a center for early Printing in Rhode Island
- December -- Notes on Early Printing in Rhode Island
- January -- "30 Benefit Street", a laboratory for Creative Arts established under the auspices of Leisure Time Activities
- February -- Gilbert Stuart and Washington (in connection with a Tercentenary Exhibition of Gilbert Stuart's paintings at the Rhode Island School of Design)
- March -- Early Rhode Island Furniture (in connection with a Tercentenary Exhibition of furniture at the Rhode Island School of Design)
- April -- The Stephen Hopkins House (in connection with a Tercentenary Exhibition in the House, under the auspices of the Colonial Dames)
- May -- The Tercentenary Celebration in Rhode Island (a general review of the artistic features of the Program)
- June -- The Tercentenary Celebration in Newport

The "Handbook of Rhode Island Architecture" by Antoinette F. Downing has not yet appeared, but will be published in 1936. This publication, announced several years ago, has been delayed as the scope of the work has been enlarged. As published, the Handbook will be the only complete study yet to appear of Rhode Island Architecture, from the seventeenth century through the Greek Revival. The Handbook will include about one hundred pages of text, about one hundred and twenty-five line drawings by Helen Mason Grose, and about forty half-tone plates.

#### IV. Prepared Lectures.

The policy of circulating lectures prepared in the form of a written text accompanied by lanternslides has been continued. Two lectures, available last year, have continued to be used. The lecture "The Life and Work of Gilbert Stuart" was given 9 times in 1935-6; the lecture "Legends of Christmas in Art" was given 15 times in the same year.

Two new lectures have been added, and are of especial interest in the Tercentenary year. "The Architectural and Civic Development of Providence", available in February, 1936, has been given 3 times. "Rhode Island Furniture", by Mr. Norman M. Isham, available June 1, has been given once, and is engaged for several times next autumn.

#### V. Picture Lending Library.

The Picture Lending Library, opened in the spring of 1933 for students in Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design, has been continued.

The original stock of 25 pictures has been increased to 163. The membership continues to be fully subscribed. 64 artists are now represented, in works that range in date from the medieval period to the present. The prints of the American Art Portfolio to be published in October, 1936, will be framed and added to the library, as well as a number of other prints now being framed.

The Picture Lending Library has proved invaluable in furnishing or completing exhibitions circulated by the Art Caravan during the summers of 1935 and 1936.

Numerous inquiries from other colleges regarding the Picture Lending Library have prompted the preparation of data on the experiment here. A copy of this material is appended to this report.

#### VI. Exhibitions.

Beyond the exhibitions circulated by the "Art Caravan" (see I), the following exhibitions of objects owned by groups of the foreign population in Providence have been held at the Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design, at the suggestion of the Community Art Project:

November 7 - 30, Polish and Russian Handicrafts  
 January 8 - 29, Armenian Handicrafts  
 March 8 - 29, Italian Handicrafts

These exhibitions have been supplemented by objects owned by the Rhode Island School of Design. In connection with the exhibitions, there have been musical programmes and gallery talks in the Museum by members of the different groups involved.

#### VII. Cooperation with Other Organizations.

The Community Art Project is represented by Messrs. Farnum and Downing on the Advisory Boards of The Federal Hill House School of Music and of 30 Benefit Street (a "laboratory of creative arts" conducted under the auspices of Leisure Time Activities, see Calendar of Art Events for January, 1936).

The Committee administering the Community Art Project is the Advisory Committee for the Providence Chapter of the Museum of Modern Art.

#### THE DEPARTMENT OF ART, BROWN UNIVERSITY

A new course, Medieval Art, was offered during the year 1935-6 for a selected group of twelve students. Two lectures a week were given by Professor Downing. In the laboratory, two hours a week, under the direction of Professors Taylor and Downing, problems in mosaic and tempera were carried on, using the medieval techniques in connection with modern subjects; these problems included a large mosaic, 4½ by 11½ feet, executed by the entire class.

The equipment of the Department was augmented by five scale models of 17th century American buildings, executed under the direction of Professor



Taylor through funds from the National Youth Administration and the Rhode Island Tercentenary Committee. (These models are being circulated during the summer of 1936 by the "Art Caravan" (see I)).

Exhibitions in Faunce House Art Gallery were few, due to the use of funds for other projects. The following exhibitions were held:

Lithographs by Rockwell Kent

Mural Projects for the New York area (W.P.A.), in connection with the Institute (see II).

Three Picture Exhibition (Museum of Modern Art)

Hobby Show

Reproductions of Drawings and Paintings by Van Gogh