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Murals in the newspaper room. A WPA series by Gladys Brannigan

Brannigan, Gladys

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MURALS IN THE NEWSPAPER ROOM
A WPA SERIES BY GLADYS BRANNIGAN, 1940
University of New Hampshire Library

The panels in the Newspaper Room were designed to show, in abstract form, all the various kinds of news handled daily, at great speed, by the metropolitan newspapers of the world. The theme of each panel is news of the activity it deals with, not the activity itself. The device of silver arrows is used to give the flight of Time, the swift pace of getting out a daily newspaper, and the feeling that news once printed is past news. In the center of each panel is a highly stylized fragment of a press, linotype machine, or other part of the mechanical equipment of a paper. In sequence, the panels portray:

A swift impression of assembling news, from tropics to arctic regions; by land, water and air; by old-fashioned telegraph and modern radio; by day, by night, and in all kinds of weather.

News of wars, marked by disturbing, contrasted motion. Great artillery, warships, flights of planes; all mingled with smoke and flame, amid which conventionalized figures of soldiers march in serried ranks, identical men in different uniforms. Modern chemical illumination lights up the sky and a ruined building.

News of the arts of peace speaks of Literature, Painting, Music. Below, symbolically, burns the Promethean fire of genius. Talents derive from and thrive in both the city and the country. Across the whole panel runs with a light, continuous rhythm a long scroll, to suggest the music of the great presses running.

News of sports is a highly self-contained theme, with violent action within its limits. Running races, wrestling, boxing, skating, football swiftly and kaleidoscopically rush across the sports pages. Characteristic motions abstractly suggest the sport and not the individual participant. Yachting and tennis have their columns too on the sports pages of the world.

News in industry and finance create and invest the flight of time and also its continuity.

A decorative intervening panel over the door is based on the motif of the telephone and telegraph lines that girdle the world.

Keeping in mind the widening of intellectual interests that a great University offers to young people coming to it from smaller towns and villages, these panels are meant to help them to realize that knowledge of all these things makes up the commonplace of an educated person's life; to help them to come to an awareness that, even while they are attending classes (which may at the moment seem the most important thing in the world), there is tennis at Wimbledon and yachting at Cowes, that there are wars going on, that people are writing books and painting pictures and composing music, that the opera is a part of life and not a curious extraneous phenomenon. That industry and finance are factors in contemporary life, but factors not the whole. And that all these activities, news of which the Press gathers and prints daily, are taking place the world around concurrently with their student routines.

--Gladys Brannigan.

MURALS IN THE NEWSPAPER READING ROOM

by Gladys Brannigan

The series on murals in the Newspaper Room honors the modern press. The subjects, in sequence, are: Assembling News, by land sea and air, and by day and night. News of Wars, contending forces and violence; News of Explorations, in remote places amid jungle growths: News of Science, astronomy, electrical phenomena, the art, architecture: A decorative intervening panel over the door is based on the motif of the Telephone and telegraph lines that girdle the world: News of Sports, running wrestling, tennis, yachting, and others covered in the sports pages: News of Industry and Finance, creating and investing the flight of time and also its continuity. The whole series is meant to give the idea of the wide range of interests, and the accuracy and speed, of the modern Newspaper.

These murals were painted under direction of Omer. T. Lasonde, State Supervisor of the N. H. WPA Art Project, and sponsored by the University of New Hampshire. The leading Newspapers of the state acting as cooperating sponsors.

NEWSPAPER ROOM MURALS.

Each panel in the newspaper room represents some particular phase of the journalistic world. Ways of news-gathering, such as radio, postal service, dogsled and airplane are shown, followed by a representation of the news in the world of art. People participating in football, tennis, swimming and other activities are portrayed in another section. Tools of modern warfare are featured in one part of the mural, while the final panel depicts the news of industry. Arrows pointed in the same direction throughout the whole mural indicate the flight of time.

From The New Hampshire, Nov.3, 1939.

File
Munch

Newspapers and newspaper men who have
contributed to newspaper room.

Mr. James M. Langley
The Monitor-Patriot
Concord, N.H.

Mr. Justin D. Hartford
The Portsmouth Herald and The New Hampshire Gazette
Portsmouth, N.H.

Mr. E. J. Gallagher
Laconia Evening Citizen
Laconia, N.H.

Mr. Arthur S. Morris
Littleton-Courier
Littleton, N.H.

Mr. Edmund F. Jewell
The Union-Leader
Manchester, New Hampshire

May 2, 1939

*Illustrations
to
Library*

The series of panels for the Newspaper Room was designed to show, in abstract form, all the various kinds of news handled daily, at great speed, by the metropolitan newspapers of the world. The theme of each panel being news of the activity it deals with, not the activity itself. The device of silver arrows is used to give the flight of Time, the swift pace of getting out a daily newspaper, and the feeling that news once printed is past news. In the centre of each panel is a highly stylized fragment of a press, linotype machine, or other part of the mechanical equipment of a paper.

1; gives a swift impression of Assembling News. From tropics to arctic regions; by land, water, and air; by old-fashioned telegraph and modern radio; by day, by night, and in all kinds of weather.

2; Disturbing, contrasted motion marks the News of Wars. Great artillery, warships, flights of planes; all mingled with smoke and flame, amid amid which conventionalized figures of soldiers march in serried ranks, identical men in different uniforms. Modern chemical illumination lights up the sky and a ruined building.

3; News of the Arts of Peace speaks of Literature, Painting, Music. Below, symbolically, burns the Promethean fire of genius. Talents derive, and thrive, both in the city and the country. Across the whole panel runs with a light, continuous rhythm, a long scroll, suggesting the music of the great presses running.

4; News of Sports is a highly self-contained theme, with violent action within its limits. Running races, wrestling, boxing, skating, football, swiftly and kaleidoscopically rush across the Sports pages. Characteristic motions, abstractly suggest the sport and not the individual participant. Yachting, and tennis, have their columns too on the sport pages of the world.

5; (to be designed. Will be "Industry and Finance").

Keeping in mind the widening of intellectual interests that a great University offers to young people coming to it from smaller towns and villages, these panels are meant to help them to realize that knowledge of all these things are the commonplaces of an educated person's life; to help them to come to an awareness that, even while they are attending classes, (which may at the moment seem the most important thing in the world to them), there is tennis at Wimbledon and yachting at Cowes, - that there are wars going on, - that people are writing books and painting pictures and composing music, - that the opera is a part of life and not a curious, extraneous phenomenon. That industry and finance are factors in contemporary life, but factors, not the whole. And that all these activities, news of which the Press gathers and prints daily, are taking place the world around concurrently with their student routine.

Newspaper
Room

Newspaper Room in the Hamilton Smith
Building when it was occupied by the
Library

MURALS IN THE NEWSPAPER READING ROOM

DESIGNED AND EXECUTED

BY

GLADYS BRANNIGAN

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5. Industry and Finance. (To be designed)

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