ArtSpace

Established in 1989 on the site of a former market in Bay City, on Tillamook Bay, ArtSpace Gallery is a leading promoter of twentieth-century and contemporary regional art. Proprietors Trisha and Craig Kauffman focus on modestly priced representational paintings and prints, and specialize in art depicting ordinary life and working people. The couple publicizes Oregon's legacy of labor-oriented work by promoting relatively unknown artists, such as Albert and Arthur Runquist and Martina Gangle.

Like Oregon painters C.S. Price, Charles Heaney, Doug Lynch, and Harry Wentz, the Runquists and Gangle portrayed commonplace scenes of the Pacific Northwest for the New Deal's OregonArt Project during the 1930s. Adhering to the Roosevelt administration's effort to promote beauty and an ethic of solidarity among Depression Era Americans, the Runquists created historical murals for a variety of public buildings, and Gangle's work included a mural of western pioneers for Portland's Rose City Grade School and several pieces for Mt. Hood's Timberline Lodge. During World War II, their paintings documented the diverse aspects of the work environment of the Kaiser Shipyards in Vancouver, Washington.

In the desire to share the visual experience with as many enthusiasts as possible, the Kauffmans joined with friends in 2002 to form the Museum of People's Art: Labor, Life, Landscape of the Pacific Northwest. Housed in a corner of ArtSpace, the facility has amassed a permanent collection of paintings and prints. Its debut exhibit in 2004, "Working People," brought together informational displays and 250 paintings and drawings by the Runquists, Gangle, Doug Lynch, and Ralph Chesse, as well as canvases by contemporary artists such as Brent D. Burkett, Yolanda Valdes, Huberto Gonzales, and Kurt Hollomon.

Written by David A. Horowitz

Further Reading:

Allen, Ginny, and Jody Klevit. *Oregon Painters: The First Hundred Years (1859-1959).* Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1999.

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