



Leslie Anderson, Sharon Cannon, Sophie Franz, and Aimee Erickson were the muralists honored at the Multnomah Arts Center open house and mural dedication, November 6. (Post photo by Lee Perlman)

Multnomah Arts Center open house includes mural dedication

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

November 6 was the official dedication for the Multnomah Arts Center’s new lobby mural, which pays tribute to the activities of the building. Visitors were also treated to a show-and-tell of these activities.

The 175-square-foot mural, covering all parts of the lobby, pays homage to the center’s fine arts and drawing, weaving, music, acting and dance classes and activities. It also includes nine classic Greek muses and figures from Native American mythology.

Lead artist Aimee Erickson presided over the work with the assistance of Sophie Franz, Sharon Cannon and Leslie Anderson, but they incorporated ideas contributed from throughout the community, and 750 people assisted in applying the paint.

The mural project was financed by grants from the Regional Arts and Culture Council, the Safeway Foundation, and the Neighborhood Small Grant Program. “The idea was to change the lobby into something more welcoming,” MAC director Michael Walsh told those who gathered for the event.

Erickson, who lives within walking

distance, said that the old lobby “had its charm, for sure,” but was “kind of shabby.” Of the center she says, “I’ve grown to love it, and realize what a special place this is.” She admitted, “I’d never done anything of this scope before.” When designing the project, “I was told, ‘Shoot for the moon. If we don’t hit the fundraising goal, we can try something more feasible.’” The finished project is “a celebration of the creative spirits working together.”

Former director Will Hathaway provided guided tours that showed not only what the center is, but how it became that way. It began at what is now Neighborhood House. It moved to its present location in 1988, when the Portland School District chose to close and sell the former Multnomah School.

Over time there have been other improvements, such as conversion of the basement boiler room to a printmaking facility, retrofitting of outdoor portables to metal and clay art areas, and paving of a gravel lot behind the building for additional parking.

In the auditorium a handicapped access ramp has been added, and other improvements have converted what was once a “graduation stage,” as Hathaway put it, to something capable

of handling theatrical performances.

Indeed, those who came were treated to a “Cirque Du Multnomah” theatrical review by Center instructors, following a similar performance by dance instructors in the gym, and an art exhibition in the gallery, and demonstrations of arts of various kinds throughout the building.



A tour of the Multnomah Arts Center, which included this art class, was part of the agenda of the open house and mural dedication, November 6. (Post photo by Lee Perlman)



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