

ARTWORK **THREE SETS OF TWELVE**

ARTIST **MICHAEL FAJANS**

INSTALLED 2004
U.S. COURTHOUSE
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

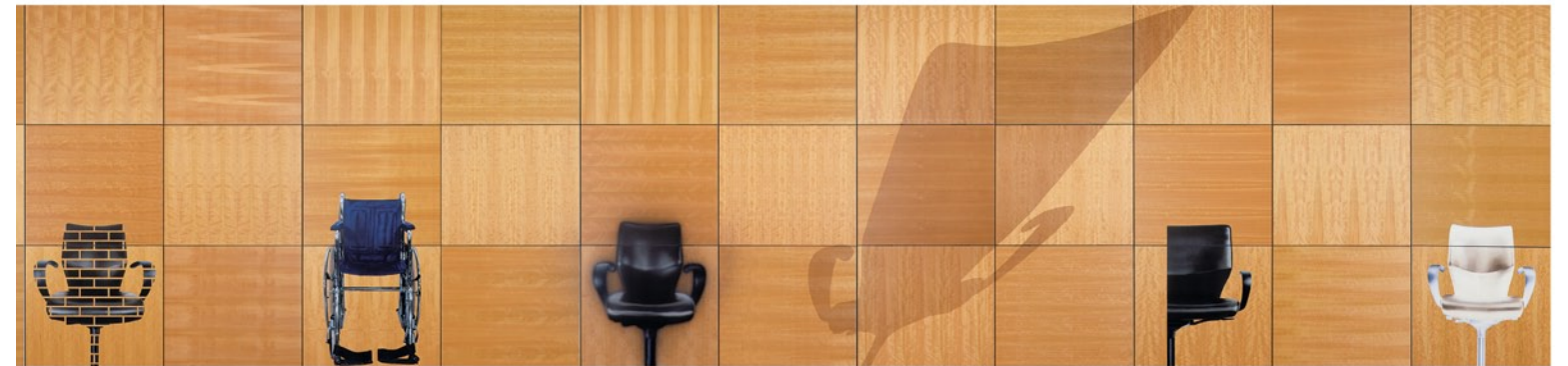


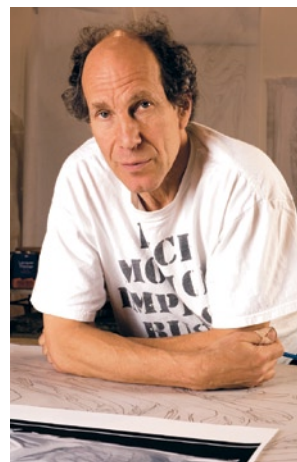
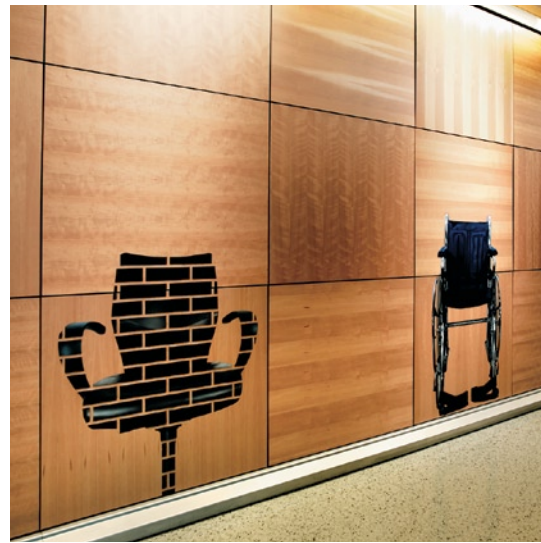
For the lobby of the federal courthouse in Seattle, Michael Fajans created a three-part mural that celebrates the vital civic function of juries. The artist selected twelve Seattle residents to represent a diverse citizenry. On the ground-floor level of the mural, Fajans shows these potential jurors—at twice life-size and in vibrant color—engaged in their various professions: microbiologist, stenographer, potter, architect, camera repairman, cellist, computer operator, shoemaker, city bus driver, heavy-equipment operator, garment worker, and window washer. The heroic scale of these figures conveys the dignity of their work. Fajans took a series of photographs of each person and used the images to create his final drawings. He then methodically painted each figure onto the wooden panels over a period of many months.

On the second floor, Fajans painted one wheelchair (belonging to the computer operator) and eleven versions of the jury-box chairs used in the building's courtrooms. He chose to depict the chairs in a variety of different ways—fragmented, in various sizes, as a shadow or a misty outline—to metaphorically convey that each juror comes to the courthouse with varied life experiences and points of view.

The mural on the third-floor mezzanine shows the jury, composed of the same individuals depicted in the first-floor mural: Leon, Cathy, Reid, Kay, Joe, Roberta, Daniel, Walter, Mattie, Chris, Thu-Van, and Phil. Their individual jobs and tools—microscope, cello, sewing machine—have been temporarily set aside. Painted in muted shades of gray to unify the group, the jurors are life-sized and their gazes are directed at the viewer. The three levels of Fajans' mural serve as a mirror that reflects the transformation all jurors experience as they enter the courthouse, suspend their normal daily activities, and assume their important public duty. WC

FAJANS





Michael Fajans (1947–2006) was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and as a teenager moved with his family to New York City. He studied art and dance at Antioch College in Ohio and from 1977 was based in Seattle, where he received public commissions from city and state agencies, hospitals, schools, and other groups. Along with *Three Sets of Twelve*, Fajans' other major commission in Seattle is *High Wire* (1993), a 180-foot-long mural at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. Museums that have exhibited Fajans' work include the Henry Art Gallery at the University of Washington in Seattle, the San Jose Museum of Art in California, the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago, and the Contemporary Museum in Baltimore.

MEDIUM ACRYLIC PAINT ON WOOD PANELS
DIMENSIONS THREE MURALS, EACH 9 FT X 80 FT

