



In the HE**ART** of region **10**

“Art washes from the soul
the dust of everyday life.”

— Pablo Picasso

Take a Journey to the Nation’s Unlikeliest Museums: Our Federal Buildings

*GSA’s Northwest/Arctic Region encompasses a stunning, widely diverse landscape. Its Buildings are no less dynamic. They house a treasure trove of fine artworks that range from bold and dynamic to whimsical. To help celebrate **National Arts and Humanities month**, meet the people that care for these works, and experience their beauty and meaning. They are our legacy, and a window into the combined American experience. Each month we will highlight GSA’s Fine Arts program and our Region’s memorable works of public art.*

Think Art Curators Only Exist in Museums

Meet GSA's Virginia Matthews, Caretaker of Masterpieces



Her eyes leap skyward following the bold curved lines of the sculpture above her, intersected by the lively dance of colors sparkling from multi-hued crystalline glass. From the base of the sculpture “**Leaf**” by Ed Carpenter, all the elements of the forest come together to give her a sense of renewal and regeneration. Virginia Matthews feels at one with the space and the people around her.



When I first experienced Leaf it touched something deep inside me. It's one of my favorite pieces of public art in GSA's Northwest/Arctic Region.



- said Matthews of the installation located in the Seattle United States Courthouse

That type of kinship with art might be why Virginia Matthews, officially a PBS Building Management Specialist, volunteered to take on the added responsibility of serving as the Region's Fine Arts Program Manager. “Art speaks to my soul — I couldn't pass up the opportunity to be around these beautiful and interesting pieces,” Matthews elaborated.

She would like everyone who visits GSA's buildings to understand the public art featured there is part of their national identity and heritage. “These works speak very much to the times we are experiencing now; they tell our story. And they are meant for everyone, not a few select people,” she emphasized.

leaf

ARTIST **ED CARPENTER**
PHOTOS OF ART BY **CAROL M. HIGHSMITH**



Stare Decisis

ARTIST **MATTHEW RITCHIE**
PHOTOS OF ART BY **JOSHUA JALBERT**

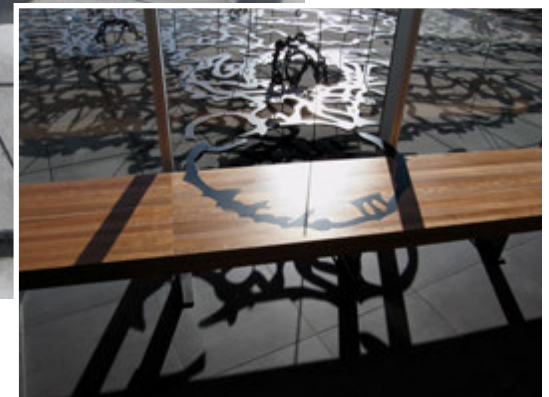
Take for instance the installation, “**Stare Decisis**,” by Matthew Ritchie, in the Wayne Lyman Morse U.S. Courthouse, Eugene, Oregon. The term stare decisis is defined as, “The legal principle of determining points in litigation according to legal precedent.”

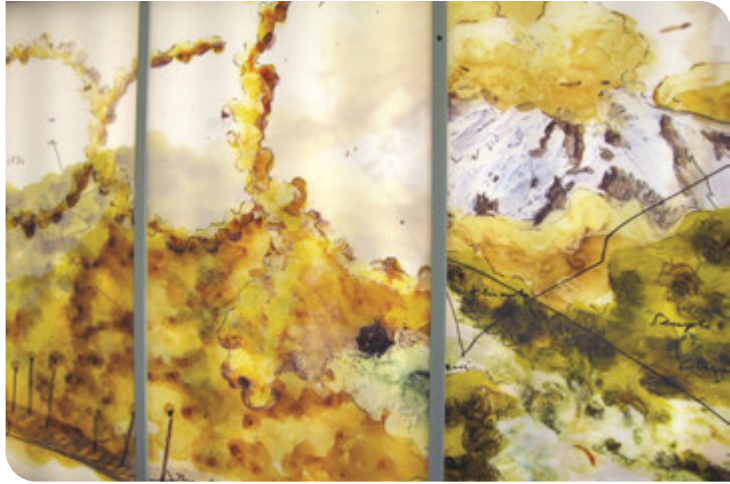
With the work Stare Decisis, Ritchie interweaves references to the natural environment of Oregon and the history of law into the sculpture and murals.

The serpentine form of the piece echoes the Willamette River System, winding its way from the rooftop outside the courtrooms into the building. The map, overlaid with text, cites precedents for the U.S. constitution. Concentric three-dimensional elements are “atoms of law” with rings numbering the articles and amendments of the constitution. Their locations correspond to the largest cities and towns in Oregon.



Sculpture: Stare Decisis





In addition to Stare Decisis, Ritchie created three large-scale illuminated murals that surround the sculpture titled, “**Life, Liberty, and Pursuit**,” from the Declaration of Independence. Each mural fuses the history and landscape of Oregon with an alternate abstract landscape embodying the more than four-thousand-year-long evolution of law.

Both the floating elements of Stare Decisis and the grand upward sweep of Leaf are intended to evoke feelings of strength and unity, an enduring reminder in our current troubled times, that our art, when we know the story, has the power to bring us together.

Matthew’s passion speaks to GSA’s mission to preserve and protect America’s national art heritage for future generations.

GSA’s Fine Arts Collection is one of the nation’s oldest and largest public art collections. It consists of fine artworks dating from the 1850’s to the present. These civic masterpieces grace federal buildings and courthouses nationwide. The NW/Arctic Region houses and cares for 66 of the nation’s 1,114 artworks.

Congress believes so greatly in the importance of art that they set aside a small percentage of the estimated construction costs of each federal building for it. Through the GSA Art and Architecture Program, a multi-discipline panel reviews a diverse pool of artists and nominates finalists for GSA to evaluate. Selected artists work closely with the building’s design team to carefully integrate their works into the overall project design.

Matthews is grateful for her part in serving the greater mission of GSA to preserve these valuable windows into the soul of our nation.

What’s next? We’ll show you what it takes to preserve and protect our Region’s masterpieces.



Mural: Life, Liberty, and Pursuit



Life, Liberty, and Pursuit