The threat of rain loomed that cloudy October afternoon in 1904 as an eager crowd filled a forested knoll in Portland’s City Park. Embarking from carriages or scrambling up the steep hill on foot, the group of well-decked dignitaries, proud pioneers, and generally curious citizens assembled to dedicate Hermon Atkins MacNeil’s bronze sculpture, The Coming of the White Man. A cornerstone in the city’s nascent tradition of outdoor art, the statue of Chief Multnomah and his companion looking toward the pass through which the first white explorers floated down the Columbia was hailed by Mayor George Williams as “not the Indians of poetry or romance, but real Indians as they were when the star of empire burst upon their vision.” MacNeil’s proud duo began their watch to the east that day from what is now Washington Park. “[T]hey did not know,” declared one dedicatory speech, “that before civilization’s march barbarism falls, as disappears the dew before the rising sun.” The lesson was clear: Lewis and Clark had brought civilization to the region.

The subject was not new. Joshua Shaw’s 1850 canvas, also titled The Coming of the White Man, shows cowering shore-bound Natives shielding their eyes from an approaching ship engulfed in the seemingly divine light of a rising sun. Closer to home, the 1890 Portland Hotel’s writing room sported a bronze frieze featuring chapters from local history, including a segment described as “Indians Watching the Landing of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.” Today, the scene may court the question who “discovered” whom, but for nineteenth-century Americans there was no doubt. With the explorers came a new order and a new day.
Almost a century later, in December 2000, another gathering took place, again to ponder art and the first white explorers to travel down the Columbia. Assembling this time in a climate-controlled New York City meeting room, representatives of Columbia River communities met to plan a work of art, not to dedicate one. The artist was Maya Lin, known best for her provocative Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. The proposed setting for the sculptures was not one but four locations: the confluences of the Clearwater and Snake, the Snake and Columbia, and the Columbia and Willamette and the mouth of the Columbia. Much like nearly one hundred years earlier, the subject was encounters, but this time the focus was not on cultural superiority but on healing and new ways of thinking. The project would draw on Lin’s strong interests in American Indians and environmental concerns. Speaking for Indian communities, Antone Minthorn, a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla, described the project as an opportunity “to tell . . . our part of this history.” Vancouver Mayor Royce E. Pollard mused: “I guarantee . . . [it] will be controversial; it will make you think.” The project, the group decided, would be completed in 2004 and would “be a catalyst in helping people think differently about the way we treat each other and the way we treat the earth.” It would be titled Confluences.

At its most basic level, the Lewis and Clark Expedition is an account of nearly three dozen adventurers — a “Corps of Discovery” — who traversed a continent, from Missouri to Oregon, to gather information for a curious and ambitious president and public in the East. More deeply, it is a mythic tale, a story that provides meaning and relevance to experiences and life. This tale has helped shape the identity of Oregonians and Americans for almost two hundred years.

Both The Coming of the White Man and Confluences are artistic statements about a historical event. One celebrates Manifest Destiny and a conqueror’s interpretation of the past; the other seeks to repair the perceived damage that has resulted from that view of history. Each tells the story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition through the artistic mirror of its own era’s perspective, values, and symbols. In fact, they tell more about the time and place in which they were created than about the event itself. Dealing with themes that are as varied as their settings, each work responds to the story’s mythic core — an encounter between two peoples took place that altered forever the course of each. As art, they are powerful expressions of that mythic idea. Because of their ability to communicate both literally and metaphorically, the visual arts are one of the most effective means of defining historical events for succeeding generations. This essay will consider how that process of defining has illuminated both the Corps of Discovery’s story and the shaping of Oregon culture.
The ideas and conclusions presented here are drawn from a national inventory of over four hundred works of art inspired by the Lewis and Clark Expedition, over seventy-five of which are from Oregon. The inventory is not a list of what is traditionally deemed “fine art.” In fact, little consideration is given to the medium or aesthetic qualities of any particular piece. Rather, a work’s inclusion in the inventory is determined by its cultural influence, its public reception, its endurance as a symbol of the national or regional experience, or the artist’s original intentions. Although a number of the pieces included in the inventory are in private collections, most are accessible for easy viewing and can be considered public art. While selected examples are examined here to demonstrate artistic and historical connections, the entire Oregon inventory is provided as an appendix.

Emmanuel Gottlieb Leutze, Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way, mural study, U.S. Capitol, 1861. Oil on canvas, 33 ¾ x 43 ¾ in. (84.5 x 110.2 cm). Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.
Art has always played an important part in telling the story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Stunning objects acquired from Native peoples attested to the richness and diversity of the cultures the explorers encountered on their journey. One impressive example from the Pacific Northwest is a round Wasco-Wishram root-gathering bag that is decorated with animal figures and stylized human heads. Another is...

Isaka Shamsud-din, Bilalian Odyssey, 1983. Oil and enamel on panel. Regional Arts and Culture Council, Portland, Oregon.
an “onion dome” knob-top whaling chief’s hat that features whaling scenes and is possibly of Chinook or Clatsop origin.

The explorers themselves created art. Thomas Jefferson instructed Lewis and Clark to record their “observations... with great pains and accuracy... entered distinctly, & intelligibly for others as well as for yourself...” With Enlightenment-era fervor and inspired by a president who embodied the age, both captains illuminated their journals with drawings of plants, animals, people, and geographical marvels they encountered on their long trek to the Pacific. Those images have become emblematic not only of the explorers’ personal accounts but of the expedition itself. They include some of the first representations of what is now Oregon made by individuals who are not members of the indigenous population. In some cases, the journal illustrations may be the first ever-recorded likenesses of their subjects.

For almost two centuries, these visual primary sources have endured as key interpretive material documenting the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Illustrating a myriad of publications, ranging from academic studies to coffee-table books, they hold their place alongside the work of later, more celebrated artists such as Charles M. Russell and John Clymer. Two of the subjects they sketched are among the most recognizable images in the iconography of American exploration: Lewis’s elegant eulachon, also known as candlefish, and Clark’s diagram picturing the Clatsop process of head-flattening. The former shows a commitment to accuracy while the latter demonstrates Lewis’s ease with visual communication.

The initial artistic response to the Corps of Discovery’s return in September 1806 gives the impression that the explorers’ personalities and experiences would leave a permanent mark on the American historical imagination. Some of the first work produced followed the lead the two captains had set throughout their journey. Although Lewis and Clark were not trained naturalists, they had identified and collected hundreds of plant and animal specimens, adding significantly to the scientific record of North America. Artists specializing in flora and fauna were eager to add the expedition’s findings to the visual register. Among the naturalist artists approached to record expedition findings was Frederick Pursh, whose 1814 Flora Americae Septentrionalis presents the German artist’s stylized, yet intricately detailed studies of plant specimens entrusted to him by Lewis. The captain asked Alexander Wilson to document bird specimens, some of which ended up in Wilson’s handsome eight-volume American Ornithology. Artist Charles Willson Peale, whose museum Jefferson and Lewis agreed was the best repository of expedition specimens and artifacts, gladly consented to illustrate selected animals identified on the trek.

Scientific illustrations, however, are only an early trickle of the deluge of
artworks that would illumine and interpret the Lewis and Clark Expedition over the decades. Today, perhaps the most widely recognized images connected to the expedition are the portraits that Peale painted of Lewis in 1807 and of Clark in 1810. The portraits have appeared in illustrated studies, school texts, museum exhibits, and souvenirs and are considered to be the definitive likenesses of the two explorers.

Charles St. Mémin, a popular artist famous for his profile busts of some of America’s best-known personalities, also painted portraits of the captains. Together with likenesses St. Mémin created of several Indian dignitaries that the explorers had sent to meet President Jefferson, the portraits of Lewis and Clark are favorites among students and enthusiasts of the expedition. Recalling that the young nation’s republican ideals were rooted in antiquity, the profiles are rendered in the straightforward neoclassical style popular at the turn of the nineteenth century. St. Mémin depicts Lewis and Clark in everyday attire, not the Greek or Roman drapery associated with European portraiture at the time. The portraits meld America’s desire to appeal to the common person with the
authority derived from classical portraiture. Altogether, three artists did Lewis's portrait and six portrayed Clark. These early works stand alongside a selection of more questionable images claiming to document the expedition. Perhaps most popular among these works are six whimsical engravings that grace the early editions of expedition member Patrick Gass's journal, A Journal of the Voyages and Travels of a Corps of Discovery, published in 1807. Gass's account featured illustrations of expedition members decked out in their finest attire encountering a capsizing canoe, a grizzly bear that looks like a friendly St. Bernard, and western Indians that appear to be members of eastern tribes. The near-comical sketches and relatively narrow report did little to encourage early serious consideration of the expedition's accomplishments.

By the mid-nineteenth century, few artists were interested in depicting the Lewis and Clark Expedition's members or adventures. Artists such as George Catlin, Karl Bodmer, and Alfred Jacob Miller followed in the explorers' wake up the Missouri River, documenting the terrain, wildlife, and indigenous populations that the Corps of Discovery had encountered. One of Catlin's most admired portraits is of Black Moccasin, a Hidatsa chief who asked the artist to pass his regards on to the captains. For the most part, however, these painters, today regarded as some of nineteenth-century America's finest, had broader agendas than to retrace a journey that had occurred twenty to thirty years before.

By mid-century, overland migrations and the railroad had become favorite themes in the rhetoric of American expansion, upstaging the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Perhaps no work of art could better illustrate this than Emmanuel Gottlieb Leutze's energetic twenty-by-thirty-foot U.S. Capitol mural, Across the Continent, Westward the Course of Empire Takes its Way, in which the Corps of Discovery is recast as a preamble to the larger drama of nineteenth-century American history. Executed in 1862, the mural features scouts, trappers, woodsmen, farmers, and covered wagons filled with families scrambling to catch a view of a Promised Land. By now a footnote in history's larger narrative, William Clark peers coolly and apparently unfazed from the lower right border of this icon of Manifest Destiny.

Most artistic representations of the Corps of Discovery during the nineteenth century served either to report or to promote. By the twentieth century, not only the purposes but also the subjects and sources of expedition art broadened radically. The dawn of this broadening coincides with the rise of commemorative
The painting of historical subjects and the tradition of rendering in a heroic manner individuals and events associated with the beginnings of the United States were well established by the late eighteenth century, but it was not until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that these subjects became popular in Oregon. Nationally, the American Renaissance, which embraced European styles while frequently celebrating American subjects, provided energy in the late 1800s for the creation of heroic and commemorative art. This movement, coupled with government-supported art programs and a moneyed class that was able to sustain an art community, helped foster laudatory art in Oregon. In addition, people were attracted to nostalgic reminiscing and sought inspiration from those who came before.

MacNeil’s The Coming of the White Man was one of two monuments given to the city of Portland by Oregon businessman and politician David P. T. Thompson and his heirs. At its dedication in 1904, in language consistent with American Renaissance ideals, the mayor and T. Thompson’s descendants praised the artist for casting a tribute to “the memory of earlier days on the part of those who . . . lived a long lifetime since the tribe of Multnomah . . . died.” In less than a year, Oregon’s European-American roots would flourish at what remains the state’s most spectacular artistic tribute to the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition.

By the time the Exposition opened its gates on June 1, 1905, expositions and world’s fairs had become an established way to educate people about the wonders of the age while promoting commerce and foreign trade. Often, they were produced under the guise of recognizing an anniversary or historic event. Philadelphia honored the nation’s centennial in 1876; Chicago hailed Columbus in 1893, 501 years after his first American landfall; and St. Louis capitalized on the Louisiana Purchase centennial in 1904. The official name of the corporation that organized Portland’s fair was The Lewis and Clark American Pacific Exposition and Oriental Fair. With emphasis on international trade, the fair’s emblem drew fairgoers’ attention not only to the establishment of so-called civilization in the Northwest but also to the region’s place in world commerce.

Perhaps the most telling symbol of how the story of the Corps of Discovery was repackaged to fit the economic and cultural objectives of the Lewis and Clark Exposition is the fair’s official emblem. Henry E. Reed, exposition secretary, described the emblem as symbolizing the arrival of the explorers at the Pacific Ocean. Escorted by the Goddess of Liberty, Lewis and Clark are pic-
tured marching toward an ocean shore and setting sun.18 "The whole," remarked one weekly, "symbolizes confidence, energy, trust, and solemn wonder, and well illustrates the well-known and appropriate sentiment... 'Westward the course of empire takes its way.' "

The Goddess of Liberty featured in John Gast's 1872 painting, American Progress, served as a model for the emblem.20 One guidebook described her as "... floating westward through the air, bearing on her forehead the 'Star of Empire.' She has left the cities of the East far behind, crossed the Alleghenies and the 'Father of Waters,' and still her course is westward." In much the same way that she escorts Lewis and Clark toward the Pacific and the setting sun in the fair's emblem, Gast's Liberty holds the accoutrements of civilization in her hands, including a schoolbook and telegraph wire, and introduces "intelligence throughout the land."21

At the Lewis and Clark Exposition, fair organizers created a Pacific Northwest wonderland. An exotic midway called The Trail sported Venetian canals and diving elk. Spanish Revival architecture recalled an earlier age of exploration. The Forestry Building — a basilica-like structure nicknamed the "Palace of Forestry" — was built with huge logs from five to six feet in diameter. A collection of fountains and statues featured exotic beasts and both historic and
fictitious scenes. One prominent exposition sculpture was Solon H. Borglum’s *The First Steps to Civilization*, which showed an Indian chief clutching a Bible, his son at his side. One writer described it as “depict[ing] the Indian after contact with the white race,” the youth “seeming to catch the spirit of the new day.” The sculpture represents a nineteenth-century genre of art that espoused that indigenous people must be controlled and taught the ways of “civilization.”

Today, perhaps the most widely recognized work of art from the Lewis and Clark Exposition is Alice Cooper’s *Sacajawea*. Originally set high on a pedestal overlooking the fairgrounds, the sculpture depicts the Shoshone woman pointing into the distance with her baby on her back. Idealized by Astorian author Eva Emery Dye in her novel *The Conquest: The True Story of Lewis and Clark*, Sacagawea was characterized as a leader in order to inspire the woman suffrage movement. Dye believed that all women could aspire to similar heroism if they had the right to vote. Influenced by Dye’s book, Cooper’s romantic sculpture was the focal point of the National American Woman Suffrage Association’s annual meeting, held at the fair in 1905. At the June 6 unveiling of the sculpture, Dye proclaimed: “Trappers had been here, traders and shipmasters had skirted these wilds, but not until mothers came was the true seed of a nation planted. And Sacajawea led them all, the dark eyed princess of the native race, the child of Asia, beckoned the white man on, toward her ancient home in the Orient.”

A highlight of the unveiling was Susan B. Anthony’s oration on “Women in Discovery.” Casting Sacagawea as a leader of the expedition, however, had deeper implications than promoting enfranchisement for women. Comparing the statue’s pose to a pioneer or explorer, the October 1904 *Lewis and Clark Journal* claimed: “…the ‘Bird Woman’ is lifted by the hands of art from the degrading characteristics which mark the features of her descendants among the Shoshone or Snake Indians of her tribe today.” His judgment was consistent with attitudes that layered European characteristics on Indians in order to admit them into the pantheon of white heroes.

In nineteenth-century American art, the individual who was most often recruited to portray the virtues of submitting to Christianity was the Indian woman. Early images of Sacagawea as mother or leader to a Promised Land are examples of the perceived necessity that indigenous people must yield not only to European religion but also to the entire spectrum of what was deemed good about European civilization. Such images served to justify European control of American Indians as well as of the American continent as a whole, as if the land itself had acquiesced to the white American domination of the continent.
Cooper’s Sacajawea held a prominent position near the top of the grand staircase at the Lewis and Clark Exposition. Adjacent to it, straddling each side of the stairway, stood statues of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. The rendering of Lewis, by Charles Lopez, shows his left hand extended, “palm downwards, as if some new cause for wonderment or admiration had been discovered.” Recalling an Old Testament prophet, Frederick Wellington Ruckstuhl’s Clark was described as possessing the “equable temper of a lawgiver.” The idealization of the explorers in Oregon art had begun.

To see the significance of this, it is necessary to look once more at the national scene. In nineteenth-century American art, the successors of early European maritime explorers were scouts and pioneers, and one of the most popular was Daniel Boone. In many works of art, Boone is shown leading people or pointing the way, a depiction borrowed from well-known portrayals of Columbus such as Emmanuel Leutze’s 1855 *The Departure of Columbus from Palos in 1492*. These renderings are not unlike much earlier images of Moses gesturing toward the Land of Canaan. In Oregon art, the duty of leading civilization to a new land is left to the Corps of Discovery. Although Sacagawea is shown pointing the way as often as Lewis and Clark are, her role is limited to being a guide for the explorers. When Lewis and Clark are shown in the lead, the implication is that they are escorting America to a new Promised Land. While such depictions are popular in art about the expedition throughout the United States, especially along the trail route, the statues of Sacagawea and Lewis and Clark at the Exposition introduced themes in Oregon art about the expedition that would carry well into the twentieth century.

By 1909, when Cooper’s Sacajawea was moved to Portland’s Washington Park, the myth labeling the heroine as leader was so established that one popular journal, the Spectator, was secure in proclaiming that the monument had been erected to one “who led Lewis and Clark in safety through the Oregon Country.” In 1925, Avard Fairbanks felt confident enough to include a rendering of Bird Woman in one of the eight panels he designed to adorn the bronze doors of the U.S. Bank building in downtown Portland. With her back toward the viewer, Sacagawea is pictured walking in front of the two famous explorers as she resolutely escorts them to the Pacific. Seven years later, Leo Friedlander’s thirteen-foot-high marble relief of Sacagawea pointing the way west for Lewis and Clark was installed in front of the new state capitol. By 1988, she was still described in one Capitol souvenir booklet as “the Indian woman who guided Lewis and Clark.”

The leadership role of the two captains, however, was clear to those who saw the June 1, 1905, Oregon Journal celebrating the exposition’s grand open-
ing, with a full-page illustration, the paper featured the two pathfinders overlooking the fairgrounds from Portland’s West Hills. As they survey the festive scene, they point eastward, toward the activity and, this time, the rising sun. The image of the explorers pointing the way is found on the 1926 Astoria Column, where either Lewis or Clark is standing in a canoe pointing west. On the memorial to Samuel Hill, erected in 1932 at the Portland Women’s Forum Park near Corbett, Alonzo Victor Lewis’s panel, Lewis and Clark Arrive Columbia River, shows them pointing down the Columbia River toward the setting sun. Frank Schwarz’s 1938 Oregon Capitol mural — one of four large canvases decorating the building’s rotunda — depicts the Corps of Discovery portaging canoes at Celilo Falls on the Columbia. In the scene, while most members are either resting or busy with the boats, Lewis and Clark are pictured in the center of the composition talking, one of them gesturing westward.

Whereas most Oregon renditions of Lewis and Clark pointing the way appeared in the first half of the twentieth century, it may not be coincidental that so many were created during the Great Depression. With the increased popularity of the Corps early in the century, the expedition came to represent certain traditional American values, including ingenuity, bravery, and fortitude — values that proved to be particularly inspirational in the 1930s. To many, the recent frontier era represented opportunity and renewal, and art about frontier subjects — including explorers, scouts, and pioneer families — often sent the message that civilization marches on through the wilderness of deprivation to the promise of a better life.

Two Oregon works, one funded by the government and the other by a corporation — demonstrate this well. At Portland’s Alameda Elementary School, a series of attractive inlaid wood murals greets visitors inside the front door. Panels featuring fairly stereotypical images of Native people, complete with corn, buckskin, and feathers, flank the entryway to the gymnasium. The central panel, however, shows Lewis and Clark at the crest of a mountain. To their left is Sacagawea peering beyond the picture’s edge toward an uncertain future. To their right is a family, civilization’s representatives, led by the explorers. A rainbow, a Biblical symbol of hope, shelters the entire assembly. Reminiscent of Leutze’s earlier depiction of pioneers trying to reach a promised land, the 1936 Works Progress Administration mural is underscored with encouraging words from an era of economic deprivation to America’s future generations: “And we shall leave to the next generation a world, which because of our efforts, has become a better place in which to live.”

Though completed before the 1929 stock market crash, Fairbanks’s U.S. Bank door panel showing Lewis and Clark was created to inspire hope, if not to stimulate private enterprise, during the Depression. In an advertisement in
which the panel is bracketed by drawings of MacNeil’s *The Coming of the White Man* and Cooper’s *Sacajawea* the following words, titled “From Stress Emerges Progress,” separate the image from a list of branch banks:

Pioneer days were days of dark discouragement. Every year was a “depression” year. But American courage, American determination won out. . . . That same spirit will triumph over today’s stresses. New economic frontiers will be explored, mapped and won over to prosperous progress. The United States National . . . stand[s] pledged to render constructive help in that great challenging development.44

After the 1930s, only a small number of Lewis and Clark subjects appear in Oregon art until the end of the century. Surprisingly, the expedition’s sesquicentennial in the mid-1950s yielded little artistic response to the event. In fact, just two examples from the era appear on the inventory of Oregon Lewis and Clark art, and their inclusion is marginal at best. The iron-fenced Salt Cairn Memorial in Seaside and the reconstruction of Fort Clatsop at Astoria are sincere attempts to re-create lost vestiges of the Corps’ brief presence on the Oregon Coast. These structures may be the fruits of painstaking research and skilled craftsmanship, but they reveal more a concern for historic architectural veritas and didactic replication than for interpreting the significance of the expedition at its 150th anniversary. The 1959 Oregon Centennial’s output was even less prolific. While a handful of significant public works of art around the state featured Oregon Trail themes, few centennial pieces dealt with other major chapters in the state’s history, including the Lewis and Clark Exposition.

Nationally, the most widely viewed artistic tributes to the Corps of Discovery in the 1950s were a sesquicentennial postage stamp and a 1955 B-movie starring Charlton Heston, Fred MacMurray, and Donna Reed. It appears that only after the nation gained practice from highly publicized, sensationalistic anniversary celebrations such as the . . . Bicentennial would the explorers receive the kind of artistic tributes to which we are accustomed today. What did emerge in Oregon between 1940 and 1980 was a limited, yet eclectic assortment of art. The variety of media, styles, and locations of this small collection demonstrates that the Corps of Discovery had become well-established in the minds of Oregonians by mid-century. Examples include a 1941 terra-cotta relief of the explorers above the doorway at The Dalles High School and a 1980 welded steel-wire sculpture called *Sacajawea* at Breaker’s Point in Cannon Beach, which features Sacagawea, Lewis, Clark, and York. Both pieces represent a tradition of focusing on an early historical event as a source of local pride.
Created in 1963, another work from this era is also worth noting. Oregon historian and journalist Stewart Holbrook relished in challenging established institutions as well as sentimental interpretations of history. In his Lewis and Clark Return/The Oregon Trail Revisited, his alter ego, “Mr. Otis,” makes a humorous and biting comment about the pioneer myth versus the pioneer legacy as he shows a bewildered Lewis and Clark on a “trail” lined with billboards. Commemorating milestones in their communities’ histories, The Dalles and Cannon Beach sculptures bear witness to the role the Lewis and Clark Expedition has played in shaping community identity. The Holbrook piece illustrates an increasing regional practice of employing the Lewis and Clark Expedition as a social emblem. These examples anticipate the significant, parallel paths Oregon art about the expedition took during the last two decades of the twentieth century, an era that witnessed a virtual renaissance of such art.

John L. Allen speaks of two images, the “literate elite” and the “folk,” when describing early collective understandings of the significance of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. In a sense, these categories can be applied to artistic responses to Lewis and Clark in Oregon over the last quarter century. In this case, the terms “academic” and “popular” may better define the incentives and results of the recent resurgence in expedition art.

In 1962, Donald Jackson published his celebrated The Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, which was revised and expanded in 1978. This was followed by Gary E. Moulton’s 1983–2001 edition of The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the first since Reuben Gold Thwaites in 1904. These two scholarly landmarks, along with dozens of books and periodicals such as the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation’s We Proceeded On, published since 1974, have resulted in a flood of expedition scholarship. As James Ronda observed, “the expedition bookshelf grew to hold lively volumes on natural history, geography, language, and relations with native people.” Ronda could have easily added ethnic studies and the environment. All of these subjects have been represented in American art about the expedition in recent years.

This awakening of Lewis and Clark studies took place within a larger context shaped by movements in American society and the world of art. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s and an increasingly diverse population encouraged Americans to seek a multicultural approach to education, legislation, and the arts. The U.S. Bicentennial, which ignited a wave of patriotism that carried into the 1980s, and an increasingly media-based, visually oriented society combined to encourage tradition, realism, and sensationalism in artistic interpretations of history. A questioning of Modernism, increased focus on the power of art to influence attitudes about society and the environment, and experimentation with new technologies served to catalyze an
increasingly varied and decentralized art world.\textsuperscript{41}

In Oregon, this cultural groundwork would result in two concurrent strains of art about the Lewis and Clark Expedition during the last two decades of the twentieth century. One sought to document and elaborate on the expedition experience; the other approached the event as a social metaphor. The former ranges from a painstaking commitment to detail regarding clothing and other accoutrements from the event to theatrical depictions of both real and imagined incidents associated with the journey. The latter runs the gamut from representing diverse cultural perspectives to fostering a change in environmental consciousness. A quarter of identified Oregon works of art about the Lewis and Clark Expedition were created from 1980 through 1993, and nearly all of them fall into one of these two categories. Whereas earlier works about the expedition may treat the subject with a similar passion and purpose, for the most part these recent pieces are less didactic in their interpretation. A few examples can demonstrate their range and variety.

Lorenzo Ghiglieri’s art has found a place in the collections of Tiger Woods, Pope John Paul II, Michael Jackson, and General Norman Schwarzkopf, to name just a few. His subjects can easily be described as noble and heroic, whether they are St. Francis encountering crusading knights, a mourning Chief Joseph, or Bighorn sheep in combat. His messages — such as peace, strength, and devotion — are blatant and unhidden. “It must be good. It must be positive. It must be uplifting,” says Ghiglieri.\textsuperscript{42} In 1982, the Wilsonville artist produced the first of several versions of a sculpture, \textit{The Strongest Bond}. Reminiscent of a Renaissance Madonna with the infant Jesus, a buckskin-clad Sacagawea is shown embracing her baby. An early statement accompanying the piece proclaimed: “... nothing in this world, not even the forces of a hurricane, the power of a raging river or the strength of the sun’s energy can match or equal that strength that belongs to the woman. This sculpture... was created and is dedicated by Lorenzo to honor the women of the world.”\textsuperscript{43} Seventy-five years after Eva Emery Dye credited Sacagawea’s maternal prowess for making her a leader of men, Ghiglieri honored Bird Woman’s strength as a noteworthy end in itself.

When visiting the north Oregon coast, it is possible to take in three monuments by sculptor Stanley Wanlass. Accenting Seaside’s famous Turnaround is the artist’s 1990 \textit{End of the Trail}. Erected near the sand’s edge and portraying a spellbound Lewis and Clark surveying the Pacific’s limitless expanse, the bronze tribute includes a base laden with scenes from the expedition’s sojourn in Oregon, medallions of the explorers and President Jefferson, illustrations from the journals, and motifs from Indian art.

In the visitor’s center at Fort Clatsop National Memorial in Astoria, a tour of interpretive panels and cases is punctuated by Wanlass’s 1980 \textit{Arrival}. With
affected poses that form a classic Renaissance pyramid, it features Lewis’s dog, Seaman, showing “unquestioning devotion to his master”; an anonymous Clatsop Indian symbolizing help given to the explorers by Natives; Clark “in a posture of stability and supplication”; and Lewis who, with arms outstretched, “beholds the Pacific with excitement and thankfulness.”

Finally, across the Columbia in Long Beach, Washington, Mark of Triumph triggers an unanticipated moment of nostalgic reflection amid the galleries, restaurants, and amusements that line the city’s main strip. The sculpture depicts the explorers carving their mark in an old tree trunk, a transfixed expression of enlightenment on their faces caused by either profound discovery or the accomplishment of a great deed. Reflecting on the sentimental tone evident in much of his art, Wanlass articulates the sincere motivation behind a good deal of the Oregon art that gives form to a heroic past: “I guess I’m a hopeless idealist and romantic. I love nostalgia. I feel a responsibility to history...Life is short and art is long. I would like to leave...a tribute to the spirit, dignity, and excellence of man.”

Lewis and Clark art that deals with social issues may be less romantic, but it is no less absorbing. In 1993, a nonprofit environmental-art group called Orlo installed its premiere exhibition, The Promised Landfill, at its gallery in northwest Portland. With the mission to use the arts to “create new stories, heroes, and definitions to serve as models for sensitive caretaking of the natural world,” Orlo used sculpture, photography, and video to encourage responsible waste management. One piece in the show was a work called Gorge Project by Portland artist Linda Wysong. It is a series of four mixed-media prints featuring proposed sites along Interstate 84 in the Columbia Gorge: Multnomah Falls, Mitchell Point, John Day, and Arlington. Each print depicts a pristine setting with a large “pier” of garbage that memorializes “society’s refuse.” Focusing on Oregonians’ complex relationship with the land, Wysong uses images and words to show how massive amounts of trash follow the same route Lewis and Clark took. Calling attention to society’s “substructure,” the artist seeks to help viewers to “re-see the everyday in a new and revealing manner.”

A relatively new iconographical subject developed among the numerous representations of the explorers that appeared in the late twentieth century. Michael Florin Dente’s The Naming of Mt. Jefferson portrays Clark near the spot where he reportedly once stood, pointing toward the central Oregon peak and “symbolically taking a step into the future.” Recalling Ruckstuhl’s William Clark, whose posture was described as that of a prophet, Dente cites August Rodin’s St. John the Baptist Preaching as the inspiration for the explorer in this work at the University of Portland.

Dente’s work does not include the usual combination of characters found in
many Oregon Lewis and Clark artworks — namely, Lewis and Clark alone, with Sacagawea, or accompanied by two or more Indians and white members of their party. [please double-check this list to make sure it is accurate] Instead, the sculpture shows William Clark; York, Clark’s African American slave; and “an unnamed American Indian who was a member of the Cushook tribe that inhabited the river valley.” Regarding his cast of players, Dente explains that the work stands as “a visual reminder that three races contributed to the success of the Lewis and Clark Expedition — symbolic of the first integrated society in the Oregon country.”

A similar gesture toward inclusiveness is evident in Richard Haas’s mural on the west exterior wall of the Oregon Historical Society building in Portland. It displays images of Lewis, Clark, Sacagawea, and, standing tall and proud, York. The artist’s initial proposal for the mural featured a misleading image of Sacagawea “pointing the way” and an ambiguous image of York. Heeding the Society’s advice, Haas switched Sacagawea’s staff to her outstretched hand. At the same time, in response to concerns from the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs that the mural was “not more inclusive to all Oregonians,” York was made more readily identifiable.

In contrast to the Dente and Haas works, Isaka Shamsud-din’s 1983 Bilalian Odyssey, originally installed at the Portland Justice Center, approaches the subject from an African American perspective. Titled after Islamic concepts of courage and faith, the canvas is crowded with individuals from throughout African-American history, including numerous Northwest characters. Redefining the region’s “creation myth,” a large figure of York upstages his more famous companions. In another example of employing the expedition to advance community values, Shamsud-din’s painting transfers York from the periphery to the center of the dramatic story of which he is a part. James Ronda alluded to this late twentieth-century view of the Corps of Discovery in his address to the 1993 Oregon Historical Society annual meeting. Elucidating that the Lewis and Clark story is a statement about the shape of the American community, he declared: “Like the Corps of Discovery and the world through which it moved, we are an ethnic and racial stew.”

Over a quarter of the works in the inventory of Oregon art about the Lewis and Clark Expedition were produced since 1998, most of them created in anticipation of the approaching Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. While much of the art that has appeared in the past five years is commemorative in nature, there are artists who have approached the subject from a social perspective and there is much less ten-
dency to romanticize the event than during the previous twenty years.

The attention to the bicentennial has given a boost to the diverse interests and scholarly pursuits begun in the 1970s and 1980s and is manifested in the wide range of artistic subjects. Some artists credit the explorers’ contributions to cartography. Joe Bush’s handsome 1999 watercolor of Fort Clatsop juxtaposes an image of the Corps’s winter quarters with a map of the mouth of the Columbia River. Pacific City artists Stan and Gail Beppu’s light-hearted fiberglass Lewis and Clark Cowtoographer, created for Portland’s 2002 Kows for Kids program, features trail maps and astronomical charts on a bovine form.

Astoria’s Erhard W. Gross and Andrew E. Cier both recognize Lewis and Clark’s scientific observations. Gross sculpts big-game animals first described by the explorers from mammoth ivory, a subspecies of which is named after Thomas Jefferson. Cier has photographed a number of undisturbed expedition sites and subjects near the mouth of the Columbia in order to highlight two centuries of change and consistency.

For nearly two centuries, the Corps of Discovery has been mainly remembered as an event about and interpreted by the mainstream, European-American community. Fortunately, the bicentennial occurs in an era in which other perspectives on the expedition are more readily expressed and respected. In 2002, Lillian Pitt created a copper, wood, and clay salmon drying rack. Recalling some of the first equipment the Corps saw when they came to Celilo, it honors an important livelihood among the artist’s Warm Springs, Wasco, and Yakama ancestors. Pat Courtney Gold’s Lewis and Clark Sally Bag recalls an object collected by the explorers on their journey. Responding to the one-sided view of the event described in Lewis and Clark’s journals, Gold uses such pieces to express the Native perspective on one of the most significant cultural encounters in the region’s history.52

Like other trail states, what distinguishes Oregon Lewis and Clark art from that of other regions is context and subject matter. Here are artists who have taken on the entire trail, but expedition chapters involving each state tend to dominate that state’s art. Even portraits and general universal themes, from science to patriotism, tend to be set within a regional context. In Oregon, Celilo Falls, Fort Clatsop, and the Pacific Ocean are common subjects. They provide the setting in which to convey larger ideas such as fortitude, maternity, and proprietorship of the land.

The evolution of Oregon art about the Lewis and Clark Expedition mirrors that of Oregon culture. The state’s influential institutions have evolved from a predominantly male-dominated, European-American base to one of more diverse representation, and the values of pluralism and equal enfranchisement have eclipsed ethnocentrism and isolationism. At the same time, sentiment and
sensationalism can still sway Oregonians’ sense of themselves, their history, and their choices, both personal and communal.

These are obviously broad American movements, too, but some of them are treated in Oregon expedition art more frequently than in other states. While Lewis and Clark became lost amid the flamboyant festivities and the larger tale of national expansion at the 1904 St. Louis Exposition, Oregon ensured the exploitation of the Lewis and Clark story by keeping the explorers’ images at the center of its own exposition and fair. This resulted in a regional body of Lewis and Clark art espousing Manifest Destiny that surpasses that created in many other trail states. At the other end of the spectrum, Alice Cooper’s Sacajawea, commissioned to advance woman suffrage, and the recent proliferation of York images produced specifically to acknowledge the African American role in the expedition demonstrate a strong inclination to employ the Corps of Discovery in art for the advancement of democratic ideals.

Judging from the national inventory of Lewis and Clark art, Oregon’s love affair with the Corps of Discovery appears to be older and deeper than that of many other trail states. Reasons may be both chronological and geographical. Not only does the trail end in Oregon, but the state also boasts the most enduring large-scale settlement as well as the largest population center of any state on the route for nearly two thousand miles. It is also significant that the expedition’s centennial occurred around the time when Oregon came of age—or was at least ready to cut its teeth.

Oregon’s first great wave of European-American settlers were mid-nineteenth-century farmers and business people who brought with them firm opinions about purpose and place. The expansionist ideas of the time, coupled with strong feelings about property rights, provided the state, for better or worse, with an abiding sense of its own uniqueness. Heir to a long pedigree of utopian epithets—“Eden,” “Land of Opportunity,” “Ecotopia”—Oregon’s identity has been informed by exceptionalism throughout its history. That sense of exceptionalism includes the notion of Oregon as a destination. By the turn of the twentieth century, many Oregonians’ understanding of their state’s history was defined in part by journeys—trails—whether overland or by sea. Residing at the western end of the Lewis and Clark Trail, Oregon’s movers and shakers were not hesitant to capitalize on the centennial of the expedition. The centennial occurred at a time of both dreaming and reflecting, when Oregon was economically and culturally confident. The state’s grand recognition of the event established a tone and a momentum for a century of evolving art about the expedition.

One of America’s most respected artists, filmmaker Ken Burns, says “. . . discovery is not so much about the thing discovered but about discovery itself.
The Corps of Discovery discovered nothing but themselves. In so doing, they discovered us.”54 During spring of 2002, part of the NASA art collection, a selection of sixty works about a more recent chapter in American exploration history called the Artistry of Space, traveled much of Lewis and Clark’s route through the Pacific Northwest. Echoing Burns’s words, James Dean, founding director of the NASA Art Program, considered art’s central place in that dynamic process of self-awareness: “At the core, both art and . . . exploration search for a meaning to life.”55

Oregon art about the Lewis and Clark Expedition illumines the memory and values of the state’s people. Scores of paintings, sculptures, and other works of art illustrate how the visual interpretation of past events both reflects and influences not only Oregonians’ understanding of their state — its history and its culture — but also their understanding of themselves. The themes that art has interpreted and with which it continues to grapple surely tell a great deal less about those thirty-three adventurers who traveled into the region two hundred years ago than about the thousands who have lived here since.

Notes

This article is drawn from Jeffry Uecker, “From Promised Land to Promised Landfill: The Iconography of Oregon’s Twentieth-Century Utopian Myth” (Master’s thesis, Portland State University, 1995).

1. “Give Statue to City,” Morning Oregonian, October 7, 1904.


14. The other work is Roland Perry's 1900 bronze elk fountain acknowledging the area's early natural environment. The statue is located on the traffic island on Portland's S.W. Main Street, between Third and Fourth avenues.


25. Eva Emery Dye, speech delivered at the unveiling of Sacajawea, Portland, Oregon, 1905, Mss. 1089, Eva Emery Dye Collection, Box 4, folder 11, OHS Research Library.


29. McCann, "Decorative Sculpture," 86.


34. "From Stress Emerges Progress: The United States Bank," Oregonian, February 8, 1933.


36. See Kammen, Mystic Chords of Memory, 531-704.

37. Allen, "Of This Enterprise," 255-80.


45. Ibid.


52. "Columbia River Indigenous People 'Dis-
Inventory of Art about the Lewis and Clark Expedition

Beck, Raphael. Official Seal of the Lewis and Clark Exposition. 1903. (Lewis and Clark Exposition, Portland.)

Bennet, Harry. East of Big Red. 2001. Oil on canvas. (River Sea Gallery, Astoria.)


Borglum, Solon. The First Steps to Civilization. 1905. Sculpture. (Lewis and Clark Exposition, Portland.)


———. The Trail's End. 1988. Bronze, 12" high. (University of Portland.)

Dowling, Colista. Lewis and Clark. N.d. Pen and ink. (Michael Powell Collection, Portland.)


Holbrook, Stewart ("Mr. Otis"). Lewis and Clark Return / The Oregon Trail Revisited. 1963. Oil on board, 22"x28" (framed). Oregon Historical Society, Portland. (P.C.D.)


Lopez, Charles. Captain Meriwether Lewis. 1904. Bronze. (Lewis and Clark Exposition, Portland.)


MacQueen, Elizabeth. Sacagawea maquette for proposed Seaside Lewis and Clark Bicentennial monument. ca. 1998. Bronze, 19"x10"x18". Collection of the artist, San Luis Obispo, California.


Quigley, Edward. Captain Clark at Lemhi Pass. N.d. Painting. (Portland.)
———. Head of a Man (York). ca. 1983. Oil on board, 36"x34". (Metropolitan Arts Council, Portland.)

Artist unknown:
Indians Watching the Landing of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1805. ca. 1890. Bronze frieze detail. (Portland Hotel writing room, Portland.)
Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition and Oriental Fair. 1905. Architecture and
Landscape design. (Portland.)
Lewis and Clark Expedition at The Dalles. 1940s. Terra cotta relief. The Dalles High School, The Dalles.
Lewis and Clark Memorial. Works Progress Administration plan (not executed). 1930s. Architecture. (Sorosis Park, The Dalles.)
Oregon Building (Fort Clatsop replica). 1904. Oregon timber. (Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis, Missouri.)
Whale Skeleton. Proposed Bicentennial project. Concrete. Les Shirley Park, Cannon Beach.

Listings have been gathered from a variety of sources, including exhibitions, collections, correspondence, and published reviews. All locations are in Oregon unless otherwise noted. When the current location of a work is not known, a significant past location, an event associated with its creation, or a past collection of which it has been a part is noted in parentheses. Sizes are listed when available. Where the exact medium is not known, the art form is listed. Works included in the 2002 Oregon Historical Society Oregon Capitol exhibit Picturing the Corps of Discovery: The Lewis and Clark Expedition in Oregon Art are indicated by “P.C.D.” in parentheses.