



Press Release



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DRBA Partners with University of Delaware on Mural Restoration Project Work Expected to Conclude in March 2017

(New Castle, DE) Today, Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) has partnered with the University of Delaware's (UD) College of Arts and Sciences to restore a mural that was created in the 1960s. Under the supervision and direction of Professor Brian Baade and Dr. Kristin deGhetaldi, Karissa Muratore and Amanda Kasman will apply their skills and gain hands-on experience in their chosen career field of study, art conservation. Ms. Muatore is a recent UD graduate of the program while Ms. Kasman continues to pursue her degree at UD. The team began the restoration process on February 24, 2017 and plans to continue their work every Friday for a period of approximately six weeks.

"We're pleased to be able to partner with the University to promote their historic art conservation program while providing an opportunity for their graduate and post-graduate students to apply their skills," said Joseph Gibbons, P.E., Director of Maintenance Operations for the DRBA. "Just as important, the Authority will be able to display its cherished and professionally restored historic mural that can be publicly enjoyed for future generations."

"What a tremendous opportunity for Amanda and Karissa to utilize their training, talents, and energy on such a real world project," remarked Dr. Kristin deGhetaldi, a UD graduate and operator of a conservation consulting business who will supervise the restoration effort. "Both students are committed to and serious about art conservation. We are enthusiastic about the project, eager to start, and can't wait to see the final product."

A series of six panels that each measure 4 by 8 feet, the mural was rendered on specially treated paper, bonded to a plywood base and given the Micarta covering for permanency. The mural will not scratch or tear. Originally located in the DRBA's Travel Center, the mural was removed from the location more than 10 years ago and stored inside the Authority's warehouse. Last year, the Authority renovated the Lobby in its administration building and incorporated the mural as a centerpiece of that project.

The restoration of the Micarta Mural will be the third conservation 'internship project' that Amanda Kasman and Karissa Muratore have worked on together. In June 2015, the pair were part of an exciting campaign to conserve four newly discovered Nuragic sculptures in Sardinia and helped to catalogue 1,950 fragments of carved stone in America's First Museum. Last year, Amanda and Karissa were

honored to design and implement a three-part internship that entailed research, public engagement, and the conservation of a custom-crafted dollhouse (6' wide x 3' high) and all of its contents, which was gifted to Winterthur Museum by Nancy B. McDaniel.

About the Mural:

On November 21, 1967, Delaware Governor Charles L. Terry joined with DRBA Chairman Alexis I. duPont Bayard of Wilmington, DE and DRBA Vice Chairman Clarence B. McCormick of Bridgeton, NJ to dedicate a huge mural map of the United States East Coast. Painted by New York artist Aurion M. Proctor, the mural covers an entire wall and illustrates metropolitan areas, bridges, tunnels, major highways and historical landmarks over in the mid-Atlantic and New England regions.

The brainchild of Delaware River and Bay Authority's first Executive Director, William J. Miller, Jr., this "Micarta" mural was commissioned at a cost of \$8,000. Mr. Miller served as the Authority's first Executive Director from September 20, 1962 to December 31, 1991.

Working from his Blauvelt, New York home near the Tappan Zee Bridge, Proctor had to study maps and then visualize the area from thousands of miles in the air, just as a descending astronaut might see the region. The map takes in part of Connecticut, west through the New York Finger Lakes to Pittsburgh, PA; Southwest to just beyond Washington, DC and along the Atlantic Coast, showing the Delaware - Maryland-Virginia eastern shore peninsula. Prominently featured are the Delaware and New Jersey state capitol buildings; the United States Capitol; and other historic and tourist attractions. The mural also highlights the twin spans of the Delaware Memorial Bridge and the Cape May - Lewes Ferry which are operated by the Authority.

Proctor had his own fun as well during his hours of work. He included a tiny reproduction of his own home and that of R. H. Dement, a U.S. Plywood Company representative whose company manufactured this mural. The mini-houses can be seen by the naked eye only when they are pointed out by someone who is in on the secret.

About art conservation at UD

Art conservators are professionals skilled in the scientific treatment and preservation of cultural artifacts, including paintings, textiles, objects and photographs. The University of Delaware Department of Art Conservation offers undergraduate, master's and doctoral programs. Its internationally known master's degree program—the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation—is one of only five graduate programs in art conservation in North America and one of only two jointly sponsored between a university and a museum. Its alumni lead conservation initiatives in museums and cultural institutions around the world.

About the Delaware River and Bay Authority

The DRBA, a bi-state governmental agency created by Compact in 1962, owns and operates the Delaware Memorial Bridge, the Cape May- Lewes Ferry, and the Forts Ferry Crossing. The DRBA also manages corporate and aviation properties through its economic development powers - two airports in New Jersey (Millville Airport and Cape May Airport) and three in Delaware (New Castle Airport, Civil Air Terminal and Delaware Airpark). All DRBA operating revenues are generated through the bridge, ferry and airport facilities. For more information, visit www.drba.net.