



## Art and Architecture | Introduction

The physical structure of the Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library is impressive in both its size and design. The two architectural styles of the North and South buildings combine to make Hatcher one of the premier landmarks of the central campus area. The Library's physical merit extends to the historic and artistic artifacts within and just outside of its walls.

## Art and Architecture | Interior

### North Lobby Murals

Fourteen painted murals adorn the North Lobby of the Hatcher Library. These murals, which were recently restored to their original bright colors, have been present since the building opened in 1920. The mural that faces visitors when they enter the building contains a quote from Thomas a Kempis' *De Imitatione Christi*. "Una vox librorum sed non omnes aequae informat." (Translation: The voice of books is one but informeth not all alike.) [15; 18]

#### *More About the Restoration*

The conservation team of Dr. Margaret Nowosielska and Christopher Woitulwicz began the restoration of the North Lobby Murals in March 2002. The lighter area on the left of the photo above shows the effects of the restoration.

The murals are fresco paintings that were commissioned when the original Hatcher structure was built in January 1920. The murals are attributed to the artist Thomas di Lorenzo. There are 14 panels, four arches, four spandrels (areas between arches), two lunettes (semicircular paintings), one frieze (decorative band), and miscellaneous ornaments that wind around the lobby. The subjects captured in the panels include animals and mythical beasts, men and women, and flowers and plants, all using the palette of teal blue, brick red, yellows, golds, and greens. [6]

Make sure to stop by the North Lobby and view the stunning and vibrant results of the restoration!

### Parthenon Frieze replica

In 1906 Theodore W. Koch, University Librarian, acquired casts of the Parthenon frieze for the Library and placed them in the reading room of the old library building. The sections of the frieze, that now hang in the North Hatcher second floor corridor, portray the Athenian celebration Panathenaia which marks Athena's birthday. The original frieze of the Greek Parthenon was 524 feet long and ran around the outside of the temple. [1]

#### *More About the Frieze*

"[Casts of the Parthenon frieze] were secured in 1906 by the University Librarian, Theodore W. Koch and were originally placed in the main reading room of the old library building. He first obtained three sections and, when they were so well received, later added more."

"The Parthenon had 524 feet of this sculptured frieze running in a continuous band around the outside of the temple. The subject of the frieze is the people of Athens celebrating the festival of the Panathenaia - their most joyful ceremony which marked Athena's birthday. The Athenians wound through the city in a procession and then ascended the Acropolis to offer sacrifices in Athena's sanctuary. According to D.E.L. Haynes in *The Parthenon Frieze*, ". . ." in every fourth year, when the festival was celebrated with special splendor and known as the Great Panathenaia, the procession carried with it a robe, newly woven by

chosen Athenian maidens and matrons, with which to drape Athena's ancient wooden image. The frieze shows us the Great Panathenaic Procession and the handing over of the robe in the presence of the gods.' There were two streams of the procession which converged on the East end (or front) of the temple. Youthful horsemen riding bareback (who must have been held in high esteem judging from the large space the calvary occupies in the frieze) are represented in the library corridor. [Also in the corridor] is a section of frieze showing girls dressed in long chitons, and carrying utensils for the sacrifices, jugs and libation-bowls, and incense-burners. Care was taken to insure that the correct relative position of the sections of the frieze was preserved. "

- *Anne Beaubien, University Library* [1]

### **Reference room stained glass windows**

D'Ascenzo, born in Toricella, Italy in 1871, came to the U.S. in 1882. He created windows for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, National Cathedral, and the west window of Princeton University Chapel. D'Ascenzo was presented with the gold medal award from the New York Architectural League. [3]

In September of 1906 Theodore W. Koch, Librarian, gave four stained glass windows by Nicola D'Ascenzo to the Library. A set of three windows, two of which are pictured above, were originally made for the Booklover's Library of Philadelphia. They are now located on the south wall of the Reading Room. The fourth window, the ship under full sail, was made a memorial to Edward Lorraine Walter - a distinguished faculty member who was lost at sea on the French steamer La Bourgogne. This window now hangs in the North Hatcher second floor corridor at the entrance to the Reading Room. [3]

### **South Lobby Artwork**

The artwork in the South Lobby of Hatcher is the work of Jim Cogswell, Associate Professor at the UM School of Art and Design. The images in the woodblocks, printed in colors characteristic of ancient Greek vases, represent the Greek goddess of Wisdom, Athena, to whom the Parthenon is dedicated. The woodblocks compliment the Parthenon Frieze replica on the second floor of Hatcher. The woodblock prints and the images of the Elgin marbles (not pictured) were created for a 1995 exhibit in the Nashville Parthenon, the only existing full scale replica of the Athenian Parthenon. [18]

### **Reference Room Murals**

Reference room murals "The Arts of Peace" (west wall) and "The Arts of War" (east wall), by Gari Melchers, were originally painted for the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building at the Chicago World's Fair in 1892-93. In 1895, UM President Angell requested that the paintings be given to the University of Michigan. They were received in 1895 and were hung in University Hall in 1896. In 1918, when plans for a new library building were underway, it was decided that the murals would hang in the main reading room. The reference room, 50 feet high at the center of the barrel vaulted ceiling, was specially designed to accomodate the murals. [2]

#### *More About the Murals*

"The murals at either end of the Reference Room, above the windows, (which have been in the Graduate Library since its opening in 1920) were originally painted for the Manufactures and Liberal arts Building at the Chicago World's Fair by Gari Melchers, a Detroit born artist. In 1892 he and several other distinguished American artists were called together in Chicago to work on the World's Fair. These paintings, "The Arts of Peace" and "The Arts of War" were Mr. Melchers' creation. In October of 1895 the executive committee of the Field Colombian Museum in Chicago responded to President Angell's request that the pictures representing the arts of war and peace be given to the University. The Board of Regents accepted the paintings and in 1896 had them placed on each side of the stage in University Hall. (University Hall was completed in 1870 and was located where Angell Hall now stands. It was the old center for University activities before Hill Auditorium was built in 1913.) In 1918 it was decided that these murals would be placed over the windows in the main reading room of the new general library."

"The paintings were done in oil on canvas. In "The Arts of Peace", according to the World Colombian Exposition, "Every figure seems bent on acquiring knowledge. Even the mother takes time from the care of her babe and becomes an interested listener to words of wisdom. The student, the philosopher, the sage, the maiden and the youth are all represented as worshipers at the shrine of knowledge." In "The Arts of War", the same source explains, "The hunters are returning. Every figure shows the strong characteristics and muscular development caused by constant exercise and endurance. . ." Gari Melchers later painted murals for the Library of Congress and the Detroit Public Library in which he treated these same subjects in a different manner."

- *Anne Beaubien, University Library* [2]



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[18] Untitled, 1. University of Michigan.  
Available: Hatcher Graduate Library Room 209 hanging files

[19] Untitled, 2. University of Michigan.  
Available: Hatcher Graduate Library Room 209 hanging files

[20] *see Bishop above*