



OREGON ARTS  
COMMISSION

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## New Sculpture by MJ Anderson Installed at the Justice Building, Salem

The Oregon Arts Commission announces the installation of a new site-specific sculpture by Oregon artist MJ Anderson at the state's Justice Building in Salem. Commissioned through Oregon's Percent for Art in Public Places program, the work, *To Scale the Scales of Justice*, was commissioned for the state's Justice Building in Salem.

The historic 1929 Justice Building called for a classically inspired work of art. *To Scale the Scales of Justice* is hand-carved of Bardiglio marble, and references great figurative classics of art history, while presenting the artist's contemporary interpretation of the symbols of protection and balance. Sited at the entrance to the building, the sculptures are placed within paired triangular islands of native plantings and are classically and symmetrically framed by the arches of the building's façade.

Facing one another, the two figures represent the dialogue which takes place in the search for justice, whether between friend and foe, defense or prosecution, or between colleagues. To the artist, the unfinished heads call one's thought to the vast intellectual deliberations and ideals of justice, as well as to the idea of "everyman" or "everywoman".

The stepped bases that elevate the figures represent the steps taken to secure justice. The two figures themselves allegorically become the two scales of Justice, creating a dialogue of integrity, fidelity, honesty and impartiality in weighing truth and equity for the people of Oregon.

The artist further expresses her title for the piece through this passage:

*To scale the scales of Justice:*

*Seek balance & dialogue,  
Hold fast patience & perseverance,  
Work for truth & fairness,  
Honor safety & community.*

"As much as stone is a material that is 'real,' I see my sculpture as a presentation of ideas -rather than a physical object of something that resembles a figure. Ideas are living things and deeply

personal. Ideas change and evolve. Ideas can be shared and can become stronger than stone. I hope to create work where the ideas of others come into play. Only then will my work have longevity and meaning.” -MJ Anderson

The sculpture was selected by an art selection committee that included the project architect, art faculty members from Willamette and Western Oregon Universities, and Oregon Judicial Department and Department of Justice staff, with oversight by the Oregon Arts Commission. An open call for proposals described the committee’s interest in a work of art that referenced the missions of protection and fairness. Of four artists invited to create specific proposals, MJ Anderson was selected to realize her vision for the building in early 2009.

Native Oregonian M.J. Anderson divides her time between her studios on the Oregon Coast and Carrara, Italy. She creates public, private, and liturgical art commissions as well as sculpture for gallery exhibition. Anderson has been exhibiting her work locally and internationally for nearly three decades. She is the recipient of an Oregon Arts Commission Individual Artist Fellowship, among other honors. MJ’s work is represented in public and private collections, including the Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University. More information on the artist is available on her website: [www.mjandersonsculpture.com](http://www.mjandersonsculpture.com)

Living up to its pioneering reputation, Oregon was one of the first states in the nation to pass Percent for Art legislation, placing works of art in public spaces throughout the state.

Since then, the Percent for Art program has maintained a commitment to the placement of permanent art of the highest quality in public places. Committees of local citizens across Oregon make selections. The overall collection enhances the state’s public spaces and contributes to our well-recognized quality of life.

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The Oregon Arts Commission provides leadership, funding and arts programs through its grants, special initiatives and services. Nine commissioners, appointed by the Governor, determine arts needs and establish policies for public support of the arts. The Arts Commission became part of Business Oregon (formerly Oregon Economic and Community Development Department) in 1993, in recognition of the expanding role the arts play in the broader social, economic and educational arenas of Oregon communities. In 2003, the Oregon legislature moved the operations of the Oregon Cultural Trust to the Arts Commission, streamlining operations and making use of the Commission’s expertise in grantmaking, arts and cultural information and community cultural development. The Arts Commission is supported with general funds appropriated by the Oregon legislature and with federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts as well as funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust.

More information about the Oregon Arts Commission: [www.oregonartscommission.org](http://www.oregonartscommission.org)