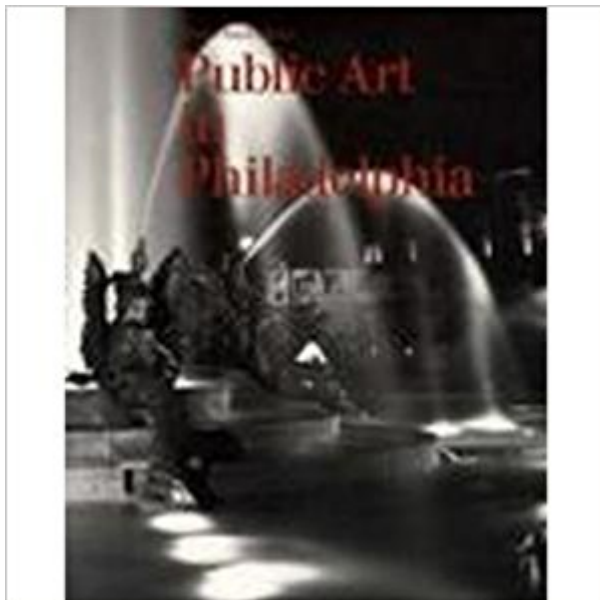


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Public Art In Philadelphia



Synopsis

'Public art is a manifestation of how we see the world the artist's reflection of our social, cultural, and physical environment'. Thus, Penny Bach introduces this fascinating history of public art in Philadelphia, narrated throughout with surprising anecdotes, biographical sketches, and more than 450 illustrations. She explores the artistic, historical, political, and social trends and events that caused the city to acquire such a rich and diverse collection of public art. Philadelphia's tradition of public art reveals the origins of our cyclic longing for public expression: the spiritual roots of Native American culture, the utilitarian needs of the colonial period, the civic glorification of American patriotism, the planning instincts that emerged from the industrial era, and the pursuit of originality and invention in the twentieth century. Guiding the reader through a chronological tour of the city's aesthetic holdings, "Public Art in Philadelphia" provides a sort of history of American monumental art in microcosm and offers a way to appreciate the public art we encounter, whether it is cast, carved, built, assembled, or painted. As the nation's first capital, Philadelphia began early to commemorate heroic figures, popular leaders, patriotic ideals, and historic events. From Lazzarini's marble figure of Benjamin Franklin to Pinto's Fingerspan in Fairmount Park, from Laurel Hill Cemetery's celebrated sculpture garden to Lipchitz's controversial Government of the People, and from William Penn atop City Hall to the colorful murals by the Anti-Graffiti Network, public art has continued to enhance, define, and challenge Philadelphians' perception of their city. With perhaps the largest collection of public sculpture in the world, Philadelphia's art acquisitions span the history of the United States. Bach examines the gradual transformation over three centuries of style, theme, and reception of statues, murals, and other art forms. Shorter thematic essays make 'connections' between works, ideas, artists, and civic missions. A catalogue focuses on more than 200 individual works, noting the materials, dimensions, location history, and commissioning process, and suggesting the vast range of public art. The armchair tourist, for example, can visit Dickens and Little Nell in Clark Park, the John Wanamaker's Eagle, the All Wars Memorial to Colored Soldiers and Sailors in Fairmount Park, or the Julius Erving Memorial on Ridge Avenue, among many others. A set of maps encourage readers to view the works in their public context. "Public Art in Philadelphia" offers a unique tour of both the familiar and the overlooked treasures that give meaning to the public environment, that reconnect art to daily life, and that remind Philadelphia's visitors and residents of what was considered important to previous generations. Author note: Penny Balkin Bach is Executive Director of the Fairmount Park Art Association, the nation's first non-profit organization dedicated to the integration of art and urban planning. She is also the author of "Form and Function: Proposals for Public Art for Philadelphia".

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Customer Reviews

"...a well-illustrated, information-packed exploration of the city's unexcelled collection of accessible artworks, and of the hopes, ideals and causes that have brought them into being...[a] good guide to both familiar pieces and some you may have never heard about." --The Philadelphia Inquirer

This is a wonderful book. However, my Grandson wants you to know he thinks there is an error on page 220. Yes, Theseus should be slaying a Minotaur as your description states. But the figure on the North Pediment by C.Paul Jennewein appears to be a Faun not a Minotaur. A Faun has human head with horns, human arms and torso and the legs of a goat. A Minotaur has the head and legs of a bull and the body of a man. The sculpture you are stating is a Minotaur is a Faun. Is it possible the sculptor errored and made a Faun when he intended to make a Minotaur next to Theseus and no one has noticed the error?

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