

# “Bibliocosmos”

(The Universe of Books)



**JACKSON AND ELLAMARIE WOOLLEY**

*Artists - 1958*

CENTRAL LIBRARY MURAL

Fresno County Public Library

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## “BIBLIICOSMOS”

The jewel-colored 144 square foot mural expresses the essence of a library as the well organized source of a wealth of complex, diverse, yet interrelated knowledge.

The subject matter is arranged according to the Dewey Decimal system of book classification used by most libraries in the United States. The ten main categories, numbered from 000 to 900 as on the books and in the file catalogs, are symbolized in the mural by human figures, plants, animals, objects, signs, and words.

These symbolic forms are arranged in a series of rectangular areas suggesting the logical structure and organization of Man's Knowledge. The color sequences and flowing lines that move through these areas and cut across the geometric divisions indicate the close relationship and actual overlapping of the different fields of knowledge.

### **000 COLLECTED WORKS**

A tree abloom with colophons (old printer's marks once used at the ends of books) represents accumulated and published knowledge, which has been gathered by the tree's roots from all categories. Over a series of alphabetic divisions, typical of encyclopedias and other many-volume works, sits the owl, Athena's bird, a symbol of wisdom throughout the ages.

### **100 PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY**

The ancient Greek philosopher facing his mirrored image indicates the beginnings of Man's self study; the other figure, the continuation of this study into our more complicated modern era. Both hold geometric shapes symbolizing logical systems of thought. Above is a nerve cell, basis of the physical side of psychology. The peeled away masks reflect the mental and analytical aspects, revealing the real personality. The necklace below suggests optical illusions represented in some psychological tests.

## 200 RELIGION

A scroll bearing Socrates' dictum in Greek, "Know Thyself," indicates the carry-over of philosophic thought into religion, which is represented by the angel described in Revelation 10:1-6. The proffered book may be considered the element of inspired knowledge in any religion. Symbols of several faiths are shown: the Jewish Star of David; the Mohammedan Star and Crescent; the Lotus of Buddhism; the Ankh, ancient Egyptian symbol of eternal life; and the fish, early Christian symbol. The sign on the fish is the *Chrismon*, composed of the two Greek initial letters of the name Christ: "X" and "P". The letters forming the word "fish" in Greek (*Ichthys*) are the initial letters of five Greek words meaning: "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior": hence the use of fish as an early Christian symbol. The Ten Commandments are in Hebrew and represent basic religious law.

## 300 SOCIOLOGY

Extending into this section, the Ten Commandments also represent basic civil law, one of the many units included in Sociology. The family, shown as the unit of society with everything revolving around it, is a private element yet a part of a complicated social structure. Other components of Sociology include: race relations (hands), business and statistics (pie chart), finance (money), industry (cog wheels), transportation (wheel), communication (telephone), commerce, labor, agriculture, education. All are unified and protected by the spreading wings of the eagle-government.

## 400 PHILOLOGY

Thoreau's statement "Books are the treasured wealth of the world" is followed the word books translated into French, German, Spanish, Greek, Japanese, Russian, Armenian, and Latin. A cuneiform and another early written symbol are indicated.

## 500 SCIENCE

Scientific man, standing among symbols of traditional branches of science, holds the atom in his hand and reaches for the stars. Alchemy, one of the precursors of true science, is recalled by its symbols for glass, copper, and sulphur which were chosen because the mural is made of enamel, a form of glass, fused to copper that has been cleaned by sulfuric acid. Modern scientific thought is epitomized in Einstein's key formula " $E = mc^2$ ". Other branches of science represented are: chemistry (retort), astronomy (Sun, Dipper, and North Star), navigation (compass), physics (tuning fork, spectrum, magnetic fields of the earth), nuclear physics (atomic chain reaction), paleontology (fossil fern), mathematics (Einstein equation and spiral formula), biology (cell division, butterfly, nautilus shell), ornithology (bird feather), botany (section of wood, flower, microscopic view of algae, grapevine), anatomy (x-ray and bones of foot), geology (earth strata). The Lichtenberg figure (an electrical effect) ties in with many forms and figures found in nature.

## 600 USEFUL ARTS

The hands are engaged in various activities that derive their techniques in whole or part from the sciences or the arts. Agriculture is related to botany and geology, engineering to architecture and drawing. Electricity, practical chemistry, medicine, carpentry, mechanics, and domestic arts are also represented.

## 700 FINE ARTS

The theatrically costumed figure, dancing and playing a musical instrument, represents all the arts. Parts of the figure are rendered in different ways to signify drawing, painting, sculpture in stone, bronze sculpture, mosaics. Represented also are photography (negative), architecture (blueprint), sports (cross-section of stadium), the crafts (jewelry).

## 800 LITERATURE

The figure of art leads the mythological winged horse, Pegasus, the traditional symbol for the art of poetry. Below, in a sheaf of book illustrations are glimpsed several well-known characters from the world of fiction and drama. Left to right they are Medea, Romeo and Juliet, Mephistopheles, Don Quixote, Captain Ahab, Alice in Wonderland, and Tom Sawyer.

## 900 HISTORY

A totemic arrangement of the heads of several persons, famous in both history and literature, represents biography, which is a blend of these two categories. Those represented are Lincoln, Queen Victoria, Napoleon, Queen Elizabeth I, and Julius Caesar. History is summed up in figures of War and Peace. In the background, a scroll of time charting the rise and fall civilizations is partially unrolled. Here, emerging from its source in pre-history, begins thread of learning that wends a devious path through all the ten categories to the roots of the tree of knowledge in 000.

## MEDIUM OF THE MURAL

“**Bibliocosmos**” is composed of 416 pieces of enameled copper of various sizes, each of which was fired in a studio kiln at least six times. The enamel, a kind of glass which fuses to metal, was used in a dry form like fine sand. The colors are permanent and the surface has the lasting properties of glass. Each tile was cleaned in acid between each firing as layers of enamel were built up on both sides. The back or hidden side had to be counter-enameled to equalize the stresses on the metal. Only one piece could be fired at a time and it had to be carefully watched during its two to three minute firing period. The kiln temperature for firing is about 1450 degrees.

When the enameling was completed the units were mounted on Novoply panels of various sizes. These were transported to Fresno and fitted together on the wall to form the continuous design of the mural.

## A WORD ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Jackson and Ellamarie Woolley, a San Diego couple, have achieved acclaim for their work with enamel on copper, a medium with which they started working in 1947. There being at that time a lack of current information on the processes involved and no instruction available, they developed their own technique for this ancient art.

Ellamarie, a native San Diegan, received her art training at San Diego State College and Los Angeles Art Center. Jackson, born in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, enrolled in art courses at Claremont Graduate School in 1946 after eleven years of acting, directing, and teaching drama. At Claremont, a demonstration of the basic steps in enameling caught his interest and set the course he and his wife have followed ever since.

The work of the Woolleys has been shown in museums throughout the country and has received numerous prizes in national and regional ceramic exhibitions. One of their enamels was shown in the exhibit of American crafts in the 1958 Brussels World Fair. Jackson has served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the American Craftsmen's Council. Both are members of the San Diego Allied Craftsmen and Southern California Designer-Craftsmen, and Ellamarie is a member of the San Diego Art Guild.

The Woolleys were chosen from ninety-three artists by the citizens' Mural Committee, appointed by the Board of Supervisors. This committee worked with the artists in the development of the theme of the mural. The members of the committee were T. Newton Russell as Chairman, Mrs. Charles W. Bonner, Mrs. Ben R. Walker, Mrs. Margaret G. VanDussen, Supervisor Sloan McCormick, Lewis S. Eaton, and Robert M. Wash. James Nargis, representing the architect, was an *ex-officio* member.

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2420 Mariposa St. Fresno, CA

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