



Central Library project to feature lots of local art



OCTOBER 28, 2012 6:30 AM • [STEVEN ELBOW | THE CAPITAL TIMES](#) | SELBOW@MADISON.COM

City library and arts officials are finalizing plans to make Madison's Central Library a big part of the local arts scene.

In recent weeks the city commissioned two works of art for \$6,013 by two local artists. And the library has plans to incorporate work by local artists into the architectural plan.

The building will also feature a formal gallery venue for local artists, including a flat-screen

television for what may be the first running display for media artists in the city.

"There's a point at which you have to move beyond the architecture and you have to talk about what's going on inside the building," says Jenni Collins, executive director of the Madison Public Library Foundation. "There are a lot of plans for the use of art throughout the building."

The city is about halfway through the \$29.5 million renovation of the downtown library, which is slated for opening in the fall of 2013. And the foundation has recently launched a [website](#) that lets viewers get a look at what the inner spaces of the building will look like, including a taste of the artwork, which will include "Hieroglyph," the familiar O.V. Shaffer sculpture that graced the front of the building for decades, and Aaron Bohrod's 1965 mural that resided in the children's section.

"We all agreed that preserving the art that already existed there should be a priority," says Karin Wolf, the city's arts administrator.

The foundation's website is interactive, allowing visitors to click on features on each floor to see a sample of the artwork or a rendering of the inside spaces. The three-floor structure will feature a green roof and terrace, which will be the new home for Shaffer's sculpture. Shaffer himself came to town this week to help work out the details of the display.

The artists commissioned to create new artwork for the library are Heath Matysek-Snyder and Niki Johnson, who will incorporate furniture from the old building. Matysek-Snyder plans to create a functional sitting space by embedding furniture into stacked wood. Johnson will construct her work from colored metal bookends.

Other artistic touches include chairs, or "pods," constructed of bend wood by area woodworkers, and vinyl art by local artists, which will be placed throughout the building.

Wolf says other artworks, funded through contributions, may be incorporated into the library's collection over time.

"I've never been this excited about any municipal project," she says.

Crime and Courts



Steven Elbow has covered police and court issues for more than a decade in Wisconsin. He joined The Capital Times in 2000, where he has covered city, county and state government in addition to law enforcement. He has also worked for the Portage Daily Register and has written for the Isthmus weekly newspaper in Madison.

