



Art for the People: The Rediscovery and Preservation of Progressive and WPA-Era murals in the Chicago Public Schools, 1904-1943

Heather Becker

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Rediscovered a few years ago in woeful disrepair by a dedicated high school teacher, the murals of Chicago's public schools had long been painted over, torn down, forgotten. Dating back almost a century, these extraordinary murals, painted by celebrated artists such as Edgar Britton, Mitchell Siporin, Lucille Ward, and Edward Millman, were created during the Progressive (1904-1933) and New Deal (1933-1943) eras. *Art for the People* tells the inspiring story of their preservation: a project that brought conservators, historians, politicians, educators, and students together in a united cause, and that brought nearly 450 murals to light across nearly 70 schools-making this the largest mural preservation project in the U.S. as well as the largest concentration of historical murals in the country. Hundreds of color photos capture the dazzling array of murals and the restoration process. A complete reference and a finely produced record of a neglected treasure, *Art for the People* is a dramatic demonstration of the power of human hands working together not just to create art, but also to save it.

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