

#9 JONES LIBRARY - PRESERVATION SURVEY OF FRAMES FINE ARTS COLLECTION - HP - \$3,000

Community Preservation Act Committee- Proposal Request Form for FY 2018

Project Title: *Preservation Survey of Frames in the Jones Library Fine Arts Collection*

CPA funding category: Check all that apply

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Open Space |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Historic Preservation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Recreation |

Amount of CPA Funds Requested: \$3,000

Submitting Entity: The Jones Library, Inc.

Contact Person: Cynthia Harbeson

Phone: 413-259-3182

Email: harbesonc@joneslibrary.org

Please complete this form in its entirety and include the following in your proposal.

Overview of Proposal: Please describe your project and your feasibility analysis.

The Jones Library is requesting funds to complete a survey of the frames in its Fine Arts Collection. While the paintings in the Collection were appraised in 2012, the frames were not included and they have not been surveyed in the 90 years since the art was donated to the Library. It is of paramount importance that the frames are surveyed in order for them to be assessed for preservation concerns. The majority of the artwork has been on permanent display throughout the Library since the building opened in 1928. A previous CPAC proposal addressed the immediate conservation needs of several pieces of art, including four of the frames, but a thorough survey is needed to determine the extent to which additional conservation work is needed.

Many of the frames were produced by well-known American frame makers and some of these frames are worth more than the paintings they surround. In recent years, fine and important picture frames have received more attention and have begun to be studied in their own right. While most of the focus has been at museums, libraries such as ours also contain treasures worthy of attention. Under the direction of William Myers, who will conduct our frame survey, Smith College Museum of Art went through an intensive frame survey. Our survey will be the first of its kind for a public library and will bring attention to the institution and the collection which it houses. Overlooked frames brought to the spotlight with a properly executed survey that will aid in the understanding of the collection. Our collection is particularly unique because it contains many frames that are original to the paintings they surround, which is quite rare.

The frame survey will be conducted by a specialist who will begin cataloging information on each frame's importance, maker's marks, and construction techniques. The specialist will also identify, when possible, the maker of the frame. Annotations regarding the condition and treatment needs will be included based on visual observations and structural deficiencies and treatment priorities will be developed. The project will create a complete database with photographic documentation will note the creation of the frame, gilding techniques, workshop habits, and connections to the paintings they showcase. This database will be a resource for further work with the Fine Arts Collection and can be used by scholars and students can use for further study.

Describe how your request meets the CPA criteria:

1. Description of funding needed, including:

- a. Documentation of cost estimates, budget
- b. Other sources of funding, e.g., grants, self-funding, fund-raising
- c. Timeline on how CPA funds would be spent, including over multiple years

The funding is needed to hire a consultant to complete the frame survey. We have been in discussion with conservator William Myers, who completed the conservation work on several frames in our collection, and he has agreed to complete the survey. Mr. Myers estimates that it will take approximately two months to complete the assessment at a cost of \$3,000. This cost includes an individual assessment of each frame, photographic documentation, and any necessary research. There would be no other sources of funding for this project. CPA funds would be spent within a year after the project is approved.

2. Urgency of the Project, if any.

There is definitely a need to move forward with this project expeditiously. We cannot proceed with further art conservation work until we complete an assessment of the collection and several of the frames are visibly in need of conservation work. This survey will allow us to identify those frames most in need of conservation treatment and will allow us to prioritize that work.

3. Estimated timeline from receipt of funds to Project completion.

The survey will take approximately 2 months to complete and should be completed within the year after receipt of funds.

4. Acquisition or preservation of threatened resources.

Identifying and surveying the frames will allow us to better understand the collection and the overall preservation needs, including identifying which frames are in need of conservation treatment. Prioritizing this work will allow us to better preserve the frames that show signs of deterioration.

5. Population(s) to be served by the Project.

As the public library for the Town of Amherst, The Jones Library serves the entire population and its collections must be accessible to all. We hope that the survey will serve as an educational opportunity and a stepping stone toward bringing our Fine Arts Collection to the attention of a broader audience.

6. How will the CPA investment in your property, facility or project be maintained over time?

The Jones Library is committed to the preservation and care of its Fine Arts Collection. The majority of the paintings (and frames) are on display throughout the library. Additionally, this survey will make the collection more useful to scholars and art historians while also identifying preservation concerns so that we will be able to better care for the frames in the long-term.

7. Which relevant Town committees and/or commissions are you working with?

N/A

8. Other information regarding the Project deemed necessary for CPAC