



Kansas Wetlands: A Wildlife Treasury

Joseph T. Collins, Suzanne L. Collins

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Travelers in Kansas in search of fine art needn't restrict themselves to the state's many excellent museums. They need look no further than the walls of their own communities to discover a remarkable array of murals—artistic creations that are striking, democratic, and easily accessible. Depicting Civil War history, the fruits of agriculture, Kansas' diverse cultural roots, and much more, these long-neglected works are now the subject of Lora Jost and Dave Loewenstein's fine new book.

Jost and Loewenstein, artists themselves, have crisscrossed Kansas researching and documenting over 600 murals to promote, preserve, and celebrate this vibrant public art. Theirs is the first and only book devoted exclusively to Kansas murals—a striking visual travelogue that offers a new perspective on the state's culture and history.

From unique small-town creations like Dennis Burghart's *The Saga of the Santa Fe* outside the Offerle Cafe to the world-famous John Steuart Curry painting of John Brown in the state capitol, murals constitute an enormous public art gallery. Some are socially compelling or were once the focus of intense controversy. Many are group projects in which artists have served as coordinators; these murals represent true expressions of their communities. All show the state as it has been seen through the eyes of Kansas artists over the past hundred years.

The authors focus on ninety exemplary murals—including mosaics and friezes—organized by region and featuring full-color photographs, brief descriptions, and notes on the artists. From Sacred Heart Cathedral to the Early Childhood Center on the Potawatomi Prairie Band Reservation, the artworks selected represent some of the most enduring and powerful images to be found throughout the state. The book also provides regional locator maps for travelers and a list of all 600-plus murals with their locations.

A unique resource that attests to the rich diversity of the mural tradition, this book is an open invitation to visit the open-air museum of Kansas murals and appreciate the stories they tell and their place in public life. They may be tucked into urban landscapes or require travel to out-of-the way locales; some may even be stained by years of exposure to the elements; but these expressions of public art are there for the viewing—and now, thanks to this book, there for the finding.

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