

MPL installs new sculpture of architect H.H. Richardson

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The Malden Public Library (MPL) has installed a stunning new sculpture of Henry Hobson Richardson, the architect that designed and built the historic Converse Memorial Building, which houses part of the Library. This addition to the MPL's art collection has been installed in the Library's art galleries, which are free and open to the public.

Philadelphia artist Morgan Dummitt created the 34" x 18" sculpture, which was cast in plaster. It is in the bas-relief style, where the image projects slightly from the background. The piece is framed in historic oak sourced from the original Richardson building. Dan Neenan of Minuteman Building & Preservation built the frame.

Dummitt says he created the piece to honor Richardson for his contribution to American architecture and the creation of the Richardson Romanesque style, which was heavily influenced by 11th– and 12th-century French, Spanish and Italian architecture. At

the time Elisha Converse commissioned Richardson to design Malden's Public Library, he was already recognized as one of the top architects of the 19th century.

Richardson is credited with more than 60 major works, including Boston's Trinity Church, Albany's New York State Capitol building and Quincy's Thomas Crane Public Library. The Converse Memorial Building, which opened in 1885 at a cost of \$125,000, reportedly, was his most expensive public library design. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1987.

Richardson frequently collaborated with his neighbor, renowned landscape architect [Frederick Law Olmsted](#). In fact, the two traveled to Malden together to choose the building's permanent site before Olmsted designed the Library's enclosed garden, which was recently updated with a new irrigation system, rain sensor, new storm drains and plants.

The trust that Elisha Converse established, along with generous donations, funds the Library's upkeep, renovations, art, books and garden. The Library's Board of Trustees — nine dedicated local Malden residents who donate their time, energy and expertise — oversee the trust, ensuring responsible stewardship of these funds. The MPL is located at 36 Salem St. For more information, visit <https://maldenpubliclibrary.org>.