



# When Tillage Begins, Other Arts Follow: Grant Wood and Christian Petersen Murals

*Lea Rosson DeLong*

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In 1927, President Raymond Hughes began planning aesthetic improvements to the Iowa State campus. In 1933, at the depth of the Great Depression, and in an act that dramatically illustrates his artistic commitment, he began discussion with Grant Wood and Christian Petersen for each to create a significant mural cycle for the Iowa State College campus in Ames. The federal New Deal's Public Works of Art Project began in 1934 and offered a grand opportunity to employ artists in executing Grant Wood's painted mural for the library, *When Tillage Begins, Other Arts Follow*, and Christian Petersen's sculpted mural for the Dairy Industry Building, *The History of Dairying*. This book presents the first history of the Public Works of Art Project in Iowa and the first in-depth examination of the Grant Wood and Christian Petersen murals at Iowa State College. It also discusses the co-operative painting group that Grant Wood developed and illuminates the collaborative nature of the Iowa Project among its artists, as well as between the State University of Iowa in Iowa City and Iowa State College in Ames. The Public Works of Art Project experience constituted a watershed in Wood's career and a catalyzing experience for Petersen's career.

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