How it was made:

John Bartlett built and installed forms made of spruce wood to reshape rectangular support columns. He rounded the tree trunks with carving tools and endless sanding. Hand-made branches and twigs completed the sculptural detailing.

Melinda Mattson painted painstakingly, with a section of birch log as inspiration. If you look closely, you'll find many unusual colors in the tree bark, as you might on real birch trunks. If the largest tree were a flat canvas, it would stand 10 feet tall and 5 feet wide.

Janlee Irving created colorful leaves and 28 small birds and creatures out of fabric and careful embroidery. Glass eyes, leather beaks and wire feet help each sculpture closely match a true-life species found in Interior Alaska.

The Library Foundation is a not-for-profit organization formed to benefit Fairbanks North Star Borough Public Libraries by supporting special library projects. It operates with tax-deductible donations from the public.
Alaskan Birch Grove

The artists aimed to complement the woodland themes of William D. Berry’s library mural, *An Alaskan Fairy Tale*. An observer’s eye moves from the mural to the birch tree sculptures, and then to the real birch trees outside the windows.

Three life-sized birch trees seem to grow through the floor and ceiling of the Berry Room. They arch over the entrance to the library’s story room. Children and adults alike stop to search the branches for small birds, bugs, animals and maybe a little magic. The colors of the leaves reveal the seasonal cycles of life in Interior Alaska.

Three local artists combined their talents to design and create this woodland scene. John Bartlett, local carpenter and artist, built the tree trunks and branches. His experience constructing theater sets helped him manage the structural details of this project.

Melinda Mattson, actor, set designer and artist, painted the trees and the plants at their bases. A seamstress and fiber artist, Janlee Irving, created the leaves and life-like cloth sculpture birds and animals that inhabit the trees.

Look for these creatures in the branches:

**Spring tree**
- 2 American robins, male and female
- 2 yellow-rumped warblers (myrtle)

**Arch** (between spring and center trees)
- Boreal chickadee (flying away)
- Black-capped chickadee
- Ruby-crowned kinglet, male
- Golden-crowned kinglet
- Dragonfly and fairy
- No-see-ums and a house fly
- Red squirrel

**Center tree, summer and fall:**
- Hairy woodpecker
- Red-breasted nuthatch
- Ruby-crowned kinglet, female
- Wilson’s warbler
- White-crowned sparrow

Three local artists combined their talents to design and create this woodland scene. John Bartlett, local carpenter and artist, built the tree trunks and branches. His experience constructing theater sets helped him manage the structural details of this project.

Melinda Mattson, actor, set designer and artist, painted the trees and the plants at their bases. A seamstress and fiber artist, Janlee Irving, created the leaves and life-like cloth sculpture birds and animals that inhabit the trees.

**Mobile**:
- Common raven
- Gray jay
- Pine grosbeak
- 2 redpolls
- 2 boreal chickadees
- 3 black-capped chickadees

**Winter tree**:
- Black-capped chickadee
- Boreal owl with a vole

A male robin returns to the nest with dinner.