



Through the ARTS

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Overview of the TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

1934: A New Deal for Artists The Mennello Museum of American Art

From February 11 – May 1, 2011, The Mennello Museum of American Art is presenting *1934: A New Deal for Artists*, which features paintings on loan from the Smithsonian American Art Museum. The exhibition provides a unique way for students in grades four through twelve to learn about history through primary source material.

Faced with tough economic times during the 1930s, American artists celebrated our nation's drive and determination. This exhibition recognizes the seventy-fifth anniversary of the federal Public Works Art project. Lasting only six months, from mid-December 1933 to June 1934, the New Deal program employed artists during the Great Depression and encouraged them to depict the American Scene.

From *1934: A New Deal for Artists*, flyer by The Mennello Museum of American Art

Based on the categories represented in the exhibition, the Teacher Resource Guide contains six lessons that each begin with an exploration of a painting from the exhibition. This exploration helps students develop observation skills through the visual arts, and asks them to develop and use critical thinking skills. All the images are accessible at the Smithsonian American Museum's website addresses provided in the lesson plans.

Each lesson features writing assignments that require students to use critical thinking skills while writing in a variety of styles. All the lessons fulfill requirements of Florida's *Sunshine State Standards* in Reading/Language Arts and Visual Arts. Although the specific benchmark for each grade will vary, the standard given is uniform across grade levels. There are Social Studies/History extensions for each lesson, as well as specific suggestions for music, drama, creative movement and additional visual arts activities.







For ease of use, the parts of each lesson that are appropriate for all grade levels are printed **black**. Strategies that are more appropriate for elementary grades are in **green**. Middle school teachers may find that the core ideas in these suggestions are appropriate with modifications. Lesson strategies for secondary level students are printed in **purple**.



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The lessons (by section) are:

	<p>The American People</p> <p><i>Writing a Letter to Eleanor Roosevelt</i></p>		<p>Leisure</p> <p><i>Writing a Sports Article</i></p>
	<p>Labor</p> <p><i>Writing a Journal Entry from a Laborer's Point of View</i></p>		<p>The City</p> <p><i>Writing about Skyscrapers</i> (Graphic novels and Calligrammes)</p>
	<p>Industry</p> <p><i>Writing Descriptive Poems about Trains</i></p>		<p>The Country</p> <p><i>The Art of Persuasion: Writing a Travel Brochure</i></p>

Go to <http://www.mennellomuseum.com> to download these lesson plans. If you are interested in studying more background information about the exhibition and each of the artworks, the “exhibition book” will be useful: Ann Prentice Wagner, *1934: A New Deal for Artists*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2009. Another excellent source of information is the Smithsonian website: <http://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/archive/2009/1934>.

This wonderful exhibition, *1934: A New Deal for Artists*, will be on display at the Museum through May 1, 2011. To arrange a class field trip, please contact Genevieve Bernard, Education Curator, at (407) 246-4278, ext. 4861.

We hope that you and your class will be able to visit the exhibition and use these lessons to reinforce your experience. Seeing the REAL paintings in a museum environment (a new endeavor for many students!) is an important learning experience all on its own!

Please share your experiences with *1934: A New Deal for Artists*, by emailing Dr. Palmer at MPalmerAssoc@aol.com.

Susan Rosoff and Dr. Mary Palmer, Mary Palmer & Associates



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Credits

Photographs of Artwork

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Somewhere in America, 1934

Robert Brackman

Born: Odessa, Russia 1898

Died: New London, Connecticut 1980

oil on canvas 30 1/8 x 25 1/8 in. (76.5 x 63.9 cm.)

Smithsonian American Art Museum

Transfer from the U.S. Department of Labor

1964.1.75

LABOR

Employment of Negroes in Agriculture, 1934

Earle Richardson

Born: New York, New York 1912

Died: New York, New York 1935

oil on canvas 48 x 32 1/8 in. (121.8 x 81.6 cm.)

Smithsonian American Art Museum Transfer from the U.S. Department of Labor

1964.1.183

INDUSTRY

Engine House and Bunkers, 1934

Austin Mecklem

Born: Colfax, Washington 1894

Died: Kingston, New York 1951

oil on canvas 38 x 50 1/4 in. (96.5 x 127.6 cm.)

Smithsonian American Art Museum Transfer from the U.S. Department of Labor

1964.1.46

LEISURE

Baseball at Night, 1934

Morris Kantor

Born: Minsk, Russia 1896

Died: Nyack, New York 1974

oil on linen 37 x 47 1/4 in. (94.0 x 120.0 cm.)

Smithsonian American Art Museum Gift of Mrs. Morris Kantor

1976.146.18

THE CITY

Lower Manhattan, 1934

Thomas James Delbridge

Born: Atlanta, Georgia 1894

Died: New York 1968

oil on canvas 26 1/8 x 30 1/4 in. (66.3 x 76.9 cm)

Smithsonian American Art Museum

Transfer from the U.S. Department of Labor

1964.1.51



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THE COUNTRY

Minnesota Highway, 1934

Erle Loran

Born: Minneapolis, Minnesota 1905

Died: Berkeley, California 1999

oil on canvas 30 1/8 x 36 in. (76.5 x 91.5 cm.)

Smithsonian American Art Museum

Transfer from the U.S. Department of Labor

1964.1.104

Exhibition Sponsors

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