



Press Release

February 2011

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

On view February 11 through May 1, 2011

In 1934, Americans grappled with an economic situation that feels all too familiar today. Against the backdrop of the Great Depression, the U.S. Government created the Public Works of Art Program – the first federal government program to support the arts nationally. “1934: A New Deal for Artists” celebrates the 75th anniversary of the Public Works of Art Program by drawing on the Smithsonian American Art Museum's unparalleled collection of vibrant paintings created for the program.

Federal officials in the 1930s understood how essential art was to sustaining America's spirit. During the depths of the Great Depression, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's administration created the Public Works of Art Program, which lasted only six months from mid-December 1933 to June 1934. The President realized that Americans needed not only employment, but also the inspiration that art could provide. Artists from across the United States who participated in the program were encouraged to depict “the American Scene” but they were allowed to interpret this idea freely. They painted regional, recognizable subjects that reminded the public of quintessential American values such as hard work, sense of community, and optimism. These artworks, which were displayed in schools, libraries, post offices, museums and government buildings, vividly capture the realities and ideals of Depression-era America.

During the 1960s, approximately 150 paintings from the Public Works of Art Program were transferred to the Smithsonian Art Museum. The works in the exhibit are drawn from that collection.

“1934: A New Deal for Artists is organized and circulated by the Smithsonian American Art Museum with support from the William R. Kenan Jr. Endowment Fund and the Smithsonian council for American Art. The C.F. Foundation in Atlanta supports the museum's traveling exhibition program, Treasures to Go.”

What: 1934: A New Deal for Artists exhibition

Where: Mennello Museum of American Art, 900 E. Princeton Street, Orlando, FL 32803

When: February 11-May 1, 2011

Related Events:

1943: A New Deal for Artists Opening reception, Friday, February 18, 6-8pm
Reception to preview the exhibition. \$5, Members attend free, Catering by Ruth's Chris, Cash Bar

Evening with the Director, Tuesday, March 8, & Tuesday, April 12, 6pm
Gallery walk with Director Frank Holt. Walk included in general admission. Reservations required. Call 407.246.4278

Family Day, Sunday, March 13 & Sunday, April 10
12:30pm, family arts and craft activities; children's workshop at 1pm; 2pm guided tour. FREE

The Mennello Museum of American Art

900 E. Princeton Street, Orlando, FL 32803
Ph. (407) 246-4278, www.mennellomuseum.com

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General Information

Admission:

Adults: \$4 + tax
Seniors (60+): \$3 + tax
Students (with ID): \$1
Children under 12: free

Members always free

Museum Hours:

Closed Mondays
Tuesday-Saturday: 10:30am-4:30pm
Sunday: Noon-4:30pm
Closed major holidays