

A New Deal for the Arts

The Great Depression began after the Stock Market Crash in October 1929, and millions were suddenly out of work. President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the New Deal to provide financial relief for the unemployed. The WPA (Works Progress Administration) was part of that effort designed to assist artists by commissioning them to produce art in all mediums. This work was then placed in public buildings including schools, hospitals and libraries. It was, in a sense, a cultural affirmative action and brought the American audience and the American artist face to face for the first time.

At its conclusion, the official record of WPA commissioned works totaled over 100,000 easel paintings in oil, watercolor, tempera and pastel; nearly 18,000 pieces of sculpture; about 2500 murals; and some 250,000 prints of over 11,000 original designs. No one pressured the artists to paint what was popular and, for the most part, they enjoyed the freedom to express what they wished in the way they chose, although a recurring theme was the strength and dignity of common men and women as they faced difficult circumstances.

We would like to thank the following schools for loaning their artwork:

Clara W. Barton
Newton Bateman Elementary School
Alexander Graham Bell School
John C. Burroughs School
John Calhoun North School
Stephen Hayt School

Eugene Field School – Region 1 will host the first WPA traveling exhibit in May 2002 which will continue to August. The exhibit will then move to a Region 2 school (TBA).

Leap Frog
Burton Freund
c. 1939
Wood carving
36" x 54"



Reading
Burton Freund
c. 1939
Wood carving
36" x 54"



Trainers Tent
Russell Gefen
1937
Oil on canvas
37" x 35"



Circus Panel I
Ralph Johnstone
1937
Gouache on paper
24.5" x 30.5"



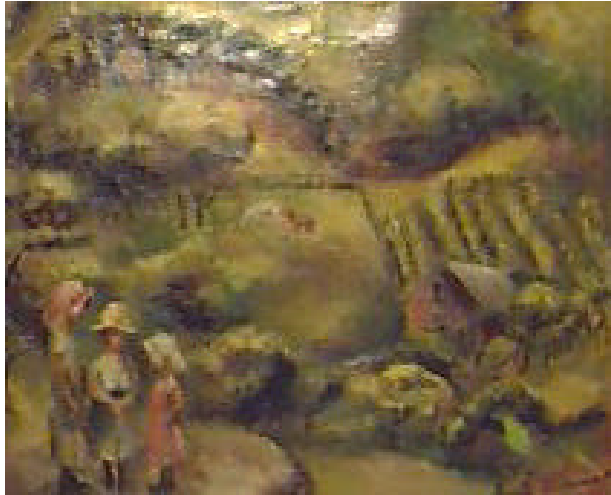
Circus Panel II
Ralph Johnstone
1937
Gouache on paper
24.5" x 30.5"



Winter Backyard
Charlotte Rothstein
1939
Oil on canvas
36" x 42"



Ozark Conversation
Isadore Weiner
1938
Oil on canvas
30" x 26"



Neighbors
Ellsworth Young
c. 1940
Watercolor on paper
22" x 21.5"

