

## Made in America

### Tour Description

History and literature come alive through objects created in North America from ancient times to the present. View Native American hide paintings and beaded moccasins, Hmong textiles, African-American paintings, and European-American portraits, landscapes, sculptures, decorative arts, and period rooms.

**Tour Objective** This tour introduces the visitor to the art produced on the North American continent by Americans of diverse backgrounds.

**Means** Select a variety of objects, including examples of Native American art, portraiture, landscape painting, sculpture, decorative arts and a period room. Include examples of works by Americans of other non-European backgrounds as well.

For any thematic approach to American art, also consider works on view in either the photography galleries or in the MAEP exhibitions. These will both change periodically.

### Themes

***What is American Art?*** We used to ask the question “What is ‘American’ about American art?” Today, it is more appropriate to ask “What *is* American art?” Explore this question while looking closely at a variety of art works.

Are the 18th-century portraits produced by European immigrants and their descendants “American”? What makes them “American”?

Is any art produced on the North American continent “American”? Do we refer to the objects made by native peoples of North America as “American”?

In the development of art on this continent, when did Euro-American artists stop relying on European tradition and produce art in response to this land? (Some would point to the 19th-century landscapes. Others would argue that there was no “American” art until abstract expressionism.)

The goal of this line of inquiry is intended to stimulate your visitors to think (perhaps in new ways) rather than to reach specific conclusions. In the process, you will examine the history as well as the artistic production of this country.

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**Art as a  
Reflection of  
History**

This theme is particularly recommended for social studies classes. Use a chronological approach, if possible. Your selections could include some of the following objects:

**Native American**

Mississippian pottery – pre-contact artistic tradition  
Bandolier bag – influence of European design and material  
Elk hide – reservation period for Plains peoples  
Tipi cover – historic conflicts; production of tourist objects  
Lakota dress – traditional design; ceremonial garments

**18th century**

American period rooms – ways of life  
Portraits – art as status objects  
Badger, *Mary Crosswell*, 1763, 70.33.6  
Copley, *Mrs. Nathaniel Allen*, about 1763, 41.3  
Stuart, *James Ward*, 1779, 16.2

**19th century**

Sully, *George Washington*, c. 1820, 32.12, leader of revolution, importance of heroic figures in post-revolutionary period  
Jarvis, *Portrait of Captain Reid*, 1815, 45.6  
Peto, *Reminiscences of 1865*, after 1900, 44.25 – Lincoln and the post-Civil War period  
Folk art – paintings, Oddfellows objects, weathervanes, painted furniture  
Landscapes – exploration and development of the American landscape:  
    Cropsey's *Catskill Mountain House*, 1855, 31.47  
    Bierstadt's *Merced River in Yosemite*, 1868, 81.6  
    Moran's *Scene on Tohickon Creek*, 1868, 68.82  
    Arthur Wesley Dow, *The Destroyer*, c. 1911-1913, 2009.62  
Minnesota scenes in paintings by Lewis or Fournier  
Upton's photographs of St. Anthony and Minneapolis  
Photographs by Ansel Adams and William Henry Jackson  
Melchers, Ridgway Knight, Sargent – Americans who studied or lived in Europe  
Russell, Catlin – “documenting” Native Americans

**20th century**

Mythology of the West – Remington, Couse, Wyeth, Jackson, Curtis  
Bellows, *Mrs. T. in Cream Silk*, 1920, 60.33 – nostalgia for the past  
Hassam, Twachtman – American artists study abroad, influence of Impressionism  
O'Keeffe – Modernism, response to American landscape, construction of skyscrapers in modern cities  
Grant Wood – development of Regionalism, the Depression  
Walker Evans – documentary photography, the Depression

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**20th century  
(cont'd)**

Bearden, Catlett – Social Realism  
Calder – sculpture, the mobile  
Hunter – folk art and African-American experience  
Dorothea Tanning – American Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism  
Guston or Hartigan – post-WWII period, Abstract Expressionism  
Louise Nevelson – Abstract Expressionism and Sculpture, The Art Students League  
Ernie Whiteman, George Morrison, Arthur Amiotte, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Francis Yellow – contemporary Native American artists  
Thompson, *Homage to Nina Simone*, 1965, 89.9.38  
Stella, Close, Dine – modern art  
Lichtenstein, Wesselman, Warhol – impact of pop culture  
Eames, Wright, Purcell & Elmslie, and Stickley – furniture and home design  
Cindy Sherman - Postmodernism

**Contemporary**

Photographs by Alec Soth  
Cy Thao's paintings of the Hmong Migration  
Siah Armanjani, *An Exile Dreaming of Saint Adorno*, 2009, 2010.22  
*Mississippi Delta*, 2005, 2010.100a-c  
Catherine Opie, *Untitled #14, Icehouses*, 2001, 2010.58.1  
Mequitta Ahuja, *Tresses IV*, 2008, 2010.17  
Cynthia Lin, *crop2aCrop7detMouth89*, 2008, 2010.90.1a-c  
Rebecca Belmore, *Fringe*, 2007, 2010.56

**Women in  
American Art**

For this tour, include images of women, art made by women, objects used by women, and/or combinations of the three. Consider the following suggested objects.

**Depictions of  
women**

Copley, *Sarah Allen*, about 1763, 41.3  
Eakins, *Elizabeth L. Burton*, 1905-1096, 39.53  
Bellows, *Mrs. T. in Cream Silk, No. 2*, 1920, 60.33  
Thompson, *Nina Simone*, 1965, 89.938 \*not on view  
Wesselman, *Pink Vinyl Nude*, 1962, 1996.22 \*not on view  
Lichtenstein, *Vicky* 1964, 79.12.23  
Clementine Hunter, *The Wash*, 1950s, 91.88.2  
Woman in Cadzi Cody's *Scenes of Plains Indian Life* hide, about 1880, 85.92

**Art made by  
women**

Lakota woman's dress, about 1880-1890, 74.64.5  
Bandolier bags, 1830-1910, 2002.166, 2003.32, 2000.138.1, 2005.27.4  
Southwestern pottery

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**Art made by  
women (cont'd)**

Georgia O'Keeffe paintings:

*City Night*, 1926, 80.28

*Pedernal – From the Ranch #1*, 1956, 63.43.2

Grace Hartigan, *Billboard*, 1957, 57.35

Clementine Hunter paintings such as *The Wash*, 1950s, 91.88.2

Claire Zeisler textiles

Photographs by Berenice Abbott, Dorothea Lange, Diane Arbus and others

Hmong textiles

Louise Nevelson, *Sky Shadow, Lead*, 1973, P.99.26.1

Dorothea Tanning

*Tempest in Yellow*, 1956, 2007.44

*Cinquième peril*, 1950, P.92.18

Refer to entry on “Women and Art” tour for further ideas.