

The Arts and American History

The panorama of American art is the panorama of American history

Course #	21SAH
Format:	Seminar
Moderator(s):	Gordon Wyse, Betty Romer
Date and Time:	Monday, 1:30-3:30 PM 10 weeks, starting February 22
Location:	ONLINE, via Zoom
Maximum number of participants:	16
Auditors accepted:	No

Purpose: The arts of America serve as a lens into American life. We will study images from various art forms (including photography, sculpture, architecture) as they describe subjects, events, or periods of American history

Description: Painting in the life of the English settlers began in the 17th century. Not by artists as the term came to mean, but by artisans, often itinerant, who were painting fences, signs, or portraits of family members, their art an extension of utilitarian tasks. What they created can still be seen as our cultural beginnings and also as important historical documents. What they began was continued over the centuries by painters, sculptors, architects and photographers who left us images of the time, which are part of our historical as well as artistic heritage. These images bring us face-to-face with extraordinary people (and ordinary people, too). Dramatic battle scenes give visual shape to the war that founded this nation and those that came later. Paintings of everyday life reinforced popular notions of national identity and character. But visual images that inevitably linger in our consciousness may also tell us stories that are false or misleading.

Role of participants: Each participant will choose either a subject (e.g., railroads, or farming) or a time (the Gilded Age, or the Great Depression) and create a visual presentation of about 30 minutes. Presenters are urged to use Power Point or similar programs. Assistance with Power Point is available if needed.

Resources: N/A

About the Moderators: Betty Romer is new to LIR but not to art history. Since retiring from Amherst College, she has been a docent at the Springfield Art Museum for many years. Gordon Wyse is a biologist who knows about as much about art as the average biologist. But he is curious and has led several seminars on various topics.