

LESSON 3: TEXAS HALL OF STATE

TOPIC: Celebrations: Texas Pride with the Texas Hall of State

OBJECTIVE: Students will:

Extend the study of Celebrations through examining the Texas Hall of State structure and how, by definition, it reflects a Celebration.

Examine the role of the art in the Texas Hall of State and how it supports the idea of celebration.

Discover unique aspects of the Hall that reveal the artist's use of symbolism and Regionalism.

Explore the role of the government in the creation of art during the Great Depression through the Public Works of Art Project.

Analyze the important people who were highlighted in the Texas Hall of State.

SYNOPSIS: The Hall of State was one of the most prominent buildings at the Texas Centennial, located at the end of a long esplanade. It housed works of art and sculpture that praised the history of Texas with statues of famous Texans. Art was utilized in the building entrance and all through the halls there were paintings which reflected a new art style called Regionalism.

INFORMATION:

THE HALL OF STATE

The Hall of State was built in 1936 to commemorate the Texas Centennial and considered the “crown jewel” of the Centennial. Through its patriotic symbolic art, this building represents four centuries of Texas history, heroism, and achievement under the flags of six nations, and served as a shrine and memorial to Texas pioneers. The Hall of State is considered one of the best examples of Art Deco architecture in the state.

The outside of the building is decorated with a frieze with carved flowers in Texas limestone and names of recognizable Texas heroes. Inside the building there were sculptures of famous Texans such as Sam Houston. The Dallas Nine, composed of 9 local artists, thought they would be painting the murals for the State Building. They were unhappy to learn that an artist from Yale, Eugene Savage, would paint and represent Texas history. Savage was allowed to select artists to paint regional scenes. Some were local artists. However, the local artists were unhappy that an outsider was going to paint their history. Savage painted two 90-foot murals that were proclaimed as the largest murals in the world.

Because of the Depression, the federal government provided financial aid to artists who were without jobs. Much of this art was funded by the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP). This resulted in an art movement called Regionalism. The art focused on the people of the region, their history, and the importance of nationalism. The murals created and almost mythical romanticism of the past. These paintings by artists employed as part of Roosevelt’s New Deal helped raise the spirits of the Great Depression by showing that Americans had survived hard times and could handle the future.

The mural, *Texas of History* focused on the beginning of Texas with the Alamo and independence from Mexico and Stephen F. Austin. The mural, *Texas of Today* illustrated the Civil War, cultural

depictions, the education system of Texas, and commercial interests. Both murals were painted by Olin Travis of Dallas, Texas.

Regional rooms did not focus on history but seemed to glorify the region of the State that they were assigned. For example, the Eastern Room had murals by Olin Travis titled, *East Texas Before Oil* and *East Texas After Oil* showing the change from rural to urban.

Before Oil



After Oil



The Western Room focused on the cowboy icon and westward expansion. Tom Lea, an artist from El Paso painted *Cowboy Mural* and *Family Mural*. His murals focused on the cowboy myth and families in covered wagons crossing the Western frontier. They showed the importance of the cattle industry to the economy of the state and the conquest of the local range.



The Northern Room has one mural that shows change from rural to urban life by Arthur Starr Niendorf, from Marshall Texas. His mural was unnamed but used the Old Man Texas, a fictional character created by Cartoonist John Knott. This character is holding a family and buildings found in Dallas. With the emphasis on the importance of economic development, this mural blended reality with fiction. He created the only fresco in the building.



The Southern Room had a mural painted by James Owen Mahoney, Jr. He said it was “more of a state of mind, not an actual place.” He graduated from SMU and Yale. His mural has steamboats, missions, yucca plants and magnolias as well as a patchwork quilt. The mural was intentionally symbolic.



The Hall of State was the center of the Texas Centennial Exposition. Many thought it might overshadow the capitol at Austin and some people thought people might think the capitol had moved to Dallas. This was a very emotional walk for many Texans. Men would take off their hats as a sign of homage and respect to the statues and one woman said, "Gosh, honey, aint's you glad we're Texans".

The central hall showed the past of Texas, and the regional rooms showed the life of the people who lived in the surrounding areas. The term "glorious past" was used often to romanticize the history of Texas.

HALL OF HEROES

One of the Hall of State's great features were the bronze statues of six men who were chosen by Texas historians because they believed these men to be most worthy of commemorating. The statues were created by Pompeo Coppini. The statues were of the following men:

James W. Fannin
Mirabeau B. Lamar
Stephen F. Austin
Sam Houston
Thomas Jefferson Rusk
William Barret Travis

Across the hall is a bronze plaque that has the names of the defenders of the Alamo:

William Travis
David Crockett
Jim Bowie
James Bonham

ACTIVITIES/ASSESSMENTS: Choose one activity to complete.

1. Select one of the six heroes and create a 4-5 slide PowerPoint documenting who they were, what they did and why they were selected for the Hall of Heroes.
2. Click on one of the names: David Crockett, James Bowie and James Bonham whose names were on the bronze plaque that were defenders of the Alamo. Debate with your classmates the following questions:
 1. What specifically did these men do that they should/should not have been one of the statues in the Hall of Heroes.
 2. How would the addition of Crockett, or of Bowie, or of Bonham have affected the Hall of Heroes?
 3. Who are the people that would have most liked a Crockett statue to be in the Hall?

3. <https://www.theartstory.org/movement/american-regionalism/>
Read the information about the art movement called Regionalism.

Examine the paintings/murals in the Hall of State to find characteristics of Regionalism in the art of Eugene Savage, Tom Lea, Olin Thomas, Arthur Starr Niendroff, and James Owen Mahoney Jr. Create a PowerPoint to introduce Regionalism history and characteristics. Compare and contrast examples/non examples from the other artists.

4. Create a collage of your personal “region”. This could include your bedroom, house, neighborhood, school, place of worship, or community. Add items of interest and any symbolic items that represent your surroundings and interests.

5. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/1934-the-art-of-the-new-deal-132242698/>

What was the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP)? What was its purpose and impact on the art at the Texas Centennial?

Complete the Crossword Puzzle : <https://crosswordlabs.com/view/public-works-of-art-project>

OR

Fill in the blanks of the Public Works of Arts Project worksheet attached to this lesson.

Celebration or Not?

Lesson 3: Building the Hall of State

Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments
Positive event			
Social interaction with others			
Looked to the past			
Remembered past accomplishments.			
Reflected on what was done well and what could be done differently.			
Took stock of people and resources needed to move forward.			
Paved the way for future success.			
People felt more supported after participation.			

Public Works of Art Project (PWAP)

Read the PWAP information. Using the list at the bottom of the page, fill in the blanks with the correct answer.

1. _____ was a federally funded program to provide income for artists during The Depression.
2. _____ was the woman who helped convince the President of the United States (POTUS) to allow artists to be a part of PWAP.
3. _____ are objects created by use of hands, like embroidery, leatherwork etc., included in the PWAP.
4. Statues are a form of _____.
5. Artists were recruited for PWAP by reading it in the _____.
6. Applicants for PWAP were required to _____ they were professional artists and pass a _____ test.
7. _____ are the public spaces where PWAP artists work can still be seen.
8. _____ are large paintings which were created for the Hall of State.
9. _____ was a time of economic lows and high unemployment in 1929-1939.
10. Artists were considered to not have real _____, like manufacturing or farming.
11. _____ was the place where the PWAP artwork was exhibited for sale.
12. Artists were held to the same value as “real” _____.
13. Artists were placed in Level _____ which determined their salary.
14. A painting titled, _____ was purchased by Mrs. Roosevelt.

Public Works of Art Projects
Needs
Crafts
The Skyscrapers
The Corcoran Gallery

Sculpture
The Great Depression
Eleanor Roosevelt
Newspapers
Prove

One
Jobs
Workers
Murals
Government Buildings

**PWAP FILL IN BLANKS
ANSWERS:**

7. Government Buildings	
9.The Great Depression	6.Prove
12. Jobs	6.Needs
8.Murals	13.One
3. Crafts	2. Eleanor Roosevelt
4.Sculpture	11.Corcoran Gallery
12. Workers	14.The Skyscrapers
5.Newspapers	1.Public Works of Art

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

<https://crosswordlabs.com/view/public-works-of-art-project>

REFERENCES:

Six Secrets of the Hall of State

<https://artandseek.org/2021/09/28/state-fair-adventures-6-secrets-of-the-hall-of-state/>

Pictures

<http://www.watermelon-kid.com/places/FairPark/hh-tour/hos/hos-east-west.htm>

<http://www.watermelon-kid.com/places/FairPark/hh-tour/hos/hos-hoh.htm>

<http://www.watermelon-kid.com/places/FairPark/images/etex-640.jpg>

<http://www.watermelon-kid.com/places/FairPark/images/wtex-mural1.jpg>

<http://www.watermelon-kid.com/places/FairPark/images/etex-mural2.jpg>

<http://www.watermelon-kid.com/places/FairPark/images/ntex-640.jp>

<http://www.watermelon-kid.com/places/FairPark/images/stex-640.jpg>

Hall of State

<https://www.fairparkdallas.com/discover/cultural-institutions/dallas-historical-society-hall-of-state>

Regionalism

<https://www.theartstory.org/movement/american-regionalism/>

Public Works of Art Project

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/1934-the-art-of-the-new-deal-132242698/>