



# *Artful Connections* Teacher Guide:

## Lure of the West

Grades 4+



**Videoconference programs at the Smithsonian American Art Museum are supported by the Smithsonian Women's Committee.**



## Tips for a Successful Videoconference

### *Before the Videoconference*

- Check with your technology coordinator to ensure your school has compatible videoconferencing equipment (H.323 protocol).
- At least four weeks prior** to your preferred dates, schedule your videoconference with the Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration (CILC): <http://www.cilc.org>. Search the list of content providers for Smithsonian American Art Museum to view a list of our programs. All requests made on CILC will be routed to the museum and our staff will contact you to set up a test call.

*Please note:* We recommend you book early due to high demand for limited time slots.

- At least one week prior** to your program date:
  - Staff will contact you with the assigned videoconference presenter's name and e-mail. Contact the presenter to discuss your plans for integrating this topic with your curriculum. Your videoconference presenter may suggest ways to customize the content of the videoconference to your needs.
  - Complete a successful test call at the scheduled time with the American Art Museum staff. This is a good time to practice turning the equipment on and off and locating the volume and other functions of your videoconference equipment.
  - Identify a space where all your students will be able to sit comfortably within your camera's view, see a projected PowerPoint, and hear the videoconference presenter.
  - Review videoconference rules and expectations with your students. Students should speak loudly and clearly to the presenter, one at a time. It's helpful to have students raise their hands and for you to call on them before they speak.
  - Review the pre-visit material (available to download at <http://AmericanArt.si.edu/Education/Video>). Encourage your students to write down questions for the videoconference presenter elicited by the pre-visit activities. Questions about the content, artwork, museum, and (within reason) the presenter are welcome!

### *During the Videoconference*

- Make sure students are comfortably seated within view of the camera and can readily see the videoconference screen and projected PowerPoint presentation.
- Classroom-appropriate behavior is essential to a successful videoconference program. Students should listen to the presenter as well as each other and should behave respectfully.
- Encourage your students to ask and answer questions and give their opinions and ideas. Remind students to speak loudly and clearly for the presenter.
- Encourage your students to exercise the observation and interpretation skills you introduced with the pre-visit materials.



- ❑ Help the videoconference presenter maintain classroom management. Call on students to prompt them to ask and answer questions. Consider rephrasing or restating a question if you know your students have something to say but are shy or may not understand the question. If the presenter cannot hear students, repeat their answers for the presenter.

### ***After the Videoconference***

- ❑ Incorporate the appropriate videoconference post-lesson into your classroom curriculum (available to download at <http://AmericanArt.si.edu/Education/Video>).
- ❑ Contact the videoconference presenter with any follow-up questions from your students.
- ❑ Contact American Art staff ([AmericanArtEducation@si.edu](mailto:AmericanArtEducation@si.edu)) with your comments and suggestions. Evaluation and program improvement are a priority and we welcome your comments.
- ❑ Follow the link to CILC below and complete a brief survey about your videoconference experience.
  - Lure of the West <http://cilc.org/evaluation.aspx?pass=YOiGw681mZ>



## Lure of the West (Grades 4 +)

### *Overview*

As both a physical place and an idealized place, the American West retains a powerful allure in popular culture. Explore depictions of the people, lifestyles, and landscape of the nineteenth-century West to better understand this dynamic period of history. After an introduction to westward expansion through a pre-visit activity, participation in the videoconference, and a post-visit lesson to cement concepts, your students will be better able to:

- Understand the period of westward expansion in America during the 1800s
- Understand the effect westward expansion had on settlers' and American Indians' lives
- Reflect upon and assess artworks depicting westward expansion and the ideals of Manifest Destiny
- Use visual vocabulary to articulate observations and interpretations of artworks

### *National Standards*

#### **Visual Arts**

K-12.3 Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas;

K-12.4 Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures;

K-12.5 Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others;

K-12.6 Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.

#### **US History**

K-4.1 Living and working together in families and communities, now and long ago.



## ***Vocabulary***

### **US History/Civics**

Expansionism – (n.) the national policy of acquiring new territories to gain natural resources and economic influence

expedition – (n.) a journey undertaken specifically to scout habitable places and passable shipping routes in the American West

frontier – (n.) the places of territorial holdings where pioneers and explorers left developed settlements

Gold Rush – (n.) the westward push of people in search of newly discovered gold. For example, the California Gold Rush of 1850 led to the settlement of that territory

homestead – (v.) to acquire land outside the established states and territories through occupation and improvement of that land. The Homestead Act of 1862 was signed by President Abraham Lincoln.

immigrate – (v.) to enter into a country with the intention of establishing a life and livelihood

Louisiana Purchase – (n.) the purchase of a territory by the United States in 1803 from the French the land between the original colonies and the Mississippi River south of the Great Lakes. President Thomas Jefferson advocated for the purchase, which doubled the size of the United States

Manifest Destiny – (n.) the belief that the acquisition and settlement of the American West, from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, was predestined and even preordained

migration – (n.) the movement of populations from one place to another. For example, the movement of humans or animals in search of new or additional resources

speculate– (v.) to purchase a good or commodity and attempt to sell it to someone at a profit

survey – (v.) to determine the situation of a tract of land or its land forms by measuring and charting

territory – (n.) an organized section of land under the jurisdiction of a government having self-governance but not the rights and privileges afforded to states

treaty – (n.) a written contract made through negotiation between governments or sovereign people. For example, agreements made between Native American nations and the federal government

### **Visual Arts**

composition – (n.) the arrangement of elements such as shape, line, value, and form within an artwork

interpret – (v.) to derive meaning from observed features or traits

landscape – (n.) a picture representing natural scenery

museum – (n.) an organization traditionally concerned with acquiring, conserving, studying, and exhibiting objects

observe – (v.) to note the visible features or traits of an artwork



portrait – (n.) a pictorial representation of a person, usually showing the face

subject – (n.) the principal idea conveyed by a work of art

symbol – (n.) something that stands for something else due to a relationship, association, or accidental resemblance<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. 11<sup>th</sup> ed. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc. 2004. [adapted]



**Topic Related Artworks**

A representative sample of the artworks in our collection that support the videoconference topic appears below. These are suggested for use during pre-videoconference activities. Images used during your videoconference may vary.

<p>TITLE: <b>The Speculator</b>          DATE: 1852          ARTIST: <b>Francis William Edmonds</b>          MEDIUM: oil on canvas          DIMENSIONS: 25 1/8 x 30 1/8 in. (63.7 x 76.4 cm.)          CREDIT LINE: Gift of Ruth C. and Kevin McCann in affectionate memory of Dwight David Eisenhower, 34th President of the United States          ACC. NUMBER: 1976.114          WEB LINK: <a href="http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=7898">http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=7898</a></p>	 <p>The painting depicts a domestic interior scene. A man in a white shirt and dark vest sits on a stool, leaning over a large wicker basket. A woman in a red headscarf and yellow apron stands behind him, looking on. To the right, another man in a dark suit sits in a chair, holding a white object, possibly a child or a bundle of fabric. The room features a fireplace, a table with a lamp, and various household items hanging on the wall.</p>
<p>TITLE: <b>Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way (mural study, U.S. Capitol)</b>          DATE: 1861          ARTIST: <b>Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze</b>          MEDIUM: oil on canvas          DIMENSIONS: 33 1/4 x 43 3/8 in. (84.5 x 110.1 cm.)          CREDIT LINE: Bequest of Sara Carr Upton          ACC. NUMBER: 1931.6.1          WEB LINK: <a href="http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=14569">http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=14569</a></p>	 <p>This mural study depicts a dramatic landscape scene. In the foreground, a group of men on horseback are shown in various poses, some appearing to be in a state of conflict or intense activity. The background features a vast, mountainous landscape under a bright, hazy sky. The entire scene is framed by a decorative border with circular medallions at the bottom corners.</p>
<p>TITLE: <b>Wi-jún-jon, Pigeon's Egg Head (The Light) Going To and Returning From Washington</b>          DATE: 1837-1839          ARTIST: <b>George Catlin</b>          MEDIUM: oil on canvas          DIMENSIONS: 29 x 24 in. (73.6 x 60.9 cm)          CREDIT LINE: Gift of Mrs. Joseph Harrison, Jr.          ACC. NUMBER: 1985.66.474          WEB LINK: <a href="http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=4317">http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=4317</a></p>	 <p>The painting shows two figures standing side-by-side. On the left is a Native American man wearing a large, feathered headdress and a fringed garment. On the right is a man in a dark, formal military-style uniform with a top hat and a sword at his side. The background is a simple, light-colored wall.</p>



<p>TITLE: <b>Rainbow over the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone</b></p> <p>DATE: 1900</p> <p>ARTIST: <b>Thomas Moran</b></p> <p>MEDIUM: oil on canvas</p> <p>DIMENSIONS: 30 1/8 x 37 in. (76.5 x 94.0 cm.)</p> <p>CREDIT LINE: Smithsonian American Art Museum Bequest of Marion H. Conley</p> <p>ACC. NUMBER: 1988.49.1</p> <p>WEB LINK: <a href="http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=17862">http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=17862</a></p>		 <p>A dramatic landscape painting showing a massive, rugged mountain peak in the center, partially shrouded in mist. A vibrant rainbow arches across the sky on the left side. The foreground is a wide, rocky valley with some sparse vegetation and a small stream or path winding through it. The overall atmosphere is one of awe and grandeur.</p>
<p>TITLE: <b>Miners in the Sierras</b></p> <p>DATE: 1851-1852</p> <p>ARTIST: <b>Charles Christian Nahl</b> <b>August Wenderoth</b></p> <p>MEDIUM: oil on canvas mounted on canvas</p> <p>DIMENSIONS: 54 1/4 x 66 7/8 in. (137.7 x 169.8 cm)</p> <p>CREDIT LINE: Smithsonian American Art Museum Gift of the Fred Heilbron Collection</p> <p>ACC. NUMBER: 1982.120</p> <p>WEB LINK: <a href="http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=18174">http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=18174</a></p>		 <p>A detailed landscape painting depicting a mining scene in a mountainous region. In the foreground, several miners are engaged in their work, some using tools and others standing near a large pile of rocks. The middle ground shows a steep, rocky slope with a small stream or path. The background features a vast, mountainous landscape under a blue sky with scattered clouds. The overall scene captures the rugged and industrious nature of mining in the Sierras.</p>



## Learning to Look: Pre-Visit Lesson

### Grades 1 – 4

#### Overview

After completing these activities, students will have strengthened their visual vocabulary by making observations of and expressing their interpretations of artwork.

#### Discussion

Define “observation” with students. Observations are statements of fact relating to what students see, not what they think might be happening.

Define “interpretation” with students. Interpretations are statements that ascribe meaning to the artwork based on observations.

Present students with one artwork that relates to your scheduled videoconference topic. (A selection of artworks related to each tour is included in the “Tour Information” document available to download at <http://AmericanArt.si.edu/Education/Video>). Have students begin by sharing only their observations. When students offer interpretations, or ideas about what they think is happening in the artwork, ask: “What do you see that makes you say that?”

#### Questions that prompt observations:

- *Who or what do you see in this artwork?*
- *What is the largest thing you see in this picture?*
- *What is the smallest thing you see in this picture?*
- *What colors do you see in the artwork?*
- *Is the scene outside? Inside?*
- *If there are people, are their clothes similar to or different from what you are wearing? How?*
- *Is the scenery similar to or different from where you are? How?*
- *What can you tell me about the colors in this artwork? What color do you see the most?*

Next, invite students to share their interpretations about what is happening in the artwork if they haven’t already done so. It is acceptable for students to have different interpretations of the same object. Make sure students support their interpretations with direct observations about the artwork. You may notice that some observation-focused questions lead directly to interpretation-focused questions. All interpretations should be founded on answers to observation questions.

**Questions that prompt interpretations:**

- *What is going on in this picture?*
- *Where do you think this scene is taking place?*
- *What season is it? What time of day is it?*
- *When was this artwork made?*
- *What do the scenery and the clothing or objects tell us about when this artwork was made?*
- *Does this scene look like it could be taking place today? Why or why not?*
- *Indicate a figure in the artwork:*
  - *Who is this person?*
  - *Is s/he similar to or different from you? In what ways?*
  - *What is s/he doing?*
  - *What do you think s/he does for a living?*
  - *How does s/he feel?*
  - *Where do you think s/he is?*
  - *What do you think it sounds like where s/he is?*
  - *What do you think it smells like where s/he is?*
  - *What kind of weather is this person experiencing?*
- *How do you think the artist feels about this person or thing in the painting?*
- *How does this artwork make you feel?*
- *How do you think this artist made this artwork?*
- *What types of materials do you think the artist used? Paint? Clay? Wood?*
- *How long do you think it took to make?*
- *What kind of mood or feelings do the colors give the artwork?*
- *Do you like the colors that are in the artwork? If you were the artist, would you have used different colors?*
- *Why do you think this artist made this artwork?*
- *What do you think the artist is trying to say?*

**Activity**

Either working in groups or independently, have students select a person or object in the artwork and complete the included worksheet, "Give this artwork a voice!" Have students refer back to their observations to support their interpretations of the person or object they chose. To take this activity further, have students create their own artwork based on the worksheet writing prompts "I wish..." or "Tomorrow, I am going to..."

Questions to ask students:

- Who or what did you choose to write about and why did you choose them?
- What in the artwork helped you make decisions about what the subject is thinking or feeling?
- Did you use the title or date of the artwork to inform your decisions? If so, how did they influence what you wrote? If not, do they contradict or reinforce your interpretation?



If your students want to know more about the artwork or learn about other interpretations from scholars, art historians or curators, visit <http://AmericanArt.si.edu>, <http://AmericanArt.si.edu/Luce/>, and your school library to research more about the artwork. If you have specific questions about an artwork, you can ask Joan of Art at <http://AmericanArt.si.edu/Research/Tools/Ask>.



# Give this artwork a voice!

*Choose an artwork and pretend you are one of the people or things in it. How would you finish these phrases?*

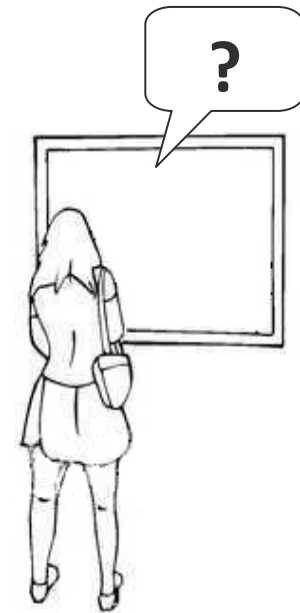
Here I am...

Boy, am I...

I wish...

I think I might...

Tomorrow I'm going to...





## Learning to Look: Pre-Visit Lesson

### Grades 5 – 12

#### Overview

After completing these activities, students will have strengthened their visual vocabulary by making observations of and expressing their interpretations of artwork.

#### Discussion

Define “observation” with students. Observations are statements of fact relating to what students see, not what they think might be happening.

Define “interpretation” with students. Interpretations are statements that ascribe meaning to the artwork based on observations.

Present students with one artwork that relates to your scheduled videoconference topic. (A selection of artworks related to each tour is included in the “Tour Information” document available to download at <http://AmericanArt.si.edu/Education/Video>). Have students begin by sharing only their observations. When students offer interpretations, or ideas about what they think is happening in the artwork, ask: “What do you see that makes you say that?”

#### Questions that prompt observations:

- *Who or what do you see in this artwork?*
- *What is the largest thing you see in this picture?*
- *What is the smallest thing you see in this picture?*
- *What colors do you see in the artwork?*
- *Is the scene outside? Inside?*
- *If there are people, are their clothes similar to or different from what you are wearing? How?*
- *Is the scenery similar to or different from where you are? How?*
- *What can you tell me about the colors in this artwork? What color do you see the most?*

Next, invite students to share their interpretations about what is happening in the artwork if they haven’t already done so. It is acceptable for students to have different interpretations of the same object. Make sure students support their interpretations with direct observations about the artwork. You may notice that some observation-focused questions lead directly to interpretation-focused questions. All interpretations should be founded on answers to observation questions.

**Questions that prompt interpretations:**

- *What is going on in this picture?*
- *Where do you think this scene is taking place?*
- *What season is it? What time of day is it?*
- *When was this artwork made?*
- *What do the scenery and the clothing or objects tell us about when this artwork was made?*
- *Does this scene look like it could be taking place today? Why or why not?*
- *Indicate a figure in the artwork:*
  - *Who is this person?*
  - *Is s/he similar to or different from you? In what ways?*
  - *What is s/he doing?*
  - *What do you think s/he does for a living?*
  - *How does s/he feel?*
  - *Where do you think s/he is?*
  - *What do you think it sounds like where s/he is?*
  - *What do you think it smells like where s/he is?*
  - *What kind of weather is this person experiencing?*
- *How do you think the artist feels about this person or thing in the painting?*
- *How does this artwork make you feel?*
- *How do you think this artist made this artwork?*
- *What types of materials do you think the artist used? Paint? Clay? Wood?*
- *How long do you think it took to make?*
- *What kind of mood or feelings do the colors give the artwork?*
- *Do you like the colors that are in the artwork? If you were the artist, would you have used different colors?*
- *Why do you think this artist made this artwork?*
- *What do you think the artist is trying to say?*

**Activity**

Have students select a different artwork and complete the included Observation/Interpretation worksheet. To take the activity further, have students refer to it as they write about the work of art. Students can choose words or phrases that they think best describe the artwork and use them as material in a poem, story or podcast.

Questions to ask students:

- *Why did you choose that artwork?*
- *Who did you choose to write about and why did you choose them?*
- *What in the artwork helped you make decisions about what the subject is thinking or feeling?*
- *Did you use the title or date of the artwork to inform your decisions? If so, how did they influence what you wrote? If not, do they contradict or reinforce your interpretation?*



Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Artwork Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Artist: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Observation	Interpretation
<i>Definition: What you see?</i> <i>Example: Dark grey sky, no rain, dry ground</i>	<i>Definition: What you think based on what you see?</i> <i>Example: A storm is approaching</i>
What is the main idea of the artwork?	



Imagine yourself inside this work of art.

What do you hear?	What do you smell?
What do you taste?	What do you feel?

Imagine that the artwork is one part of a larger story.

What happened right before this moment?
What will happen next?



## Post-Visit Lesson: Lure of the West

### Grades 4 – 12

#### Overview

After completing this lesson, students will better understand the motivations behind westward migration and will be able to identify realistic and romanticized depictions of these events.

#### Background

Emmanuel Gottlieb Leutze's mural study for the Capitol in Washington, D.C. celebrated the idea of Manifest Destiny just when the Civil War threatened the republic. The surging crowd of figures records the births, deaths, and battles fought as European Americans settled the continent to the edge of the Pacific. Like Moses and the Israelites who appear in the ornate borders of the painting, these pioneers stand at the threshold of the Promised Land, ready to fulfill what many nineteenth-century Americans believed was God's plan for the nation.

#### Discussion and Activity

Pass out the Leutze Graphic Organizer and printouts of Emanuel Leutze's *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way*—both the study and final mural. If possible, provide magnifying glasses. Instruct each group to fill out the first two columns of the Graphic Organizer, focusing on major elements of both works.

After the groups have had time for concentrated looking, ask each to share several observations with the class as a whole. Use these observations to closely observe the images together. If groups had a hard time seeing important elements of the paintings (such as the burial scene in the study or the Native Americans in the margins of both paintings), use this time to point them out.

Suggested questions for visual analysis of both paintings:

#### Narrative interpretation

- What is happening in the main portion of the painting? Try to read it from right to left.
- What evidence from the scene are you using to understand the elements of the image?
- Where have these pioneers come from? What has happened to them in the recent past?
- Where are they going? What in the work alludes to their destination?

#### Art Elements

- Where is the movement in this painting? If you had to draw a directional arrow between two points, where would it be?
- Where is the brightest point in the central image? Why would the artist want to draw your eye there first?
- Where are the major areas of light and dark? What are the moods of these areas?
- How do the landscapes on the left and right side of the painting differ?
- How do all of these elements add to your interpretation of the mood and significance of the scene?



Tell the class that the study was completed in early 1861, during the Civil War, and that the final mural was completed in late 1862 while the war was still being fought and a preliminary draft of the Emancipation Proclamation had been published. Review information about these events from the textbook.

Distribute the Leutze Primary Source handout to each student. Ask each group to fill out the second two columns of the Leutze Graphic Organizer using the handout.

After the groups have had time for discussion, ask each to share several observations with the class. Use the discussion to prompt further close observation of the images and careful reading of the primary sources.

Use the following questions to discuss the role of minorities in Leutze's paintings:

- Can you find the two Native Americans in the study and the three in the final mural?
- What do their location and posture say about contemporary attitudes toward American Indians?
- What allusions to encounters with Indian tribes can you find in the center of the painting?
- What inspired Leutze to add a freedman to his painting of future western settlers? What impact might this image of the nation's future have on contemporary audiences?

Lead a wrap-up discussion with the class reviewing information and student observations about Leutze's mural and relating it to the concepts of Western expansion, manifest destiny, and nationalism. Have students record their answers to the final question at the bottom of the Leutze Graphic Organizer.

Suggested questions for a discussion about the student's final interpretation:

- Do you think this is what Western expansion looked like? Why or why not?
- What does the inclusion of minorities (African American, Native American, Irish American, German American) in the larger group say about American identity at this time? What picture of the nation's future is being offered?
- How has that picture played out in history?
- How does Leutze's mural project interpret manifest destiny and its place in American history?



Emmanuel Gottlieb Leutze, *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (mural study, U.S. Capitol), 1861, 1931.6.1



Emmanuel Gottlieb Leutze, *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way*, 1862, from the U.S. Capitol Historical Society: [http://www.aoc.gov/cc/photo-gallery/upload/westward\\_77207.jpg](http://www.aoc.gov/cc/photo-gallery/upload/westward_77207.jpg)



### Handout One: Graphic Organizer

Analyzing an Artwork: *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* by Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze

List Differences		Relate to Historical Context	Primary Source Evidence
<i>Mural Study, 1861</i>	<i>Final Mural, 1862</i>		

How does Leutze’s mural project interpret Manifest Destiny and its role in American history?

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### Teacher Sample: Graphic Organizer

Analyzing an Artwork: *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* by Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze

Compare and Contrast		Relate to Historical Context	Primary Source Connections (when available)
<i>Mural Study, 1861</i>	<i>Final Mural, 1862</i>		
only white settlers	inclusion of freedman	Emancipation Proclamation, free blacks are the future in the West	“mounted on a mule led by a negro boy who caresses the beast for the work done”
no American flags	two American flags flying	The flag represents unity of divided nation. Refers to hope for the end of the Civil War	
pyramidal composition	same	Emphasizes leader at apex of pyramid pointing toward Pacific Ocean—destination of group	
burial scene	scene removed	Evidence of hardship might detract from the optimistic mood	
Indian figures marginalized	same	Western expansion meant dispossessing Indian tribes	“To represent as near and truthfully as the artist was able the grand peaceful conquest of the great west”
figures move from dark to light	same	Eastern states caught in divisive Civil War; West represents promise of the future	“having passed the troubles of the plains, ‘The valley of darkness’”
inclusion of recent immigrant	same	Immigrants from Ireland and other countries left crowded Eastern cities and found a home in the West	



## Handout Two: Primary Sources

### Bishop Berkeley's Poem

*America or the Muse's Refuge:  
A Prophecy*

The Muse, disgusted at an Age and Clime,  
Barren of every glorious Theme,  
In distant Lands now waits a better Time,  
Producing subjects worthy Fame:

In happy Climes, where from the genial Sun  
And virgin Earth such Scenes ensue,  
The Force of Art by Nature seems outdone,  
And fancied Beauties by the true:

There shall be sung another golden Age,  
The rise of Empire and of Arts,  
The Good and Great inspiring epic Rage,  
The wisest Heads and noblest Hearts.

Not such as Europe breeds in her decay;  
Such as she bred when fresh and young,  
When heav'nly Flame did animate her Clay,  
By future Poets shall be sung.

Westward the Course of Empire takes its Way;  
The four first Acts already past,  
A fifth shall close the Drama with the Day;  
Time's noblest Offspring is the last.  
—Bishop George Berkeley

*This poem inspired Leutze's work and its title. In these verses, Berkeley predicts that Western expansion will make America the site of the next golden age. Europe, despite past glories, has become decadent, and the world needs the hope that America promises.*



Inscriptions on the Mural

The Spirit grows with its allotted Spaces  
The Mind is narrow'd in a narrow Sphere

*The source of this inscription is unknown, but it may be based on Friedrich Schiller's Wallenstein Trilogy, set during the Thirty Years' War. The plays explore the Catholic general's downfall in one of Europe's most destructive conflicts. Schiller's lines read:*

Thus in a narrow sphere the mind contracts,  
But man grows great along with greater goals.

*Below is an excerpt from Sewall's "Epilogue to Cato." Sewall was a Massachusetts lawyer and poet. Cato the Younger, a Roman statesman known for his probity in public life, committed suicide while in Utica, a Roman province of Africa, after hearing that Quintus Metellus Scipio lost to Julius Caesar at the Battle of Thapsus. Leutze broadens the meaning of the quote to include the entire United States.*

"No pent up Utica Contracts our Powers but the whole boundles[s] Continent is yours."

--- Jonathan M. Sewall, 1778

Emanuel Leutze's Letters and Notes

Let me propose, that a series of pictures representing the history of our country may be painted for the capitol, with just regard to the truth of history, with regard to the exhibition of the glorious examples of our great men for the benefit of future generations, and as a token of a nation's glory, that they may be continued as our history advances...

--From Emanuel Leutze's letter to Montgomery C. Meigs, Captain of the U.S. Engineers, February 14, 1854

*Meigs began supervising the Capitol construction on April 4, 1853, at the request of the Secretary of War Jefferson Davis. He also influenced the artistic design of the building by his choice of artists. Leutze argues at length that American artists have an important role to play in elevating the young nation to the international status that European countries enjoyed.*

"Subject---'Emigration to the West' being one, it takes its place on the Western staircase of the House of Rep.

"Design---**A party of Emigrants have arrived near sunset on the divide (watershed from whence they have the first view of the pacific slope, their promised land 'Eldorado,' having passed the troubles of the plains, 'The valley of darkness, etc.'**----The first are eagerly pressing forward--- the dim line of the Western ocean can be



traced on the horizon to the left---on the right rise rocky mountains---at the foot of which the 'mesa,' 'tableland' and the rolling prairie with the commencement of one of the 'fathers of the water.'"

"Emigrant Train of wagons toiling up the slope, jolting over the mountain trail scarcely a road, or diving into water worn gullies---upheld by the drivers from tilting over---On the nearest pinnacle of a rock, a frontiere farmer (Tenneseian) has carried his suffering wife with her infant in her arms, to show her the glories of the promised land---her boy with his fathers rifle, a jackknife, string and newspaper, looks thoughtfully into the future (type of young American)---while his little sister is cheering her mother with expressions of delight and surprize---the mother has folded her hands thanking for escape from dangers past. (religious feeling indicated)."

"In the ravine below axemen are clearing the Trail from fallen Trees---before them the guide, an old trapper, clad complete in buckskin, pointing to the way which lies before them, he rests his horse---next to him a young adventurer rides in stirrups to catch the first glimpse of the distant land, while his horse is straining up the last slope of the divide---next to him another of the same class, cheering on the followers---both have their complete outfit strapped to their breasts, caricette, mealbag, frying pan, coffeepot, &c, &c, extra blankets."

"Above them a young vagrant with a fiddle on his back, is assisting his equally young partner for life, up to the rock to peep at the distance, they express careless happiness spite of their scanty equipments."

"Below a mother kissing her babe with tears of joy, **mounted on a mule led by a negro boy who caresses the beast for the work done**--- She hopes to meet the father of her child who has preceeded them."

" Next to her a rough but bighearted hunter of the border, **assisting a lad who has been wounded, probably in a fight with the Indians**, up the rocky path---behind and in the immediate foreground a team of oxen drawing a wagon, in which a young woman with a still younger girl in her lap is straining to look at the far land---in doubt whether there be not more troubles ahead, while the child is thoughtless of the scene enjoying life in wanton capers---a young brother guides the oxen, **a boy astride of one of them, has Indian arrows and a bow**, with a dead squirrel . . ."

"Intention

**To represent as near and truthfully as the artist was able the grand peaceful conquest of the great west** (paper torn off) . . . without a wish to date or localize, or to represent a particular event, it is intended to give in a condensed form a picture of western emigration, the conquest of the Pacific slope, while if ever the general plan be carried out the side walls will have the earlier history of Western Emigration, in illustrations from Boone's adventures the discovery of the valleys of the Ohio, Mississippi . . ."

"In the ornamental border which is but to serve as a margin to separate this picture from the others, or the blank wall, is the motto, 'westward the course of Empire makes its way' in the arabesque a playful introduction from earlier history as a prelude to the subject of the large picture."



**“In the ends of the upper margin the standard bird shields union and liberty under his wings---influences of superior intelligence---the Indians creeping and flying before them---to the left the axeman, preceeded by the hunter whose dog has attacked a catamount, the Indian creeping, discharging an arrow at the hunter.”**

**“To the right--the agriculturist, preceeded by the missionary--a prairie owl and rattlesnake seeking the hospitality of a Prairie dog hide themselves, and Indian covering himself with his robe sneeking away from the light of knowledge. . . .”**

“Margin below

Golden Gate, entrance to harbour of San Francisco--in the poem by Bishop Berkeley from which the motto is taken the last verse runs

Westward the course of Empire takes its way

The first four acts already past.

A fifth shall close the drama with the day.

The drama of the Pacific Ocean closes our Emigration to the west. All subjects in the margins are but faintly indicated without any attempt at imitation or deception and kept entirely subservient to the effect of the Principal picture.”

“This is the first mural painting in the capitol painted in this new manner which has been tried with complete success in Germany and England, based on the chemical quality of the Silicates--called the Stereochromatic manner also the first attempt in this country.”

—From Emanuel Leutze's notes (about 1862) describing *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way*

*All punctuation and spelling are original, but bolded emphasis has been added to key sections of the notes. Leutze later identified the woman on the mule as an Irish immigrant, adding another new American to his image of the westward journey.*



## ***Additional Resources***

### **Catlin Classroom**

<http://catlinclassroom.si.edu>

Explore Native American history and culture through multiple perspectives. This site, which features the paintings and journals of George Catlin, includes galleries, videos, lessons, and a searchable database of journal entries from the 1830s.

### **Lure of the West**

<http://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/online/t2go/1lw/index.html>

This slide show includes paintings and sculptures from the 1820s through the 1940s that incorporate various attitudes toward Native American cultures, depict the expanding frontier and the pristine wilderness, and document the change brought on by the Gold Rush.

### **Podcast: The American West**

[http://americanart.si.edu/multimedia/podcasts/exhibits/american\\_west.mp3](http://americanart.si.edu/multimedia/podcasts/exhibits/american_west.mp3)

This podcast includes discussion of the Lewis and Clark expedition's doctor, Benjamin Rush, an introduction to the exploration through opera, and an exploration of the work of painter George Catlin.

### **Interview: Jaune Quick-to-See Smith**

<http://americanart.si.edu/luce/media.cfm?key=372&type=Archive&subkey=483>

A member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation, a painter and lithographer, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith discusses the inspiration that prompted her to create works such as *State Names*.

### **Westward Expansion: Encounters at a Cultural Crossroads**

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/westward/>

The expansion of the U.S. westward and the experiences of the migrants as well as Native Americans are documented in photographs, sheet music, maps, letters, oral history, and more from the Library of Congress.

***Lure of the West: Treasures from the Smithsonian American Art Museum*** by Amy Pastan (Washington, DC: Smithsonian American Art Museum: 2000).

In this book, paintings and sculptures illustrate changing attitudes toward the West—its landscape, peoples, and development—from the 1820s through the 1940s. Charles Bird King, George Catlin, and others documented Native American cultures, while Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Moran painted an idealized wilderness. Later, members of the Taos Society of Artists presented the rich Native cultures and rugged terrain of the Southwest.

***Going West! Quilts and Community*** by Roderick Kiracofe and Sandi Fox (Washington, DC: Smithsonian American Art Museum: 2007).

*Going West! Quilts and Community* presents more than fifty quilts, brought to or made in Nebraska in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Embellished with flowers, stars, wagon wheels, dazzling mosaics and even signatures, the quilts reveal the extraordinary creativity of the individuals who made them. The



essays reveal the hardship and risk overlanders undertook to leave the familiar and forge new communities in the West, and the joy and pride quiltmakers brought to this time-honored craft.

***Your Travel Guide to America's Old West*** by Rita J. Markel (Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publishing Group: 2004).

Written in a conversational voice and accompanied by photographs and engravings, this book provides details about the lives of Native Americans, vaqueros, prospectors and more.