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Media Web site: americanart.si.edu/pr

Media Advisory

WHAT: Exhibition press preview for “1934: A New Deal for Artists”

WHEN: Tuesday, Feb. 24
10 a.m.

WHERE: Smithsonian American Art Museum
Enter at Eighth and G streets N.W.

WHO: Elizabeth Broun, director, Smithsonian American Art Museum
Roger Kennedy, director emeritus, National Museum of American History
George Gurney, deputy chief curator, Smithsonian American Art Museum
Ann Prentice Wagner, curatorial associate, Smithsonian American Art Museum

The Smithsonian American Art Museum will hold a preview of the museum’s newest exhibition, “1934: A New Deal for Artists,” for members of the press Tuesday, Feb. 24, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; remarks will be given by Elizabeth Broun and Roger Kennedy at 10 a.m. A tour of the exhibition with George Gurney and Ann Prentice Wagner follows. The exhibition opens to the public Friday, Feb. 27.

In 1934, Americans grappled with an economic situation that feels all too familiar today. Against the backdrop of the Great Depression, the U.S. government created the Public Works of Art Program—the first federal government program to support the arts. Officials in the Roosevelt administration understood how art was essential to sustaining America’s spirit. Participating artists from across the United States painted regional, recognizable subjects—ranging from portraits to cityscapes and images of city life to landscapes and depictions of rural life—that reminded the public of quintessential American values such as hard work, community and optimism. The Public Works of Art Program not only paid artists to embellish public buildings, but also provided them with a sense of pride in serving their country.

“1934: A New Deal for Artists” celebrates the 75th anniversary of the Public Works of Art Program by drawing on the Smithsonian American Art Museum’s unparalleled collection of vibrant paintings created for the program. The 56 paintings in the exhibition are a lasting visual record of America at a specific moment in time. The exhibition will begin a three-year national tour in 2010.

Questions during the morning of the preview should be directed to Mandy Young at (202) 631-5222. A full press kit is available online at <http://americanart.si.edu/pr/kits/#1934>.

The Smithsonian American Art Museum is located at Eighth and F streets N.W., above the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metrorail station. Hours are 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, except Dec. 25. Admission is free. Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000 or TTY (202) 633-5285. Museum information: (202) 633-7970. Web site: americanart.si.edu.

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