



EVERSON MUSEUM OF ART

EDUCATOR PACKET

***Passionate Observer: Eudora
Welty Among Artists of the
Thirties***

March 3 – May 27, 2007

Introduction

This exhibition highlights the Depression-era photography of author Eudora Welty. Eudora Welty was born April 13, 1909 in Jackson Mississippi, where she lived most of her life until her death in 2001. A renowned author, Welty explored the depths of human relationships and emotions through the written word. During her twenty years as a photographer, Welty captured the enduring struggle of humanity and the trials and hardships of the Depression through her lens. At the center of the exhibit are Eudora Welty's dramatic photographs of Mississippi, Louisiana and New York during the Great Depression. Welty's photographs bear witness to America's courage in the face of adversity. Few American writers share both a gift for pictorial precision and words as Welty does: the craft of the metaphor, the gift for discovering the world and then transmitting the image clearly.

Developed by the Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson, MS, and organized by International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC

Lesson 1: "Snapshots" and Short Stories: Capture an Image—Visually and In Prose or Poetry

Target group: Elementary, Middle, High School

NYS Learning Standards:

The Arts: Standard 1: Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts

English Language Arts: Standards 2: Language for Literary Response and Expression

Goals:

To create a "snapshot" capturing a "pregnant" moment. Communicating the photograph through the written word—prose or poetry

Materials:

Camera

Human subjects

Materials for writing a story or crafting a poem.

Questions to Consider:

How will students' learn to "see" an important moment?

What form of writing—prose or poetry will best capture the visual image?

Activities:

Have a Visual Thinking Strategies discussion about a number of Welty's photographs. Talk about the "pregnant" moment—that special time just before an event happens. Sometimes the subject of a photograph is captured just after a major event (like the photographer who did a series of children's photographs right after she took the lollipop out of their mouths). Help the students to find some other examples of special moments that are reflected in a subject's face.

Students will take a photography "safari" looking/waiting/creating the circumstances for a special moment. Students will create a literary piece—prose or poetry that best describes their photograph. They may also exchange with another student and write about their photograph.

Lesson 2: A Chronicle of Today: Capturing the World of 2007

Target group:

Elementary, Middle, High School

NYS Learning Standards:

The Arts: Standard 1: Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts

Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art

English Language Arts: Standard 3: Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation

Goal:

To create a series of insightful photographs documenting the everyday life of students. To compose artist statements reflecting on their choice of subject matter.

Activities:

Have a Visual Thinking Strategies discussion about a number of Welty's photographs.

After the discussion ask:

What have we learned about Welty's time in history through our discussion?

Who were the subjects of her photographs?

What activities are they involved in?

Conversation could be enhanced by including examples of genre paintings of the past. Information about the Depression could aid students in their understanding.

Then turn the discussion to contemporary times and ask:

What kinds of people represent our community?

What kinds of things are people doing in 2007?

What kinds of photographs can you take that will document our contemporary era?

Students will take a series of photographs, which will chronicle their life in 2007. Students will mount those photographs. Students will write an artist statement about each photograph, discussing the way in which the photo represents the world of 2007.

Materials:

Camera

Human subjects School, home, community environment

Questions to Consider:

How will students learn to "see" a person or place that "defines" life in the early 21st century?

How are the economic conditions of the Depression communicated in Welty's paintings?

How does this assignment relate to genre paintings of the past?