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Classic Section

Museums, Libraries & Other Public Institutions

Hobos to Street People:
Artists' Responses to Homelessness from
the New Deal to the Present
Through August 15, 2009
at California Historical Society, San Francisco, CA



Rockwell Kent
And Now Where? 1936
Lithograph
Courtesy of Private Collection



Charles Surendorf
California, 1938
Wood Engraving
Courtesy of Surendorf Gallery Collection

The tragedy of homelessness and poverty in the United States over the last 75 years - and the government's role in responding to the crisis - is presented in the compelling and timely exhibition and tour of *Hobos to Street People: Artists' Responses to Homelessness from the New Deal to the Present*. The first exhibition of its kind to look at homelessness through art, it is presented by the California Exhibition Resources Alliance (CERA) and will premiere at the California Historical Society, in San Francisco, California, February 19 through August 15, 2009. Curated by Art Hazelwood, the exhibition features the work of 30 artists including New Deal era artists such as Dorothea Lange, Rockwell Kent, and Giacomo Patri along with contemporary artists such as Sandow Birk, David Bacon, and Christine Hanlon. Through painting, printmaking, pho-

tography, and mixed media, these Depression-era and contemporary artists offer stark glimpses of life on the street and show many similarities between the eras. The exhibition at the California Historical Society also marks the premier of a statewide California tour slated for multiple venues through 2011 including: the Kolligan Library at the University of California, Merced; the Corona Public Library in Corona; the Hayward Area Historical Society in Hayward; and the de Saisset Museum at Santa Clara University in Santa Clara. Accompanying the exhibition is an audio tour featuring exhibition curator, Art Hazelwood, along with historian Dr. Charles Wollenberg, advisor Paul Boden and several of the featured artists. It provides additional insights into the issue of homelessness as well as the work of the artists.

Hobos to Street

People: Artists' Responses to Homelessness from the New Deal to the Present is the first exhibition and audio tour of its kind to focus on the issue of homelessness through art. Curated by San Francisco, California-based artist and exhibition contributor, Art Hazelwood, the exhibition takes a thematic approach in examining the tragedy of homelessness and the government's role over the past 75 years in dealing with the crisis. The themes of *Daily Realities, Displacement, Rootlessness and Vulnerability, Urban vs. Rural, and Struggle and Hope*, offer the viewer a sobering statement on homelessness from life on the street - to how the struggles and hopes of the hopeless have changed as views of government's role in society have changed. "Some of the artists in this exhibition personally experienced homelessness and poverty, and some worked directly with organ-

izations to combat poverty, but all of them felt that art could be used to focus attention on homelessness," explained curator Art Hazelwood. "The idea that art can have a function in society by engaging in a struggle for a better world, and that everyone should take an interest in the well-being of less fortunate people are the twin beliefs of the artists in this show."

During the Great Depression, New Deal programs such as the Works Progress Administration funded artists to document what was happening in the country. Artists focused their attention on issues of human rights, and due to the large number of poor and displaced people, homelessness became a central focus of their work. Following World War II, artists shifted their energies elsewhere, but by the 1970s a period of increased poverty and economic inequality once again stimulated artists to focus their atten-

tion on the issue of homelessness. Contemporary artists are continuing to witness, document, and comment on today's poverty. This unique collection explores the evolution of work by artists who have sought to bring attention to the issue of homelessness. Contemporary artists are continuing to witness, document, and comment on today's poverty. This unique collection explores the evolution of work by artists who have sought to bring attention to the issue of homelessness and have actively found ways to influence society through exhibition and distribution of their artwork.

Artists featured in *Hobos to Street People* include (in alphabetical order): David Bacon; Jesus Barraza; Sandow Birk; Jacob Burck; Richard Correll; Francisco Dominguez; Eric Drooker; Fritz Eichenberg; Isaac Friedlander; Ed Gould; Christine Hanlon; Art

Hazelwood; Rockwell Kent; Dorothea Lange; Clare Leighton; Jean McIntosh; Doug Minkler; Claude Moller; Giacomo Giuseppe Patri; Albert Potter; Anton Refregier; Rachael Romero; Iver Rose; Jos Sances; Kiki Smith; Charles Surendorf; Robert L. Terrell; Herman Volz; Paul Weller; and Jane "in vain" Winkelman.

Hobos to Street People is a California Exhibition Resources Alliance (CERA) traveling exhibition funded by the James Irvine Foundation, LEF Foundation, and Fleishhacker Foundation.

The California Exhibition Resources Alliance (CERA) is a network of professionally operated museums and cultural organizations that collaborates to create and tour smaller, affordable, high quality exhibitions that enhance civic engagement and human understanding. Visit www.ceraexhibits.org for more information.



Ed Gould
Kindred Spirits, 1997
Linocut
Courtesy of the Artist