



NEW JERSEY

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QuickTakes!

William Paterson University Galleries Awarded an NEA Grant to Celebrate NJ Artist Ben Shahn

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The William Paterson University Galleries have been awarded a \$10,000 Art Works Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to present an exhibition and related publication to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the death of social-realist artist Ben Shahn. **The exhibition, to be held from September 9 through December 13, 2018, will also celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Universities Galleries.**

“We are honored to be among the recipients of a National Endowment for the Arts grant, and we look forward to commemorating the legacy of Ben Shahn, who is one of New Jersey’s – and arguably one of our nation’s – most prominent artists,” said Kristen Evangelista, director of the University Galleries.

Ben Shahn (1898-1969), who is the namesake for the University’s Ben Shahn Center for the Visual Arts, was a prolific painter, photographer and printmaker who was committed to social justice. He first achieved fame with his series of paintings, Sacco and Vanzetti. In 1933, Mr. Shahn assisted Mexican muralist Diego Rivera on the controversial, and ultimately destroyed, mural for New York City’s Rockefeller Center. Mr. Shahn went on to be a key New Deal muralist and photographed rural poverty in the South and Midwest for the Farm Security Administration. He lived for many years in the New Jersey town of Roosevelt.

The exhibition will showcase Ben Shahn’s works from the William Paterson University’s art collection as well as works loaned from the New Jersey State Museum as well as other public and private collections. William Paterson’s collection includes more than 30 works on paper, as well as photographic portraits of the artist in his home/studio as well as 11 unpublished photographs that are rare documentation of the creation of Shahn’s mural Resources of America (1938-39) at the Bronx Central Post Office.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue with essays by Ben Shahn scholars – a William Paterson University Professor of Art Alejandro Anreus and art historian Diana L. Linden, who is author of Ben Shahn’s *New Deal Murals*, among other books.

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The Art Works category is the NEA's largest funding category and supports projects that focus on the creation of art that meets the highest standards of excellence, public engagement with diverse and excellent art, lifelong learning in the arts, and/or the strengthening of communities through the arts.