

# POSTCARDS FROM UTAH ARTISTS

## THEME: UTAH ART CAN TELL US ABOUT UTAH HISTORY

### Objectives:

1. **Art History**—Students be able to name two early Utah artists and explain their contribution to Utah Art.
2. **Art Criticism/Aesthetics**—Students will explore different ways art is valuable to us by comparing several Utah artists' works. Students will choose a stance and be able to defend that stance.
3. **Art Production**—Students will make “pioneer” journals with four drawings that illustrate “events” on the journey.

### Materials

- Postcards: *Immigrant Train*, George Ottinger; *Handcart Pioneers*, C.C.A. Christensen; *Capital from North Salt Lake*, Louise Richards Farnsworth; *Richards' Camp*, J.T. Harwood; *Riders of the Range*, Paul Salisbury.
- Other Utah artworks that can be found at [sma.nebo.edu](http://sma.nebo.edu): *Teepees*, John Hafen; *Rocky Mountains*, Parishort, William Warner Major; *Bishop Sam Bennion Farm*, and *Ontario Mill Park City*, Danquart Weggeland; *Sugar Refinery Burning*, George Ottinger; *Dreaming of Zion*, Lee Greene Richards; *Curtain Time—Pioneer Theater*, Cornelius Salisbury; *Frontier Scout*, Mahonri Young

### Language Arts/Social Studies/Art Production

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate their understanding of the pioneer trek to Utah by writing and illustrating journals that could have been written by pioneers. (You may wish to add specific class objectives for the illustrations and writing.)

### Materials

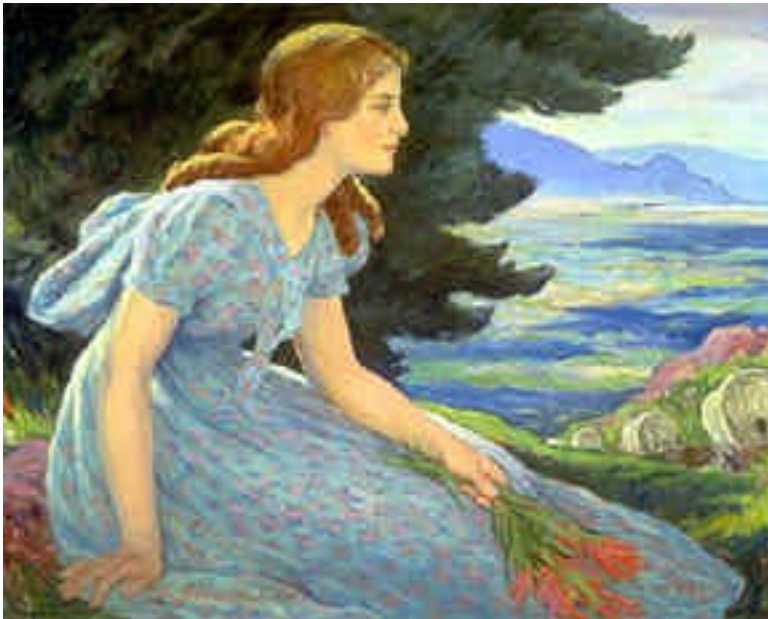
- Excerpts from pioneer journals such as Mary Gobel Peay's (she was 12) artworks including *Immigrant Train*, George Ottinger; *Handcart Pioneers' First View of Salt Lake Valley* C.C.A. Christensen—Postcard Set.
- Additional useful artworks: *Teepees*, John Hafen; *Rocky Mountains*, Parishort, William Warner Major; *Frontier Scout*, Mahonri Young—all available at [sma.nebo.edu](http://sma.nebo.edu) George Catlin's paintings of Native Americans from BYU MOA's *Lure of the West* Packet, March 2002—available at MOA bookstore and at [byu.edu.moa](http://byu.edu/moa)

As part of a unit on the pioneers, have students “become” pioneers for a week. They can make books as shown on page 24. Then the students will write journal entries, illustrating the events that happen so that people 150 years later could read and see what their experiences were like.

To introduce the activity: If you have a slide projector, project a slide of Lee Greene Richard's

*Dreaming of Zion* on the screen or wall while you read excerpts from Mary Gobel Peay’s journal. (The slide is available in past SMA packets. You may be able to borrow a poster from a middle school, or, purchase a poster from the Springville Museum of Art for \$5—special price for teachers)

Ask the students how the picture does or does not look like what Mary Peay describes. Ask why an artist might not be most interested in being historically accurate. Then tell them you’re going to look at two artworks that are historically accurate. Divide the students into groups and have them look at the postcards of *Immigrant Train* and *Handcart Pioneers’ First View of Salt Lake Valley* and any other artworks you have. Also, have the students read another excerpt from a pioneer journal. As groups, have the students discuss why journals and artworks with accurate historical data are important. Then have the groups share their ideas with the class.



Lee Greene Richards, *Dreaming of Zion*

Explain to the class members that they are going to create journal entries that accurately reflect what pioneers might have gone through. Teach them how to make the books. As you continue to study the pioneers, have the students make a journal entry each day, using both written accounts as well as illustrations, as if they were part of a wagon train or handcart company. When the journals are finished, students should title them appropriately. Have the students read each other’s journals and discuss them as groups. Display the journals in the media center and invite other classes to view and read the journals.

**Addition:** You may want to complete a lesson on gesture drawing and depicting space in art before you start the journals. If you have already done this as a class, a brief review may be helpful: do three quick gesture drawings and review the list of space indicators on page 40.

**Evaluation:** Have students evaluate their journals using a simple rubric of the criteria you choose. You can also evaluate the journals using the same rubric.

**Art History**—Students be able to name two early Utah artists and explain their contribution to Utah Art. Students will create a timeline of Utah art and identify ways the art tells us how life in Utah has changed over the years. Students will demonstrate their ability to read the labels on artworks correctly by identifying the year artworks were created.

As part of, or after finishing, the journals activity, have students learn about the two artists, George Ottinger and C.C.A. Christensen. Use information from the biographies included in the poster

backs section. Divide students into groups and give them copies of the following postcards: *Immigrant Train*, *Handcart Pioneers*, *Riders of the Range*, *Richards Camp*, *Boy and Cat*, *Wash Day in Brigham City*, *Capitol from North Salt Lake*, *Road to the River*, *Youthful Games*, and *Keeper of the Gate*. Have students speculate about Ottinger's and Christensen's possible impact on art in Utah. Have the groups share their ideas with another group. Each student should write a few lines in their art journals: Ottinger's and Christensen's names and the titles of their artworks, when they painted, and how they might have influenced the development of Utah art. (Although not the most important part of the activity, two ways the artists were influential are that their artworks exposed many of the early settlers of Utah to art. For example, CCA Christensen toured his Panorama through many small towns where people might not have gotten to see any art. Ottinger became a teacher and not only passed on his skills but also encouraged the next generation of artists to gain more extensive training by going to Paris..

Have the students organize the art images into a timeline. They should make the timeline without looking at the backs of the postcards. They can check the timeline dates after they are finished. Make sure they know how to read the labels on the back of the postcards. The year the artwork was created is the date that follows the artwork's title. Ask if they were surprised by any of the dates on the artwork. Ask them to decide why they had a hard time telling on some artworks. For example, *Riders of the Range* has cowboys and they have looked much the same for many years.

**Art Criticism/Aesthetics**—Students will explore different ways art is valuable to us by comparing several artists' works. Students will choose a stance and be able to defend that stance.

#### Materials

- Two posters or large-size reproductions of artworks. The first should be an artwork most of the students will like. The second should be *Handcart Pioneers' First View of Salt Lake Valley*, SMA Elementary poster
- Postcards for the 4th grade: *Handcart Pioneers' First View of Salt Lake Valley*, *Immigrant Train*, and *Rhinoceros*
- Other postcards such as *Road to the River*, *Sunrise North Rim Grand Canyon*, *Boy and Cat*, *Riders of the Range*, *Capitol from North Salt Lake*
- Other postcards, particularly of artworks many of the students will consider beautiful such as *Cliffs of the Upper Colorado River*, *Wyoming Territory*, Thomas Moran; *Among the Sierra Nevada, California*, Albert Bierstadt; both from BYU MOA's Lure of the West packet, March 2002.



James Christensen, *Rhinoceros*

Art is valuable to different people in different ways. It may be valuable in several ways at once. Art criticism and aesthetics are ways to explore the ways we value art. In this component of the lesson, students will compare various artworks and determine the ways we might value each artwork. Then the students will choose one way we value art and argue that stance in a debate.

Show the class a poster or large reproduction of an artwork that you think most of the students will respond to positively. Ask: What is your first reaction to this artwork? So is it valuable because it's beautiful or makes you feel happy, or \_\_\_\_\_? (use whatever responses the students have given) Why else might this work be valuable to someone? Hold up the poster of Handcart Pioneers' First View of Salt Lake Valley. Ask? If you collected art by Utah artists, why might this artwork be valuable to you? Help the students explore the idea that art is valuable is different ways.

Divide the students into groups and pass out the postcards. Ask the students to figure out as many different ways as they can that the artworks they have can be considered valuable. Students should make a list.

If students need more direction, ask them questions such as the following:

Which artworks would be most valuable to an art museum that specializes in Utah artworks? Why?

Which artworks would be most valuable to a museum of Utah History? Why?

Which artworks would be most valuable to you as something you would want in your home so you could look at it every day? Why?

Each student group will choose one artwork and decide why it may be valuable. They will choose two students who will debate two members of another group, using the reasons they determined in their group to assert that their artwork is the most valuable. Students will complete a form or write in their journals the title of the artwork they chose, the artist, and three reasons they believe the artwork is valuable.

<p>Artist: _____</p> <p>Title: _____</p> <p>This artwork is valuable because</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
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