

Tom Lea
INSTITUTE

THE NEW DEAL

What's the Big Deal About the New Deal?



Tom Lea, *Pass of the North*, mural, 1938. Oil on canvas, 11 x 54 feet.



Tom Lea, *Stampede*, mural, 1940. Oil on canvas, 5 1/2 x 16 feet.

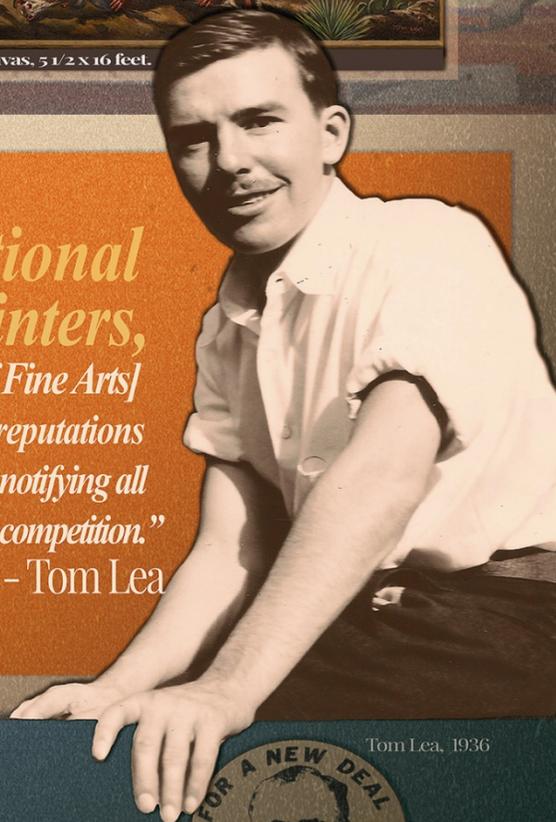
Comanches, mural, 1943



The Nesters, mural, oil on canvas, 1937

"I had won a national competition of painters, [Treasury Department, Section of Fine Arts] and a lot of the painters had great reputations up in New York. They sent out a flyer notifying all painters that wished to compete in the competition."

- Tom Lea



Tom Lea, 1936



TOM LEA PAINTED
7 MURALS
FOR THE WPA!



What's the Big Deal About the New Deal?

What's the story behind the murals at courthouses, the post offices and other public spaces?

In the curriculum "What's the Deal about the New Deal Art?" the history of who made this art, why it was commissioned and the legacy it left behind is explored. Fortunately, Tom Lea, Texas native and nationally renowned artist created New Deal murals in El Paso, Odessa, Seymour and Dallas. The artwork by Lea is a visual marker that reveals important facts about ourselves as individuals and a country during the Progressive Era and Depression

Tom Lea's art is a unique portal to learn history and hone skills in writing.

- Roosevelt's Works Project Administration included artist in its programs and funded projects for new federal buildings. It was a very competitive process where the artist submitted ideas and if chosen executed their work on a large scale.
- Tom Lea researched every mural thoroughly, in the process he became a student of history. Student's conduct research using primary and secondary sources to develop critical thinking skills by analyzing depression era themes in New Deal murals.
- After being presented with both sides of an argument, students write a letter to defend and support their point of view. Should the arts be funded partially by the government or solely by private sector/non-profit donations?
- As an artist, Tom Lea adapted his talent to the changing times and economy. He was a painter, illustrator and later became a WWII Life war correspondent. Lea was also an author of a best-selling books that became movies.

Why Emphasize Character Qualities Instead of Teaching to the Test?

The Tom Lea New Deal curriculum combines critical thinking and character skills needed for academic success and achievement in testing. Character qualities provide students with the focus and self discipline to develop academic skills and acquire knowledge for success. The teacher is provided with engaging, videos, slides, a detailed teacher guide and student activities. *What's the Big Deal about New Deal Art?* is a segue into the New Deal era that captures the student's imagination and solidifies knowledge of

TEKS Correlated, Blended Learning Impacts Achievement and Test Results

- Primary sources are used by students to create an article detailing how the student was inspired by Tom Lea. They are asked to develop an imaginary two page spread for Texas Monthly. Students reflect on Lea's **character qualities** and how they contributed to his fame and success. They then personally evaluate how their peers portray success on social media, is there a difference? How can they adapt at least three of Tom Lea's qualities (**ex. hard work, flexibility, alertness.**) to be successful? Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text, highlighting a TEKS ELA(13), Fine Art(F).
- Students use the Primary Source Analysis to evaluate the historical value of Tom Lea's correspondence about the Thomas Branigan Memorial Library mural in Las Cruces, New Mexico. By reviewing this letter students acquire information, analyze and answer historical questions. US History TEKS(29A)
- The flipped classroom is introduced, giving students more responsibility and creative freedom. The curriculum is designed to be student directed with the teacher as a learning facilitator. Innovative thinking activities lend themselves well to this model of teaching. High priority TEKS can be implemented with excellent student engagement