

**Name:** Melanie Linn Gutowski

**Title:** Homestead Steel Strike Collage Workshop

**Subject area:** art programming, public history programming

**State:** Pennsylvania

**Abstract:** This art workshop encourages reflection on the events of the Homestead Steel Works lockout and strike of 1892 through the creation of mixed media collage.

1. **Introduction:** This is a 2-hour workshop that is geared toward school groups that have previously studied the Homestead Steel Strike in the classroom, as well as members of the general public who have some base knowledge of the event, such as a book group that has read *Meet You in Hell* by Les Standiford or similar titles. It would be appropriate for museums, history organizations, libraries, community groups, etc. A museum or history organization could use this program as an outreach opportunity to tie in with ongoing book groups at local libraries.
2. **Program Goals:** To encourage individual reflection upon the Homestead Steel conflict and expression of the event in artistic form.
3. **Connections to State Standards:** Not applicable
4. **Description:** This program occurs in three parts, with an optional fourth part:
  - i. **Discussion** (20 min.): Facilitator (museum educator, librarian, or similar) leads the group in creating a mood board for each side of the Homestead conflict on a bulletin board or similar surface. Using samples of the provided materials, participants take turns adding different colors, textures, images, etc. to each side. During the exercise, discuss the strike at an overview level. Ask participants who represents each side—can also hold up materials and ask the group where they should go and why. What makes these sides different? What do they have in common? Be sure to highlight all of the materials available to participants so they can make use of them.
  - ii. **Active work time** (60-90 min.): Participants are given free rein to create their collage. If needed, give a demonstration of adhesive techniques (decoupage, spray adhesive, etc.). Facilitator should circulate, assisting participants. Works can depict any portion of the events in question.

- iii. **Writing exercise** (20-30 min.): This portion can be done at the conclusion of the active work time or be done in the days following the workshop.
  - a) Write an artist statement about your collage. What aspects of the Homestead Strike specifically inspired your collage? What does it depict? Why did you choose these aspects? What feelings did you want to express or impart to the viewer? What story are you telling? What do you think an audience in the late 19th century would have thought or felt about your work?
  - b) Write a museum label for your artwork. What does a current audience need to understand about your work? Alternatively, ask classmates/other workshop participants to write labels for one another's works before each artist writes their own.
- iv. **Exhibition** (optional): Artworks with their accompanying labels can be put on display as part of a mini exhibition. Partner participants and ask them to discuss one another's works.

5. **Formal and Informal Assessment:** Not applicable.

6. **Technological Needs:** Bulletin board(s), pushpins

7. **Materials Needed:**

- i. Historic ephemera (available at <https://pitt.libguides.com/homestead> and <https://historicpittsburgh.org> > image search "Homestead Steel")
  - a) Copies of public-domain images, letters and other strike ephemera
  - b) Images of Homestead, past and present
  - c) Copies of period sheet music/lyrics
  - d) Copies of period newspapers, headlines
  - e) Copies of period advertisements, Sears catalog ([https://archive.org/details/catalog1918sear\\_201901](https://archive.org/details/catalog1918sear_201901)), Homestead business directories
- ii. Consumables
  - a) Magazines
  - b) Wallpaper samples
  - c) Old books
  - d) Scrapbooking paper in varying textures, including metallics
  - e) Metallic leaf
  - f) Urban textures (brick, wood, metal, rust, clapboard)
  - g) Images of freshwater, mud, earth, sky, flame, etc.
  - h) Newsprint
  - i) Tissue paper
  - j) Rivets, tacks, brads, or other metal accents

- k) Fabric scraps - burlap, calico, seersucker, wool, leather, damask, satin, silk, gingham
  - iii. Art Supplies
    - a) Stretched canvas for each participant
    - b) Glue, spray adhesive, Modge Podge, scissors, drawing utensils, brushes
    - c) Ageing spray (Tim Holtz or similar)
  - iv. Writing exercise worksheets
    - a) Artist Statement
    - b) Museum label (attached)

8. **Other Sources to Consider:** This workshop could tie in with a larger discussion of artistic depictions of industry (or lack thereof), as well as different collage techniques.

Connecting ideas:

- i. Westmoreland Museum of American Art collection: *Born of Fire: The Valley of Work* <https://collection.thewestmoreland.org/objects-1/portfolio?records=20&query=Portfolios%20%3D%20%22407%22&sort=0>
- ii. Impressionist depictions of industrialization: James Henry Rubin, *Impressionism and the Modern Landscape: Productivity, Technology, and Urbanization from Manet to Van Gogh*
- iii. Collage artists: Romare Bearden, Robert Rauschenberg, Vanessa German, Vik Muniz, Lee Krasner

**Homestead Steel Strike Collage Workshop  
Museum Label Worksheet**

Artist Name
<i>Title of work, YEAR</i>
Medium (mixed media collage)
Description of your work

Artist Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of work: \_\_\_\_\_

Medium: \_\_\_\_\_

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

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