The American Visions Exhibition
Overview: The era between the world wars was a time of growing art awareness in the United States— in the 1920s alone, more than 60 new museums opened across the country. In addition, the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration program provided work for hundreds of artists who in turn created thousands of artworks for public spaces. This government effort coupled with the social problems of the time, contributed to a renewed search for a unique American art style.

Although abstract painting was becoming ever more sophisticated in the United States and some artists deliberately eschewed social realist subjects, for others there was an increasing desire to depict the American land and its people as the Great Depression went on, World War Two began, and the American landscape changed from one of vast open land to one that reflected human inventiveness and development.

Look:
- What do you notice? Describe what you see.
- What is going on in this image?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What is the year or time period depicted in this image? What do you see that makes you say that?
- Where is the setting? How do you know?
- What is the mood in the image? What colors, lines, shapes, or textures communicate this mood?
- Describe the figures in the image? What activities are they performing? Do they look happy, tired, sad, rich, poor, hungry, old, young, etc. What do you see that makes you say that?

Discuss:
- What is the artist’s message and how do we know?
- What is their point of view (perspective)? Purpose? Agenda?
- What events, experiences and beliefs influenced the vision of each artist?
- What does the artwork say about the time in which it was created?
- How does the image personify America? Are any of these personifications ‘true’ today?

Do:
For centuries, artists have learned from other artists—sketching and drawing paintings and sculptures made by another’s hand. Choose your favorite work from the American Visions Exhibit. Look closely at it for a few minutes. Then sketch the work of art in the space provided.