

## Spencer Art Reference Library

### Library Guide

#### *American Epics: Thomas Hart Benton and Hollywood*

Resource List | October 2015



Thomas Hart Benton is one of the most well-known American artists of the twentieth century. A native of Missouri, he worked and taught in Kansas City for many years. His art reveals his interest in telling stories about America and American experiences—themes that also played out on the silver screen. Benton’s preparatory process also shared affinities with Hollywood’s preproduction techniques, resulting in finished works that were often cinematic in their composition and content. His style garnered attention from major film studios and movie directors, which gave rise to multiple Hollywood commissions.

This bibliography, created in conjunction with the featured exhibition *American Epics: Thomas Hart Benton and Hollywood*, includes titles about the artist’s work throughout his career and Hollywood in the twentieth century. The section “American Epics” includes titles on major works featured in the exhibition. The following sections include titles on different aspects of Benton’s art, and concludes with a section on Hollywood. Online resources are listed throughout the bibliography. All the resources are in the collection of the Spencer Art Reference Library, unless otherwise noted.

If you have questions, please contact the reference staff at the Spencer Art Reference Library (telephone: 816.751.1216). Library hours and services are listed on the Museum’s website at [www.nelson-atkins.org](http://www.nelson-atkins.org)

Selected by:  
Roberta Wagener | Library Assistant, Public Services

## American Epics

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. "American Epics: Thomas Hart Benton and Hollywood, October 10, 2015–January 3, 2016." Accessed June 5, 2015. <http://www.nelson-atkins.org/art/exhibitions/benton-hollywood.cfm>

Bailey, Austen Barron. *American Epics: Thomas Hart Benton and Hollywood*. Salem: Peabody Essex Museum; Munich, London, New York: Delmonico Books/Prestel, 2015.

Call No: N6537 .B457 A4 2015 BENTON

---

Allen, Nina. *Thomas Hart Benton and John Steinbeck: Populist Realism in the Depression Era*. Call No: ND237 .B47 A8 1995

Bailey, Austen Barron. *Painting the American Historical Epic: Thomas Hart Benton and Race, 1919–1936*. Thesis (Ph.D.): University of California, Santa Barbara, 2009.  
Call No: ND237 .B47 B35 2009 BENTON

Braun, Emily and Thomas Branchick. *Thomas Hart Benton: The America Today Murals*. Williamstown: Williams College Museum of Art, 1985.

Spencer Art Reference Library  
Call No: N44 B467 .B7

Doss, Erika. "Thomas Hart Benton (1889–1975) *American Historical Epic*, c. 1919–1926" in Conrads, Margaret C. ed. *American Paintings to 1945: The Collections of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*. Kansas City: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2007, v. 1, pg. 52-70, v. 2, pg. 18-26.  
Call No: Reference Desk ND205 .A673 2007 no. 3 v. 1-2

Doss, Erica. "Thomas Hart Benton (1889–1975) *Hollywood, 1937–38*," in Conrads, Margaret C. ed. *American Paintings to 1945: The Collections of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*. Kansas City: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2007, v. 1 p. 86-91, v. 2 p. 31-33.  
Call No: Reference Desk ND205 .A673 2007 no. 3 v. 1-2

Griffey, Randall R., Elizabeth Mankins Kornhauser and Stephanie L. Herdrich.

*Thomas Hart Benton's American Today*. Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin v. 72 no. 3 Winter 2015.  
Call No: N610 .A2 2015 v. 72 no. 3

Griffey, Randall. "Thomas Hart Benton's America Today Mural." In Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–. Accessed July 10, 2015. [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/bent/hd\\_bent.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/bent/hd_bent.htm)

Hurt, R. Douglas and Mary K. Dains, eds. *Thomas Hart Benton: Artist, Writer, Intellectual*. Columbia: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1989.  
Call No: N44 B467 .H87 1989

MacLeish, Archibald. *The Year of Peril: A Series of War Paintings by Thomas Benton*. North Chicago: Abbott Laboratories, 1942.  
Call No: Special N44 B467 ND.Y4b 1942

Smee, Sebastian. "Benton and the Hollywood Effect." *The Boston Globe*. June 4, 2015. Accessed June 23, 2015. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/theater-art/2015/06/04/benton-and-hollywood-effect/4cEQCK0KsFt24uvkTRDGaO/story.html>

## Works Illustrated by Benton

Huberman, Leo. "*We, The People*." with illustrations by Thomas Hart Benton. Rev. ed. New York, London: Harper & Brothers, 1947, 1932.  
Call No: Special E178.3 .H92 1932 BENTON

Keesee, Vincent Alvin. *Regionalism: The Book Illustrations of Benton, Curry and Wood*. Thesis (Ph.D.) University of Georgia, 1972.  
Call No: ND212.5 .R43 K4

Larson, Sidney. *Thomas Hart Benton's Illustrations from Mark Twain: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Life on the Mississippi: From the State Historical Society of Missouri Collection*. Kansas City: Mid-America Arts Alliance, 1976.  
Call No: N44 .B467 NC.L37 1976

Museum of Nebraska Art. *Thomas Hart Benton: Original Illustrations for Francis Parkman's The Oregon Trail*. Kearney: The Museum, 1988  
Call No: N44 B467 .N42 1988

Parkman, Francis. *The Oregon Trail*.  
Illustrated by Thomas Hart Benton.  
Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc.,  
1946.  
Call No: N44 B467 .A46

Schiller, Joyce K. "Imaging a Daunting Journey," May 2, 2013. The Rockwell Center for American Visual Studies-The Norman Rockwell Museum. Accessed July 10, 2015.

<http://www.rockwell-center.org/essays-illustration/imaging-a-daunting-journey/>

Stuart, Jessie. *Taps for Private Tussie*.  
Illustrated by Thomas Hart Benton.  
New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1943.  
Call No: N44 B467 .A55

Twain, Mark. *Life on the Mississippi*.  
Illustrated by Thomas Hart Benton.  
New York: Heritage Press, 1944.  
Call No: Special PS1314 .T82 1944

### **Thomas Hart Benton**

Adams, Henry. *Thomas Hart Benton: An American Original*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989.  
Call No: N44 B467 .A644 1989

Baigell, Matthew. *Thomas Hart Benton*.  
New York: H.N. Abrams: Distributed  
by New American Library, 1975.  
Call No: ND237 .B47 B32 1975 BENTON

"Benton Memories." Youtube.com Accessed  
June 10, 2015.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6i-7Xb8xM>

Benton, Thomas Hart. *Thomas Hart Benton: Artist File, 1920-2014*. 4 folders.  
Spencer Art Reference Library Vertical Files

Benton, Thomas Hart. *Thomas Hart Benton's America*. Lincoln: Kiechel Fine Art, 2009.  
Call No: N6537 .B457 A4 2009 BENTON

Burns, Ken; Julie Dunphey, Geoffrey C. Ward,  
Jason Robards, Florentine Films. *Thomas Hart Benton*. PBS Home Video, 2004.  
Call No: Multimedia ND237 .B47 T46 2004  
BENTON

Burroughs, Polly. *Thomas Hart Benton: A Portrait*.  
Garden City: Doubleday, 1981.  
Call No: N44 B467 .B87

Chiappini, Rudy. *Thomas Hart Benton*.  
Lugano: Museo d'arte moderna;  
Milan: Electa, 1992.  
Call No: ND237 .B47 A4 1992 BENTON

Conrads, David. "Biography of Thomas Hart Benton." Kansas City Public Library. Accessed  
July 14, 2015.  
<http://www.kchistory.org/u?/Biographies,62>

Gruber, J. Richard. *Thomas Hart Benton and the American South*. Augusta: Morris Museum of Art, 1998.  
Call No: ND237 .B47 A4 1998 BENTON

Mazow, Leo G. *Shallow Creek: Thomas Hart Benton and American Waterways*. University Park: Palmer Museum of Art, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007.  
Call No: N6537 .B457 A4 2007 BENTON

Mazow, Leo G. *Thomas Hart Benton and the American Sound*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012.  
Call No: ND237 .B47 M39 2012

Mazow, Leo. "Thomas Hart Benton and the American Sound." YouTube video, 50:23, streamed live from a lecture at the Smithsonian American Art Museum on September 26, 2013, posted by Smithsonian American Art Museum.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOtmDiwG1EE>

Missouri State Parks. "Thomas Hart Benton Home and Studio State Historic Site." Accessed  
July 14, 2015.  
<http://www.mostateparks.com/park/thomas-hart-benton-home-and-studio-state-historic-site>

PBS. "Ken Burns: American Stories: Thomas Hart Benton." Accessed July 14, 2015.

<http://www.pbs.org/kenburns/benton/>

Schiller, Joyce K. *Passion, Politics, Prohibition: Benton's "Bootleggers": February 28 to June 2, 2002, Reynolda House, Museum of American Art, Winston-Salem, North Carolina*. Winston-Salem: Reynolda House, Museum of American Art, 2002.  
Call No: ND237 .B47 A4 2002 BENTON

"Thomas Hart Benton Dies; Painter of American Scene." *New York Times (1923–Current File)*, Jan 20, 1975. Accessed July 14, 2015.  
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/120515560?accountid=28457>.

Wolff, Justin. *Thomas Hart Benton: A Life*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012.  
Call No: ND237 .B47 W65 2012 BENTON

### **Benton on Benton**

Benton, Thomas Hart. *An American In Art: A Professional and Technical Autobiography*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1969.  
Call No: ND237 .B47 A4 1969 BENTON

Benton, Thomas Hart and Matthew Baigel. *An Artist in America*. 4<sup>th</sup> rev. ed. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1983.  
Call No: ND237 .B47 A3 1983 BENTON

Benton, Thomas Hart and Paul Cummings. "Oral History Interview with Thomas Hart Benton, 1973 July 23-24." Archives of American Art. Sound Recording Available in Nelson-Atkins Museum Archives

### **Benton Murals**

Baigell, Matthew. "Thomas Hart Benton in the 1920's." *Art Journal*, v. 29, no. 4 (Summer 1970) pg. 422-429.  
Accessed July 14, 2015 via JSTOR:  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/775406>

Bailey, Austen Barron. "Art for America: Race in Thomas Hart Benton's Murals, 1919–1936." *Indiana Magazine of History*, v. 105 no. 2 June 2005 pg. 150-166.

Accessed July 14, 2015 via JSTOR.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27792976>

Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, Nashville. Adams, Henry. "Thomas Hart Benton." Accessed July 14, 2015.  
<http://countrymusichalloffame.org/ContentPages/thomas-hart-benton1>

Edelman, Nancy. *The Thomas Hart Benton Murals in The Missouri State Capitol: A Social History of the State of Missouri*. Jefferson City: Missouri State Council on the Arts, 1975.  
Call No: ND237 .B47 E33 1975

Foster, Kathleen A., Nanette Esseek Brewer, and Margaret Contompasis. *Thomas Hart Benton and the Indiana Murals*. Bloomington: Indiana University Art Museum in association with Indiana University Press, 2000.  
Call No: ND237 .B47 A76 2000 BENTON

Harry S. Truman Library & Museum. "Independence and the Opening of the West by Thomas Hart Benton." Accessed July 14, 2015.  
<http://www.trumanlibrary.org/teacher/benton.htm>

Priddy, Bob. *Only the Rivers Are Peaceful: Thomas Hart Benton's Missouri Mural*. Independence: Independence Press/Herald Pub. House, 1989.  
Call No: N44 B467 .ND.M5p 1989  
"Thomas Hart Benton: Murals in the Missouri State Capital." Accessed July 14, 2015.  
<http://benton.truman.edu/artist.html>

### **Lithographs and Works on Paper**

Adams, Henry. *Thomas Hart Benton: Drawing From Life*. Seattle: Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle; New York: Abbeville Press, 1990.  
Call No: NC1075 .B522 A47 1990 BENTON

Benton, Thomas Hart. *Benton Drawings: A Collection of Drawings by Thomas Hart Benton*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1968.  
Call No: NC1075 .B522 A45 1968

Czestochowski, Joseph S. *A Question of Regionalism: Lithographs by Thomas Hart Benton, John Steuart Curry, Grant Wood*. Memphis: Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, 1975.  
Call No: NE2319 .B48 C9

Dreishpoon, Douglas. *Benton's America: Works on Paper and Selected Paintings*. New York: Hirschl & Adler Galleries, 1991.  
Call No: N44 B467 .H57 1991

Fath, Creekmore. *The Lithographs of Thomas Hart Benton*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979.  
Call No: ND2312 .B48 A4 1979 BENTON

Louis Newman Galleries. *Thomas Hart Benton (1889–1975): Works on Paper*. Beverly Hills: Louis Newman Galleries, 1991.  
Call No: BENTON N6537 .B457 A4 1991

Makin, Jean. *American Life & Lore: Thomas Hart Benton & The Associated American Artists: From the Hugh Taylor Collection*. Tempe: University Art Museum, Arizona State University, 1989.  
Call No: NE104 .A88 A6 1989

Marling, Karal Ann. *Tom Benton and His Drawings: A Biographical Essay and a Collection of His Sketches, Studies and Mural Cartoons*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1985.  
Call No: N44 B467 NC.M3

Miller Gallery. *Thomas Hart Benton: Lithographs, March 6–April 3, 1982*. Cincinnati: Miller Gallery, 1982.  
Call No: N44 B467 NE.M55 1982

Worthen, Amy Namowitz. *Benton–Curry–Wood: Selected Lithographs*. Des Moines: Iowa Art Council, 1978.  
Call No: NE2312 .B48 A4 1978 BENTON

## Hollywood

Abbott, Garret, ed., Robert Dance and Joan Collins. *Hollywood Unseen: Photographs from the John Kobal Foundation*. Suffolk: Antique Collectors Club, 2012.  
Call No: TR653 .H65 2012

Berry, Sarah. *Screen Style: Fashion and Femininity in 1930s Hollywood*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.  
Call No: PN1995.9 .C56 B47 2000

Doherty, Thomas. *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.  
Call No: D743.23 .D64 1993

May, Lary. *Screening Out the Past: The Birth of Mass Culture and the Motion Picture Industry*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.  
Call No: PN1995.9 .S6 M39 1980

Michaude, Juliette and Michel Hazanavicius. *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*. Paris: Flammarion, 2014.  
Call No: TR681 .A28 M53 2014

Parkinson, David. *History of Film*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2012.  
Call No: PN1993.5 .A1 P37 2012

Sherman, David E. *Life Goes to the Movies*. New York: Time-Life Books, 1975.  
Call No: PN1994 .L483

Sklar, Robert. *A World History of Film*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2002.  
Call No: PN1993.5 .A1 S555 2001

Smyth, J. E., ed. *Hollywood and the American Historical Film*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.  
Call No: PN1995.9 .H5 H63 2012

Thomson, David. *The Big Screen: The Story of the Movies*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012.  
Call No: PN1993.5 .U6 T46 2012

## Resources for Teachers and Educational Professionals

Available in the museum's Educator Resource Center (ERC)

<http://www.nelson-atkins.org/education/ERC.cfm>

Berardi, Marianne. *Under the Influence: The Students of Thomas Hart Benton*. St. Joseph: The Albright-Kemper Museum of Art, 1993.

Call No: 214B.5 Ben993

Adams, Henry. *Thomas Hart Benton: An American Original*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989

Call No: 214B.5 Ben989

Missouri Southern State College. *Thomas Hart Benton: A Personal Commemorative*. Kansas City: Burd + Fletcher, 1973.

Call No: 214B.5 Ben973

*Thomas Hart Benton's The Sources of Country Music*. [videorecording]. North Kansas City: Master's Mark, 1992.

Call No: 214V.5 Ben992

Greenberg, Jan. *The American Eye: Eleven Artists of the Twentieth Century*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1995.


Call No: 600B Gre995

### Explore More...

Search the library's collections at [libraryonsearch.nelson-atkins.org](http://libraryonsearch.nelson-atkins.org)

*Ask Us...*

*Spencer Art Reference Library Staff can help*  
[nelson-atkins.org/library](http://nelson-atkins.org/library)

 [SpencerArtReferenceLibrary](https://www.facebook.com/SpencerArtReferenceLibrary)

### Image Credits

Thomas Hart Benton, American (1889-1975). *Hollywood*, 1937-1938. Tempera with oil on canvas (mounted on plywood panel), 56 x 84 inches (142.2 x 213.4 cm). The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Bequest of the artist, F75-21/12.

Photo by Jamison Miller. Works of Art by Thomas Hart Benton are © T.H. Benton and R.P. Benton Testamentary Trusts/UMB Bank Trustee/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY