

The Bruton Sisters

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Note to Teachers

UCI Jack and Shanaz Langson Institute and Museum of California Art (Langson IMCA) aims to be a resource to educators and students by offering school visits, programs, digital tools, and activities designed for grades 3–12 that contribute to the development of strong critical-thinking skills, empathy, and curiosity about art and culture. When students are encouraged to express themselves and take risks in discussing and creating art, they awaken their imaginations and nurture their creative potential. School visits, whether in-person or virtual, offer opportunities for students to develop observation and interpretation skills using visual and sensory information, build knowledge independently and with one another, and cultivate an interest in artistic production.

This Teacher Resource Guide includes essays, artist biographies, strategies for interdisciplinary curriculum integration, discussion questions, methods for teaching with objects, a vocabulary list, and activities for three works in Langson IMCA's collection that are included in the exhibition, *The Bruton Sisters: Modernism in the Making*.

About the Exhibition

Margaret, Esther, and Helen Bruton—known collectively as the Bruton sisters—made important contributions to **California Modernism**. Influenced by the state's hospitable climate, scenic beauty, and optimistic future, the Brutons and their contemporaries experimented with new techniques and materials that pushed art and architecture beyond abstraction in an effort to meld art and life. Part of a movement that was active from the 1930s to the 1960s, the Brutons explored the boundaries of their chosen mediums, imbuing their work with warmth, light, texture, natural materials, and organic forms. Margaret experimented with painting and terrazzo, Helen with mosaics, and Esther with decorative screens and murals. Besides assisting one another with their projects, the sisters also collaborated on large-scale public art commissions.

The exhibition, *The Bruton Sisters: Modernism in the Making*, presents a selection of works created between the 1920s and the 1950s, and explores the Brutons' innovative use of materials, creative approach to design, and collaborative process. Rarely seen works and archival materials reveal how the sisters integrated art, craft, and design into their everyday lives. This rich body of material, displayed alongside art by their Californian contemporaries, provides a deeper understanding of how Margaret, Esther, and Helen Bruton advanced the development of modern art in California.

Featured Works

Margaret Bruton, *Taos Woman*, 1929, Oil on canvas, 24 x 21 in. The Buck Collection at UCI Jack and Shanaz Langson Institute and Museum of California Art, © Bruton Family Archive, courtesy of Barbara Carroll

Helen Bruton, *Woman with Turquoise Bracelet*, 1943, Cut ceramic mosaic tiles and cement, 24 x 29 in. The Buck Collection at UCI Jack and Shanaz Langson Institute and Museum of California Art, © Bruton Family Archive, courtesy of Barbara Carroll

Thelner Hoover, *Esther Bruton Working on Terrazzo Table*, circa 1940, 8 x 10 in. Bruton Family Archive, courtesy of Barbara Carroll, Thelner Barton Hoover and Louise Eleanor Brown Hoover photographic collection, Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA

Mabel Alvarez, *Still Life*, 1916-1917, Oil on canvas, 16 x 16 in. UCI Jack and Shanaz Langson Institute and Museum of California Art, Gift of The Irvine Museum

Margaret Bruton, *Helen at Sargent House Studio*, circa 1920, Oil on canvas, 40 x 34 in. The Buck Collection at UCI Jack and Shanaz Langson Institute and Museum of California Art, © Bruton Family Archive, courtesy of Barbara Carroll

Learn More

For questions about scheduling a school visit, please contact the Education Department by email or phone at imca@uci.edu or 949-476-0003 or register online at imca.uci.edu.



About the Artists

The Bruton Sisters



Imogen Cunningham, *The Bruton Sisters, Artists*, 1930, 1930, Gelatin silver print, 8 x 10 in. © 2022 Imogen Cunningham Trust

About the Artists

“We were always interested in trying new techniques,” Helen Bruton (1898–1985) said of the sisters. “When one would start something, we would all do the same thing.”¹

The Bruton sisters—Margaret, Esther, and Helen—were each talented artists and craftspeople dedicated to the cause of **modernism**. Born in the final years of the 19th century and raised in Alameda, California, outside of San Francisco, they helped to advance the modern art movement in the state. Although each of the sisters specialized in her own medium, they assisted one another with projects and collaborated on large-scale public art **commissions**. They experimented widely and made what they called “living art,” objects that fulfilled a function in the everyday. Most of all, the Bruton sisters influenced each other.

The siblings were fiercely independent and resisted the constrictions of traditional domesticity. Best friends since childhood, they supported each other and were connected to a large network of other female, modernist artists. They traveled widely from a young age and journeyed both domestically and internationally, including to Tahiti, Haiti, and the Philippines. Two of the sisters never married, and Esther married in her mid-forties. None of the sisters had children. Their lives were inextricably tied to each other and, in later years, caring for their widowed mother, who encouraged their creativity throughout their lives.

Each of the sisters broke new ground in her chosen art form, although there was plenty of crossover. Margaret (1894–1983) studied painting and was considered an “ultra-modernist”² in the medium. During the Great Depression, Helen was hired by the Works Progress Administration to design murals and, following Margaret’s suggestion, turned to mosaic. By the late 1930s, she was considered an expert in the art form. Meanwhile, Esther (1896–1992) specialized in decorative objects for the home like fireplace surrounds and tri-fold screens. She also designed murals for hotels, department stores, and office buildings. Esther and Margaret worked together on terrazzo, making the ancient form modern.

Many of the works the Bruton sisters created have been lost. Although they achieved international fame in their own time, their name recognition has since vanished, due to a combination of ongoing discrimination against women artists, changing tastes, and the sisters’ reticence about recording their accomplishments and ideas for posterity.

Travel and Culture

Travel and Culture

“It’s a disappointment to return to the States and see people rushing about—people who don’t know how to play!”

—Esther Bruton, upon returning from Tahiti³

During their childhoods, the Bruton sisters traveled frequently within their home state of California, often for long periods of time—to the mountains, to their family ranch in Napa County, and to the seaside Pacific Grove on the Monterey Peninsula. Sometimes they traveled by train and other times by horse-drawn buggy. For an entire year in 1907–08, they lived in Brooklyn, NY with their mother’s family. Margaret took classes at the Art Students League at only 13 years of age. The sisters were also exposed to other cultures through well-traveled relatives and friends, including their mother’s younger sister, who visited them from her home in Hawaii.

The Bruton sisters continued to journey far from home well into adulthood—to Haiti, Mexico, and the Philippines, among other locations. Their family’s wealth meant they had the money to travel and, because two of them never married and none had children, they didn’t have the same obligations and responsibilities of other women at the time. Avid campers, Helen and Esther even camped in Taos, New Mexico, in 1975 in their late 70s. Their widowed mother accompanied them on many of these trips, although the sisters began to limit their travel when

During their childhoods, the Bruton sisters traveled frequently within their home state of California

their mother fell ill and they needed to care for her. Esther’s traveling was not hampered by her marriage. Her husband’s job as a civil engineer required him to travel often, and she was delighted: “Marry an engineer,” she said, “and see the world.”⁴ Of course, Esther was already widely traveled when she first met him. She had visited

Tahiti with friends in 1924 for several months to follow in the footsteps of artist Paul Gauguin (1848–1903).

Several years later, another trip made a significant impression. In 1929, Margaret, Esther, and their mother went to New Mexico at a time when an artists’ community in Taos was thriving, drawn by the region’s light, air, and Indigenous cultures. That year, visitors included Georgia O’Keeffe (1887–1986) and Ansel Adams (1902–1984), with whom the sisters would later become close. The trip had a major impact on the two siblings, especially their exposure to Native American cultures in the American Southwest. Margaret’s portrait of a **Puebloan** woman from this time was praised for avoiding a “sentimental haze.”⁵ While other contemporaries traveled to far-off locations for what is called **cultural tourism** and created inaccurate or simplistic depictions of Indigenous people, the Brutons, in their depictions, seemed to demonstrate true respect for the people they met.

View and Discuss



Margaret Bruton, *Taos Woman*, 1929, Oil on canvas, 24 x 21 in. The Buck Collection at UCI Jack and Shanaz Langson Institute and Museum of California Art, © Bruton Family Archive, courtesy of Barbara Carroll

View and Discuss

Ask students to look carefully at Margaret Bruton's painting. Then ask them to describe the subject of the portrait: her clothes, body language, and facial expression.

Ask students to share with a partner what they imagine she might be thinking and why.

The background does not have many details. Ask students to imagine where she is seated. How would different settings influence their thoughts about the portrait subject? Why do they think the artist might have left the setting ambiguous?

Now think about technique. What kinds of colors, lines, and brushstrokes did Bruton use? How do those choices influence the way the viewer sees the portrait subject?

In 1929, Margaret, her sister Esther, and their mother traveled to New Mexico where they met many people from local Indigenous cultures. Margaret made several modernist portraits of people she encountered, like this one, and the paintings were praised when she returned to California. *The Los Angeles Times* said her portraits were "all staked on clean, modern methods of working on colors or tones that are definite, steering clear of any borderland of sentimental haze."⁶ As a class, analyze this review by the newspaper. What does it mean? Do students think it applies to the painting? Why or why not? What would a portrait that had a "sentimental haze" look like and why would an artist want to avoid that?

Further Explorations

Further Explorations

Travel

The Bruton sisters were life-long travelers. Encourage students to think of a place they have traveled to that has made an impact on their lives. This could be a camping trip, a day trip to the beach, or a visit to a relative. What did they learn from their travels? What memories do they have? Encourage students to research where they have traveled in books and online, and also through conversations with people who journeyed with them (and, if possible, by looking at photos taken on their trips). Then ask students to create a depiction of the place using collaged images (e.g., trip photos, print-outs from internet research, or photocopies from books) and acrylic paint. Encourage students to present their final artworks to the class. What combination of memories and research did they use? What did they communicate about the place through their artistic choices?

Artist Colonies

Margaret and Esther Bruton and their mother traveled to Taos, New Mexico in 1929. There they became part of a lively artist colony that revolved around an American woman named Mabel Dodge Luhan (1879–



Margaret and Esther Bruton in Taos, NM with Friends, 1929.
Photographic print, black and white, 3 x 4 in. © Bruton Family
Archive, courtesy of Barbara Carroll

1962), who was married to a native Puebloan man. Luhan socialized with writer D.H. Lawrence (1885–1930), dancer and choreographer Martha Graham (1894–1991), and photographer Dorothea Lange (1895–1965). Painter Georgia O’Keeffe, who visited in the summer of 1929, was entranced by the landscape and said Taos had “a different kind of color from any I’d ever seen . . . The world is so wide up there, so big.”⁷ Ansel Adams, also in residence that summer, was so inspired he decided to become a photographer instead of a concert pianist.

Assign students to work in small groups to research the following artists: Ansel Adams, Martha Graham, Dorothea Lange, and Georgia O’Keeffe. Ask each group to identify two to three key works made by their assigned artist and discuss them. Then ask students to form new small groups comprised of one representative from each artist group. Ask students to present information on their artist to their new small group. Then ask the groups to compare artists and artworks. What do they have in common? Are there differences? Tell students that artist colonies have always been a feature of artistic life. What might be the benefits and drawbacks of working in an artist colony? As an extension to this exercise, have students imagine a dialogue between the artists they were assigned. What might they say to each other and why?

Ethics of Cultural Tourism

Margaret’s depiction of an Indigenous woman was considered a sensitive one, but it was part of a larger trend of cultural tourism at the time in which artists descended on places they knew little about and created

Further Explorations

images of cultures that were unfamiliar to them. Ask students to discuss the potential problems with cultural tourism. Then ask them to stage a debate. What ethical considerations must artists wrestle with when depicting other cultures? What is the line between **cultural appropriation** and an appreciation for other cultures? Finally, challenge students to draft a list of guidelines for future artists.

Modernism and the Female Artist Network



Mabel Alvarez, 1953, Photographic print, black and white, 7 x 5 in. (17 x 13 cm.). Mabel Alvarez Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

Modernism and the Female Artist Network

“I wish I were more modern.”

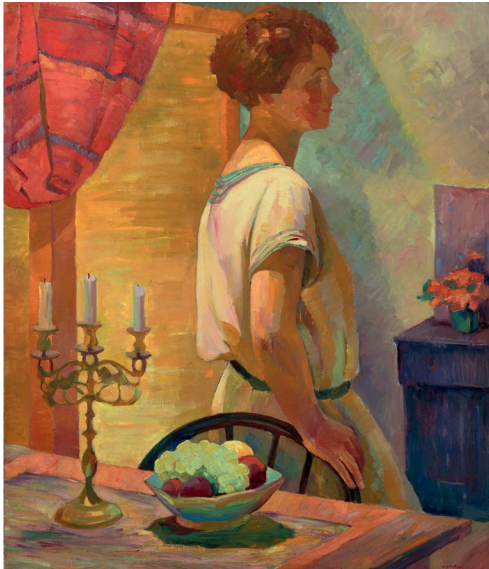
—Margaret Bruton, 1927

In the early 1920s, Margaret Bruton moved to the Monterey Peninsula, an area in Northern California where she and her sisters had regularly visited since childhood. She was attracted to the region by its natural beauty and the burgeoning artist colony developing around the artist and teacher Armin Hansen (1886–1957). Margaret soon came to love not only the place but also the other painters she met, especially other female artists. In 1923, Helen joined her and together with another female artist, the three women rented the attic of “Sargent House,” a Victorian home owned by a local judge, before building their own home nearby.⁸

In Monterey and elsewhere, the Bruton sisters found and cultivated a network of women artists. The sisters—and other female modernists they came to know—supported each other and often worked together in what was otherwise a man’s world. Mabel Alvarez (1891–1985) was one of these women. Born in Hawaii, she was raised in Los Angeles and trained with prominent artists in Southern California, including Morgan Russell (1886–1953) and Stanton MacDonald-Wright (1890–1973), who together founded the **Synchromist** movement. Russell had an especially large impact on Alvarez’s work with his ideas about color.⁹

Margaret’s portrait of Helen (see next page, left), made while living in Judge Sargent’s attic, captures many of the key themes of the Bruton sisters’ lives. First, it demonstrates their close relationships with each other. The sisters often served as each other’s models. The portrait also shows the sisters’ affection for decorative objects. Helen is encircled by the type of objects that bring beauty into everyday lives, such as a screen, candelabra, and a fruit bowl. The sisters often made things that were both aesthetically appealing and had a function, such as terrazzo-topped tables and gold-leaf painted folding screens. They called these objects “living art.” Like Margaret’s portrait, Alvarez’s *Still Life* (see next page, right) emphasizes the beauty of the everyday with its sensitive depiction of a painted pitcher and bowl.

Margaret’s portrait also reveals her burgeoning modernist aesthetic, with its unusual color choices and geometry. Margaret would eventually break away from the influence of Hansen in her quest to be even more avant-garde and move further away from realism toward abstraction. By the mid-1920s, a critic called her an “ultra-modernist.”¹⁰



Margaret Bruton, *Helen at Sargent House Studio*, circa 1920, Oil on canvas, 40 x 34 in. The Buck Collection at UCI Jack and Shanaz Langson Institute and Museum of California Art, © Bruton Family Archive, courtesy of Barbara Carroll



Mabel Alvarez, *Still Life*, 1916–1917, Oil on canvas, 16 x 16 in. UCI Jack and Shanaz Langson Institute and Museum of California Art, Gift of The Irvine Museum

View and Discuss

Ask students to look first at Margaret Bruton's portrait of her sister, Helen. What do they notice about how the subject is posing and how she is dressed?

Tell students that Helen is wearing a smock to protect her clothing while painting. (Photographs of Helen show her wearing a similar garment while working.)

Now look together at the setting. What objects surround Helen? Combined with her pose and her clothing, what does the setting and its contents suggest about her identity and her sister's perspective on her identity?

Compared to other portraits of women from the same period, argues one Langson IMCA curator, the portrait expresses "a different idea of femininity than what was typical for the time." It is a "statement of modernity and how she views herself."¹¹ Ask students to respond to these ideas. What "idea of femininity" do they think the portrait expresses? What do they think about how Helen views herself?

At the time this was painted, a critic said of Margaret's work: "All of [her works] are quite modern: full of color and movement . . . This young artist has endeavored, usually with success, to depict the character and mood of her subject rather than make" an exact copy of them.¹² Do students think Margaret's portrait depicts Helen's character and mood instead of copying her face exactly, or more like a photograph? Why or why not?

Now compare Margaret's painting to Mabel Alvarez's *Still Life*. Both were female painters working in California at the same time. What do their methods have in common? How do they differ? How do they each use color to communicate rather than copy their subject?

Further Explorations

Further Explorations

Still Life Painting

The Bruton sisters and Mabel Alvarez were interested in the beauty of everyday objects. For this activity, challenge students to create their own still lifes by thoughtfully arranging and then sketching three objects in their own home that they consider to be beautiful or interesting. These could be objects that bring comfort, that intrigue, or that are striking in appearance. Ask students to bring their sketches to class and then select one to use as the basis for a painting. Using watercolor or acrylic paint, encourage students to paint the object not by creating an exact, photograph-like replication but by using color and brushstroke to communicate how they feel about the object. When students are finished, create a gallery in the classroom and ask students to talk about what each one communicates and how.

A Network of Women

The Monterey area where Margaret and Helen Bruton lived in the early 1920s was, according to one art historian, a place that was accepting of women artists, many of whom had never married and whose “nonconformity and eccentricity were not only tolerated but encouraged.” Indeed, in the region, women artists were able to achieve more “parity with men.”¹³ Even so, female painters with the boldest styles, like Margaret Bruton, had the most difficult time because this rule-breaking mode was considered masculine. Mabel Alvarez, born in Hawaii to a father from Spain, may have also faced unique challenges adjusting to the continental United States. Yet, each woman persisted in experimenting.

Share this history with students and then ask them to write a piece of historical fiction in the form of a letter from an imagined modernist female painter to a family member or friend. Probe students to imagine what this artist would have experienced at the time. What struggles, worries, or dreams might they share in their letter? Read these aloud to each other and discuss what stood out. Who in our society today might share these worries and dreams?

Portraiture

Margaret Bruton used setting, light, clothing, and posture to communicate the identity and mood of her sister, Helen. For this activity, ask students to take a photograph of a classmate that communicates something about their own identity. Using iPads or digital cameras (or for older students, cell phone cameras), encourage students to think about photographic elements such as cropping and framing in addition to the elements Margaret manipulated. If the device allows, encourage students to also play with light or color using filter options. What do their choices communicate about their subject? Challenge them to write a short label to describe their process and their photograph’s meaning.

Materiality

“As a medium for modern expression, [mosaic] has endless possibilities.”

—Helen Bruton¹⁴

Before the Great Depression, Helen Bruton’s work in **mosaics** had been limited to what she called “some little experiments”¹⁵ and a library where, in the late 1920s, she installed large painted tiles depicting great philosophers. Then, in 1934, she was commissioned by the Works Progress Administration to make public murals for the San Francisco Zoo. Because the murals would be outdoors and exposed to the elements, her sister Margaret suggested she use mosaic and the ancient version of the medium: complex designs composed of small pieces of tile. Helen confessed she “hardly knew what [Margaret] was talking about”¹⁶ before she embarked on the project that would change her life forever. In time, she and her sisters would come to be known as expert mosaicists. And they would transform the ancient art form into something modern, inspiring a mosaic revival in California. Helen, however, did not want to be pigeonholed as a “mosaic artist” and emphasized that it was just another mode of artistic expression.

The Bruton sisters were resourceful when it came to finding materials for their mosaic projects. Because of shortages during the Great Depression, they could not obtain the small glass tiles typical of mosaic, so they substituted large **terracotta** tiles that had been rejected by manufacturers because of their color variations. They ground down the tiles and cut them into smaller pieces. The inconsistent hues that customers did not like were actually preferable to the Brutons, whose mosaics gained depth from the variation.

The sisters’ mosaic work soon led them to a related medium: **terrazzo**, an art form made of pieces of marble, granite, or glass set into concrete, then leveled and polished. During the 1940s and 1950s, Margaret and Esther took an inventive approach with the form, using unusual materials such as Coca-Cola bottles and creating designs reminiscent of Abstract Expressionist paintings. Margaret even gave up painting in the late 1930s to concentrate on terrazzo tabletops, in part because they sold far better than her paintings ever had.

Not much is known about Helen’s mosaic titled *Woman with Turquoise Bracelet* (see next page, left). It is approximately 24 inches square and one inch in depth. It was likely either made for herself or as a study for a larger work. In a photograph by Thelner Hoover (see next page, right), Esther can be seen smoothing down one of her terrazzo tabletops, with other abstract table designs on display in the background.

The Bruton sisters were resourceful when it came to finding materials for their mosaic projects.

View and Discuss



Helen Bruton, *Woman with Turquoise Bracelet*, 1943, Cut ceramic mosaic tiles and cement, 24 x 29 in. The Buck Collection at UCI Jack and Shanaz Langson Institute and Museum of California Art, © Bruton Family Archive, courtesy of Barbara Carroll



Thelner Hoover, *Esther Bruton Working on Terrazzo Table*, circa 1940, 8 x 10 in. Bruton Family Archive, courtesy of Barbara Carroll, Thelner Barton Hoover and Louise Eleanor Brown Hoover photographic collection, Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA

View and Discuss

Ask students what comes to mind when they think about the word “mosaic.” If students have made mosaics previously, ask them what the process was like.

Now ask students to look closely at Helen Bruton’s mosaic from 1943. What can they guess about the materials and processes the artist used? What do they imagine was challenging about the process? What do they notice about the figure—her facial expression, her clothing, her accessories? What do they notice about the background?

This artwork is a mosaic by the artist Helen Bruton who came to be known as a master of the form and is even credited with starting a mosaic revival. What do students think are the benefits and challenges of working in mosaic?

Mosaics are an ancient art form used by many cultures, including ancient Greeks and Romans and Mesoamericans, yet Helen worked to transform her practice into something modern with new approaches to color and line. Some criticized her works as having a “primitive rigidity,” while others thought they possessed a “timelessness.”¹⁷ Ask students what they think. Do they agree with either description? Why or why not?

Now look together at the photograph of Esther Bruton working on a terrazzo tabletop. What do students notice about the images she has created on these tabletops? How do these tabletop designs compare to the female portrait mosaic created by her sister Helen? Like Helen, Esther and Margaret transformed the ancient art form of terrazzo into a modern one. Unlike Helen, they made nonrepresentational designs with a function. Ask students where they would put this tabletop in their house and why. How would they use it? How would it affect the space?

Further Explorations

Mosaics

The Bruton sisters' mosaics were made with tiles, many of which were scavenged or acquired inexpensively. Later, Esther Bruton worked with unusual materials for her terrazzo tabletops, including "chicken scratch, Coca Cola bottles, road repair rock, fine native and imported marbles, and metal filings from machine shops."¹⁸

For this project, challenge students to create a mosaic-like collage out of scavenged paper pieces. They should spend time collecting paper items, such as gum wrappers, receipts, graph paper, or parking tickets. Using these scavenged materials and colored construction paper, ask them to approach their "paper mosaic" in one of two ways:

1. They can sketch their design first and then place torn or cut paper pieces onto their sketch;
2. They can arrange a collage without a design.

Ask students why they might prefer one way over the other. After they have completed their collages, compare the methods various students used. Which did they prefer? What would it have been like to work as a group as the Bruton sisters did, with one leading the project and the others assisting?

Finally, ask students if anyone felt frustration along the way. In an interview while she was constructing a piece, Helen once said: "I can't talk to you very much ... I have to fight this thing. Sometimes it ... makes ... me ... mad!"¹⁹ Even worse, tell students that terrazzo is made "upside down" so that Esther and Margaret did not know what their tabletops would look like until the concrete was set and they could turn it over.

Fine Art vs. Craft

Even though the Bruton sisters were respected and celebrated in their time, their work has not been preserved with the same diligence or collected as methodically as male artists from their era. There are still many unanswered questions about their biographies and artistry that reflect not only bias against female artists but also against so-called craft: ceramics, textiles, furniture-making, and anything with a functional or decorative role. Future generations of scholars and curators must fill in the gaps that have been left because of this bias. Challenge students to each choose a female artist whose work has craft elements and produce a blog post with images and information about them. Encourage them to put the artist in dialogue with so-called fine artists (e.g., painters and sculptors). What do they have in common aesthetically? How do they speak to the same ideas? Then publish the blog posts so others can benefit from this information.

Works Progress Administration

In the wake of the Great Depression, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) employed thousands of artists through its cultural programs. WPA funding gave the Bruton sisters an opportunity to create large-scale artworks. Margaret Bruton said about these programs: "I think they were

Further Explorations

wonderful. I think they gave the artists a terrific boost.”²⁰ For this project, tell students about the legacy of the WPA. Then ask students to imagine they are administrators of the WPA. What large-scale projects would they want for their school or local community? Projects could include a mural on a school wall, a mosaic on a train station platform, or a sculpture at a post office. Encourage students to work in small groups to create a Call for Proposals for a particular site and project. Students should include a sketch or photograph of the proposed site and a description of why a commissioned artwork is desired, as well as any theme they would ask artists to consider. Then, have groups exchange these Calls for Proposals and apply to each other for commissions. The applications should include sketches and descriptions of materials. Reflect on the process. Were the applications what the administrators expected? Are there any they would select for future funding? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

Vocabulary

(From merriam-webster.com unless otherwise noted)

California Modernism (from Langson IMCA curators): From the 1930s to the 1960s, this movement pushed art and architecture towards abstraction and emphasized experimentation with new techniques and materials in an effort to meld art and life.

Commission: a formal request to produce something (especially an artistic work) in exchange for payment

Craft (adapted from merriam-webster.com): an occupation, trade, or activity requiring manual dexterity or artistic skill; often referring to objects made to have a function

Cultural Appropriation (adapted from britannica.com): adoption of languages, behaviors, clothing, or traditions belonging to a minority culture or social group by a dominant culture or group in a way that is exploitative, disrespectful, or stereotypical

Fine Art: art (such as painting, sculpture, or music) concerned primarily with the creation of beautiful objects

Modernism (adapted from britannica.com): in the fine arts, a break with the past and search for new forms of expression; Modernism fostered a period of experimentation in the arts from the late 19th to the mid-20th century, particularly in the years following World War I

Mosaic: a surface decoration made by inlaying small pieces of variously colored material to form pictures or patterns

Puebloan: a person who is part of an American Indian village of the southwestern US, including Arizona and New Mexico

Synchromist (adapted from britannica.com): member of an art movement in 1913–14 led by American painters Morgan Russell and Stanton Macdonald-Wright that focused on color

Terracotta: a glazed or unglazed fired clay used especially for statuettes and vases and architectural purposes (as for roofing, facing, and relief ornamentation)

Terrazzo: a mosaic consisting of small pieces of marble or granite set in mortar and given a high polish

Notes

1 Wall text, *The Bruton Sisters: Modernism in the Making*, UCI Jack and Shanaz Langson Institute and Museum of California Art, Irvine, CA, 4 Feb–6 May 2023.

2 Good, Wendy Van Wyck. *Sisters in Art: The Biography of Margaret, Esther, and Helen Bruton*. West Margin Press, 2021, p. 38.

3 Ibid., p. 25.

4 Ibid., p. 123.

5 Ibid., p. 48.

6 Ibid., p. 48.

7 Ibid., p. 43.

8 Ibid., p. 33.

9 “Mabel Alvarez.” Christies, <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5059294> <https://sova.si.edu/record/AAA.alvamabe>. Accessed 9 Nov 2022.

10 Good, op. cit., p. 38.

11 Mohrmann, Michaela. Personal interview. 1 Nov 2022.

12 Good, op. cit., p. 33.

13 Landauer, Susan.

“Searching for Self-hood: Women Artists of Northern California.”

Independent Spirits: Women Painters of the American West, 1890-1945, Patricia Trenton, ed. University of California Press/ Autry Museum of the American West, 1995, p. 23.

14 Good, op. cit., p. 96.

15 Ibid., p. 87.

16 Ibid., p. 86.

17 Wall text, *The Bruton Sisters: Modernism in the Making*, UCI Jack and Shanaz Langson Institute and Museum of California Art, Irvine, CA, 4 Feb–6 May 2023.

18 Good, op. cit., p. 134.

19 Ibid., p. 99.

20 Ibid., p. 103.