

Jewish Museum Exhibit Captures Life During Great Depression

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Reporting [Cherri Gregg](#)

By Cherri Gregg

PHILADELPHIA (CBS) – If you think we’ve had hard economic times over the past few years, a local museum opens a new exhibit tomorrow that reminds the world of what life was like during one of the most devastating depressions of all time.

The National Museum of American Jewish History will showcase 21 paintings by Jewish artists that tell the story of urban life in America during the Great Depression. The exhibit is titled, “Jewish Artists in America 1935 to 1945: Selections from the Collection of Steven and Stephanie Wasser.”

“There are a lot of paintings that have to do with work or labor or the absence of work during the depression,” says Claire Pingel, the museum’s chief registrar and associate curator. “There are [also] a group of paintings that showcase the non-public sides of people’s lives, their sort of private times. Sort of what they do when they are not at work, or during recreation or when they are at home.”

She says many of the artists worked as part of the Works Progress Administration, which supported workers during the depression. They used vibrant colors to tell showcase life amid layoffs, food shortages, housing crises and the escalating anti-Semitism.

“The 1920s to 1940s was a time difficult time for America in many ways, with the Great Depression. Everyone was affected.” says Pingel. “A lot of people have heard their parents and grandparents talk about what they experienced during the great depression. This is a chance to get see it in person.”

For more info, go to NMAJH.org.

<http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2013/01/28/jewish-museum-exhibit-captures-life-during-great-depression/>