



School Room Art Images

Use these school-related images to discuss how others see school.

Discussion questions:

- *What do you see in these images?*
- *What is the significance of the flowers? What would you give to a favored teacher?*
- *What feeling do these images provoke? How do you think these artists felt about school? How is this similar or different to how you feel about school?*
- *Draw your own image of school. Or tell us what you would include in your own image of school. Teachers? Friends? The building? The classroom? Would it have bright colors or dark? Would it seem busy and chaotic or idyllic like the Amish scene?*

Image 1

Flower to Teacher. William H. Johnson. Oil on paperboard, c. 1944. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the Harmon Foundation.

Image 2

Classroom Scene. William H. Johnson. Oil on plywood, ca. 1938-1946. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the Harmon Foundation.

Image 3

Amish School House. Aden E. Miller. Designed 1974, quilted 1976. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Eleanor T. and Samuel J. Rosenfeld.

Image 4

Classroom with Three Figures. Lavern Kelley. White pine, plywood, brass, and plastic, 1979. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Herbert Waide Hemphill, Jr.

Sharing the sentiment of cartoonist Bill Watterson that, "people who get nostalgic about childhood were obviously never children," Lavern Kelley's piece recalls the perceived captivity of the grade school experience. "Whatever I do, I want it to be my own thoughts and methods, not somebody else's."—Lavern Kelley, Exhibition Label, Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2006

Use these images of lunchboxes in conjunction with the lunchbox articles and exhibition to discuss the history and iconography of lunchboxes in America.

Discussion questions:

- *What details do you notice in these images?*
- *What do you think would be featured on lunchboxes in America today? What would be featured on lunchboxes in your own country?*
- *Design your own lunchbox.*

Image 5

Disney School Bus Thermos. Walt Disney Company, 1961. Smithsonian National Museum of American History.





Image 6

Astronaut Lunch Box, 1969. Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

Image 7

Sesame Street Lunch Box, 1983. Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

This tin lunch box was manufactured by Aladdin Industries in 1983. The lunch box features colorful action scenes and characters from the television series Sesame Street. Sesame Street was created in 1969 and continues to this day.

Image 8a & b

The Magic of Lassie Lunch Box, 1978. Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

This metal lunch box was manufactured in 1978 by Thermos. Lassie the faithful collie was originally created in 1940 by Eric Knight in the short story "Lassie Come-Home." The novel was made into a 1943 motion picture of the same name, and starred the dog Pal in the lead role. Pal went on to star in several other "Lassie" movies and television series, and his descendants continued to play Lassie in subsequent movies and TV shows. This lunch box features imagery from the 1978 film The Magic of Lassie, starring Mickey Rooney and James Stewart.

Image 9

The Adventures of Wild Bill Hickok Lunch Box, 1956. Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

This metal lunch box was manufactured by Aladdin Industries in 1956. The lunch box features imagery from the Western show The Adventures of Wild Bill Hickok, which aired from 1951-1958 on both television and the radio. Bill Hickok was portrayed by Guy Madison, and was accompanied by his comedic sidekick Jingles, played by Andy Devine.

Image 10

Stars and Stripes Lunch Box, 1970. Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

Use these pictures of classroom scenes to talk about the similarities and differences between school in America and school in the host country.

Discussion questions:

- *What details do you notice in these images?*
- *If you could create a title/caption for these images, what would they be?*
- *Do these classroom images differ from what your school looks like? How?*

Image 11

May 1947 Miss Duckett Monroe School [cellulose acetate photonegative]. Scurlock Studio (Washington, D.C.). Scurlock Studio Records, ca. 1905-1994, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Image 12

Esther Rolick teaching art class. William Hsu. Photograph, 1968. Smithsonian Archives of American Art.

<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/images/detail/esther-rolick-teaching-art-class-3968>

September – Back to School





Image 13

[Children in a classroom with teacher: b&w photoprint]. Faris and Yamna Naff Arab American Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

http://collections.si.edu/search/tag/tagDoc.htm?recordID=siris_arc_362161&hlterm=Children%2Bin%2Ba%2Bclassroom%2Bwith%2Bteacher%3A%2Bb%26w%2Bphotoprint

Image 14

Boys Club, Monroe School [nitrate film photonegative.]. Photograph by Addison N. Scurlock. Scurlock Studio Records, ca. 1905-1994, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Image 15

May 1947 Miss Duckett Monroe School [and vacation bulletin board] [cellulose acetate photonegative]. Scurlock Studio (Washington, D.C.). Scurlock Studio Records, ca. 1905-1994, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Image 16

Scurlock Ebony [Magazine] series [Cardozo High School] [cellulose acetate photonegative]. Scurlock Studio (Washington, D.C.). Scurlock Studio Records, ca. 1905-1994, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Use this image to talk about segregation and the history of desegregation in schools in America.

Discussion questions:

- *What do you think of when you look at this image?*
- *Why do you think people were so upset about desegregating schools?*
- *Are there people in your community who face obstacles to get their education?*

Image 17

Broken School Bus Window from Boston Desegregation Violence, 1974. Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

http://collections.si.edu/search/tag/tagDoc.htm?recordID=nmah_844489&hlterm=Broken%2BSchool%2BBus%2BWindow%2Bfrom%2BBoston%2BDesegregation%2B

The school bus, once a symbol of higher education standards because it transported rural students to large, consolidated schools, became a symbol of racial conflict and controversy as school desegregation programs were implemented. In 1974, Boston's court-ordered busing plan became one of the most visible and controversial examples of racial balancing through student transportation. Twenty years after the Supreme Court ruling on *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* officially desegregated public schools, the NAACP and parents of African-American school children claimed that segregated residential patterns in Boston's neighborhoods created serious inequities between predominantly white schools and predominantly black schools. They claimed that the all-white city school board deliberately perpetuated a dual system and disregarded the state's Racial Imbalance Law, which required that no student body be more than 50 percent non-white.





On June 21, 1974, federal district court judge W. Arthur Garrity ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and ordered a program of cross-neighborhood busing to change the racial balance within non-compliant schools.

When the new school year opened in September, the busing program proceeded smoothly in some neighborhoods, but in a few there was fierce resistance. In South Boston, an insular Irish-American working-class neighborhood with strong ethnic identity, parents and their children vehemently objected to a student exchange program that paired "Southie" with Roxbury, a mostly black neighborhood two miles away. Southie parents and students staged a school boycott to demonstrate their resolve to preserve social and ethnic homogeneity and maintain South Boston High School as a core of community activities and identity. On opening day, the student body was racially mixed, but fewer than ten percent of students who were expected to attend SBHS actually came. Violence erupted in the streets; groups of white teenagers hurled rocks and bottles at school busses carrying black students, some of whom were injured by flying window glass. Whites shouted racial epithets at blacks. For days, city police held back surging crowds of white teenagers bent on violent protest and disruption of the desegregation plan. By year's end, school attendance had risen slightly, but a stabbing incident and other physical attacks at SBHS brought renewed violence outside the school building and a temporary shutdown. Sporadic violence continued for several years.

Rewhit Transport, Inc. contracted with Boston public schools for transportation of pupils to South Boston, Roxbury, Dorchester, and South End. The company fielded a fleet of 56 new 1974 GMC 65-passenger buses. According to Robert E. White, president of Rewhit, white students who were protesting the busing of black students into their neighborhoods broke virtually all of the windows on these buses, throwing bottles and rocks from the hill along G Street near South Boston High School and at several other high schools in Rewhit's service area. Rewhit purchased riot helmets for its bus drivers. The bus windows were replaced in the Rewhit garage; broken windows were placed in a small room, where they remained until the 1980s. Side windows were completely shattered, but in 1983 White selected a semi-intact rear window and donated it to the National Museum of American History.

