
BORN OF FIRE



THE WESTMORELAND
MUSEUM of AMERICAN ART

Born of Fire

Born of Fire is an immersive exhibition exploring the rise, transformation, and enduring legacy of the American steel industry. Through paintings, photographs, sculpture, works on paper, and a multimedia experience, the exhibition tells the story of the industrial communities that shaped the Rust Belt and helped build modern America. Featuring works from the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries, **Born of Fire** brings together historic and contemporary perspectives, revealing how artists have documented, interpreted, and reimagined the industrial landscape across generations.

Although rooted in the industrial heritage of western Pennsylvania, **Born of Fire** tells an American story, shared by communities throughout the Midwest and Northeast, of abundant natural resources, technological innovation, immigration, labor, prosperity, and resilience in the face of profound change. While national in scope, the exhibition draws heavily from the exceptional industrial collection of The Westmoreland Museum of American Art, whose holdings reflect Pittsburgh's pivotal role as the heart of America's steel industry and provide a compelling lens through which to explore the broader story of industrial America.



Exhibition

The exhibition is organized into six thematic sections:

Shaping the Land explores the waterways and mineral-rich landscapes that made industrial development possible. Artists depict both the beauty of the American landscape and its dramatic transformation as railroads, steamboats, coal mines, steel mills, and cities reshaped the nation. The section also acknowledges the displacement of Native American communities whose ancestral lands were appropriated for settlement, resource extraction, and industrial development.

Fueling Industry examines the industry that powered the steel age, exploring the lives of coal miners, the harsh realities of underground work, and coal's essential role in fueling America's industrial expansion.

Mighty Mills captures the immense scale and energy of steel production. Paintings, photographs, prints, and drawings convey the heat, movement, and monumentality of blast furnaces and mills while illustrating how the steel industry transformed both the physical and cultural landscape.

Labor and Community celebrates the people that made the industrial age possible. Portraits and scenes of everyday life honor laborers and their families whose skill, determination, and sacrifice forged the nation's infrastructure and built vibrant communities around the mines and mills.

End of an Era examines the decline of heavy industry during the late twentieth century. Artists reflect on mill closures, abandoned factories, and the economic and emotional impact on communities throughout the Rust Belt.

Igniting Inspiration explores how America's industrial history continues to inspire people today. Through contemporary artworks, including works that use steel as both material and metaphor, visitors discover how the legacy of coal and steel continues to shape artistic practice, regional identity, and community renewal.



Immersive Experience

At the heart of the exhibition is a signature immersive experience featuring large-scale projections of selected works in the exhibition, moving imagery, and a dynamic soundscape inspired by the coal mines and steel mills. This multisensory environment evokes the sights, sounds, and rhythms of an industry that transformed the nation.

Interactive Experiences

Two interactive experiences further enrich the visitor journey. The **Listening Lounge** features a curated playlist of music associated with miners and steelworkers, from traditional folk songs and union ballads to music inspired by industrial life. **Connections** invites visitors to share family stories connected to the coal and steel industries, creating a growing community archive that celebrates the generations whose lives were shaped by this shared history.

Catalogue

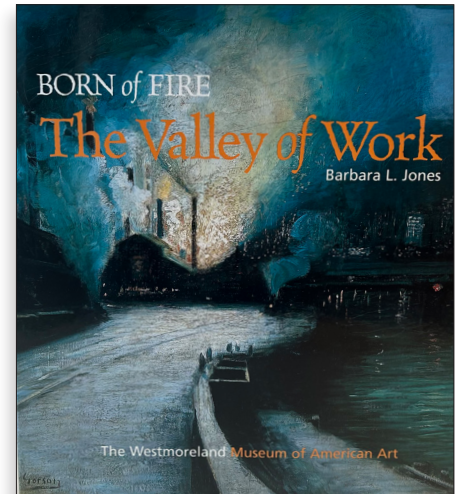
A fully illustrated exhibition catalogue accompanies **Born of Fire**, featuring scholarly essays, historical context, and full-color reproductions of selected works. The publication highlights The Westmoreland Museum of American Art's remarkable industrial collection while placing Pittsburgh's steel heritage within the larger story of the American Rust Belt.

Designed for a broad audience, **Born of Fire** combines exceptional American art with engaging storytelling, history, and immersive media. Host museums can further personalize the exhibition by incorporating local stories, objects, or artworks that connect the exhibition's themes to their own industrial heritage, making the experience both nationally relevant and locally meaningful.



Exhibition Details

- **Contents:** 47 artworks spanning the nineteenth through twenty-first centuries, including paintings, photographs, sculptures, and works on paper
- **Experiences:** An immersive multimedia installation and two interactive experiences
- **Publication:** Exhibition catalogue
- **Interpretation:** Introductory panel, six section texts, object labels, and selected extended chats
- **Space Requirements:** Approximately 3,000-4,000 square feet



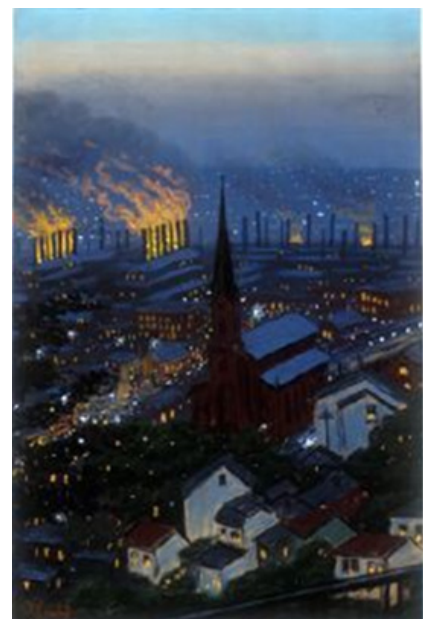
The Westmoreland will provide all equipment necessary for the immersive experience, including projectors, speakers, BrightSign players, amplifier, etc. The host museum will be responsible for providing the three projection surfaces required for the installation, which may consist of screens, drywall, or other suitable surfaces that meet the technical requirements of the experience.

Tour Availability

Available for Tour: February 2027 and beyond

Rental Fee: \$55,000 plus inbound and outbound shipping.

The rental package includes **20 complimentary copies** of the exhibition catalogue. Additional copies are available for purchase by the host museum at a discounted rate.



About the Westmoreland

Located 35 miles east of Pittsburgh in Greensburg, PA, The Westmoreland Museum of American Art offers a place to share compelling and meaningful cultural experiences that open the door to new ideas, perspectives and possibilities. An AAM-accredited institution, The Westmoreland was established in 1949 through a bequest from Mary Marchand Woods, a Greensburg resident who wanted her community to have an important cultural institution, and opened to the public ten years later in 1959. The opening in 2015 of Ennead Architects' nearly 45,000 square ft. renovation and expansion of the Museum was recognized in 2018 as the best designed museum in Pennsylvania by Architectural Digest.



The Westmoreland's collection balances historical artists, such as Mary Cassatt, Winslow Homer, John Singer Sargent, and Henry Ossawa Tanner, with leading modern and contemporary artists like Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, Stephen Towns, Mickalene Thomas, and Will Wilson. The Museum is dedicated to expanding narratives of American art and is one of the few museums in the region that has no admission fee. The Museum has organized a dynamic suite of national tours—for example, most recently, *Picturing America: Signature Works from The Westmoreland Museum of American Art*, *Simple Pleasures: The Art of Doris Lee*, *Stephen Towns: Declaration & Resistance*, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Southwestern Pennsylvania*, and *Anila Quayyum Agha: Interwoven*.

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THE WESTMORELAND
MUSEUM of AMERICAN ART

2026 Born of Fire Checklist

SHAPING THE LAND



William Coventry Wall

(Oxford, England 1810-1886 Pittsburgh)

On the Monongahela

1860

Oil on canvas

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert J. Hudson

1976.9



Ralph Albert Blakelock

(New York City 1847-1919 Elizabethtown, NJ)

Grove of Trees with Indian Encampment, around 1886-1887

Watercolor on paper

Gift of the William A. Coulter Fund

1967.13



Emil Bott

(Wurtenburg, Germany 1827-1908 Phillipsburg (Monaca), PA)

Pittsburgh, PA, 1851 Lithograph on paper

Director's Fund

1986.258



Thomas Pollack Anshutz

(Newport, KY 1851-1912 Fort Washington, PA)

Steamboat on the Ohio,

around 1896

Pastel on paper

Gift of the William A. Coulter Fund

1959.73



Otto August Kuhler

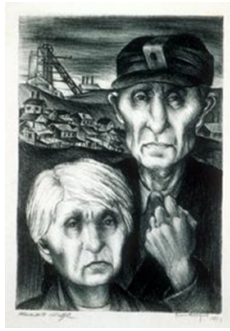
(Remscheid, Germany 1894-1977 Santa Fe, NM)

Steam Train, date unknown

Etching on paper

Gift from Friends of the Museum

1984.9



FUELING INDUSTRY

Riva Helfond

(Brooklyn 1910-2002 Plainfield, NJ)

Miner and Wife, 1937

Lithograph on paper

Museum purchase

2007.9



Ernest Fiene

(Elberfeld, Germany 1894-1965 Paris)

Coal Breaker, Pennsylvania, 1935-1937

Oil on canvas

Gift of The Westmoreland Society and The Thomas Lynch Fund

2005.26



Ron Donoughe

(Loretto 1958)

Neville Coke Works, 2002

Oil on panel

Gift of the artist

2002.11



Bruce Davidson

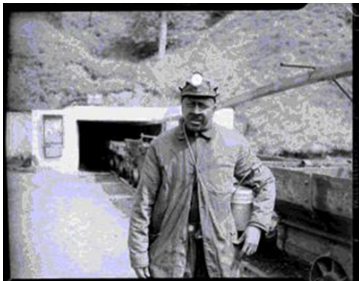
(Oak Park, IL 1933)

Coal Miner, West Virginia, USA, 1962

Photograph (Black & White) on Paper

Sale of Art Fund

2022.9



Charles H. "Teenie" Harris

(Pittsburgh 1908-1998)

Coal Miner, Library, PA, 2001

Gelatin silver print on paper

Gift of Charles A. (artist's son) and Beatrice Harris in Loving Memory of "Teenie" Harris

2013.2.i



Michael J. Gallagher

(Scranton 1895-1965)

Coal Miner, 1935

Linocut on paper

Museum purchase

1999.2

MIGHTY MILLS



Aaron Harry Gorson

(Kovno, Lithuania 1872-1933 New York City) Industrial Scene,
Pittsburgh, 1928

Oil on canvas mounted to Masonite

Gift in memory of Roy C. McKenna

1994.4



Hayley Lever

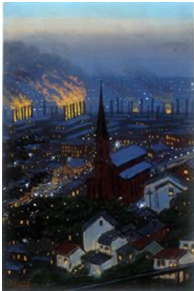
(Adelaide, Australia 1876-1958 New York City)

Allegheny River, around 1923

Oil on canvas

Museum Purchase with partial funding from the Women's Committee

1978.33



A. [Annie] Campbell

(Charleston, WV 1862-1951 Dayton, OH)

Pittsburgh Aglow, around 1915

Pastel on paper

Gift in memory of Doris B. Maxwell, M.D.

1999.1



Thornton Oakley

(Pittsburgh 1881-1953 Bryn Mawr)

Mills, around 1910 - 1940

Watercolor and gouache on board

Partial funds from the Thomas Lynch Fund, the Art Acquisition Fund
and an Anonymous Donor

1998.1



Otto August Kuhler

(Remscheid, Germany 1894-1977 Santa Fe, NM)

Teeming (Steel Mills), 1938

Watercolor on paper

Gift of the Thomas Lynch Fund

2001.9



Otto August Kuhler

(Remscheid, Germany 1894-1977 Santa Fe, NM)

Pittsburgh, date unknown

Watercolor on paper

Gift of the William A. Coulter Fund

1967.12



Cynthia F. Cooley
(Minneapolis, MN 1931)
Furnace Door, 1999
Watercolor on paper
Gift of the artist



Cynthia F. Cooley
(Minneapolis, MN 1931)
Bucket Series #6, 1995
Watercolor on paper
Gift of Jonathan W. Shirer
2015.135



Colin Campbell Cooper
(Philadelphia 1856-1937 Santa Barbara, CA)
Pittsburgh, PA, 1905
Oil on Canvas
Gift in memory of Alex G. McKenna
1996.19



Louis Lozowick
(Kiev Governorate (Ukraine), Russian Empire, 1892 - 1973, South Orange, NJ)
Steel Valley, 1942
Lithograph on paper
Gift of the Thomas Lynch Fund
1980.10



Selden I. Davis
(Pittsburgh 1904-1971)
Pittsburghesque, around 1949
Gelatin silver print on paper
Gift of The Women's Committee through The Westmoreland Society, 2002
2003.7



Harry Sternberg
(New York City 1904-2001)
Forest of Flame, 1939
Lithograph on paper
Gift of The Westmoreland Society, 2004
2005.8



LABOR & COMMUNITY

Mildred Young Olmes (AKA Mildred Arminta Young Olmes)

(Oil City, PA 1906-1994 Canton, OH)

Madonna of the Mines, 1949

1995.39



Thomas Hart Benton

(Neosho, MO 1889-1975 Kansas City, MO)

Strike (Mine Strike), 1933

Lithograph on paper

Gift of the Women's Committee

1999.8



F. Frinka

(American, active 1910s)

Open Hearth, 1914

Charcoal on paper

Museum purchase



Martin B. Leisser

(Pittsburgh 1845-1940)

Union Station Riot, 1877

Oil on canvas mounted on board

Museum purchase

1998.12



William Gropper

(New York City 1897-1977)

Joe Magarac, date unknown

Lithograph on paper

1998.7



Elizabeth Olds

(Minneapolis, MN 1896-1991 Sarasota, FL)

Steel Town, Pennsylvania, around 1937

1997.3



Virginia Cuthbert

(West Newton, PA 1908-2001 Kenmore, NY)

Slum Clearance on Ruch's Hill, Pittsburgh, 1937

Oil on canvas

Gift of The Westmoreland Society, 1992

1992.109



Vincent Nesbert

(Telechany, Poland 1898-1976 Pittsburgh)

Industry, around 1933

Pencil on paper

Gift of the Thomas Lynch Fund

2001.10



Michael J. Gallagher

(Scranton 1898-1965)

Last Shift, 1937

Lithograph on paper

Gift of the Thomas Lynch Fund

2001.1



Thomas Lo Medico

(New York City 1904-1985 Tappan, NY)

The Apprentice, around 1947

Plaster

Gift of The Westmoreland Society, 2009



Samuel Rosenberg

(Philadelphia 1896-1972 Pittsburgh)

Sunday Morning, 1937

Oil on Masonite

Gift of Arline Rosenberg (Mrs. Murray)

2003.21

END OF AN ERA



Nat Youngblood

(Evansville, IN 1916-2009 West Middletown, PA)

***Pittsburgh Industrial*, 1973**

Watercolor on paper

Gift in honor of Mr. and Mrs. George P. Baumunk and Dr. Creston Neal Baumunk, by exchange

2019.17



Mark Perrott

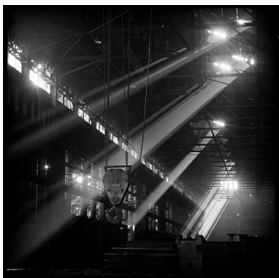
(Pittsburgh 1946)

***Eliza; House, Furnace, Skyline*, 1979**

Gelatin silver print on paper

Gift of the artist

999.10



Mark Perrott

(Pittsburgh 1946)

***Eliza; Crane Hook*, 1982**

Gelatin silver print on paper

Gift of the artist

1999.9



Richard A. Stoner

(Greensburg 1952)

***Mon Valley Triptych: Twilight of a Titan, Dorothy Six, USS Duquesne Works, Pennsylvania*, 1980**

Photograph (silver gelatin) on Bergger Warmtone paper

Gift of the artist

2021.11.C



Richard A. Stoner

(Greensburg 1952)

***Mon Valley Triptych: Clairton Coke Works, Clairton, Pennsylvania*, 1980**

Photograph (silver gelatin) on Bergger Warmtone paper

Gift of the artist

2021.11.A



Richard A. Stoner

(Greensburg 1952)

***Mon Valley Triptych: Clairton Glassport Bridge, Pennsylvania*, 1980**

Photograph (silver gelatin) on Bergger Warmtone paper

Gift of the artist

2021.11.B



Aaronel deRoy Gruber

(Pittsburgh 1918 – 2011)

***Steel Temple Ruins*, 1998**

Photograph (black & white) on paper

Gift of Jamie deRoy

2001.28



Aaronel deRoy Gruber

(Pittsburgh 1918 – 2011)

***End of an Era*, 1998**

Photograph (black & white) on paper

Gift of Jamie deRoy

2001.31

IGNITING INSPIRATION



Joyce Werwie Perry

(Pittsburgh 1956)

***Mining America (Diptych)*, 2010**

Oil with knives on canvas

Partial gift of the artist and the William W. Jamison II Art Acquisition Fund

2011.2



Sophie Glenn

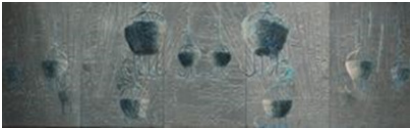
(New York City 1989)

***Black Sheep*, 2020**

Painted and rusted steel, hand coiled steel wool

Gift of the Westmoreland Society, 2023

2023.102



Alan Shepp

(Cleveland 1935)

Industrial Landscape, Welfare Room, Bethlehem Steel, (Pentaptych), 2013

Oil color on slate

Gift of the artist

2017.6



Patrick J. Quinn

(Hartford, CT 1981)

Johnstown Landscape No. 3, 2025

Steel and brass

Center for Metal Arts



Fabrizio Gerbino

(Tripoli, Libya 1962)

Coal Barges, 2020

Oil and tint colors on canvas

Loan courtesy of the artist