

# N E W S   R E L E A S E

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## **The College of Wooster Art Museum Presents World War II Posters, 1939-1945** *Final Exhibition of the academic year features more than 70 posters from Wooster's permanent collection*

WOOSTER, Ohio – Images of patriotism, heroism, and idealism, juxtaposed with portraits of evil, atrocity, and threats to freedom will be on display when The College of Wooster Art Museum presents “World War II Posters, 1939-1945,” March 25 through May 12 in the Ebert Art Center (1220 Beall Ave.).

From the Battle of Britain to Allied victories in Europe and the Pacific, more than 70 posters from Wooster’s permanent collection of approximately 200 will be on display in the Sussel Gallery and the Burton D. Morgan Gallery. The opening reception will be Thursday, March 27, from 4-6 p.m. Guest curators Beth Irwin Lewis and Arn Lewis will present a gallery talk on Thursday, April 24, from 12-1 p.m. All events are free and open to the public.

“This exhibition was planned two years ago, and I am grateful to the uniquely qualified curatorial team for their efforts.” said Kitty McManus Zurko, director of The College of Wooster Art Museum. “Beth Irwin Lewis co-authored *Persuasive Images: Posters of War and Revolution*, in 1992, and Arn Lewis is an emeritus professor of art history who mounted the last exhibition of these posters at Wooster in 1975. For this exhibition, they selected posters that address different wartime themes.”

The Sussel Galley will feature posters that portray “Images of the Total War,” including such themes as invasion, national self-images, images of the enemy, and images of the United Nations. The Burton D. Morgan Gallery will display posters that present “The Nation at War,” focusing on the home front and wartime production.

“Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, posters in public places were a ubiquitous presence in urban life,” said Beth Irwin Lewis. “They are both a dynamic and pragmatic form of art and the visual images on these posters contributed significantly to the public perceptions in

modern industrial life. This intersection between art and the public was powerfully demonstrated in war posters.

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### **First Add – The College of Wooster Art Museum Presents World War II Posters, 1939-1945**

“The posters in this exhibition represent well the formulation of positive images of heroic patriotism arrayed against the negative images of the enemy – perceptions that were essential to the process of transforming civilian society into a nation at war,” she added. “The total mobilization of the nation was further enforced through posters calling for service, sacrifice for the nation, and production of weapons and food for victory.”

Included in the exhibition will be the “Four Freedoms” by Norman Rockwell; several unflattering caricatures of Hitler and other German leaders; a poster featuring the five Sullivan Brothers, all of whom were killed when their ship was sunk; and a tribute to Dorie Miller, the African-American sailor whose heroic actions during the attack on Pearl Harbor led to his selection as a Navy Cross recipient.

“We can learn a great deal about history and about our country at the time from these posters,” said Arn Lewis. “What we have to remember is that these posters were designed, not necessarily to portray an accurate image, but to influence, inspire, exhort, and motivate. In that regard, they can be deceptive.”

World War II posters were created by artists and advertising agencies and displayed in post offices, government offices, factories, schools, sidewalk kiosks, and many other venues. This exhibition includes several of the award-winning posters from the second MoMA (Museum of Modern Art) competition – the National War Poster Competition held under the joint auspices of Artists for Victory, The Council for Democracy, The Museum of Modern Art, and the Office of Civilian Defense. According to Beth Lewis, the winning posters were shown in an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in the Fall of 1942 before being made available to government, industry, and private agencies for distribution.

The College of Wooster Art Museum is located in the Ebert Art Center (1220 Beall Ave.) . Museum hours are Tuesday through Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 1-5 p.m. Group tours are available. The 2002-2003 exhibition season is supported in part with funds from the Ohio Arts Council. For more information, call 330-263-

2290 or visit [www.wooster.edu/Music-and-the-Arts/The-College-of-Wooster-Art-Museum.aspx](http://www.wooster.edu/Music-and-the-Arts/The-College-of-Wooster-Art-Museum.aspx)..

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