

[Benton Artist Website](#)[Benton at SAAM](#)[Benton at the National Gallery of Art](#)**Thomas Hart Benton (American, 1889-1975)**

Visit Benton's [home and studio](#) on your next trip to Kansas City! Read an article about the site in [KCUR](#).

Read the transcript of a 1964 oral history interview with Benton about his mural, *Independence and the Opening of the West* (1961), archived in the [Harry S. Truman Library](#). Other oral history interviews are archived at [Columbia University](#) (1972) and the [Archives of American Art](#) (1973).

In 1985, Georgetown University's Charles Marvin Fairchild Memorial Gallery installed *Rural America Revisited with Thomas Hart Benton, John Steuart Curry and Grant Wood*. Full documentation, including the catalogue, are available on the gallery's [website](#).

Esteemed documentary filmmaker Ken Burns made a film about Benton in 1988. Watch clips or the entire documentary on [PBS](#).

The Whitney Museum of American Art held a major retrospective exhibition in 1989. Read a review of the exhibition published in the [New York Times](#).

Read a 2014 article in [Smithsonian Magazine](#) about Benton's famed [America Today](#) mural at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, completed in 1931.

In 2015, the [Peabody Essex Museum](#), the [Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art](#), and the [Amon Carter Museum](#) co-organized *American Epics: Thomas Hart Benton and Hollywood*. It was the first major exhibition of Benton's work in over 25 years, exploring the previously overlooked relationship between his art and movie making, particularly silent films. Read a [review](#) of the PEM edition in The Arts Fuse by Franklin Einspruch and a [rebuttal](#) in the same

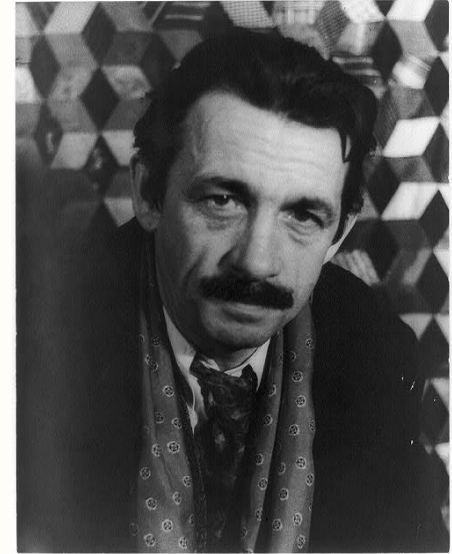
publication by Charles Ciuliano. Another article was published in the [New Yorker](#) by Louis Menand, "The Bump and the Hollow of Thomas Hart Benton." [Glasstire](#) published a review of the AC edition by Peter Lucas.

Watch an ["Up Close At Home"](#) feature on Benton with Spencer Museum of Art curator Kate Meyer from 2020.

[An American Masterwork: Thomas Hart Benton's "Sources of Country Music" at 50](#) was an exhibition in 2023 celebrating the artist's mural in the Country Music Hall of Fame, which was his final painting. Watch a [panel discussion](#) about the commission.

In 2024, Schoelkopf Gallery installed [Thomas Hart Benton: Where Does the West Begin?](#) The exhibition featured 48 paintings and works on paper drawn from the Thomas Hart Benton Trust.

The [Naval History and Heritage Command](#) in Washington, D.C. holds several of Benton's artworks documenting the submarine USS Dorado and LSTs along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Exhibitions with the works have been held at the [Chrysler Museum of Art](#) in 2017 and the [MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History](#) in 2026.



Benton, 1935
Photograph: Carl Van Vechten



Benton in his Kansas City studio, ca. 1970s
Photograph: Michael Mardikes



Thomas Hart Benton (American, 1889-1975)

Menemsha, 1952

Oil on canvas

Private Collection; L2026:43.1

“Martha’s Vineyard had a profound effect on me. The relaxing sea air, the hot sand on the beaches where we loafed naked, the great and continuous drone of the surf, broke down most of the tenseness which life in the cities had given me.... It feed my art from the dominance of narrow urban conceptions and put me in a psychological condition to face America.”

– Thomas Hart Benton

Benton was one of the most impactful painters of the 20th century. As a leader of the Regionalist movement, he built a prolific career depicting people and scenes of rural America. In 1920, Benton first traveled to the island of Martha’s Vinyard, where he would continue to summer for over 50 years. **Menemsha** is a serene depiction of the pond where he had a small cottage. The painting has been part of the family’s collection for decades and has not been publicly displayed since its completion.

On view July 22 – October 25, 2026