Crockett Johnson: Art and Math in the Days of Sputnik

with curator Peggy Kidwell

Podcast Link: http://amhistory.si.edu/thinkfinity/podcast/crockett.mp3
Enhanced Podcast Link: http://amhistory.si.edu/thinkfinity/podcast/crockett.m4a
Images Link: http://amhistory.si.edu/thinkfinity/podcast/crockett.zip

Discussion Questions:

- How does the mathematical artwork of Crockett Johnson fit into the history of 1950s and 60s America?
- Why did the United States begin to place a larger emphasis on math and science education during this time period?
- Think about art and popular culture during this time period, in what other instances do you see connections to the Space Race?

Related Resources—for continued instruction or resources for your students’ research

National Museum of American History:
- Mobilizing Minds: Teaching Math and Science in the Age of Sputnik
  http://americanhistory.si.edu/mobilizing-minds/teaching-mathematics-and-science-home
- Mathematical Paintings of Crockett Johnson
  http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/object-groups/mathematical-paintings-of-crockett-johnson

Thinkfinity:

National Standards—from the National Center for History in the Schools
- NSH (5-12) US Era 9 Standard 3: Domestic policies after World War II

Have your students email their question, comments, and discoveries to thinkfinity@si.edu
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Listen to the podcast, take notes, and answer the questions.

1. How does the mathematical artwork of Crockett Johnson fit into the history of 1950s and 60s America?

2. Why did the United States begin to place a larger emphasis on math and science education during this time period?

3. Think about art and popular culture during this time period, in what other instances do you see connections to the Space Race?

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