

6/2/2018 Question of the Week

The Federal Art Project began in 1935 under the Works Progress (later Work Project) Administration. The Federal Art Project provided hundreds of jobs for artists, particularly African American artists, across the country, including the Philly-based artist pictured here. What was his name?

Answer: Dox Thrash

Dox Thrash was born in Griffin, Georgia, in the late 1890s. Once he reached the age of fifteen, he left home to make his way in the world. He worked a series of odd jobs and ended up in Chicago, Illinois, in the early 1910s where he enrolled in classes at the city's Art Institute. In 1917, Thrash put his studies on hold to join the Army following the United States' entry into World War I.

In 1919, he resumed his work at the Art Institute and spent time there teaching. He moved to the east coast in the 1920s and had permanently settled in Philadelphia by the latter part of that decade. It was in Philadelphia that Thrash honed his skills, especially in print-making. He quickly became a well-known realism artist. He joined the Fine Print Workshop, a division of the Federal Art Project, in 1937, and developed a new printing (mezzotint) process using carborundum, an abrasive used in making lithographic prints.

The Federal Art project was terminated in 1939 and work for artists soon dwindled. Thrash eventually found a job with the Sun Ship Company of Chester, Pennsylvania, but he remained prominent in art circles throughout the region. He died in Philadelphia in 1965.
