FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

1. Look at the photographs by Ansel Adams and Dorothea Lange. Do you think these images support or challenge the practice of racial profiling during this time?

2. Compare A Sad Plight, October 8, 1942 by Chiura Obata with Poston Strike Rally by Gene Sogioka. What are the people in these pictures doing? What do you think they’re feeling? What visual clues lead you to your conclusions?

3. Consider the characters in When the Emperor Was Divine and what they experienced. How might some of the images you see here have impacted them? Do any of these images remind you of specific scenes in Otsuka’s story?

CONNECTION
Artist Chiura Obata was interned at Tanforan and Topaz camps, the same camps described in When the Emperor Was Divine.

PUBLICATIONS
An exhibition brochure featuring an essay by the curators is available free of charge in the Teaching Gallery. Books relating to the exhibition can be purchased in the Museum shop on the main floor.

The exhibition is organized into three sections: “Profiling the Enemy,” “Profiling the Patriot,” and “Resisting the Profile.” In “Profiling the Enemy,” images produced by popular media and government publications portray Japanese Americans as a dangerous, sneaky group to be avoided and contained. In “Profiling the Patriot,” photographers Ansel Adams and Dorothea Lange, both of whom were hired by the government to document the relocations, attempted to counter negative stereotypes by depicting internees as patriotic. “Resisting the Profile” presents works by Japanese American artists who documented their experiences during internment. Photographs by Toyo Miyatake along with paintings and drawings by Chiura Obata and a published children’s book document how internees preserved their Japanese traditions while also appearing as Western as possible. An illustrated newspaper by Obata and a high school yearbook offer a window into daily life. Still other works by Obata and paintings by Gene Sogioka depict the rough surroundings, occasional uprisings, and harsh treatment by guards inside the camps.

A Challenge to Democracy will be on view from September 18, 2009, through January 4, 2010, during which time students and University groups are invited to visit the Kemper Art Museum to engage with this exhibition. To arrange a group visit, contact Sydney Norton at (314) 935-7918 or sydneynorton@wustl.edu.

For more information on exhibitions and education at the Kemper, visit www.kemperartmuseum.wustl.edu