AFRICAN AMERICAN ART

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### Preface

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This long-awaited manual is designed, primarily for teachers, as a rich, though by no means complete, introduction to the visual legacy of Black America. It focuses in particular on the African American collections at The Art Institute of Chicago, and while it covers a wide range of aesthetic movements, geographies, intentionalities, and styles, its central locus is that special historical moment we know as the Harlem Renaissance (1920-40). Fittingly, the perspectives and psychosocial climate of those two decades between the World Wars are illumined in the manual’s opening and closing quotes from one of its seminal figures, W.E.B. DuBois. What DuBois has to say about the “double-vision” inherent in the “Soul” (and lives) of “Black Folks,” who are undeniably at once American and something extra, is as much a function of what drives African American art today as it was then. The post-World War II years have seen marked progress in demarginalizing the artistic contributions of African Americans, but their vision and work still stubbornly maintain a special place. Created from the margins, the work introduced here has the complexity and sheer humanity to nurture the souls of folks both Black and non-Black.

The “double-space” occupying the consciousness of Black Americans echoes in the haunting plaint of another seminal Harlem Renaissance figure, the famed poet Countee Cullen. In lines which continue to have resonance as we enter a new millennium, Cullen, DuBois’s friend and colleague, captures another kind of duality: “Yet do I marvel at this curious thing: to make a poet Black, and bid him sing.” This manual recontextualizes the term “double vision,” and asks if the challenge to those with access to two worlds may be less affliction and more the power of second sight. Whatever characteristics we apply, it is clear that in Harlem, New York City, or in the other Harlems of our minds, Black poets and painters have a special vocation, that of setting forth the true and appropriate place of Africans forcibly brought to this country, who have made, however tenuously, their own place within it. As artists, they have the necessary mandate to set the record straight, to create from their own history and experience, to tell the story true.

Thus Countee Cullen is right and not right. The African American artist, poet, or painter not only does sing, but must sing, and that, it
seems to me, is not so curious at all. With the deep insight which is the special privilege of the silenced, African American artists have painted and sculpted and photographed the truth. This, as much as their aesthetic power, is why their works must be collected and exhibited for the widest possible public viewing. This is why teachers need to have the resource of their multiple visions, to inform, to enrich, indeed to empower traditional curricula with the vitality of the authentic.

This manual, then, is not only a guide to a diverse and complex set of images presenting a spectrum of intellectual and artistic contributions. It is a new curriculum; much of what is discussed here will be a challenge to outmoded categorizations and canonical exclusions that cannot hold. Images that contain and convey indigenous personal and cultural memory carry the necessary messages, not in polemic, but in the true languages of art.

With spirit and imagination, the works of art brought together here can encourage, enliven, and enlighten the learning of students, their parents, and their teachers. The Art Institute of Chicago recognizes the crucial role of art in nurturing the educative process. We hope this manual will be a useful tool and valued guide to which you will return again and again.

RONNE HARTFIELD
One ever feels his two-ness—an American, a Negro: two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self in a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the old selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed in his face.

W.E.B. DuBois, The Souls of Black Folk, 1903
“Judge me not by the heights to which I’ve risen, but by the depths from which I have come,” declared Frederick Douglass, who escaped slavery to rise to spectacular heights as an abolitionist, orator, author, newspaper publisher and editor, human rights activist, and diplomat. This daguerreotype done between 1847 and 1852 by Samuel J. Miller shows us the man who achieved such heights against almost overwhelming odds. [See slide 1] The depths to which Douglass refers had their origin some three hundred years before his birth when in 1619 a shipload of twenty African slaves were delivered to the eastern shores of North America. The Africans were brought to bolster the economy of the fledgling colonies, particularly the agricultural plantations of the South, where the need for steady, cheap labor was crucial.

This forced migration thus launched the beginning of slavery in what would become, some 150 years later, the United States of America. For his entire free life, Douglass fought tirelessly against slavery on behalf of America to become the most important African American of the nineteenth century. “Under the whole heavens there is no relation more unfavorable to the development of honorable character,” he proclaimed, “than that sustained by the slaveholder to the slave.”

Douglass was born as Frederick Bailey in Tuckahoe, on Maryland’s eastern shore. “I have no accurate knowledge of my age,” he wrote later in Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave (1845), the first of his four books. “The white children could tell their ages. I could not tell why I ought to be deprived of the same privilege.” He was separated from his black mother in infancy—“a common custom,” he wrote—and afterwards, saw her only several times, always at night. “She would lie down with me, and get me to sleep, but long before I waked she was gone.” A fieldhand on a plantation twelve miles away, she made the journey by foot, leaving work after sundown and arriving back on the field by sunrise; otherwise, she would be whipped. Of his white father. “I know nothing,” he said; “the means of knowing was withheld from me.”

He was brought up by his grandmother on what Douglass described as “the outskirts of the plantation where she was put to raise the children of the younger women.” Later, Douglass recounted with bitterness the story of his beloved grandmother, a slave for life: “She had served my old master faithfully from youth to old age.... She had peopled his plantation with slaves.... She had rocked him in infancy, and attended him in childhood, served him through life, and at death wiped from his icy brow the cold death-sweat and had closed his eyes forever.... Her present owners finding she was of but little value, her frame already racked with the pains of old age ... took her to the woods, built her a little hut ... and then made her welcome to the privilege of supporting herself there in perfect loneliness; thus virtually turning her out to die!”

* designates entry in
Biographical Glossary

SAMUEL J. MILLER
At about six years of age, Douglass crossed the threshold to what he called “the blood-stained gate, the entrance to the hell of slavery.” One of his first sights was a brutal whipping of his aunt. Stripped from waist to neck, hands tied and hung from a large hook, she was whipped until blood pooled on the floor. Her crime was that she had met a male friend one night, a fellow slave on a neighboring plantation, against her jealous master’s orders. “Now you damned bitch,” Douglass heard him scream, “I’ll learn you how to disobey my orders!”

For the next fourteen years, Douglass was passed back and forth like the property he was, from owner to owner, from various eastern shore plantations to the bustling seaport city of Baltimore. On the plantations, he performed tasks around the main house as a child, suffering mainly from “hunger and cold.” He elaborated: “I was kept almost naked—no shoes, no stockings, no jacket, no trousers, nothing on but a coarse ... linen shirt, reaching only to my knees.” When he was older, he worked in the fields from sunrise to sundown, planting and harvesting tobacco, corn, and wheat.

A city slave fared better. Around age eight, he was sent to new masters in Baltimore, then the third largest city in the country. There, Douglass had enough to eat and his own straw mattress. He spent nearly ten years in Baltimore, running errands around the house and later working at the shipyards, his pay going to his owner. Most importantly, as Douglass later declared: “Going to live at Baltimore laid the foundation, and opened the gateway, to all my subsequent prosperity.” For in Baltimore, Douglass learned to read and write. First he had his mistress’s blessing, but soon her husband forbade her from continuing. “Learning will spoil the best nigger in the world,” her husband had raged. “If you teach him to read, he’ll want to know how to write, and this accomplished, he’ll be running away with himself.”

Although it took him many years, Douglass did just that. Practicing to read in secret, he used the discarded schoolbooks of his master’s children until he earned enough money polishing boots to buy his fortuitous first book, The Columbian Orator. Not only did the collection of poems and speeches expose him, for the first time, to a point of view that morally opposed slavery, but it also provided him with models with which to practice—and perfect—his own speaking skills.

In 1832, as property of his recently deceased original master, Douglass was shipped back to the Maryland plantations. Because of his rebellious nature, he was soon sent to a “slave-breaker,” whose task it was to crush the will of defiant slaves. Douglass would bear the scars from repeated flogging on his back for the remainder of his life. “I was broken in body, soul, and spirit,” Douglass recalled, until, faced one day with yet another lashing, Douglass unexpectedly found himself fighting back. “However long I might remain a slave in form, the day had passed forever when I could be a slave in fact. I
did not hesitate to let it be known of me, that the white man who expected
to succeed in whipping, must also succeed in killing me.” Douglass’s coura-
geous act apparently so intimidated the slave-breaker that no more brutality
occurred. Nor did Douglass receive the punishment he called “more unre-
lewing than death”—being auctioned off to cotton plantations in the Deep
South. There, slaves suffered not only separation from families, but were
treated more harshly and the likelihood of escape was remote.

Finally, six years after the decisive battle with the slave-breaker, the twenty-year-
old Douglass escaped and boarded a train to freedom in 1838. He had obtained
false identification papers and, pretending he was an experienced sailor bound
for sea, nervously rode to New York. There, as prearranged, he met and married
Anna Murray, a free black woman whom he had met in Baltimore and with
whom he eventually had five children. They settled in the rich whaling town of
New Bedford, Massachusetts, where Douglass worked at odd jobs for four
years. (He was barred from his trade as a ship caulker because he was black.) To
avoid capture, he also changed his name from Bailey to Douglass. He chose his
new surname after the heroine Lucy Douglass in Sir Walter Scott’s* (1771-1832)
poem The Lady of the Lake—a premonition perhaps of Douglass’s later pio-
neering support for women’s rights.

In 1841, at the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society summer meeting in
Nantucket, Douglass made a stirring speech recounting his firsthand experi-
ences as a slave. So captivating was his talk that the society recruited him as
a full-time lecturer. National exposure made people doubt that so articulate
a spokesperson could have been a former slave. To prove he wasn’t a fraud,
Douglass published the above-mentioned narrative of his life as a slave in
1845. But his increased fame, coupled with the facts he disclosed in his
book, made him visible prey to slave-catchers. To avoid his capture, aboli-
tonist allies sent him to England in 1845, where British admirers proceeded
to raise $711.66—the amount needed to pay off Douglass’s owner—so that
Douglass could return to the United States in 1847 a free man.

His speaking powers were now at their height. In 1852, asked to make an
Independence Day speech in his new home of Rochester, New York, he
declined, agreeing to speak the following day, July 5. Known as “What to the
Slave is the Fourth of July?” the speech is perhaps the finest anti-slavery
address Douglass ever delivered: “The existence of slavery in this country
brands your republicanism as a sham, your humanity as a base pretense and
your Christianity as a lie.... It fetters your progress; it is the deadly enemy of
improvement; the deadly foe of education; it fosters pride it breeds insolence,
it promotes vice; it shelters crime; it is a curse to the earth that supports it;
and yet you cling to it as if it were the sheet anchor of all of your hopes.”

This striking daguerreotype was made around the same time, between 1847
and 1852. At six feet tall, with strong, handsome features, an intense gaze
and a mass of hair, Douglass was always an imposing figure. But captured
here is a certain quality, a state of barely suppressed fury, that early feminist Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) so accurately describes: “He stood there like an African prince, majestic in his wrath, as with wit, satire, and indignation, he graphically described the bitterness of slavery and the humiliation of subjection to those who ... were inferior to himself. Thus it was that I first saw Frederick Douglass, and wondered that any mortal man should have ever tried to subjugate a being with such talents, intensified with the love of liberty.”

Circumstances had conspired to exacerbate that majestic wrath. The federal government had recently passed the Fugitive Slave Law, increasing protection for slaveholders. From a believer in peaceful agitation, Douglass now declared: “Every slave-hunter who meets a bloody death in his infernal business, is an argument in favor of the manhood of our race.” These drastic measures may have run counter to the party line of the white abolitionists who had, up until now, run his career, much as political handlers of candidates today. The scowl and furrowed brow we see here may be manifestations of Douglass’s recent radicalization—his newfound self-assertion on behalf, solely, of blacks.

Daguerreotypes were unveiled in France in 1839, one of the two original forms in which photography was invented. Daguerreotypes were unique objects, produced on a silver-coated copper plate that had been photo-sensitized. Their glory was their extraordinary clarity and detail, which made them the perfect vehicle for portraiture. With this miraculous invention, everyone, it seemed, wanted to be photographed for posterity—from famous individuals like Douglass to workmen and peasants. Responding to the demand, portrait galleries opened throughout Europe and America.

Samuel J. Miller, whose name is on the inside of this velvet case, is an example of this trend. He opened a daguerreotype shop in Akron, Ohio. Douglass probably passed through the Akron area around 1852 on one of his lecture circuits, taking a moment from his busy schedule to have this striking portrait made.

Americans in particular embraced this new medium. Writer and physician Oliver Wendall Holmes, Sr.* (1809-1894) called daguerreotypes “the mirror with a memory.” With Douglass’s exasperated intensity, this powerful image not only reveals his magnetic character, but reflects him at a specific juncture in time. American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson* (1803-1882) declared that daguerreotypes were the true republican artform, because the artist steps aside and lets the sitter create him or herself. There could be no better medium, then, to capture Douglass who was, in all senses of the word, “self-made.”

As the country edged closer to the divisiveness of the Civil War (1861-1865), Douglass turned words into action. He donated funds from his
speeches to aid the Underground Railroad, which helped runaway slaves reach safe havens—or, as Douglass said, “get Canada under their feet.” He used his weekly paper, The Northern Star, to spread anti-slavery sentiment. He also developed a friendship with the radical abolitionist John Brown (1800-1859). Although Douglass did not participate in Brown’s ill-fated anti-slavery assault on Harper’s Ferry in western Virginia, a warrant was still issued for Douglass’s arrest on charges of conspiracy after federal troops raided Brown’s compound in 1859. Douglass fled again to England for several months, returning home only after Brown had been tried and hanged.

“God be praised! that it has come at last!” exulted Douglass May 1861, after the outbreak of the Civil War. Perhaps the most influential African American during the war, Douglass lobbied Abraham Lincoln, president from 1861-1865, relentlessly to make the abolition of slavery the Civil War’s main agenda. “No War but an Abolition War; no peace but an Abolition peace; liberty for all, Chains for none” Douglass declared. Dubbed by Douglass “the slow coach at Washington,” Lincoln finally signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862, declaring all southern slaves free effective January 1, 1863. A jubilant Douglass proclaimed the date “a day for poetry and song.” He doubled his efforts throughout the North recruiting “men of color to arms!”

During the post-Civil War decade known as the Reconstruction era, many of Douglass’s crusades seemed successful. The Constitution of the United States abolished slavery while guaranteeing civil rights and suffrage for black males. Nonetheless, racism remained rampant. “We are not quite yet free,” Douglass lamented. “We have been turned out of the house of bondage, but we have not yet been fully admitted to the glorious temple of American liberty.” Even with the future “shrouded in doubt and danger,” Douglass remained a loyal member of the Republican party, bringing in black votes. Republican presidents rewarded him with various political posts, including that of United States Minister to Haiti.

But by the late 1880s, Douglass understood that his campaign to realize America’s ideals of freedom, equality, and justice for all was a battle without end. Mob lynchings, widespread poverty, and southern maneuvers to thwart blacks’ rights caused Douglass to proclaim: “Until truth and humanity shall cease to be living ideas, this struggle will go on.” From his hilltop home in Washington, D.C., where he had moved in 1878, he became an elder statesman for the African American cause as well as the nation’s conscience to realize its best self. “The American people have this lesson to learn,” he reminded them in one of his late speeches. “That where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob, and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe.” With his ardent speeches and passion for justice, Douglass continued to captivate audiences until a year before his death, in 1895.
Today, Henry Ossawa Tanner is the first (and, as of 1997, the only) African American artist whose work hangs on the walls of the White House in Washington, D.C.. The painting *Sand Dunes at Sunset, Atlantic City*, c. 1885 [see figure 1], was acquired for the presidential collection in 1996, ninety years after the Art Institute acquired *The Two Disciples at the Tomb*, c. 1906. [See slide 2] He was also considered the most famous black artist of his time. But to reach that point, he had to flee to Europe to receive acclaim at home.

In 1880, a decade after black males were granted the right to vote in the United States, Tanner was admitted as a student to the prestigious Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia. His teacher was Thomas Eakins (1844-1916), now considered one of America’s greatest nineteenth-century artists. Tanner was pursuing a dream he had harbored since youth, when he had first seen a landscape painter working in a park near his Pittsburgh home. At the Academy, he was an accomplished, although quiet student, and he was also the only black enrolled. One night, fellow students seized Tanner and tied him to his easel in a mock crucifixion. As one of the participants later declared: There had never been “a great Negro or a great Jew artist.... Rembrandt and Turner were accused of being Jews but they never admitted it.”

Tanner withdrew as a student from the Academy in 1881. For the next ten years, he struggled to establish himself as an artist, first in Philadelphia, then in Atlanta, where he opened up an ill-fated photography shop while teach-
ing art. He would occasionally sell works and receive acknowledgment, but not enough to sustain or support him. Finally in 1891, aided by some white patrons, Tanner followed the precedent set by many American artists of studying abroad. But Tanner was not merely drawn to Europe's venerable artistic tradition. He left, as he declared, because it was impossible "to fight prejudice and paint at the same time." He made Paris his home for the rest of his life.

There, in the capital of the international art world, Tanner finally found the freedom to paint. With poignant genre scenes like The Banjo Lesson, 1893, Tanner became one of the first academically trained African American artists to render the black experience on canvas. [See figure 2] The painting portrays an old man sitting in a sparsely furnished, light-flooded room showing a little boy how to play a banjo. In featuring an instrument that slaves brought to America before 1700, this simply composed scene of passing on a musical tradition from one generation to another quietly asserts the prominent contribution African Americans have made to music in United States history. With his signature use of color and light, Tanner captures the dignity and humility of this deeply felt universal subject. The Banjo Lesson would become one of his most famous works, offering the public a glimpse into the daily life of American blacks. As Tanner said: "He who has the most sympathy with his subject will achieve the best result."

However, around 1895, Tanner realized that Europeans could hardly understand African American themes, and in the United States, there was no market
for sympathetic images of them. After completing only some four genre scenes, he began to focus instead on landscapes and religious imagery. Adopting these subjects proved that black artists could paint in the prevailing European mode. Also, religious painting came naturally to Tanner. As the son of a highly educated minister who eventually became bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Tanner had always considered the church a source of support and inspiration.

Tanner's first religious painting, a dramatically lit *Daniel in the Lion's Den* (1895; now lost) won an honorable mention in the highly competitive, government-sponsored annual Paris Salon exhibition of 1896. The next year, his *Raising of Lazarus* (1896, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Compiègne) won a third-class medal and, more significantly, the French government bought the painting. Less than forty years after the abolition of slavery, a black received an honor given by that time to only a handful of Americans. Then in 1899, the site of Tanner's humiliating "crucifixion" some nineteen years earlier, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts bought his *Nicodemus Visiting Jesus* (1899, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia), giving its former student his first major recognition at home. In addition, Tanner's growing reputation led an American benefactor to finance trips for the artist to the biblical Middle East, especially Jerusalem, which inspired him for years to come.

Evidence of the trip's influence is the Art Institute's compelling *Two Disciples at the Tomb* which depicts the discovery of Jesus's empty tomb on Easter Sunday. As the Gospel of John (20:5) in the Bible's New Testament proclaims: "And [John] stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in." Here, John's youthful, radiant face reflects the luminous emptiness of the arched sepulchre, while next to him, bowing his head in awe, stands the bearded disciple Peter, who will become Jesus's successor and the leader of the Christian church. With his great skill at handling light effects, Tanner has chosen very carefully a moment that best represents the drama of this hallowed event. He captures the dim early light of the morning star hovering above the outline of trees in the upper right portion of the picture. The light both heralds the dawn of a new day and plays off against the miraculous glow emanating from the now empty tomb of the resurrected Jesus.

Tanner's composition places the two disciples right at the edge of the landscape and the wall of the tomb, with Peter closest to the tomb. Next to him stands John, the beardless intellectual among the apostles who wrote two books of the New Testament: the Book of John the Apostle and the visionary Revelation of Saint John the Divine that describes the return of Christ on the Day of Last Judgment. The younger John's expression is alert as he responds to this miracle at the tomb.
Tanner’s use of color and light to define structure and infuse essence seems to have reached its peak in this painting. Nothing detracts from the power of this portentous New Testament scene. Tanner crops the opening to the wondrously shining tomb. He also uses a subdued and restricted palette, dominated by dark hues and layered on with broad, commanding brushstrokes. Like *The Banjo Lesson*, the composition is simple, consisting of two masterfully painted figures who contrast youth and age. Our main focus is the apostles’s expressive hand gestures and facial expressions, which glow with radiant light. “My effort,” Tanner explained, “has been to not only put the Biblical incident in the original setting ... but at the same time give the human touch ‘which makes the whole world kin.”

*TWO DISCIPLES AT THE TOMB* became Tanner’s most well-known religious painting in America, giving him at long last the kind of recognition that he had received abroad. Called “the most impressive and distinguished work of the season,” the painting competed against 350 other works to win the Harris Silver Medal at The Art Institute of Chicago in 1906, which acquired the painting later that year.

Tanner lived through some of America’s—and the world’s—most profound changes. Born in 1859 on the eve of the Civil War in a house that was an Underground Railroad station, he was six years old when the Constitution abolished slavery in 1865—giving rise, the following year, to the founding of the Ku Klux Klan. By the dawn of the twentieth century, *modernism* had begun its ascendancy in art, and world order was about to topple with the advent of World War I (1914-1918). African Americans began to claim their heritage, and one of their heroes was Tanner, who became labelled the “dean” of African American artists. Black educator Booker T. Washington* pleaded with him to paint more of his early African American genre scenes. But like figures in his paintings—dignified, deeply feeling, isolated—Tanner followed his own artistic vision. However, his commitment to religious subjects led some to believe he was rejecting his heritage.

Tanner continued to receive awards. In 1908/9, he was made a member of the National Academy of Design in the United States, and, in 1927, received France’s highest honor: he was made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. But in America, success was always qualified. Reviews unfailingly referred to him as the country’s “foremost Negro artist.” Although he had never discussed that early incident of racism in Philadelphia—or any instance, for that matter—he was moved to rebuke: “Now am I a Negro? .... Does the 1/2 or 1/8 of ‘pure’ Negro blood, in my veins, count for all? I believe it, the Negro blood, counts and counts to my advantage—though it has caused me at times a life of great humiliation and sorrow but that it is the source of all my talents (if I have any) I do not believe, any more than I believe it all.
comes from my English ancestors.... True—this condition has driven me out of the country, but still the best friends I have are 'white' Americans and while I cannot sing our National Hymn, 'Land of Liberty,' etc. still deep down in my heart I love it and am sometimes sad that I cannot live where my heart is." Tanner died in Paris in 1937.
“Many of my people are earnestly working to make what some call ‘the new Negro race,’” declared Hale Woodruff in 1926, around the same time that he painted this vibrant early work entitled *Twilight*, c. 1926. [See slide 3] “It is like laying a foundation for a great building. Workers are carrying stones we may call music, art, science, literature etc. I, too, want to add something.”

Woodruff’s early years as an artist coincided with the creative flourishing during the 1920s known as the Harlem Renaissance, or New Negro Movement, centered in the New York City neighborhood of Harlem. [See map page 23] Among the leaders was the first African American Rhodes scholar, Alain Locke*, who was also a professor at Howard University, founded in 1867 in Washington, D.C., to provide college educations for newly emancipated slaves. “Even with the rude transplanting of slavery,” declared Locke, “the American Negro brought over an emotional inheritance, a deep-seated aesthetic endowment”—and he urged blacks to express this African heritage. The Harlem Renaissance’s celebration of black culture benefitted Woodruff, even in Indianapolis, where the Illinois-born, Nashville-raised young man had moved in 1918 in search of work.

The artistically gifted youth’s ambition was to attend the city’s sole art school, the John Herron Art Institute (now the Indianapolis Museum of Art), which admitted blacks as well as whites. But tuition was high, and Woodruff worked for two years to save enough money—scrubbing carpets, washing dishes, shovelling coal. He also did political cartoons on racial issues for the local black newspaper.

This exuberant scene at dusk was the type of landscape painting done by Woodruff during his studies at Herron. He called them “ultra-impressionist” works, perhaps in homage to his teacher, the Indiana Impressionist William Forsyth. Although we see here Forsyth’s “juicy brush” technique, in which he loaded his brush with paint and worked with great speed, Woodruff’s explosive colors and bold, gestural brushwork seem entirely his own.

The young artist depicts dusk in a vibrant, almost visionary manner, using a riot of colors and textures that radiates out from the unseen setting sun and turns the painting’s entire foreground and middleground into gorgeous shades of red. Woodruff layers his brilliant complementary colors so thickly that the picture seems sculpted, modelled. We can almost recreate his act of constructing the painting by following his brushstrokes. They mold the furrowed ground, carrying our eyes to the upright trees, with the boulder in the background. Likewise the dense strokes of the beautiful twilight sky carry our gaze downward again to the central focus of the trees and rock. Animated by light, color, and brushwork, Woodruff’s landscape seems almost alive.
Twilight was among four paintings that Hale Woodruff submitted to the Negro in Art Week, an historic exhibition held at The Art Institute of Chicago in 1927 featuring paintings and sculpture by contemporary black artists. This exhibition served as a model for the pioneering Harmon Foundation exhibitions of the works of African American artists that began the following year in New York. In addition to these unprecedented exhibitions, the Harmon Foundation, founded in 1922, also issued exhibition catalogues and sponsored award-winning competitions. These were the kinds of opportunities that had begun to be available to African American artists as a result of the Harlem Renaissance. In fact, Woodruff won the bronze medal of Harmon’s inaugural contest held in New York in 1928. This award helped finance a trip long desired by Woodruff: to travel and study abroad. By the time the Art Institute unveiled Twilight in its celebrated 1927 exhibition, Woodruff was already in Paris; he lived in France for four years, from 1927 through 1931. While there, he absorbed the seminal paintings of Post-Impressionist Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) and the ensuing Cubist
works by Pablo Picasso (1881-1973). Encouraged by Alain Locke who was visiting Paris, Woodruff also began to collect native African art. The young artist also met with expatriate Henry Ossawa Tanner, whose groundbreaking prominence in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century had provided such inspiration. [See pages 17-21]

Upon his return to the United States in 1931, Woodruff accepted a position at the new all-black Atlanta University, which included Spelman and Morehouse Colleges. Although he had never intended to teach, his force and commitment as a teacher made a lasting contribution to the art of African Americans. “A great teacher,” he once said, “learns from his students how to be a great teacher.” At Atlanta University, he founded the art department, teaching there until 1945. Early in his career, he broke the racial barrier at Atlanta’s High Museum of Art when he brought his students to the segregated institution without prior permission. “These were first steps for blacks,” recalled a former student. “It was our first contact with a museum,” echoed another. And in 1942, he inaugurated annual exhibitions of black art at the university, thereby continuing the precedent set by the Harmon Foundation. The Atlanta annuals ran through 1970, when they were discontinued.

In 1936, Woodruff won a scholarship to study in Mexico, where he worked under the noted Mexican muralist Diego Rivera (1886-1957). Woodruff

Figure 3
was naturally drawn to the muralist's use of heroic historical narratives to inspire the masses. He joined Rivera's crew, without pay. "We ground [colors] on a marble slab with a marble brick," Woodruff recalled, "working all night, so that the colors would be fresh and ready when Rivera arrived in the morning."

Influenced by his Mexican experience, Woodruff painted his stirring Amistad Mutiny murals (1939) for Talladega College, a small African American college in Alabama.[See figure 3] Of the six murals Woodruff completed during his lifetime, the Amistad series is the most celebrated. The three paintings depict the story of the mutiny of African slaves aboard the Spanish slave ship Amistad in 1839. The slaves were tried in a United States court (one of the leading defense lawyers was John Quincy Adams, president from 1797 to 1801)—and, although slavery was legal, the mutineers were still acquitted and returned to their homeland. Perhaps the earliest assimilation of Social Realism and the Mexican muralist technique in African American art, the Amistad series is noted for its bold, linear style, bright colors, and factual accuracy. Upon the murals' dedication in 1939, one of the Harlem Renaissance's primary figures, Harvard-educated and N.A.A.C.P.-cofounder, W.E.B. DuBois*, called the series "the most important work done by a black artist." Fifty-eight years later, the mutiny aboard the Amistad became the subject of an Opera by Anthony Davis and Thulani Davis premiering in Chicago at The Lyric Opera in November of 1997.

Upon receiving a Julius Rosenwald Fund fellowship, Woodruff painted in New York from 1943 to 1945. He then accepted a position in 1947 at New York University, where he taught with great success until his retirement as Professor Emeritus in 1968. With the emergence of the radical new visual vocabulary of Abstract Expressionism in the late 1940s, Woodruff began to develop an entirely new style—a synthesis, it seemed, of all of his heritage and past experience. These late works became increasingly nonfigural, with suggestions of African symbols and motifs. With artist Romare Bearden (1912-1988) [see pages 70-74], he also cofounded Spiral, a forum to promote discussion and exhibitions devoted to black art. "It is through the Arts—all arts—that the spirit of man is best realized—transmitted to others," Woodruff once said. He continued working until the year of his death, in 1980.
“The day of the ... ‘Mammies’ is done. Uncle Tom and Sambo have passed on,” declared Harlem Renaissance spokesman Alain Locke* in his watershed book entitled *The New Negro* (1925). There, Locke urged black artists to reclaim their ancestral heritage as a means of strengthening and enriching their own expressions. Testimony to this were the lyrical silhouetted black figures that illustrated Locke’s landmark book. Their creator, Aaron Douglas, would become a leading member of the Harlem Renaissance, and these fluid figures in motion were the first examples of what would be his signature style, clearly visible in *Study for Aspects of a Negro Life*, 1934. [See slide 4] Although such seminal modernists as Pablo Picasso had found the art of Africa a vital source, Douglas was the first African American to consciously use as inspiration what Locke considered the black artist’s birthright: African imagery, culture, and history. Of his breakthrough rhythmic images, Douglas merely said: “I tried to paint the sounds from hymns, chants, lullabies, and work songs.”

Douglas and Locke were part of the Harlem Renaissance, or New Negro Movement, the creative outburst of literature, music, dance, and art that flourished during the 1920s. [See map page 23] The movement drew its name from the narrow strip of upper Manhattan called Harlem, whose black population had more than tripled between 1910 and 1930, as a result of the Great Migration, in which large numbers of blacks moved from the South to urban centers in the North. In Harlem, no longer isolated in rural southern communities, blacks experienced a rebirth—a reawakening—of their African cultural roots. It was almost as if segregation had served as a retaining wall, holding back centuries of a vital tradition of storytelling, craft, music, and dance—an undiluted legacy that refused to be extinguished despite the diaspora, or forced dispersal of blacks from their ancestral homeland in Africa.

Black nationalist leader Marcus Garvey* spoke out, as did scholars like Locke and W.E.B. DuBois*. African rhythms of jazz filled the streets of Harlem while authors such as Langston Hughes* captured the black experience in words. Although Harlem was dubbed “the cultural capital of black America,” this rich outpouring proved contagious, spreading to other cities as well, such as Chicago’s Bronzeville district. [See map page 45] “Nothing is more galvanizing to a people,” Locke declared, “than a sense of their cultural past.”

From the moment of Douglas’s arrival in New York around 1924, the Kansas native became part of renaissance activities. In addition to his illustrations for Locke’s *New American Negro*, Douglas’s flattened, highly stylized images appeared in DuBois’s N.A.A.C.P. magazine *Crisis* in 1925. He also illustrated poetry books by Langston Hughes. In 1927, he completed his first mural; his dancing figures adorned walls of the popular Harlem nightspot, Club Ebony, which is now destroyed. Rhythmic images of joyful
blacks decorated two more murals begun in 1929, one for Chicago’s Sherman Hotel (now destroyed) and the other still surviving for Fisk University, the African American college founded in 1866 in Nashville, Tennessee.

The golden era of the Harlem Renaissance dimmed with the Stock Market Crash of 1929, which plunged the nation into the Great Depression (1929-1939). To aid the paralyzed economy, Franklin Roosevelt, president from 1933 to 1945, initiated a series of federally sponsored social programs beginning in 1933, among them the 1935 Federal Arts Project (FAP) under the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The WPA/FAP not only helped create community art centers throughout the country, but employed more than five thousand artists, both black and white, by the time the program ended in 1943 in the middle of World War II (1939-1945). For many black artists, the WPA/FAP provided the first opportunity to work professionally with other artists. As artist Elizabeth Catlett later said [see pages 64-66]:

Figure 4
Aaron Douglas,
“There have been two great periods in the development of Negro artists in the United States. The first was the Negro Renaissance when white patronage gave an opportunity for development to Negro artists. The second surge forward was during the Depression, during the days when Negro as well as white artists were employed and thus eligible for a job creating with the Government acting as patron of the arts.”

Douglas completed a number of murals under WPA sponsorship, but no work is more singled out to symbolize the renaissance’s celebration of blacks’s cultural roots than Douglas’s 1934 series of four murals entitled Aspects of Negro Life (1934). [See figure 4] They decorate the walls of what is now the renowned Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture at the Countee Cullen Branch of the New York Public Library at 135th Street, which was then the cultural epicenter of the Harlem Renaissance. The murals illustrate the emergence of an African American identity, detailing black history from African life through slavery and Reconstruction to the flowering of the Harlem Renaissance and the difficulties of the Depression.

The Art Institute’s rare sketch is a study for the first mural, entitled The Negro in an African Setting, which Douglas has described as representing “the African cultural background of American Negroes. Dominant in it are the strongly rhythmic arts of music ... dance and sculpture—and so the drummers, the dancers, and the carved fetish represent the exhilaration and rhythmic pulsation of life in Africa.” Using his characteristic silhouetted forms, with their lively stylization, Douglas portrays here a kind of paradise, where music, dance, art, and religion are all fused. In the center, a man and woman dance to the beat of the drums, while noble, spear-holding figures encircle them. At their feet are leaves of a palm forest. A shadowy deity figure in the upper middle of the picture seems to emanate one of Douglas’s characteristic motifs—ever-widening concentric circles that here suggest throbbing heat and the rhythm of the drums.

This highly finished sketch, with its African setting, gives vision to Locke’s notion that, through study, one can create a new, ancestrally inspired art for black America. Douglas’s wide-ranging background included a B.F.A. from the University of Nebraska, study abroad, and a Barnes Foundation Fellowship to examine outstanding examples of African tribal art and modern masters at the Barnes Collection in Merion, Pennsylvania. He also earned an M.A. from Columbia University’s Teaching College in 1944.

Douglas here created a unique synthesis of African art with ancient art and the modernist aesthetic. Its subject matter is, of course, African, and its stylized figures recall tribal sculpture. The rhythmic silhouettes suggest Greek vase painting and the profiled heads, Egyptian reliefs. The painting’s sleek lines and muted colors reflect the contemporary Art Deco style.
That these murals were placed above the heads of readers who had come to study and learn at the New York Public Library suggests Douglas's other contribution to the celebration of black art by black artists. In 1937, Douglas founded the art department at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, teaching there until 1966, when he retired as Professor Emeritus. While he was there, his 1929 murals entitled *Symbolic Negro History*, installed in the university's administration building, taught students daily about visual expression as well as about their African American roots. Called a "pioneering Africanist" by Alain Locke, Douglas also established in 1949 what is now known as the Aaron Douglas Gallery of African Art. The genesis of this superb teaching collection was a major gift to Fisk by American artist Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986) of works, including African sculpture, acquired by her late husband, the photographer Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946). In 1973, Fisk University awarded Douglas an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts. He died in Nashville in 1979.

Throughout his long, illustrious career, Douglas, as artist and professor, served as a prime role model for future African American artists. Both his art and his life sought to answer the question asked during the Harlem Renaissance's heyday in 1926 by Harlem poet *Countee Cullen*, for whom the library containing Douglas's *Aspects of Negro Life* series is named:

*What is Africa to me:*
*Copper sun or scarlet sea,*
*Jungle star or jungle track,*
*Strong bronzed men, or regal black*
*Women from whose loins I sprang*
*When birds of Eden sang?*
*One three centuries removed*
*From the scenes his fathers loved,*
*Spicy grove, cinnamon tree*
*What is Africa to me?*
“His eye is always on the line of the diaspora, from Africa, across ... the deep rural South and on into the Northern cities,” declared writer Clyde Taylor, describing the centuries of continual resettlement, often forced, by African Americans since they were removed from their ancestral homeland. This very small, brightly painted picture by Walter Ellison captures the most massive relocation of all—the Great Migration—when more than six million blacks left their rural southern homes for industrial cities in the North. [See slide 5] The mass emigration began around the First World War (1914-1918), in which more than two hundred thousand blacks had served, and continued through 1970. The war spawned jobs which beckoned southern blacks northbound—some two million, for instance, between 1920 and 1925 alone. Without this new concentration of blacks in urban centers, coupled with the economic boom, the cultural explosion known as the Harlem Renaissance, or New Negro Movement, would not have occurred. For many African Americans, the exodus toward the land of promise in the North began by train. As one migrant from the South later recalled: “You couldn't do without the train spiritually. It was the vehicle that could take you to heaven before you died. Heaven meaning away from here.”

Shown here, in fact, may be the very train station in Macon, Georgia, where Ellison as a teenager joined this immense migration by boarding a train heading North. He grew up nearby, in the small town of Eatonton. With his distinctive broad areas of color and simple, almost naive style, Ellison divides the station into three sections to illustrate the Jim Crow laws that legalized segregation in the South. All public spaces, such as streetcars, trains, and the railway station here, had separate, but rarely equal, sections or facilities. Here, whites and blacks pass each other, but rarely connect. In the upper righthand rear of the painting, for example, the woman exits through her designated “Colored” doorway.

Ellison uses just a few brushstrokes to capture imaginatively the characters about to depart. On the left, well-dressed white passengers board trains headed South, for such vacation spots as Miami, West Palm Beach, and Tallahassee, Florida. The only blacks to break the racial barrier and enter this exclusive white bastion are the orange-garbed porters, who held what was then considered a prestigious job. In the foreground, a little girl with her dog, who peers around the corner, carries our eye to the middle section. There, a porter directs a confused man toward the trains heading North.

In the righthand section, we sense the momentum of the Great Migration. With their worldly possessions in sacks, boxes, and trunks, black mothers, fathers, and children scramble, rushing to board trains to the three most popular northern destinations—Chicago, Detroit, and New York. If they did not hurry, they might run the risk of harassment or arrest forcing them to remain as cheap labor in the South. Assisting them were black porters,
who served as invaluable conduits of news, helpful hints, and information during the upheaval of the Migration. Perhaps to prove that he was part of this historical relocation, Ellison paints his initials on the suitcase in the right foreground, which an old man struggles to lift.

While Ellison leaves the illustration of the actual train-ride to our imagination, another child later described the experience of a friend: “As soon as she got on the train to leave ... she felt free. Said she felt like she was being born all over again. Sure she was sitting in the Jim Crow section, up front where all the coal, smoke, and dust rose up, got in the windows and ruined your clothes. But she said the chugging of the train couldn't hardly keep up with her heart, she was so excited.”

Ellison's actual destination was Chicago, the largest industrial center of the nation, whose potential jobs in meat packing, rail, and steel mills had attracted the greatest single number of migrants—some sixty thousand—by the end of World War I (1914-1918). The black population almost doubled two years later, by 1920. Although discrimination existed, the city also offered better schools, voting rights, leisure activities, and the chance to live daily life with more freedom than that which existed in the South.

Like most blacks, Ellison probably ended his journey at the Illinois Central Railway station, now demolished, at 12th Street and Michigan Avenue. Once in Chicago, he studied at The School of The Art Institute of Chicago, the vital institution where a number of noted black artists trained, including Archibald J. Motley, Jr. and Charles White. [See pages 45-48 and 55-57]

During the 1940s, Ellison played a pioneering role in the creation of the South Side Community Art Center, sponsored by the WPA/FAP and modelled after the highly successful Harlem Community Art Center in New York. Scholar Alain Locke* came to New York to lead the South Side Community Center's opening ceremony in 1941, accompanied by Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962), whose husband was then president of the United States. “The center had quite an impact on Black artists,” recalled one of its first students, “because there wasn’t anything else around.” Although WPA/FAP funding ended in 1943, with the advent of World War II (1939-1945), the South Side Community Art Center continues to this day to provide professional training and opportunities for aspiring young artists.

Ellison also exhibited at the historic American Negro Exposition (also called the Art of the American Negro), one of the first commercial gallery exhibitions to feature African American artists, held at Chicago's Tanner Gallery in 1940. The exhibition became the basis of Alain Locke’s Negro in Art, the first monograph on black art which was published later that year. Ellison's monotype The Sunny South, 1939, appeared in the monograph, bringing Ellison the most attention that he would receive as an artist. [See slide 6]

* designates entry in Biographical Glossary
Now owned by the Art Institute, the work is a sequel, in a sense, to *The Train Station*. Ellison depicts in this print both the hope and despair of life in the city. People working and relaxing are side-by-side with gangsters with guns poised, or jailbirds escaping from prison. As in *Train Station*, we see Ellison's simple, direct style juxtaposed with his sophisticated insights, providing us with another telling image of the black experience in the decades between the two world wars.
When Jacob Lawrence was young, the colors and patterns of his mother’s small, inexpensive Persian rugs so intrigued him that he would copy them. First he drew all the geometric designs, then he filled them in color-by-color—all of the reds, then all the blues, and so on. He also loved to cut the tops off cardboard boxes, then paint inside neighborhood street scenes—funeral parlors, barbershops, tenements with broken windows. Today, Jacob Lawrence is considered one of the greatest artists of the twentieth century, with these early artistic interests continuing throughout his sixty-year career.

We see both patterning and neighborhood scenes in this early genre painting, done when Lawrence was only twenty. [See slide 7] Featuring the Harlem Clinic that Lawrence himself used, *Free Clinic* demonstrates the young artist’s skill at creating wonderfully economical yet evocative shapes that let us diagnose, with just a few clues, these patients and their various states of pain. We see injured heads, upset stomachs, sick infants, and bad feet. Above the patients’ heads, images of lungs, intestines, and laboratory equipment reinforce the clinic’s function and its clients’ ailments. The people seem to wait so patiently, and we wait with them as Lawrence’s plunging diagonals lead our eyes back and forth along the weaving line of long-suffering individuals. Using *gouache*, Lawrence narrows his *palette*, which became one of his stylistic signatures—“It forces you to be more inventive,” he once explained. He then arranges this limited number of bright, flat colors into bold patterns to further strengthen his composition.

Lawrence was part of this community, and *Free Clinic* is just one of the artist’s many genre scenes that document Harlem during the Great Depression. “My pictures express my life,” he once said; “I paint the things I have experienced.” Lawrence’s mother, who was part of the Great *Migration* North, brought her children to Harlem around 1930, when Lawrence was thirteen. Although the Depression dulled the glitter of the Harlem Renaissance, also called the New Negro Movement, the vital community continued to nurture its artists, aided in the mid-1930s by the government-sponsored programs of WPA/FAP. [See map page 23]

Lawrence studied at a number of federally-funded community cultural centers and art workshops, including the Harlem Art Workshop. His talent was recognized immediately, although Lawrence thought otherwise. “No matter how hard I try,” he once declared, “I just can’t draw like the rest of the fellows up at Mike’s (studio workshop).” Since many of the artists’ studios doubled as gathering spots, Lawrence came into contact with some of the period’s luminaries, including Aaron Douglas (see pages 26-29), the poet *Langston Hughes*, and scholars *Alain Locke* and W.E.B. DuBois*. In 1938, the WPA/FAP hired Lawrence in its Easel Project, which not only paid for materials and paintings, but exposed him, on equal footing, to other professionals. “It was a real turning point for me,” he stated. “It was my education.”

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* designates entry in Biographical Glossary
Lawrence, however, was well on his way. In 1938, at the age of twenty, he had his first one-man exhibition in Harlem, displaying his early genre scenes of Harlem. The following year, he had two shows, one of them featuring an epic narrative series documenting the life of *Touissant l'Ouverture* (c. 1744-1803), the Haitian revolutionary responsible for the establishment of Haiti as the first independent black republic in the Western Hemisphere. This recognition of Lawrence's talent happily coincided with the museum and gallery world beginning, as black art historian/curator Edmund Barry Gaither stated, "its earliest retreats from the freeze-out against black artists." Thus the Baltimore Museum stressed the importance of the Touissant series by installing it in a separate room. This first major museum exhibition of black artists's work, held in 1939, was co-sponsored by the Harmon Foundation. Lawrence's series was also shown in Chicago's landmark *American Negro Exposition*, held at the Tanner Gallery in 1940.

Throughout the rest of his career, Lawrence would intersperse small genre scenes like *Free Clinic* with these epic series, which consist of small panels that fit together in a cinematographic fashion to form a powerful narrative whole. Continuing the pattern-making he did as a child, Lawrence worked on all of the panels at once, filling them in color-by-color, doing the darker colors first, which imparted a consistency of hue throughout the entire series.

Soon Lawrence became known as the great narrative painter of black nineteenth-century history. Since, as Lawrence once claimed, "they never taught Negro history in public school," he wanted to set the record straight. "The Negro has always participated in American history. There were Negroes with George Washington crossing the Delaware. I don't see how a history of the U.S. can be written honestly without including the Negro." In the tradition of such socially committed artists as the Spaniard Francisco Goya (1746-1828) or Lawrence's contemporaries, the Mexican muralists, the artist declared: "If at times my productions do not express the conventionally beautiful, there is always an effort to express the universal beauty of man's continuous struggle to lift his social position and to add dimension to his spiritual being."

Lawrence chronicled the story of the valiant abolitionist Frederick Douglass in his next series of 1939-40. [See figure 5, also see pages 12-16] Consisting of thirty-two panels, the work combines narrative text and imagery to retell the compelling story of Douglass who escaped from slavery in Maryland to become the foremost African American abolitionist spokesman during and following the Civil War era. Lawrence divides his series into three sections: "The Slave," "The Fugitive," and "The Free Man." In this panel from "The Fugitive" section, an angry mob of pro-slavery supporter attack Douglass and his fellow abolitionists at a rally in Indiana. They knocked Douglass unconscious and also broke his left hand, which was left permanently weakened.
Lawrence depicts this dramatic incident using a spare, forceful composition consisting of angular and diagonal thrusts. “When the subjects are strong, I believe simplicity is the best way of treating them,” he once said. His perspective is steep, and depth is indicated by smaller, receding forms. His expressive technique features bold and dark colors. In striking contrast, the white-attired Douglass forms the panel’s anguished centerpiece, his arms and legs extended in a manner suggestive of Christ.

Just as Lawrence captures the essence of the episode through his simplified angular imagery, so too does he concisely and accurately narrate the scene. Text and images complement one another, with a vividness reminiscent of black oral tradition. Culled from thorough research, Lawrence’s caption reads: “The Garrisonians in the year 1843 planned a series of conventions in order to spread and create greater antislavery sentiment in New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Ohio, Indiana, and Pennsylvania. In one of these conventions, Douglass and two of his fellow workers were mobbed at Pendleton, Indiana.”

As shown here, Lawrence combines a modernist sensibility—simple composition, large flattened forms, and minimal detail—with the narrative tradition of Social Realism to achieve his uniquely expressive style. “I gravitate to geometric forms,” he once said. “My work is abstract in the sense of
being designed and composed.” But, he added, “The human subject, the human figure, is the most important thing for me. I want to communicate.”

And communicate Lawrence did. Between 1940 and 1943 alone, when he was drafted into the Coast Guard during World War II (1939-1945), Lawrence completed series about ex-slave Harriet Tubman, abolitionist John Brown, and his home of Harlem. With the success of his sweeping *Migration of the Negro* series, 1940-1941, Lawrence joined that vanguard of African American artists to be represented by a New York gallery, Edith Halpert’s prestigious Downtown Gallery. Meanwhile, awards such as the *Julius Rosenwald Fund* fellowship (his first of three) enabled Lawrence to travel for research and study through the rural South where he experienced for the first time the blatant discrimination still prevalent in the region. Of his work during this period, a critic remarked: “[In Lawrence’s work] there is a laconic handling of explosive subject matter, direct as a broadside.”

After World War II, as awards and fellowships continued, including a noted John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, Lawrence broadened his approach.
His *Struggle: From the History of the American People* series, 1955-1956, documented blacks’ involvement in American history from the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) through the first covered wagons heading West, around 1817. He responded to the turmoil of the civil rights era during the 1960s by producing perhaps his most overtly political art.

Lawrence’s most recent art ranges from people laboring together harmoniously in works entitled *Builders*, begun around 1969, to his 1982 *Hiroshima* series that exposes the devastation wrought by the atomic bomb dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima in 1945. One of Lawrence’s latest works is *Events in the Life of Harold Washington*, 1991, a ceramic tile mosaic featuring the accomplishments of the late Chicago mayor (1922-1987) that greets visitors in the lobby of Chicago’s Harold Washington Library Center. [See figure 6]

In 1974, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, honored Lawrence with a major travelling retrospective, and in 1983, he was elected to the prestigious Academy of Arts and Letters. For much of his career, Lawrence has also contributed to the art world through his teaching. Currently, he is Professor Emeritus of Art at the University of Washington, Seattle. And for his entire career, despite pressure and trends to the contrary, Jacob Lawrence has not wavered in his commitment to, in his words, “my national, racial, and class group.” As a critic once said, during the heyday of *Abstract Expressionism* in the mid-1950s: “Jacob Lawrence is one of the very few ... American artists courageous enough to paint subject in a day-when it is distinctly unfashionable; and much more than that, to make his subject a testament, an expression of his belief in man’s continuing strength and will to achieve and preserve freedom.”
Although as a child Horace Pippin favored drawing over schoolwork, he declared that World War I (1914-1918) "brought out all the art in me." He served in the celebrated all-black 369th Regiment in France, one of the few African American units allowed to see combat—spending, in fact, more time at the front than any other American troops. While stationed at the front, a German sniper shot Pippin in the right arm. Upon discharge to his birthplace of West Chester, Pennsylvania, the permanently disabled Pippin found himself unable to do much more than deliver laundry taken in by his new wife. As a form of therapy—and to keep himself busy—the thirty-year-old veteran turned once again to his childhood passion. Using his left hand to guide his injured right arm, which had a steel plate in the shoulder, he slowly and laboriously began to produce pictures. "It brought me back to my old self," he exclaimed.

*Cabin in the Cotton*, c. 1930s, comes years later [see slide 8], as Pippin's initial works included scenes of his combat experience, as well as calendar-style images of his native Brandywine Valley in Pennsylvania. His first painting took three years to complete and depicted Armistice Day, on November 11, 1918, which Pippin never actually witnessed because he was recuperating in the hospital. Nor did the end of the First World War occur as Pippin imaginatively portrayed it. In his picture of the cease-fire, he painted one of his desires, integrating what were in reality segregated troops, placing African Americans side-by-side with whites.

Pippin depicted another one of his fantasies in the Art Institute's engaging picture of a cabin on a cotton plantation in the Deep South. He had made only one brief visit to the South, in 1925, which probably did not include a visit to a plantation. But his grandmother had been a slave before the Civil War and used to tell him stories about the Old South. "Pictures just come to my mind," he once said. "I think them out with my brain and then I tell my heart to go ahead."

Done before 1937, *Cabin in the Cotton* is one of Pippin’s earliest works after settling down to paint in earnest. We can already see what would become the unschooled artist’s hallmarks: a direct, naive style characterized by flattened spaces and simplified patterns and forms. The artist lovingly weaves together these rudimentary shapes—layered logs, the zig-zagged fence, the puffy balls of cotton—much like stitched-together designs in old-fashioned quilts. His colors are strong and literal—blue for the sky, white for cotton, green for the ground. Pippin worked extremely slowly, stroking on layer after layer of paint. Here, the brushstrokes are so densely applied that the paint almost resembles tar. The scene is charmingly sentimental. A mother and child sit in front of a log cabin in a farmyard set against the backdrop of a sea of cotton. The mother takes in the sun while her child frolics with a dog. Anecdotal details abound. Barnyard fowl roam around,
an ax is poised to chop wood, and there is a cookstove, on which we can imagine a pot gently bubbling.

But cotton as a crop does not look this way when it is opened. Moreover, blacks were hardly content in the cotton fields, and this nostalgic image corresponds instead to the huge popularity of romanticized southern themes around this time. Blacks and whites flocked to see both the musical (1927) and the film (1929) Show Boat, about love aboard a Mississippi showboat. Considered an American classic today, the folk opera Porgy and Bess (1935) told the sad tale of love and loss in a black section of Charleston, South Carolina. And Gone with the Wind, Margaret Mitchell’s saga about the Civil War and Reconstruction in the South, is still revered, both as a book (1936) and a film (1939). In addition, Pippin may have been influenced by a film, also entitled Cabin in the Cotton, that was released in 1932. The artist apparently was fond of this theme because he made three more variations of the subject in 1944.

Pippin’s original version played a crucial role in the self-taught artist’s meteoric success at age forty-nine. On view in a cobbler’s window in early 1937, Cabin in the Cotton caught the attention of artist and illustrator N.C. Wyeth (1882-1944), father of the now even more famous Andrew Wyeth (b. 1917). N.C. Wyeth encouraged Pippin to show the painting in the Chester County Art Association’s annual exhibition that May. There it was so well received that the Association invited Pippin for a one-man show the next month. Curators from The Museum of Modern Art in New York saw the show and immediately asked Pippin to participate in the museum’s 1938 Masters of Popular Painting exhibition, one of several exhibitions at the time reflecting the current interest in folk art. The Art Institute’s painting was one of four of Pippin’s works included in the exhibition in New York that went on to travel to other cities.

Pippin’s good fortune did not end there. During his first commercial exhibition at a Philadelphia gallery in 1940, the gallery owner’s daughter recalled: “Barnes [Albert Barnes of the noted Barnes Collection] and his friend [the film star] Charles Laughton had been drinking at Barnes’s house in Merion, [Pennsylvania,] and Laughton wanted to buy [a] Pippin, right then. Father got up and took the picture out to them in the middle of the night.” The work purchased by Laughton would eventually become the Art Institute’s painting, but first Laughton brought Cabin in the Cotton to Hollywood, starting the purchase of Pippin’s work there.

Dr. Barnes, in fact, had written the catalogue introduction to Pippin’s 1940 Philadelphia show. The collector glorifying—but somewhat patronizingly—proclaimed that “[Pippin’s] work has the simplicity, directness, sincerity, naïveté, and vivid drama of a story told by an unspoiled Negro in his own
words. It is probably not too much to say that he is the first important Negro painter to appear on the American scene.” The mercurial Barnes seemed to have forgotten about such prominent black precursors as Henry Ossawa Tanner and Aaron Douglas, not to mention such noted contemporaries as Richmond Barthé and Archibald J. Motley, Jr. [See pages 17-21, 26-29, 42-44, and 45-48]

Pippin reached the height of his success during the years of World War II (1939-1945), when he was considered the most acclaimed self-taught artist in America. Museums avidly bought his paintings, and magazines such as Life, Vogue, Time, and The New Yorker wrote about him. The Arts Club of Chicago and the San Francisco Museum of Art held one-man exhibitions, while The Art Institute of Chicago, Washington's Corcoran Gallery of Art, and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts featured his work in their annual exhibitions. His collectors ranged from America's gentry to Hollywood producers and stars.

His subject matter now included intimate domestic interiors, colorful floral still lifes, and historical and biblical scenes that, at times, convey a moral anti-war or anti-racist thrust. The war was raging; U.S. troops were still segregated; at home, separate and unequal conditions continued to prevail. A deeply spiritual man, Pippin bemoaned: “The world is in a Bad way at this time. I mean war. And men have never loved one another. There is trouble every place you Go today.”

Pippin also painted compelling portraits. His innate grasp of color, composition, and form are revealed in this striking self-portrait from 1941. [See figure 7] He intuitively simplifies the image to reveal its essence. Tall and genial, with a fine sense of humor, Pippin himself was a community-spirited man. Here, he presents himself seated before an easel with a painting we cannot see. In the center of the picture is his shrivelled right arm, which he could not move above his shoulder.

Pippin’s remarkable career was, unfortunately, short-lived. He died in his sleep from a stroke in July 1946. Five unfinished canvases were found in Pippin’s studio at the time of his death. The unschooled artist had pursued his distinctive personal vision for some sixteen brief but dazzling years. “My opinion of art is that a man should have a love for it,” he once proclaimed, “because ... he paints from his heart and mind. To me it seems impossible for another to teach one of Art.”
Figure 7
Horace Pippin.
*Self Portrait*, 1941.
Oil on canvas mounted on cardboard, 14 x 11". Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, Room of Contemporary Art Fund, 1942.
Richmond Barthé, the foremost black sculptor during the 1930s and 1940s, rarely used models for his work. Instead, he often posed himself in front of the mirror. "I don’t do my body," he once explained. "But if I can get the position, feel the position with my body, I can do it with my fingers." His particular focus was portraiture and genre figures—blacks dancing, boxing, and picking berries, with their postures filtered through Barthé’s unique vision.

Completed in 1942, *The Boxer* is one of the sculptor’s most famous works. [See slide 9] It was also done at a time when segregation barred African Americans from participating in any league sports with whites. Boxing was the only sport where blacks could truly compete. Barthé’s sculpture just preceded the era of the “Brown Bomber”—Joe Louis (1914-1981), world heavy-weight champion. Between 1937 and 1949, the black son of a sharecropper defended his title a record twenty-five times to become a hero to blacks and whites alike. *The Boxer* also predated another great period in the history of the sport—the reign of champion Muhammad Ali (b. 1942), whose prowess in the ring led to his recognition as world figure and symbol for African American pride.

For this sculpture, Barthé chose the moment that just precedes action. Head down, feet striding, the boxer coils his right arm, ready perhaps to block a counter-punch. To accentuate the athlete’s grace and rhythm, Barthé distorts the figure, elongating the torso and limbs. With its wiry elegance, the sculpture conveys the willowy strength of a dancer more than a boxer’s stocky athleticism, but the figure’s furrowed face shows the rigors of the ring. Black art historian James Porter* described this work, along with two other statuettes by Barthé, in his pioneering 1943 survey of African American artists entitled *Modern Negro Art*. According to Porter, Barthé’s sculptures were “so close to perfection ... that their effect upon the spectator is transport- ing.”

To render this sport, pre-dating ancient Egypt, Barthé used the equally old sculptural tradition of bronze casting. The process of making an art object by running molten, or melted bronze into a mold was used in ancient Egypt, perfected in ancient Greece, and revived during the Italian Renaissance from about 1400 to 1600. The artist first makes a model in clay, plaster, or wax and then constructs a mold from it to receive the melted bronze. During the nineteenth century, the remarkably naturalistic works of Frenchman Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) brought cast bronze renewed popularity. Barthé’s *Boxer* springs from this time-honored method and was extremely well received.

Barthé actually began his artistic career as a painter. The Mississippi native trained at The School of The Art Institute of Chicago from 1924 to 1928. During his fourth year, his anatomy teacher made a pivotal suggestion. “He
asked me to do a number of heads in clay,” Barthé recalled, “saying that they would give me a feeling for the third dimension in my painting.” Barthé never turned back. He cast the heads, exhibiting them at the historic Negro in Art Week, held at the Art Institute in 1927. A Julius Rosenwald fellowship followed, as did an honorable mention in the 1929 Harmon exhibition. When his work received a critically acclaimed one-man show in a New York gallery in 1931, the artist moved permanently to Manhattan.

The African Dancer (1933), was completed during this period of success. [See figure 8] Again, Barthé captures not a dramatic gesture, but perhaps the moment before, when the dancer is in transition. She wears only leaves over her pelvis and a headwrap. Totally engrossed in her movement, she balances on the balls of her feet, with her knees bent and arms loose. On the brink of motion, she seems ready to spring into the next, perhaps grander, gesture.

Barthé was greatly interested in dance, one of the cultural traditions that Africans brought to the New World centuries ago. He even studied at the studio of Martha Graham (1895-1991), just as Graham was becoming one of America’s leading modern dancers. New York’s Whitney Museum of American Art purchased African Dancer, with two additional sculptures, making Barthé the first African American to enter the Whitney’s permanent collection.

Well-received exhibitions continued, including participation in Harmon’s last show of 1935. These ground-breaking exhibitions were discontinued when the federal arts programs, WPA/FAP, began to employ black artists. Barthé travelled to Europe and won the prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship in 1940 and again in 1941. Upon America’s entry into
World War II (1939-1945) in 1941, such government agencies as the Office of War Information began to publicize Barthé in order to mobilize black manpower as well as to promote an image of the democratic ideal. During this period, he made grand statues of black military heroes, such as Haiti's founder, Touissant L'Ouverture*. But he was aware of the motives behind his high profile. As he said: "This was the answer to Hitler and the Japanese, who said that 'America talks democracy, but look at the American Negro.'"

After the upheaval of World War II (1939-1945), Barthé turned to a mode he had used previously—portrait busts. From black heroes, such as the post-Reconstruction leader Booker T. Washington*, the artist began to focus primarily on his longstanding interest in the theater and its personalities. His series of actors in their favorite roles received a gallery exhibition in 1947. But Barthé's traditional style seemed particularly outdated with the advent of the revolutionary postwar movement of Abstract Expressionism, which originated in New York. Barthé moved from Manhattan to Jamaica in the late 1940s, continuing portraiture and genre statuettes. In the mid-1960s, he moved to Europe before settling in Pasadena, California, where he died in 1989.
Archibald J. Motley, Jr. depicted contemporary black social life in the city, often after dark. His particular focus was Bronzeville [see map below] Chicago's vibrant South Side community whose population had mushroomed due to the Great Migration, from 14,000 in 1890 to 109,000 by 1920. Also known as the Black Belt, this area around Douglas/Grand Boulevard became home to more than 90 percent of Chicago's black population by the 1930s.

Among those migrating North were the Motleys who journeyed from New Orleans to Chicago when the artist was two. Motley seizes the energy of this burgeoning black metropolis in pioneering images that range from backyard barbecues to backroom cardgames, from bustling street life to lively nightclub scenes. As art historian Jontyle Robinson declared: “Motley captured what facts alone cannot—the rhythms, the sounds, the blur of activity, indeed the essence of life itself.”

One of Motley's most celebrated urban portrayals is Nightlife, 1943. [See slide 10] Here, he takes us inside one of Bronzeville's many nightspots, set against the backdrop of the Jazz Age. A major contribution by African Americans to American culture, jazz rhythms and melodies had floated through darkened city streets since the early 1920s, not just in Chicago and New York, but also in the European capitals of Paris, London, and Berlin. During Motley's time, such jazz greats as Duke Ellington (1899-1974), Count Basie (1904-1984), and Louis Armstrong (1900-1971) all played in Chicago clubs. Although Motley painted the Art Institute's picture during the difficulties of World War II (1939-1945), club patrons seem to have left the world's troubles behind. Inside the nightspot, all is exuberance, upbeat energy, revealing a pulsing, syncopated rhythm suggestive of jazz.

Motley conveys this animation through technique, composition, and color. What looks like a compact mass of bodies is, in fact, carefully composed and meticulously rendered. Figures are precisely outlined and stylized, and then strategically placed to form three diagonals—at the bar on the left, at the tables on the right, and, in the middle, on the dance floor.
These diagonals sweep our gaze toward the lively dancers at the rear, swaying to the music from the jukebox on the far right, in the middle of the picture. The drama of the central dancers in the foreground dominates the scene. The woman in the tight orange dress looks left where the blue-suited man beckons. Next to him, at the bar, the green-dressed woman watches it all.

Uniting the entire scene, infusing it with verve, are the artist’s trademark colors—an iridescent, almost eerie combination of hues. Motley was fascinated with light, both natural and artificial, and here, glowing violet/red tones dominate the composition. As in a tapestry, Motley weaves together color accents to lead our eye through the picture. From the purple tablecloth in the foreground, we look to the central man dancing, then behind him to the woman on the barstool and the men serving drinks. The well-stocked bar is like a palette, containing all of the painting’s hues.

Color also served another purpose—in Motley’s words, “as an expression of the numerous shades and colors which exist in such great variety among Negroes.” Of Louisiana-Creole ancestry himself, the light-skinned artist had long been intrigued with skin color. We see here, as Motley called it, “the whole gamut”—skin tones that range from the deepest ebony to a pale rose-gold. Like the discrimination in the world at large, black society also had its subtle stratification, with white-looking skin conferring higher status.

Motley’s 1943 painting of city nightlife recalls one of the best-known images of twentieth-century art: the Art Institute’s Nighthawks, painted by Edward Hopper (1882-1967) one year before. [See figure 9] Both artists explore the
modern city after dark using a simplified figurative style. The effects of light are central in both paintings. In fact, Motley was aware of Hopper’s image, declaring that it was “the best example I have seen of [artificial interior] lighting.” (Fluorescent lighting had just come into use in the early 1940s.) But whereas Motley’s work exudes the energy and motion of people connecting, Hopper’s painting conveys emptiness and isolation—or, in the artist's words, “the loneliness of a large city.”

Encased behind the all-night diner’s seamless wedge of glass, his four anonymous and uncommunicative night owls seem as separate and remote from the viewer as they are from one another.

Motley began painting these Bronzeville icons of the Jazz Age as early as 1921. He himself, however, did not grow up in Bronzeville. He was instead from a comfortable middle-class home in the predominantly white Englewood section of Chicago’s South Side. He graduated from The School of The Art Institute of Chicago in 1918. Although he was not part of the Harlem Renaissance group of artists, his philosophy embraced the same need to express his cultural heritage. “For many years artists have depicted the Negro as the ignorant southern ‘darker,’ ... gulping a large piece of watermelon ... or [as] a cotton picker or a chicken thief,” he stated. “This material is obsolete.... Progress has changed all of this. In my paintings I have tried to paint the Negro as I have seen him and as I feel him, in myself, without adding or detracting, just being frankly honest.”

His earliest works were dignified, sensitive portraits. His subjects included a series of—almost a scientific inquiry into—women of mixed racial identity. As a young and struggling artist, he also turned to members of his family, who would pose for free. Mending Socks (1924) depicts his paternal grand-

Figure 10. Archibald J. Motley, Jr. Mending Socks, 1924. Oil on canvas. Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Burton Emmett Collection.
mother, Emily Motley, a former slave who lived with the artist's family. [See figure 10] Motley shows her patiently mending socks, surrounded by objects that tell her life's story. A brooch with a picture of her only daughter pins together the eighty-two-year old's red shawl. The crucifix and bible on the table attest to her deeply spiritual nature. And the bowl of fresh fruit, which she loved, rests on a geometrically patterned tablecloth that suggest her Native American husband's roots.

This homage to his elderly matriarch earned Motley critical acclaim. The painting received the Art Institute's Frank G. Logan prize in 1925. Other awards followed, and by 1928, the New Gallery in New York featured Motley in a one-person show. A representative sampling of Harlem Renaissance themes, the works included portraiture, Jazz Age images, and several new paintings featuring fantastical African jungle scenes. Of the twenty-six paintings on view, twenty-two works sold. Success breeds success, and the same year, Motley received a Harmon Foundation Award. The next year, a Guggenheim Fellowship financed a year's study in Paris, from 1929 to 1930. There, he completed fifteen paintings, including his famous work Blues (1929; collection of Archie Motley and Valerie Gerrard Browne), that explored jazz and black life in Paris.

Upon Motley's return to Chicago in 1930, he began painting in earnest his signature Bronzeville images, including the Art Institute's Night Life. In 1934, his work was included in Chicago's Century of Progress exhibitions. During this period, he also completed murals and easel paintings for the WPA/FAP. In 1935, he was appointed visiting instructor at Howard University in Washington, D.C. With the exception of a series of works featuring scenes of Mexico, where he made extended visits during the 1950s, Motley painted genre scenes of the Black Belt in Chicago (see map page 45) until the early 1960s. Although recognition dwindled, Motley was honored by the National Conference of Artists in Chicago in 1972, and in 1980, he received an honorary doctorate from The School of The Art Institute of Chicago.

Motley's mature images of black life in the city coincided with sociologists at the University of Chicago deeming Bronzeville the nation's truly representative "black metropolis." As art historian Wendy Greenhouse stated: "In the Black Belt's intense urbanism, its highly textured character as America's essential modern black community, and its prominence as a center for innovative popular music, Motley found the occasion for the breakthrough he engineered in the portrayal of the African American, and the inspiration for the individual stylistic means by which to realize that breakthrough."

Motley died in Chicago in 1981.
"As for Beauford Delaney," wrote black author James Baldwin* (1924-1987) about the man depicted in this intense and vibrant self-portrait of 1944, "it escapes the general notice that he has comprehended, more totally perhaps than anyone in this century—and certainly more totally than anyone I know—the tremendous reality of the light which comes out of darkness." [See slide 11]

Son of a Tennessee preacher, Beauford Delaney studied art in Boston before settling in New York in 1929. He arrived just as the Great Depression (1929-1939) eclipsed the fertile period of the Harlem Renaissance, also called the New Negro Movement. Delaney supported himself as a bellboy, then as a phone operator and janitor at the Whitney Museum of American Art, while beginning to produce a compelling and unconventional body of work.

His first pictures were portraits of friends or celebrated blacks. "I looked [W.E.B. DuBois*] up in the directory and went to his office," Delaney once recalled. "He was very busy and his secretary came and spoke with me ... and I told her that, if Dr. DuBois didn't mind, I would like to make a drawing of him. And she said: 'You can make a drawing, but he won't stop. Just go and make it.' Which is what I did."

Delaney's work began to receive recognition—nurtured, in many instances, by those organizations spawned during the Harlem Renaissance to help black artists. He exhibited his portraits and drawings at the 135th Street branch of the New York Public Library, for instance, as well as at the Harmon Foundation shows. [See map page 23] In 1938, Life magazine featured a photo of Delaney and his work. By the early 1940s, Delaney's unheated garret-studio on Greene Street in Greenwich Village was the meeting place for the avant-garde. Author Henry Miller (1891-1980) wrote an essay on Delaney's work in 1945, and artist Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986) drew his portrait. "He was a very special person," she remarked, "impossible to define." Although he lived most of his life in poverty, his generosity of spirit often led him to give paintings to admirers. Oblivious to world events and, obviously, material comfort, his passion was his art. As Miller recalled: "The impression I carried away was one of being saturated in color and light. Poor in everything but pigment. With pigment he was lavish as a millionaire."

Painted in 1944, the Art Institute's Self-Portrait supports Miller's statement. The colors are vibrant tones of red, blue, and yellow, freely and thickly applied. The artist wears his hallmark hat, painted a brilliant red, which is picked up again in the fragment of his sweater. Dominating these bright, thick tones is Delaney's intense gaze. His eyes stare out, one piercing black pupil, one blank. Outlined in black, his features seem to be mere starting

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* designates entry in Biographical Glossary
points leading the artist toward his unique and imaginative vision. It's as if Delaney used these outlines to contain his images, which seem about to explode.

Following the tradition of Dutch artist Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), Delaney uses color as a means of emotional expression. But whereas there is always a sense of anguished, nervous vitality in van Gogh's expressionist work, Delaney's paintings seem otherworldly, almost spiritual. As James Baldwin wrote: "If we stand before a Delaney canvas, we are standing, my friends, in the light: and, if in this light, which is both loving and merciless, we are able to confront ourselves, we are liberated into the perception that darkness is not the absence of light, but the negation of it."

By the late 1940s, Delaney was painting numerous street scenes drawn from the area around his home in lower Manhattan. [See figure 11] In Can Fire in the Park, 1946, street people warm themselves around a fire in a trash barrel whose roaring flames dance. Again, we see figures and shapes encased in black outlines, as if to keep them self-contained. And in some instances, they burst free. Trees sway, fire hydrants and lamp posts look almost like totemic figures, and the background becomes purely expressive pattern.

In some instances, Delaney dispensed entirely with representing the figure, painting thick swirls of brilliant color and pattern. Both in his representational and nonfigural work, Delaney's explosive brushwork, vibrant colors, and suggestive shapes and patterning reflect the bold new visual vocabulary of Abstract Expressionism, which had just begun to hold sway in New York.

In 1947 and 1948, Delaney's works received gallery exhibitions, both in New York and Philadelphia. Friends also obtained a fellowship for him to attend Yaddo, the artists' colony in Saratoga Springs, New York. Then, in the early 1950s, a benefactor gave Delaney his dream trip to Rome. But Delaney never made it past Paris, the artistic mecca that had attracted African American artists such as Henry Ossawa Tanner, since the nineteenth century. [See pages 17-21]

There, in the City of Lights, he met his old friend James Baldwin, took a room in a hotel on the Left Bank, and ended up living in Paris for the rest of his life. Pigment and light dominate a series of abstractions Delaney completed during the 1960s. He also continued painting powerfully expressive landscapes and portraits, often of noted figures in the arts, such as gallery director Darthea Speyer or French author Andre Gide* (1869-1951). He received gallery exhibitions and several grants throughout the 1960s. In 1973, Darthea Speyer Gallery presented a comprehensive exhibition of Delaney's work.
But in his later portraits, some critics noticed a hint of melancholy. Life in the French capital had proven difficult. He failed to become fluent in French. Poverty was a constant threat. In 1978, The Studio Museum in Harlem held a major retrospective of Delaney's work, of which he was unaware. Suffering from Alzheimer's disease, he spent his final years in a French hospital. He died in 1979.

Although Delaney became legendary in France, the artist remained largely unknown in America. "A poor white artist is a miserable sight. But a poor black artist is apt to be a ridiculous figure as well," Henry Miller had written angrily in 1945. "And," he continued, "the better his work the more cold and indifferent the world becomes." Delaney's friend Baldwin was more sanguine: "Great art can only be created out of love, and ... no greater lover ever held a brush."
“One day in 1938, I was driving my car down on 37th Street near Indiana Avenue, and there I saw a huge red stone, next to a newsstand,” recalled Peter Pollack, then director of Chicago’s South Side Community Art Center. “A few days later, I was driving down there again, and noticed that the head of [Abraham] Lincoln was beginning to emerge,” continued Pollack, who later became Publicity Director at The Art Institute of Chicago. “I stopped and did a double take, and asked a little Negro boy who the stone belonged to; he said it was his father’s.” The father was Marion Perkins, who found his stones at demolition sites and worked various jobs—day laborer, newsstand owner, post office clerk—to support his three children. Art was a goal he had to pursue on the side, as in the case of Man of Sorrows, done more than a decade later in 1950. [See slide 12]

Pollack offered studio space to Perkins at the South Side Community Art Center, where the artist’s work soon rivalled that of his teacher. Perkins began to exhibit and teach at the Center, becoming one of its first generation of successful Chicago artists. In the late 1930s, he worked for the WPA/FAP. By 1940, Perkins’s sculpted heads were included in the noted American Negro Exposition, held at Chicago’s Tanner Gallery. That same year, he exhibited at Howard University Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., as well as at Hull House in Chicago.

Throughout the 1940s, Perkins’s figurative sculptures with African American themes were shown at the Art Institute’s Artists of Chicago and Vicinity exhibitions. By 1948, Perkins received the Julius Rosenwald Fund fellowship, enabling him to tour museums and studios in New York City. There he found the piece of marble that he transformed into Man of Sorrows. This powerful work won the Pauline Palmer Purchase Prize upon its exhibition in the Art Institute’s 1951 Artists of Chicago and Vicinity show, thus entering the museum’s permanent collection.

Here, Perkins uses one of Christianity’s oldest subjects, Christ wearing a crown of thorns, and depicts him as African American. Perkins selectively polishes the gray stone, juxtaposing the rough texture of the beard, eyebrows, and hair with the smooth surface of the skin. Contemplative and unshaven, the head seems to be inwardly praying. The symbol of Christ’s endless love and suffering for mankind—the crown of thorns—seems embedded in the figure’s skull. Fully aware of the double meaning behind his hybrid Christ, the socially committed Perkins declared: “My work says what I want it to say. This head reflects the suffering of our people. This head of Christ is the acid test of American democracy.”
As was his custom, Perkins found the piece of marble at a demolition site. "I usually work in marble. It has greater aesthetic value, and it's easy to find although it's too expensive to buy," Perkins explained. "Lots of old buildings in Chicago were made in marble, and lots of them are being torn down for freeways and housing projects—plenty of marble!" He let the hardness of the marble and its portable size dictate the finished product. Here, within the head's compact unity, Perkins has managed to convey both a quiet constraint and an expressive intensity. "Art must enable the viewer to see that the spiritual emanates from out of the materials," he explained. To accomplish this, he chiselled and carved the marble directly, using the method of direct carving. Both African sculptors and modernist artists of his era utilized this traditional technique. In addition, the head's composed, down-turned gaze recalls features found in African masks, while the abstracted, simplified forms reflect the modern sculptor's interest in paring down detail to achieve the most immediate effect.

When *Man of Sorrows* won the Art Institute award, *Ebony* magazine ran this headline: "Marion Perkins: Talented Chicago Sculptor Wins Prize But Still Works as Freight Handler." Life had never been easy for the Arkansas native. His parents died when he was eight. He arrived in Chicago shortly afterwards, with a note pinned to his clothing alerting the train conductor that an aunt would pick him up. He always wanted to be a sculptor, but he had to drop out of high school after three years to go to work.

Throughout the 1950s, awards and exhibitions continued—additional Art Institute shows and in 1956, both *Art in America* magazine's New Talent Award and first prize at Atlanta University's annual exhibition, started by Hale Woodruff. [See pages 22-25] Perkins helped found the National Conference of Artists in 1959, which is now the oldest organization of African American artists. But he was never able to support himself as an artist. As he declared in the conference's keynote address in Atlanta: "To be an artist and a Negro presupposes problems whether one likes it or not. In fact, just to be a Negro in America creates a problem...."

An additional problem was that Perkins's career as a traditional figurative sculptor coincided with the heyday of Abstract Expressionism. As the outspoken artist despair: "The vogue of abstract expressionism ... has small attraction for the Negro artist confronted with harsh human realities and impelled with the desire to uplift his people, to portray them in dignity in the manner of old masters, and to seek to demolish the stereotype which persists in being cherished in the minds of white America."
Nonetheless, Perkins remained unwavering in his commitment to his art and his cultural heritage, continuing to sculpt African American figures who served black ideals. [See figure 12] He died in Chicago in 1961, his dedication to his artistic goals expressed in lines written years before by Harlem Renaissance poet Countee Cullen*:

"Yet do I marvel at this curious thing;  
To make a poet Black and bid him sing!"
“I’ve only painted one picture in my entire life,” declared Charles White once. “I see my totality of 300 years of history of black people through one little fraction ... a family ... my family.... I don’t try to record it, but use it symbolically to make a broad universal statement about the search for dignity.... the history of humanity.” Harvest Talk, 1953, makes that universal statement. [See slide 13]

White’s particular history exemplifies, in many ways, the African American artist of the mid-twentieth century. His great-grandmother was a Trinidad slave-wife whose white master brought her to Mississippi and fathered her ten illegitimate children. White was raised by his mother, a domestic worker since she was eight. On his mother’s first job, she had to be lifted up on a box to wash the dishes in other peoples’ houses. Three of White’s uncles and two cousins had been lynched.

Born and raised on Chicago’s South Side, White was gifted as a child and studied art at settlement house art classes as well as at The Art Institute of Chicago. In between after-school jobs to get through the Great Depression, he found refuge in the museum galleries. During this formative period, he also discovered the writings of Alain Locke* at the neighborhood library; he also met Chicago’s black cultural leaders. In 1937, White won a scholarship to The School of The Art Institute of Chicago. By the time he was twenty-two, he proclaimed: “The old masters pioneered in the technical field. I am interested in creating a style that is much more powerful, that will take in the technical and, at the same time, say what I have to say. Painting is the only weapon I have with which to fight what I resent.”

A job with the WPA/FAP, offered him the opportunity to work professionally with other artists. Relatively little money was spent on this federally funded arts program, yet during the 1930s and 1940s, it started and sustained the careers of many artists—particularly African Americans. White’s first murals, for the Chicago Public Library (now lost) and Virginia’s Hampton Institute, depicted black heros in a heavily stylized and symbolic technique. He also was involved with the founding of the federally-funded South Side Community Art Center in Chicago.

With WPA/FAP exposure came recognition. The Julius Rosenwald Fund fellowship he received the early 1940s enabled White and his then-wife, sculptor and printmaker Elizabeth Catlett (b. 1919)[see pages 64-66], to tour the rural South. Beaten for entering a New Orleans restaurant, White encountered the brutalities of segregation firsthand. “I began to understand the beauty of my people’s speech, their poetry, their folklore, their dance and their music,” he said, adding, “as well as their staunchness, morality and courage.”

Living in Mexico in the mid-1940s deepened White’s social commitment.
White and Catlett worked at Mexico City's Taller de Gráfica Popular, or People's Graphic Arts Workshop, that espoused the populist political ideals that were the cornerstone of post-revolutionary Mexico. At the graphics studio, White learned, in his words, "how to do better what I wanted to express... to impress... the masses of the black population." He drew his inspiration from the great Mexican muralists—Diego Rivera (1886-1957), José Orozco (1883-1949), and David Siqueiros (1896-1974)—and their Social Realist depictions of the history and struggles of the working classes.

The experiences of both his southern journey and his stay in Mexico are distilled in the Art Institute's large, beautifully rendered drawing. Here we see two southern rural farmhands as they sharpen a scythe in silence during fall harvest. Their powerful figures recall those of revolutionary Mexican murals, and are made more imposing by their placement so close to the front of the picture. Through the use of his masterful technique, White has instilled in their heroic forms a deep humanity, almost a spiritual beauty. With his assured sense of line and subtle tonalities, he captures the particularities of these workers—their worn and wrinkled clothing, their strong hands and arms musclebound from years of hard labor in the fields. He also renders something more general, more ideal—their dignified composure, their strength, their all-seeing gaze.

In the beautifully evocative landscape with its deep perspective, White once again conveys the grand sweep of the terrain as well as its specifics, such as single blades of grass. In the true tradition of Social Realism, Harvest Talk portrays both a tangible reality and a political ideal. About his method, White declared: "I use Negro subject matter because Negroes are closest to me. But I am trying to express a universal feeling through them.... This does not mean I am a man without anger—I've had my work in museums where I wasn't allowed to see it—but what I pour into my work is the challenge of how beautiful life can be."

The Art Institute drawing represents White's mature style, developed between 1950 and 1963. During this period, he began to shift his focus from black leaders of the past to ordinary men and women, such as the rural farmworkers here. These meticulously depicted subjects become everyperson, the real heroes of the human struggle. During this period, White switched largely to black-and-white drawings and prints. He felt a skillfully rendered black-and-white image had sharper impact. Also, his message could reach millions because prints could be more easily reproduced and sold at affordable prices.

White had moved to New York by the time he made Harvest Talk in 1953. He had been drafted during the war but developed tuberculosis which would afflict him periodically throughout the remainder of his life. Divorced from Elizabeth Catlett and remarried, he began to receive recognition, both in New York and abroad. White showed regularly at American
Contemporary Artists (ACA) gallery. Among his acquaintances were such noted African Americans as W.E.B. DuBois*, Langston Hughes*, and Jacob Lawrence. [See pages 33-37] The Whitney Museum of American Art purchased an artwork in 1952, the same year that The Metropolitan Museum of Art included his work in a group exhibition. In 1955, he was awarded the John Hay Whitney Fellowship.

In 1956, White and his wife moved to California for health reasons. In 1961, both Atlanta University and Howard University in Washington, D.C. purchased White’s work. In 1965, he began teaching at Otis Institute of Art in Los Angeles. Around this time, the emerging civil rights movement triggered moving depictions by White of anonymous blacks quietly and courageously overcoming difficulties—visual renditions, in a sense, of the nonviolent approach of civil rights leader Martin Luther King*. In the late 1960s, White discovered some pre-Civil War posters advertising for runaway slaves. He transformed these haunting artifacts into his compelling Wanted series. [See Figure 13] As shown here, the artist created his deeply humane portraits of black men and women, using the wrinkled, aged relics as background.

White continued to receive honors. In 1972, he became the second black after Henry Ossawa Tanner to be elected to the National Academy of Design. [See pages 17-21] Atlanta’s High Museum, whose racial barrier Hale Woodruff had broken [see pages 22-25], presented the artist with a major retrospective in 1976. White died in California three years later. As art historian James Porter* said in his introduction to a 1967 book of White’s work, Images of Dignity: “I like to think of Charles White ... as an artist who, more than any other, has found a way of embodying in his art the very texture of the Negro experience as found in life in America.”

Figure 13.
Charles White.
Wanted Poster No. 3,
Collection Dr. E.M. Jacobs.
I want to photograph Harlem through the Negro people," declared Roy DeCarava early in his career. "Morning, noon, night, at work, going to work, coming home from work, at play, in the streets, talking, kidding, laughing, in the home, in the playgrounds, in the schools, bars, stores, libraries, beauty parlors, churches, etc.... I want a creative expression, the kind of penetrating insight and understanding of Negroes which I believe only a Negro photographer can interpret."

The Harlem-born photographer accomplished his goal, as Dancers New York, 1956, and other photographs testify. [See map page 23] He has continued to focus predominantly on African American life in the city for almost fifty years, producing images that are intimate, lyrical, and searingly accurate. DeCarava knew from the age of nine that he wanted to be an artist, but he did not choose photography as a medium until the late 1940s. He had studied painting, then printmaking at New York’s Cooper Union of Art and at several WPA/FAP-sponsored programs, including the Harlem Community Art Center. While he was working as a commercial artist to support himself, he purchased a $19.95 camera to help him record ideas for his prints. Soon he abandoned printmaking altogether.

DeCarava’s intuitive gifts were noticed almost immediately. In 1950, New York’s Museum of Modern Art purchased three photographs. Soon the museum, which was then perhaps the most prestigious photographic venue in the country, began exhibiting his works. In 1952, DeCarava became the first African American photographer to win the celebrated John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship. The award enabled him, for the first time, to take leave from his job and photograph full-time. The results were a remarkable series of intimate scenes of Harlem—of its streets and interiors, of its men, women, and children—that Museum of Modern Art curator Peter Galassi later declared filled “a gaping hole in the world’s image of Harlem: its image of itself.” In 1955, 140 of these images were published with text by Harlem poet Langston Hughes in the highly successful The Sweet Flypaper of Life, the first photography book to focus on life in a black community.

The Art Institute’s Man Lying Down, Subway Steps, 1965, exemplifies the style of DeCarava’s earlier Harlem series. Here, he distills the bustle of city life into the silence of a sole encounter, a single image. Melded together is the personal with the social, a deeply felt intimacy with concern for the other. The image is both sorrowful as well as sensuous, with its sprawling, solitary figure enveloped in—indeed barely emerging from—DeCarava’s characteristic rich, deep shadows.

DeCarava insists, however, that his photographs are not about darkness, but about light—without which we could see nothing at all. Using whatever light is available, the photographer captured his images with a hand-held
35mm camera—the instrument that relied on intuition and instant response, needing no further planning than an extra roll of film. “When you find it at the right moment,” declared DeCarava, “it is not only particular, it is universal.”

Also seized at that specific moment when, as DeCarava said, “expression reaches its zenith” are the extraordinary images from the series on modern jazz that the photographer began in 1956. Harlem was the birthplace of modern jazz during the 1940s, just as DeCarava was developing his photographic style. This newest evolution of the quintessentially African American music of jazz was called be-bop. Created by such legends as Charlie “Bird” Parker (1920-1955) and Dizzy Gillespie (1917-1993), the essence of be-bop was not entertainment, but self-expression, plumbing the soul. DeCarava’s celebration of this musical revolution—of musicians, jam sessions, fans, and clubs—are some of the richest and most sensitive images ever taken.

In *Dancers, New York*, two men jive onto the dance floor at a social club in Harlem. Their interlocking figures almost, but not quite, blend into the darkness of the background of the cavernous hall. Exuding a kind of modern beauty, their postures are both awkward and hip, supple and graceful. DeCarava captures the dancers not at the moment of climax, of dance pyrotechnics, but at that off-beat, untimed instance when their bodies most reveal the new music of be-bop.

With its reliance on spontaneity, intuition, and the immediate moment, be-bop resembles DeCarava’s picture-taking. His quickness of eye echoes a jazz musician’s spontaneity. Just as there could never be a wrong note when Parker, say, jammed with Dizzy Gillespie, brilliantly improvising as they played along, so too does DeCarava’s composition have that quirky sense of something instantly invented, off balance yet right.

Yet DeCarava had difficulty with this image. The two dancers represented for him “a terrible torment.” He goes on to explain: “What they actually are is two black male dancers who dance in the manner of an older generation of black vaudeville performers.” Although black bands played in these Harlem nightclubs, most of the clubs served only white audiences. These dancers were pure entertainment, a kind of floorshow. DeCarava continued: “The problem comes because their figures remind me so much of the real life experience of blacks in their need to put themselves in an awkward position ... to demean themselves in order to survive.”

The artist in DeCarava prevailed. “And yet,” he declared, “there is something in the figures not about that something in the figures that is very creative, that is very real and very black in the finest sense of the word.” Art Institute curator Colin Westerbeck interpreted further: “The man in the lead, with that kind of amazing herky jerky motion, contorting himself into
the shape that's needed to keep his balance, is a surrogate for DeCarava himself—the man with the camera, sinewy, muscling his way through the crowd, taking the pictures as he goes, stretching himself to whatever is needed to make the images come out right."

While DeCarava was immersed in his jazz series in 1958, he quit his job as a commercial artist to begin freelance photography for leading national magazines, including *Time*, *Life*, *Newsweek*, and *Sports Illustrated*. Since 1975, he has also taught photography at Hunter College, where he is Distinguished Professor of Art of the City of New York. His work is in such New York collections as The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Studio Museum in Harlem; the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., the Atlanta University museum, and The Art Institute of Chicago. A major travelling retrospective organized by The Museum of Modern Art, New York was on view at the Art Institute in 1996 and travels through 1999.
Chicago-born Richard Hunt created this dynamic sculpture in 1958, only one year after his graduation from The School of The Art Institute of Chicago. [See slide 14] He attended art classes there beginning at age thirteen. To help finance his education, he worked part-time at a zoology laboratory at the University of Chicago. There, he became fascinated with the concept of metamorphosis, the transformation from one physical state to another, such as a cocoon changing into a butterfly.

*Hero Construction* explores this theme. The sculpture consists entirely of found metal objects, urban scrap—old pipes, bits of metal, parts from automobiles—that Hunt discovered in junkyards or on the street. Not only were these metal discards cheap, but they gave the sculptor fascinating shapes that he could then manipulate in space. With blow torches, grinders, and other welding tools, Hunt transformed the metal cast-offs into the vital, not quite abstract, not-quite figurative form we see here.

In his choice of subject matter, Hunt links *Hero Construction* to some of the earliest works of art known to man. Eight thousand years ago, during the Neolithic Period (c. 6000-1500 B.C.), heroic hunters were painted on cave walls. One of the most popular figures in Classical and later art is Hercules of Greek mythology, the personification of physical strength and courage. Throughout the centuries, statues of heroes continued to be a staple in the history of art.

But how does one portray a hero now that machine guns have made charging into battle on horses seem ridiculous; or when tanks, rockets, and bombs have made individual feats of strength meaningless? Half-organic, half-manmade, Hunt’s gallant sculpture may be a model for the new hero of the technological age. Like a Proto-Schwarzenegger “Terminator,” Hunt’s hero may have been down and chewed to pieces, but he’s not out. Fashioned from junkyard cast-offs, the figure holds its chin high, thrusts out its semblance of a ribcage proudly, and plants its limblike appendages firmly on the pedestal-ground.

What Hunt calls the “reconciliation of the organic and the industrial” has been one of the sculptor’s ongoing themes. “I see my work as forming a kind of bridge between what we experience in nature and what we experience from the urban, industrial, technology-driven society we live in.” His direct-metal technique combines some of nature’s oldest materials—copper, iron, bronze—with the thoroughly modern practice of welding. His torch, in a sense, is his paintbrush; it is the instrument that shapes, or metamorphoses, his medium: “Artists no longer must imitate nature,” he once stated, referring to the traditional mode of representation used through the mid-nineteenth century. “But [they] are free to interpret it. Sometimes I try to develop forms nature might create if only heat and steel were available to her.”
Hunt drew inspiration for his welded metal sculpture from such modernist artists as the American David Smith (1906-1965) and particularly the Spaniard Julio González (1876-1942). Hunt once said that early works like the Art Institute’s sculpture resembled González’s welded open-form pieces because both were nearly linear in the way they interacted with space. Both, as Hunt said, seemed “essentially drawings in space.” But according to noted art critic Hilton Kramer (b. 1928), Hunt took this modernist tradition even further. As Kramer declared in a 1963 review: “Hunt’s use of ‘line’ in sculpture—and by ‘line,’ of course, one means those slender masses of steel rod or tubing which are Hunt’s customary materials—is probably the subtlest and most elegant in current art.”

Within the five years between Hunt’s creation of Hero Construction in 1958 and Kramer’s glowing 1963 review, the artist won the Logan Prize from the Art Institute three times, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and a year’s travel grant to study in England, France, Italy, and Spain. He had also begun showing and selling his work. One of his first buyers was the influential Museum of Modern Art, New York, which presented Hunt with a one-man exhibition in 1971.

Although Hunt’s work has grown larger and denser, he continues to fuse nature and technology, producing forms that are both abstract and organic. In 1967, he was commissioned to do a sculpture that was too big for his studio. Thus began what he calls his second career in public sculpture. In 1971, Hunt purchased a former Chicago Transit Authority power substation on Chicago’s mid-North Side. Outfitted with a full-sized crane, a floor that can support very large and heavy equipment, and forty-foot ceilings, his studio is perfect to accommodate his more monumental works. Assistants now help him transform massive flat sheets of bronze and steel into the more than one hundred public sculpture commissions that he has completed nationwide.

Deeply committed to Chicago, which has provided him with a constant source of inspiration, Hunt has produced over thirty public works in and around his hometown. These include Slabs of the Sunburnt West, 1973 [see figure 14], a memorial to Carl Sandburg* (1878-1967) at the University of Illinois-Chicago (a Ferguson Fund monument), and in Jonquil Park across from Hunt’s studio, Eagle Columns, 1989, that commemorates two Chicagoans of the 1890s—the liberal Illinois Governor John Peter Altgeld and the poet Vachel Lindsay.

On Chicago’s South Side, in the Carter G. Woodson Regional Library, is another monumental welded bronze work entitled Jacob’s Ladder, 1977. Suspended from the library’s twenty-seven foot high skylighted atrium are two massive claw-like arms, one of which dangles a flowing metal ladder.
Centered underneath is a large floor sculpture that suggests some type of ancient slablike altar. Like the words of its title, the familiar black spiritual “Jacob’s Ladder,” the sculpture refers to the link between heaven and earth. Furthermore, with its placement in a library in a predominantly black community, Hunt’s work implies that the way to reach heaven—to be set free—is through books and learning. (Hunt’s mother, who fostered in her son a love of books and music, was a librarian.)

Declared by critic Hilton Kramer to be “one of the most gifted and assured artists working in the direct-metal, open-form medium ... anywhere in the world,” Hunt is represented in collections here and abroad. These include in addition to The Art Institute of Chicago, the Los Angeles County Museum; New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art and Whitney Museum of American Art; the National Museum of Israel in Jerusalem; and the Museum of the Twentieth Century, Vienna, Austria. Also, The Studio Museum in Harlem featured his work in a solo exhibition in 1997.

Nonetheless, Hunt has not forgotten that he grew up during the Great Depression in the Black Belt of Chicago—nor that the artworld remains predominantly white. He was particularly reminded after an artworld cocktail party in the early 1960s: “I suddenly saw that artists are like Negroes—as we were then called... People really believe the artist is better off without any money, as whites believe Negroes are happier that way. Like most artists, most Negroes do not succeed in the larger world. Inner-city blacks drop out of school at rates similar to the rates at which art school graduates drop out of art. That was a moment of illumination. I’ve never forgotten it.”
“Art is important only to the extent that it helps in the liberation of our people,” proclaimed printmaker and sculptor Elizabeth Catlett, who has been fiercely committed to the social responsibility of art throughout her entire career. “It must answer a question, or wake somebody up, or give a shove in the right direction.” *Sharecropper*, 1970, assuredly accomplishes those goals. [See slide 15]

Born in Washington, D.C. to schoolteacher parents, Catlett acquired a career in art when few opportunities existed for women or blacks. She received her B.S. from Washington's Howard University in 1937, where she studied under the noted art historian James Porter*. In 1940, she became the first person to receive an M.F.A. from the State University in Iowa, where her teacher was Grant Wood (1891-1942). His depiction of a Midwestern couple—*American Gothic*—was exhibited at the Art Institute in 1930, immediately acquired by the museum, and quickly became one of America’s most popular paintings. It was Wood who encouraged Catlett to find her lifelong subject matter. As she recalled: “Grant Wood, one of the first white people that I had contact with, emphasized that we should paint what we know most intimately ... and my people have always been just that.” Her thesis project, a sculpture depicting what would become one of her major images, a mother and child, won the first prize in sculpture in Chicago’s *American Negro Exposition* in 1940.

In Chicago, Catlett met and married artist Charles White (see pages 55-57), and the two of them taught in and travelled throughout the rural segregated South during 1942 and 1943. They returned to New York where Catlett taught in public school in Harlem.[See map page 23] “I came from a middle class family... The school brought me into contact with working people. For the first time I began to get an understanding of the great hunger for art and culture of ordinary black people.”

The award of a *Julius Rosenwald Fund* fellowship in 1946 enabled Catlett to travel with White to Mexico. Her burgeoning social commitment was reinforced by the ideals of the great *Mexican muralists* and their use of *Social Realist* art to teach and reach the masses. Working collectively at the legendary populist printmaking studio, Taller de Gráfica Popular (People’s Graphic Arts Workshop) in Mexico City also had profound impact. “In the Taller de Gráfica ... I learned that art is not something that people learn to do individually,” she said, “that who does it is not important, but its use and its effects on people are what is most important.” Among Catlett’s first works at Taller de Gráfica was her powerful *Negro Women* series of the mid-1940s that a later critic declared had “foreshadowed the women’s movement of the 1970s.”

Catlett chose to make Mexico her home. After she and White divorced, she
married Mexican artist Francisco Mora, eventually acquiring Mexican citizenship. In the 1950s, she also resumed her teaching career and became the first woman to head the sculpture department at the National School of Fine Arts at the National Autonomous University in Mexico City.

A compelling example of Catlett’s dominant theme—black women—is the Art Institute’s print entitled Sharecropper. The woman’s gaunt, strong face dominates the composition. Her features are sensitively evoked, revealing the artist’s fascination with African physiognomy. Catlett’s striking point of view, in which she positions the image so that we look up, inspires awe. She also favors realism because, as she professed, when “you use your art for the service of the people, struggling people, ... only realism is meaningful.” A realistic depiction “reflects us ... relates to us ... stimulates us ... makes us aware of our potential.”

Catlett’s profound empathy for black people and their suffering, combined with her masterful technique, gives the image its strength. A dazzling variety of strokes and textures, from the thatching of the straw hat to the sharp staccato lines, create the composition. There is a hardness and strength to the lines that mirror the durability and toughness of this woman farmer, down to the sharp pin that fastens her shirt. “Technique was the main thing to learn from art schools,” Catlett declared. “It’s so important—technique—how to do things well. It’s the difference between offering our beautiful people art and offering them ineptitude....”

With the print’s reference to the South and its dignified depiction of the rural worker, Catlett’s work resembles Harvest Talk by her former husband. [See slide 13] Sharecropping—renting farmland, then paying rent to the owner in crops instead of money—was a frequent occupation of African Americans after the Civil War. Farm mechanization and decreased cotton acreage have largely ended the practice. Catlett cut the linocut, or linoleum block, in 1957. She didn’t print it, however, until 1970—perhaps as a forceful reminder to Lyndon Johnson, president from 1963 to 1967, that despite his vast anti-poverty programs of the mid-1960s, rural impoverishment and backward social conditions still remained.

Catlett’s commitment to the rights of the underclass made her an ideal spokesperson during the civil rights unrest in the 1960s. She delivered a powerful keynote address at the 1961 National Conference of Artists, a new group of art teachers from southern black colleges. In the speech, she advocated all-black group activities, including exhibitions that rejected museum representation as a goal. “We have to find a way, collectively—not working alone,” she proclaimed. “That’s the art that’s going to carry over to other people throughout the world. It may not win prizes and it might not get into museums, but we ought to stop thinking that way, just like we stopped
thinking that we had to have straight hair.” To further the civil rights cause, she also produced compelling prints exposing inequality and police brutality.

In *Malcolm X Speaks for Us*, 1969, Catlett portrays the familiar face of the militant black nationalist leader, Malcolm X*, who was assassinated in 1965. [See figure 15] Here Catlett shows him as he was in life, surrounded by the evocative, eager faces of young African Americans. The linocut won first prize at the National Print Salon in Mexico City in 1970 and was purchased by the National Institute of Fine Arts there. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, also owns a print of the portrait.

Today, Catlett is considered one of Mexico’s leading artists. Her work is in such collections as The National Institute of Fine Arts, Mexico City; The National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.; and New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Studio Museum in Harlem. She has also created a number of public sculptures, including a work on the campus of her alma mater, Howard University in Washington, D.C. With her dynamic prints and stylized, smoothly polished sculpture, she continues to create, in her words, “an art for liberation and life.”
“Now, I’m way up there on the moon,” exclaimed Alma Thomas in 1971. “I’m telling everyone—stay down there if you want to. I am long gone.” The eighty-year old painter had been “long gone” since the late 1960s, when she started her vibrant series of abstract paintings in response to America’s Apollo missions including the Art Institute’s Starry Night with Astronauts, 1972. [See slide 16] Although the rest of the nation may have been preoccupied with the Vietnam War (c. 1961-1975), the moon landing of Apollo II in 1969, as Thomas said, “set my creativity in motion.” She elaborated: “I was born at the end of the 19th century, horse and buggy days, and experienced the phenomenal changes of the 20th century machine and space age. Today not only can our great scientists send astronauts to and from the moon to photograph its surface and bring back samples of rocks and other materials, but through the medium of color television all can actually see and experience the thrill of these adventures.”

Thomas’s jubilant Space series resulted, with several paintings containing the word “Snoopy” as part of the title. (The astronauts had nicknamed Apollo 10’s lunar module “Snoopy” after the much beloved dog in Charles Schulz’s comic strip Peanuts.) The Art Institute’s luminous painting—Starry Night with Astronauts—culminates the series. With the scale of a toy, the spacecraft hovers in the upper right of the painting, its brilliant colors reflecting the intense yellow, orange, and red of the sun. The rest of the picture is taken up by the shimmering sky—aligned patches of varying shades of blue through which chinks of white appear. The spaceship’s jewel-like radiance juxtaposed against the vastness of the pulsating blue sky suggests a timeless immensity.

We see here Thomas’s mosaic-like use of strokes of vivid color against a white ground. Her technique recalls the groundbreaking pointillism of French painter Georges Seurat (1859-1891), who filled the surface of his paintings with a mass of small, regularized dots and brushstrokes of complementary colors, imparting a radiant shimmer. Thomas explained the method behind her zestful blend of thickly painted patches of color: “The irregular strokes give an interesting free pattern to the canvas, creating white intervals that punctuate the color stripes. There is rhythmic movement obtained, too.”

Although her titles are afterthoughts, Starry Night and the Astronauts may refer to Vincent van Gogh’s (1853-1890) painting Starry Night, 1889, now in The Museum of Modern Art, New York. [See figure 16] Like Thomas, van Gogh’s inspiration for the work was sparked by space. “This morning,” he wrote to his brother Theo, “I saw the country from my window a long time before sunrise with nothing but the morning star, which looked very big.” Also like Thomas, the Dutch artist depended on color—long swirling brushstrokes of vivid hues—to animate the heavens. “Color,” van Gogh declared, “[is] the sole architect of space.”
Thomas relied on the enlivening properties of color throughout her late-blooming career. “Color is life,” she once proclaimed, “and light is the mother of color.” To arrive at her unique and poetic vision of the natural world took the Georgia-born artist some forty years. From a middle-class family whose main belief was the value of education, she was the first to graduate from the newly formed art department at Washington, D.C.’s Howard University in 1924. Ten years later, she received an M.A. from Columbia University in New York City. Soon, she was teaching at a black junior high school in Washington, pursuing her art whenever and wherever she could. (Her kitchen table served as her studio.)

Her inspirations ranged from Asian art at Washington museums to Abstract Expressionism’s explosions of color. She also became a major figure in the formation of Barnett-Aden Gallery, the first integrated private gallery in Washington. In the decade before her retirement from teaching in 1960, she took art classes at Washington’s American University and met noted color-field artists, including Morris Louis (1912-1962) and Kenneth Noland (b. 1924). From a conventional realism in the early 1950s evolved the spirited, colorful abstractions we see here.

Her breakthrough came in the mid-1960s, inspired by the view just beyond her window. Art historian James Porter* had just requested a major retrospective of her work for Howard University. She wanted to paint “something different from anything I’d ever done.... ever seen.” As she explained: “The display of designs formed by the leaves of the holly tree that covers the bay window in my home greets me each morning. These compositions are framed by the window panes with the aid of the wind as an active designer.” Space was already on her mind. Although she had never flown, she began to paint as if she were in an airplane. “You look down on things,” she explained. “You streak through the clouds so fast.... you see only streaks of color.”

Figure 16.
Vincent van Gogh.
Starry Night, 1889.
Oil on canvas, 29 x 36 1/2".
To capture these shifting patterns of light and streaks of color on botanical blossoms, Thomas applied patches of thick bright colors in stripes or concentric circles. In the large painting *Light Blue Nursery*, 1968, irregular patches of vivid color form horizontal stripes that are punctuated by rhythmic white spaces and lines. [See figure 17] Called her *Earth* series, these joyful paintings of the mid-1960s brought her local and national acclaim.


With the sanction of these institutions, Thomas occasionally—and ironically—recalled her segregated Georgia childhood, when "the only way to go [to the library] as a Negro would be with a mop and bucket." Her real battle, however, was with age. "Do you have any idea what it's like to be caged in a seventy-eight-year-old body and to have the mind and energy of a twenty-five year old?" exclaimed the artist, riddled with arthritis, as she embarked upon her *Space* series. "If I could only turn the clock back about sixty years, I'd show them." Then she added, "I'll show them anyway."

Figure 17.
*Alma Thomas.*
*Light Blue Nursery,*
1968. Acrylic on canvas.
In 1963, Romare Bearden mobilized a group of New York black artists in response to the upheaval of the civil rights movement. He and cofounder Hale Woodruff called the group Spiral; their stated goal was “to examine the plight of the Black American artist in America.” [See pages 22-25] As a method of working collaboratively, Bearden suggested using a technique he had just begun investigating—the groundbreaking modernist method of collage. Invented around 1912, collage—sticking bits of paper, material, or other items to a flat backing—extended the accepted boundaries of art by combining painted surfaces with real or painted materials. Later, Dadaists and Surrealists used collage because of the possibility for creating illogical, often absurd, juxtapositions.

For the remainder of his career, collage would become Bearden’s favored technique, and *The Return of Odysseus*, 1977, is a distinguished example. [See slide 17] His unique contribution was the combination of this quintessentially twentieth-century language with depictions of the ageless rituals of black life. Collage seemed ideally suited to render a group of people who, like the method itself, were torn apart and fragmented during the diaspora, then reassembled in new and different ways. Author *Ralph Ellison* (1914-1994) declared that Bearden’s innovative use of collage conveys the “sharp breaks, leaps in consciousness, distortions, paradoxes, reversals, telescoping of time and Surreal blending of styles, values, hopes and dreams which characterize much of Negro American history.”

Also, in adapting the European tradition of collage to African American themes, Bearden was fulfilling his lifelong goal of creating a universal art—an art that was contemporary yet grounded in history, without losing sight of what he called “the particulars of the life I know best.” He elaborated: “In my work, if anything I seek connections so that my paintings can’t be only what they appear to represent. People in a baptism in a Virginia stream are linked to John the Baptist, to ancient purification rites, and to their African heritage. I feel this continuation of ritual gives a dimension to the works so that [they] are something other than mere designs.”

Bearden was uniquely positioned to fulfill his goal—to create an art that, in his words, “belongs to all mankind.” Exposure to the arts came early. His childhood was spent in New York City’s Harlem (see map page 23) where his parents were among the Harlem Renaissance elite, and their apartment was often filled with such leaders of the renaissance as scholar *W.E.B. DuBois*, poet *Langston Hughes*, and artist Aaron Douglas [see pages xx-yy]. Jazz musicians Duke Ellington (1899-1974) and Fats Waller (1904-1943) also paid calls. After graduating from New York University with a mathematics degree in 1933, Bearden studied at New York’s Art Students League with émigré German artist George Grosz (1893-1959). Grosz introduced Bearden to other socially committed European artists throughout his-
tory, such as the Spaniard Francisco Goya (1746-1828) and the Frenchman Honoré Daumier (1808-1879). In keeping with the Social Realist sensibility so prevalent during the Great Depression years, Bearden's first works of the late 1930s and early 1940s depicted scenes from southern black life, painted on brown paper.

In the mid-1940s, as one of the few African Americans represented in a downtown New York art gallery, Bearden soon met a number of leading artists, among them American painter Stuart Davis (1896-1964). A lifelong lover of jazz, Bearden was inspired by Davis's pioneering works—a combination of popular American imagery with European Cubist technique that seemed to pulsate with the rhythms of jazz. Meanwhile, Bearden's style continued to evolve, and often against the mainstream. During the height of Abstract Expressionism in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Bearden created small semi-abstract paintings based on literature, the Bible, and Greek myth, but he became increasingly uncertain about his direction. A trip to Paris to study modernist masters in 1951 failed to inspire him. Soon, he renounced art altogether and took up songwriting. He began his slow return to painting by immersing himself in the history of art—literally copying its masterworks, from the Italian Renaissance through the breakthrough of modernism. When he again began to paint his own works in the late 1950s and early 1960s, they were large and nonobjective. He also began to investigate collage.

What triggered Bearden to a synthesis of all of his studies, subjects, and styles—as well as of his childhood memories, his community, his identity as a black man—was the civil rights turbulence of the mid-1960s, specifically the eruption in Harlem, his own backyard. In his first collages, enlarged black-and-white photomontages, the figure reappears in his art, never to disappear again. The collages feature scenes from Bearden's life as he remembered it, in Harlem or on visits to his grandparents in the South. Entitled Projections, the series as a whole captures African American rituals—baptisms, planting, listening to jazz, funeral farewells. In their assemblage of disjointed images, there is an energy and distortion that seems to reflect the turmoil of the world at large. Exhibited in a one-man show at New York's Cordier & Eckstrom gallery in 1964, the works were a great critical and commercial success.

Soon Bearden's collages grew more complex, as he added pieces of fabric, colored paper, and generous amounts of paint. In Black Manhattan, 1969, he juxtaposed large flat areas of color with elements of collage. [See figure 18] We see the hectic pattern of the fire-escape's cagelike grid, coupled with images of people watching and waiting, looking out windows, or sitting on stoops. The work evocatively renders the rhythms of African American life in the city, its frantic pace opposed to periods of endless waiting.
Like a kaleidoscope, Bearden assimilates myriad sources to create his unique, universal vision of the world. The depiction of black street life recalls seventeenth-century Dutch genre scenes. The angularity and distortions of collaged images suggest forms of African sculpture. And the improvisational, disjunctive nature of collage itself suggests the intuitive, off-beat rhythms of jazz.

Bearden began to simplify his compositions during the 1970s, which we can see in The Return of Odysseus. “Art celebrates a victory,” the artist once declared. “I look for all those elements in which life expresses that victory.” Celebrated here, with all black figures, is the climax of The Odyssey, the epic poem by the ancient Greek author Homer (active 9th century, B.C.E.), who has been called Europe’s first poet. Wily and shrewd, generous and noble, Odysseus, king of the Greek Island of Ithaca, is The Odyssey’s legendary hero and one of Western literature’s greatest protagonists. He is also an inspiring role model for African Americans because he often had to hide his prowess, appearing old or inept, if circumstances forced him.

Homer’s Odyssey is a story of courage, morality, and fidelity. During the twenty years of her husband’s absence, suitors overrun Queen Penelope’s home. To ward them off, she devises various schemes, including telling them she is weaving a shroud for her elderly father-in-law, promising to choose to marry one of them when the garment is completed. But each night, she unravels what she has woven on her loom during the day. Meanwhile, determining
to become a man, Telemachus, son of Odysseus and Penelope, sets off to find his father. Just as the suitors discover Penelope’s scheme, father and son sail home. Odysseus kills off all the suitors, reunites with Penelope, and rules his country of Ithaca once again.

Depicted in Bearden’s collage is the long-awaited return of Odysseus. Penelope sits on the left, reaching her arms to greet the central figure, her loyal son Telemachus, who has heroically fetched his father home. Barely visible, disguised as a beggar, Odysseus enters the doorway in the upper right with his right arm raised. A little girl knits by Penelope’s side while a cat plays with the yarn. Rising up between Penelope and her suitors, the figures on the right, is her protective loom. Hanging unstrung next to a quiver of arrows, is Odysseus’s bow. To prove that the ragged stranger is indeed Odysseus, the suitors require that he string the bow, said to be made of such powerful wood that only Odysseus is strong enough to bend and string it. The sails of Odysseus’s ship are visible through the window, as is, on the left, the mound representing the island of the sorceress Circe, who held Odysseus and his men captive as they made their way home.

To simplify the composition, Bearden uses fewer and larger collage elements, with an emphasis on the flatness of the space and a single blue-green color scheme. As if in a Greek frieze, the formal, stylized figures are arranged largely in the foreground of the work, with architecture functioning as a backdrop. The simplicity of the scene, coupled with the balance of design and color, impart a sense of epic grandeur, befitting its heroic theme.

Again, Bearden gives the Art Institute’s collage a universality by drawing his inspiration from world literature and art. As suggested by its parenthetical title—(Homage to Pintoricchio and Benin)—one of the collage’s sources is the fifteenth-century Italian artist Bernardino di Betto (1454-1513), nicknamed Pintoricchio, or “little painter.” He was a splendid storyteller, known for his sumptuous fresco cycles, which commemorated the pageantry of the Italian Renaissance. Here, Bearden has based his composition almost exactly on Pintoricchio last surviving fresco, the Italian artist’s version of the climax of Homer’s epic entitled The Return of Ulysses (c. 1508-1509; National Gallery, London). [See figure 19] (Ulysses is the Roman name for Odysseus.) Bearden places his characters, window, loom, and boat in almost identical positions. Also, both painters rely on anecdotal detail, often whimsical, to make their works as true-to-life as possible. Bobbins dangle from Penelope’s loom; a cat plays with a ball of yarn; a dove perches on the windowsill. Birds happened to be one of Bearden’s favorite motifs; he called them “journeying things.”

Bearden’s other inspiration is the eight-hundred-year-old African Kingdom of Benin. Located in present-day Nigeria, Benin has been one of the most
powerful nations in Africa since the fifteenth century and is renowned for its sculpture and ceramics. As Bearden once proclaimed: “I do want my language to be strict and classical in the manner of the great Benin bronzes.” The Art Institute’s collage is part of an entire Odysseus series that Bearden completed in 1977.

By the time of The Return of Odysseus, Bearden had achieved considerable success. In 1966, he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters; two years later, Time magazine based a cover on one of his works. During the 1970s and 1980s, awards and honorary degrees continued, and a number of museums organized major retrospectives of his work, including New York’s Museum of Modern Art (1971) and The Detroit Institute of Art (1986). Museums across the nation acquired his art, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Cleveland Art Museum, Ohio; the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C; and in New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Studio Museum in Harlem, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

At the time of Bearden’s death in 1988, he was considered the nation’s leading African American artist. His richly poetic narratives of the rituals of black life are now part of the pantheon of world art, providing inspiration for the next generation of African American artists. The most accomplished black playwright in American history, August Wilson* (b. 1945) can cite specific paintings of Bearden’s that inspired him. Wilson’s play The Piano Lesson, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1987, bears the same title as a 1973 collage by Bearden. “In Bearden,” declares Wilson, “I found my artistic mentor and sought, and still aspire, to make my plays the equal of his canvases.”
In 1989, Martin Puryear was singled out not only as the first African American artist to be chosen as the official United States representative in the São Paulo Bienal in Brazil, but the then forty-eight-year-old artist also won the acclaimed international exhibition’s first prize. That Puryear achieved these honors working in a tradition considered old-fashioned makes his accomplishments more pronounced. In contrast to some contemporary sculptors who favor industrially and workshop-made art, Puryear works by himself, primarily in wood, using his own hands, producing consummately crafted abstract sculptures that are elegant, accessible, and full of allusion. A supreme example is the Art Institute’s Lever #1, 1988-89. [See slide 18]

“I have a hard time thinking of myself as dictating to others how to do my work,” Puryear once said. “And I think it has to do with where I came from in society, where I fit in ... the fact that my people were always executors, workers, their hands were always busy, their backs were always bent. It would be very hard for me to turn into the kind of person who is giving orders for the work to be realized by somebody else. I guess I don’t trust that.”

The Washington, D.C.-born sculptor came of age during the tumultuous civil rights era of the 1960s, when barriers were broken down, and different cultures sought to assimilate. His work—an evocative combination of sculpture, craft, and architecture; of modernist aesthetic and other cultures’ shapes and techniques—very much reflects this period. After graduating with a degree in art from Washington’s Catholic University in 1963, Puryear began the peripatetic existence that has informed his art. “I think of moving as a kind of saving grace,” he has said.

From 1964 to 1966, Puryear served in the Peace Corps in Sierra Leone, Africa, where he learned to have great respect for the mastery of African craftsmen. A 1967 fellowship to Sweden introduced him to Scandinavian design and woodworking, as well as to Arctic quillwork and basketry. Although Puryear had built objects since he had been a child—“If I became interested in archery, I made the bows and arrows”—it was in Scandinavia that he combined his vocation with his avocation. “At a certain point, I just put the building and the art impulse together. I decided that building was a legitimate way to make sculpture, that it wasn’t necessary to work in the traditional methods of carving and casting.”

More studies, travel, and homes continued to cross-fertilize his art. He received an M.F.A. from Yale University in 1971 and has lived, worked and taught, at various times, in Washington, D.C., Chicago, New York City, and upstate New York. In 1982, a Guggenheim Fellowship took him to Japan. There, the words of Soetsu Yanagi, founder of a Japanese crafts movement, could aptly describe the philosophy underlying Puryear’s quietly compelling work: “The thing shines; not the maker.”
The Art Institute’s 1982 sculpture reveals this supreme emphasis on workmanship and respect for materials. [See figure 20] Entitled Sanctuary, the work consists of a wooden cube perched atop two spindly branches that end in clawlike feet riding astride a single wheel. The sculpture humorously recalls the rickety balance of a unicyclist, who lurches forward, then has to lean back to regain stability. The “head”—or shelter—of this sculpture is, in fact, attached to the wall, leaving the prospect of any real motion an impossible dream.

Sanctuary is among a group of works dealing with, in Puryear’s words, “mobility, and a kind of escapism, of survival through flight.” The artist made these works after a 1977 fire gutted his studio and adjoining apartment. “The fire was followed by a period of grieving,” Puryear recalled, “and then by an incredible lightness, freedom, and mobility.”

Characteristic of all of Puryear’s work, and embodied here, is what Neal Benezra, former Art Institute curator, calls “the embrace of opposites.” The work is both freestanding sculpture and, in its attachment to the wall, a relief. Puryear pairs his exquisitely crafted woodwork with rough and natural tree saplings, and the geometry of the cube and wheel with asymmetrical tree branches. Above all, there is the thematic contradiction reflecting Puryear’s own contradictory yearnings. As Benezra explains: “Puryear’s art suggests a continuing search for ... spiritual balance—between freedom and mobility on the one hand, and the stability of a home to provide physical and psychological sustenance on the other.”

Puryear continued to probe opposites and equilibrium throughout the 1980s. Elegant and emphatic in its simplicity, Lever #1 consists of a long and very narrow open vessel and a tall arched lid, shaped like the opening below. Resembling a tongue or shoehorn, the lid seems precariously balanced, on the verge of slamming down shut. Its dynamic verticality contrasts
with the prone, more passive horizontality of the form below. Does the work represent a coffin just before burial, the final closure? Or, with its opening and upright member, does it allude to sexual union, with its connotation of birth and life? The sculpture also suggests ancient cultural artifacts, such as a storage vessel or a ceremonial throne.

These ambiguities enliven the sculpture, as do the visible traces of workmanship. Clearly evident are bits of glue and staples used to hold the strips of red cedar together. These undisguised workings of the creative process differentiate Puryear's simple, direct work from the minimalist tradition, whose impersonal, geometric, and industrially fabricated forms of the mid-1960s had a strong impact on the artist. In addition, Puryear's eloquent forms and masterful craftsmanship recall the pioneering modern sculpture of Romanian Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957), who also used the age-old techniques of woodworkers and stonemasons to create his elegant, streamlined work. [See figure 21]

Lever #1 was one of the eight works Puryear exhibited in the previously mentioned São Paolo Bienal; it was also included in the major travelling retrospective of Puryear’s work organized by The Art Institute of Chicago on view in 1991-1992. Puryear’s poetic, handmade sculpture ranges in scale from small gallery-sized works to large public installations, whose biomorphic forms remain infinitely suggestive. He continues to receive awards, exhibitions, and public commissions. Currently, his work is included in numerous public collections, such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden and the National Gallery of Art, both in Washington, D.C.; and New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of American Art and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

Martin Puryear is considered one of America’s finest contemporary sculptors. “He remains something of an outsider, with one foot outside the mainstream,” said New York Times critic Michael Brenson. “But he has one foot comfortably in it as well. Many blacks feel too alienated from the mainstream, or too angry at it because of its continuing failure to make room for black artists. Puryear is very conscious of this history of exclusion. But he has never excluded mainstream art, and his willingness to test himself against the best of it is indispensable to his success.”
"Moving from silence into speech is for the oppressed, the colonized, the exploited ... a gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible," declared black historian bell hooks (who uses no capitalization with her name). "It is that act of speech, of ‘talking back’ ... that is the expression of moving from object to subject, that is the liberated voice.” Drawing on the African American tradition of storytelling, Lorna Simpson juxtaposes cryptic symbolic narratives with spare, large-scale photographs to give blacks and females a voice—to let these culturally, historically, economically silent and passive individuals finally “talk back.”

The Brooklyn-born Simpson developed these distinct and challenging artworks, such as Outline, 1990, [see slide 19], after a period of exploration during the late 1970s, when she took documentary photographs in the United States, Europe, and Africa. She then studied photography at New York’s School of Visual Arts, receiving a B.F.A. in 1982, and at the University of California at San Diego, graduating with an M.F.A. in 1985. While in graduate school, she began to question the photograph’s ostensible objectivity. How “true” were documentary photographs? Didn’t prevailing historical and cultural conditions affect how people interpret them? This led her to examine the hidden meanings of photographs—which she called the “things that the photograph would not speak of and that I felt needed to be revealed, but that couldn’t be absorbed from just looking at an image.”

From these investigations evolved the hallmarks of Simpson’s probing, understated, and elegant style. Her focus is both on the image itself—as well as on the viewer. As she explains:

I started to concentrate more upon how the viewer looks at photographic images. I took elements from my own documentary work and abstracted particular qualities, putting them in very stark environments—meaning, perhaps, the way a person stands or a particular gesture—but leaving the photographic subject blank or not permitting the photographic subject’s face to appear. That way, all information or clues that point to a particular individual are eliminated from the image. From there, I would insert my own text or my own specific reading of the image to give the viewer something they might not interpret or surmise, due to their “educated” way of looking at images, and reading them for their emotional, psychological, and/or sociological values.

The Art Institute’s Outline, 1990, demonstrates Simpson’s conceptual approach. The image on the right features a figure that appears in many of Simpson’s photographs—an anonymous black woman, whose back is turned, resisting the viewer’s gaze. Although Simpson creates variations of this iconic image—some appear faceless, others with heads or eyes cropped
off—the artist resolutely refuses to give the viewer any of the physical clues that have historically defined black and female bodies. “I made a conscious decision not to show anyone’s face,” she declared. “The viewer wants so much to see a face to read ‘the look in the eyes’ or the expression on the mouth. I want viewers to realize that this is one of the mechanisms ... which they use to read a photograph ... that they are making a cultural reading that has been learned over the years.”

To further eliminate physical clues, the model is minimally adorned, wearing a short natural hair cut and a plain black dress. Although she is presented close enough so that we can see freckles on her skin, even individual pores, these provide no answers, so we refer to the five plaques of printed text, which appear equally impersonal and enigmatic. They read: “lash,” “bone,” “ground,” “ache,” and “pay.”

The image on the left seems just as cryptic: a braid of hair, shaped like a U, and underneath, a single plaque that reads simply “back.” Simpson has evolved a repertoire of symbols or props that serve as stand-ins for the body. They include shoes, gloves, African masks, and the hair we see here. Hair is of particular interest to Simpson. As she explains: “Within racism’s ... codification of human values, black people’s hair has been historically devalued as the most visible sign of blackness, second only to skin.”

As in all of Simpson’s work, the viewer has an active role in deciphering, or decoding, the artwork’s message. But with the absence of a clear narrative, we are challenged to construct meaning by putting together the discrete parts and to go beyond our own preconceived ideas and value systems. With reference to the title Outline, if we look at the two images together, the braid of hair forms an outline, just as the model’s back in the right photograph is outlined. Then, combining the text panels that are appropriately placed down the model’s back, the resulting words—“backlash,” “backbone,” “background,” “backache,” “backpay”—provoke a number of strong associations about race and gender. They include themes Simpson examines throughout her work, such as origins, bodily functions, and job and financial discrimination. In Outline, Simpson has created a symbolic artwork that challenges the viewer to think beyond conventional, culturally conditioned interpretations of the issues and experiences involving the black and female today.

Because she has stripped away most physical details and attributes of her subjects, words have prominence in Simpson’s work. “In remembering the things I’ve read and the experiences that I’ve had,” she explains, “it’s the words, the things that are said, that stick in my mind.” In Flipside, 1991, the text reads: “The neighbors were suspicious of her hairstyle.” [See figure 22] Above, on the left, is again the image of the back-turned, simply
dressed, black female figure. This time, Simpson pairs her with a traditional African mask. Like the model, the mask is turned backwards—ready to be worn, in a sense, by our reflections. With its turned-up ends, the mask seems to wear a flipstyle hairdo, which was popular with both black and white women during the civil rights era of the early 1960s, when Simpson grew up.

In fact, the work has autobiographical roots, as do many of the photographer’s pieces. When Simpson was about ten years old, her mother began wearing an Afro hairdo, a symbol of solidarity, strength, and power among African Americans during the civil rights struggle. As Art Institute curator Sylvia Wolf explains in the children’s book Focus: Five Women Photographers (Albert Whitman & Co., 1994): “At the time, the Simpsons lived in a working-class black community in Queens, New York. To the neighbors, Lorna’s mother’s Afro was a political statement. It looked radical. It made them question who she was.”

Figure 22.
Lorna Simpson.
Courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery,
New York.
The fact that the model wears a natural hairdo, and the traditional artifact wears the "artificial" straightened hair underscores the complicated relationship between American blacks and their African roots. As with Outline, this work also addresses racial and gender stereotypes—how women in particular are judged by how they look. And, like all of her pieces, "the work is not answer-oriented," says Simpson. "It's intentionally left open-ended. There's not a resolution that just solves everything."

Well before she was forty, Simpson's compelling photographs and installations received significant notice. In 1990, she became the first black woman to show in the noted Venice Biennale in Italy and at New York's Museum of Modern Art's Project series of exhibitions. Among her one-person exhibitions are those at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, in 1993, and at the Whitney Museum of Art, New York, in 1994. Her work is in such major collections as the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota; the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut; and The Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art, both in New York.

Although Simpson's conceptual works challenge and critique, they also have a restorative sense. As bell hooks proclaimed: "Within sexist racist iconography, black females are most often represented as mammys, whores or sluts. Caretakers whose bodies and beings are empty vessels to be filled with the needs of others. Against this backdrop of fixed colonizing images, Simpson constructs a world of black female bodies that resist and revolt, that intervene and transform, that rescue and recover."
“So I’m getting off the expressway everyday,” Kerry James Marshall begins, “and I see this sign, ‘WELCOME TO WENTWORTH GARDENS.’ I look around Chicago and I see that there are three other housing projects called ‘gardens’—Stateway Gardens, Rockwell Gardens, Altgeld Gardens.” The Chicago-based artist continued: “They looked like everything else but a garden.... Was there a trend once to name housing projects as garden spots. Isn’t there an irony there?”

Thus began Marshall’s Garden Project series, which includes this large, riveting work called Many Mansions, 1994. [See slide 20] In the series, Marshall examines what public housing means to him, the difference between the misguided utopian ideal and its harsh reality. The painting abounds in strong symbols. Looking almost like cardboard cutouts, stark highrise towers that represent the immense eight-building development of Stateway Gardens form the painting’s backdrop. Their gold color may refer to Chicago’s elite “Gold Coast,” so near and yet so far. Carefully manicured trees lead our eye to the intriguing foreground scene. There, three solemn men weed, rake, and dig in a garden that is in striking contrast to the austere buildings behind them. A profusion of multicolored flowers bloom in the garden. There are also random daisies, what look like lilies, and an Easterbasket or two. The men are formally dressed, more suitably for worship or prayer, in jetblack shoes, pants, and ties the color of their skin, with their bright shirts complementing the whites of their eyes.

Marshall never lets the viewer forget that this is a painted depiction—an investigation, an examination—not a recreation of reality. Fluttering in front of the weatherworn “Welcome” sign are two bluebirds of happiness that seem to have flown right out of a Walt Disney film; “Bless Our Happy Home” reads the streamer that dangles from their beaks. Above them, the signpost tells us that there are 8 buildings here, with 1644 units. “IL 2-22”—the official registration number for Stateway Gardens—is stamped in red letters across the buildings on the right. And in the bright blue sky above the entire scene is a framing red ribbon, like a banner of honor. Its message feminizes the Bible’s well-known New Testament phrase from John 14:2: “In my Mother’s House There Are Many Mansions,” perhaps to express the idea of an all-inclusive home, or perhaps in reference to absent fathers.

In Many Mansions, Marshall blends contemporary subjects and materials with traditions of the past. The large unstretched canvas, which is simply nailed to the wall, resembles a brilliant, albeit slightly weatherworn, billboard. With its mixture of words, painted patches, decorative curlicues, and banners, the multilayered image combines acrylic paint with collage. But the stylized figures, flat space, and lively patterning reflect—in Marshall’s words—the “traditional folkways” of black art. He also draws on art historical sources. In titling his series “garden,” Marshall suggests idealized pastoral compositions seen in paintings beginning with the Italian
Renaissance. Indeed, despite the knowledge that this is a desolate urban site, Marshall depicts an idyllic foreground scene that unfolds with an almost otherworldly grace.

Perhaps the strongest of Marshall's symbols are the carefully depicted, trancelike figures themselves. As Art Institute curator Daniel Schulman declares: "The figures are mesmerizing; their eyes they engage you." Calling these jet-black figures archetypes, Marshall cites as their source black author Ralph Ellison's* award-winning first novel, Invisible Man, 1952. As the book's powerful opening reads: "I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids—and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me."

Marshall elaborates about his figures' dark color: "I painted them to heighten their function as rhetorical figures. That's how we identify ourselves, as black. It's going to the extreme that we accumulate our power. I also wanted to heighten their visual impact as social and political figures. They do flirt with that tradition of derogatory images, but where the humor lies in my work has nothing to do with those figures." Using biblical allusions to Easter and the resurrection, Marshall depicts fully grown men who refuse to give in to society's degradations and misled attempts at salvation. They will give dignity to their "mansions," digging themselves out on their own.

Marshall's knowledge of housing projects is firsthand, for he grew up in them himself, first in a low-rise project in Birmingham, Alabama. When he was eight, his family moved to the Nickerson Gardens development in Watts in Los Angeles. Throughout the 1960s, as a little boy Marshall seemed eerily positioned to experience the upheaval of the civil rights movement. From his early childhood in Birmingham, he remembers the police dogs and water hoses during the 1963 sit-ins, and two years later, the family was in Los Angeles when Watts rioted. The Marshalls also lived in Chicago during the police shoot-out of the Black Panther Party in 1969.

But, Marshall insists, life in the projects "wasn't any different than being in a house, except we paid less rent." He has fond memories, such as using the communal garden tools in Birmingham to tend his family's garden. The Los Angeles project, he reminisced, "had a huge gymnasium and a large field where we flew kites." He used to check out toys from the project's toy library, returning them the next day. "These [Garden Project] pictures are meant to represent what is complicated about the projects," explains Marshall. "We think of projects as places of utter despair. All we hear of is the incredible poverty, abuse, violence, and misery that exists there, but [there] is also a great deal of hopefulness, joy, pleasure, and fun."
One early episode of joy determined Marshall's life course. It happened when he was five and in kindergarten. As he recalled: "If you behaved yourself in school and were good, the teacher rewarded you by letting you sit down and look at a scrapbook she'd made up of painted postcards and pictures from magazines. One day I was good so I got to sit down and look at this art and it was so magical. I knew right then what I wanted to do. I wanted to make magical pictures like that. I wanted to paint." This desire motivated him through high school, city college, and the Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles, where he studied with Charles White. [See pages 55-57] Marshall also worked briefly in film as a production designer. His film work may have influenced the stagelike setting of his paintings, as well as their sudden shifts in style, from a cartoonlike realism to decorative curlicues to abstract drips.

A 1991 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts enabled Marshall to pursue painting full-time. His works are now included in The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. His paintings were exhibited at The Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1993; the Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, Germany, in 1994; and in 1995, in the American Exhibition, the venerable survey of modern art at The Art Institute of Chicago. He was also included in the exhibition Art in Chicago 1945-1995 held at The Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago during 1996-1997. In 1997, Marshall represented the United States in Documenta X, the international contemporary art exhibition in Kassel, Germany. He also received the prestigious John D. And Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation grant the same year.

Throughout his career, Marshall has made African American life his predominant subject. In his recent Scout series, 1995, Marshall again addresses racial stereotypes, with their underlying incongruities and ambiguities. [See figure 23] The series was triggered by the artist's glimpse of a black Scout Master and two black Boy Scouts emerging from a housing project, fully dressed in scout uniforms. To see African Americans in a stereotypical white American role had a profound impact. "The effect was startling," recalls Marshall. "They certainly looked alien at that moment."

His response caused him to examine his own bias. "One of the things a lot of Black people have to overcome is this self-limiting kind of construction of who we are and what we are supposed to be like. This notion that if you are smart and getting straight A's you are trying to be white, those are self-defeating kind of things."

Nevertheless, in Campfire Girls, 1995, Marshall leaves the viewer wondering, "In itself, being a Campfire Girl, camping out, is not such a strange phenomenon," he insists. But the girls in Marshall's image do not look like
they’re having such a good time. Wrapped in blankets, they sit in a big yard with a tent, and on the other side of the fence is a house. “Are they in their own back yard in this suburban neighborhood,” Marshall asks, “or are they homeless?” Do they camp out because of pleasure, or necessity? Marshall concludes: “They are certainly not placed specifically in the community.... The community seems on the other side of the fence.”

With images like Campfire Girls, as well as with all of Marshall's compelling narrative paintings, the artist examines the same issue of “two-ness” that W.E. B. DuBois* articulated almost a century before. As DuBois declared: “One ever feels [the African American’s] two-ness—an American, a Negro: two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.... He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed in his face.” And as Marshall reiterates about his underlying theme: “the ambivalence and duality that Black Americans experience with that hyphenated designation of Black-American or African-American—the ambivalence that Black people experience about really joining and participating in American culture fully. There’s still—in the back of people’s minds—this notion that they’re never really ever going to be fully American.” It is just this "ambivalence and duality" that has informed African American art with richness and complexity of vision.

Figure 23.
**Abstract Art:** A term referring to art that does not attempt to depict recognizable scenes or objects, but instead uses color, form, texture, etc. for expressive purposes.

**Abstract Expressionism:** A movement characterized by monumental canvases and a bold new visual vocabulary and techniques that emerged in New York City after World War II to become the first American style to have worldwide impact. Inspired by Surrealism, with its emphasis on the unconscious, Abstract Expressionist artists emphasized spontaneous personal expression, replacing representation with vibrant areas of color or dynamic brushstrokes to express innermost feelings.

**American Negro Exposition** (Also called Art of the American Negro): One of the first commercial exhibitions of African American art, it was held in 1940 at Chicago’s Tanner Gallery and became the basis of Alain Locke’s *Negro in Art*, the first monograph on black art, published later that year.

**Amistad Mutiny:** Uprising in 1838 aboard the ship *Amistad* that was transporting African slaves to Cuba. With support of American abolitionists, the slaves were freed when tried for mutiny in New Haven, Connecticut.

**Archetype:** The original model or prototype.

**Art Deco:** A decorative style fashionable during the 1920s and 1930s characterized by geometric, streamlined, stylized shapes and the use of contrasting, often luxurious, materials. Named after the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* held in Paris in 1925.

**Assemblage:** Both two- and three-dimensional works of art, including collage, constructed from fragments of natural and preformed materials, such as everyday objects or household items.

**Avant-Garde:** Artists, works of art, or movements—visual, literary, or musical—considered to be unconventional or experimental and thus ahead of their time.

**Barnes Collection:** Private collection including African tribal art and modern masters amassed in the first quarter of the twentieth century by Dr. Albert C. Barnes in Merion, Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia. Initially, Barnes established an art school, offering Barnes Foundation Fellowships to such artists as Aaron Douglas and Horace Pippin.

**Be-Bop:** Form of jazz made popular during the 1940s by such legends as Charlie “Bird” Parker (1920-1955) and Dizzy Gillespie (1917-1993) emphasizing self-expression and relying on intuition, spontaneity, and improvisation.

**Biomorphic:** Abstract forms derived from organic rather than geometric shapes.

**Bronzeville:** Chicago’s vibrant South Side community whose population mushroomed due to the Great Migration, from 14,000 in 1890 to 109,000 by 1920. Also known as the Black Belt, this area around Douglas/Grand Boulevard became home to more than 90 percent of Chicago’s black population by the 1930s.

**Casting:** An ancient process of making an art object from a mold into which a molten, or melted, liquid, such as bronze, is poured, which then hardens. The mold is often constructed from a clay, plaster, or wax model.

**Century of Progress International Exposition:** World’s fair held in Chicago in 1933 and 1934, whose art exhibit took place at The Art Institute of Chicago. Selected by the museum staff, the works ranged from Italian primitives to contemporary abstract paintings.

**Circe:** Sorceress whom Ulysses met on his journey home to Ithaca who entrapped men on her island by turning them into pigs.

**Collage:** Derived from the French verb *coller*, to gum, that describes works of art made by sticking pieces of paper, material, or other items onto a flat backing, often in combination with painted passages. First used extensively by Cubists, such as Georges Braque (1882-1963) and Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), collage extended the boundaries of art by combining painted surfaces with other materials.

**Color-Field Painting:** Describes the often monumental work of certain Abstract Expressionist artists and their successors who were interested in the expressive qualities of vast areas of color.
**Color Wheel:** Circular diagram divided into six triangles, each designated as one of the three primary colors (red, blue, yellow) and three secondary colors (green, orange, purple).

**Complementary Colors:** Colors that have the maximum contrast to one another. They are opposite one another on the color wheel. The complementary of one primary color (red, blue, yellow) is formed by mixing the remaining two primary colors (green is the complementary of red).

**Conceptual Art:** A term referring to the work of a diverse group of artists who first gained attention in the 1960s. Conceptual art focused on the concept of the artwork rather than the finished product.

**Cubism:** Art movement (c. 1908-1920) led by the Spaniard Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) and the Frenchman Georges Braque (1882-1963) that aimed to take the pictorial elements of line, shading, light and composition and reorganize them to call attention to their function as representational devices and to create images independent of recreating the appearance of the world.

**Curator:** Person responsible for the care, presentation, study, and interpretation of works of art, usually in a museum context.

**Dada:** Derived from the French word meaning “hobby-horse” to emphasize the anti-rational, anti-aesthetic, and, ultimately, anti-art stance of a group of artists working from approximately 1915 to 1923. European and American artists and writers used such arbitrary forms as nonsense poems, readymade objects, and collage to protest traditional values that they felt led to the chaos of World War I (1914-1918).

**Daguerreotype:** Unveiled in France in 1839, one of the two original forms in which photography was invented. Produced on photo-sensitized silver-coated copper plates, daguerreotypes were unique objects of extraordinary clarity and detail, which made them the perfect vehicle for portraiture.

**Diaspora:** Dispersal and resettlement of blacks, or of any people, far from their ancestral homeland.

**Direct Carving:** Ancient but still practiced method of carving a piece of sculpture in its final form, such as cutting into wood or a stone block.

**Direct Metal:** The shaping or putting together of a unique piece of metal or metal construction, using such techniques as welding, hammering, or riveting.

**Ferguson Fund:** Bequest left in 1905 by wealthy lumberman Benjamin F. Ferguson to be administered by Art Institute trustees for the building and maintenance within the city of Chicago of public statues and monuments that commemorated important American figures and events.

**Fetish:** An object, often revered, believed to possess magical powers.

**Folk Art:** Works of art made by artists without formal training and often regarded in the twentieth century as fresh and direct in contrast to adhering to the formulas of the past and of the art academies.

**Foreground:** Front of a two-dimensional (flat) work of art.

**Fresco:** From the Italian word for “fresh,” referring to painting on moist plaster. The painting fuses with the plaster, becoming part of the wall itself. The ancient technique reached its height during the Italian Renaissance and was also used in the early twentieth century by Mexican muralists.

**Frieze:** A continuous band of painted or sculptural ornamentation.

**Genre:** An artwork depicting scenes of everyday life.

**German Expressionism:** A German movement (c.1905-1925) that emphasized the painter’s emotional response to a subject; characterized by expressive distortions, stylized forms, and often strident color combinations.

**Gestural:** Describes the physical application of paint, and the use of sweeping, expansive gestures. Often refers to Abstract Expressionist painters, with their expressive brushwork and gestures.

**Gouache:** Derived from the Italian word meaning “puddle” to describe a watercolor paint made opaque, or non-transparent, by the mixture of white. Used for paintings on paper, gouache is dense and fast-drying.
Great Migration: The massive resettlement, spanning the decades from 1910 to 1970, of over six million African Americans from the rural South to the industrial North in search of jobs and freedom from discrimination.

Harlem Renaissance: The creative outburst during the 1920s of literature, music, dance, and art centered in the New York City neighborhood of Harlem, which spread to other cities as well, including Chicago's Bronzeville. Also known as the New Negro Movement after Alain Locke's* watershed book The New Negro (1925), which urged black artists to reclaim their ancestral heritage as a means of strengthening and enriching their own expressions.

Harmon Foundation: Vital agency founded by Ohio-born William Harmon in 1922 to promote African American artistic talent through awards, catalogues, and pioneering exhibitions that ran from 1928 through 1935, when FAP/WPA programs took over. An example of white philanthropy originating during the Harlem Renaissance, the foundation closed in 1966, having amassed the largest repository of African American art from the first half of the twentieth century.

Howard University: Established in 1867, the primarily black institution has been a leader in educating blacks and promoting their intellectual and artistic achievement.

Iconic: Symbolic or emblematic.

Impressionism: Term applied to a group of late nineteenth-century French artists who sought to capture the rapidly changing modern world. To do this, Impressionist painters analyzed the urban scene as well as natural effects and relied on the application of pure unmixed color in visible brushstrokes to convey that they had caught the subject spontaneously.

Installation Art: Work made for exhibition at a specific site that is dismantled once the exhibition is over.

Julius Rosenwald Fund: Established in 1917 by Julius Rosenwald (1862-1932), chairman of the mail-order house of Sears, Roebuck & Company, to give fellowships, travel grants, and commissions to black and southern white artists and writers. The fund was an example of white philanthropy that aided the flourishing of black culture during the Harlem Renaissance.

Linear: With an emphasis on line.

Linocut: Print made from carved linoleum rather than wood or metal.

Loom: A frame for interlacing at right angles thread or yarn to form cloth.

Medium: Type of artistic expression.

Mexican Mural Art: Inspired by the Mexican Revolution of 1911, a group of artists such as José Clemente Orozco (1883-1948) and Diego Rivera (1886-1957) developed a national narrative style incorporating their native heritage of folk traditions and pre-Columbian art in order to create an art that was “of the people.” They executed vast mural cycles—large paintings applied directly to walls and ceilings—whose powerful portrayals of the history and struggles of working class Mexicans influenced the Social Realist style so prevalent in American art during the 1930s and 1940s.

Middleground: Middle section of a two-dimensional (flat) work of art.

Minimalism: A term applied to a diverse group of artists working in the 1960s whose work was characterized by simple geometric forms and structures. Minimalist art is nonfigural. Minimalist sculpture frequently uses industrial materials produced by a manufacturer.

Modernism: An umbrella term originating in the twentieth century referring to the myriad avant-garde styles that have dominated the arts in western culture. Modernism is seen as developing in the late nineteenth century when artists rejected the notion that an art object had to be representational, a window to reality, and instead could stand alone as a formal construction of color, line, and form.

Monochromatic: From “monochrome,” meaning “one color,” referring to paintings limited to a palette of light and dark shades of a single color.

Monotype: A method of making prints from a flat, freshly painted or inked surface of glass or metal. A sheet of paper is pressed down over the still-wet image and, although a number of prints can be made from the same plate, each print is unique.

Mosaic: Ancient technique of cementing together small pieces of glass, stones, marble, etc. to make designs or pictures.
**Motif:** Major idea or subject in a composition.

**Narrative:** A story or description of real or imaginary events.

**National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.):** Founded in 1910 by eight prominent Americans—W.E.B. DuBois* and seven whites—dedicated to securing nonviolently full civil and legal rights for African Americans. The N.A.A.C.P. directed its initial efforts (successfully) against lynching. It continues today as an influential civil rights organization.

**Negro in Art Week:** Historic exhibition held at The Art Institute of Chicago in 1927 featuring paintings and sculpture by contemporary black artists, which served as a model for the pioneering Harmon Foundation exhibitions that began the next year in New York.

**New Negro Movement:** See Harlem Renaissance.

**Nonfigural; Nonobjective:** An artwork that depicts no recognizable object, figure, or scene. See Abstract Art.

**Organic:** Related to a living organism.

**Palette:** Color scheme.

**Pastoral:** A landscape painting that represents the countryside as a paradise filled with demi-gods, nymphs and satyrs, shepherds and shepherdesses, and romantic love.

**Photomontage:** Pictorial composition consisting of overlapping photographs or fragments of photographs.

**Photo-sensitized:** Reactive to light.

**Physiognomy:** Appearance; facial features.

**Pointillism:** Term applied to French painter Georges Seurat’s (1859-1891) use of a tapestry-like surface of small regularized brushstrokes and dots of complementary colors that, through blending in the viewers’ eyes, formed a single, and Seurat believed, more brilliantly luminous hue. Also called “divisionism.”

**Portrait Bust:** A sculpted representation of an individual consisting of the head and part of the shoulders.

**Post-Impressionism:** Term used to describe the generation of artists who pushed beyond the Impressionists’ emphasis on the appearance of nature, stressing instead a more prolonged and personal vision. Some used a more scientific analysis of color; others emphasized formal values or the expressive use of line; still others explored religious or symbolic themes.

**Realism:** General term describing an intent to depict the appearance of the world. Also refers to a movement in nineteenth-century France that concentrated on the unidealized representation of, as Realism’s leader Gustave Courbet (1819-1877) said, “real and existing things.”

**Relief:** A sculpture in which figures or designs stand out or project from the background surface but are not freestanding.

**Italian Renaissance:** From the French word meaning “rebirth.” A revival of learning, literature, art, and architecture that initially emphasized the classical models of Greek and Roman antiquity. Began in Italy in the late thirteenth century, then spread to other parts of Europe; lasted throughout the sixteenth century.

**Retrospective:** Comprehensive exhibition of an artist’s work created over a period of years.

**Salon:** Official exhibition of art of all media sponsored by the French Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris, held mostly annually from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. Until challenged by the independent exhibitions in which the artists later dubbed the Impressionists showed their work beginning in 1874, the Salon was the main venue for artists to exhibit their work, receive recognition, and make sales.

**Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture:**
Located in the Countee Cullen* Branch of the New York Public Library at 135th Street in Harlem. A main cultural force in the community during the Harlem Renaissance through the Great Depression, the 135th Street branch sponsored exhibitions, performances, and lectures to heighten the community’s awareness of its ancestral heritage. The Center is named after Arthur Schomburg, whose collection formed the nucleus of what is now the most extensive repository of black studies material in the nation.
**Sepulchre**: Place of burial; a tomb.

**Social Realism**: A broad term to describe diverse styles of representational painting (or literature) whose subject has social or political content. Prevalent in the United States during the Great Depression.

**South Side Community Center**: WPA/FAP-funded arts center modelled after the highly successful Harlem Community Art Center in New York and dedicated in 1941; continues to this day to provide professional training and opportunities for aspiring young artists.

**Still Life**: Depiction of a group of inanimate objects (flowers, game, fruit, etc.) carefully arranged by an artist; from the French term, **nature morte**, meaning “dead nature.”

**Study**: Detailed representation of a part or of a whole composition, preliminary to the final work.

**Surrealism**: Group of writers and artists led by French poet André Breton (1896-1966) in Paris in 1924 who embraced the art of spontaneous creation. To unleash their creativity, some Surrealists used as their model Austrian psychiatrist Sigmund Freud’s (1856-1939) theory of psychoanalysis, probing the world of dreams, fantasies, and the subconscious in their art. Many Surrealists produced fantastic, meticulously rendered organic forms, while others combined ordinary objects in strange and startling ways.

**Totemic**: Serving as an emblem or revered symbol.

**Utopian**: Imaginary place of ideal perfection.

**Works Progress (later Projects) Administration/Federal Arts Project (WPA/ FAP)**: Federal agencies created in 1933(WPA) and 1935 (FAP) by Franklin Roosevelt, president from 1933 to 1945, to support artists during the Great Depression. Lasting through the advent of World War II, WPA/FAP was the largest and most well-known governmental agency to assist the arts through its federally-sponsored social programs, employing at its height some five thousand artists.

**Yaddo**: Artists’ colony founded in 1926 in Saratoga Springs, New York, offering writers and artists an opportunity to work without daily distraction.
Baldwin, James (1924-1987): American novelist and essayist whose noted works include Go Tell It on the Mountain (1953); Nobody Knows My Name (1961); and The Fire Next Time (1963), a passionate statement about African American suffering and an indictment of a society that allows such conditions to exist.

Cullen, Countee (1903-1946): Major poet of the Harlem Renaissance whose name was given to the Harlem branch of the New York Public Library at 135th Street, then the area's cultural epicenter. His works include Copper Sun and The Ballad of the Brown Girl, both of 1927.


Ellison, Ralph (1914-1994): American writer whose award-winning novel The Invisible Man (1952) captures the pain of a nameless young black man trying to find his place in a hostile society.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo (1803-1882): American poet, essayist, and philosopher whose most noted works include The Conduct of Life and whose philosophy that nature is the manifestation of spirit and that each man possesses within himself the means to all knowledge impacted the history of American culture.

Garvey, Marcus (1887-1940): American proponent of black nationalism who urged a “back to Africa movement” and was one of the most influential black leaders in the early 1920s.


Holmes, Oliver Wendell, Sr. (1809-1894): Celebrated physician, professor, and colleague of Ralph Waldo Emerson whose best-known poems include “The Last Leaf,” who published in The Atlantic Monthly magazine, and whose son was the noted jurist of the same name.

Homer (active 9th century B.C.E.): Principal figure of ancient Greek literature who has been called Europe's first poet. The two epic poems Iliad and Odyssey attributed to him are among the great works of Western literature and the model of subsequent Western epic poetry. The Iliad recounts the history of the ten-year Trojan War, and The Odyssey recounts the adventures the hero Ulysses experienced during his 10-year journey home.

Hughes, Langston (1902-1967): American poet and central figure of the Harlem Renaissance whose work often used dialect and jazz rhythms to explore African American life, particularly in the city. Among his collections are Shakespeare in Harlem (1942), One-Way Ticket (1949), and Selected Poems (1959).

King, Martin Luther Jr. (1929-1968): Clergyman and civil rights leader whose policy of nonviolent passive resistance first gained national prominence in the mid-1950s, when his boycotts led to desegregation of the bus lines in Montgomery, Alabama. King organized the massive 1963 March on Washington and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. He was assassinated in 1968.

Locke, Alain (1886-1954): First African American Rhodes scholar and Howard University philosopher who was a leading spokesperson for the Harlem Renaissance. His seminal book, The New Negro (1925), urged black artists to reclaim their ancestral heritage as a means of strengthening and enriching their own expressions.

L'Ouverture, Touissant (c. 1744-1803): Haitian self-educated slave devoted first to freeing fellow Haitian slaves, then to the liberation of his country from French colonial rule. His valiant life and tragic death (he died in a French dungeon) led to the establishment of Haiti as the first independent black republic in the Western Hemisphere.

Malcolm X (1925-1965): Militant black nationalist leader born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska, who became a Black Muslim minister upon his release from prison in 1952. He was shot and killed before a speech in a New York City public auditorium in 1965. The identity of his assassins remains undetermined.
**Miller, Henry** (1891-1980): American author whose works include *Tropic of Cancer* (1934), an autobiographical description of Miller's life as a struggling artist in Paris during the early 1930s. Banned on grounds of obscenity, the controversial book was not published in the U.S. until 1961.


**Sandburg, Carl** (1878-1967): Illinois-born poet who celebrated America and its ordinary people and events. His numerous collections include *Chicago Poems* (1916), *Slabs of the Sunburnt West* (1922), as well as the Pulitzer-Prize winning biography (1926-1939) of Abraham Lincoln (president from 1861-1865).

**Scott, Sir Walter** (1771-1832): Scottish novelist and poet of the romantic period whose notable works include his narrative poem *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) and novels *Waverly* (1814), *Rob Roy* (1818), and *Ivanhoe* (1820).

**Washington, Booker T.** (1856-1915): American educator and post-Reconstruction leader who founded Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee, Alabama), making it one of the top black educational institutions in America. His writing includes his autobiography, *Up from Slavery* (1901).

**Wilson, August** (b. 1945): American playwright, poet, and writer, largely self-educated, whose plays expose the struggles of ordinary African Americans, often in rural settings. Perhaps the most eminent American playwright now writing, Wilson's work includes *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (1984) and *Fences* and *The Piano Lesson* (1987), which both won Pulitzer Prizes.
This timeline provides a context for the artworks in the manual. The arts portion includes those artists discussed in the manual and key writers, musicians, and dancers of the times. Bullets designate multiple entries in a given year. For a more complete account of the contributions of African American artists, see Romare Bearden and Harry Henderson, *A History of African American Artists from 1792 to the Present* (see Bibliography).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE ARTS</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>CONTEMPORARY EVENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral by poet, Phillis Wheatley (of Boston) is published. First book published in the British colonies by an African American and the second by an American woman</td>
<td>1502</td>
<td>African slaves are brought to South America</td>
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<td>1619</td>
<td>African indentured servants arrive on Dutch ship, beginning slavery in Jamestown, Virginia</td>
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<td>1770s</td>
<td>Jean Baptiste Pointe du Sable, French African, establishes a trading post that will later become Chicago</td>
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<td>1773</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1776</td>
<td>Declaration of Independence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1787</td>
<td>Absalom Jones and Richard Allen organize the Free African Society in Philadelphia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>George Washington inaugurated as first President of the United States</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>African American Benjamin Banneker helps plan the city of Washington, D.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1794</td>
<td>Toussaint L'Ouverture joins black forces in Haiti and by 1801 leads them to control of both Haiti and Santo Domingo</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1803</td>
<td>Fort Dearborn built at mouth of Chicago River to protect settlers</td>
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<td>1816</td>
<td>• African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is founded in New York</td>
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<td>1816</td>
<td>• American Colonization Society organized by Bushrod Washington, Henry Clay, and other legislators to encourage blacks to return to Africa</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1817</td>
<td>Frederick Douglass born (approximate year)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Illinois becomes a state</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1822</td>
<td>Streets of Boston are lit by gas</td>
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<td>1831</td>
<td>Nat Turner's slave rebellion takes place in Southampton County, Virginia</td>
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<td>1833</td>
<td>• Chicago sets up a town government</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>• Oberlin College, an active center of abolitionist activity, admits African American and female students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1835</td>
<td>5th National Negro convention meets in Philadelphia and urges blacks to drop the use of the terms &quot;African&quot; or &quot;colored&quot; in referring to themselves or their institutions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1837</td>
<td>Chicago incorporates as a city</td>
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Samuel J. Miller born
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<tr>
<th>THE ARTS</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>CONTEMPORARY EVENTS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</em> published</td>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Slave revolt on Spanish Ship <em>Amistad</em> leads to a legal case that reached the U.S. Supreme court in 1840 in which slaves were vindicated and freed</td>
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<td>1843</td>
<td>Samuel F.B. Morse builds 1st telegraph line between Baltimore and Washington</td>
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<td>1845</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1846-</td>
<td>Mexican War</td>
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<td>1848</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Frederick Douglass launches abolitionist first newspaper <em>North Star</em> in Rochester, New York</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1847</td>
<td>• Dred Scott petitions St. Louis court to gain his freedom</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>• Harriet Tubman escapes slavery and becomes legendary conductor on the Underground Railroad</td>
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<td>1852</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes <em>Uncle Tom's Cabin</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Narrative of Sojourner Truth</em> published</td>
<td>1853</td>
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<td>1855</td>
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<tr>
<td>In Cincinnati, photographer James Presley Ball, publishes the narration</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Abolitionist John Brown leads a raid on the federal armory in Harper's Ferry, West Virginia</td>
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<tr>
<td>which depicts the history of black people in the U.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry Ossawa Tanner born in Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>Abraham Lincoln elected president</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>U.S. Civil War begins</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>Congress allows recruitment of Negroes for military duty</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>• Lincoln signs the Emancipation Proclamation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Battle of Gettysburg</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Lincoln's Gettysburg address</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The all-black 54th Massachusetts Regiment achieves enormous valor</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1865</td>
<td>• Civil War Ends</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Congress passes 13th Amendment, officially abolishing slavery</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• President Lincoln is assassinated</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ku Klux Klan is formed in Tennessee</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Union stockyards open in Chicago</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Reconstruction era begins in what were formerly “slave” states</td>
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<td>1867</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harriet Jacobs publishes *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl:</td>
<td>1868</td>
<td>First Transcontinental railroad is completed</td>
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<td>Written by Herself*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Congress ratifies 15th Amendment, granting all male citizens the right to vote</td>
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<td>1870</td>
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<tr>
<td>Composer, Scott Joplin born</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE ARTS</td>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>CONTEMPORARY EVENTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Founding of the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>The Great Chicago Fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Ossawa Tanner enrolls at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Academy of Fine Arts changes its name to The Art Institute of</td>
<td>1876</td>
<td>Sioux and Cheyenne defeat Custer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>1879</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alain Locke born, first African American to become a Rhodes Scholar</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>Clara Barton founds the Red Cross</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horace Pippin born in Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1882</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Archibald J. Motley, Jr. born in Louisiana</td>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Statue of Liberty dedicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Alma Thomas born in Georgia</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Inventor George Eastman develops a low-cost, hand-held camera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Henry Ossawa Tanner completes <em>The Banjo Lesson</em></td>
<td>1891</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• The Art Institute of Chicago opens in its permanent home at Adams and</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Ida B. Wells, former editor and part-owner of the <em>Memphis Free Speech</em> and chair of the Anti-Lynching Bureau of the National African-American Council, moves to Chicago and marries Ferdinand Barnett, founding editor of the <em>Chicago Conservator</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Chicago hosts the World's Columbian Exposition from May-October</td>
<td>1893</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Henry Ossawa Tanner's <em>Daniel in the Lions Den</em> wins an honorable</td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Booker T. Washington makes his <em>Atlanta Compromise</em> speech at the 1895 Cotton States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mention at the Paris Salon</td>
<td></td>
<td>Frederick Douglass dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Henry Ossawa Tanner's <em>Resurrection of Lazarus</em> medals at the Paris</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td>W.E.B. DuBois earns his Ph.D. in history from Harvard University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salon</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plessy v. Ferguson sustains “separate but equal” status for African Americans in local (“Jim Crow”) laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Musician Scott Joplin composes <em>Maple Leaf Rag</em></td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>National Association of Colored Women is founded in Washington, D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Aaron Douglas born in Kansas</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>The American Negro Academy founded in Washington, D.C. to promote African American history and cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Walter Ellison born in Georgia</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Spanish-American War begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hale Woodruff born in Illinois</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• The Cakewalk, a dance of African origin, popularized by African</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Americans Egbert Williams and George Walker</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Richmond Barthé born in Louisiana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Beauford Delaney born in Tennessee</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• William Marion Cook's musical satire, <em>In Dahomey</em>, focuses on African</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>themes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Writer Langston Hughes born</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE ARTS</td>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>CONTEMPORARY EVENTS</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • Henry Ossawa Tanner’s *Two Disciples at the Tomb*  
• Upton Sinclair publishes *The Jungle*  
Marion Perkins born in Arkansas |
| 1903 | • W.E.B. DuBois’s collection of essays *Souls of Black Folk* published  
• The Wright brothers fly the first powered airplane  
• Henry Ford founds the Ford Motor Company  
• Founding of *Chicago Defender* daily newspaper  
• Albert Einstein formulates Theory of Relativity |
| 1908 | William Howard Taft elected President |
| 1909 | • National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) formed by W.E.B. DuBois  
• Robert Peary and Matthew Henson reach the North Pole |
| 1911 | National Urban League is founded to assist blacks who migrate to northern cities |
| 1912 | Henry Ford pioneers new assembly line techniques in his car factory |
| 1913 | World War I begins |
| 1914 | Marcus Garvey from Jamaica founds the Universal Negro Improvement Association in New York |
| 1917 | • U.S. enters World War I to fight against Germany  
• 300,000 African Americans serve in the military |
| 1918 | • World War I ends November 11  
• Beginning of the Great Migration of blacks from the rural South to urban centers in the North |
| 1919 | • 369th Infantry Regiment of Black Americans marches in New York parade  
• 1st Pan-African Congress meets in Paris under W.E.B. DuBois |
| 1920 | • 19th Amendment gives women the right to vote  
• KDKA, America’s first commercial radio station, begins operation in Pittsburgh  
• W.E.B. DuBois publishes *Darkwater* a collection of essays |
| 1921 | Sociologist Charles S. Johnson becomes director of research for the National Urban League  
Romare Bearden born in New York  
Armory Art show opens in New York City and Chicago  
• Jacob Lawrence born in New Jersey  
• Horace Pippin joins the U.S. army, fights in Europe and is wounded  
• Poet Gwendolyn Brooks is born, Topeka, Kansas  
Charles White born in Illinois  
• Elizabeth Catlett born in Washington, D.C.  
• Artist Roy DeCarava born in New York  
• Jazz becomes popular in Europe, from performances by Jelly Roll Morton, Duke Ellington and Paul Whiteman  
• Harlem Renaissance begins an immensely influential concentration of African American artists, dancers, musicians and authors in New York  
• Artist Leslie Roger’s comic strip *Bungleton Green* appears in the *Chicago Defender*  
• Lincoln Motion Picture Co. produces *By Right of Birth*, a movie about Black American life  
• The first large show of African American artists opens at the 135th Street branch of the New York Public Library  
• *Shuffle Along*, a musical revue written and performed by blacks, opens in New York |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE ARTS</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>CONTEMPORARY EVENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band takes up residence at the Lincoln Gardens dance hall in Chicago playing New Orleans jazz joined by Louis Armstrong Henry Ossawa Tanner is awarded France’s Legion of Honor</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archibald J. Motley, Jr. wins Francis Logan Prize from The Art Institute of Chicago Countee Cullen’s poem <em>Heritage</em> is published with famous line “What is Africa to me?” Marion Anderson’s debut with the New York Philharmonic Josephine Baker appears in <em>La Revue Nègre</em> in Paris Aaron Douglas creates interpretive illustrations for James Weldon Johnson’s book of poetry <em>God’s Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse</em> Harmon Foundation begins to sponsor annual exhibitions for African American artists, awarding first gold medal to Palmer C. Hayden Langston Hughes <em>The Weary Blues</em>, is published Aaron Douglas creates illustrations for <em>Fire</em>, a magazine of literary and artistic rebels Hale Woodruff’s <em>Twilight</em> Henry Ossawa Tanner wins National Bronze Medal, Arts Club Show, New York City Tanner is elected to the National Academy of Design <em>The Negro in Art Week</em> show is held at The Art Institute of Chicago Archibald J. Motley, Jr.’s one-man show, New York Aaron Douglas wins Barnes Foundation Scholarship Archibald J. Motley, Jr.’s <em>Blues</em> Barthé receives Julius Rosenwald grant <em>Ain’t Misbehavin</em> opens on Broadway with music by Fats Waller and Louis Armstrong The New Negro Art Theater Dance Troupe is founded in New York City by Helmsley Winfield</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>National Urban League publishes the first issue of Opportunity magazine 2.5 million radios in the U.S.</td>
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<td>1924</td>
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<td>1925</td>
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<td>1926</td>
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<td>1927</td>
<td>• Babe Ruth sets home run record when he hits 60 for the season Charles Lindbergh flies the Spirit of St. Louis from New York to Paris</td>
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<td>1928</td>
<td>Amelia Earhart becomes first woman to fly across the Atlantic</td>
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<td>1929</td>
<td>Stock market crash starts the Great Depression</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Black Muslims organization founded by W.D. Ford, succeeded by Elijah Mohammed in 1935</td>
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<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>President Roosevelt is elected and inaugurates New Deal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>THE ARTS</td>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>CONTEMPORARY EVENTS</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago employs WPA artists to paint murals</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• E. Simms Campbell begins contributing cartoons and artwork to <em>Esquire</em> magazine</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Aaron Douglas's study for <em>Aspects of Negro Life: The Negro in an African Setting</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Federal government establishes Federal Arts Project (FAP) agency which initiates programs designed to alleviate unemployment among artists</td>
<td>1933-1939</td>
<td>With rise of Nazi power in Germany, about 60,000 European artists, writers and musicians immigrate to the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Richard Hunt born in Illinois</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• <em>African Negro Art</em> exhibition of traditional African art at the Museum of Modern Art, New York</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Marian Anderson performs at the Town Hall in New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Harlem Artists Guild is formed to voice black artists' concerns</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Alain Locke's booklet <em>Negro Art: Past and Present</em> published</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Under the WPA program Charles Alston and other African American artists paint the Harlem Hospital murals</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Alonzo Aden creates an exhibit for the Hall of Negro Life at the Texas Centennial celebration, 93 works by 38 artists exhibited</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>• Jesse Owens wins four gold medals at the Berlin Olympics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Walter Ellison's <em>Train Station</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>• National Negro Congress is founded in Chicago to promote economic opportunities for African Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Zora Neale Hurston publishes novel <em>Their Eyes Were Watching God</em></td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Joe Louis defeats James J. Braddock and becomes heavyweight boxing champion of the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Aaron Douglas wins the J. Rosenwald travel Fellowship</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jacob Lawrence's one man show at Harlem YMCA</td>
<td>1938-1939</td>
<td>World War II begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Baltimore Museum of Art mounts a major exhibition <em>Contemporary Negro Art</em> featuring the works of Richmond Barthé, Aaron Douglas and Jacob Lawrence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Hale Woodruff paints murals of the <em>Amistad</em> mutiny for Talladega College in Alabama</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Jacob Lawrence's <em>Harriet Tubman</em> series</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Elizabeth Catlett's <em>Mother and Child</em> wins first prize at the American Negro Exposition in Chicago</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Martin Puryear born in Washington, D.C.</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>• Franklin D. Roosevelt is reelected to a third term as president of the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exhibition American <em>Negro Art: 19th and 20th Centuries</em> organized by Alain Locke, assistance from the Harmon Foundation, held in NY</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>• First successful helicopter flight in the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pearl Harbor bombed, U.S. enters World War II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE ARTS

- Charles White completes mural *Five Great American Negroes* for the Chicago Public Library
- *Fortune* magazine publishes 26 of Lawrence’s panels for his *Migration* series
- Richmond Barthé’s *The Boxer*
- Jacob Lawrence’s *Migration* Series
- *Native Son* by Richard Wright opens on broadway
- Archibald J. Motley, Jr. paints *Nightlife*
- Selma Burke designs the portrait of Franklin Roosevelt that is used in minting the dime
- Dancer Katherine Dunham choreographs *Carib Son*
- The exhibit *The Negro Artist Comes of Age: A National Survey of Contemporary American Artist’s* is held in Albany, New York
- The documentary *We’ve Come a Long Way* charting the progress of African Americans in the U.S. history is released

Jacob Lawrence illustrates the book *One Way Ticket*, by Langston Hughes
- Willard Motley publishes his novel *Knock on Any Door*
- Gwendolyn Brooks becomes first African American to win a Pulitzer Prize, for her Chicago-based poem *Annie Alley*

Oprah Winfrey is born

DATE | CONTEMPORARY EVENTS
--- | ---
1941 |  
1942 |  
1943 |  
1945 |  
1947 |  
1948 |  
1950 |  
1953 |  
1954 |  
1955 |  
1956 |  

- Cassius Clay is born, later becomes heavyweight boxing champion
- The Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) is organized
- U.S. Government places over 100,000 Japanese Americans from the West Coast in inland labor camps
- First computer is created in the U.S.
- Penicillin successfully used in the treatment of chronic diseases
- John H. Johnson publishes first issue of *Ebony* magazine in Chicago
- Axis forces surrender in Europe on May 8
- Harry S. Truman assumes the presidency after Franklin D. Roosevelt dies
- U.S. drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan
- World War II ends August 16
- U.S. Congress passes the Marshall Plan, $17 billion in aid to help Europe recover from World War II
- GI Bill is passed, allowing over one million World War II veterans to go to college
- Jackie Robinson breaks the racial barrier in major league baseball
- Harry S. Truman defeats Thomas E. Dewey to become president of the U.S.
- Korean War begins
- Ralph Bunche is the first African American to win the Nobel Peace Prize for his role as United Nations mediator in Palestine
- In *Brown v. Board of Education*, U.S. Supreme Court rules that school segregation is unconstitutional
- Rosa Parks prompts Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott

Korean War ends
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>DATE</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Society of African Culture is organized in the wake of the</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>U.S. Senate passes Civil Rights Act, guaranteeing right to vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First International Congress of Negro writers and Artists</td>
<td></td>
<td>The African nation Ghana gains its independence and during the 1960s colonial rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ends in many other African and Asian countries</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Crisis in Little Rock Central High School upon admitting black students resolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>when President Eisenhower sends in Federal troops to enforce integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Hunt's <em>Hero Construction</em></td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>U.S. establishes the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, launches</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Explorer I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alvin Ailey founds the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Fidel Castro becomes Premier of Cuba and expropriates U.S. owned sugar mills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Conference of Artists convenes at Atlanta University including</td>
<td></td>
<td>Alaska and Hawaii become 49th and 50th states</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Margaret Burroughs, Jack Jordan, Marion Perkins and James Parks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Playwright Lorraine Hansberry's <em>A Raisin in the Sun</em> opens on</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broadway, starring Sidney Poitier, and wins New York Drama Critics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Circle Award</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ella Fitzgerald and Count Basie win Grammy awards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Artist Lorna Simpson born in New York</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>West Africa Vignettes</em> by Elton Fax documenting African American</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>artists' travels to Africa is published</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Catlett publishes her speech, <em>Negro People and American Art</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>in the journal <em>Freedomways</em>, calling for shows of African American</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>art and prompting many black artists to form groups to discuss their</td>
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<tr>
<td>concerns</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>John F. Kennedy elected President of the U.S.</td>
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<td>Student sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina mark the beginning of student</td>
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<td>involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. Student Non-Violent Coordinating</td>
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<td>Committee is organized</td>
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<td></td>
<td>U.S. Bay of Pigs Invasion of Cuba fails</td>
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<td>1961</td>
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<td>James Meredith enrolls as the first African American student at the Univ. of</td>
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<td>Mississippi, prompting riots and the need for 12,000 troops</td>
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<td>President Kennedy signs order banning racial discrimination in federally financed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>housing</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>President John F. Kennedy assassinated</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medgar Evers assassinated</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>March on Washington: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s &quot;I Have a Dream&quot; speech</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>W.E.B. DuBois dies in Ghana</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Martin Luther King, Jr. receives Nobel Peace Prize</td>
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<td>1964</td>
<td>Malcolm X founds the Organization for Afro American Unity</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>President Lyndon B. Johnson's Civil Rights Act bans discrimination in public</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>accommodations, education, and employment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In New York, artists including Romare Bearden and Hale Woodruff form the group Spiral, dedicated to defining problems faced by artists linking art with social responsibility.

- The Museum of African Art is established in Washington, D.C.
- For his role in the movie *Lilies of the Field*, Sidney Poitier wins an Academy Award.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE ARTS</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>CONTEMPORARY EVENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alex Haley publishes <em>The Autobiography of Malcolm X</em></td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Civil Rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weusi, an artists’ group, is founded in Harlem African American artists form the largest delegation of visual artists to exhibit at the first World Festival of Black Arts in Senegal</td>
<td></td>
<td>Malcolm X assassinated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall of Respect painted by members of the Organization of Black American Culture (OBAC) in Chicago</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Black Panthers Party founded by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale in California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Studio Museum in Harlem opens</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>The December holiday Kwanza is created by a professor of African American studies to celebrate African American culture and community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The group AfriCobra (African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists) is launched to promote Afrocentric art</td>
<td></td>
<td>50,000 people demonstrate against Vietnam War at Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Conference of Black Museum and Museum Professionals is held in Detroit</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Thurgood Marshall appointed to U.S. Supreme Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>African Arts Magazine</em> established at Univ. of California at Los Angeles</td>
<td></td>
<td>Martin Luther King assassinated in Memphis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romare Bearden helps found Cinque Gallery</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Robert Kennedy assassinated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>New Black Artists</em> exhibition opens at the Brooklyn Museum</td>
<td></td>
<td>Richard M. Nixon elected President of the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 <em>Contemporary Black Artists</em> appears at the IBM Gallery in New York City</td>
<td></td>
<td>78 million TV sets in American homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Harlem on My Mind</em> opens at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shirley Chisholm is elected to the House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Invisible America: Black Artists of the Thirties</em> shows at the Studio Museum in Harlem</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td><em>Black Scholar</em> magazine is founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodstock Music Festival attracts 400,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>The “Chicago 8” is tried for conspiracy to incite a riot during the 1968 Democratic National Convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Carlett's <em>Sharecropper</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>Supreme Court declares that the expulsion of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., from the House of Representatives was unconstitutional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Lawrence receives NAACP Springarn Medal</td>
<td></td>
<td>First U.S. troops are withdrawn from Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Afro-American Artists, New York and Boston</em> is exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>U.S. astronaut Neil Armstrong is the first man to set foot on the moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Black Art-International Quarterly</em> is founded by Samella Lewis</td>
<td></td>
<td>The first Earth Day is celebrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women, Students and Artists for Black Art Liberation is organized in New York</td>
<td></td>
<td>Four student demonstrators are killed by the National Guard on Kent State Univ. campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwendolyn Brooks' <em>Family Pictures, Aloneness</em> and <em>The World of Gwendolyn Brooks</em> are published</td>
<td></td>
<td>President Nixon signs a bill to keep the Civil Rights Act of 1965 in force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romare Bearden is featured in one-man exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York</td>
<td></td>
<td>In Chicago, Jesse Jackson organizes People United to Save Humanity (PUSH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works by Jacob Lawrence and Alma Thomas are included in the exhibition <em>Contemporary Black Artists in America</em> at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>The Congressional Black Caucus is created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac Hayes <em>Theme from Shaft</em> reaches top of the charts, and later wins Oscar for best song</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>THE ARTS</td>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>CONTEMPORARY EVENTS</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alma Thomas <em>Starry Night and the Astronaut</em></td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Sixteen African Americans elected to congress, including Andrew Young and Barbara Jordan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas has a major show at the Whitney Museum in New York and the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles White is second African American along with Henry Ossawa Tanner to be elected to the National Academy of Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gordon Parks awarded Springarn Medal for his writings, films, and photographs</td>
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<tr>
<td>B.B. King receives honorary doctorate from Tougaloo College, Mississippi</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Lawrence retrospective held at the Whitney Museum in NY and travels to five cities around the country</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Watergate investigation begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Haley's <em>Roots</em> airs on national television</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vice President Spiro Agnew resigns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wiz opens on Broadway</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gerald Ford becomes the new vice president</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ntozake Shange's play <em>For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow Is Enuf</em> premieres in New York</td>
<td></td>
<td>National Black Network, a black-owned radio news network, begins broadcasting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Sixth pan-African Congress convenes in Tanzania</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry Ossawa Tanner, Elizabeth Catlett and Charles White are included in <em>Two Centuries of Black American Art</em>, at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art</td>
<td></td>
<td>President Richard Nixon resigns as President of the U.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Romare Bearden's <em>Return of Odysseus</em></td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>All U.S. troops and civilians are withdrawn from South Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American artists form the largest foreign delegation to the Second World Festival of Black and African Art, held in Lagos, Nigeria</td>
<td></td>
<td>NAACP annual convention calls attention to the increasing unemployment figures for African Americans</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>American Heritage</em> magazine publishes the oldest known daguerreotypes of African American slaves from South Carolina; taken by J.T. Zealy in 1850</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>U.S. celebrates its bicentennial as a nation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aaron Douglas dies</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jimmy Carter is elected president of the U.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles White dies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hale Woodruff dies</td>
<td>1979</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. Embassy in Iran is seized by Islamic militants, who take 90 hostages</td>
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<td></td>
<td>President Carter and Soviet Premier Brezhnev sign SALT II treaty, cutting nuclear armaments</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arthur Lewis wins Nobel Prize for Economics</td>
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<td>1980</td>
<td>Marva Collins, creator of the innovative Preparatory School in one of the poorest Chicago areas, is named Educator of the Year by Phi Delta Kappa</td>
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<td></td>
<td>U.S. boycotts Olympic Games in Moscow to protest Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Black public-broadcasting TV station is launched at Howard University in Washington, D.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ronald Reagan elected president of the U.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE ARTS</td>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>CONTEMPORARY EVENTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Martin Puryear’s <em>Sanctuary</em></td>
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<td>1982 Congress votes to extend the Civil Rights Act of 1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• August Wilson’s play <em>Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom</em> opens; later becomes Wilson’s first play on Broadway</td>
<td></td>
<td>1983 • U.S. invades Grenada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Jacob Lawrence is elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sally Ride is the first woman in space</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Alice Walker’s novel <em>The Color Purple</em>, wins the Pulitzer Prize</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Astronaut Guion S. Bluford, Jr. participates in a mission on the Challenger, first African American astronaut in space</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Michael Jackson releases <em>Thriller</em>, which becomes top-selling album in music history with over 40 million copies sold</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday declared a federal holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The High Museum of Art in Atlanta opens <em>African American Art</em> exhibition</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Harold Washington is the first African American elected mayor of Chicago</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <em>The Cosby Show</em> premieres</td>
<td></td>
<td>1984 • Ronald Reagan reelected to second term as president of the U.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The Art Institute of Chicago exhibits <em>Sharing Traditions: Five Black Artists in Nineteenth-Century America</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Johnson Publishing company, publisher of <em>Ebony</em> and <em>Jet</em> tops, <em>Black Enterprise</em> magazine’s list of the 100 leading black firms in the U.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Apollo Theater in Harlem reopens after renovation continuing the tradition of providing a venue for African American entertainers</td>
<td></td>
<td>• General Collin Powell heads Joint Chiefs of Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <em>Harlem Renaissance: Art of Black America</em> a major touring show premiers at The Studio Museum in Harlem</td>
<td></td>
<td>1985 • Rueben V. Anderson becomes the first African American judge to sit on the Mississippi Supreme Court</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Rita Dove wins Pulitzer Prize for her poem <em>Thomas and Beulah</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>• The first annual National Black Arts Festival is held in Georgia</td>
<td></td>
<td>1987 • Reagan Administration mired in controversy over the alleged swap of arms for hostages in Iran</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Martin Puryear wins first prize at the São Paulo Biennial in Brazil</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Mae C. Jemison is the first African American woman accepted into the U.S. space program</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Chicago’s Museum of Science and Industry exhibits <em>Black Creativity 1989: Juried Art Exhibition of Black Artists</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Publisher John H. Johnson is named “Businessman of the Decade” by <em>Black Enterprise</em> magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Richmond Barthé dies</td>
<td></td>
<td>1988 • George Bush elected president of the U.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Spike Lee’s film <em>Do the Right Thing</em> meets critical and commercial success</td>
<td></td>
<td>• First transatlantic optical fiber telephone cable to enter service links France, the UK and the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Jacob Lawrence receives the National Medal of Arts from President Bush</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Clarence Page of the <em>Chicago Tribune</em> is the first African American columnist to win the Pulitzer Prize for commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Southeastern Center for Contemporary Arts in North Carolina presents <em>Next Generation: Southern Black Aesthetic</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Douglas Wilder elected Governor of Virginia, the state’s first African American Governor</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska</td>
<td></td>
<td>1989 • Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska</td>
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<tr>
<td>• President Bush sends U.S. troops to Kuwait for Operation Desert Shield</td>
<td></td>
<td>1990 • Black Expo, a national annual networking and recruiting convention of black entrepreneurs is held in Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE ARTS</td>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>CONTEMPORARY EVENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Archibald J. Motley, Jr. retrospective opens at the Chicago Historical Society</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>• President Bush and Premier Gorbachev of the Soviet Union sign the historic Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Martin Puryear retrospective opens at The Art Institute of Chicago</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Rodney King, stopped by Los Angeles police while driving his car, is videotaped being beaten, which later creates a public outcry</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Romare Bearden Retrospective at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Bill Clinton is elected president of the U.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Jacob Lawrence's Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman series, at The Art Institute of Chicago</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>• The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute opens in Alabama, featuring exhibits that commemorate the struggle for civil rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Jacob Lawrence's Migration series is exhibited at the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C. for the first time in twenty years.</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>• Ronald Brown appointed U.S. Commerce Secretary</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Toni Morrison wins the Nobel Prize in Literature for Beloved</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Jocelyn Elders appointed Surgeon General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I Tell My Heart: The Art Of Horace Pippin, at The Art Institute of Chicago</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>• 30 years after Medgar Ever’s death, his killer is found guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Kerry James Marshall’s Many Mansions</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 50th Anniversary of the United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series, held at the Chicago Historical Society</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>• 100th Anniversary of Labor Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The White House buys Henry Ossawa Tanner's Sand Dunes at Sunset, from 1885</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>• 50th Anniversary of the end of World War II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Statue of jazz legend Duke Ellington unveiled in Central Park, New York</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>• Reflections on their Ancestors—100th anniversary of Booker T. Washington’s famous compromise speech at the 1895 Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wynton Marsalis wins the Pulitzer Prize in Music for his Oratorio Blood on the Fields</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Commerce Secretary, Ron Brown killed in plane crash in Bosnia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opera Amistad premieres at Lyric Opera, Chicago</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Bill Clinton reelected president</td>
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SLIDE ONE

Samuel J. Miller
(Frederick Douglass)

1. A daguerreotype is an early photograph, yet poet Ralph Waldo Emerson said that daguerreotypes allowed the sitter to paint him- or herself. What does this mean? How did Douglass “paint himself”? What visual clues in the daguerreotype reveal Douglass’s temperament? Ask students to consider how they would convey their personality in a photographic portrait; what objects would they hold? What directions would they give the photographer? If cameras are available, have students photograph one another, following directions given by the sitter.

2. “Judge me not by the heights to which I’ve risen, but by the depths from which I have come,” declared Douglass. Have students create a timeline of Douglass’s life, drawing information from this manual and his 1845 Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave. Add to the timeline events in American history, with emphasis on milestones in the fight to conquer slavery and racism.

3. Frederick Douglass was a captivating speaker, delivering impassioned speeches about the injustices of slavery and racism to audiences around the country. Share some of his speeches with your students and discuss why they are effective. Have students pick an issue about which they are impassioned to serve as the subject of a speech that each can write and present to the class.

4. After the abolition of slavery, Douglass said “We have been turned out of the house of bondage, but we have not yet been fully admitted to the glorious temple of American liberty.” If Douglass were alive today, what would he think about the progress made towards stamping out racism in the United States? Have students discuss.

SLIDE TWO

Henry Ossawa Tanner

1. Describe and discuss the expressions of the two men. Have two students pose as the two figures recreating their body postures, hand gestures and facial expressions. (If costume and makeup are available, recreate their ages and dress.) Have the rest of the class assist the students in moving into the stances. How do the two students feel when in the positions? Have the rest of the class discuss their responses watching the two students assume the characters’ poses. Are both figures feeling and responding in the same way? Is this scene a public or private moment? Is it an emotional or spiritual event? Have students perform an appropriate dialogue.

2. Describe the light in this painting. Where is it coming from and what does it illuminate? Have students investigate the effects of different kinds of light on a still life setting. On a table arrange objects such as rocks, cloth, etc., or items from the classroom. Illuminate them with different kinds of light such as a candle, a flashlight, fluorescents, holiday lights, or different color bulbs. Perform this experiment at different times throughout the day to capture changing light effects. Have students write a description of the different moods lighting creates. What mood do they think Tanner was hoping to create in Two Disciples?

3. This painting depicts an event from the ancient biblical Middle East. Have your students be archeologists and “collect” evidence by making a list of everything in this painting such as clothes, tomb, door, hair styles, and lighting. Make a chart with the headings “modern” and “ancient times” and chart the evidence in the painting under the above five categories. Have students discuss if there is enough evidence in the painting to indicate that this event takes place in ancient times. Have students list other “artifacts” that could have been added to confirm the time and location of the event.

4. This painting is based on writings on Christ’s life in the book of John found in the Bible. As a class, choose a book to read (see bibliography). Assign each student a chapter of the book to illustrate. Have students hang the illustrations around the room sequentially and discuss the stories each illustration represents.

SLIDE THREE

Hale Woodruff

1. Woodruff worked very hard to save enough money to attend art school, scrubbing carpets, washing dishes, and shoveling coal. Which other artists in this manual struggled or made great sacrifices to pursue their dreams? Talk with students about the challenges and rewards of hard work. What goals do they have in their lives and how will they strive to achieve them?
2. Woodruff's *Twilight* is both beautiful and forceful. Explore with students the artist's use of color, brushstroke, and perspective in creating this powerful scene. Assign students the challenge of composing poems about dusk that capture the same vitality and strength.

3. When Woodruff lived in France from 1927 - 1931, he met artist Henry Ossawa Tanner (see pages 17-21). Have students imagine a conversation between them about their choices of subject matter, working methods, and missions as artists.

4. Woodruff participated in both the Harlem Renaissance and Mexican mural movement. After learning about each in this manual, explore with students the similarities that exist between these two creative periods when the arts flourished. Consider the impetus, mission, and products of each movement.

SLIDE FOUR

Aaron Douglas

1. Of Douglas's rhythmic images, the artist said "I tried to paint the sounds from hymns, chants, lullabies, and work songs." In this study, what sounds do students imagine? How did Douglas evoke them? Ask students to compare these sounds with those that Archibald J. Motley, Jr.'s Nightlife (see pages 44-48) evokes.

2. Harlem Renaissance spokesperson Alain Locke declared that "nothing is more galvanizing to a people than a sense of their cultural past." Have students investigate their own cultural past and the struggles, triumphs, and traditions that have impacted their lives today. Have students design studies for a mural on some aspect of their heritage.

3. Douglas is said to be the first African American artist that consciously used African imagery, culture, and history as inspiration for his work. Using the Art Institute collection of African art and related teaching manuals, explore with students this rich influence and its evidence in Douglas's art.

4. Douglas was one of many artists who completed murals under WPA sponsorship. Have the students investigate WPA murals in their community—in schools, post offices, or other buildings that serve the public. How do these murals compare with Study for Aspects of Negro Life: The Negro in an African Setting in subject matter and style? What relevance did/do they have to the community?

5. Read the Langston Hughes poem below and discuss it in relation to Douglas's study. How do the words and composition create the same image and rhythm as the painting?

*African Dance*

The low beating of the tom-toms,  
The slow beating of the tom-toms,  
Low....slow  
Slow....low -  
Stirs your blood.

Dance!  
A night-veiled girl  
Whirls softly into a
Circle of light.
Whirls softly...slowly,
Like a wisp of smoke around the fire -
And the tom-toms beat,
And the tom-toms beat,
And the low beating of the tom-toms
Stirs your blood.

SLIDES FIVE AND SIX

Walter Ellison
1. Have students list as many words as they can find in the painting. When the words are found, have them answer these questions:
   1) South-bound: White people are on their way south for vacation. How are they dressed?
   2) Miami: This city is in the South. Why was Miami a popular vacation spot?
   3) Trains North: African Americans are traveling north to find freedom and jobs. How might they feel about their journey?
   4) Chicago: What kinds of jobs did blacks find in this northern city?
   5) Detroit: What kinds of jobs did they find there?
   6) Exit: Where might this door lead?
   7) Colored: When this painting was made, public places in the South had segregated facilities, such as restrooms. What do students think about the Jim Crow laws?
   8) W.W.E.: Why did the artist include his initials on a suitcase?
   9) Walter Ellison: This is the artist’s signature. What was his connection to the subject of this painting?

2. Have students write a story based upon the painting, selecting one character and describing his/her journey and wishes.

3. The subject of this painting is based on the Great Migration (1910-1970), when more than six million African Americans left the South in search of economic opportunities and personal freedom in the North. For centuries, people from around the world have taken journeys for similar reasons. Have students research the history of their family’s journey to their present home. With a map of the world, use colored yarn and push pins to trace the paths that their families have traveled. When possible, have students interview family members who have migrated about their experiences.

4. On a very small canvas, Ellison depicted a complex story with a wealth of visual information. Explore with students the composition of Train Station. How did Ellison divide the canvas and present a clear narrative?

SLIDE SEVEN

Jacob Lawrence
1. Lawrence uses diagonals in Free Clinic to create a sense of depth and movement. Have students compare this compositional device with diagonals in works by Hale Woodruff, Walter Ellison, and Archibald J. Motley, Jr. in this manual. Have students compose pictures with perspective created through the use of diagonals.
2. "My pictures express my life," said Jacob Lawrence. "I paint the things I have experienced." Have students create scenes of the people, places, and incidents that they experience in their community.

3. Lawrence has created epic narrative series of historic figures such as Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass. Have students research a figure from American history and determine 8 to 10 scenes from his/her life to depict. In keeping with Lawrence's working methods, have students fill in their drawings color by color and write narratives to accompany their pictures. (Suggestion: Depict the life of Frederick Douglass, as outlined on pages 12-16.)

4. A critic once said that Lawrence's subjects are "an expression of his belief in man's continuing strength." How is this painting, with its subject of illness and poverty, about strength? Have students discuss.

**SLIDE EIGHT**

**Horace Pippin**

1. Pippin painted several pictures of events and places that he never witnessed, such as Armistice Day, the end of World War I in 1918, and the South. How do his paintings differ from the realities? Which works of art in this manual are products of the artists' imaginations? Which are based on memory? And which are the result of direct observation?

2. Have students research the all-black 369th Regiment in which Pippin served during World War I in France.

3. Pippin was an unschooled artist who received no formal training in painting. Are there elements in *Cabin in the Cotton* that appear to be naïve or awkward? Given his lack of training, why did Pippin receive great accolades for his work? Why is it appreciated by museums today? (This relates to the 20th-century belief that the unschooled artist is closer to the source of inspiration, instead of being laden with the techniques and concerns of the art world.)

3. Relate the following Langston Hughes poem to *Cabin in the Cotton*. Consider subject matter and the importance of storytelling in Pippin's life.

*Aunt Sue's Stories*

Aunt Sue has a head full of stories.
Aunt Sue has a whole heart full of stories.
Summer nights on the front porch
Aunt Sue cuddles a brown-faced child to her bosom
And tells him stories.

Black slaves
Working in the hot sun,
And black slaves
Walking in the dewy night,
And black slaves
Singing sorrow songs on the banks of a mighty river
Mingle themselves softly
In the flow of old Aunt Sue’s voice,
Mingle themselves softly
In the dark shadows that cross and recross
Aunt Sue’s stories.

And the dark-faced child, listening,
Knows that Aunt Sue’s stories are real stories.
He knows that Aunt Sue
Never got her stories out of any book at all,
But that they came
Right out of her own life.

And the dark-faced child is quiet
Of a summer night
Listening to Aunt Sue’s stories.

4. Have students examine the application of paint on *Cabin in the Cotton*. How do the varied surfaces that Pippin created relate to the objects that they depict?

**SLIDE NINE**

**Richmond Barthé**

1. Ask students to study the body of *The Boxer*. How did Barthé endow it with grace and strength? Consider his choice of materials and the manipulation and pose of the figure. On a visit to the Art Institute, compare *The Boxer* with the sculpture *Hercules and Lichas*, c. 1590, after Giovanni Da Bologna. Discuss each artist’s familiarity with anatomy and ability to sculpt a figure in athletic motion.

2. *The Boxer* is a figure in the round; a viewer can examine all angles of the sculpture by walking around it. Challenge students to imagine and draw what the figure of this athlete might look like from another viewpoint. Or, have a student assume an athletic pose in the middle of the classroom for other students to draw from various angles.

3. When this sculpture was made, African Americans were banned from playing all professional sports except boxing. Today, many of the top athletes in the United States are black. Have students discuss this change and its impact on racism. Has it been entirely positive or has it created new stereotypes which must be challenged?

4. Have students compare *The Boxer* with Richard Hunt’s *Hero Construction* (see pages 61-63). Consider materials, production, and choice of subject matter. Do both sculptures depict heroes? As a creative writing exercise, have students imagine a conversation between the two sculptures; what would the boxer and the hero say to one another about their battles and triumphs?

**SLIDE TEN**

**Archibald J. Motley, Jr.**

1. How does Motley convey the spirit of the scene through the organization within the picture? The nightclub is filled with energy and motion. How does he create a sense of rhythm and movement? Motley creates a visual rhythm that makes the painting pulsate and vibrate by using contrasting diagonals and parallels. Discuss how he
places the swinging dancers, juggling waiters and seated patrons to convey swaying movement.

2. In 1914, School of The Art Institute of Chicago instructor George Walcott taught Motley “composition with color.” Color harmony is created when complementary colors are placed next to each other, which intensifies each color by contrast (i.e. red and green). Each pair has a warm and cool color. Cool colors usually slow down the viewer’s pulse rate. Warm colors stimulate the viewer’s pulse rate. On canvas, Motley would color each background area, then select and color spaces using colors of varying intensity.

While looking at Motley’s Nightlife, have students work in groups and section off the painting into six equal parts. Assign each group a section of the painting and have them find complementary color pairs. Does Motley always pair a color with its complement or does he sometimes mix-up the pairs (e.g. yellow with blue instead of purple)? Is there a balance of warm and cool colors? Using paints, have students record the color pairs found in their section.

3. Jazz was an important part of urban entertainment in Motley’s lifetime (1891-1981). The subject matter and titles of his paintings, such as Hot Rhythm, Stomp, Black and Tan Cabaret, and Syncopation, reflect the music scene of the time. Have students look up “jazz” terms (syncopation, improvisation, swing, bop, rhythm, polyrhythms). Using these terms, have students design and write a newspaper ad for this urban club.

4. Have your class listen to songs like Mood Indigo, Sophisticated Lady, Black and Tan Fantasy, Mahogany Hall Stomp, and It Don’t Mean a Thing If It Ain’t Got That Swing. While listening to the music, have students describe the colors the music seems to express. Describe the mood the music creates. What instruments can students identify? Does one or more of the instruments carry the melody? Is there more than one melody? What instrument(s) play out the rhythm(s)? Are there any instrumental solos? Have students relate these concepts to the painting. Does there seem to be a “melody” carried by a color or a line? What colors, lines, or shapes provide a sense of “musical composition” in the painting?

5. The artistic expressions in music, dance, literature and the visual arts were all part of the Harlem Renaissance experience. Artist Archibald Motley, Jr. and musician Bud Freeman, for example, demonstrated that the “Renaissance” went beyond Harlem and took place in Chicago as well. Writer Langston Hughes likewise centered his poems and stories around his cultural heritage, music, and the urban scene. Below is an excerpted conversation from Hughes’s story In The Dark set in a Chicago club from the book Chicago Stories:

“What you know, daddy-o?’ hailed Simple.
“Where have you been so long lately?” I demanded.
“Chicago on my last two War Bonds,” answered Simple, “to see my Cousin Art’s new baby to which I am godfather—against the wife’s will, because she is holy and sanctified.”
“What is the trend of affairs in Chicago?” I inquired....

While viewing Nightlife, have students choose two or three people and write a conversation between them. Have students look carefully at their expressions, gestures, and placement to develop the dialogue.
6. The social, political and artistic events that occurred during Motley's lifetime determined many of his projects. He helped establish the South Side Community Art Center which brought art to the neighborhood by providing free education in the arts and crafts. Have students investigate additional South Side Community Center artists such as Marion Perkins, or other Chicagoans who were involved with community organizations and businesses. These could include: Provident Hospital, Wabash Avenue YMCA, the Negro Business League and newspapers, including the Chicago Whip, the Chicago Defender, and the magazine Ebony. What long-term influence have these people, organizations and events had on Chicago? Have students write articles, cartoons, editorials and columns on one of the above and combine and create a classroom newspaper.

**SLIDE ELEVEN**

**Beauford Delaney**

1. Writer James Baldwin said that Delaney comprehended “more totally than anyone I know—the tremendous reality of the light which comes out of darkness.” Ask students to interpret this statement, looking to Delaney's art and life for possible meaning.

2. As author Henry Miller recalled about the artist and his paintings, he was “poor in everything but pigment. With pigment he was lavish as a millionaire.” Have students study Delaney's *Self-Portrait* and comment on his selection, juxtaposition, and blending of color. What adjectives describe the colors, and how do these adjectives compare with those that students might use to describe the artist as he portrayed himself?

3. Delaney, like many painters, was friendly with a number of writers. How are visual art and writing similar? Why might these two types of artists benefit from and enjoy each other’s friendship?

4. Delaney was one of several 20th-century African American artists who spent part of his life in Paris. What did the city offer blacks and, specifically, black artists that the United States did not? Beginning with information from this manual, have students research the motives of African American artists who moved to Paris in the early and mid-1900s and the degree of acceptance that they found there.

**SLIDE TWELVE**

**Marion Perkins**

1. Perkins found many of his stones for sculptures at demolition sites. What other artist in this manual used materials that he found (in junkyards) to create his art? Have students make works of art from objects—natural or manufactured—that they find in their neighborhoods.

2. Ask students to imagine a conversation between *Man of Sorrows* and the woman in Elizabeth Catlett's *Sharecropper* (see pages 64-66), referring to their facial expressions, information in the manual, and knowledge about the subjects. What would they have in common? What stories would they tell? What comfort or advice would they offer one another?

3. As an artist, Perkins had the “desire to uplift his people” and “demolish the stereo-
type which persists in being cherished in the minds of white America.” Do other artists in the manual share this mission? Who? How have they expressed it in their art?

4. Have students relate the Langston Hughes poem below to *Man of Sorrows*. What does the crown symbolize in both the poem and sculpture?

   \begin{quote}
   \textit{Prayer}
   
   I ask you this:
   
   Which way to go?
   
   I ask you this:
   
   Which sin to bear?
   
   Which crown to put
   
   Upon my hair?
   
   I do not know,
   
   Lord God,
   
   I do not know.
   \end{quote}

**SLIDE THIRTEEN**

**Charles White**

1. This drawing is made with charcoal. Charcoal, produced by reducing wood to carbon in heated chambers, is cut into pieces. Charcoal can be used to create the structure of a work and establish a variety of tones. Charcoal drawings are often protected from smudging by the application of a fixative. After being applied, charcoal can also be changed by a method of erasing. Erasing is done by using a piece of bread or a kneaded eraser and rubbing it across the surface. These methods can be used in the final stages of making a drawing to accentuate lines or strengthen certain areas.

   Have students become familiar with charcoal and erasers. Provide students with these materials and drawing paper. Have students choose a section of *Harvest Talk* to recreate using charcoal and erasing. Have students practice the same section a few times. Discuss their experience.

2. Charles White used many values in this drawing. The term value is used in art to describe the lightness or darkness of lines, shapes, and colors. Artists can use many values (figure A) or a few (figure B). Look carefully at sections of *Harvest Talk*. Locate at least five different values.

   Artists use values in various ways. White has shaded objects to make them look three-dimensional (not flat). Shading is a very gradual change from light to dark values. Describe where you see shading in *Harvest Talk*. How does White’s use of value affect the work’s meaning?
3. Charles White wanted to reach African Americans with artworks that would give them confidence and pride in themselves. White’s hero is the everyday person who lives his life in dignity. What characteristics of a hero does he portray? How is this achieved through pose, setting, or facial expression? Does the artist make a social comment? Have students discuss a current social issue in their school such as cheating, gangs, discrimination or drugs. Have students design a poster that takes a stand for a cause or social concern.

4. Discuss how the artist placed the two figures in the picture frame. The figures are so large that the hat of one worker is cut off and his strong arm looks as though it is resting on the edge of the frame. How does their placement in the frame make us think about these two workers? (They are larger than life, prominent men, strong in muscle, and strong in character.)

5. Have your students be researchers. Imagine scholars are disputing the title Harvest Talk and are claiming it depicts a different season. Have your students provide evidence found in this painting that supports the original title. Have students chart their careful observations, noting the types of clouds, strength, and direction of the wind in the field, dress of the workers, describe the tool and its purpose, describe the field and what stage it is in, such as plowed for planting or tall crops for cutting. Place these workers in the same scene in a different season.

**Roy DeCarava**

1. DeCarava photographed Harlem through its people—“...going to work, coming home from work, at play, in the streets, talking, kidding, laughing, in the home, in the playgrounds, in the schools, bars, stores, libraries, beauty parlors, churches, etc.” In the spirit of The Sweet Flypaper of Life, ask students to photograph their neighborhood through its people and compose poems to accompany the photographs.

2. Jazz music inspired DeCarava and many other artists discussed in this manual. While looking at works by such painters as Lawrence, Motley, and Bearden, play jazz and ask students to note similarities between the visual arts and music in composition and mood.

3. Have students discuss photography as an art form. Where does the artistry lie? In the eye and mind of the photographer? In the capabilities of the camera and the dark room? Have students debate its validity as an art form compared to that of painting or sculpture.

**SLIDE FOURTEEN**

**Richard Hunt**

1. What material did Hunt use for Hero Construction and how did he put it together? Why do you think Hunt called this sculpture Hero Construction? Would you give it a different title? Think about some of the qualities a hero displays such as strength, bravery and leadership. List other qualities. How does this figure represent those characteristics? What is this figure’s heroic deed?

Have students act as speech writers for this hero. Choose an issue for him to speak about. What will he say, where will he give the speech and who will be its audience?
Will he call people to action? What kind of action? Have them write a brief one-page speech.

2. This sculpture is made up of found objects that originally served another purpose. Have students collect found objects of all materials, organic and manmade, and construct a sculpture. The sculpture can be a figure, machine, landscape, etc. Ask students to explain their choice of objects and what the new composite expresses.

3. Using images from magazines and newspapers, have students compose a collage of a modern superhero. Have students write an account of the hero's background and accomplishments to go with the collage figure. What physical and supernatural qualities will it possess?

4. Have students start an oral history project about a hero from their family, school, or neighborhood. As a class, develop questions to be asked and a list of people to be interviewed, and record responses using notes or a video or audio tape. Describe the occupations and actions of these individuals, citing specifically what makes them heroes.

5. Have students choose another work from this manual that represents a hero or heroic deed. Have students outline their reasons for their choice and present their argument to the class, discussing how the artist successfully portrays a hero or heroic deed. Have the class vote if they are persuaded.

**SLIDE FIFTEEN**

**Elizabeth Catlett**

1. When Catlett printed *Sharecropper* thirteen years after she cut the linoleum block, its subject still had great relevance in the United States. Would the subject of rural impoverishment and backward social conditions have validity today? Have students research and discuss.

2. Given the information on Catlett's commitment to social issues as well as that of the Taller de Grafica Popular, why was printmaking an appropriate artistic process for them? Have students cite examples of the dissemination and effectiveness of printed material in today's culture.

3. Catlett's artistic and racial sensitivities were developed throughout her life by a number of key individuals as well as by various policies, programs, and movements that she experienced. Have students research one of the following influences: Grant Wood, Charles White, the Taller de Grafica Popular, or President Johnson's "Great Society" program.

4. Catlett studied with American artist Grant Wood in 1940. Have students compare *Sharecropper* and *American Gothic* (in the Art Institute collection) and discuss similarities in style, subject, and intent.
SLIDE SIXTEEN

Alma Thomas

1. Have students make a list (or timeline) of some of the dramatic changes that Thomas might have witnessed during her long life from 1891 to 1978. Consider advances in science and technology and the rights of women and African Americans. Have students imagine the changes that they might experience in the twenty-first century.

2. In *Starry Night with Astronauts*, Thomas depicts in her mosaic-like style the sunlit sky and Apollo 10 spacecraft as seen from the ground. Have students imagine the view of the earth from the Apollo 10 spacecraft and produce paintings using a technique similar to Thomas’s.

3. Thomas has much in common with American artist Georgia O’Keeffe (1887-1986). Both lived long lives at approximately the same time and both were interested in nature and space. Have students research O’Keeffe’s life and art and compare her work to Thomas’s paintings.

4. The title *Starry Night with Astronauts* may refer to Vincent van Gogh’s (1853-1890) painting *Starry Night*, 1889. Have students look at the reproduction of van Gogh’s work on page 68 and note similarities to Thomas’s painting. What adjectives describe the sky in each work? What would be the experience of traveling through each sky? How did each artist handle the paint brush and paint?

SLIDE SEVENTEEN

Romare Bearden

1. As an artform, collage can be regarded as a metaphor for community: bits of paper, material, and other items are brought together to create one work of art while still retaining their individual identities. In the same way, people come together and create a community, bringing with them their own experiences, ideas, and talents. Ask the class to produce a collage with the theme of community. The entire project must be a joint effort, from the collection of materials to the design of the work of art. Upon completion, discuss with students the challenges and benefits of working collaboratively.

2. Bearden said: “In my work, if anything I seek connections so that my paintings can’t be only what they appear to represent.” Why might the artist have selected the subject of Odysseus’s return for a collage? What might the story represent to Bearden? to African Americans?

3. Have students discuss Bearden’s ability as a visual storyteller. How did he depict the narrative of Odysseus’s return? Compare his storytelling techniques with those of Renaissance artist Giovann di Paolo in his *Ulysses* panel in the Art Institute’s collection.

4. Bearden and many other artists introduced in this manual were deeply affected by the civil rights movement of the mid-1960s in this country. Have students research this turbulent period in American history. Who were the leaders? How was the common man involved? What was the movement’s mission and how successful was it in achieving its goals? What works of art in this manual are expressions of these goals?
SLIDE EIGHTEEN

Martin Puryear

1. Have students compose a diamante poem for Lever 1. The format of a diamante poem is as follows:

   line 1: a single word that describes the work of art
   line 2: an action phrase based on something you see in the work
   line 3: a comparison between something in the artwork and something else in the world
   line 4: another word that comes to mind when looking at the work of art

2. Puryear builds, rather than sculpts, his works of art. Have students explore this distinction in working methods, comparing his sculptures with those in this manual by Barthé, Perkins, and Hunt.

3. Look at the sculpture entitled Sanctuary. What is a sanctuary? Why might Puryear have given this sculpture its name? Have students create their own sanctuaries in sculpture and discuss their choice of materials and design.

4. As an artist, Puryear has chosen not to address African American subject matter. His heritage, however, has affected his work and his philosophy as an artist. How? Ask students to consider how their cultural and/or racial backgrounds have influenced their values and lives.

SLIDE NINETEEN

Lorna Simpson

1. Have students review the words “backlash,” “backbone,” “background,” “backache,” and “backpay” in this work by Simpson. What associations do these terms provoke about race and gender?

2. Refer to the five words in Simpson’s text panels and quoted in exercise #1. Are any of them suggested in the other works of African American art in this manual? How have various artists interpreted these loaded terms and communicated their significance?

3. Discuss the notion of a conceptual approach to art. How is the experience of viewing and understanding Outline different from that of looking at and comprehending a work by Tanner, Motley, or Pippin? What must the viewer bring to each experience? Have students debate the artistic merit of Outline versus art that is narrative.

4. Simpson strives to give blacks and females a voice—to let these culturally, historically, economically silent and passive individuals finally “talk back.” Have each student pick one of the five words in Outline as the basis for a written or verbal monologue in which a fictional African American or woman “talks back” about his/her experience with the term.
SLIDE TWENTY

Kerry James Marshall

1. Ask students what they know about housing projects or life in the inner city. Is it from their own experience? Where or from whom have they learned this information? How does this painting support or challenge what they think or know to be true about places like Stateway Gardens?

2. Kerry James Marshall decided to be an artist after an episode as a child in which his kindergarten teacher showed him painted postcards and pictures from magazines. How many other artists highlighted in the manual were inspired early in their lives to pursue the visual arts? Discuss with students their professional ambitions; can they attribute their interests to any early experience or contact with specific individuals?

3. “IL 2-22”, the official registration number for Stateway Gardens, has been painted prominently by the artist. Why? Have students discuss the link between addresses and identity. Do different streets, neighborhoods, or cities conjure up different pictures in their minds? By what other means (cars, clothing, belongings, etc.) is status perceived?

4. Relate the following excerpt from a poem by Maya Angelou to Many Mansions:

from On the Pulse of Morning

Women, children, men
Take it into the palms of your hands,
Mold it into the shape of your most
Private need. Sculpt it into
The image of your most public self.
Lift up your hearts
Each new hour holds new chances
For a new beginning.
Do not be wedged forever
To fear, yoked eternally
To brutishness.

The horizon leans forward,
Offering you space
To place new steps of change
Here, on the pulse of this fine day
You may have the courage
To look up and out and upon me,
The Rock, the River, the Tree, your country.
No less to Midas than the mendicant.
No less to you now than the mastodon then.

Here on the pulse of this new day
You may have the grace to look up and out
And into your sister's eyes,
And into your brother's face,
Your country,
And say simply
Very simply
With hope -
Good morning.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Exhibition Catalogues


BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR STUDENTS


List of African American Artists Represented in The Art Institute of Chicago's Permanent Collection

Note: This is not a comprehensive list but a sample of African American artists represented in the permanent collection of The Art Institute of Chicago.

| Abernathy, Billy          | Lawrence, Jacob  |
| American, b. 1938        | American, b. 1917 |
| Barthé, Richmond          | Lewis, Edmonia    |
| American, 1901-1989       | American, 1845-1890 |
| Bearden, Romare Howard    | Middlebrook, Willie Robert |
| American, 1914-1988       | American, b. 1957 |
| Chatman, Larry            | Morrison, Keith   |
| American, b. 1931         | American, b. Jamaica 1942 |
| Coppin, Kerry             | Morley, Archibald John, Jr. |
| American, born 1953       | American, 1891-1981 |
| Cortez, Eldzier           | Parks, Gordon     |
| American, b. 1916         | American, born 1912 |
| Crite, Allan Rohan        | Perkins, Marion   |
| American, b. 1910         | American, 1908-1961 |
| DeCarava, Roy             | Phillips, Bertrand D. |
| American, born 1919       | American, b. 1938 |
| Delaney, Beauford         | Piper, Adrian     |
| American, 1901-1979       | American, b. 1948 |
| Delaney, Joseph           | Pippin, Horace    |
| American, 1904-1991       | American, 1888-1946 |
| Douglas, Aaron            | Puryear, Martin   |
| American, 1899-1979       | American, b. 1941 |
| Elisonof, Eliot           | Simpson, Lorna    |
| American, 1911 - 1973     | American, b. 1960 |
| Ellison, Walter W.        | Tanner, Henry Ossawa |
| American, 1899-1977       | American, 1859-1937 |
| Evans, Minnie             | Thomas, Alma      |
| American, 1892-1987       | American, 1891-1978 |
| Freeman, Roland           | Thompson, Bob     |
| American, b. 1936         | American, 1937-1966 |
| Gilliam, Sam              | West, Edward      |
| American, b. 1933         | American, b. 1949 |
| Gwathmey, Robert          | White, Charles Wilbert |
| American, 1903-1988       | American, 1918-1979 |
| Harper, William A.        | Wilson, Robert Earl |
| American, 1873-1910       | American, b. 1936 |
| Hartt, David              | Woodruff, Hale    |
| Canadian, b. 1967         | American, 1900-1980 |
| Landry, John              | Yoakum, Joseph E.  |
| American, 1912-1986       | American, 1886-1972 |
A.R.T. (Art Resources in Teaching), 18 South Michigan Avenue, #1004, Chicago, IL 60603 (312) 332-0355. Offers six-week residencies to Chicago public elementary schools in painting, sculpture, public sculpture, architecture, photography, and world cultures.

The Art Institute of Chicago, The Elizabeth Stone Robson Teacher Resource Center, 111 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603 (312) 443-3719. Teaching materials that introduce art from all over the world are available.

Chicago Children's Museum, Navy Pier, 600 East Grand, Chicago, IL 60611, (312) 527-1000. Interactive exhibitions include “Face to Face,” addressing prejudice and discrimination.

Chicago Cultural Center, 78 East Washington St., Chicago, IL 60602, (312) 744-6630. Exhibits include “Perspective in African American Art,” a national collection of contemporary visual art works.

Chicago Historical Society, 1601 North Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60614, (312) 642-4600. Devoted to collecting, interpreting, and presenting the rich multicultural history of Chicago and Illinois through exhibitions, programs, collections and publications.

Chicago Public Art Group, 1255 S. Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60605, (312) 427-2724 Call for information about public art in Chicago.

Elliott Donnelley Youth Center, 3947 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60653, (773) 268-3815. Mural by Marcus Akinlana, The Great Migration. Kiela Songhay Smith and Rene Townsend made a concrete fresco of African American designs for the sculpture garden, which includes art by Mr. Imagination, David Phelp and Kevin Orth.

DuSable Museum of African American History, 740 East 56th Place, Chicago, IL 60637, (312) 947-0600. The Museum contains a unique collection of rare artifacts, art, and a 10,000 volume library on African American life, history, and culture.

Field Museum, Roosevelt Road at Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60605, (312) 922-9410 Permanent exhibits at this natural history museum include Africa and Inside Ancient Egypt.

Harold Washington Library Center, 400 South State Street, (312) 747-4050. Permanent exhibition that documents Mayor Washington's political life, and artwork throughout the building by 19 African American artists.

Marwen Foundation, 325 West Huron, Suite 215, Chicago, IL 60610, (312) 944-2418. Provides visual arts education, college planning, and career development programs free to Chicago’s under-served youth in grades 7-12.

May Weber Museum of Cultural Arts, 299 East Ontario Street, Chicago, IL 60611, (312) 787-4477. Changing exhibitions present objects from cultures throughout the world.

Oriental Institute Museum, 1155 E. 58th Street, Chicago, IL 60637, (773) 702-9521. Contains a comprehensive collection of artifacts from Egypt and the Ancient Near East. Exhibits provide a glimpse of daily life, industry, ancient religion, and writing systems.

A. Philip Randolph Pullman Porters Museum, 10406 South Maryland Ave, Chicago, IL 60628, (773) 928-3933. Exhibits tell the stories of the early African American railroad workers who settled in the Chicago area.

South Side Community Art Center, 3831 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60633, (773) 373-1026. A neighborhood facility for art exhibitions, art and music classes, poetry workshops, photography shows, and jazz concerts available for school group visits.


Urban Gateways, 105 West Adams Street, 9th floor, Chicago, IL 60603, (312) 922-0440. Brings performances, workshops, and artist residencies to schools.

Urban Tradition, 55 East Jackson Street, #1880, Chicago, IL 60604 (312) 663-5400. School programs focus on exploring cultural heritage's and provide tools for incorporating such explorations into a basic curriculum.

ADDITIONAL CULTURAL RESOURCES can be found in the following publications:

The Guide to Black Chicago, a resource guide to Black cultural, historical, and educational points of interest. Published by The Guide Group, 843 West Van Buren, Suite 378, Chicago, IL 60607, (312) 509-6815.

Illinois Generations, a traveler's guide to African American heritage. Available through the Chicago Convention and Tourism Bureau, 2301 S. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60616, (312) 567-8500.
AFRICAN AMERICAN MANUAL

Slides [Indicated in Text]

1. SAMUEL J. MILLER
American, c. 1817-1895
Frederick Douglass
Daguerreotype (6 x 3¾ in.)
Major Acquisition, Centennial Endowment, 1996.433

2. HENRY OSSAWA TANNER
American, 1859-1937; worked in France from 1891
The Two Disciples at the Tomb, c. 1906
Oil on canvas (51 x 41 ¾ in.)
Robert A. Weller Fund, 1906.300

3. HALE WOODRUFF
American, 1900-1980; worked in France 1927-1928
Nighthawks, c. 1926
Oil on pressed paperboard (28 x 32 in.)
Estate of Marjorita S. Rittman, 1993.125

4. AARON DOUGLAS
American, 1899-1979
Study for Aspects of Negro Life: The Negro in an African Setting, 1934
Gouache on Whatman artist's board (14% x 16 in.)
Estate of Solomon Byron Smith; Margaret Fisher Fund, 1990.416

5. WALTER ELLISON
American, 1899-1977
Train Station, 1936
Oil on canvas (8 x 14 in.)
Charles M. Kurtz Charitable Trust and Barbara Neff Smith and Solomon Byron Smith funds, through prior gifts of Florence Jane Adams, Mr. And Mrs. Carter H. Harrison, and Estate of Celia Schmidt, 1990.134

6. WALTER ELLISON
American, 1899-1977
The Sunny South, 1939
Monotype on Japanese paper (535 x 406 mm. [image])
Karl and Nancy von Maltitz Endowment, 1990.158

7. JACOB LAWRENCE
American, b. 1917
Free Clinic, 1937
Gouache on tan wove paper, laid down on ivory cardboard (76.7 x 81.3 cm.)
Karl and Nancy von Maltitz Endowment, 1990.447

8. HORACE PIPPIN
American, 1888-1946
Cabin in the Cotton, c. 1935
Oil on canvas mounted on masonite (18 x 33 in.)
In memory of Frances W. Pick, from her children Thomas F. Pick and Mary P. Hines, 1990.417

9. RICHMOND BARTHÉ
American, 1901-1989
The Boxer, 1942
Bronze ([from an edition of at least two], 18 in. high)
Simeon B. Williams Fund, 1948.79

10. ARCHIBALD J. MOTLEY, JR.
American, 1891-1981; worked in Paris 1927-1930
Nightlife, 1943
Oil on canvas (36 x 47 ¾ in.)
Restricted Gift of Mr. And Mrs. Marshall Field, Jack and Sandra Guthman, Ben W. Heineman, Ruth Horwich, Lewis and Susan Manilow, Beatrice C. Mayer, Charles A. Meyer, John B. Nichols, Mr. And Mrs. E.B. Smith, Jr.; James W. Alsdorf Memorial Fund; Goodman Endowment, 1992.89

11. BEAUFORD DELANEY
American, 1901-1979; worked in France from 1953
Self-Portrait, 1944
Oil on canvas, (27 x 22 in.)
Restricted Gift of Alexander C. and Tellie S. Speyer Foundation; Samuel A. Marx Endowment, 1991.27

12. MARION PERKINS
American, 1908-1961
Man of Sorrows, 1950
Marble, 17½ in. high
Pauline Palmer Purchase Prize, 1951.129

13. CHARLES WHITE
American, 1918-1979
Harvest: Talk, 1953
Charcoal, Wolff's carbon drawing pencil, and graphite, with stumping and erasing on board (66.1 x 99.2 cm.)
Restricted gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hartman, 1991.126

14. RICHARD HUNT
American, b. 1935
Hero Construction, 1958
Welded metal (64 in. high)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Marent, 1958.528

15. ELIZABETH CATLETT
Mexican (b. United States), b. 1919
Sharecropper, 1970
Color linocut on Japanese paper (Sheet: 54.4 x 51.3 cm)
Restricted gift of Mr. And Mrs. Robert S. Hartman, 1992.182

16. ALMA THOMAS
American, 1891-1975
Starry Night with Astronauts, 1972
Acrylic on canvas (60 x 53 in.)
Gift of Mary P. Hines in memory of her mother, Frances W. Pick, 1994.36

17. ROMARE BEARDEN
American, 1914-1988
The Return of Odysseus (Homage to Pintoschio and Benini), 1977
Collage on masonite (44 x 56 in)
Mary and Leigh Block Fund for Acquisition, 1977.127
18. MARTIN PURYEAR
American, b. 1941
*Leaf* #1, 1988-89
Red cedar, cypress, poplar, and ash (169 x 134 x 18 in.)
A. James Speyer Memorial, UNR Industries in honor of James W.
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1989.385

19. LORNA SIMPSON
American, b. 1960
*Outline*, 1990
Two gelatin silver prints with applied plastic plaques (braid 30 x 53
cm, back 121 x 101 cm [braid frame: 124.2 x 103.7 cm])

20. KERRY JAMES MARSHALL
American, b. 1955
*Many Mansions*, 1994
Acrylic and collage on canvas (114 x 135 in.)
Max V. Kohnstamm Fund, 1995.147