

Philadelphia
Museum of
Art

Represent: 200 Years of African American Art
A Resource for Students and Teachers



Represent: 200 Years of **African American Art**

A Resource for Students and Teachers

Division of Education and Public Programs

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Introduction

Represent: 200 Years of African American Art and this accompanying teacher resource celebrate the innovation, creativity, and determination of African American artists. Engaging our eyes and our minds, the works of art in the exhibition and in these pages challenge us to think about the unique stories they tell about the lives and culture of African Americans and ponder the issues they raise. They also show how these artists responded to and helped to shape the changing definitions and boundaries of art over the last two centuries. It is our hope that these materials spark rich conversations in your classrooms and beyond.

The works of art in this resource relate to key subject areas, intersecting with significant moments in American history, including the Civil War, Emancipation, World Wars I and II, the Harlem Renaissance, and the civil rights movement. They also share strong connections with language arts, linking to themes and ideas in literature and poetry. The artworks invite thought-provoking discussions and written response, encouraging students' literacy and critical thinking skills. The wide range of subjects, artistic styles, and media offer a multitude of opportunities for the art classroom.

This resource was developed for K–12 classroom teachers to use with their students before, after, or instead of a visit to the exhibition. Although *Represent* is on view temporarily, the works included in these materials are all in the permanent collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and will therefore continue to be accessible to area teachers and students both in our galleries and online.

We hope that you enjoy exploring these works of art and artists with your students, looking closely together, and sharing thoughts and ideas.

This resource for students and teachers includes:

- Connections to educational standards
- Information about fifteen artists and artworks featured in the exhibition
- Curriculum connections with suggested classroom activities for each artwork
- Resource list
- Glossary
- Teaching poster

The CD includes:

- A PDF of this printed resource
- A PowerPoint presentation with digital images of all artworks and related looking questions to initiate discussions

These materials are also available online at philamuseum.org/education.

Acknowledgments

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Finally, we would like to express our appreciation to the members of our Teacher Advisory Committee for their participation and ideas. These classroom educators and school administrators helped to select the works of art to feature and brainstorm related classroom activities:

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Connections to Educational Standards

Common Core State Standards—English Language Arts/Literacy Standards

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard for Reading

Standard 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing

Standard 1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Standard 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Standard 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Standard 10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

Standard 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Standard 2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Standard 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

National Visual Arts Standards

Responding: Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning

Anchor Standard: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Anchor Standard: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

Connecting: Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context

Anchor Standard: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

Anchor Standard: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Pennsylvania Academic Standards for History

8.1.3-12A: Understand, analyze, and evaluate patterns of continuity and change.

8.1.3-12B: Understand, explain, analyze, and synthesize historical sources.

8.1.3-12C: Understand, explain, analyze, and evaluate the fundamentals of historical interpretation.

8.1.3-12D: Understand, describe, analyze, and synthesize historical research (primary sources).

8.2.3-12B: Identify and describe primary documents, material artifacts and historic sites important in Pennsylvania history from beginnings to 1824.

8.2.3-12C: Identify and analyze how continuity and change have influenced Pennsylvania history.

8.2.3-12D: Identify, describe, analyze, and evaluate conflict and cooperation among social groups and organizations in Pennsylvania history.

8.3.3-12A: Identify, explain, analyze, and evaluate the political and cultural contributions of individuals and groups to United States history.

8.3.3-12C: Identify, explain, analyze, and evaluate how continuity and change have influenced United States history.

8.3.3-12D: Identify, describe, analyze, and evaluate conflict and cooperation among social groups and organizations in United States history.

Attributed to Moses Williams

American, c.1775–c. 1825

Dr. James Hunter
Fayssoux
Hannah Brown

After 1802

Cut-paper profiles

56 × 44 × 24 inches
(142.2 × 111.8 × 61 cm)

Gift of the McNeil Americana Collection,
2009-18-42(99), 2009-18-42(36)



Let's Look

What do you see in these images?

Which details are included? Which are left out?

What can you tell about how these profiles were made?

Why do you think people want images of themselves?

About the Profiles

Cut-paper profiles are one example of how Americans had their portraits made before photography was invented. About the size of a baseball card, each profile shows a side view of a person's face. Moses Williams is thought to have made these profiles for visitors at Charles Willson Peale's museum in Philadelphia in about 1802. It took great skill to cut the elegant lines of these works of art, and he became well known for his talent.

How did Williams create the profiles? First, the person sat on a stool, facing sideways. Using a newly invented machine called a **physiognotrace** (fiz-ee-OG-no-trace), Williams recorded the outline of the person's head on white paper. He then removed the paper from the machine and made slight alterations to the machine's lines to create the most accurate portrait possible. Next, he cut out the person's profile from the middle. Because the paper was folded twice, he produced four exact profiles at once, so the person could keep one and give others to friends or family members. Williams placed each profile on top of black or dark blue paper so that the portrait stood out. Sometimes, he would add fine details such as eyelashes with black ink. Remarkably, this entire process took only a few minutes.

About Moses Williams

Moses Williams was born into slavery around the time of the American Revolutionary War; his parents were enslaved by the artist Charles Willson Peale. From a young age, Williams trained to work in Peale's museum in Philadelphia, which displayed paintings, inventions, and fossils, as well as preserved insects, birds, and other animals. Williams learned **taxidermy**, object display, and the operation of the physiognotrace, a machine he used to create portrait profiles. When Williams gained his freedom in 1802, he became a part of one of the largest free black communities in the nation. He earned a steady income through the fees he collected for cutting these profiles for museum visitors. Although much about his life remains unknown, Williams's accomplishments and financial independence testify to his artistic skill and personal determination in the face of severe discrimination.



Moses Williams, Cutter of Profiles, after 1802, attributed to Raphaelle Peale (Library Company of Philadelphia)

Curriculum Connections

Art

Negative and Positive Space (elementary and middle school)

What we see in these profiles is the negative space that remains after the person's portrait was cut out of the center of the paper. Explore the relationship between positive and negative space by cutting shapes out of white paper and placing them on dark-colored paper.

Create a Profile (elementary and middle school)

Using a light source, paper, and pencil, work in pairs or small groups to create profiles by tracing each student's shadow projected onto a wall. Cut the shape of the head out of the center of the paper and place it on dark paper.

Language Arts

Six-Word Memoirs (upper elementary through high school)

Williams's profiles describe the subject with few visual details. A six-word memoir accomplishes the same thing, only with words. Choose a person to describe in six words. The words can be in the form of a list or a phrase.

Social Studies

The 1780 Gradual Abolition of Slavery Act (middle and high school)

Williams's parents were **manumitted** by Charles Willson Peale under the 1780 Gradual Abolition of Slavery Act. Under this law, Williams was to be granted his freedom when he was twenty-eight years old. Research this law and others that gradually abolished slavery in the United States.

The Free Black Community in Philadelphia (upper elementary through high school)

In Williams's time, Philadelphia was home to one of the largest populations of free African Americans in the United States. Conduct research on this community and what life was like for free black people during this time.

African American Artists and Entrepreneurs (upper elementary through high school)

Research other African American craftspeople and artists who made a living in Philadelphia in the 1800s, such as cabinetmaker Thomas Gross, Jr. (1775–1839), silversmith Peter Bentzon (active 1810–1842)—both of whom made objects that are in the Philadelphia Museum of Art's collection—and sailmaker James Forten (1766–1842).

A PowerPoint slideshow with all of the resource images can be found on the enclosed CD.

David Drake (Dave the Potter)

American, 1800–c. 1870

Storage Jar

1859

Alkaline-glazed stoneware

26 1/2 × 23 1/2 inches (67.3 × 59.7 cm)

Made at the Lewis J. Miles Pottery
(Miles Mill), Edgefield district, South
Carolina, c. 1830–1879

125th Anniversary Acquisition. Purchased
with funds contributed by Keith and Lauren
Morgan and with the gifts (by exchange) of
John T. Morris, Mrs. John D. Wintersteen,
and the bequest of Maurice J. Crean, and
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Let's Look

How do you think this large
jar was made?

Look at the measurements of
this jar and show how high it is
compared to your body.

What do you think you
could put in it?

Why do you think the artist
wrote words on his pots?

About the Storage Jar

At first glance, this large, heavy storage jar is impressive in both size and design. Looking more closely, a story unfolds. The artist signed his name (Dave) and the date (May 3 1859). He also added an inscription on the other side of the jar that reads, "Good for lard or holding fresh meat; blest we were when Peter saw the folded sheet." The first part of this poetic verse tells us that the jar was to be used as a food container. The second part may refer to a New Testament story (Acts 10:10–16) about the apostle Peter, who had a vision of a large sheet of sailcloth full of different creatures. Peter interpreted this as God telling him to accept all people, regardless of their race or religion. Perhaps the inscription reflects the hope that the artist, who was enslaved, found in this biblical passage calling for equality for all people.

David Drake made this jar by shaping two bowls on a potter's wheel and putting them together. He formed the handles by hand and attached them on both sides. He then poured on a brownish **glaze**, leaving a few streaks and bare spots. Useful and remarkable at the time it was made, this jar remains a testament to the triumph of Drake's artistic voice, determination, and wit despite the hardships and anonymity of slavery.

About David Drake

David Drake, also known as Dave the Potter, was a master potter and poet who created exceptionally large and well-crafted storage jars while enslaved in South Carolina in the mid-1800s. He lived in Edgefield, which became well known for its pottery because of the abundance of rich clay in the area. What makes Drake's jars especially unique is that he signed and inscribed them. Since most southern states denied education to enslaved people, how Drake learned to read and write remains a mystery. Judging from how he wrote his name—in beautiful script at the top of his pots—he wanted to be recognized for his work, and was allowed to do so. Perhaps he also meant his verses to be noticed by other enslaved people, to inspire them and encourage them to learn to read.

Curriculum Connections

Language Arts

What Message Would You Send? (adaptable for all grades)

Using the worksheet on page 44, write a message that you would like to send out to the world on the jar. Remember to consider the style and size of your handwriting and the placement of your message.

What If This Jar Could Talk? (adaptable for all grades)

This storage jar was used 150 years ago to store food. If it could speak, what stories would it tell us? Write a story featuring this jar: who used it, what they used it for, what they understood about the inscription, and what it meant to them.

Dave the Potter (elementary and middle school)

Read *Dave the Potter* by Laban Carrick Hill, which tells David Drake's story through text and image. After reading the book, look closely at the storage jar and discuss what new thoughts you have.

Social Studies

Urban and Rural Slavery (middle and high school)

David Drake was enslaved in rural South Carolina, while fellow artist Moses Williams was enslaved in Philadelphia. Research slavery in American rural and urban areas to compare and contrast these artists' experiences.

Slave Narratives (middle and high school)

Read firsthand accounts of those who endured slavery, such as Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs. Discuss what these texts tell us about the experiences of those who were enslaved. What new insights do you have about David Drake and Moses Williams?

Art

Clay Jars (elementary and middle school)

Make your own pinch pots out of clay, inscribing them with your name and a word, poem, or phrase. When deciding on your inscription, consider the purpose of your jar, who will use and see it, and what message you would like to send to them.

A PowerPoint slideshow with all of the resource images can be found on the enclosed CD.

Henry Ossawa Tanner

American (active France), 1859–1937

Portrait of the Artist's Mother

1897

Oil on canvas

29 1/4 x 39 1/2 inches (74.3 x 100.3 cm)

Partial gift of Dr. Rae Alexander-Minter and purchased with the W. P. Wilstach Fund, the George W. Elkins Fund, the Edward and Althea Budd Fund, and with funds contributed by The Dietrich Foundation, EW1993-61-1



Let's Look

Describe this woman's pose and facial expression. What might she be feeling?

What might her clothing and the setting tell us about her?

Where are the brightest parts of the picture? The darkest?

How would you describe the mood of the painting?

If you could read this woman's thoughts, what do you think they would be?

About the Portrait

Henry Ossawa Tanner created this portrait of his mother, Sarah Elizabeth Tanner, on a visit back to Philadelphia from his home in France. In the painting, Sarah sits in a wooden rocking chair and gazes ahead, deep in thought. A golden light illuminates the fan in her hand, and brightens her face as well as the shawl that drapes onto the floor behind her. She wears a long, navy blue dress, and her black leather shoes are just visible beneath it. She appears relaxed, her left hand gently resting against her cheek.

Sarah lived a remarkable life. When she was a child, her mother put her and her siblings on an oxcart bound for Pennsylvania to escape slavery in Virginia via the Underground Railroad. Sarah helped found one of the first societies for black women and raised seven children with her husband, Benjamin Tucker Tanner, a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. In the bottom right corner of the painting, Tanner wrote, "To my dear mother, H. O. Tanner." This sensitive portrayal and endearing inscription capture the love and admiration the artist felt for his mother, the center of his large and distinguished family.

About Henry Ossawa Tanner

Raised in Philadelphia, Henry Ossawa Tanner was inspired to become a painter at the age of thirteen, when he observed an artist at work in Fairmount Park. As a young man, he studied painting at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. In the early 1890s, he moved to Paris, France, to pursue his artistic career because he found it impossible to “fight prejudice and paint at the same time” in the United States.¹ In Paris, he painted landscapes, stories from the Bible, and scenes from everyday life, and his work received international acclaim. Tanner’s long and successful career secured his position as a leading artist of his day and inspired others to follow in his footsteps.



[Henry Ossawa Tanner], ca. 1935
/ unidentified photographer.
Photographic print : 1 item : b&w ;
23 x 18 cm. Henry Ossawa Tanner
papers, 1860s-1978, bulk 1890-1937.
Archives of American Art.

Curriculum Connections

Art

Famous Mothers in Art (adaptable for all grades)

Tanner based this painting on John Abbott McNeill Whistler’s famous 1871 painting, *Arrangement in Gray and Black, No. 1*, also known informally as “Whistler’s Mother.” Locate an image online (it is in the collection of the Musée d’Orsay in Paris) and compare and contrast the two works, such as their mood, feeling, color, and composition.

Language Arts

Who Do You Admire? (elementary and middle school)

After discussing this portrait and the relationship between Tanner and his mother, write a description and appreciation about an older relative or mentor in your life. What do you admire about them? What have you learned from them?

Mother to Son (middle and high school)

Read the Langston Hughes poem, “Mother to Son.” What does the mother in the poem want to relay to her son? How do you think this might relate to the advice Tanner’s mother may have given to him? How might it relate to how an older relative or friend feels about you? Discuss the connections between this poem and Tanner’s portrait of his mother, as well as Elizabeth Catlett’s sculpture *Mother and Child* (see page 24).

Social Studies

Underground Railroad (upper elementary through high school)

Sarah Elizabeth Tanner escaped slavery as a child via the Underground Railroad. Research how this system worked, and how escaped slaves found safety and a support network upon arriving in a free state. After researching this topic, reflect on what more you understand about this portrait.

African Methodist Episcopal Church (adaptable for all grades)

Benjamin Tucker Tanner, Henry’s father, was a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. Research the history of AME churches and their important role in advocating for African Americans. Visit historic AME churches such as Mother Bethel in Philadelphia to learn firsthand about their history.

A PowerPoint slideshow with all of the resource images can be found on the enclosed CD.

¹ “The Annunciation,” by Henry Ossawa Tanner, Teacher Resources, Philadelphia Museum of Art, <http://philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/104384.html?mulR=1091219676|111>

Aaron Douglas

American, 1899–1979

Birds in Flight

1927

Oil on canvas

16 1/4 x 14 inches (41.3 x 35.6 cm)

Promised gift of Marguerite and Gerry Lenfest in honor of Anne d'Harnoncourt



Let's Look

What do the shapes in this painting remind you of?

Look at the title of this painting. What do you think now?

What do you see that reminds you of birds flying?

About the Painting

At first glance, this painting looks to be **abstract**. Strong diagonal lines radiate outward in all directions, creating interesting shapes and patterns in shades of red, orange, brown, green, and blue. A closer look reveals three looming smokestacks in the upper right, suggesting that this is an urban scene. The title of the painting, *Birds in Flight*, encourages us to find flapping wings, eyes, and round heads throughout the picture. Instead of showing a realistic image of birds flying, Aaron Douglas captured the sense of movement of birds against the background of a city. In his work, Douglas was inspired by many other kinds of art, including African sculpture and modern art and design, which can be seen in the strong lines and **geometric** shapes in *Birds in Flight*.

Douglas made this painting in 1927, just two years after he moved from Kansas to New York City. He lived in the neighborhood of Harlem, which was becoming a center for African American writers, artists, and intellectuals who expressed pride in their African heritage and celebrated their racial identity. This cultural movement, known as the **Harlem Renaissance**, was just beginning when Douglas arrived, and he soon became a central figure within it.

About Aaron Douglas

Aaron Douglas created works of art that celebrated the African American experience. He moved from the Midwest to Harlem in 1925, at the dawn of the Harlem Renaissance. A leading figure in the movement, his art reached a large audience. People could easily view his illustrations and covers for books by authors such as Alain Locke and Langston Hughes. Many people also appreciated his large public **murals**, such as his famous *Aspects of Negro Life* on the walls of the 135th Street branch of the New York Public Library. Influenced by African art, Egyptian painting, and European modern art, Douglas often used bold geometric shapes and silhouetted figures to capture the energy of people in motion. In 1940, he established the art department at Fisk University, a historically black university in Nashville, Tennessee.



Aaron Douglas, 1933, by Carl Van Vechten (Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of John Mark Lutz, 1965-86-3709)

Curriculum Connections

Language Arts

Writers of the Harlem Renaissance (high school)

The New Negro, an anthology edited by Alain Locke, includes poetry, prose, and essays by Harlem Renaissance writers such as Zora Neale Hurston, Countee Cullen, and W.E.B. Du Bois. Aaron Douglas contributed illustrations to this important text. Read excerpts from this book and discuss in the context of the Harlem Renaissance.

Harlem Stomp! (middle and high school)

Read Laban Carrick Hill's engaging book *Harlem Stomp!* to learn more about the music and culture of the Harlem Renaissance. After reading it, look back at Douglas's painting and reflect on the connections you find.

Art

Modern Art and Ideas (adaptable for all grades)

Among Douglas's artistic inspirations was European modern art. Compare Douglas's painting with another work of modern art about a bird taking flight, Constantin Brancusi's *Bird in Space* (available for viewing on the Philadelphia Museum of Art's website and on the enclosed CD). What do these artworks convey about a bird flying? What information do they leave out? Create your own abstract work of art that captures your interpretation of a bird in flight or another animal in motion.

Social Studies

The Arts in the Harlem Renaissance (adaptable for all grades)

Explore music, art, dance, poetry, and prose of the Harlem Renaissance (see Resources, pages 38–43, for useful books and websites). For example, visit the Kennedy Center's Drop Me Off in Harlem website to listen to poetry and music from the Harlem Renaissance. Look at Douglas's painting, and other works by him, while you listen. Discuss connections between what you see and what you hear. What themes and similar ideas do you discover?

Harlem Today (adaptable for all grades)

Explore the legacy of the Harlem Renaissance by researching the museums and performing arts organizations of Harlem today. How has the neighborhood changed over time? What has remained?

A PowerPoint slideshow with all of the resource images can be found on the enclosed CD.

William Henry Johnson

American, 1901–1970

Blind Singer

c. 1939–40

Color silkscreen print on paper

17 1/2 x 11 9/16 inches (44.5 x 29.4 cm)

Gift of the Philadelphia Commercial Museum (also known as the Philadelphia Civic Center Museum), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2004-111-719



Let's Look

What are these people holding?
What are they doing?

Describe the lines, colors, and shapes that you see. What kind of mood do they create?

What do you think you would see and hear if this work of art came to life?

About the Print

This lively image shows two musicians entertaining us with their voices, a guitar, and a tambourine. Facing us directly and standing close together, the man and woman catch our attention with their dynamic poses and their colorful clothing: a yellow hat with a blue band, a red tie, orange and blue jackets, and green shoes. Their bodies suggest movement: fingers strumming the strings of the guitar, hands shaking a tambourine, feet tapping, and hips swaying to the music.

William Henry Johnson would have seen musicians like these performing on busy street corners in New York City, where he worked and lived. He may have based these particular figures on gospel and blues singers from the 1930s and 1940s, such as Blind Boy Fuller, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, or the Reverend Gary Davis, who became popular first in the American South and then in northern cities such as Chicago and New York.

Johnson enjoyed the sights and sounds of New York's Harlem neighborhood and captured the fashion, music, and dance around him in his images. His artistic style was influenced by the **geometric** shapes of West African sculpture, which he could see in the city's museums. He was also inspired by colors and patterns used by other great modern artists like Pablo Picasso.

About William Henry Johnson

When he was growing up in rural South Carolina, William Henry Johnson loved copying the comic strips in newspapers and dreamed of being a cartoonist. At age seventeen he moved to Harlem to live with his uncle, who worked as a porter on the New York City–Miami train line. Johnson enrolled in painting and drawing classes at the prestigious National Academy of Design. After completing his studies, he traveled to Europe, where he launched his artistic career and drew inspiration from the art he saw there. In 1938, after spending about a decade abroad, Johnson returned to New York, where he taught at the Harlem Community Art Center. Immersed in the artistic community of Harlem, he developed a signature style that emphasized striking colors, rhythmic patterns, and simplified shapes for which he is known today.



William Henry Johnson, c. 1927/
unidentified photographer.
William H. Johnson papers, Archives of
American Art, Smithsonian Institution

Curriculum Connections

Art

Elements of Art (adaptable for all grades)

Explore William Henry Johnson's use of the elements of art, such as line, color, shape, pattern, texture, and space. What details catch your attention, and why do you think so? How did his artistic choices affect the mood and feeling of the artwork?

Complementary Colors (upper elementary and middle school)

Learn about **complementary colors** on the color wheel. Find areas in *Blind Singer* where Johnson used complementary colors right next to each other. How does seeing these colors together affect the overall picture? Create a work of art that uses the same strategy of putting complementary colors together in an interesting way.

Music

Blues and Gospel (adaptable for all grades)

Explore the music of blues and gospel singers of the 1930s and 1940s, such as Blind Boy Fuller, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, or the Reverend Gary Davis. Play excerpts of their songs while looking at *Blind Singer* and talk about any new observations you have.

Language Arts

Imagine the Rest (elementary school)

Imagine what the rest of the scene around this man and woman would be. Write a story describing where they are and who is surrounding them. What brought them to this place, and what will they do next?

Social Studies

The Great Migration (middle and high school)

Like many other African Americans, Johnson left the South to pursue better opportunities in the North. Research this movement, known as the Great Migration, to discover where people were migrating from and where they were going, as well as the reasons they left, and the joys and obstacles that met them in their new homes. Relate this new knowledge to Johnson's print, and to other works of art, such as Jacob Lawrence's series *The Migration of the Negro*.

A PowerPoint slideshow with all of the resource images can be found on the enclosed CD.

Horace Pippin

American, 1888–1946

Mr. Prejudice

1943

Oil on canvas

18 1/8 x 14 1/8 inches (46 x 35.9 cm)

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Matthew T. Moore,
1984-108-1



Let's Look

What do you notice first in this painting?

Look closely. What can you tell about the figures?

What do you think Horace Pippin is saying in this painting?

What do you see that tells you that?

About the Painting

Mr. Prejudice is a small painting with a powerful message. At the bottom, a group of figures, half white and half black, stand on either side of a large V. The men wear uniforms: a doctor in white, two sailors in blue, two aviators in tan, two men operating machinery, and two Army soldiers in brown, including a self-portrait of Horace Pippin himself, with his right arm that was injured in battle hanging at his side. Above them are larger figures: a white-robed member of the Ku Klux Klan (a white supremacy group), a white man in a red shirt holding a noose, and a brown Statue of Liberty. At the top, a grim-faced white man hammers a wedge down into the V.

Pippin was deeply affected by his experiences as a soldier in a segregated troop during World War I in France. Despite helping the United States achieve victory abroad—**symbolized** by the V—he and his fellow African American soldiers were treated poorly when they returned home. Pippin painted *Mr. Prejudice* over twenty-five years later, toward the end of World War II, when he saw more discrimination against the next generation of African American soldiers. This painting is one of his strongest artistic statements about segregation, racial prejudice, and social injustice.

About Horace Pippin

Born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, Horace Pippin held many jobs before he became an artist, including working on a farm, in an iron mill, and for a moving company. He enlisted in the Army in 1917, and fought in World War I in France. He served in the 369th Infantry, a famous African American regiment nicknamed the Harlem Hellfighters. After being shot in his right shoulder, Pippin returned home and taught himself to paint. He used his left hand to guide his impaired right hand, which held the paintbrush. He painted his own experiences, often taking inspiration from his childhood memories, his community, and the Bible. He said, "Pictures just come to my mind and I tell my heart to go ahead."²



[Horace Pippin], 1940 / Carl Van Vechten, photographer. Photographic print : 1 item : silver gelatin ; 36 x 28 cm. Downtown Gallery records, 1824-1974, bulk 1926-1969. Archives of American Art.

Curriculum Connections

Social Studies

African Americans in the Military (middle and high school)

Research the history of African Americans in the US military, from the American Revolutionary War through today. Find other works of art that depict African American soldiers, such as Augustus Saint-Gaudens's *Shaw Memorial* (1897), which commemorates the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, who fought in the American Civil War under the command of Colonel Robert Gould Shaw. Discuss the contributions of black soldiers in various conflicts and the discrimination they faced. Look at *Mr. Prejudice* again and discuss new ideas and insights.

Advocating for Equality (upper elementary through high school)

Through this painting, Horace Pippin called for the equal treatment of African American soldiers. Research other individuals who also advocated for racial equality in the United States, both in Pippin's time and in the years that led up to the **civil rights movement**.

Art/Math

Symmetry (upper elementary school)

Discuss Pippin's use of **symmetry** and balance in *Mr. Prejudice*. Where is the symmetry broken? How does the composition add to the meaning of the painting?

Language Arts/Art

A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin (elementary school)

Read this award-winning book by Jen Bryant aloud and discuss. Create works of art that incorporate the color red as a response.

Symbolism (upper elementary through high school)

Discuss the various symbols in *Mr. Prejudice*, such as the Statue of Liberty, the Ku Klux Klan figure, and the letter V. What associations do these symbols have? What meaning do they bring to the artwork? What are other symbols of freedom and oppression?

Art

Art for Social Change (upper elementary through high school)

Create a work of art about a social or political issue that is important to you. Choose a letter of the alphabet to represent your cause and create a composition around the letter to convey your message.

A PowerPoint slideshow with all of the resource images can be found on the enclosed CD.

² "Pippin's Story," National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, <http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/education/teachers/lessons-activities/counting-art/pippin.html>

Jacob Lawrence

American, 1917–2000

The Libraries Are Appreciated

1943

Opaque watercolor over graphite on textured cream wove paper

Sheet: 14 3/4 x 21 5/8 inches (37.5 x 54.9 cm)

The Louis E. Stern Collection, 1963-181-40

© 2014 The Jacob and Gwendolyn Lawrence Foundation, Seattle / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Let's Look

Describe the setting of this scene. Where is it and what is the mood?

What do you notice about the colors, lines, and shapes in the painting?

How do you think these people feel about reading? How do you know?

About the Painting

Three people sit at a table, surrounded by brightly colored books that line the shelves behind them. They lean forward, completely absorbed by the books in their hands. This painting depicts the 124th Street branch of the New York Public Library, located in the heart of Jacob Lawrence's Harlem neighborhood. Libraries were vital centers of learning and culture for the Harlem community and for Lawrence personally, who visited them frequently and painted them many times.

This painting is the twenty-eighth image in a group of thirty called the *Harlem Series*, which Lawrence completed between 1942 and 1943. The series shows scenes of everyday life in Harlem, from its busy streets filled with buildings and billboards, to people enjoying leisure activities such as dancing, playing games, and shooting pool, to the poverty, illness, and prejudice that were a reality in this inner-city neighborhood during the wake of the **Great Depression**. These scenes resonated with other African American communities. As Lawrence explained, "Most of my work depicts events from the many Harlems which exist throughout the United States. This is my genre. My surroundings. The people I know . . . the happiness, tragedies, and the sorrows of mankind as realized in the teeming black ghetto."³

About Jacob Lawrence

Acclaimed as a painter, storyteller, and educator, Jacob Lawrence spent his career interpreting the lives of African Americans. He began studying art in an after-school program in Harlem and later at the American Artists School. Greatly influenced by the vibrant Harlem community, Lawrence's artistic style featured bold shapes, vivid colors, and dynamic patterns. The artist's work celebrated everyday life and the daily struggles and contributions of the working class. Lawrence also focused on important historical figures and narratives from American history. He often portrayed these stories through a series of paintings, such as *The Life of Frederick Douglass* (1939), *The Life of Harriet Tubman* (1940), and *The Migration of the Negro* (1941). Although he spent most of his life in Harlem, in the early 1970s Lawrence moved to the West Coast, where he taught art at the University of Washington.



[Jacob Lawrence], 195-? / Sid Bernstein, photographer. Photographic print : 1 item : b&w ; 26 x 21 cm. Jacob Lawrence and Gwendolyn Knight papers, 1945-1995, bulk 1973-1994. Archives of American Art.

Curriculum Connections

Art

Images of Libraries (adaptable for all grades)

Search online for other images of libraries by Jacob Lawrence. What do they have in common? What does Lawrence emphasize in each one? How do you think he feels about libraries? Create your own work of art depicting the library in your school or neighborhood, emphasizing the role it plays in your community.

Series (adaptable for all grades)

The Libraries Are Appreciated is one of a series of images that Lawrence created about his Harlem neighborhood. As a class, brainstorm what happens in your school or neighborhood and create a series of images that depict everyday life. Display them together, along with captions, either on a bulletin board or in a book.

Language Arts

Write What You Know (middle and high school)

Read Lawrence's quote on page 20, and discuss why he created art about his own surroundings and experiences. Think about your life experiences and daily surroundings. What do you know best? Write a narrative about a familiar experience that is unique to your life. As Lawrence suggests, it can reflect both the joys and sorrows of human life.

A PowerPoint slideshow with all of the resource images can be found on the enclosed CD.

Art and Math

Pattern and Geometry (elementary school)

Look closely at this painting and discuss the patterns and **geometric** shapes that you see. What is interesting about them? Find shapes and patterns at home or at school and create a work of art that features them.

Social Studies

Public Libraries (upper elementary and middle school)

Research the history of public libraries in the United States. Where did they begin, and why? What is their purpose in a community? In particular, investigate the history of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (part of the New York City Public Library) in Harlem. How did it start, what collections does it have, and what is it like today?

³ Peter T. Nesbett, Michelle Dubois, and Patricia Hills, eds. *Over the Line: The Art and Life of Jacob Lawrence*. Seattle: University of Washington Press in association with the Jacob Lawrence Catalogue Raisonné Project, 2000), 84.

Gordon Parks

American, 1912–2006

Untitled (Man in Hat Holding Little Girl)

c. 1950

Gelatin silver print

10 1/4 x 10 11/16 inches (26 x 27.1 cm)

Purchased with funds contributed in memory
of Magda Krauss, 2001-78-1

Courtesy and © The Gordon Parks
Foundation



Let's Look

Look closely at the people in this picture and describe what you see.

What do you think has brought everyone together? Why do you think so?

How do you think this man is feeling? What could he be thinking?

About the Photograph

Standing in a crowd, an older man holds a young girl in his arm with ease and strength. Our eyes go directly to him; the people in the background are out of focus, but we see every detail of his face. The bright white rim of his hat creates a halo-like shape around his head, further drawing our attention to him. The man looks outward, in the same direction as those behind him. The people are dressed in modest clothes and are of different ages. They stand together, but are not in organized rows. The photograph is unposed, and the individual figures remain unknown to us, leaving us with questions. What has captured their attention? Is it a joyous or serious occasion? What is the relationship between the man and the girl?

Gordon Parks took this picture around 1950, when he worked as a **photojournalist** for *Life* magazine, documenting the effects of poverty and racism, as well as the lives of famous celebrities and politicians. No matter what the subject, Parks's photographs engage us visually and speak to us on an emotional level. Although we don't know the exact story in the picture, we are left with an enduring impression of human dignity and powerful determination.

About Gordon Parks

Born in Kansas, the youngest of fifteen children, Gordon Parks overcame poverty, segregation, and discrimination to become an accomplished photographer, filmmaker, writer, poet, and composer. A self-taught artist, he studied the **Great Depression**–era photographs that he saw in *Life* and other magazines and soon earned a position with the **Farm Security Administration**, documenting social and economic conditions. He became a freelance photographer, moved to Harlem, and was hired by *Life* in the late 1940s, becoming the magazine’s first African American staff photographer. An advocate for the **civil rights movement**, Parks believed in photography as a powerful tool in combating social injustice.



Untitled, 1948, by Gordon Parks
(Courtesy and © The Gordon Parks Foundation)

Curriculum Connections

Art

Art for Social Change (middle and high school)

Gordon Parks believed in the power of art to enact social change on issues such as racism and poverty. What issue is important to you? Take photographs that address a social or political issue that you feel strongly about and write about why you think this issue needs the public’s attention.

Careers in Art: Photojournalism (high school)

What is photojournalism, and how do you pursue a career in it? What skills are required? Research the history of photojournalism and how people train to work in this field.

Language Arts

What Are They Thinking? (adaptable for all grades)

Imagine you could hear the thoughts of the man or girl in this photograph. What would they be? Write an interior monologue for one of these people in a stream-of-consciousness style.

Jesse Owens (high school)

Read Jesse Owens’s “Open Letter to a Young Negro” and discuss the issues that he raises. How might it relate to the mood of the photograph or speak to the common experiences of African American men?

Social Studies

Farm Security Administration (high school)

Like fellow photographers Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans, Parks worked for the Farm Security Administration (FSA) early in his career, documenting life during the Great Depression. This organization was established as a way to create jobs. Research the FSA (and related programs) and the artistic production that came out of them. How did art address the social issues of this time?

Lift Every Voice and Sing (middle and high school)

The song *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, originally written as a poem by James Weldon Johnson, became important within the civil rights movement and continues to inspire people today. Listen to a recording of it while looking at Parks’s photograph. What ideas and feelings relate to the image? What similar messages do the picture and song communicate?

A PowerPoint slideshow with all of the resource images can be found on the enclosed CD.

Elizabeth Catlett

American, 1915–2012

Mother and Child

c. 1956

Terracotta

11 1/2 x 5 3/4 x 6 5/8 inches (29.2 x 14.6 x 16.8 cm)

125th Anniversary Acquisition. Purchased with funds contributed by Willabell Clayton, Dr. Constance E. Clayton, and Mr. and Mrs. James B. Straw in honor of the 125th Anniversary of the Museum and in celebration of African American art, 2000-36-1

© Estate of Elizabeth Catlett/Visual Artists and Galleries Association



Let's Look

What words would you use to describe this mother and child?

What do you think the artist wants us to know about them?

What details are left out of the figures? Why might the artist have left out those details?

About the Sculpture

A woman sits solidly before us, holding a young child. Shoulders back, she appears calm and strong. Her feet are planted firmly on the ground. Her lap provides a stable seat for the child, who rests comfortably. Her head tilts slightly upward, suggesting that she is listening, looking, or thinking. The simplified bodies, facial features, and clothing of the figures could be those of people from many different parts of the world.

Elizabeth Catlett made this sculpture of terracotta, a brownish-red clay, when she was living in Mexico City with her husband and their three sons, then ages seven, five, and three. Responding to her life experience in her work, Catlett chose to focus on women of color in their roles as mothers, workers, and freedom fighters.

While making her sculptures, Catlett tried out her models' poses to "feel where the stress and tensions are."⁴ Later in her career, she carved other versions of *Mother and Child* in mahogany and in pecan wood. Although these sculptures are small—roughly one to three feet high—they all have a monumental quality that makes them seem much larger. The figures' strength, self-assurance, and quiet dignity give them a powerful voice.

About Elizabeth Catlett

Renowned printmaker and sculptor Elizabeth Catlett believed in creating art that could speak to working people everywhere. She studied art at Howard University and the University of Iowa, and taught art in both New Orleans and New York City. After moving to Mexico in 1946, Catlett was influenced by the social and political ideas of the Mexican Revolution and artists such as David Alfaro Siqueiros and Frida Kahlo. Throughout her long and successful career, Catlett stood by her convictions about the role of art. She said, "I have always wanted my art to service my people—to reflect us, to relate to us, to stimulate us, to make us aware of our potential. We have to create an art for liberation and for life."⁵



Photograph by Moira Pernambuco-Holsten, © 2000

Curriculum Connections

Art

Mothers and Children in Art (adaptable for all grades)

Find other images of mothers and children in art from different times and places by looking in books and online. Compare and contrast these with Catlett's sculpture. What qualities do they share? What do they convey about the relationship between mothers and children? What is unique about Catlett's work?

Figures in Clay (adaptable for all grades)

Look carefully at Catlett's sculpture and analyze how the two figures relate to each other. Brainstorm about two people who have a special relationship and create a clay sculpture of these figures. Consider how they will be positioned so that you can convey their relationship.

Catlett's *I Am the Black Woman* series (middle and high school)

Catlett often depicted women of color in her work, including her important series of prints, *I Am the Black Woman* (see Resources, pp. 38–43). Explore the images and titles of these works, and discuss the experiences of African American women that Catlett addresses. Relate these ideas back to *Mother and Child*.

A PowerPoint slideshow with all of the resource images can be found on the enclosed CD.

Social Studies

The Mexican Revolution (high school)

Catlett's beliefs about the role of art as a tool for social justice were influenced by the Mexican Revolution. Research this historical event and the ideas its leaders put forward. What were their goals and convictions? How do these ideas relate to Catlett's sculpture?

Language Arts

What Is the Role of Art in Our Society? (middle and high school)

Read Catlett's quote above about why she created art and discuss it with the class. Do you agree with what she believed about the role of art in our society? Why do artists make art? How can art help society? How can art best do this? Research other artists or works of art that you feel help to improve our society.

⁴ Melanie Anne Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett: In the Image of the People* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2005), 35.

⁵ "Elizabeth Catlett—Biography," *Beyond the Blues: Reflections of African America in the Fine Arts Collection of the Amistad Research Center, New Orleans Museum of Art*, http://www.amistadresearchcenter.org/beyond_the_blues/catlett.html.

Barkley L. Hendricks

American, born 1945

Miss T

1969

Oil on canvas

66 1/8 x 48 1/8 inches (168 x 122.2 cm)

Purchased with the Philadelphia Foundation
Fund, 1970-134-1

© Barkley L. Hendricks. Courtesy of the artist
and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York



Let's Look

Describe this woman's pose, clothing, and accessories. What do they tell you about her?

What words would you use to describe her mood?

Where do you think she is standing?

What do you think she is thinking about?

About the Painting

A woman, identified as "Miss T," is dressed in black against a white background with her hands placed behind her back. Even though she averts her gaze out and downward, she has a commanding presence. Her personality and style are evident in both her pose and her clothing. As Barkley L. Hendricks has stated, "How people dress is how they want to be seen by the world."⁶ Miss T wears black bell-bottom pants, fashionable in the late 1960s, and a long-sleeved black shirt. A belt made of thin gold chains sits on her hips and matches the color of her aviator-style glasses. She wears her hair in an Afro, a popular style at the time, and one that suggests her pride in her African American heritage. The background gives us no information about the scene around her, and we are left to imagine where she is standing.

Hendricks painted *Miss T* early in his career, before pursuing his graduate degree at Yale University. While visiting major museums in Europe during a trip in 1966, the artist noticed the lack of black figures in European and American art. When he returned home to Philadelphia, he sought to change this and began making life-size portraits of people of color, such as this compelling painting.

About Barkley L. Hendricks

Born and raised in North Philadelphia, Barkley L. Hendricks is best known for his realistic life-size portraits of confident, stylish individuals, often people of color. He studied painting at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and Yale University before becoming a professor at Connecticut College. Working from both live models and photographs, Hendricks pays particular attention to his subjects' style and attitude, and includes details that speak to each person's individuality, such as a certain pose, accessory, or hairstyle. Combining a traditional approach to painting with his personal experiences, he creates portraits that invite us to get to know his charismatic subjects.



Photograph by Chris Hildreth

Curriculum Connections

Art and Math

Life-Size Portraits (upper elementary through high school)

Create a life-size portrait of yourself or someone you know. Include details that are unique to the person. Working from a photograph, use a grid system to enlarge the image to life-size.

Art

Portraiture (adaptable for all grades)

Compare and contrast the portraits included in this resource: the profiles by Moses Williams, Henry Ossawa Tanner's portrait of his mother, and *Miss T*. What does each artist tell us about his subject? How do the materials and artistic styles of each artist differ? What do they have in common? If you had your portrait made, which artist would you select, and why?

Social Studies

Black Is Beautiful Movement (high school)

Investigate the Black Is Beautiful movement of the 1960s and 1970s, which celebrated the natural beauty of African Americans. When did it begin, and how did the ideas spread? What were the messages? After completing your research, look again at *Miss T* and reconsider your perceptions of her. What new ideas do you have?

Language Arts

Powerful Women (high school)

Read and discuss Maya Angelou's poem, "Phenomenal Woman," written about a decade after Hendricks painted *Miss T*. What does Angelou celebrate about being a woman? How would you describe her voice and the tone of the poem? What similarities and differences do you find between the poem and *Miss T*?

Interview (upper elementary through high school)

Imagine you could interview Miss T. What would you ask her? Brainstorm a list of questions, either individually or as a class, and write the answers that you think she would give.

A PowerPoint slideshow with all of the resource images can be found on the enclosed CD.

⁶ Benjamin Genocchio, "Pop Art Meets Photorealism," *New York Times*, January 27, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/27/nyregion/nyregionspecial2/27artsubct.html?_r=1&

Martin Puryear

American, born 1941

Old Mole

1985

Red cedar

5 feet 1 inches × 5 feet 1 inches × 2 feet 10 inches (154.9 × 154.9 × 86.4 cm)

Purchased with gifts (by exchange) of Samuel S. White 3rd and Vera White, and Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. G. Chaplin, and with funds contributed by Marion Boulton Stroud, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kardon, Gisela and Dennis Alter, and Mrs. H. Gates Lloyd, 1986-70-1

© Martin Puryear, Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery



Let's Look

What do you notice about the shape and texture of this sculpture? What does it remind you of?

Read the measurements of the sculpture and compare its height to your own. What might it feel like to stand next to it?

Read the title of the work. What new thoughts do you have?

About the Sculpture

This large sculpture—about five feet high and five feet wide—is made of red cedar slats that Martin Puryear wove together in a crisscross fashion. Its shape is strange yet familiar, emerging from the ground in a wide cylinder and forming a point at its tip. The sculpture is **abstract**, but its title, *Old Mole*, suggests an association with the small, tunneling animal. Perhaps the base reminds us of a body or torso, and the upper portion of a head and pointy nose. Looking closely, we can see evidence of how Puryear made the sculpture: pencil markings, tacks that hold the slats together, and indentations left by clamps. With no specific front or back, we are encouraged to walk around the sculpture, noticing the intricate overlapping of the wooden slats and peeking into the small holes they create.

Having studied building and woodworking techniques in Sierra Leone (where he served in the Peace Corps), Sweden, and Japan, where he traveled shortly before making this work, Puryear used techniques such as bending wood and basket weaving to create *Old Mole*. The natural world, from which he has often drawn inspiration for his work, is one of his lifelong interests. However, the artist intends for his sculptures to speak for themselves, and we as viewers are invited to make our own interpretations.

About Martin Puryear

Martin Puryear has worked with his hands and his ideas from an early age. Reflecting on his childhood, he said, "If I became interested in archery, I made the bows and arrows; if I became interested in music, I made the guitar."⁷ He studied art in Sweden and at Yale University, but also honed his woodworking skills by learning from builders and craftspeople all over the world, from Europe to Asia and Africa. With strong interests in culture, history, and nature, Puryear creates abstracted sculptures that draw from his life experiences and connect with our own. One of his large-scale projects, *Pavilion in the Trees* (1992), is in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park. It features a wooden walkway and an observation deck that is twenty-four feet off the ground, where visitors can relax and contemplate nature.

Curriculum Connections

Art

Forms and Shapes (adaptable for all grades)

Compare and contrast the forms and shapes in Martin Puryear's *Old Mole* with those in other works of art featured in this resource, such as the jar by David Drake and the **geometric** shapes in Aaron Douglas's *Birds in Flight*. How are they similar or different?

Inspired by Nature (adaptable for all grades)

Puryear is inspired by the natural world. Think of an animal or plant that you like and use it as the inspiration for an abstract work of art. Start by observing it in real life or in a photograph and make sketches. Use these drawings to create a three-dimensional object that captures the main characteristics of your chosen plant or animal.

Language Arts

Descriptive Words (adaptable for all grades)

Brainstorm a list of words to describe the color, texture, size, and shape of *Old Mole*. Next, brainstorm all of the things the sculpture reminds you of. Where have you seen something similar? Using this word bank, create poems, either individually or collaboratively, describing the sculpture.

Social Studies

Woodworking Traditions (middle and high school)

Choose a woodworking technique that Puryear uses in his work, such as carving, bending, joining, or basket weaving. Investigate the history of the technique and how it is practiced in different parts of the world. How have people adapted it to fit their purposes?

A PowerPoint slideshow with all of the resource images can be found on the enclosed CD.

⁷ Neal Berenza, *Martin Puryear* (New York: Thames and Hudson in association with the Art Institute of Chicago, 1991), 14.

Faith Ringgold

American, born 1930

"Tar Beach 2" Quilt

1990

Multicolored screenprint on silk plain weave, printed cotton plain weave, black and green synthetic moiré

66 x 67 inches (167.6 x 170.2 cm)

Produced at The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia

Purchased with funds contributed by W. B. Dixon Stroud, 1992-100-1

© 1990 Faith Ringgold



Let's Look

Can you find Cassie in a red dress?
How many times do you see her?
Where?

Where is this story taking place?
How do you know?

What is going on in the image?

How is this different from
other quilts you've seen?
How is it similar?

About the Quilt

When she was growing up, Faith Ringgold and her family often spent summer evenings on the roof of their apartment building. This childhood memory inspired her to create a series of quilts and write her acclaimed children's book *Tar Beach*, published in 1991. This quilt, called *Tar Beach 2*, features eight-year-old Cassie, the **protagonist** in the story, on her building's roof with her family and neighbors. Amid the city lights, the adults enjoy food and each other's company, while Cassie and her brother look up at the night sky. In the story, which Ringgold wrote in the upper portion of the quilt, Cassie dreams of flying, a **symbol** of freedom and power. Here, she soars among the stars, over the George Washington Bridge. A true heroine for readers young and old, Cassie discovers, as the written inscription on the quilt states, that anyone can fly: "All you need is somewhere to go that you can't get to any other way."⁸

In this quilt, Ringgold used a pattern of eight triangles within a square, derived from a traditional design of the Kuba peoples of Africa. She printed the images using the **screenprinting** process at the Fabric Workshop and Museum in Philadelphia. It is one of an edition of twenty-four.

About Faith Ringgold

Born in the Harlem neighborhood in New York City in 1930, Faith Ringgold grew up in the wake of the **Harlem Renaissance**. As a girl, she was often bedridden with asthma and spent time drawing while she rested. She taught art in city public schools from 1955 to 1973, simultaneously pursuing a career as a painter. In the 1970s, she began to create sculptures made of cloth in collaboration with her mother, Willi Posey Jones, who was a successful fashion designer. Soon Ringgold developed the idea for “story quilts,” **pieced quilts** with narratives written and illustrated on their surfaces. She has written and illustrated numerous children’s books, including *Tar Beach*, which won the Coretta Scott King Book Award for illustration. The stories are often narrated by African American women or girls who speak assertively in their own voices, giving children role models who are female and of color.



Photograph by Grace Matthews

Curriculum Connections

Language Arts

Flying (elementary school)

Imagine you can fly above your neighborhood, town, or city. Where would you go, what would you see, and what would it feel like? Write a story about your adventures as you soar above it all.

Tar Beach (elementary school)

Read and discuss *Tar Beach*. How does Faith Ringgold’s quilt relate to the story? Compare and contrast the images in the book to those in this quilt. How does this quilt add to the story?

Childhood Memories as Inspiration (upper elementary and middle school)

Ringgold used her memory of being on the roof of her apartment building as inspiration for her story. What childhood memories do you have of a special place or family tradition? Write a short story about this memory.

Art

Fabric Art (middle and high school)

Ringgold transformed her art by using fabric to make sculptures and creating pieced cloth borders around her painted canvases and quilting the entire work. Experiment with using fabric to make works of art such as sculptures, collages, and paintings.

Social Studies

American Labor Unions (middle and high school)

In *Tar Beach*, Cassie’s father is prevented from joining the union because he is African American. Research the history of African Americans and labor unions. When were the unions in your area integrated? What were the reasons given why African Americans could not join? Research some of the leaders who helped change the situation, such as Bayard Rustin and A. Philip Randolph. What problems still exist?

Math

Quilt Patterns (elementary school)

Investigate quilt patterns, including the one Ringgold used in *Tar Beach 2*. Using tangrams or other math manipulatives, create your own quilt pattern. Will yours be **symmetrical** or asymmetrical? What patterns will it have?

A PowerPoint slideshow with all of the resource images can be found on the enclosed CD.

Carrie Mae Weems

American, born 1953

Untitled

1990 (negative); 2011 (print)

Gelatin silver print

From the *Kitchen Table Series*

Each image: 27 1/4 x 27 1/4 inches
(69.2 x 69.2 cm)

Gift of Marion Boulton Stroud, 2011-194-2a-c

Courtesy of the artist and
Jack Shainman Gallery, New York



Let's Look

What is happening in each of these photographs?

What changes from one image to the next? What could explain these changes?

What story do you think is taking place here?

Why do you think the artist leaves the story open to interpretation?

About the Photographs

These three photographs are a part of a series of twenty black-and-white images called the *Kitchen Table Series*. Staged in Carrie Mae Weems's home, at her own kitchen table, and featuring herself as the main character, they convey an open-ended narrative. The drama unfolds as various characters interact with the woman.

In the first picture, the woman and a man sit at a table under a bright light. The man reads the newspaper, and the woman seems occupied by her thoughts. She holds a cigarette in her hand, and glasses of water sit on the table. In the next image, she stands against the wall behind the man, who intently reads the paper. Next, the man and woman embrace. Time has elapsed, but how much? What words have been spoken?

As viewers, we can relate to the setting: the kitchen table is a familiar place where people gather for socializing, eating, working, or reading. In this way, Weems connects to our individual personal experiences, while raising questions about larger issues such as family dynamics, relationships, and power. As she stated, "This woman can stand in for me and for you; she can stand in for the audience, she leads you into history. She's a witness and a guide."⁸

About Carrie Mae Weems

At age fourteen, Carrie Mae Weems knew she would become an artist. After completing her studies in California, she began a career in documentary photography, but soon focused instead on staged images that explore issues of gender, race, class, and politics. As she explains, she has always “been interested in the idea of power; relationships are made and articulated through power.”⁸ Aware of the lack of images of African American women in popular culture or fine art, Weems seeks to counter that in her work. A socially engaged artist who considers herself a storyteller, she invites viewers into the worlds she constructs and challenges them to consider the issues she raises.



Photograph by Todd Gray

Curriculum Connections

Art

Artist as Subject (high school)

Compare and contrast Carrie Mae Weems’s photographs with those by Cindy Sherman. What is each artist communicating? What ideas about gender, power, and identity are in each? Why do you think these artists depict themselves in their work?

The Narrative in the Kitchen Table Series (high school)

Explore Weems’s entire *Kitchen Table Series* (see Resources, page 43). How does the narrative in these three images relate to the larger series? What new thoughts do you have?

Light and Shadow (middle and high school)

Compare and contrast the use of light and shadow in the photographs by Weems, Gordon Parks, and Lorna Simpson that are included in this resource.

Language Arts

Dialogue (high school)

Write a dialogue between the man and the woman, both during the scenes depicted, and in the time in between. As an alternate, write a caption for each image.

A Story in Three Photos (high school)

Using an app such as Snapchat, tell a story with three photos. What will change in each image? What will stay the same? Can you tell a story while leaving its meaning open-ended?

The Kitchen as Setting (high school)

In both Weems’s *Untitled* and Lorna Simpson’s *C-Ration* (see page 34), the artists place an African American woman in the context of a kitchen. Compare and contrast the messages in each picture. Why do you think the artists chose this setting? As an extension, research other works in which artists have explored this theme, such as Judy Chicago’s *Dinner Party*.

Social Studies

Images of African American Women (high school)

Weems has commented on the lack of images of African American women in popular culture and art. Explore the images you find online, in magazines and advertisements, on television, and in art museums. How are African American women shown? How often? What stereotypes exist? What do you think is the best way to counter these stereotypes?

A PowerPoint slideshow with all of the resource images can be found on the enclosed CD.

⁸ Dawoud Bey and Carrie Mae Weems, “Carrie Mae Weems,” *BOMB* no. 108 (summer 2009), 66, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40428266>.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 62.

Lorna Simpson

American, born 1960

C-Ration

1991

Gelatin silver prints (diptych)

Left image: 18 5/8 × 20 3/4 inches (47.3 × 52.7 cm); right image: 18 5/8 × 20 1/4 inches (47.3 × 51.4 cm); sheet: 24 1/2 × 47 3/4 inches (62.2 × 121.3 cm)

Gift of Marion Boulton Stroud, 2012-154-1



Let's Look

What do you see in these two photographs? What can't you see?

Read the words in each picture.
What do you think they mean?

What similarities do you find
between the two images?

What do you think the artist's
message might be?

Who else might identify with
this message?

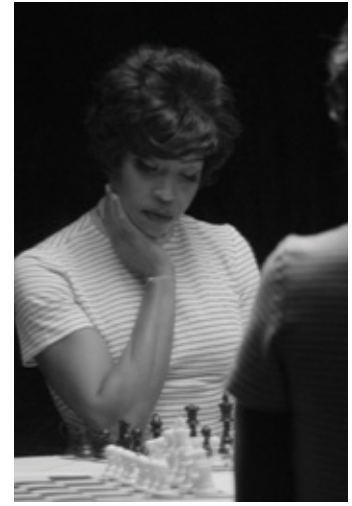
About the Photographs

In this work of art, Lorna Simpson brings together words and images and asks us to draw our own conclusions. This work is a **diptych** (dip-tick), or pair of images, of two black-and-white photographs. On the left, an empty, white paper plate contains the words "not good enough" in black capital letters. On the right, the words "but good enough to serve" are printed in white over the image of a black woman dressed in a simple white shift. The woman remains anonymous: we can see only from her lips to her chest. The contrast of black and white in the photographs, and the similar white curves of the plate and neckline, tie the two images together.

The woman, words, and plate reference the experience of enslaved women and their descendants who worked as servants, but could not eat the same food or use the same dishes as the white families they served. The title, *C-Ration*, refers to the canned, precooked meals given to US soldiers during the 1940s and 1950s when they were in combat. What do you think the title adds to the meaning of the photographs? Why do you think Simpson chose to crop out the rest of the woman's face? What do you think she might be saying about the experience of African American women?

About Lorna Simpson

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Lorna Simpson started on the path to becoming an artist when she worked as an intern at the Studio Museum in Harlem at age eighteen. She studied photography at the School of Visual Arts in New York. Even before finishing graduate school at the University of California, San Diego, she had become known for her large-scale photographs, which often feature African American women, paired with text. Though uncomplicated in appearance, these works of art do not offer a straightforward meaning. Instead, they challenge us to make our own interpretations and reconsider our views of gender, identity, culture, race, history, and memory. Visually engaging and thought-provoking, Simpson's work encourages us to confront these complex issues that continue to face American society today.



Lorna Simpson
Chess (still), 2013
HD Video
Duration: 10 minute loop

Curriculum Connections

Art

Text and Image (high school)

Look at additional artwork by Lorna Simpson and other artists who combine images and text, such as Barbara Kruger. What messages do you find in their images? Create your own work of art that combines image and text in a meaningful way. How will you keep your message clear but still open to interpretation?

Cropping (middle and high school)

Simpson carefully crops her images to limit what we can and cannot see. Discuss how she has cropped the image of the woman in *C-Ration*. How does it affect the artwork and its meaning? How does it affect your experience of viewing it? Create your own work of art that employs strategic cropping.

Social Studies/Language Arts

Domestic Labor (high school)

Research Dorothy Lee Bolden, who established the National Domestic Workers Union (now the National Domestic Workers Alliance) in 1968. Why did she create the organization? What issues do they address? Relate these ideas to your understanding of *C-Ration*.

Language Arts

What Is Your Interpretation? (high school)

After discussing *C-Ration* as a group, write an individual persuasive essay about your interpretation of the work. What meaning do you find in it? Cite visual evidence to support your claims.

I, Too (middle and high school)

Read the poem "I, Too" by Langston Hughes, written in the voice of a domestic worker. Read the poem aloud several times while viewing *C-Ration*, and discuss the connections you find between the poem and the photographs. As a response, write your own poem in the voice of a woman who works as a domestic laborer.

A PowerPoint slideshow with all of the resource images can be found on the enclosed CD.

Jerry Pinkney

American, born 1939

John Henry

1994

Watercolor and graphite pencil on paper

Cover illustration for *John Henry*, by Julius Lester (New York: Dial Books, 1994)

Image: 14 11/16 × 22 3/8 inches (37.3 × 56.8 cm); sheet: 16 15/16 × 23 15/16 inches (43 × 60.8 cm)

Purchased with the Julius Bloch Memorial Fund created by Benjamin D. Bernstein, the James D. Crawford and Judith N. Dean Fund, and the Print Revolving Fund, 2013-156-1



Let's Look

Describe the man in this painting.

What is he wearing? What is he holding in his hands?

What do you think are his strengths? How do you know?

What do you notice in the background of the picture? What do these details tell you about where this story is taking place?

About the Painting

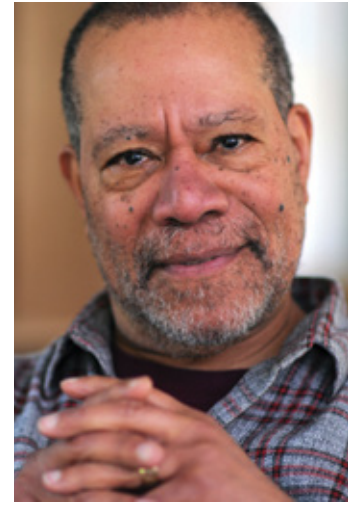
In this cover illustration for the children's book *John Henry*, the legendary hero sits comfortably and confidently on railroad ties, with a large hammer in each of his clenched fists. In the story, Henry accomplishes incredible feats, such as chopping down an acre of trees into firewood in an afternoon and outrunning a man on horseback.

This picture shows Henry at the site of his final accomplishment. After coming across a team of railroad workers who were using a new steam drill to dig through a mountain, he challenged the machine to a contest. With the drill on one side of the mountain, and Henry on the other, people gathered to see who would reach the middle of the mountain first. Amazingly, Henry dug through five times as far as the drill. Sadly, he soon died from physical exhaustion, but his admirers understood that "dying ain't important...what matters is how well you do your living."

Artist Jerry Pinkney collaborated with author Julius Lester on the retelling of this beloved folktale. The story was a childhood favorite of Pinkney's, and he embraced the opportunity to "create an African American hero that would inspire all."¹⁰ A master visual storyteller and watercolorist, Pinkney captured key details of the story, such as the railroad, mountain, and onlookers, as well as Henry's confidence and pride.

About Jerry Pinkney

A native Philadelphian, Jerry Pinkney grew up in the city's Germantown neighborhood. Although he struggled with reading due to dyslexia, he worked hard in school and won a scholarship to the Philadelphia Museum School of Art in 1957 (now the University of the Arts). He has illustrated numerous books featuring African American characters and exploring African American history and has won many awards, including a Caldecott Honor for *John Henry* and Caldecott Medal for *The Lion and the Mouse*. His beautiful **watercolors** and drawings pull viewers of all ages into each narrative. As he stated, "I am a storyteller at heart. There is something special about knowing that your stories can alter the way people see the world, and their place within it."¹¹



Photograph by Thomas Kristich

Curriculum Connections

Language Arts

John Henry (upper elementary school)

Read the book *John Henry* aloud and discuss Jerry Pinkney's illustrations. What details do you find in the illustrations that help you understand the story?

African American Heroes and Heroines (elementary and middle school)

John Henry is a heroic figure who continues to inspire people of all ages and backgrounds. What other heroic figures are represented in the works of art included in this resource? Why do you think so? What makes someone heroic?

Superpowers (elementary school)

John Henry can achieve unbelievable feats with his superhuman strength. Similarly, Cassie, the **protagonist** in Faith Ringgold's quilt *Tar Beach 2*, can fly among the stars. What superpower would you like to have? Describe it in words, and then create an image of yourself using this power to help someone else or accomplish an otherwise impossible task.

Art

Pinkney's Process (adaptable for all grades)

Explore Pinkney's artistic technique of drawing a picture in pencil and then adding watercolor on top. First, decide on a story you'd like to illustrate in your picture. Then, sketch it in pencil and add layers of watercolor to bring your drawing to life.

Social Studies

Oral Storytelling (adaptable for all grades)

Investigate oral history traditions in the American South through folktales such as *Tales of Uncle Remus* and *The Jack Tales*. How have these stories been passed down from one generation to the next? What is different about hearing a story told aloud from memory and reading it silently from a book?

A PowerPoint slideshow with all of the resource images can be found on the enclosed CD.

¹⁰ Norman Rockwell Museum, *Witness: The Art of Jerry Pinkney* (Stockbridge, MA: Norman Rockwell Museum, 2010), 17.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

Resources

Books

Berenza, Neal. *Martin Puryear*. New York: Thames and Hudson in association with the Art Institute of Chicago, 1991.

Earle, Susan, ed. *Aaron Douglas: African American Modernist*. New Haven: Yale University Press in association with the Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, 2007.

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Powell, Richard J. *Homecoming: The Art and Life of William H. Johnson*. Washington, DC: National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1991.

Schoonmaker, Trevor, ed. *Barkley L. Hendricks: Birth of the Cool*. Durham, NC: Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, 2008.

Shaw, Gwendolyn DuBois. *Represent: 200 Years of African American Art in the Philadelphia Museum of Art*. New Haven: Yale University Press in association with the Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2014.

Todd, Leonard. *Carolina Clay: The Life and Legend of the Slave Potter Dave*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2008.

Trotter, Jr., Joe William, and Eric Ledell Smith, eds. *African Americans in Pennsylvania: Shifting Historical Perspectives*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.

Wheat, Ellen Harkins. *Jacob Lawrence: American Painter*. Seattle: University of Washington Press in association with the Seattle Art Museum, 1986.

Children's Literature and Nonfiction

Bryant, Jen. *A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin*. New York: Alfred K. Knopf, 2013.

Duggleby, John. *Story Painter: The Life of Jacob Lawrence*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1998.

Everett, Gwen. *Li'l Sis and Uncle Willie: A Story Based on the Life and Paintings of William H. Johnson*. Washington, DC: National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1991.

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Hill, Laban Carrick. *Dave the Potter: Artist, Poet, Slave*. New York: Little, Brown, 2010.

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Lester, Julius. *John Henry*. New York: Dial Books, 1994.

Ringgold, Faith. *Henry Ossawa Tanner: His Boyhood Dream Comes True*. Pierpont, NH: Bunker Hill Publishing in association with Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 2011.

Ringgold, Faith. *Tar Beach*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1991.

Websites

African American Artists and Culture

African American World (PBS)

pbs.org/wnet/aaworld/arts/index.html

African American history, arts, and culture, and other information

The Blues

pbs.org/theblues/index.html

Companion website to the PBS series *The Blues*, featuring an interactive map that traces the blues migration, musical selections, essays, lesson plans, and other resources

Drop Me Off in Harlem

artsedge.kennedy-center.org/interactives/harlem/faces/

Information about Harlem Renaissance artists, writers, dancers, musicians, actors, and activists, along with audio and video offerings, an interactive map, thematic essays, and classroom activities

Harlem Renaissance (Library of Congress)

loc.gov/rr/program/bib/harlem/harlem.html

Resources in the Library of Congress as well as annotated links to external websites

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (New York Public Library)

nypl.org/locations/tid/64/node/65914

Information, interpretation, and scholarship on the global black experience, including lesson plans for some online exhibitions

Individual Artists

Elizabeth Catlett

Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

pafa.org/museum/The-Collection-Greenfield-American-Art-Resource/Tour-the-Collection/Category/Collection-Detail/985/collectionid--20030/mkey--14102

Images and information about Catlett's *I Am the Black Woman* print series (formerly *Negro Women*)

Chrysler Museum of Art

elizabethcatlett.net

Information about Catlett's work as well as videos of her talking about her life and career

Aaron Douglas

Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas

aarondouglas.ku.edu/resources/teacher_resource.pdf

Teacher resource developed for an exhibition of Douglas's work

Jacob Lawrence

Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-jacob-lawrence-11490

Transcript of an interview with the artist as well as links to the digital archives of the artist's papers

Jacob and Gwen Knight Lawrence Virtual Resource Center

jacobandgwenlawrence.org/index.html

Biographical information about Jacob Lawrence and his wife, artist Gwen Knight Lawrence, as well as resources for teaching and research and a searchable image archive

Whitney Museum of American Art

whitney.org/www/jacoblawrence/meet/

Lesson plans, timelines, images, and a biography

William Henry Johnson

Smithsonian American Art Museum

americanart.si.edu/education/johnson/index.html

Biographical information about the artist and suggested classroom activities, specifically developed for teachers

Gordon Parks

Gordon Parks Foundation

gordonparksfoundation.org

Information, a biography, and images

Jerry Pinkney

PBS

video.nhptv.org/video/1687990726/

A recording of *John Henry* being read aloud

Martin Puryear

Association for Public Art

associationforpublicart.org/interactive-art-map/pavilion-in-the-trees

Information about Puryear's *Pavilion in the Trees* in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park

The Center for Art in Wood, Philadelphia

centerforartinwood.org

Teacher training, resources, and on-site and classroom student workshops

Museum of Modern Art

moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2007/martinpuryear/flash.html

Information about the artist's work, images, and essays

PBS Art 21 Series

pbs.org/art21/artists/martin-puryear

A video about the artist's work developed for the classroom

Lorna Simpson

American Federation of Arts

afaweb.org/education/documents/Simpson_resource_packet-final.pdf

Teacher resource developed in conjunction with an exhibition of the artist's work

Brooklyn Museum

brooklynmuseum.org/uploads/lorna_simpson_teachers_packet.pdf

Teacher materials developed for an exhibition of the artist's work

Tate Modern

tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/lorna-simpson-talking-art

Interview with the artist

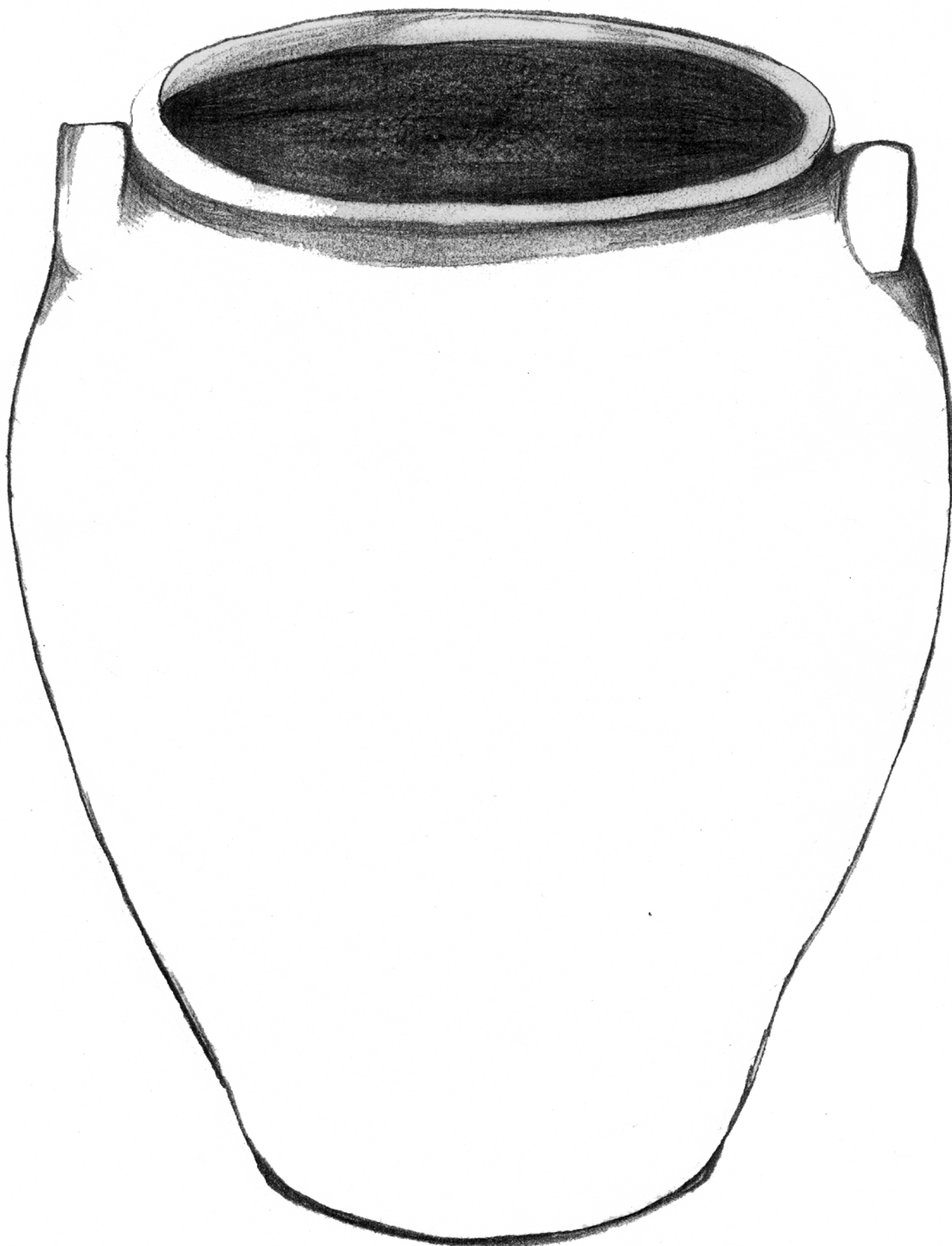
Carrie Mae Weems

Artist's Website

carriemaeweems.net

Extensive information about the *Kitchen Table Series* in its entirety and other work by the artist

Using David Drake's *Storage Jar* as inspiration, write a message that you would like to send out to the world on this jar. Remember to consider the style and size of your handwriting and the placement of your message.



Glossary

abstract

Having little or no pictorial representation or narrative content.

civil rights movement

A movement from 1955 to 1968 that aimed to abolish racial discrimination against African Americans.

complementary colors

Pairs of contrasting colors: red and green, yellow and violet, blue and orange.

diptych

A work of art made of two parts.

Farm Security Administration (FSA)

A program created as part of the New Deal whose goal was to combat rural poverty; its photography program (1935–44) documented the challenges of rural poverty.

geometric

Primarily involving lines and shapes, such as curves and zigzags or circles and squares.

glaze

A layer of clay or minerals in liquid form that coats pottery to give the surface a protected and luminous finish after being fired in a kiln.

Great Depression

An era in US history defined by an economic downturn, which is often associated with the stock market crash on October 29, 1929.

Harlem Renaissance

A movement, centered in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City, in which artists, philosophers, and other intellectuals found new ways to explore the experiences of African Americans. The movement, which lasted from the 1920s to the 1930s, produced a wealth of literature, drama, music, visual art, and dance, as well as new ideas in sociology, historiography, and philosophy.

manumit

To release from slavery.

mural

A painting applied to and made integral with a wall or ceiling.

photojournalist A person who takes photographs to report news stories in print or digital form.

pieced quilt

A quilt whose top is made from bits of fabric stitched together to form patterns and borders often with a geometric motif.

physiognotrace

A machine invented in 1802 by British-born Philadelphian John Isaac Hawkins (1772–1805). It was used to produce a miniature copy of a person's profile. Hawkins called it a physiognotrace because it literally traced a person's physiognomy, or facial features.

protagonist

The main character in a story.

screenprinting

A process that uses a fine cloth mesh stretched over a frame, with parts of the mesh sealed, to create an image (often using stencils). Ink is pushed through the unsealed areas onto paper or fabric underneath, creating a screenprinted image.

symbol

An object or act that represents (or symbolizes) something else, such as an emotion, idea, or story.

symmetry

Corresponding in size, shape, and design on opposite sides of an imaginary dividing line.

taxidermy

The practice of preparing, stuffing, and mounting the skins of animals for display or study.

watercolor

A paint in which pigment is dispersed in water.

Printed by CRW Graphics, Pennsauken, New Jersey

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Front cover: *Blind Singer* (detail), c. 1939–40, by William Henry Johnson (Gift of the Philadelphia Commercial Museum [also known as the Philadelphia Civic Center Museum], Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2004-111-719)

