



African American Art: Harlem Renaissance, The Civil Rights Era, and Beyond

Richard J. Powell, Virginia Mecklenburg, Theresa Slowik

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A beautifully illustrated survey of African American art of the twentieth century, including many never-before-seen works by the most important artists of the period. African American Art presents a powerful selection of paintings, sculpture, prints, and photographs by forty-three black artists who explored the African American experience of the twentieth century. Embracing many universal themes and also evoking specific aspects of the African American experience such as the African diaspora, jazz, and the power of religion, the artists worked in styles as varied as documentary realism, abstraction, and postmodern assemblage of found objects. Drawn entirely from the Smithsonian American Art Museum's rich collection of African American art, the works include paintings by Benny Andrews, Jacob Lawrence, Thornton Dial Sr., Romare Bearden, Alma Thomas, and Lois Mailou Jones, and photographs by Roy DeCarava, Gordon Parks, Roland Freeman, Marilyn Nance, and James Van Der Zee. More than half of the artworks in the exhibition are being shown for the first time. In Richard Powell's text, his usual keen insights into meaning and metaphor enrich the reader's understanding of the artworks in their historical setting and contemporary culture.

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