

FIFTH GRADE CURRICULUM MATERIALS

LACMA's Permanent Collection

SIX OBJECTS FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY Museum of Art (LACMA) are highlighted in these curriculum materials. The artwork included represents a variety of United States regions, and provides examples of artistic production from the mid-nineteenth century through the early twentieth century in a wide variety of mediums: painting, sculpture, ceramics, and textiles.

The pieces examined range from personal, intimate expressions, including a family quilt, to a porcelain vase celebrating America's centennial. The landscape of the United States – and human interaction with it – is a theme of a number of artworks included here. One painting from the early twentieth century portrays the busy street life of New York City, home to many immigrants in the country.

Each of these six objects is accompanied by a description of the object and background information about the artist who created the work. Suggested activities for looking, thinking, and writing are included to assist students as they explore the artworks and related historical information. This curriculum was developed in alignment with Grade Five California State Content Standards for Visual Arts, English Language Arts, and History-Social Science. It is designed for classroom use and intended to stimulate critical thinking, support creative expression, and promote meaningful experiences with works of art.

This curriculum was written by Jennifer Miller, edited by the LACMA Education Department, and designed by Jenifer Shell and Eunice Lee for *Art Programs with the Community: LACMA On-Site*.

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Snyder Memorial Quilt

CIRCA 1845–1850, EMILY SNYDER

MADE OF MULTICOLORED FABRICS ON A WHITE ground, this quilt contains a central medallion comprised of tulips and stars, popular folk motifs in the mid-nineteenth century. Around the tulip design is inked script that records the birth dates of members of the Snyder family, as well as some death dates. Beneath the inscriptions of family members who died are small sketches of floral sprays and boughs of leaves in ink. They are flanked by the names and birth dates of the surviving children. Four verses surround the central tulip.

A tulip and lotus bud motif in green, red, and yellow is featured in each of the four corners of the medallion. Surrounding the medallion are thirty-six album blocks with inked signatures and figurative sketches. The pattern in each block is composed of pieced squares of at least two different fabrics. Each of the blocks and the medallion is separated by a strip of fabric in a paisley print on a red ground.

It is believed that this quilt was created by Emily Snyder as a family register, perhaps prompted by the death of her husband, which is recorded on the quilt along with the deaths of three daughters. Six of her children were still alive on completion of the quilt, and their births are also recorded.

Beginning in the late 1830s, signature quilts, or quilts composed of signed blocks, became popular in mid-Atlantic communities. At this time, commercially produced permanent inks were available and it became common practice to inscribe signatures, verses, and drawings on quilt blocks. The *Snyder Memorial Quilt* was created in Pennsylvania, perhaps in Lebanon County in the south central part of the state. The chimney sweep pattern used for the blocks of the quilt was a popular pattern for signature quilts because it left the center square of the block open and available as a canvas for a signature or a verse. Marking important occasions, these quilts served to commemorate important historical and

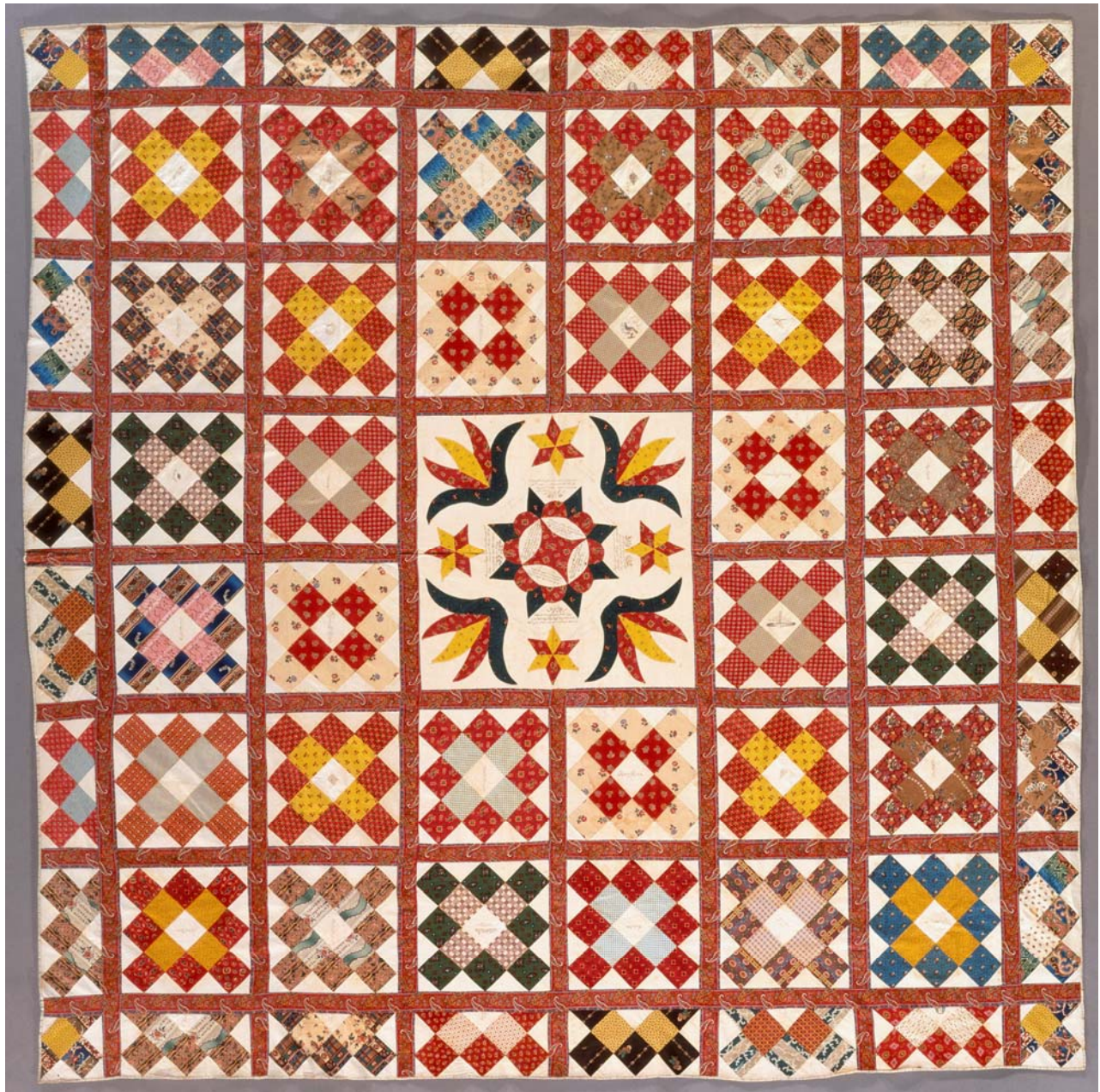
personal events, as well as relationships. The popularity of signature quilts began to fade in the late 1850s, but there was a revival in their popularity at the end of the nineteenth century. AIDS quilts produced in more recent years are examples of the continuation of the commemorative quilt-making tradition.

- *Discuss the various ways people commemorate life, death, and other important events. What are the objects we associate with commemoration? Can you think of other works of art that serve a commemorative purpose (monuments, portraits, history paintings, and so on)? Compare and contrast one of these examples to the Snyder Memorial Quilt.*

Quilt making is considered to be one of the traditional art forms of the United States; in fact, the quilt-making tradition flourished in the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century. This coincided with the increased availability of materials due to greater mechanization of weaving and improvements in transportation – results of industrialization.

- *Why would one find a quilt in the collection of an art museum? Do you consider this art? Why or why not?*

While quilt making has long been considered important to women of all socio-economic groups, in more recent times, it has become a highly skilled art form practiced by men and women. They have been created by individuals or by groups. Quilts with a single block repetition have been associated with egalitarian ideas of friendship and the lack of sharp class distinctions that existed in rural communities. More visually elaborate quilts that incorporated complex techniques like appliqué (a layering technique) were costlier and reflected the social standing of the donors and recipients. The *Snyder Memorial Quilt* incorporates both piecing (fabric stitched together side by side) and appliqué. Regardless of the complexity and expense of the design, the visual language of the quilt is familiar to a diverse range of people in America.



EMILY SNYDER
(BORN 1804)

QUILT, "SNYDER MEMORIAL," c. 1845–1850

PIECED AND APPLIQUÉD COTTON, WITH INKED SIGNATURES, 98½ x 98½ IN.

AMERICAN QUILT RESEARCH CENTER ACQUISITION FUND M.87.208

PHOTO © 2010 MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA

Century Vase

CIRCA 1876, UNION PORCELAIN WORKS, UNITED STATES

AN ELABORATE DISPLAY OF THE PROGRESS OF the United States during its first century, the *Century Vase* combines a simple shape with elegant decoration. The focal point on both sides of the vase's body is a profile portrait of George Washington in *biscuit-relief* (unglazed pottery that has been fired only once). The lower portion of the vase is dominated by a band of six biscuit-relief panels; each panel portrays a scene from American history, divided by a geometric pattern in gold, green, and purple. Above the narrative scenes is an ornate painted design dominated by greens and purples with touches of orange—grape clusters, floral motifs, acorns, and leaves form the design. Bands of gilt are found at the top of the shoulder of the vase and repeat to divide different floral motifs on the neck and the lip, while the foot of the vase is decorated with a black and purple scalloped design and a small flower motif. There are two handles on the vase, both in the shape of North American bison heads. The bison head handles are framed by a floral motif and a pattern of leaves and acorns.

- *Examine the details of the Century Vase. What is "American" about the vase? What does the decoration reveal about perceptions of the United States at the Centennial?*

Porcelain is a ceramic characterized by, and highly valued for, its pure white color, smoothness, hardness, and its translucent quality. Porcelain was first produced in China during the Tang dynasty (AD 618–907), but the Europeans did not discover how to make true "hard-paste" porcelain until the eighteenth century. During the 1870s there was a rapid growth in the porcelain industry throughout the Western world; new technologies and techniques were important to this growth. American manufacturers looked to classical prototypes for the basic forms of their porcelains but overlaid them with modern decoration in patriotic themes.

The Centennial Exposition of 1876 in Philadelphia is considered pivotal to the development of porcelain in the United States. Porcelain displays from all over the world were featured at the Exposition, and American artists and craftsmen sought to present a unique style. American manufacturers saw this as an opportunity to display their technical virtuosity in the production of porcelain, as well as an opportunity to move away from imitating imported European porcelain wares.

The Centennial Exposition resulted in the production of some uniquely American porcelain. Two large Century vases created for the Union Porcelain Works display are now considered among the most original porcelains made in the United States in the later part of the nineteenth century. Union Porcelain Works was located in Greenpoint, New York (a neighborhood of Brooklyn), from approximately 1861 to 1922. Although the Porcelain Works created mainly mass-produced lines, they became nationally known for their production of art ware, and particularly for the production of the Century vases.

Karl Müller was the chief designer and modeler for Union Porcelain Works. Müller, who was born in Germany and educated in Paris, designed a number of works for the company to be displayed at the Centennial Exhibition of 1876 in Philadelphia. The pair of large Century vases he created for the exhibition was covered in patriotic motifs and scenes from American history. Müller used popular and easily legible emblems in his designs, like the profile portrait of George Washington, a representation of the Boston Tea Party, and animals and plants associated with the United States. LACMA's *Century Vase* is identical to the large Century vases in form and relief decoration, but it is about ten inches smaller. There were approximately twelve known Century vases created in this size.

- *What emblems and narratives would you choose if you were given the task of representing the progress of the United States to date?*



CENTURY VASE

UNITED STATES, c. 1876

MADE BY UNION PORCELAIN WORKS, NEW YORK

PORCELAIN, PAINT, GILT, HEIGHT: 12 13/16 IN.; DIAMETER: 11½ IN.

DECORATIVE ARTS ACQUISITION FUND AND MUSEUM ACQUISITION FUND M.87.3

PHOTO © 2010 MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA

Lower Falls, Rochester

1849, FREDERIC EDWIN CHURCH

IN THIS WORK BY LANDSCAPE PAINTER FREDERIC Edwin Church, the eye of the viewer is drawn to the center of the composition, where water rushes out of a gorge and over the falls to a basin below. The weather conditions are clear and calm, and the dominant tone is one of nature at peace. The late afternoon sun shining on the cliffs adjacent to the cascading water is balanced by the shadowed glade of trees on the opposite cliff. Viewers are invited into the harmonious scene through the tiny figure of the boy fishing at the center bottom of the painting.

- *Look carefully at this work and describe the place that is depicted? What conclusions might a viewer draw about life in mid-19th- century western New York based on this painting? Do you think the scene is realistic or idealized?*

The falls of the Genesee River at Rochester, New York, are featured in this landscape. In the nineteenth century, artists and industries were both attracted to this area. The Genesee River flows north to Lake Ontario with three major waterfalls and a deep gorge at Rochester. Church chose to represent the Lower Falls, which were removed from the more concentrated areas of mills and factories that lined the river at that time. Church was interested in waterfalls and sought them out as he traveled and sketched in 1848. During his visit to Rochester in September and October, he completed seven detailed drawings from different vantage points of the site represented in this painting. Lower Falls is described as an 84-foot cataract (a large or high waterfall) with a wide cascade (a waterfall or a series of small waterfalls over large rocks) twenty-five feet above it.

An important nineteenth-century American landscape painter, Frederic Edwin Church was famous during his career and widely regarded as the most renowned of American landscape painters from the late 1850s to the early 1870s. Trained in the Hudson River School style, Church was the first

pupil of the great American landscape painter, Thomas Cole (1801–1848), who is credited with establishing the landscape as the predominant genre in the United States. In the 1840s Cole's work reflected an interest in producing scenes in which man and nature exist in harmony.

At the beginning of his career, Church followed Cole's example in creating peaceful scenes that diminished the conflict between the growth of civilization and the preservation of the natural environment. The depiction of the United States as a harmonious land is exemplified by this painting, completed five years after Church began his association with Cole.

- *Discuss the relationship between nature and civilization in this work. What is the message that is conveyed about this relationship? How is this message conveyed?*

Lower Falls, Rochester was originally purchased by Cyrus West Field, a friend of the artist's who would become a great patron of his work. Field made his fortune as a dealer of fine paper, particularly paper manufactured in mills in western Massachusetts. Field believed in the potential of technology and the importance of economic growth, but he also shared with Church an enthusiasm for nature and geology. Church's interest is revealed in his precise observation of the geological characteristics of the area, which have a more prominent focus than the man-made elements in this painting. The artist's drawings show the numerous mills and other buildings that existed around the falls in the mid-nineteenth century. Church selected a vantage point for the painting that obscured many man-made structures. The careful integration of the mill into this landscape suggests that industrial progress need not be destructive to the natural environment, a prevailing opinion at this time.

- *Sketch multiple views of a prominent place near your home or school. Choose one vantage point to use in creating a final drawing or painting. How will your artistic choices, such as color and composition, convey a specific mood or message about this place?*



FREDERIC EDWIN CHURCH
(UNITED STATES, 1826–1900)
LOWER FALLS, ROCHESTER, 1849
OIL ON CANVAS, 19¾ x 29 3/8 IN.

GIFT OF CHARLES C. AND ELMA RALPHS SHOEMAKER AC1994.152.2

PHOTO © 2010 MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA

The Bronco Buster

MODELED 1894–1895, CAST CIRCA 1907, FREDERIC REMINGTON

FREDERIC REMINGTON SUSPENDS THE DRAMATIC motion of a rider and a bucking horse in bronze in *The Bronco Buster*. Rearing high on its hind legs, the horse drops its head in an attempt to dislodge the rider. The rider grips the reins in one hand and a quirt (a riding whip with a short handle and a rawhide lash) in the other as he leans forward in the saddle to maintain his seat. The tension of the moment is evident in the artist's rendering of the gathering of muscles in the horse's hind legs and neck and the look of intense concentration on the face of the rider. One of the stirrups swings free, emphasizing the rider's precarious position. The confident posture of the man as he prepares to bring the quirt forward belies the danger of the moment. The artist carefully details the clothing and outfitting of the rider, from the well-worn hat to the details of the saddle.

- *What types of images do you associate with the American West? How is the West portrayed in popular media? Discuss how Remington's sculpture fits (or doesn't fit) our ideas of the American West.*

Frederic Remington was born in Canton, New York, and was raised in a nearby town. After studying at the Yale School of Fine Arts, Remington traveled to the West as a young man and purchased a sheep ranch in Kansas. He sold the ranch in less than a year and moved on to invest in a saloon and a hardware store, which also failed. While in Kansas City, Remington began to sell paintings locally and to sell illustrations to publishers in New York City. After traveling to the New Mexico and Arizona territories, he moved back to New York in 1885. Successfully specializing as an illustrator of Western subjects, Remington had his first solo exhibition in 1890, which featured his paintings of life in the American West. He made frequent trips to the West and feared that his experience of the West would soon disappear with the closing of the American frontier.

- *The American West is often romanticized in literature and popular media. Using your knowledge of American history, can you think of any other time periods and/or regions that have been romanticized in our popular culture? How are these times and places represented in various media?*

Remington had already demonstrated that he could move successfully between mediums as an illustrator and a painter when he began sculpting around 1894. He chose to represent the same themes he was known for in his paintings and drawings in sculpture, and became the first artist to specialize in Western sculpture. Remington's sculptures are known for a photographic quality of suspended motion, readily apparent in this example. *The Bronco Buster* was Remington's first sculpture and proved to be his most popular. Sculpture in bronze has a permanency that was attractive to the artist, who was interested in preserving his own legacy, as well as his vision of the West. Small bronze sculptures can be easily replicated through the casting process, which allows for the creation of multiple sculptures from a single model. (*Casting* is a term for a sculpture-making process that involves pouring liquid material into a mold.)

The early castings of *The Bronco Buster* were produced using a sand-casting method. Around 1900, Remington began using the lost-wax technique, which involves replacing the wax in a mold with bronze. This technique allowed Remington to modify the model to more closely meet his artistic objectives. Between 1903 and 1907 he made a number of adjustments to his plaster model and in the wax models used for each cast, enhancing the sense of motion and unity. The artist achieved his final version in 1907 in about the sixtieth cast; all subsequent casts resemble this cast. LACMA's cast number is sixty-nine.



FREDERIC REMINGTON
(UNITED STATES, 1861–1909)
THE BRONCO BUSTER, MODELED 1894–1895; CAST C. 1907
BRONZE, 22 X 18 X 12 IN.
GIFT OF MRS. GLADYS LETTS POLLOCK 43.11.2
PHOTO © 2010 MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA

Cliff Dwellers

1913, GEORGE BELLOWS

CLIFF DWELLERS BY GEORGE BELLOWS TEEMS with life. The city streets are overrun with people going about their everyday lives while buildings loom over the figures in the street. The proximity of the structures is emphasized by the lines of laundry strung from the balconies of one building to the balconies of another on the opposite side of the street. The residents of the tenements seem to spill out of the structures – almost every balcony and window is populated by a figure. Below, a streetcar travels through the middle ground of the painting. Mothers and children, often in a minimal amount of clothing, stand in groups and sprawl together on the sidewalk, engaged in games, scuffles, and conversations. The two women in the right foreground who rest their backs against the stairway suggest the overwhelming energy of the scene. The younger of the two figures cradles an infant and leans her head back in exhaustion.

- *After looking carefully at the picture, describe the living conditions. What does Bellows reveal about the everyday lives of the people he painted? Based on the details of the picture, what assumptions can we make about the social and economic status of the figures?*

George Bellows was raised in Columbus, Ohio. Enrolling in the New York School of Art in 1904, Bellows studied with well-known American painter Robert Henri. Closely associated with the group of painters popularly known as the Ashcan school, Bellows, Henri, and others were known for depicting urban subjects, particularly the working-class subjects of New York's Lower East Side, without idealization.

A complex urban scene, Bellows manages the complicated *Cliff Dwellers* utilizing color and compositional theories that advocated using triads of complementary colors to create harmonious works. Bellows used a limited

palette in the painting that is enriched by the intermediate hues produced by mixing the colors on the canvas. The theory also advocated harmony and balance in composition through the use of simple geometric forms. It appears that Bellows inserted at least ninety pins into this canvas at regular intervals to create vertical, horizontal, and diagonal rows around which he painted. He then pulled the pins out while the paint was still soft.

Cliff Dwellers portrays the lifestyle of the many immigrants who populated American cities in the early twentieth century. Underlying Bellows's painting is the issue of urban reform, which was a frequent topic in the newspapers when *Cliff Dwellers* was painted. Bellows depiction of store-fronts and tenements emphasized the domestic aspect of life in downtown New York City. The word *tenement* is often associated with housing for the urban poor; tenements were first built as a solution to an immediate need for more housing in the city. As the population of New York City doubled in the years between 1845 and 1860, new tenements were an affordable place to live for immigrants with low-paying jobs. They quickly became overcrowded, however, and a study of 1903 showed that about two-thirds of the New York population was living in tenements at that time.

- *How is Bellows' depiction of urban life similar to or different from your own experience? Discuss how you would represent life on the streets of Los Angeles. What neighborhood or street might you choose to depict? Is there a message you would try to convey to your viewer?*

A significant painting in the history of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, *Cliff Dwellers* was the first painting purchased by the county for the museum and is still among the best known American paintings in the collection. The work was purchased in 1916 when the artist was still very young, and it has become one of the most appreciated works in the history of American art.



GEORGE BELLOWS
(UNITED STATES, 1882–1925)
CLIFF DWELLERS, 1913

OIL ON CANVAS, 40 3/16 x 42 1/16 IN.
LOS ANGELES COUNTY FUND 16.4

PHOTO © 2010 MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA

The 1920's...The Migrants Arrive and Cast Their Ballots

1974, JACOB LAWRENCE

THIS EIGHT-COLOR SILKSCREEN, OR PRINTED image, portrays a busy scene of more than twenty people waiting to vote. At the center of the image, a man in a black suit signs his name at a table. Behind him, in the top part of the print, a man in a blue suit reaches to pull the voting booth's curtain. In the upper left side an old man with a cane stands in line to vote; the line snakes down the left side of the image, where one person reads a newspaper and a woman holds a baby. Other people wait on chairs and benches along the right side of the image. This print was included in the *Kent Bicentennial Portfolio: Spirit of Independence* (1975), a portfolio of prints by twelve artists commissioned for the American Bicentennial, the 200th anniversary of the adoption of The Declaration of Independence. Each artist was asked to make a print in response to the question: "What does independence mean to me?"

- What images come to mind when you think of the concept of independence? And what image would you choose to represent independence in an artwork? Would you include a personal story? Something from the history of the United States?

The title of this work, *The 1920's...The Migrants Arrive and Cast Their Ballots*, refers to the period between the two world wars when more than a million African Americans moved from communities in the southern United States to northern cities. Lawrence's parents participated in the Great Migration. In reflecting on the subject of this silkscreen, Lawrence said, "Among the many advantages the migrants found in the north was the freedom to vote. In my print, migrants are represented expressing that freedom."

The Great Migration was an important subject for Lawrence, and in the mid-1930s he chose to create a work of art about this subject. To prepare, he recalled anecdotes told by family and friends who had participated in the Great Migration and spent months at the Harlem branch of the New

York Public Library researching historical events. He was the first visual artist to engage this important topic, and in 1941 he completed the artwork in a form unique to him: a painted and written narrative in sixty panels. Exhibitions of the series received positive reviews and twenty-six of the panels were reproduced in *Fortune* magazine. In the Great Migration series, as with many of his other artworks, the paintings relate to broad themes of human drama as a universal experience and taking risks in search of a better life.

- Lawrence's distinctive style includes geometric shapes and simplified forms, overlapping figures, and bold colors. Look closely at this artwork: how has Lawrence used lines, colors, shapes, patterns, and the placement of the figures to depict what the people are doing and the importance of voting? How does he use color to suggest mood and movement in the artwork?

Jacob Lawrence was born in New Jersey in 1917 and settled with his mother and two siblings in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City at age thirteen. He took art classes in Harlem and was encouraged by artists living in the neighborhood. One of his teachers, the sculptor Augusta Savage, encouraged him to work for the Works Progress Administration/Federal Art Project, where he was paid to paint and was able to study with notable artists of the Harlem Renaissance.

Throughout his lengthy career, Lawrence concentrated on portraying the history of African Americans, while also conveying themes important to all people. Early in his career he created series of paintings about the Haitian general Toussaint L'Ouverture, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and John Brown. For many decades he created images of people working—cabinetmakers, librarians, seamstresses, and people cooperating to create a better life. In 1970 he settled in Seattle, Washington and in 1990 he was awarded the National Medal of Arts.



JACOB LAWRENCE
(UNITED STATES, 1917–2000)

THE 1920'S...THE MIGRANTS ARRIVE AND CAST THEIR BALLOTS, 1974

SILKSCREEN; EIGHT COLORS, 34 3/8 x 26 IN.

GIFT OF THE LORILLARD COMPANY (M.75.121.11)

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