



## **African American Art and the Political Dissent of Aaron Douglas during the Harlem Renaissance**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 00.04.01  
by Val-Jean Belton

This unit is designed for High school students who are enrolled in Advanced Placement studio art classes. This unit will introduce these studio art students to the visual culture of African American art. This unit will also teach students about the history of the Harlem Renaissance from the beginning of the early 1900's to the fall of the Renaissance in the early 1950's.

Through this unit students will also learn to analyze and critique the political statements that were represented in visual form. Meta Warrick Fuller, Palmer Hayden, William H. Johnson, and Aaron Douglas were all prominent African American artists during the time of the Harlem Renaissance. This unit will briefly explore each of these prominent artists and their contribution to the making of African American art during the Harlem Renaissance.

Various reproductions and slides will be used in order to help students gather a clearer understanding of the history of the Renaissance. The visual slides and reproductions will be used to help student analyze and focus on the social and political statements that are made in each painting.

During the teaching of this unit students will have the opportunity to visit various art galleries in the Connecticut and New York areas. They will also have the opportunity to gather information first hand using various Internet Web sites and once they visit The Schomburg Center for Black Culture, New York Public Library.

This unit also contains three lesson plans that are a result of the cultural and heritage portion of the unit. This unit also adheres to certain visual arts standards that are part of the visual arts curriculum in the New Haven Public Schools.

This unit will take approximately 35 days to complete. Students who are enrolled in Advanced Placement Studio art courses will have the chance to use this unit as part of their concentration portion for their general portfolio.

(Recommended for AP Studio Art and Advanced Art, grades 10-12.)

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