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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1988 Volume II: Immigrants and American Identity

Harlem Renaissance: Black Artistic Tradition

Guide for Curriculum Unit 88.02.02
by Patricia Flynn

My unit emphasizes the Black artistic tradition that grew during the period known as the Harlem Renaissance during the 1920s in New York City. This period of unprecedented Black creative activity followed World War I and the mass migration of many Blacks from the rural South to the urban centers of the North. Issues of cultural identity as well as social and political tension in a segregated culture gave rise to a flowering of the arts. Most well known are the creative efforts of writers, poets, dramatists and musicians; less is known about the painters and sculptors of the Harlem Renaissance. My unit examines the visual arts and artists such as painters Aaron Douglas, Palmer Hayden and William Johnson, sculptor Metta Warrick Fuller, and printmaker James Lesesne Wells.

(Recommended for Art classes, grades 9-12; and American History classes, grades 9-12)

Key Words

Afro-American Art History Harlem Renaissance

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