

Selected Artists of the Harlem Renaissance and artworks on VMR

Sargent Claude Johnson (1887-1967)

Mask (circa. 1930-1935)

Wanted to show the beauty of the Negro to themselves more than to the Whites. He did this through making the Negro sculpture with dignity and taking pride with his/her hair, lips, and bearing. He wanted to reverse the stereotypes about the Negro having big lips and eyes...looking like monkeys.

Jacob Lawrence (1917-2000)

Tombstones (1942)

You can take it as remembering those before you (Blacks). It is symbolic in many ways: *religious*- Mom and baby resembles the Madonna and child that are found in many Renaissance paintings; *life*- by using the plant that is located in the window he shows the different stages of growth. You can apply this by seeing the baby, middle age people, older people, and then the tombstones. Plants, as it is in Art History, have always been a symbol of growth or changes in life. You can also say that he painted this to portray the death rate of Blacks compared to Whites in Harlem during this particular time. There was a lack of health care and hospitals in Harlem; moreover, throughout the great migration and the thousands of people pouring into Harlem plus the lack of health care came also of famine and diseases.

Aaron Douglass (1898-1979)

*Building More Stately
Mansions (1944)*

The paintings shows the achievements of African-Americans through time (Ancient Egypt to contemporary New York). It shows the labor that African-Americans invested through machines as well as physical labor. The Bulls' eye effect can resemble war or wartime as American was going through WWII.

The Poetry of Langston Hughes

The Negro speaks of rivers (1921)

Langston Hughes

Overall suggestions from colleagues: rivers brings life and connects people and time through life; rivers aided slaves to freedom; don't be surprised of African-American success today; acknowledge history before the slave ships.

"My soul has grown deep like the rivers." This acknowledges the ills of slavery and racism

"I bathed in the Euphrates...in the sunset" Traces roots of Black life from the Euphrates and Nile Rivers in Africa to the Mississippi River.

"I've known rivers: Ancient, dusky rivers." Refers to the past

Mother to son (1922)

Langston Hughes

Overall the mother demonstrates her love and concern a mother has for a son and throughout the midst of it all she did not give up.

"It's had tacks in it...And boards torn up," Refers to life's struggles.

"Don't you set...find it's kinder hard." Get up from there! Blacks shouldn't be apathetic to what's going on around them. Do not just accept the little that Whites give them.

Let American be America Again

Langston Hughes

This poem speaks of freedom and equality that ALL Americans never had and the American dream must be fulfilled.

(America never was America to me.) These are suggestions that a few colleagues gave: 1) possibility of Blacks being afraid, 2) the suppression of the Black Voice from the beginning, and 3) lack of equality.

(There's never been... "homeland of the free") His inside feelings; however, by the end of the poem he flat out states his feelings.

“the people”

Poor Whites, Indians, Immigrants, and Blacks.

The Music of Louis Armstrong on VMR

Music was the foundation for popular genres that are found in today’s society. Its origin came from Creole, Scandinavian, and French backgrounds. It is also known as “rag time.” It is also based off of church music. Its style is very choppy compared to modern day jazz.