

## African American Highlights

### EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

#### African-American Highlights From the Reader's Digest Association Collection

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|--|--|--|---|
| 1. Romare Bearden<br><i>Dreams of Exile</i> , 1979<br>Lithograph<br>29 1/4 x 23 in.<br>FA.21716                  | 11. Robert Colescott<br><i>Dark Continent</i> , 1988<br>Acrylic on paper<br>45 1/8 x 33 1/4 in.<br>FA.70015                              | 21. Jacob Lawrence<br><i>Eight Passages</i> , 1990<br>Silkscreen, lithograph<br>29 7/8 x 43 5/8 in.<br>FA.71455                            | 29. Lorna Simpson<br><i>Odds</i> , 1991<br>Gelatin silver print<br>55 x 114 3/4 in.<br>FA.71324                           |
| 2. Romare Bearden<br><i>Open Door</i> , 1979<br>Lithograph<br>36 1/2 x 30 1/2 in.<br>FA.71804                    | 12. Robert Colescott<br><i>At Times the Image Seemed Bigger Than Life</i> , 1989<br>Acrylic on canvas<br>16 1/2 x 18 3/8 in.<br>FA.70017 | 22. Jacob Lawrence<br><i>Eight Passages</i> , 1990<br>Silkscreen, lithograph<br>29 7/8 x 43 5/8 in.<br>FA.71461                            | 30. Bob Thompson<br><i>Untitled</i> , 1960<br>Oil on wood panel<br>12 7/8 x 18 1/4 in.<br>FA.70500                        |
| 3. Romare Bearden<br><i>Quilting Time</i> , 1979<br>Lithograph<br>31 1/4 x 36 1/4 in.<br>FA.71803                | 13. Roy DeCarava<br><i>Mrs. Murphy Waiting</i> , c. 1950s<br>Gelatin silver print<br>FA.70183  | 23. Jacob Lawrence<br><i>Eight Passages</i> , 1990<br>Silkscreen, lithograph<br>29 7/8 x 43 5/8 in.<br>FA.71456                            | 31. Michael Kelly Williams<br><i>Trio</i> , 1989<br>Oil on linen canvas<br>46 3/4 x 41 1/8 in.<br>FA.70499                |
| 4. Beverly Buchanan<br><i>Blue Sky Shack</i> , 1990<br>Oil pastel on paper<br>42 x 53 3/4 in.<br>FA.70260        | 14. Sam Gilliam<br><i>Philadelphia</i> , 1987<br>Mixed media print<br>44 3/8 x 54 3/4 in.<br>FA.70371                                    | 24. Hughie Lee-Smith<br><i>Counterpoise</i> , 1988<br>Oil on canvas<br>18 1/4 x 22 1/4 in.<br>FA.70498                                     | 32. Randy Williams<br><i>Untitled 11/23/88 (2)</i> , 1988<br>Mixed media on paper<br>31 1/2 x 45 1/8 in.<br>OA.18345      |
| 5. Kimberly Camp<br><i>The Boys</i> , 1989<br>Acrylic on canvas<br>33 7/8 x 27 3/4 in.<br>FA.70261               | 15. Noah Jemison<br><i>J Train</i> , 1988<br>Encaustic on canvas<br>54 7/8 x 66 7/8 in.<br>FA.70179                                      | 25. Glenn Ligon<br><i>Prologue Series #1</i><br>(Text From Ralph Ellison), 1991<br>Oil on canvas<br>19 1/8 x 40 in.<br>FA.71740            | 33. Randy Williams<br><i>Untitled 5/23/88 (1)</i> , 1988<br>Mixed media on paper<br>31 1/2 x 45 1/8 in.<br>FA.18350       |
| 6. Myles Carter<br><i>Untitled #1</i> , 1990<br>Acrylic on canvas<br>24 5/8 x 24 5/8 in.<br>FA.70679             | 16. Jacob Lawrence<br><i>Eight Passages</i> , 1990<br>Silkscreen, lithograph<br>29 7/8 x 43 5/8 in.<br>FA.71459                          | 26. Tyrone Mitchell<br><i>Theory of Dreams</i> , 2001<br>Mixed media<br>23 x 29 in.<br>FA.90695  | 34. Randy Williams<br><i>Untitled 9/13/88 (2)</i> , 1988<br>Mixed media on paper<br>31 1/2 x 45 1/8 in.<br>FA.18344       |
| 7. Willie Cole<br><i>Man, Spirit and Mask</i> , 1999<br>Mixed media print<br>41 3/4 x 29 in.<br>FA.72771         | 17. Jacob Lawrence<br><i>Eight Passages</i> , 1990<br>Silkscreen, lithograph<br>29 3/8 x 43 5/8 in.<br>FA.71462                          | 27. Howardena Pindell<br><i>India: Lord Krishna</i> , 1985-86<br>Acrylic, mixed media<br>28 1/2 x 35 1/2 x 7 1/8 in.<br>FA.18363           | 35. Randy Williams<br><i>Untitled 9/17/88 (1)</i> , 1988<br>Mixed media on paper<br>27 3/4 x 29 1/2 in.<br>OA.18341       |
| 8. Willie Cole<br><i>Man, Spirit and Mask</i> , 1999<br>Mixed media print<br>39 x 26 3/8 in.<br>FA.72790         | 18. Jacob Lawrence<br><i>Eight Passages</i> , 1990<br>Silkscreen, lithograph<br>29 7/8 x 43 5/8 in.<br>FA.71460                          | 28. Howardena Pindell<br><i>Peter Squares Waterfall Johnson</i> , Vermont, 1986<br>Woodcut, chine-colle<br>35 1/2 x 45 1/2 in.<br>FA.70180 | 36. Philemona Williamson<br><i>Must You Always Topsy-Turvy?</i> , 1989<br>Oil on linen<br>60 7/8 x 48 7/8 in.<br>FA.70166 |
| 9. Willie Cole<br><i>Man, Spirit and Mask</i> , 1999<br>Mixed media print<br>39 1/4 x 26 3/8 in.<br>FA.72789     | 19. Jacob Lawrence<br><i>Eight Passages</i> , 1990<br>Silkscreen, lithograph<br>29 7/8 x 43 5/8 in.<br>FA.71458                          |  |   |
| 10. Robert Colescott<br><i>A Letter From Paris</i> , 1989<br>Acrylic on paper<br>45 1/4 x 33 1/4 in.<br>FA.70016 | 20. Jacob Lawrence<br><i>Eight Passages</i> , 1990<br>Silkscreen, lithograph<br>29 7/8 x 43 5/8 in.<br>FA.71457                          |  |   |

To further enjoy this special exhibition, please see information about related public programs in the Hofstra University Museum Public Program guide. If you are interested in learning more about African-American art, we suggest the following resources:

#### WEB RESOURCES

##### Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

[nypl.org/research/sc/sc.html](http://nypl.org/research/sc/sc.html)

A major collection of materials related to Africa and African Americans, including art collections, prints and photographs, films and recordings, as well as books and manuscripts.

##### Amistad Research Center

[amistadresearchcenter.org](http://amistadresearchcenter.org)

An independent archive, library and museum of African-American history and culture. Includes significant African American art holdings (Aaron Douglas and AFAC Collections) of more than 400 works of artists of the 19th and 20th centuries.

##### Smithsonian Institution Research Information System (SIRIS)

[si.edu](http://si.edu)

The Smithsonian's resources include the National Museum of African Art, the National Museum of American Art and the National Portrait Gallery, all of which include African-American artists; also includes the Archives of American Art.

#### RESOURCES

Amaki, Amalia K. *A Century of African American Art: The Paul R. Jones Collection*.

Newark, DE: University of Delaware. University Museum;

New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004.

Bearden, Romare and Harry Henderson. *A History of African American Artists from 1792 to the Present*.  
New York: Pantheon Books, 1993.

Britton, Crystal A. *African American Art: The Long Struggle*.  
New York: Smithmark Publishers, 1996.

Lewis, Samella. *African-American Art and Artists*.  
University of California Press, 2nd revised edition, 1990.

Thank you for visiting the Hofstra University Museum.  
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# HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY MUSEUM Gallery Guide

## Where Art Inspires and Transforms



Michael Kelly Williams  
*Trio*, 1989  
Oil on linen canvas  
46 3/4 x 41 1/8 in.  
FA.70499

## African American Highlights From the Reader's Digest Association Collection

January 29-March 20, 2008 • Emily Lowe Gallery

African American Highlights

ROMARE BEARDEN

Romare Bearden (1911-1988), painter and collagist, filled his works with the symbols and myths of the African American experience. Bearden was born in Charlotte, North Carolina in 1911. Soon after his birth, his family moved to New York City's Harlem. During the mid-1930s when Bearden was George Grosz's student at the Art Students League of New York, he founded the "306 Group" for black artists living in Harlem. After he served in the army during World War II, Bearden's work appeared in several well-publicized exhibitions. In 1950, he went to Paris and enrolled at the Sorbonne. In Paris he met James Baldwin, Constantin Brancusi and Georges Braque, all of whom influenced his work. After Bearden returned to New York City in 1954, his work became more abstract.

Bearden was also profoundly influenced by the civil rights movement of the 1960s. In 1963, the Sleeping Car Porters union leader A. Philip Randolph was organizing what would later become the historic March on Washington where Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech, and Randolph asked Bearden for help. Bearden gathered a group of African-American artists who sought to make a contribution to the civil rights movement. The gathering evolved into an artist collective that took the name *Spiral*, and Bearden proposed they create a collaborative collage for exhibition. Although the group project never took place, Bearden, who had previously worked as a painter, adapted the technique to his own work.

**Romare Bearden**  
(1911-1988)  
*Quilting Time*, 1979  
Lithograph  
31 1/4 x 36 1/4 in.  
FA.71803

In *Quilting Time* (1979) - whose composition Bearden used in a painting, a mosaic and a lithograph - notice how two women bend over their sewing in a small house as a pink sunset sky glows outside the window. Quilting was an important activity among African-Americans. In the lower left of the lithograph, pay special attention to the beautiful way he has depicted a basket containing salvaged scraps of fabric, just waiting to be sewn into a new quilt. What impact does this lithograph have on you as the viewer?



WILLIE COLE

Contemporary artist Willie Cole was born in Somerfield, New Jersey in 1955 and received his bachelor's degree from the School of Visual Arts in New York. He is a sculptor and printmaker whose works contain multiple meanings and associations. In the mid-1980s he began using irons, scorching paper, ironing boards and other surfaces in his work, to create patterns that resemble African masks and shields, and at the same time, suggest the tradition of ritual scarification.

The iron imagery has become a signature motif in Cole's work, a symbol of both personal and historical significance. He often helped repair irons for his grandmother and great grandmother who worked as housekeepers. As household objects, irons are also reminders of the African-American heritage, and for many, domestic labor. The artist continues to create multifaceted works by using discarded objects in his sculptures, and imbuing them with references to African art and mythology. He currently lives and works in New Jersey.

**Willie Cole**  
(b. 1955)  
*Man, Spirit and Mask*, 1999  
Mixed media print  
39 1/4 x 26 3/8 in.  
FA.72789.



*Man, Spirit and Mask* (1999) is Cole's triptych of images which explore his ideas of race, class and personal identity. The first part, a mask, is a mix of photo-etching and woodblock. Notice how the mask is in the shape of an iron. The second part, a self-portrait, uses photo-etching, embossing and hand coloring with lemon juice. Pay special attention to the way the artist has superimposed a pattern of an iron's steam vents on a photograph of Cole's own

face. The third part, an iron, is created by screen printing with lemon juice and scorching. Do you find this work challenging or shocking? Do you think the artist is successful in conveying his intentions?

JACOB LAWRENCE

In his paintings and prints, Jacob Lawrence (1917-2000) championed the history and culture of African Americans and the universal quest for justice, equality and human dignity. At age 15, Lawrence took classes at the Harlem Art Workshop with artist Charles Alston and subsequently obtained a scholarship to the American Artists School. By age 21 he was employed as a professional painter by the Works Progress Administration created by Former President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Lawrence paints in tempera on composition board using highly stylized figures, vivid primary colors and sharp contrasts. While still in his 20s, he was the first black artist to be honored with a one-man show at the Museum of Modern Art.

The civil rights movement and the desegregation of the South during the late 1950s and 1960s provided Lawrence with themes for later paintings. At the same time, he undertook the first of many teaching assignments. He was a professor of art at the University of Washington in Seattle for many years. In his later years he dedicated his talents to book illustration. Even Lawrence's mature paintings retained an almost childlike simplicity. This, combined with his ability to capture expressive human gestures, gives his works a quiet strength.

**Jacob Lawrence**  
(1917-2000)  
*Eight Passages*, 1990  
Silkscreen, lithograph  
29 7/8 x 43 5/8 in.  
FA.71462



This narrative series by Lawrence illustrates *The First Book of Moses*. This is the first book of the Old Testament. Jewish tradition considers the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) to have been written by Moses, so Genesis is sometimes also called *The First Book of Moses*. Genesis recounts a history of the world from creation to the descent of the Children of Israel into Ancient Egypt. It contains some of the best-known stories of the Old Testament. Lawrence liked using the series format because he could develop an idea at length from many different perspectives. When looking at the entire series on the wall, notice how Lawrence uses bold shapes and eye-catching colors to convey the story he is telling. What do you think the artist was trying to say?

"I was baptized in the Abyssinian Baptist Church [in Harlem] in about 1932. There I attended church, I attended Sunday school, and I remember the ministers giving very passionate sermons pertaining to the creation. This was over 50 years ago, and you know, these things stay with you even though you don't realize what an impact these experiences are making on you at the time. As I was doing the series I think that this was in the back of my mind, hearing this minister talk about these things"

— A recollection by Jacob Lawrence in his later years

HOWARDENA PINDELL

Contemporary artist Howardena Pindell is known for the wide variety of techniques and materials used in her artwork. Pindell has created abstract paintings, collages, video drawings and process art. Her work explores texture, color, structures and the process of making art. Her work is often political, addressing issues of racism, feminism, violence, slavery and exploitation. Pindell is primarily an abstract painter and her mature work has helped to redefine painting since the 1970s. Her work goes beyond paint on canvas to include three-dimensional objects, and even mutilated canvases that she roughly stitches back together; she has also created mosaics and murals for public spaces.

Howardena Pindell was born in Philadelphia in 1943, the daughter of Howard and Mildred (Lewis) Douglas. She decided she wanted to be an artist at age 12, and was encouraged by her parents to study fine art at college. She attended Boston University, graduating with a B.F.A. in 1965, followed by an M.F.A. from Yale University in 1967. After graduating from Yale, she became a curatorial assistant at the Museum of Modern Art and began to establish herself as an artist.

**Howardena Pindell**  
(b. 1943)  
*India: Lord Krishna*, 1985-86  
Acrylic, mixed media  
28 1/2 x 35 1/2 x 71/8 in.  
FA.18363



Pindell's heritage is diverse, embracing African, European, Seminole, Central American and Afro-Caribbean ancestry. Although raised a Christian, she is part Jewish through a great grandfather, and has pursued Buddhist and Hindu spiritual practices. She comments, "I have always been concerned about the world at large ... I am from a very racially mixed family, some are liberal and some very conservative, and I have tried to understand and appreciate this." In what ways do you think being African-American and female has influenced the artwork of Pindell?

She has traveled extensively to Africa, Asia, Europe, Russia, Latin America and the Caribbean, lived in Japan for seven months and in India for four months. She uses these journeys and experiences as inspiration to integrate her own history as content for the autobiographies of her life. As a world traveler and cultural wanderer, she paints a visual record of her search as she finds her way in a world where some always perceive others as being out of place. What feelings do you have when looking at this artwork? Do you think the artist was successful in conveying her intentions?