

This is an incomplete list of resources on digital images of artworks by Black artists that focus on Black history and issues of race. The Fine Arts Library is committed to increasing our representation of works by Black artists and others who have been traditionally left out of the narrative of art history, and to making these resources more accessible and discoverable. Towards that goal, we encourage you to reach out to us with suggestions for artists you don't find in our collections, improvements we can make to improve the findability of our images, or any other inquiries.

### **[Digital Images and Slides Collection \(DISC\)](#)**

The collection currently numbers over 750,000 images in both 35mm and lantern slide formats. Of these, approximately 491,000 images are available in digital format, including all collections added since 2001.

The Digital Images and Slides Collection can help you [digitize images you need for teaching and research](#). Materials including books, photographs, slides or transparencies can be digitized. Image subject matter should be related to the visual arts, archaeology, architecture, or material culture. All Harvard ID holders can use this service at no charge. Faculty and classroom teaching requests are given first priority.

- Questions and requests for digitizing images for teaching and research:  
Christopher Hyde: [christopher\\_hyde@harvard.edu](mailto:christopher_hyde@harvard.edu)
- General inquiries about the Digital Images and Slides Collection:  
Bill Connor: [wsconnor@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:wsconnor@fas.harvard.edu)

### **For More Information**

- Visit the [Fine Arts Library](#) website for updates about our services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Ask our Copyright First Responders questions related to copyright and intellectual property.](#)
- [Find more information about how to use library resources to teach remotely.](#)
- In addition to the online resources described below, books and periodical articles about Black artists can be found in [HOLLIS](#). For assistance with searching Harvard Library's online catalog, contact [falibref@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:falibref@fas.harvard.edu).

### **Sample images by Artists:**

#### **[Romare Bearden](#)** (September 2, 1911 - March 12, 1988)

Bearden was an American artist, author, and songwriter. Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, Bearden grew up in New York City and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and graduated from New York University in 1935. Bearden's early work focused on unity and cooperation within the African-American community. Bearden became a founding member of the Harlem-based art group known as The Spiral, formed to discuss the responsibility of the African-American artist in the civil rights movement. (Wikipedia: Retrieved on 6/30/20)

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### [Conjur Woman](#)

Bearden, Romare, 1911-1988, American [artist]

stats (copies) on fiberboard

89.2 x 71.1 cm.

1964

Repository: Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, New York, New York, United States

HOLLIS number: 8001564230

[HOLLIS Images](#): Search word: Romare Bearden

### [David Hammons](#) (born 1943)

Born in Springfield, Illinois, Hammons moved to Los Angeles to study art in 1963, later relocating to New York City in 1974. There, Hammons started his lifelong practice of making sculptures from the highly charged detritus of urban African-American life, including hair gathered from barbershop floors, chicken bones, bottle caps, and empty liquor bottles. Public installations like *Higher Goals* (1983; 1986), a group of towering basketball hoops decorated with metal bottle caps bent to look like cowrie shells, or *In the Hood* (1993), a small sculpture made from a hood cut from a used sweatshirt and mounted on the wall like an African mask, are iconic examples of American Conceptual art. At the same time, they are sharply critical commentaries on the clichés of growing up Africa-American in the United States, from the nearly impossible aspiration of becoming a sports hero to the danger of wearing everyday outfits that are somehow perceived as menacing. (MoMA website: Retrieved on 6/16/20)



### [In the hood](#)

Hammons, David, 1943-, American [artist]

1993

HOLLIS number: olvwork227193

"In the hood" at left, with "Six sisters" at right

[HOLLIS Images](#): Search word: David Hammons

### [Jacob Lawrence](#) (September 7, 1917 – June 9, 2000)

Lawrence was an American painter known for his portrayals of African-American life. As well as a painter, storyteller, and interpreter, he was an educator. Lawrence is among the best-known 20th-century African-American painters, bringing the African-American experience to life using blacks and browns juxtaposed with vivid colors. He was 23 years old when he gained national recognition with his 60-panel *Migration Series*, painted on cardboard. The series depicted the 20<sup>th</sup> century [Great Migration](#) of African-Americans from the rural South to the urban North.



[Struggle: from the History of the American people: No. 6, We declare ourselves independents](#)

Lawrence, Jacob, 1917-2000, American [artist]

egg tempera on cardboard

16 x 12"

1955

Repository: Driskell, David C. - Collection, United States

HOLLIS number: olvwork91715

[HOLLIS Images](#): Search word: Jacob Lawrence

[Glenn Ligon](#) (born 1960, pronounced Lie-gōne)

Ligon is an American [conceptual artist](#) whose work explores race, language, desire, sexuality, and identity. Based in New York City, Ligon engages in [intertextuality](#) with other works from the visual arts, literature, and history, as well as his own life. He is noted as one of the originators of the term [Post-Blackness](#). (Wikipedia: Retrieved on 5/8/20)



[Profiles Series](#)

Ligon, Glenn, 1960-, American [artist]

1990-1991

painting

HOLLIS Number: olvwork210796

[HOLLIS Images](#): Search word: Glenn Ligon

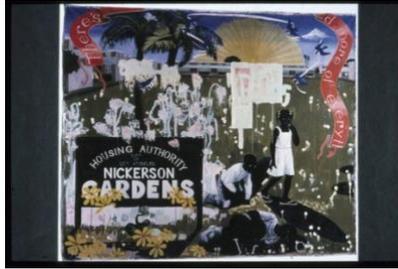
[Kerry James Marshall](#) (born 1955)

Marshall was born in Alabama and grew up in Watts, Los Angeles. He graduated from the Otis College of Art and Design in 1978 and currently lives and works in Chicago, Illinois. Marshall uses painting, sculptural installations, collage, video, and photography to comment on the history of Black identity both in the United States and in Western art. He is well known for paintings that focus on Black subjects historically excluded from the art historical canon and has explored issues of race and history through imagery ranging from abstraction to comics. (Jack Shainman Gallery's website: Retrieved on 6/15/20)

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### [Watts 1963](#)

Marshall, Kerry James, 1955-, American [artist]

290 x 343 cm.

painting

1995

Repository: St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri, United States

HOLLIS number: olvwork43451

[HOLLIS Images](#): Search word: Kerry James Marshall

### [Lorraine O'Grady](#) (born September 21, 1934)

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, O'Grady is an American artist and critic. She works in [conceptual art](#) and [performance art](#) that integrates [photo and video installation](#). Her work explores the cultural construction of identity - particularly that of Black female subjectivity - as shaped by the experience of [diaspora](#) and [hybridity](#). (Wikipedia: Retrieved on 5/8/20)



### [Mlle Bourgeoise Noire goes to the New Museum](#)

O'Grady, Lorraine, 1940-, American [artist]

Guerrilla performance at The New Museum of Contemporary Art during the opening of the "Persona" exhibition, which O'Grady referred to as the "Nine-White-Personae" show. O'Grady shouted poetry about racial injustices in the art world during the exhibition opening.

Hollis Number: olvwork293100

[HOLLIS Images](#): Search word: Lorraine O'Grady

### [Gordon Parks](#) (November 30, 1912 - March 7, 2006)

Parks was an American photographer, musician, writer, and film director, who became prominent in U.S. documentary photojournalism in the 1940s through 1970s, particularly for depicting issues related to civil rights, poverty, and African-Americans, as well as in glamour photography. A pioneer among Black filmmakers, he was the first African-American to produce and direct major motion pictures—developing films relating the experience of slaves and struggling Black Americans and creating the "[blaxploitation](#)" genre. He is best remembered for his iconic photographs documenting rural poverty during the 1940s (for the Farm Security Administration), for his photographic essays in *Life* magazine, and his 1971 film *Shaft*, which he directed. Parks also was an author, poet, and composer. (Wikipedia: Retrieved on 6/16/20)

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### [American Gothic, Washington, D.C.](#)

Parks, Gordon, 1912-2006, American [artist]

Black and white photograph

1942

HOLLIS number: olvwork235637

[HOLLIS Images](#): Search word: Gordon Parks

### [Howardena Pindell](#) (born April 4, 1943)

Pindell is an American painter and mixed media artist. Her work explores texture, color, structures, and the process of making art and is often political, addressing the intersecting issues of racism, feminism, violence, slavery, and exploitation. She is known for the wide variety of techniques and materials that she uses to create her artwork, including abstract paintings, collages, "video drawings," and "process art." (Wikipedia: Retrieved on 6/15/20)



### [Free, white and 21](#)

Pindell, Howardena, 1943-, American [artist]

Video in which the artist describes her experiences of racial discrimination. Addressing the audience, she gradually transforms herself into white face after wrapping her face in white gauze.

Video art

1980

HOLLIS number: olvwork159967

[HOLLIS Images](#): Search word: Howardena Pindell

### [Adrian Piper](#) (born September 20, 1948)

Piper is an American [conceptual artist](#) and philosopher. Her work addresses how and why those involved in more than one discipline may experience professional [ostracism](#), [otherness](#), racial [passing](#), and racism by using various traditional and non-traditional media to provoke self-analysis. She uses reflection on her own career as an example. (Wikipedia: Retrieved on 5/8/20)

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### [Self-portrait as a nice White lady](#)

Piper, Adrian, 1948-, American [artist]

Photograph altered with oil crayon

*Dimensions:* 10 x 18"

1995

Hollis Number: olvwork128991

[HOLLIS Images](#): Search word: Adrian Piper

### [Faith Ringgold](#) (born October 8, 1930)

Born in Harlem, New York City, Ringgold is a painter, writer, mixed media sculptor, and performance artist, best known for her narrative quilts. Ringgold's art was initially inspired by African art in the 1960s, but it was not until the late 1970s that she traveled to Nigeria and Ghana to see the rich tradition of masks that have continued to be her greatest influence. (Artist's website: Retrieved on 6/16/20)



### [Die](#)

Ringgold, Faith, 1934-, American [artist]

oil on canvas

72 x 96"

1967

HOLLIS number: olvwork128122

[HOLLIS Images](#): Search word: Faith Ringgold

### [Bettye Saar](#) (born July 30, 1926)

Born in Los Angeles, California, Saar is an African-American artist known for her work in the medium of assemblage. A visual storyteller and an accomplished printmaker, Saar was a part of the Black Arts Movement in the 1970s, which engaged myths and stereotypes about race and femininity. Her work is considered highly political, and she has challenged negative ideas about African-Americans and critiqued American racism toward Blacks throughout her career. (Wikipedia: Retrieved on 6/16/20)

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### [Liberation of Aunt Jemima](#)

Saar, Betye, b.1926, American [artist]

mixed technique

29.9 x 20.3 x 7 cm.

1972

Repository: University of California, Berkeley. Art Museum, Berkeley, California, United States

HOLLIS number: olvwork89685

[HOLLIS Images](#): Search word: Betye Saar

### [Lorna Simpson](#) (born August 13, 1960)

Simpson is an African-American photographer who first became well-known in the mid-1980s for her large-scale photograph-and-text works that confront and challenge narrow, conventional views of gender, identity, culture, history, and memory. Using unidentified figures as a visual point of departure, Simpson examines the ways in which gender and culture shape the interactions, relationships, and experiences of life in contemporary America. (Artist's website: Retrieved on 6/16/20)



### [Guarded conditions](#)

Simpson, Lorna, 1960-, American [artist]

mixed media

Eighteen dye diffusion (Polaroid) prints, 21 engraved plastic plaques

*Dimensions*: overall 91 x 131"

1989

HOLLIS number: olvwork97015

[HOLLIS Images](#): Search word: Lorna Simpson

### [Kara Walker](#) (born November 26, 1969)

Walker is an American contemporary painter, silhouettist, printmaker, installation artist, and filmmaker who explores race, gender, sexuality, violence, and identity in her work. She is best known for her room-size tableaux of black cut-paper [silhouettes](#). (Wikipedia: Retrieved on 5/8/20)



### [End of Uncle Tom and the grand allegorical tableau of Eva in heaven](#)

Walker, Kara, 1969-, American [artist]

Cut paper and adhesive on wall

variable dimensions; about 3 x 12.1 m. overall

1995

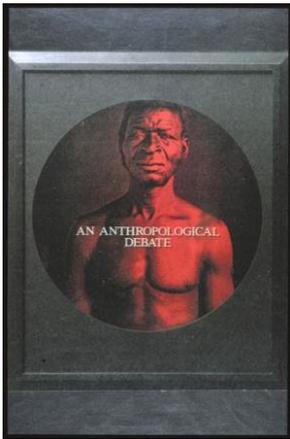
Repository: Deitch, Jeffrey - Collection

HOLLIS number: olvwork43430

[HOLLIS Images](#): Search word: Kara Walker

**Carrie Mae Weems** (born April 20, 1953)

Weems is an American artist who works with text, fabric, audio, digital images, and installation video, though she is best known for her work in the field of photography. Her award-winning photographs, films, and videos have been displayed in over 50 exhibitions in the United States and abroad and focus on issues that face African-Americans today, including as racism, sexism, politics, and personal identity. (Wikipedia: Retrieved on 6/15/20)



**From here I saw what happened and I cried [series]**

Weems, Carrie Mae, 1953-, American [photographer]

Series consisting of 33 photographic works with text

*Materials/Techniques:* C-prints with sandblasted text on glass: 19th and 20th century photographs, appropriated and re-photographed, enlarged and colored, monoprinted and mounted, with text sandblasted on the glass that covers each piece.

Photographic project commissioned in 1994 by the J. Paul Getty Museum, as a response to/commentary on an historical exhibition the Getty had mounted entitled "Hidden Witness: African Americans in Early Photography." Weems appropriated some of these historical photographs, as well as some 20th century photographs in her response. 1995-1996

HOLLIS number: olvwork94828

**HOLLIS Images:** Search word: Carrie Mae Weems

**Charles White** (April 2, 1918 - October 3, 1979)

White was an American artist known for chronicling African-American subjects in paintings, drawings, lithographs, and murals. White's best known work is *The Contribution of the Negro to American Democracy* (1943), a mural at Hampton University in Hampton, Virginia. In 2018, the centenary year of his birth, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Museum of Modern Art organized the first major retrospective exhibition of White's work. (Wikipedia: Retrieved on 6/15/20)



**Wanted poster #18**

White, Charles, 1918-1979, American (artist)

Oil on illustration board

37 3/4 x 54 x 7/8"

1972

Repository: Cosby, Camille O. and William H. Jr. - Collection, United States

HOLLIS number: olvwork127155

**Jack Whitten** (born 1939)

Born in Bessemer, Alabama, Whitten is celebrated for his innovative process of applying paint to the surface of his canvases and transfiguring their material terrains. Although Whitten initially aligned with the New York circle of abstract expressionists active in the 1960s, his work gradually distanced from the movement's aesthetic philosophy and formal concerns, focusing more intensely on the experimental

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aspects of process and technique that came to define his practice. (Hauser & Wirth website: Retrieved on 6/15/20)



### [Black monolith VIII \(for Maya Angelou\)](#)

Whitten, Jack, 1939-2018 [artist]

acrylic and mixed media on canvas

213.4 x 160 x 7.6 cm.

2015

Repository: Rose Art Museum, Waltham, Massachusetts, United States

HOLLIS number: 8001606699

[HOLLIS Images](#): Search word: Jack Whitten

## ARTSTOR

Additional works and artists addressing racism, Black history, and Black identity can be found in Artstor: <https://www.artstor.org/>.

You can conduct keyword searches for the artists listed below, as well as many others.

[Artstor](#) provides Harvard faculty and students with an extensive image resource that includes both images of contemporary and historical art, as well as documentary photography, from institutions beyond Harvard. The Artstor Digital Library provides straightforward access to curated images from reliable sources that have been rights-cleared for use in education and research - you are free to use them in classroom instruction and handouts, presentations, student assignments, and other noncommercial educational and scholarly activities.

Harvard users have full access to Artstor and can download images, as well as save them to personalized image groups once they create an Artstor account.

### Additional list of artists:

[Dawould Bey](#) (born 1953)

[Sanford Biggers](#) (born 1970)

[Mark Bradford](#) (born 1961)

[Nick Cave](#) (born 1957)

[Ellen Gallagher](#) (born 1965)

[Theaster Gates](#) (born 1973)

[Wangechi Mutu](#) (born 1972)

[Toyin Ojih Odutola](#) (born 1985)

[William Pope.L](#) (born 1955)

[Allison Saar](#) (born 1956)

[Xaviera Simmons](#) (born 1974)

[Kehinde Wiley](#) (born 1977)

**Artstor's collections and curated image groups:**

In addition, Artstor has several collections that contain material pertinent to the study of African-American history, art, and artists. Images from these collections will be included in your keyword search results. They can also be browsed as distinct collections from the Collections page in Artstor at: <https://library.artstor.org/#/browse/library>.

Collections include:

- Amistad Research Center
- Image of the Black in Western Art, Harvard University (photographs from the archive of the same name at the W. E. B. Du Bois Research Institute at the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research, which formed the basis of the multi-volume series published by Harvard University Press)
- Magnum Photos (a major collection of documentary photography)
- Eugene James Martin
- Mott-Warsh Collection (focuses on artists of the African diaspora and others who reflect on it)
- The Museum of Modern Art and the Phillips Collection (to view Jacob Lawrence's entire *Migration Series*, which is dispersed between these two museum collections, conduct a keyword search for: jacob lawrence migration)
- Wangechi Mutu
- Howardena Pindell
- Romare Bearden Foundation
- Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery, Scripps College (includes the Samella Lewis Contemporary Art Collection, which focuses on art by women and African-Americans)

Artstor staff have also created curated image groups that explore themes related to African-American Studies, including:

- [Overview: African and African American Studies](#)
- [Washington's Secret City: Cultural Capital](#)
- [Sweet Fortunes: Sugar, Race, Art, and Patronage in the Americas](#)

Please note that you must be logged into Artstor view these collections and curated image groups.