

Represent: 200 Years of African American Art
Lynne and Harold Honickman Gallery and Muriel and Philip Berman Gallery
January 10–April 5, 2015

This winter, the Philadelphia Museum of Art will present an exhibition highlighting its exceptional holdings of work by African American artists. Reflecting a broad range of stories, subjects, styles, mediums, and traditions, *Represent: 200 Years of African American Art* will include works by Horace Pippin, Jacob Lawrence, Alma Thomas, Martin Puryear, and Carrie Mae Weems, and many others. The presentation of this exhibition also marks the publication of a new catalogue highlighting the Museum's collection of African American art.

Timothy Rub, the Museum's George D. Widener Director and CEO, stated: "In telling a story that spans two centuries, we recognize not only a great many important artists and their work, but also the dramatic shifts that have occurred in African American life during this period. Presenting these works together now, we are mindful of the many anniversaries of the civil rights movement that have recently passed or are soon to come, and are thinking equally about the way race remains a key topic of conversation in the United States today—in politics, society, popular culture, and, of course, the arts. This is an important moment in which to explore the historic development and continuing growth of the Museum's collections of African American art."

Represent: 200 Years of African American Art will include approximately 75 works by more than 50 artists. It will begin with rare examples of fine and decorative arts made by free and enslaved artists prior to the Civil War, including silhouettes made after 1802 by Moses Williams, who worked in Philadelphia at the museum of Charles Willson Peale, and a massive storage jar with a Bible verse finely inscribed across the lip by the South Carolina potter David Drake. Also included will be Henry Ossawa Tanner's landmark painting *The Annunciation*, which entered the Museum's collection in 1899, the first work by an African American artist to be acquired by an American museum.

The exhibition places a strong emphasis on the modern era, when African Americans began to have greater access to artistic training and professional opportunities in this field. Artists such as William Henry Johnson, James VanDerZee, and Elizabeth Catlett embraced modernism in the early twentieth century while sustaining a focus on aspects of African American life. *Represent* also includes a number of important works by self-taught artists such as William Edmondson and Bill Traylor.

Among the most significant works in the exhibition are a group of abstract paintings and sculptures from the 1960s through the 1980s, most notably Barbara Chase-Riboud's monumental *Malcolm X #3*. Many of these works represent the engagement of African American artists with broader stylistic movements. Numerous works from the past several decades directly confront issues pertaining to race and representation. This tendency is reflected in Glenn Ligon's text painting *Untitled (I'm Turning Into a Specter before Your Very Eyes and I'm Going to Haunt You)* and Lorna Simpson's *C-Ration*.

Represent: 200 Years of African American Art also ventures outside of the historical narrative to present an array of portraits, historical as well as contemporary. Images of family, friends, and historical icons made by several generations of artists will be shown, from works by Philadelphia-based printmaker Dox Thrash and Samuel Joseph Brown, Jr., to Barkley L. Hendricks's *Miss T*.

The exhibition will feature an audio component comprising excerpts from recently recorded interviews with several of the living artists represented in the exhibition.

Curators

Consulting Curator Dr. Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw, Associate Professor of American Art, University of Pennsylvania; Organizing Curator John Vick, Project Curatorial Assistant, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Catalogue

This exhibition accompanies a major catalogue, co-published by the Philadelphia Museum of Art and Yale University Press.

Sponsorship

The exhibition is generously supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Center for American Art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and The Kathleen C. and John J. F. Sherrerd Fund for Exhibitions, and PECO. The publication is supported by the Center for American Art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Women's Committee of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Dr. Constance E. Clayton, Marguerite and Gerry Lenfest, Marion Stroud Swingle, and other generous individuals. The educational resources for students and teachers are supported by Iroko Pharmaceuticals, LLC.

Programs

A broad range of programs will be presented, including gallery talks, school tours, family programs, and collaborative programming with local community groups, and a Friday evening dance party. Special related events include an evening of spoken word and music with Nina "Lyrispect" Ball on Wednesday, January 28; an artists roundtable on Sunday, February 1, with contemporary artists in the exhibition, moderated by noted scholar Dr. Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw, Associate Professor of American Art, University of Pennsylvania, who served as consulting curator for the exhibition and editor of the exhibition catalogue; a performance by poet, vocalist, and scholar Tracie Morris on Wednesday, March 25; and tours about slavery and freedom at the Museum's Fairmount Park Historic Houses.

Additionally, *Represent* will be a featured component of the Museum's extended celebration of the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. On Friday, January 16, musician Darryl Yokley will perform a new composition inspired by works in the exhibition, followed by a late night dance party with DJ Rob Base. On Sunday, January 18, the Museum will offer family mini-tours, art making, and a performance by St. Thomas Gospel Choir. On Monday, January 19, a Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service is planned, with performances by Danco2 and activities for visitors of all ages. For more information, visit www.philamuseum.org.

The full weekend of celebratory events and programs leading to the Day of Service is presented by PECO.

The Art After 5 Dance Party celebrating *Represent* is supported by SugarHouse Casino and the Samuel and Deidre Patterson Foundation.

The Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service is generously supported by the Wyeth Foundation for American Art.

Exhibition Hours

Tuesday through Sunday: 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Wednesdays and Fridays until 8:45 p.m.

Social Media

Facebook: [philamuseum](#); Twitter: [philamuseum](#); Tumblr: [philamuseum](#); YouTube: [PhilaArtMuseum](#); Instagram: [@philamuseum](#)

The Philadelphia Museum of Art is one of the largest museums in the United States, with a collection of more than 227,000 works of art. The Museum's many galleries present painting, sculpture, works on paper, photography, decorative arts, textiles, and architectural settings from Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the United States. Its facilities include a landmark main building; the Ruth and Raymond G. Perelman Building; the Rodin Museum; and two historic houses in Fairmount Park, Mount Pleasant and Cedar Grove. The Museum offers a wide variety of activities for public audiences, including special exhibitions, programs for children and families, lectures, concerts, and films.

For additional press information contact the press office at pressroom@philamuseum.org or 215-684-7860. For general information, call 215-763-8100 or visit philamuseum.org.