

# Vision & Spirit African American Art

Works from the Bank of America Collection



## Family Discussion and Activity Guide

Use this activity guide to enhance  
your experience in the Vision & Spirit  
exhibit and learn about yourself  
along the way.



# Family Discussion and Activity Guide

Vision & Spirit: African American Art Works from the Bank of America Collection provides a powerful opportunity for everyone to have important conversations about race, diversity, inclusion and social justice. Grown-ups! In this guide you will find helpful terms and definitions as you move throughout the exhibition. Refer to this guide to start informative conversations and to have important teachable moments.



*Jacob Lawrence (American, 1917–2000), Aspiration, 1988, Lithograph on Arches paper, 26/200, Bank of America Collection*



# I Am A Man

The image below entitled I Am A Man documents the 1968 sanitation workers' on strike in Memphis, TN. This march was the last one led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. before his assassination in April 1968. It is speculated that the photographer, Ernest C. Withers, took between 1 million and 5 million images that are now in the process of being preserved and catalogued. Can you find all of the artwork with people holding protest signs in the exhibition?

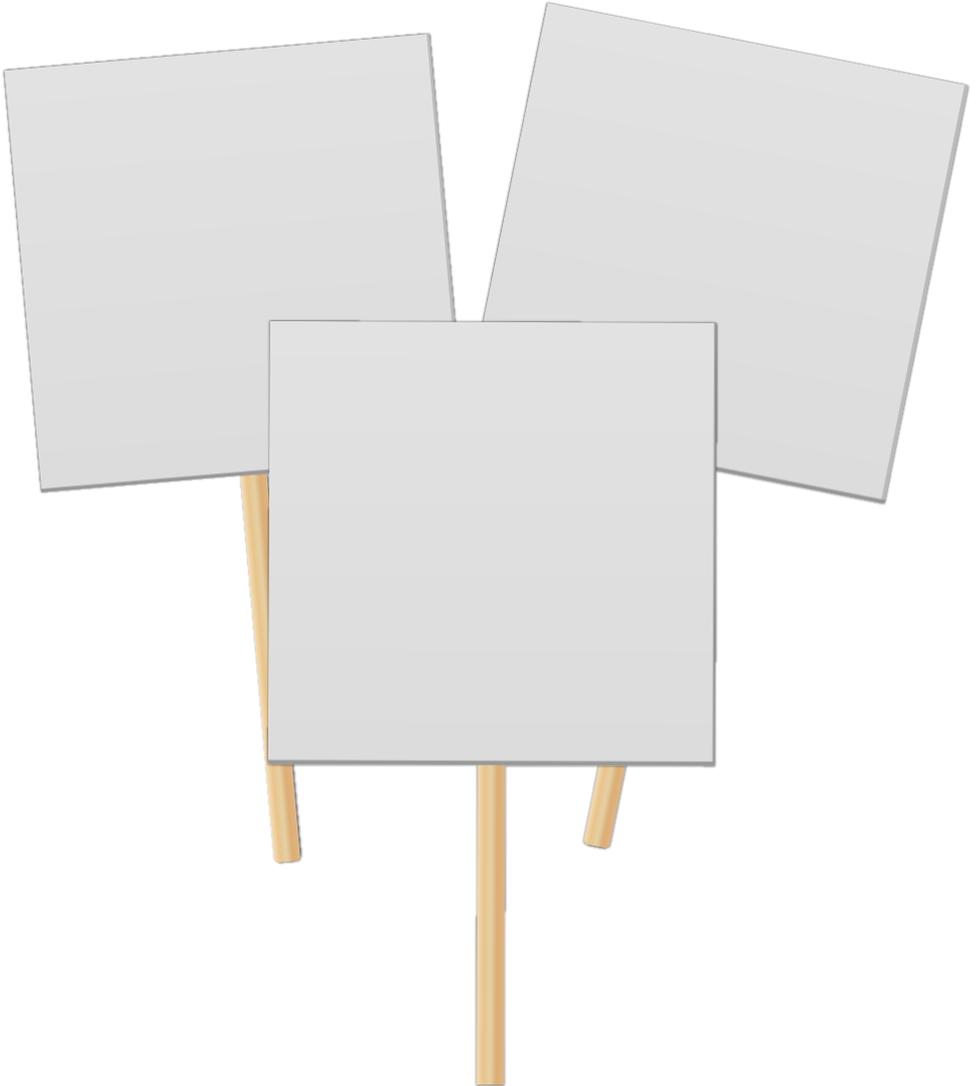


Ernest C. Withers (American, 1922–2007), *I Am a Man – Sanitation Workers Strike, Memphis, Tennessee, March 28th, 1968* From the *I Am a Man* portfolio, 1994, Gelatin silver print, 8/35, Bank of America Collection

1. What do you think the sanitation workers meant by the phrase “I Am A Man?”
2. How did photography contribute to the Civil Rights Movement?
3. How do photographic images play a role in social justice?



# Your Voice Matters



Using the blank signs above, use your critical thinking and creative skills to send messages through your protest signs.



# Frozen in Time

Find the names of photographers who documented various historical movements and the key terms that relate to the art form. Answers are on page 15.

Civil Rights Movement  
Culture  
Ernest C. Withers  
Gordon Parks  
Harlem, NYC  
I Am A Man  
James Van Der Zee

Movements  
Photography  
Portraits  
Robert Sengstacke  
Roy DeCarava  
Street Photography

s v c f d u e s s h z m u q g y r s n l  
g w m i x r b t a t u a c a h o c r a a  
z o l c u o t r q v n a p p k v r e m g  
j w u t e c l e p b a e a p f o h h a o  
k o l b u e i e y z e r m z b t l t m r  
k u n l m q h t t k g y y e g t q i a d  
c w s n h x x p k o u w r w v f n w i o  
g y y o c z s h t t c t f q o o c c n n  
h c f f b h p o f u s w t l g n m t y p  
t x x y h u h t y e a z m z t m e s o a  
k n b c n p g o n z c l z k i q c e k r  
c i v i l r i g h t s m o v e m e n t k  
n q i e f w s r c q q j i i b l o r m s  
p i s v i t b a a u w j k t w w o e q k  
z k t i a o s p v f o z m g y q n o y g  
c r l c m n j h r o y d e c a r a v a t  
r t k o p c y y t d m e j q j r o z g b  
e e z r e d n a v s e m a j k w r w x t  
s t i a r t r o p m p p j q m l o x b s  
e g q f e b e y d u h u b x o d a r d d



# Artistic Emotions

Art has the power to evoke many emotions. As you make your way through the exhibit, choose the artwork that best matches each emotion listed below, write the name of the piece in the blank that corresponds to the emotion and the name of the artist.

Excited \_\_\_\_\_

Happy \_\_\_\_\_

Sad \_\_\_\_\_

Angry \_\_\_\_\_

Proud \_\_\_\_\_

Hopeful \_\_\_\_\_

*Background Image: Ernest C. Withers (American, 1922–2007), "Tent City" Family, Fayette County, Tennessee, 1960, From the I Am a Man portfolio, 1994, Gelatin silver print, 8/35, Bank of America Collection*



# A Portrait in Time



*Carrie Mae Weems (American, b. 1953), May Flowers, 2001, 2001 negative, printed 2002, Color coupler print, Bank of America Collection*



# A Portrait in Time

A portrait is a painting, drawing, or photograph of a person, especially one showing only the face or head and shoulders. In the frame below, draw a portrait of yourself.





# Defining a Movement



Ernest C. Withers (American, 1922–2007) *William Edwin Jones Pushes Daughter Renee Andrewnetta Jones (8 months old) During Protest March on Main St., Memphis, Tennessee, August 1961*, From the *I Am a Man* portfolio, 1961, Gelatin silver print, 8/35, Bank of America Collection



# Defining a Movement

Use the definitions below to further understand some of the content you are seeing in the Vision & Spirit exhibition.

**Slavery:** The practice of people owning other people is called slavery. Enslaved people have to work for the owners, doing whatever the owners ask them to do. In the past many societies had slavery.

**The Great Migration:** The migration movement of around 6 million African Americans out of the Southern United States to the Midwest, Northeast and West between 1915 and 1960. The main reasons African Americans left the south were to escape racism and seek jobs in industrial cities. Between 1940 and 1960 over 3,348,000 blacks left the south for northern and western cities.

**Harlem Renaissance:** The Harlem Renaissance was a period during the 1920s when African-American achievements in art, literature and music flourished. A period of great diversity and experimentation. The WW1 Great Migration saw the movement of thousands of African Americans from the farmlands in the south to the cities in the north in order to find new opportunities and build better lives. Many made their way to the New York city neighborhood of Harlem in Manhattan, New York City which became the home of the movement.

**Systemic Racism:** The formalization of a set of institutional, historical, cultural and interpersonal practices within a society that more often than not puts one social or ethnic group in a better position to succeed, and at the same time disadvantages other groups in a consistent and constant manner that disparities develop between the groups over a period of time.

**Civil Rights Movement:** An organized effort by black Americans to end racial discrimination and gain equal rights under the law. It began in the late 1940s and ended in the late 1960s. The main aim of the Civil Rights Movement was to give everybody equal rights regardless of color skin color, gender, nationality, religion, disability or age. The aim of the movement which peaked in the 1960's was to ensure that the rights of all people are equally and are protected by the law.

**Black Arts Movement:** The Black Arts Movement was the name given to a group of politically motivated black poets, artists, dramatists, musicians, and writers who emerged in the wake of the Black Power Movement. The poet Imamu Amiri Baraka is widely considered to be the father of the Black Arts Movement, which began in 1965 and ended in 1975. The Black nationalism movement that focused on music, literature, drama, and the visual arts made up of black artists and intellectuals.

**AfriCOBRA:** was a Chicago-based group of black artists whose shared aim was to develop their own aesthetic in the visual arts in order to empower black communities. AfriCOBRA was founded on the South Side of Chicago by a group of artists intent on defining a "black aesthetic." AfriCOBRA artists were associated with the Black Arts Movement in America, a movement that began in the mid-1960s and that celebrated culturally-specific expressions of the contemporary Black community in the realms of literature, theater, dance and the visual arts.



# Exhibit Scavenger Hunt

Use the clues in the following poems to determine which piece in this exhibit each poem is describing. Answers are on page 15.

1. It's a special day for me,  
As I stand on this busy street  
Apart from the graffiti and debris  
It is me you truly see
- My neighbors stop to admire  
My clean tie and attire  
I am proud of my home  
From the concrete, I have grown

Your Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

2. A Giant stallion  
A city in flames  
An armed battalion  
With a victory to claim
- This famous story  
Of which we all know the end  
Has a different glory  
Of warriors with dark skin

Your Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Cadillac and fur  
Symbols of Black luxury  
Glamour for him and her  
Their eyes glazed with serenity
- Capturing a moment  
Of these cultural icons  
In the wake of a major movement,  
The Harlem Renaissance

Your Answer: \_\_\_\_\_



# Exhibit Scavenger Hunt

4. Connected by 6 colors  
Gray, red, brown, white, orange, and green.  
A lovely father and mother  
As they both peacefully read.
- Outside the neighbors are busy  
Walking the dog and carrying bags  
But inside the couple is cozy  
And for that they must be glad.

Your Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

5. We stand in the subway  
Leather jackets and brown hats  
At the turn of a decade  
Discussing this and that
- I put my fingers to my temple  
As an idea begins to flower  
And I say plain and simple  
That knowledge is power

Your Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Centered over multi colored fabric  
I appear warm and serene  
My attire is quite angelic  
And stands out in front of the trees
- From the title of this piece  
You will learn my name  
My eyes are full of peace  
Behind these white frames

Your Answer: \_\_\_\_\_



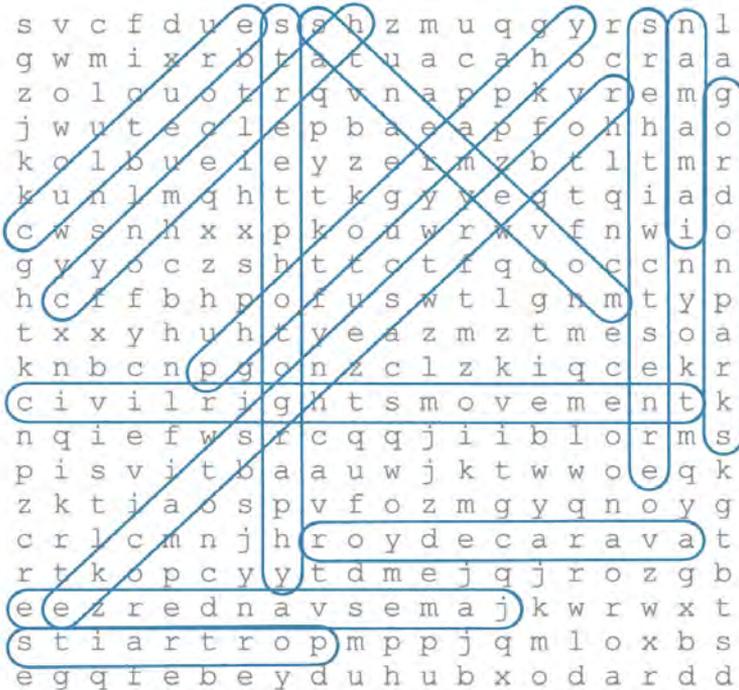
# My Masterpiece

Use the blank space below to create a sketch of your favorite piece from the exhibition.



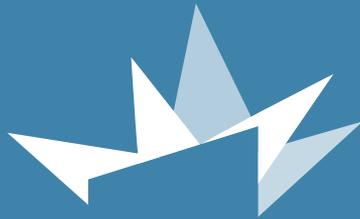
# Answer Keys

## Frozen in Time Word Search:



## Exhibit Scavenger Hunt:

1. Willie Birch, *Graduation Day*
2. Romare Bearden, *Fall of Troy*
3. James VanDerZee, *Couple in Raccoon Coats*
4. Jacob Lawrence, *Aspiration*
5. Jamel Shabazz, *Knowledge is Power*
6. Faith Ringgold, *Coming to Jones Road #3: Aunt Emmy*



Harvey B. Gantt Center for  
African-American Arts + Culture  
551 S. Tryon Street, Charlotte, NC 28202  
Office: 704.547.3700 | [gsa@ganttcenter.org](mailto:gsa@ganttcenter.org)  
[ganttcenter.org](http://ganttcenter.org)

Get Social With Us! Connect with the Gantt Center  
[@hbganttcenter](https://twitter.com/hbganttcenter)



**BANK OF AMERICA** 



North  
Carolina  
Arts  
Council



**KNIGHT  
FOUNDATION**

Cover image credit: Benny Andrews (American, 1930–2006), *Rehearsal* (Music Series), 1997,  
Oil and collage on canvas, Bank of America Collection, © 2021 Estate of Benny Andrews /  
Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY, Courtesy Michael Rosenfeld Gallery,  
LLC, New York, NY