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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2023 Volume I: Histories of Art, Race and Empire: 1492-1865

Perspectives on Race: Slavery and its Legacies in Art

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by Tina Berry

In this unit students will be introduced to wood engravings from the Antebellum period, murals from the Harlem Renaissance and Black Wall Street/Tulsa Race Massacre, and collage work done by modern artists. Students will also read pieces of writing that reflect the time periods and struggles of the day, as well as their hope for the future. Each time period reflects the last. Each new era is growing from the struggles of the last. This is about the growth of the nation as displayed by people that helped build it. When introducing this unit to students I want them to understand this is not representative of all black people, everywhere, but images and stories of real struggles and the legacies these struggles have stamped on the art world (and the world at large) to gain independence and equality, and the security of self-actualization and self-expression. Art, history, writing, and the American Dream of freedom, equality, and justice make this unit informative and beneficial for high school curriculum.

(Developed for Art 2 and Advanced Art 2, grades 9-12; recommended for U. S. History, ELA, and Art History, grades 9-12; and Art, grades 8-12)

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