

# Metropolitan Museum showcases famous artists

*Exhibition includes lithography, paintings, carvings tracing African-American history*

By Renee Minus White  
Special to Sentinel-Voice  
NEW YORK (NNPA)—

"African-American Artists, 1929-1945: Prints, Drawings and Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art" is now on view through May 4, 2003.

This is the first exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum in recent years to focus attention on the accomplishments of 20th-century African-American artists. It also offers an opportunity to display a substantial number of acquisitions that have not been exhibited previously at the Met.

The museum's new exhibition features a variety of print media, including intaglio, lithography, woodcut, wood engraving and screen-printing. There is a smaller selection of paintings and watercolors, also from the museum's collection.

This educational yet very entertaining exhibition focuses on images of daily life for African-Americans from the latter part of the Harlem Renaissance through the Depression and New Deal era to World War II. It's a truly remarkable show that's worth a

visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Art for the entire family.

Thanks to the Works Progress Administration (WPA), instituted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to provide both financial assistance and professional validation to American artists, the arts in America were revitalized. The WPA was one of the largest and most successful of the New Deal programs.

Under the New Deal arts programs, African-Americans gained unprecedented access to professional training and equipment, exhibition opportunities and public commissions. Throughout the war, the artistic skills of African-Americans were directed toward promoting patriotic ideals and documenting the American way of life.

Back then, artists understood that they were expected to depict American subjects produced by Americans for Americans. African-American artists translated this into depictions of their own life experiences, which is what you will enjoy seeing at the exhibition. For the first time, African-Americans appeared



"Newsboy" is the title of one of the works in the exhibit.

in large numbers of paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints and photographs. The images range from simple moments of everyday life to serious social commentaries on the war, the economy and racial discrimination.

Emmy Award-winning actress Cicely Tyson narrates the Metropolitan Museum's audio guide to this magnificent African-American artis-

tic exhibition. Archival recordings of Langston Hughes reading his poems and the lives of many artists whose works are included in the exhibition—Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence and Robert Blackburn, among others—also are featured in the audio guide, which was produced especially for this exhibition.

Displaying more than 70 works, the show's selection was drawn from 204 prints donated to the museum by Reba and David Williams in 1999.

It showcases such famous artists as Robert Blackburn, Elizabeth Catlett, William H. Johnson, Raymond Steth and Dox Thrash, for whom printmaking served as a primary creative outlet. Paintings and watercolors by Jacob Lawrence, Joseph Delaney, Lois Mailou Jones, Horace Pippins, Romare Bearden, Samuel Joseph Brown, Palmer Hayden and Bill Traylor supplement the collection.

The exhibition highlights African-American art and life between 1929 and 1945,

when new opportunities led to technical innovations in printmaking and resurgence of artistic production.

The installation explores eight themes: "Cultural Identity and Heritage," "Faces" (portraits), "The South," "The North," "Religion," "Labor Recreation" and "World War II." Pictures of home, work and leisure activities convey the artists' dreams, aspirations and perseverance in the face of economic and social realities.

Other pieces explore images related to their ethnic culture.

A catalog published by the Metropolitan Museum of Art featuring 50 works from the exhibition accompanies the show.

It's available at the museum's bookshop in a paperback edition for \$14.95. The museum also offers a variety of educational programs in conjunction with the exhibition, which also is featured on the Museum's web site at [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org).

Renee Minus White writes for the Amsterdam News.

## Bush

(Continued from Page 1)

dent [of the NAACP] has invited him to speak at the national convention. He has not only refused to enforce civil rights protections, but now he is actively engaged in the roll back of civil rights progress."

That rollback consists of Bush wrongly characterizing the University of Michigan as operating "quota" programs, an allegation strongly denied by the school. Their undergraduate admission program awards 20 points to Black and Hispanic applicants who apply to Michigan. Often overlooked is the school's practice of awarding 20 points to scholarship athletes, men who want to go into nursing and women who go into engineering, 16 points to students from Michigan's Upper Peninsula and extra points for other factors.

Like most universities, Michigan also gives special consideration to children of alumni. Yale operated a similar program when George W. Bush was admitted into Yale. Bush's stand on the case as well as his decision to seek the elevation of Charles Pickering Sr., a conservative

Mississippi judge once supported by Trent Lott, to an appeals bench has caused further alienation.

Senate Democrats killed the Pickering nomination last year, but it has resurfaced now that Republicans have regained control of that chamber. "He did not talk about affirmative action and all that's happened with Trent Lott," said Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-Md.), referring to the former Senate leader who praised Sen. Strom Thurmond's 1948 segregationist campaign.

Bush did propose making permanent what had been temporary tax cuts. However, Marilyn Murrell, mayor of Arcadia, Okla., who is president of the National Conference of Black Mayors, says the president's stimulus plan fails to stimulate her.

"The so-called cuts won't do what they're supposed to do," Murrell explains. "Oh, it's supposed to boost the economy, have everybody singing in the sunshine. The numbers just don't pan out."

That depends on one's income. According to an analysis of the program, 47.7 percent of the tax cut will go to

the top 1 percent of wage earners. At the other end, only 9.5 percent will go to the bottom 80 percent of all wage earners. William Spriggs, executive director of the National Urban League's Institute for Opportunity and Equality, says he has problems with the president's tax plan.

"The first problem is that it's a permanent tax," he says. "The second problem is that it's too big. It's a permanent and it's too big." Democrats point to another set of numbers. Bush is the first president since Harry Truman to lose jobs on a monthly basis. The average number of jobs created each month has averaged 135,000 over those years. Under Bush, 73,000 jobs are being lost each month.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2.3 million jobs have been lost in the private sector since Bush assumed office. "He said nothing about unemployment," observed Denise Majette, the Georgia Democrat who replaced Cynthia McKinney in Congress. "The people in my district are concerned about jobs."

## SEEKING TO GLORIFY GOD?

Join Us for Our Sunday Worship Services

Service begins at 10:00 am

Pastors Emanuel and Juanita Wasson welcome you!



**HOLY TRINITY**

African Methodist Episcopal Church

700 Lola Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89030 • 877-0790

(Located just off Lake Mead Blvd. and N. 5th Street)

