

**HISTORY GIRL**



*Stars of the*

# **HARLEM RENAISSANCE**

Art Show Activity



# LOUIS ARMSTRONG

## 1901-1971



Born in New Orleans, Louisiana, Louis Armstrong was a trumpeter, singer, band leader, soloist, and even entertained as a film star and comedian. Nicknamed Satchmo, Armstrong is considered the most influential musician in jazz history and had many hit songs such as “Star Dust” and “What a Wonderful World”. He was also known for his scat singing in hits like “Heebie Jeebies.”

Armstrong came from one of the roughest neighborhoods in New Orleans and was arrested as a youth for firing his father’s gun into the air at a New Year’s celebration. He was introduced to Jazz Music at the Colored Waif’s Home for Boys where he learned to play the coronet and fell in love with music.

Starting in 1919, Armstrong spent his summers performing with riverboat bands where he gained more musical skills and learned to better read music. He also learned from many other great Jazz musicians. He helped to bring Jazz to northern cities such as Chicago and New York.

Louis filmed movies such as “Pennies from Heaven” starring Bing Crosby and later “Hello, Dolly” starring Barbara Streisand in 1969.

# LOUIS ARMSTRONG



## When the Saints Go Marching In

*(Chorus)*

Oh when the saints  
Go marching in

Oh when the saints go marching in  
Oh how I want to be in that number  
When the saints go marching in



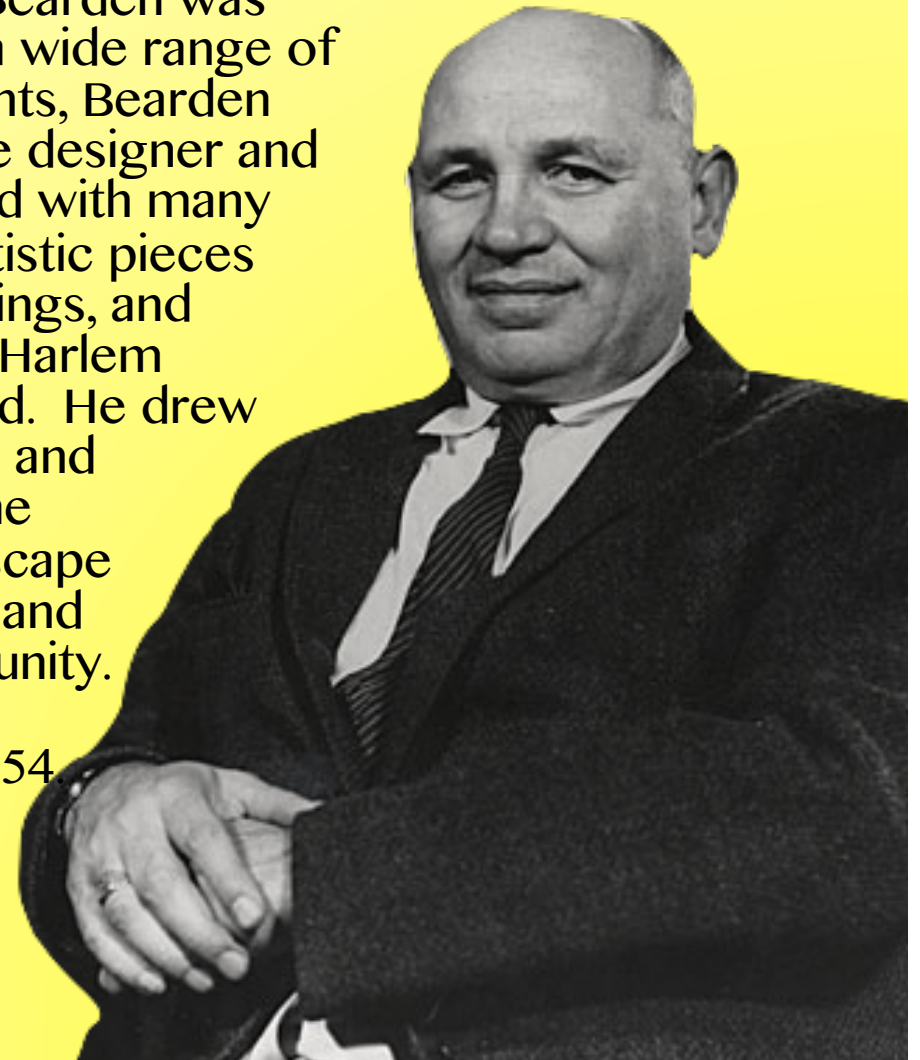
Originally a gospel hymn. First recorded by Louis Armstrong and his orchestra in 1938.

# ROMARE BEARDEN

## 1911-1988

Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, Romare Bearden was marked by exceptional talent that included a wide range of interests and abilities. Among his many talents, Bearden was a cartoonist, art editor, set and costume designer and a gifted writer. As an artist, he experimented with many types of mediums and artistic styles. His artistic pieces ranged from collages, watercolors, oil paintings, and photomontages. Bearden was active in the Harlem Cultural Council and the Harlem Artists Guild. He drew inspiration from various artists like Cezanne and Picasso as well as from African art, Byzantine Mosaics, Japanese prints, and Chinese landscape paintings. His early works focused on unity and cooperation in the African-American community.

Romare was married to Nanette Rohan in 1954. For nearly 30 years he worked as a social worker with the New York City Department of Social Services, working to better his community by day, and focusing on his art in the evenings.

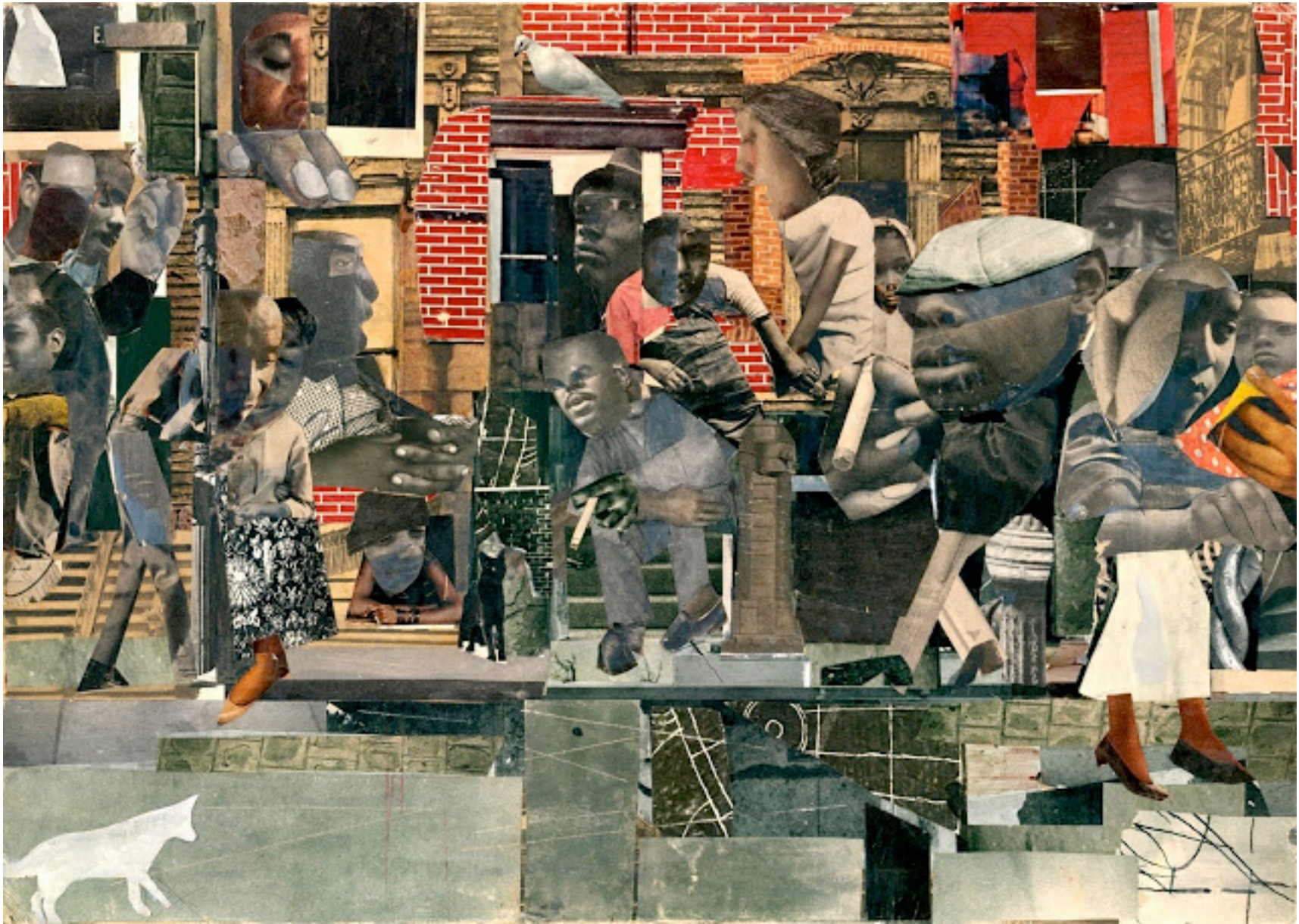




Romare Bearden, "Jammin' at the Savoy", 1968, Collage



Romare Bearden, "The Block", 1971, Collage



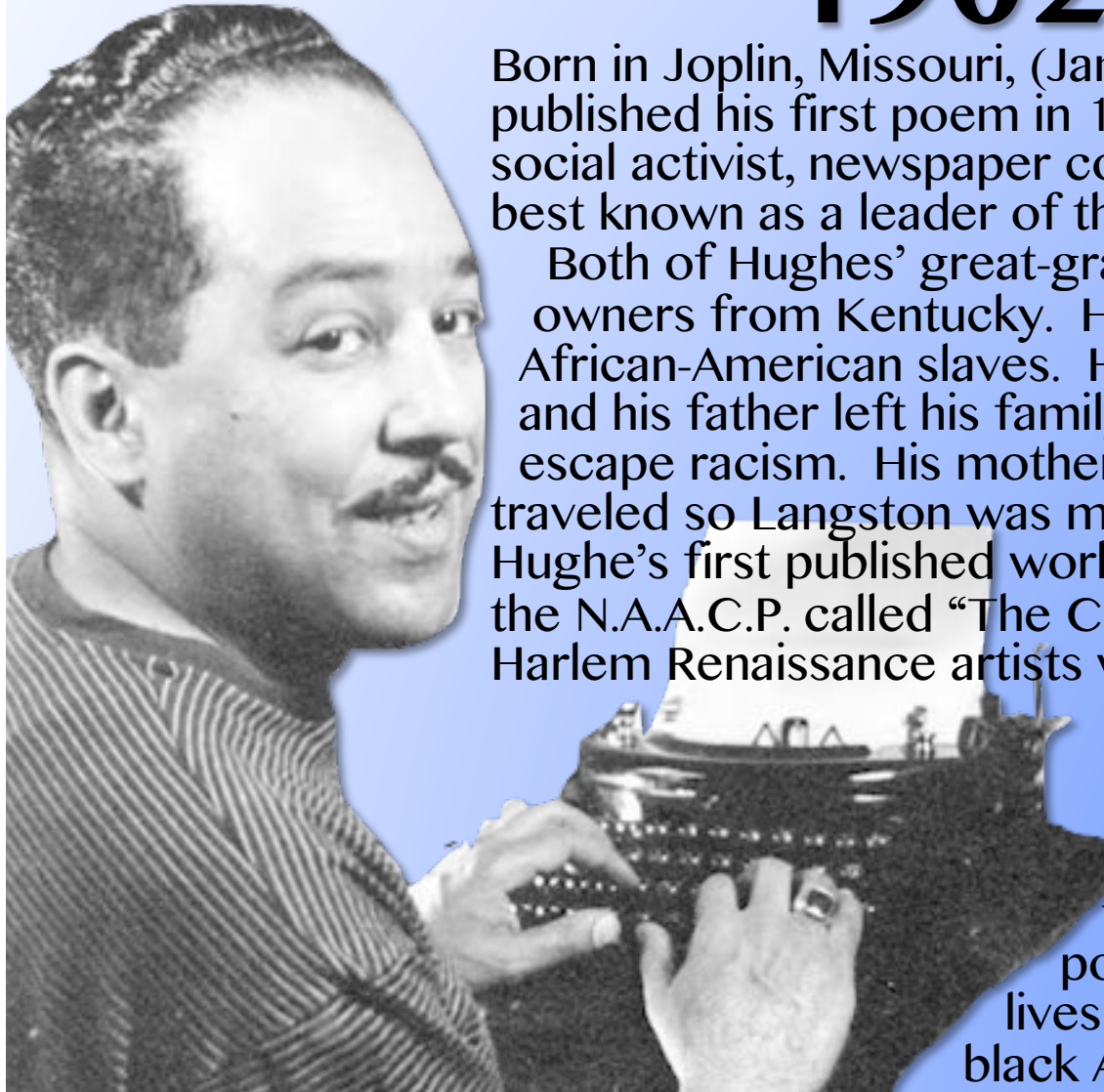
Romare Bearden, "The Dove", 1964, Collage

# LANGSTON HUGHES

## 1902-1967

Born in Joplin, Missouri, (James Mercer) Langston Hughes published his first poem in 1921. Hughes was a poet, novelist, social activist, newspaper columnist, and playwright who was best known as a leader of the Harlem Renaissance.

Both of Hughes' great-grandfathers were white slave owners from Kentucky. His great-grandmothers were both African-American slaves. His mother was a school teacher and his father left his family fleeing to Mexico in hopes to escape racism. His mother was often seeking work and traveled so Langston was mostly raised by his grandmother. Hughes' first published work was a part of a journal put out by the N.A.A.C.P. called "The Crisis." Hughes and his fellow Harlem Renaissance artists were trying to depict the reality of life for America's black population. They criticized division and segregation not only in Jim Crow regions, but within their own black communities. His poetry and fiction portrayed the lives and struggles of working class black Americans.





# LANGSTON HUGHES

1.



## **Afro-American Fragment**

So long,  
So far away  
Is Africa.  
Not even memories alive  
Save those that history books create,  
Save those that songs  
Beat back into the blood-  
Beat out of blood with words sad-sung  
In strange un-Negro tongue-  
So long,  
So far away  
Is Africa.

Subdued and time-lost  
Are the drums- and yet  
Through some vase mist of race  
There comes this song  
I do not understand,  
This song of atavistic\* land,  
Of bitter yearnings lost  
Without a place-  
So long,  
So far away  
Is Africa's  
Dark face.

\* Atavistic = going back to something ancient or in your distant past.

2.



# LANGSTON HUGHES

## Merry-Go-Round

Colored Child at Carnival

**Where is the Jim Crow\* section  
On this merry-go-round,  
Mister, cause I want to ride?  
Down South where I come from  
White and colored  
Can't sit side by side.  
Down South on the train  
There's a Jim Crow car.  
On the bus we're put in the back-  
But there ain't no back  
To a merry-go-round!  
Where's the horse  
For a kid that's black?**



\*Jim Crow = Segregation laws that kept people separated by race in the South.

3.



# LANGSTON HUGHES

## I Dream A World

I dream a world where man  
No other man will scorn,  
Where love will bless the earth  
And Peace its paths adorn.  
I dream a world where all  
Will know sweet freedom's way,  
Where greed no longer saps the soul  
Nor avarice blights our day.  
A world I dream where black or white,  
Whatever race you be,  
Will share the bounties of the earth  
And every man is free,  
Where wretchedness will hang its head  
And joy, like a pearl,  
Attends the needs of all mankind-  
Of such I dream, My world!

Scorn = despise, hate  
Adorn= Decorate, beautify  
Avarice= Greed for wealth  
Bounties= Blessings  
Wretchedness= Sorrow, despair



# BESSIE SMITH

## 1894-1937

Born in Chattanooga, Tennessee in 1894, Bessie Smith signed a recording contract with Columbia Records in 1923. She was quickly among the highest paid African American performers in the United States. She was nicknamed the “Empress of Blues” and was the most popular blues singer in the 1920’s and 1930’s. After experiencing great popularity in the 20’s, the Depression in the early 1930’s left her struggling financially. Smith began to adapt her style to incorporate the growing popularity of Swing music and continued to travel and perform.

Smith died at the age of 43 when on her way to a show in Tennessee the vehicle she was riding in sideswiped a truck and she was thrown from the car.

Since her death, her music has continued to attract new fans and has sold considerably well.



# BESSIE SMITH

## Nobody Knows You When You're Down & Out



Once I lived the life of a millionaire  
Spent all my money, I didn't care  
Took all my friends out for a mighty good time  
Bought bootleg whiskey, champagne and wine

Then I began to fall so low  
I didn't have any friend, I had nowhere to go  
I get my hands on a dollar again  
I'm gonna hold on to it till that eagle grins

Because  
Nobody knows you  
When you're down and out  
In my pocket, not one penny  
And as for friends,  
Well, I don't have any

If I ever get on my feet again  
Everybody wants to be my old long-lost friend  
Said it's mighty strange, without a doubt  
Nobody knows you when you're down and out  
Oh, when you're down and out

So, if I ever get on my feet again  
Everybody wants to be my old long-lost friend  
Said it's kind of strange, without a doubt  
Nobody knows you when you're down and out  
I mean when you're down and out  
When you're down and out

Written by Jimmy Cox 1923  
Performed by Bessie Smith 1929

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MzU8xM99Uo>

# GEORGIA DOUGLAS JOHNSON

## 1880-1966



Georgia Douglas was born in Atlanta Georgia. Her mother was Native American and her father was African-American and English. She graduated from Atlanta University's Normal School and taught school in Marietta, Georgia. She left teaching to pursue her love of music in 1902 and attended Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Ohio. Later she returned to Atlanta where she became the assistant principal at a public school. She married Henry Lincoln Johnson in 1903. Her husband's job moved their family to Washington D.C. where Georgia was a homemaker, raising their two sons. She spent her time writing poetry, plays songs, giving music lessons, and playing the organ for her church.

After her husband's death, Georgia began contributing written works and hosting arts gatherings for members of the Harlem Renaissance- a group she was active in and supported until her death in 1966. She was inducted into the Georgia Writer's Hall of Fame in 2009.



# GEORGIA DOUGLAS JOHNSON

## Common Dust

And who shall separate the dust  
What later we shall be:  
Whose keen discerning eye will scan  
And solve the mystery?

The high, the low, the rich, the poor,  
The black, the white, the red,  
And all the chromatique between,  
Of whom shall it be said:

Here lies the dust of Africa;  
Here are the sons of Rome;  
Here lies the one unlabelled,  
The world at large his home!

Can one then separate the dust?  
Will mankind lie apart,  
When life has settled back again  
The same as from the start?



2.



# GEORGIA DOUGLAS JOHNSON

## Your World

Your world is as big as you make it.  
I know, for I used to abide  
In the narrowest nest in a corner,  
My wings pressing close to my side.

But I sighted the distant horizon  
Where the skyline encircled the sea  
And I throbbed with a burning desire  
To travel this immensity.

I battered the cordons around me  
And cradled my wings on the breeze,  
Then soared to the uttermost reaches  
With rapture, with power, with ease!





3.



# GEORGIA DOUGLAS JOHNSON

## My Little Dreams

I'm folding up my little dreams  
Within my heart tonight,  
And praying I may soon forget  
The torture of their sight.

For time's deft fingers scroll my brow  
With fell relentless art-  
I'm folding up my little dreams  
Tonight, within my heart.

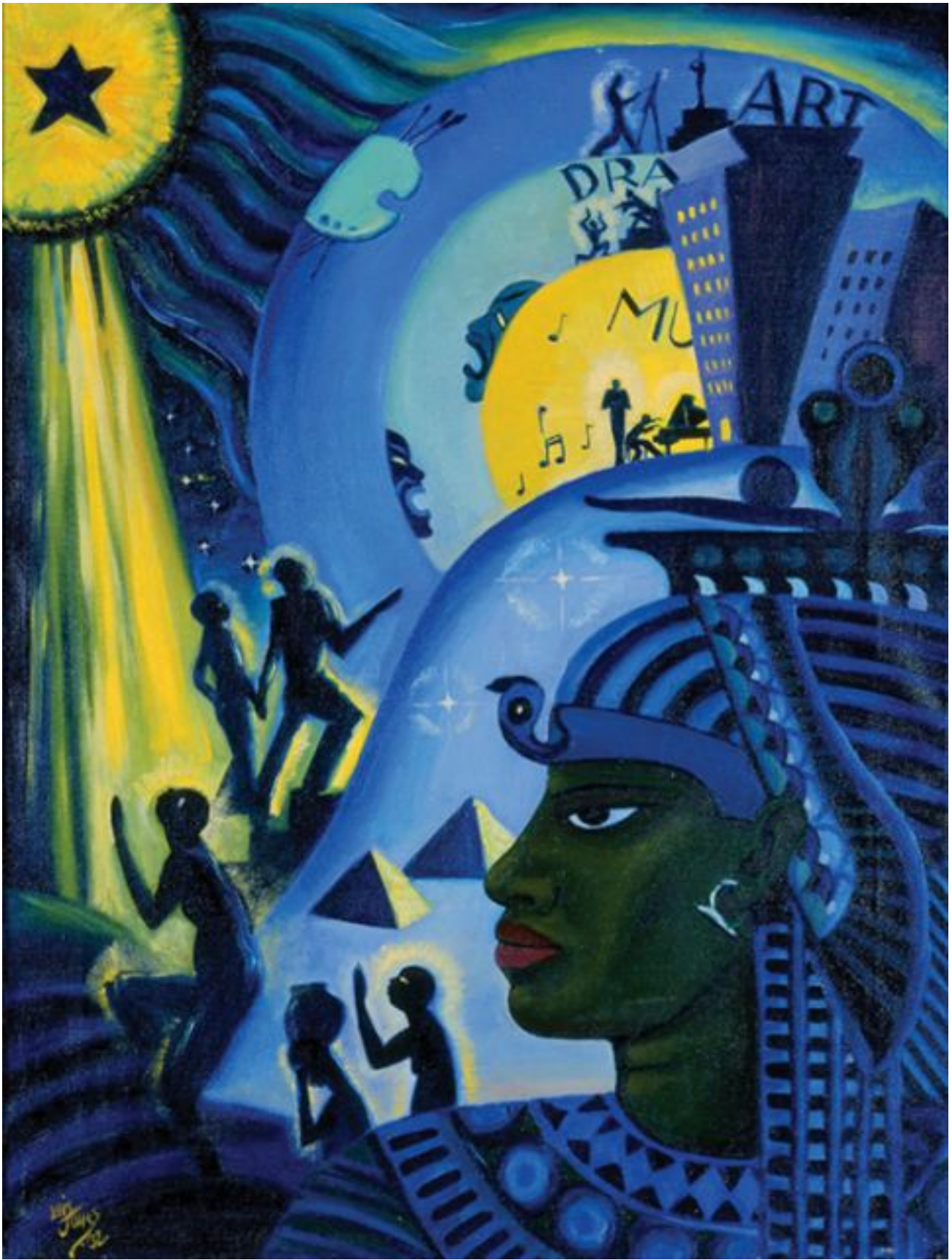


# LOIS MAILOU JONES

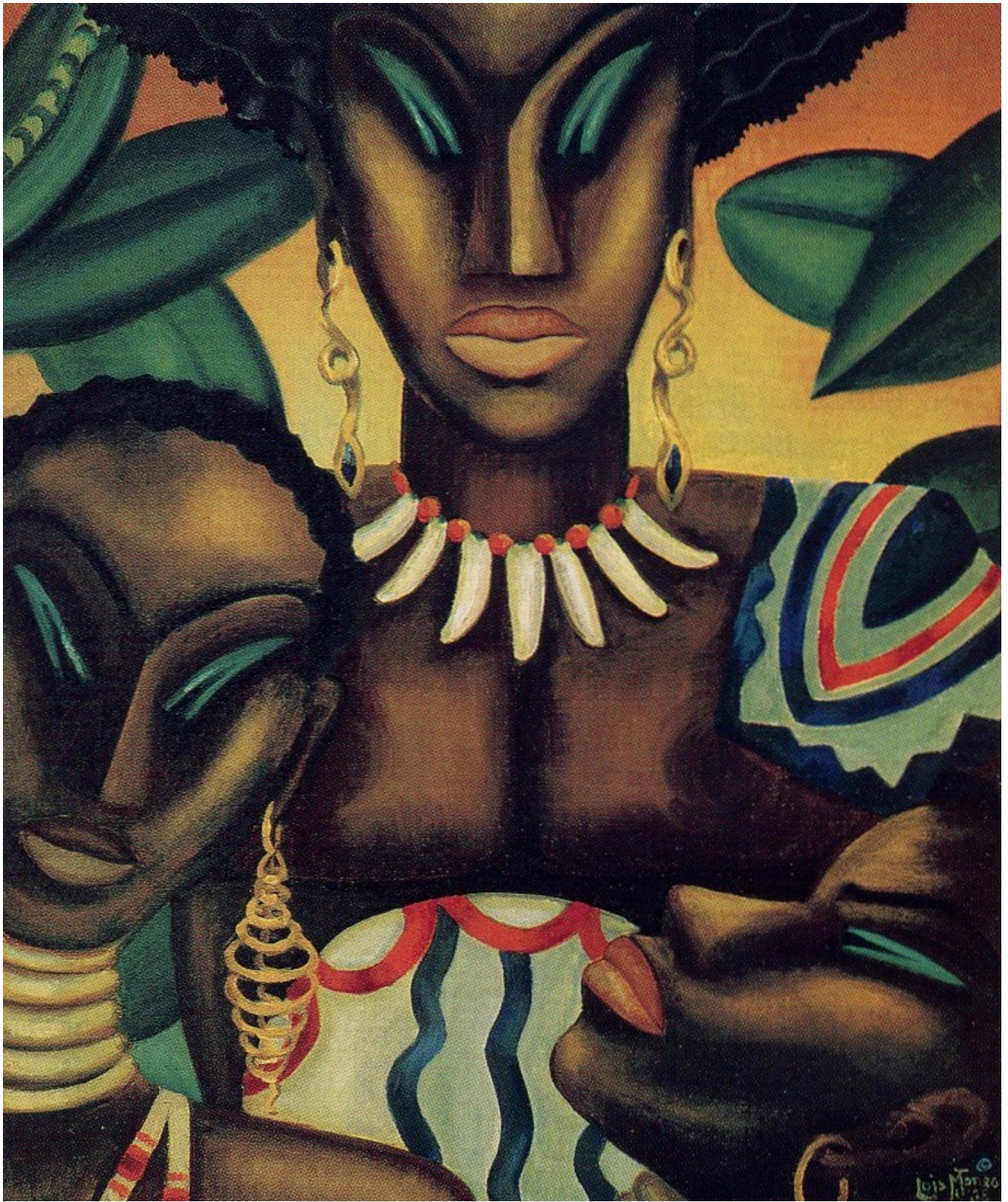
## 1905-1998

Lois Jones attended the School of Museum of Fine Art in Boston in the midst of strong discrimination against African Americans. Besides being a painter, Jones was also a textile designer and teacher. Her paintings incorporated African and, later in her life, Haitian sceneries. She had a passion for social justice, participated in the Harlem Renaissance, depicted images from Jim Crow and Civil Rights eras in the South, and documented scenes from travels around the world to places such as Haiti, Jamaica, Paris, and Cape Cod. In various stages of her life, her art was inspired by many styles. Her paintings range in styles and mediums from cubism, softer water colors, vibrant oil paintings, and even some impressionism. Jones taught at a prep school in North Carolina where she also coached the women's basketball team. She then taught at Howard University for 47 years.





Lois Mailou Jones, "Ascent of Ethiopia", 1932, Oil on Canvas



Lois Mailou Jones, "Africa", 1935, Oil on Canvas



Lois Mailou Jones, "Mere du Senegal", 1985, Acrylic on Canvas