

The Black Effects

Annotations of Art

J. Grandi, W. Ward, G. Wimmer

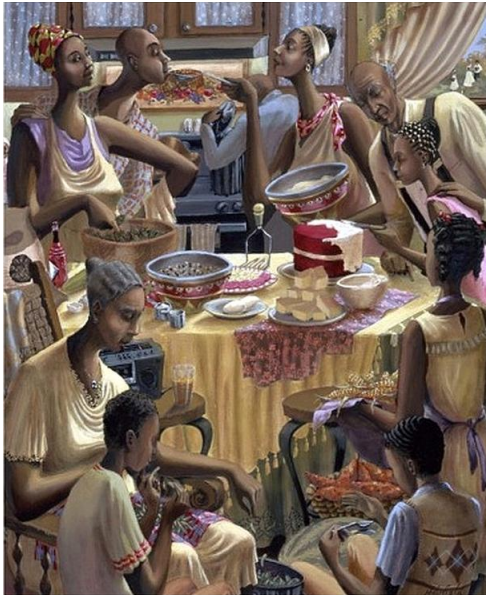


April W Harrison is the artist of this painting. She has developed a strong foundation of faith, friendship, and family that supports her throughout all aspects of her life including her art. On her website, she opens with the idea that throughout whatever she creates she wants the viewer to feel something. “A touch of the spirit” she calls it. To me that is the core of what African American culture is about. The food of the culture is called *soul* food. One of the pillars of music in the culture is rhythm and *blues*. African Americans had to create their own culture and existence from scratch often while illiterate and undereducated. They have created a culture that is meant to touch and connect souls. Food is meant to bring a sense of familiarity, the music is meant to express deep emotions and bring out a sense of pride. The language is meant to allow a deeper level of emotional communication that traditional English doesn’t allow. The fashion is meant to be an outward expression of the individual and a connection to a far away past. Her work - each painting - is the embodiment of the fluidity and need for expression that the culture has. The colors that she used are bold and so diverse but when they come together they create a complete and beautiful piece. Her use of color is strategic, it would almost be as if one color was missing the painting would not be complete. Both again can relate to the African diaspora. There are so many parallels that can be drawn from her work and from the history and stories of the African American community. To see more of her work and to learn more about her as an artist her website is a wonderful resource: <https://www.april-harrison.com/>



The piece is titled “Rising”. Created by Justin Bua, this piece of artwork, along with many that Bua has created, gives a stylistic depiction of Black urban culture that many do not see. Often when speaking on African American urban culture, there is an abundance of stories about violence, drugs, abuse, and poverty. However, that is only a fragment of the reality of Black urban culture. So many of the styles and trends that are popular in society stem from Black urban culture and the sustained popularity of basketball is one of them. Basketball is a popular sport amongst the Black community. And while it is not the only sport that Black people play and enjoy, the interest and dedication that many Black people take in programs like the NBA has helped to boost its popularity and secure its spot as one of the nations favorite pastimes. The artwork that Justin Bua creates shows scenes of Black experiences that people neglect to see the beauty and importance in. To some, basketball might just be a stereotype, but it is a sport that has brought together communities and has made an impact all over the world. The style that Bua uses in his work can also be compared to the constantly moving urban environment. He does a wonderful job of capturing depth and perspective in his pieces so the viewer really feels the impact and overwhelming feel of the city environment. His work is helping to educate people through art of a specific part of the African American story and experience.

(<https://atmos.earth/braylen-dion-black-beauty-finding-peace-in-nature/>)



John Holyfield was the creator of this painting and titled it “Soul Food”. This painting captures the beauty and comfort of African American food and food culture. The stacking of the people and the chaos in the piece can be related to the complexities of the cuisine. There are often layered and stacked spices, seasonings, and flavors throughout African American cooking and to some that can seem chaotic. However, because it is so complex and intricate, the creation of it is a work of art. The multi generational home represented in this piece is a tie to the family and community environment that is so important to the African American community. Popular African American recipes and foods are represented as well but the food is being cooked by multiple members of the household. This again can be seen as a symbol and can be seen in relation to the family structure and sense of family help, and encouragement that is important to a lot of African Americans. On his website, John states his work is, “Art that

celebrates the beauty of the African American community.” And he has done just that. He brings out all the unique and underrepresented parts of African American culture and presents them in a captivating style. Anyone can view more of his mesmerizing work on his website: <http://www.holyfieldstudio.com/>



This painting is titled “America’s Civilized” by Harmonia Rosales. Rosales is an Afro-Cuban American artist that has a multi-cultural, Afro-Cuban, approach to the art she is making. She is also a womanist that uses her creations and art to empower and uplift others as they fight for social justice in this world. She is a phenomenal talent that has been greatly influenced by the Renaissance artists. Her comparison and depiction of similarities between the African American in the piece and the Native American opens the conversation to discuss the social and historical similarities between the two groups and how these groups build and contribute to American society. Often in the fight for racial justice and equality people forget to connect groups of marginalized communities. There is power in numbers and the Native American and African American community can both help

each other and support one another to continue the battle for equality. The clothing that Rosales chose to paint on her subjects can be seen as assimilation. African American and Native Americans were both forced to abandon their original cultures and fit into the culture and way of life of the “new America”. But, it can also be seen as a representation of the work that these two groups have done to support the “new America” and even if they are not seen as such in society, they are America and the creator of the culture that is valued and treasured today. (<https://thebennettartcollection.com/artist/harmonia-rosales/>)

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“The Thankful Poor” by Henry Ossawa Tanner is a very famous genre painting from 1894. His depiction and break from the African American stereotypes during that time made this painting so popular and a staple of art in the African American community. He grew up and was heavily influenced by the Episcopal Church, as his father was a bishop. His education, religious background, and view on race and racial relations in America were the foundations of his genre paintings. After he turned back to America and saw that racial relations were not improving while he was away for 2 years, he decided to depict African Americans in a different light. He chose to paint and

showcase the very real pathetic, sensitive, and emotional side of the African American community. For decades, and even now, Black people are so often depicted in society as harsh, mean, and aggressive beings that are only barely human. The religious, caring, and soulful side of the community is ignored to justify people’s racist beliefs and reactions of Black people. Tanner’s work broke that mold and opened up the door for people to really see the Black people. The subjects are praying before they eat in this painting. There is no light besides the light coming through the window, and there is very little food on the table. Like many during this time they were poor. But they are still human, still have emotions, and still have feelings and needs that have been neglected in this country. Furthermore, this painting wasn’t just from the imagination. This was based on a photograph. He brought the real and intimate realities of being African American to light and has helped us to better the Black perspective.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Thankful_Poor,
<https://frontporchville.org/black-history-of-the-banjo/>)



Keith Mallett was born in Pennsylvania and started painting as a hobby, but quickly became an influential figure in the art community. This etching is untitled but is expertly created. The details and style presented in this etching are captivating and draws in the viewer to gain a deeper understanding of the message in this artwork. Black love and the relationships within the African American community are misunderstood. Stereotypes and stigmas overshadow the beauty of community and those relationships. Mallett’s interpretation of what a relationship can look like in the African American community is a refreshing break from the often broken and dysfunctional Black families that are shown in society. The hands joined together to hold up a delicate flower can be seen as symbolic of Black parents holding and supporting their children; raising them to be strong and resilient. Especially considering the challenges that African Americans still

face to this day. Furthermore, both the women’s and the man’s hands are holding up the flower together touching on the need and push for gender equality in the culture. His inclusion of natural hair types is also very beautiful to see included in fine art. To see more of his work and to learn more, his website is filled with images and resources: <https://www.keithmallett.com/portfolio-1>.