

Bridges on the I-Way: Multicultural Resources Online

African/African-American Multicultural Artists Online

by Frank Alan Bruno

This article will cover several significant African/African-Canadian/African-American artists. I have selected web sites that feature individual ethnic artists and usually include biographical information or examples of their artwork. It is not possible to include every major artist in any great detail; nonetheless, I will highlight many I consider interesting for teachers, students, and librarians. Many web sites I identify of well-known artists and a few sites with up-and-coming artists will help teachers, students, and librarians become better acquainted with artists in these two categories. The names of some artists will be duplicated on general African/African-American art sites because they are considered by selectors to be among the most influential or popular.

Remember that preference for artists is a lot like preference for singers or athletes: There are a lot of them out there and not everyone will agree on who is the best, most popular, most collected, or most socially relevant. Art is a subjective field, with new talent coming on the scene constantly. One person's treasure is another person's junk. I hope you will enjoy finding out about these artists and viewing their work as much as I have.



AFRICAN ART

The **Smithsonian National Museum of African Art** (www.nmafa.si.edu/exhibits/insights/index2.html) identifies nine distinguished African artists from across the continent and directs visitors to additional web sites. These artists include Nigerian **Sokari Douglas Camp** (www.sokari.co.uk/); Senegalese **Iba N'Diaye** (www.culturebase.net/artist.php?1139); and South Africans **William Kentridge** (www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/kentridge_william.html; www.artthrob.co.za/99may/artbio.htm; www.gregkucera.com/kentridge.htm); **Jeremy Wafer** (www.museums.org.za/sang/SA_art/waf_jer.htm; www.artthrob.co.za/00nov/artbio.html); **Zwelethu Mthethwa** (www.goodman-gallery.com/mainamtheth.htm; www.the-artists.org; www.culturebase.net/artist.php?939); **Georgia Papageorge** (www.artfirst.co.uk/pe_papageorge_03.html); **Ezrom Legae** (www.vgallery.co.za/99article3/vzine.htm; www.vgallery.co.za/cvlegae.htm); **Gavin Jantjes** (www.culturebase.net/artist.php?922); and **Sue Williamson** (www.artthrob.co.za/03nov/artbio.html; www.goodman-gallery.com/mainawill.htm; www.onepeople.com/swiltemp.html). In studying contemporary African art, a good place to find information about contemporary artists is to peruse

NKA: Journal of Contemporary African Art (www.asrc.cornell.edu/nka/journal_issues/6.html).

A select list of African artists, with biographies and additional web links, can be found at **Artcyclopedia** (www.artcyclopedia.com/nationalities/African.html). The list of black and white artists from the continent includes Olowe of Ise, Agbonbiofe Adeshina, Ann Newdigate, Skunder Boghossian, Marlene Dumas, Gary Schneider, William Kentridge, Samuel Fosso, Mwama Kiti, Georgia Papageorge, and Ricardo Rangel.

A-Gallery: A Web Gallery of Contemporary East African and South African Paintings (www.a-gallery.de/index.htm) identifies 15 contemporary African painters of international reputation, including **Veroniccah Muwonge** (www.kuonatrust.org/godown/veroniccah.html), Peter Kwangware, **Richard Wasike** (www.insideafricanart.com); **Mary Ogembo** (www.kuonatrust.org/godown/mary.html); **Godfrey Semwaiko** (www.artshost.org/rafiki/rafiki/artists/godfrey.htm), **Side** (www.a-gallery.de/english/artists/side.htm), **Douglas Musyoki** (www.kuonatrust.org/artists%20page/dauglas.html), Mkumba, Lawrence Gitau, Batanayi Tawengwa, Jeff Wambugu, **Jimnah Kimani** (www.artkenya.net/jimnahkimani/jimnah_portfolio.htm; <http://people.africadatabase.org/people/data/person16657.html>), **Kivuthi Mbuno** (www.insideafricanart.com), Shine Tani, and Martin Kamuyu.

African Art Gallery (www.africaartgallery.co.za) features paintings by both black and white South African artists categorized by landscapes, seascapes, wildlife, contemporary figures, still life, and Bushmen paintings. The emphasis is on emerging artists. About 20 featured artists rotate on the site every few months; when I looked in March 2004 they included mostly black artists. When I looked at the site again in May 2004 it featured a different set of mostly white artists.

A Nigerian art perspective can be found at **Gallery Watatu** (www.gallerywatatu.com/Artists.html) with featured artists Abel Keragori, Allan Githuka, Annabelle Wanjiku, Anthony Muyu, Benson Mwenda, Castel Branco, Chain Muhandi, Charles Sekano, Dan Sekweyama, Daniel Kariuki, Daniel Kinynjui, David Kimani, David Munyua, E. S. Tinga Tinga, Elijah Ogira, Elijah Ooko, Elisha Ongere, Erick Shitawah, Ernest Aundi, Eunice Wadu, Francis Kahuri, Fred Oduya, Fredrick Tantuo, George Lilanga, George Thairu, Gik Njau, Hans Seuren, Harrison Mburu, Heidi Lange, J. M. Mbugua, Jackson Wanjau, Jak Katarikawe, Jean Anderson,

Jeff Wambugu, John Dianga, John Njenge, Jony Waite, Joseph Cartoon, Joseph Opiyo, Justus Babal, Kahuga James, Kamal Shah, Kennady Raballa, Kimiti Gimp, King Dodge, Kivuthi Mbuno, Laban Ngugi, Lucy Njeri, Martin Kamuyu, Mary Naita, Meek Gichugu, Morris Foit, Moses Gichuri, Moses Mwangima, Nadia Keseleva, Nicholas Nzioka, Omari Idd, Patrick Kayako, Peter Kibunjah, Peter Otieno, Richard Kimathi, Robert Kaim, Rosemary Karuga, Ruth Nyakundi, S. G. Mpata, Sally Ndayabu, Sande Lucas, Sane Wadu, Sebastian Kiarie, Seth Musindi, Shade Kamau, Shake Makelele, Simon Kahueo, Simon Murithi, Stephen Njenga, Tabitha Mburu, Timothy Brooke, Vijaya Kalyeri, Wanyu Brush, and Zachariah Mbutha.

Inside Africa Art (www.insideafricanart.com) has an East African modern art flavor. The 12 featured artists include Andrew Kamondia, Joseph Juma, Martin K. Bulinya, Daniel Kenyajui, Martin Njugi, Tinga Tinga, Patrick Kinithia, Gary Frier, Emmanuel Morgan, House, A. Mbugua, and Stephen Mbitia. **Art in South Africa** (www.art.co.za) spotlights ten modern ethnic artists: Mokgabudi Amos Letsoalo, Colbert Mashile, Daniel Mosako, Daniel Phaladi, Johnny Ribeiro, Nukain Mabusa, Titus Matiyane, Mike Mmtutle, Peter Sibanda, Ruben Mokwena, Gerard Sekoto, Zondi Skosana, and Vincent Baloyi.

AfricasArt.Net (www.africasart.net/frame_africa.htm) is a site dedicated to Zimbabwe contemporary wood sculpture. The site contains promotional materials from the following sculptors: Godfrey Kututwa, Shephard Madzikatire, Damian Manuhwa, Nicholas Mukomberanwa, Moses Masaya, Sylvester Mubayi, Nesbert Mukomberanwa, Henry Munyaradzi, Claud Nyanhongo, Brighton Sango, Norbert Shamuyarira, John Takawira, Edward Chiwawa, and Lazarus Takawira.



AFRICAN-CANADIAN ARTISTS

A site for finding out about African-Canadian artists is **York University's African Canadian Online** (www.yorku.ca/aconline/visualart/artists.html). Featured twentieth-century artists include Dorsey James, Neville Clark, Charmaine Lurch, Shawn Skeir, Lloyd Pollar, Arlene Case, Grace Channer, Isaac Wanzama, Jacqueline Ward, Macaulay Eteli, Sandra Brewster, and Lyonel Laurenceau.

James, a Pickering, Ontario, sculptor who was born in Philadelphia, can be viewed at **Home Place** (www.homeplace.ca); **Dorsey James, Sculptor** (<http://novacan.ca/djames/index.html>); and **Ontario Society of Artists** (www.ontariosocietyofartists.org/profiles/james.html). Clark, an Ontario painter, can be viewed at **Official Site of the town of Markham** (www.markham.ca/markham/channels/gallery/exhibit_threshold.htm); **Toronto.Com** (www.toronto.com/profile/874433/); and **Ontario Society of Artists** (www.ontariosocietyofartists.org). Lurch, of Toronto, can be viewed at **African Canadian Heritage** (www.geocities.com/multi_cultural_99/afr.html). Skeir, a visual artist in Toronto, can be viewed at **My Urban Profile** (www.myurbanprofile.com/profiles/profile.php?Profile_id=627) and

ValenArt (www.valenart.com/abstract_ShawnSkeir.htm). Pollar's work is available at the **Irie Music Festival** site (www.iriemusicfestival.com/viz-arts/Lloyd_Pollard.phtml). Case, a Montreal artist, can be viewed at **First Art Source** (www.firstartsource.com/Content/CaseA.htm) and **Art of Color** (www.artofcolor.com/db/artisticasearle.html). Channer can be viewed at **WLU Film** (<http://info.wlu.ca/mtr/MediaCollection/L/v660.shtml>); **Interval House** (www.intervalhouse.on.ca/newsletter/articles/default.asp?articleID=114); and **Women Artists in Canada** (<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/waic>). Wanzama, a Toronto painter/photographer can be viewed at **My Urban Profile** (www.myurbanprofile.com/profiles/profile.php?profile_id=10). Ward can be viewed at the **City of Toronto** site (www.city.toronto.on.ca/blackhistory/2000_art15.htm; www.city.toronto.on.ca/blackhistory/exhibit2002/2002_art30.htm). Eteli, an Oshawa, Ontario, artist can be viewed at **Irie Music Festival** (www.iriemusicfestival.com/viz-arts/Mac_Eteli.phtml) and **Art and Soul Gallery** (www.artandsoulgallery.ca/acrylics-oils/eteli.html). Brewster, from Toronto, can be viewed at **Art Lover's New York** (www.artnet.com/Magazine/people/smith/smith4-26-17.asp); **XEXE Gallery** (www.xexegallery.com/page15.html); and the City of Toronto site. Laurenceau, a Laval, Quebec, painter born in Plaisance, Haiti, can be viewed at **Sakapfet** (www.sakapfet.com/news/news_detail.tpl?form.id=20031121142848); **Afrocentric Gifts** (www.afrocentricgifts.com/scripts/prodList.asp); and **Galerie Nader** (<http://galeriedartnader.com/laurenceaulevel1.htm>).

Stones Art Gallery (www.stonesartgallery.com) has a smattering of Caribbean, Canadian, and African-American artists. These include well-known artists such as Jacob Lawrence and Faith Ringgold alongside a number of less heralded or emerging artists.



AFRICAN-AMERICAN ARTISTS

A site with a mix of African and African-American themes created by mostly African-American artists is **African Art World** (www.africanartworld.com/artist_dir/artist.html). Most of the artists featured here are major historical and contemporary figures.

Notable Artists and Their Works

Access Art-African American Art (www.artic.edu/artaccess/AA_AfAm/index.html), the Art Institute of Chicago's beautifully styled site, offers brief biographies with representative works of distinguished African-American artists: Samuel J. Miller, Henry Ossawa Tanner, Aaron Douglas, Walter Ellison, Jacob Lawrence, Archibald J. Motley Jr., Richard Hunt, Elizabeth Catlett, Alma Thomas, Romare Bearden, Kerry James Marshall, and Glenn Ligon. Also included are a few lesson plans for high school students: *Heroes in Action*, *African American Literature in Art*, *Scaling up Art*, *Texture in Relief-Print Portraits*, and *The 1920s Variety Shows*.

The African American Registry (www.aaregistry.com/african_american_history/category/7/theatre_and_the_arts)

has a selective list of historical and established contemporary artists, including Edward Bannister, Edmonia Lewis, Henry O. Tanner, William Edmondson, Isaac Hathaway, Augusta Savage, Alma Thomas, Archibald Motley, Dox Thrash, Eva Jessye, Aaron Douglas, Selma Burke, Beauford Delaney, Rex Goreleigh, James Lesesne Wells, Inge Hardison, Lois M. Jones, James A. Porter, Charles Alston, James Hampton, Norman Lewis, Allan Crite, Kapo, Romare Bearden, Gwendolyn Knight, William Artis, Elizabeth Catlett, Hughie Lee Smith, Eldzier Cortor, Jacob Lawrence, Margaret Burroughs, Charles White, John Biggers, Ed Wilson, Betye Saar, Artis Lane, Faith Ringgold, Simmie Knox, Robert Thompson, and Jean-Michel Basquiat.

Artnoir (www.artnoir.com/history101.html) has biographical data on the African-American artists William Artis, Edward Bannister, Richmond Barthe, Leslie Bolling, Selma Burke, Elizabeth Catlett, Allan Crite, Beauford Delaney, Richard Dempsey, Aaron Douglas, David Driscoll, Prefete Dufaute, Robert S. Duncanson, Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller, William Henry Johnson, Lois M. Jones, Joseph Kersey, Jacob Lawrence, Edmonia Lewis, Samella Sanders Lewis, Naza, Delilah Williams Pierce, Horace Pippin, James A. Porter, Antonion Broccolu Porto, Faith Ringgold, William Eduard Scott, Henry O. Tanner, James Lesesne Wells, Charles White, and Hale Woodruff. A larger, more comprehensive list of 81 African American artists can be found at **Artcyclopedia: Artists by Nationality, African American Artists** (www.artcyclopedia.com/nationalities/African-American.html). Most of the artists included in one or more of the previous four sources are featured here also.

Another top list of African-American artists is Long Island University/C.W. Post Campus's **African Americans in the Visual Arts: A Historical Perspective** (www.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/aavaahp.htm#sum), which includes short sketches for Richmond Barthe, Selma Burke, Allan R. Crite, Aaron Douglas, Isaac Hathaway, Edmonia Lewis, Horace Pippin, Henry O. Tanner, Charles Alston, Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, Beauford Delaney, David C. Driscoll, Joshua Johnston, Alain Leroy Locke, Ellis Ruley, Edward M. Bannister, John T. Biggers, Eldzier Cortor, Joseph Delaney, Robert Scott Duncanson, Jacob Lawrence, Scipio Moorhead, and Floyd Sapp.

The National Museum of American Art (www.usc.edu/isd/archives/ethnicstudies/africanamerican/black_art_nmaa.html) has a stellar collection of exceptional African-American artists whose major works are shown. Artists include Edward Bannister, Romare Bearden, John Biggers, Frederick Brown, Elizabeth Catlett, Alan R. Crite, Beauford Delaney, Robert Scott Duncanson, William Edmondson, Minnie Evans, Sam Gilliam, James Hampton, Palmer Hayden, Richard Hunt, Joshua Johnson, Sargent Johnson, William H. Johnson, Frank Jones, Lois M. Jones, Jacob Lawrence, Edmonia Lewis, Sister Gertrude Morgan, Keith Morrison, James A. Porter, Augusta Savage, Henry O. Tanner, Alma Thomas, Bob Thompson, Bill Traylor, Hale Woodruff, and Joseph E. Yockum.

Another major resource of past and present African-American artists and their works can be found at **The**

University of Maryland: David C. Driskell Collection (www.artgallery.umd.edu/exhibit/02-03/driskell2003/checklist.html), which includes Edward Mitchell Bannister, Richmond Barthe, Romare Bearden, John Biggers, Grafton Tyler Brown, Elizabeth Catlett, Robert Colescott, Eldzier Cortor, Kevin Cole, Allan Rohan Crite, Roy DeCarava, Aaron Douglas, Meta Warwick Fuller, Sam Gilliam, Michael D. Harris, Earl Hooks, Margo Humphrey, Clementine Hunter, William H. Johnson, Lois Mailou Jones, Jacob Lawrence, Norman Lewis, Keith Morrison, Mary Lovelace O'Neal, Stephanie Pogue, Martin Puryear, Augusta Savage, Frank Smith, Frank Stewart, Lou Stovall, Henry O. Tanner, Alma Thomas, James VanDerZee, Laura Waring Wheeler, James Lesesne Wells, Charles White, Walter Williams, William T. Williams, and Hale Woodruff. **Pomegranate** (www.pomegranate.com) has published elegantly produced volumes of prominent individual artists from the David C. Driskell collection.

HistoryMakers: ArtMakers (www.thehistorymakers.com/biography/biography.asp?category=artMakers) is a site dedicated to leaders and role models in the African-American community. Those featured with biographies must be nominated, with an essay describing why they qualify. A number of visual artists, past and present, are included along with notables in a variety of other arts fields, sports, business, politics, the military, religion, education, and science.

Herself an artist specializing in the healing power of the medium, Rhonda Lee Willers has an African-American section on her **Minority American Artists** site (www.uwrf.edu/~rw66/minority/minority.htm) with paintings by noted artists.

Contemporary and Emerging Artists

Hearne (www.hearnefineart.com/html/artists.html), a prestigious Black fine arts gallery, represents the following stable of highly collected artists: Gabriel Ajayi, Leroy Allen, Benny Andrews, Phoebe Beasley, Alix Beaujour, John Biggers, Chukes, Neville Clark, William Clark, Charles Criner, Ed Dwight, Marion Epting, Lawrence Finney, Frank Frazier, Paul Goodnight, Jonathan Green, Larry Hampton, Kenneth Humphrey, Brenda Joysmith, Artis Lane, Samella Lewis, Dean Mitchell, Euneda Otis, Mario Robinson, Marjorie Smith, Phyllis Stephens, TAFA, William Tolliver, and Dale Washington.

Grandpa's Art (www.grandpasart.com/default.php), a trendy pop art site, carries reasonably priced African-American prints by contemporary artists, both well known and emerging.

International Visions: The Gallery (www.inter-visions.com/gallery_artists.asp) has a few young contemporary artists, including Lila Snow, Betty Murchison, Tim Davis, Claire McArdle, Sheldon Horton, Kevin Cole, Leonard Dawson, Alex Bay, Preston Sampson, David Scott, Bill Dorsey, Nicole Cutts, Verna Hart, Lauren Saxon, and Jefferson Pinder.

Our New Day Begun (www.ournewdaybegun.com/main.html) has mostly up-and-coming artists with a handful

of big names. It has some interesting write-ups that cannot be accessed in any logical way except through searches on Google or some other search engine by the artist's name. The artists profiled are James Ayers, a Flagstaff, Arizona painter/sculptor; Radcliff Bailey, a painter in Atlanta; Adrian Baxter, a Houston painter/installation artist; muralist John Biggers, also from Houston; Lillian Blades, an Atlanta installation artist; sculptor/painter Elizabeth Catlett, who lived in Cuernavaca, Mexico; Michael Ray Charles, a painter in Austin, Texas; installation artist Marie Cochran in Athens, Georgia; Michael Cummings, a New York quilter; Torkwase Dyson, a Chicago painter; Colette Gaither, a computer graphic designer in Minneapolis; photographer Richard Gary in Brooklyn, New York; Leamon Green, a Houston painter; Kojo Griffin, a painter in Atlanta; New Orleans painter Channel Guice; Greg Henry, a Hampton, Virginia sculptor; Janine Jackson, a Lithonia, Georgia portrait artist; Jean Lacey, a collage/stained glass designer in Dallas; Roy LaGrone, a computer graphics designer in Savannah, Georgia; Jacob Lawrence; Lynn Marshall Linnemeier, an Atlanta mixed media artist; Tempe, Arizona computer graphics designer Stephen Marc; Kim Mayhorn, a New York filmmaker; Vicki Meek, a Dallas mixed media artist; painter Angelbert Metoyer, from Houston; Eric Marshall Murray, a Norfolk, Virginia painter; David Newton, a Dallas sculptor; New York photographer Gordon Parks; Arleen Polite, an Austin printmaker; Houston painter/installation artist Robert Pruitt; Faith Ringgold; John Scott, a New Orleans sculptor; Carol Harris Simms, a Houston ceramist; Houston sculptor Lili Kaneem Smith; Rejina Thomas, a glass artist in Austin; Washington, D.C. ceramist Kathleen Varnell; and Bernard Williams, a Chicago muralist.

African-American quilting is another vernacular art form that has developed a following in recent years. Descriptions of this artistic expression can be found at **International House of Blues: Preserving Culture, Quilting Activity** (www.ihobf.org/download/Preserving_Culture_Quilting_Activity.pdf); **Virtual Gallery of African American Art Quilters** (www.africanamericanartquilt.com/index.htm); **African American Quilting Traditions** (<http://xroads.virginia.edu/%7EUG97/quilt/atrads.html>); **Sheila Williams Quilting Software Consulting** (www.sheilawilliams.com); and **Quilt Ethnic** (www.quiltethnic.com).

Many museums and galleries have spotlighted the colorful and dynamic works by such artists as **Harriet Powers** (<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~UG97/quilt/harriet.html>; <http://womensearlyart.net/powers/>; www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?path=/Folklife/FolkArt&id=h-2577); **Denise Allen** (www.expresstosuccess.com/allenindex.htm); **Cathleen Richardson Bailey** (www.cathleenbailey.com); **I.B. Bayo** (www.ibbayo.com/index.html); **Rachel D. K. Clark** (www.rdkc.com); **Michael A. Cummings** (www.michaelcummings.com); **Carolyn L. Mazloomi** (www.mindspring.com/%7Emazloomi/; www.octobergallery.com/paintmagazine/pages/fa_mazloomi.html); **Dr. Tracey Rico** (www.jaderico.com/); **Faith Ringgold** (www.faithringgold.com); **Mary Louise Smith** (<http://community-2.webtv.net/MARYLOUISESMITH/MARYLOUISESMITH/>); **Sherri Whetstone McCall** (www.quiltdancer.com/

www.hearnefineart.com/html/stephens.html); **Phyllis Stevens** (www.octobergallery.com/paintmagazine/pages/fa_phyllis.html); **EdJohnetta Miller** (www.edjohnetta.com); **Karen Bouthe** (www.karenboutte.com/pages/419681/index.htm); **Raymond K. Houston** (www.nachograndmasquilts.com/home_001.htm); **Chris Clark** (<http://americaohyes.com/pages/clark.htm>); **Gyleen Fitzgerald** (www.colourfulstitches.com); **Lynette Edmonds Johnson** (<http://homepage.mac.com/lynettejohnson/Menu6.html>); **Marlene O'Bryant Seabrook** (www.marleneobryantseabrook.com/indexa.html); **Theresa Polley-Shellcroft** (www.studioone-artworks.com); and **Charlotte Hill O'Neal** (www.uaacc.habari.co.tz/Charlotte's%20Arts%20Bio%2003.htm). The quilting collective The Gee's Bend Women—Jessie T. Pettway, Mary L. Bennett, Nettie Young, Anna May Young, Loretta Pettway, Lutisha Pettway, Louella Pettway, Allie Pettway, and Lucy T. Pettway—may be found at **Tinwood Press: Gee's Bend** (www.tinwoodmedia.com/geesmain.html) and **The Whitney Museum: Gee's Bend** (www.whitney.org/programs/educators/geesbend-es-prepost.pdf).

Art Prints and Other Reproductions for Sale

Artisan Arts Online: African American American Gallery (www.artisanartsonline.com) has representative art from many of the popular artists from the past and today. The site sells posters, cards, calendars, magnets, paperweights, and other reproductions. A sizeable selection of Black artists' works, both well known and emerging, are for sale at **Ebony Graphics** (www.ebonygraphics.com/Artists.htm). Dozens of artists from Africa, Europe, and the Americas are featured.

If you are looking to buy posters by popular African-American artists for your classroom then you can check out **Poster Checkout** (www.postercheckout.com), **Art.Com** (www.fine-art.com/posters/), **Poster Gallery.Com** (www.thepostergallery.com), **ArtPrintsDirect.Com** (www.artprintsdirect.com), and **Barewalls.Com** (www.barewalls.com/index.html). **Afrocentric Art** at Art.Com (www.art.com/asp/collections/afrocentric-asp/_afrocentric.asp/) has a nice range of materials. Barewalls has a better selection of prints with good prices. Their framing service is a bit overpriced. A better price on frames may be found at Art.Com, **PictureFrames.Com** (www.pictureframes.com), or **Art Frames.Com** (www.artframes.com).

Exposure to these artists should do much to raise cultural literacy. Librarians and educators should consider works by these artists for inclusion in their curriculum or on their walls. The artists I have included depict themes and subjects that will help others gain an appreciation for African and African-American culture. 📖

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