

# AAAS 520S/ARTHIST 554S

## Harlem Renaissance

### AARON DOUGLAS & DUDLEY MURPHY: TOWARDS A BLACK VISUAL MODERNISM

September 25, 2024

Films to be discussed: Dudley Murphy's *Black & Tan* (1929), Dudley Murphy's *St. Louis Blues* (1929)

Upper right: Dudley Murphy (1897-1968). Lower right: Aaron Douglas (1899-1979)

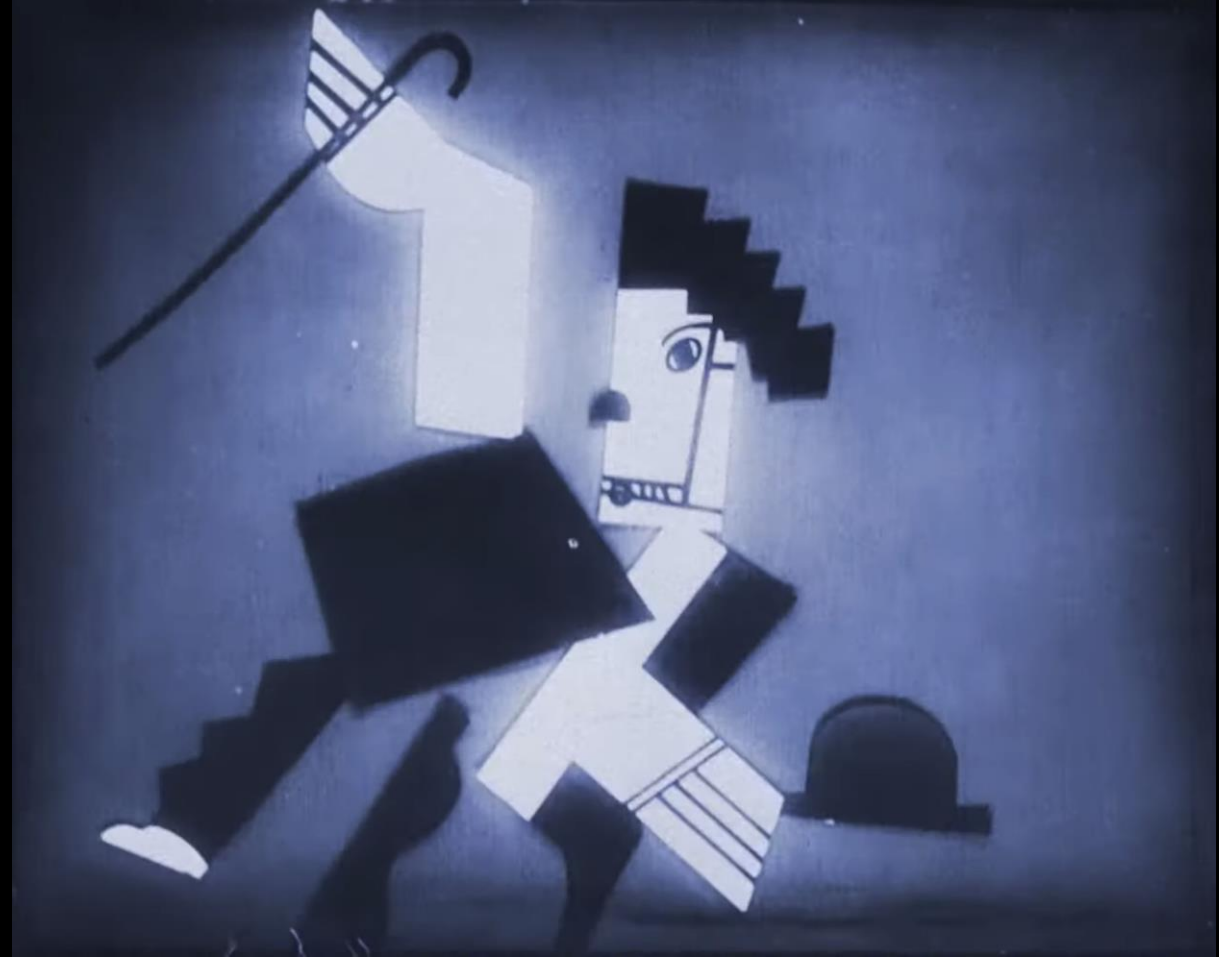




Left: Dudley Murphy, c. 1920s.



Above: Film still (featuring "Kiki") from Dudley Murphy & Fernand Léger's *Ballet Mécanique* (France, 1923-24).



Film stills from *Ballet Mécanique* (France 1923-24, directed by Fernand Léger & Dudley Murphy).

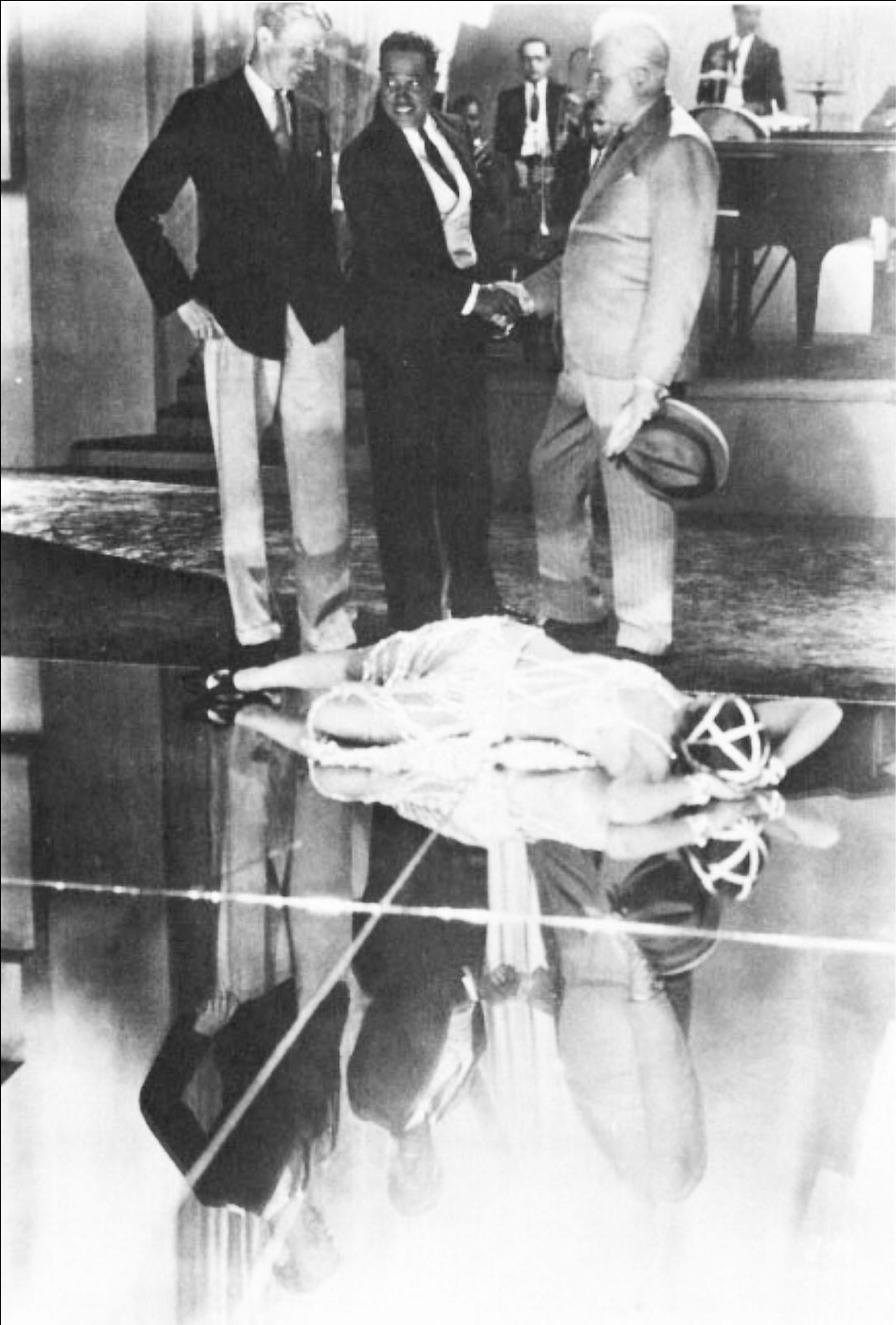




Upper left, upper right, lower right & lower left:  
film stills from *Black and Tan* (USA, 1929, directed  
by Dudley Murphy) featuring clockwise from  
upper right: Fredi Washington, Duke Ellington &  
his Cotton Club Orchestra, & the Hot Shots  
dancing quintet.







Left: Dudley Murphy, Duke Ellington, Carl Van Vechten and, reclining on the mirrored floor, Fredi Washington, between scenes during the filming of *Black and Tan* (USA, 1929, directed by Dudley Murphy).



Clockwise from upper right: Three film stills from *Black and Tan* (USA, 1929, directed by Dudley Murphy).





Upper left, upper right, lower right & lower left: Film stills from *St. Louis Blues* (USA, 1929, directed by Dudley Murphy). Clockwise from upper right, Bessie Smith, Jimmy Mordecai, & Isabel Washington.





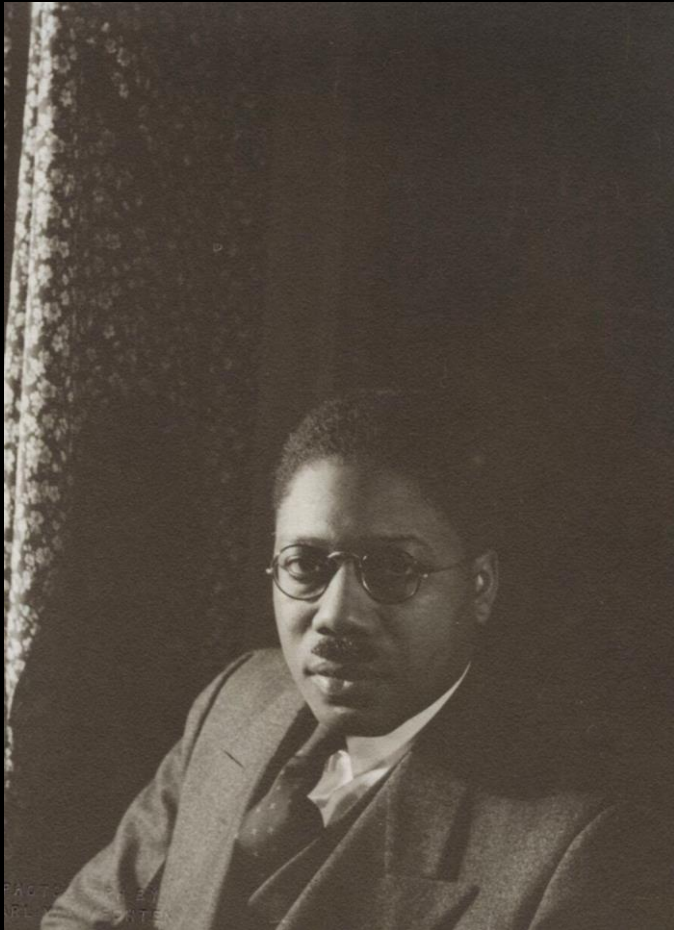


Left: Film stills from *Black and Tan* (USA, 1929, directed by Dudley Murphy).



Right: Aaron Douglas, *Philosophy*, 1934. One of several mural installed in Fisk University's Cravath Hall, Nashville, TN.





Above: Carl Van Vechten, *Aaron Douglas*, 1933. Photograph.

Right: Aaron Douglas, *Rise Shine for Thy Light Has Come*, c. 1927. Opaque watercolor and black ink on paperboard.





Industry

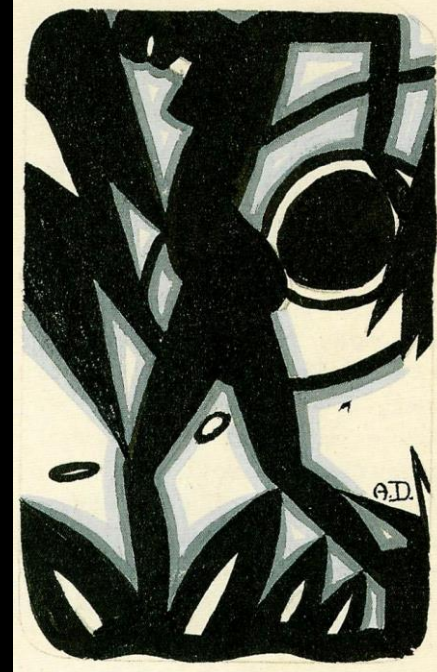
THE Chicago Urban League, while working on an unemployment survey among Negroes, learns that out of 600 men able and willing to work only one-third are actually employed. Mr. A. L. Foster, Executive Secretary, feels that although conditions are serious now they would be considerably worse were Prohibition not in force. It was found that labor turnover has been reduced among the workmen in industry along with Monday-morning absenteeism since saloons were closed. With 6,000 Negroes in the stock yards receiving from 42½ cents for common labor to 72½ cents an hour for skilled labor (the minimum wage—which most of them receive—being about \$17.00 per week), unquestionably the Volstead Act is helping the Negro economically because he cannot afford to spend money on liquor. With the very low wages paid he would be reduced to a starving point, Mr. Foster believes. The stock-yard employees have a guarantee under the Altshuler agreement of 40 hours a week.

An interesting sidelight on the complex distilling and bootlegging business among the Italians on the North Side, where many Negroes live, was discovered during the survey. The colored man is trusted by white customers in this illicit business because he is regarded as an authority on the manufacture of bootleg products due to a supposedly long previous experience in the mountains of the South. Mr. H. N. Robinson, head



AARON DOUGLAS—a self portrait

AARON DOUGLAS is a graduate of the University of Nebraska in 1922, and was Professor of Art in Lincoln High School, Kansas City, Missouri for two years. Mr. Douglas was described by Winold Reiss as “a young artist of great promise with a marvelous, flowing imagination.”



Above: Article about Aaron Douglas, including a Self-Portrait, from *Opportunity*, September 1925.

Upper right: Aaron Douglas, *The Sun-God* (from *The New Negro*), c. 1925. Gouache on paper.

Lower right: Aaron Douglas, *The Poet* (from *The New Negro*), c. 1925. Gouache on paper.



# OPPORTUNITY

JOURNAL OF NEGRO LIFE



DECEMBER, 1925

15  
CENTS

Left: Aaron Douglas, cover illustration for *Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life*, December 1925.

Right: Aaron Douglas, cover illustration for *The Crisis*, November 1926.

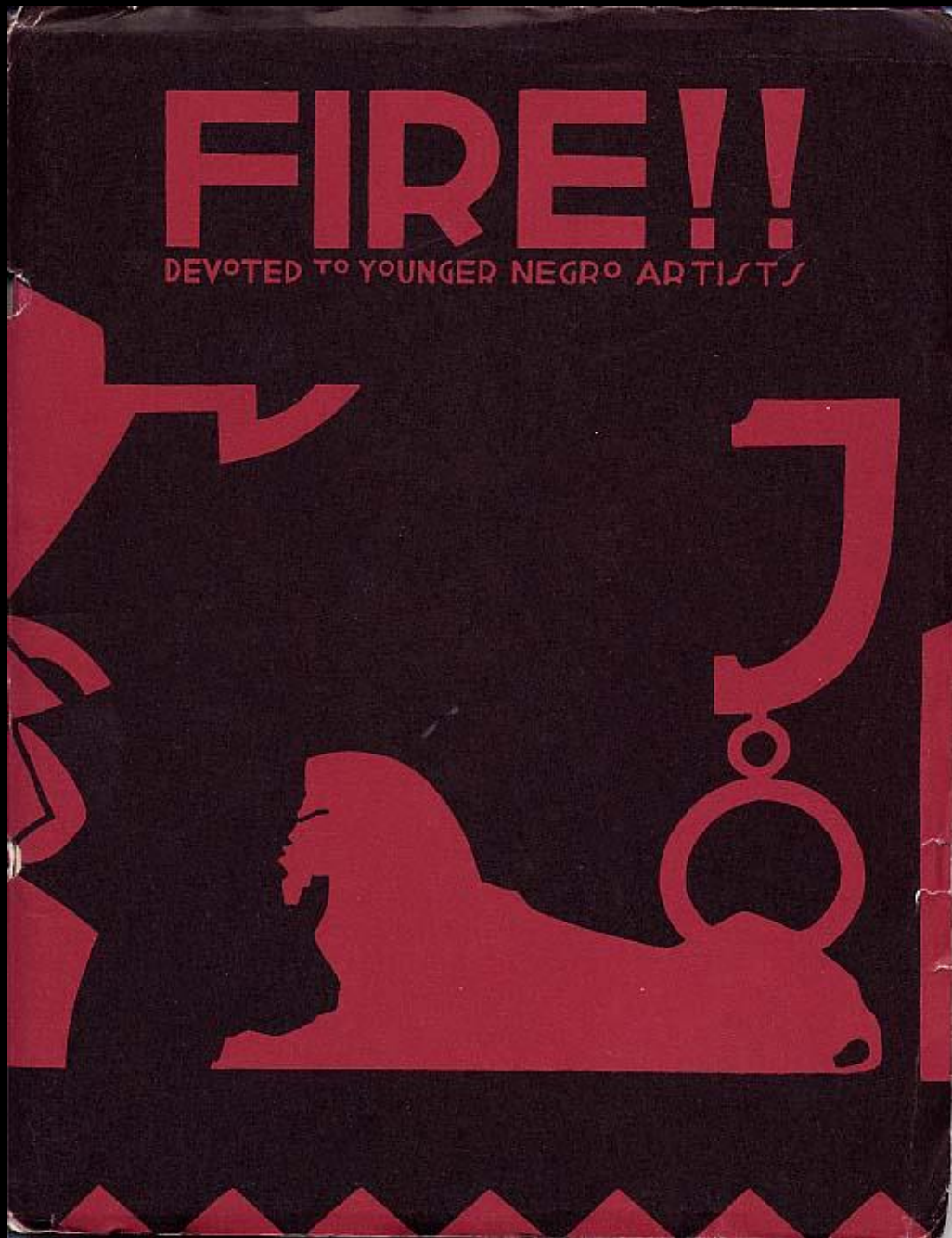
# The CRISIS



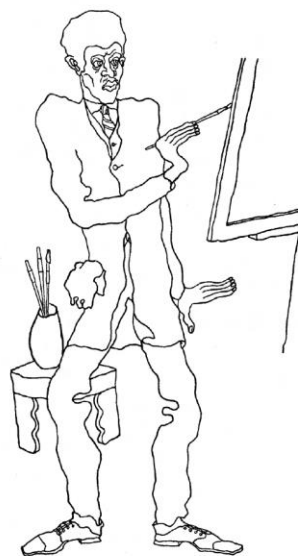
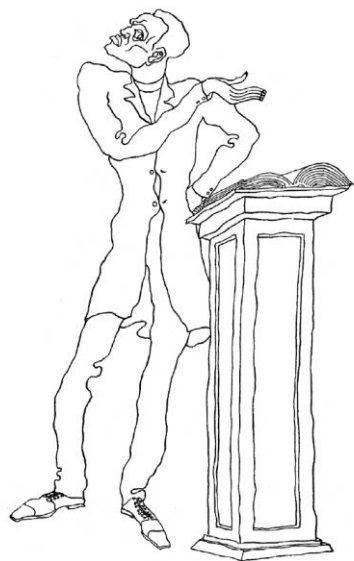
NOVEMBER, 1926

15 Cents a Copy

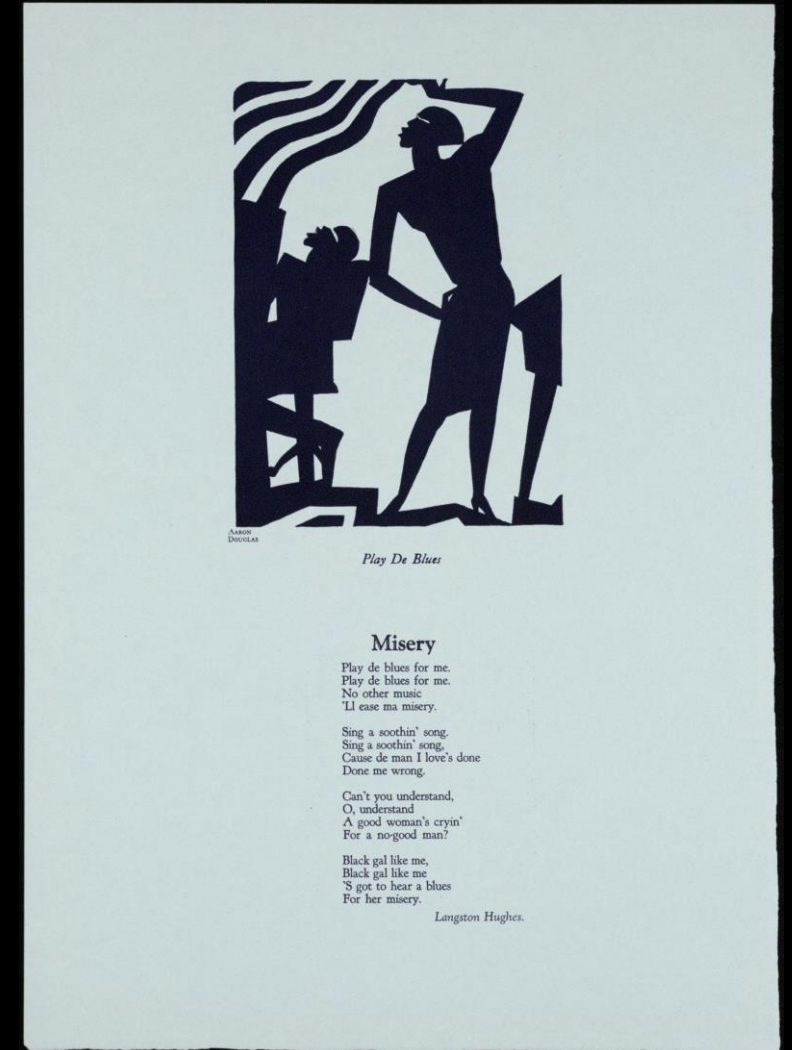
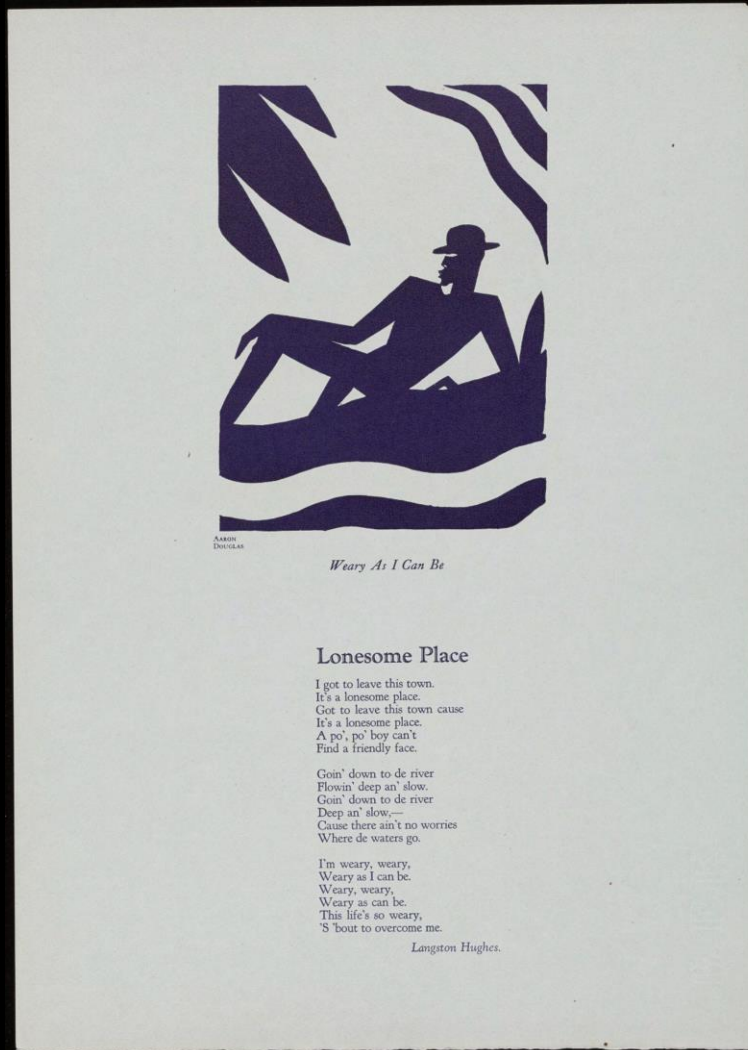




Aaron Douglas, cover illustration for *FIRE!! Devoted to Younger Negro Artist* 1, no. 1 (November 1926).



Aaron Douglas, Three drawings for *FIRE!! Devoted to Younger Negro Artist* 1, no. 1 (November (1926). Left: *The Preacher* (1926); center: *The Artist* (1926); & right: *The Waitress* (1926).

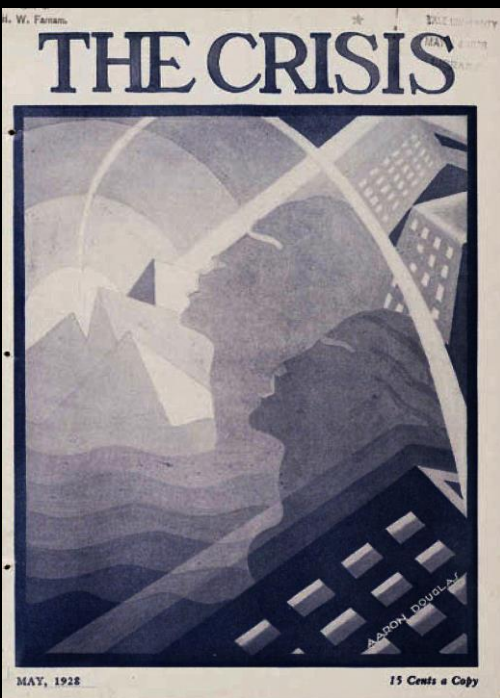
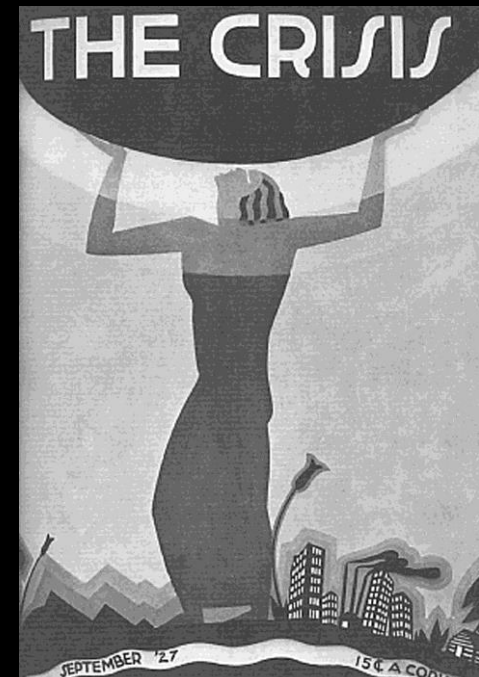
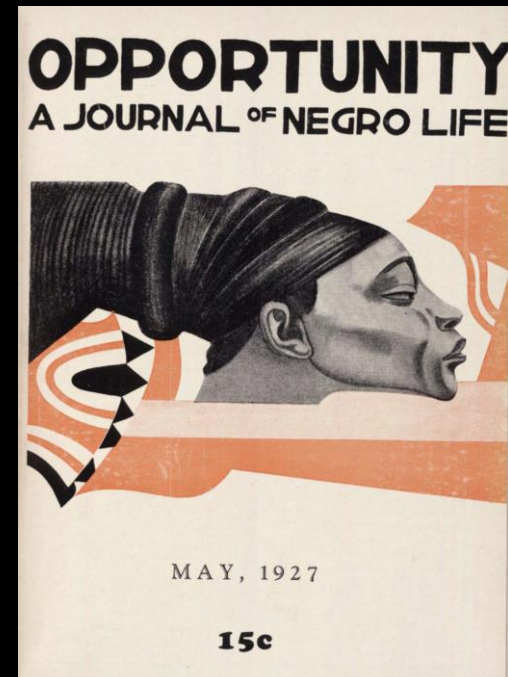
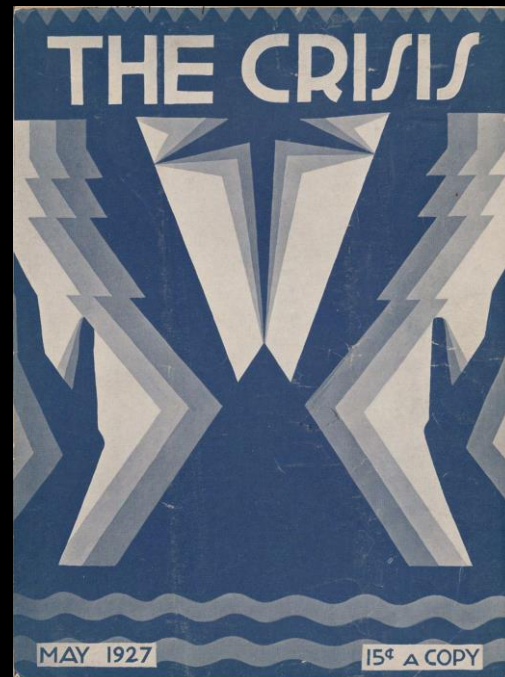


Left: Aaron Douglas, cover illustration for the Langston Hughes/Aaron Douglas Art Folio for *Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life* (1926).

Center, Aaron Douglas, *Weary As I Can Be* & Langston Hughes, "Lonesome Place," from the "Opportunity" Art Folio, 1926. Offset lithograph.

Right: Aaron Douglas, *Play De Blues* & Langston Hughes, "Misery," from the "Opportunity" Art Folio, 1926. Offset lithograph.





Clockwise from lower left:  
Aaron Douglas, cover illustration for *The Crisis*, May 1928.

Aaron Douglas, cover illustration for *Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life*, February 1926.

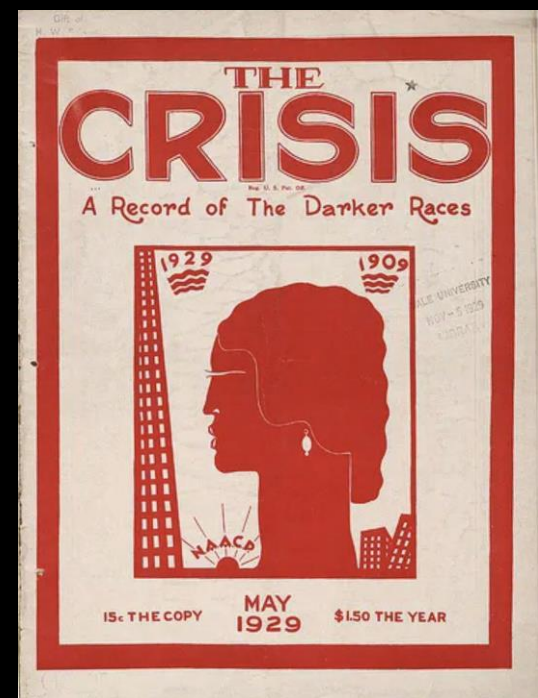
Aaron Douglas, cover illustration for *Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life*, June 1926.

Aaron Douglas, cover illustration for *The Crisis*, May 1927.

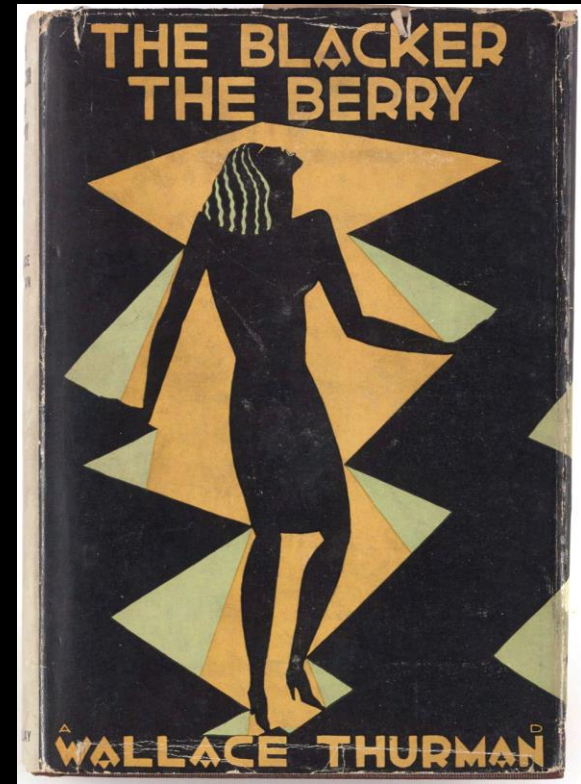
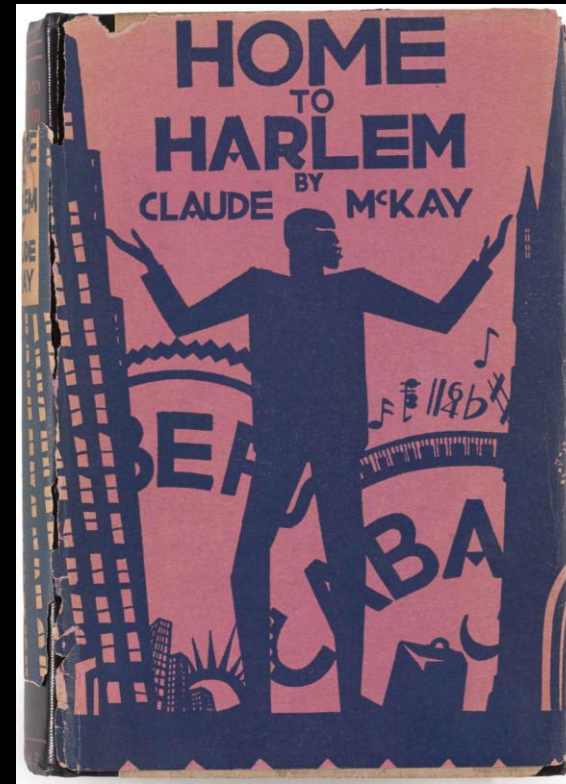
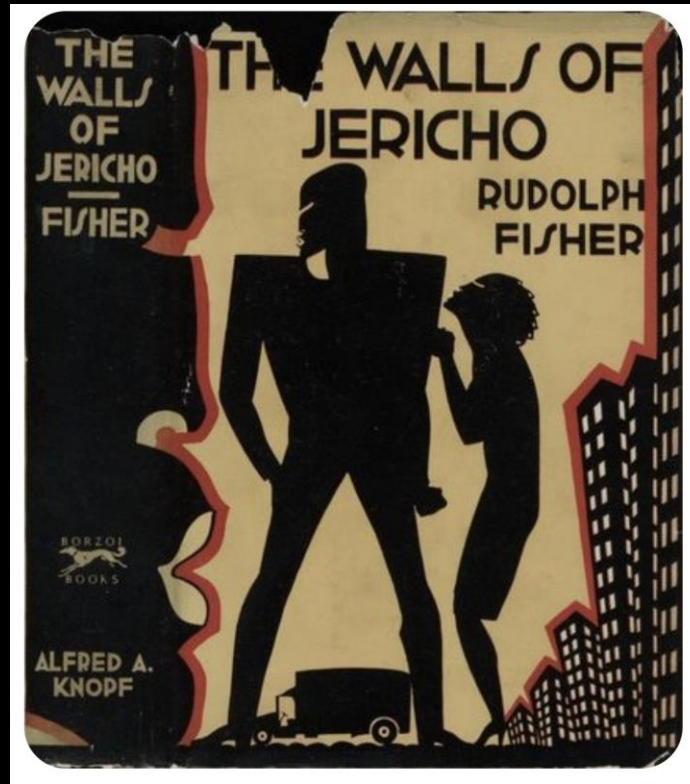
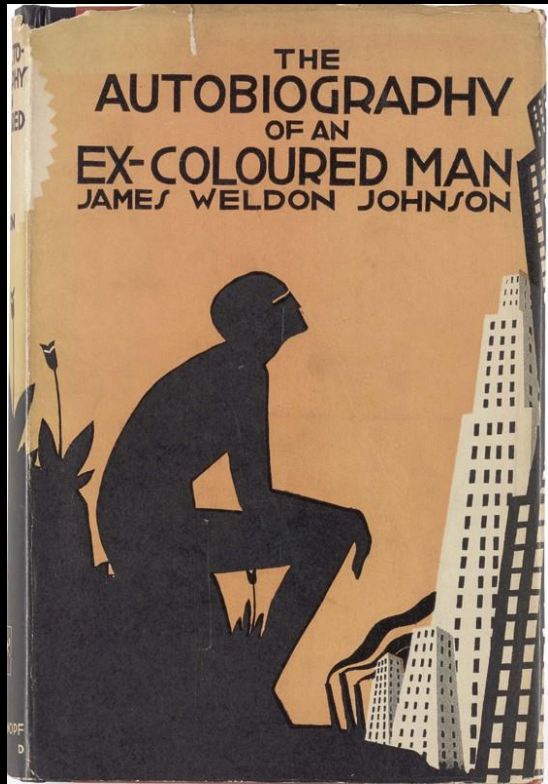
Aaron Douglas, cover illustration for *Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life*, May 1927.

Aaron Douglas, cover illustration for *The Crisis*, September 1927.

Aaron Douglas, cover illustration for *The Crisis*, November 1929.







From left to right:

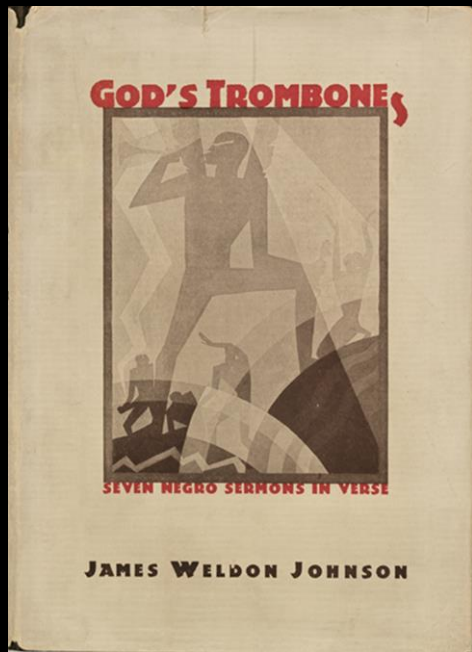
Aaron Douglas's cover illustration for James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1927).

Aaron Douglas's cover & binding illustrations for Rudolph Fisher's *The Walls of Jericho* (1928).

Aaron Douglas's cover illustration for Claude McKay's *Home to Harlem* (1928).

Aaron Douglas's cover illustration for Wallace Thurman's *The Blacker the Berry* (1929).





Clockwise from upper left:  
Aaron Douglas's cover illustration, *The Judgment Day*, for James Weldon Johnson's *God's Trombones* (1927).

Aaron Douglas, *The Prodigal Son* (from *God's Trombones*), c. 1926. Gouache on paper.

Aaron Douglas, *Creation* (from *God's Trombones*), 1927. Gouache on paper.

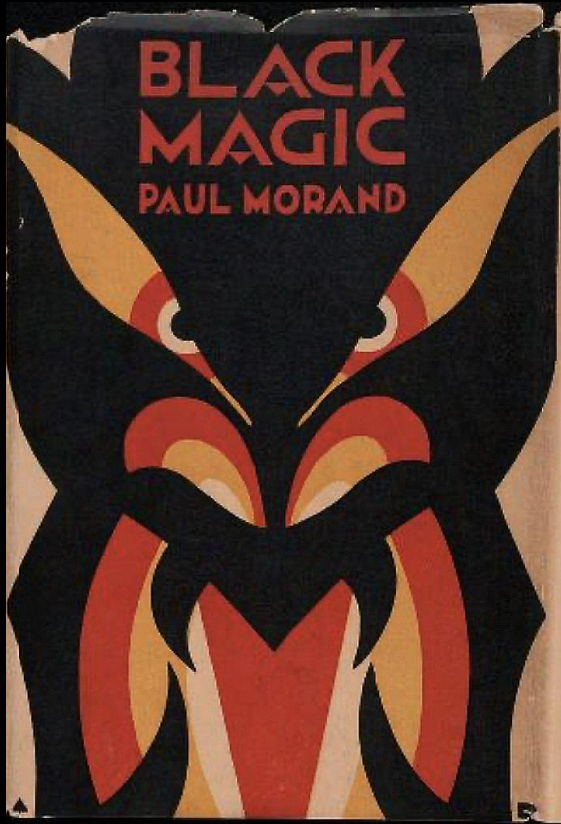
Aaron Douglas, *Go Down Death* (from *God's Trombones*), 1927. Oil on canvas.

Aaron Douglas, *Crucifixion* (from *God's Trombones*), c. 1927. Oil on canvas.

Aaron Douglas, *Let My People Go* (from *God's Trombones*), 1927. Oil on canvas.







From left to right:

Aaron Douglas, cover illustration for Paul Morand, *Black Magic* (1929).

Aaron Douglas, *Charleston*, for Paul Morand, *Black Magic*, c. 1928. Gouache and pencil on paperboard.

Aaron Douglas, *The Black Tsar*, for Paul Morand, *Black Magic*, c. 1928. gouache and pencil on paperboard.

Aaron Douglas, *Congo*, for Paul Morand, *Black Magic*, c. 1928. gouache and pencil on paperboard.





FOR  
GRACE AND JAMES WELDON JOHNSON

TOP FLOOR 228 W. 13<sup>TH</sup>

SAT. NITE. APR. 11

NINE TILL

STUDIO OF MR. CHARLES H. STUDIN

DRAWING BY AARON DOUGLAS



Left: Aaron Douglas, Party Invitation for Grace and James Weldon Johnson, c. 1928. Offset lithograph.

Above: Photograph of Mrs. Nathella Sawyer Bledsoe, Judge Frank S. Bledsoe, Aaron Douglas & Alta Sawyer Douglas, New York, c. 1930s.



Left: Carl Van Vechten, *Aaron Douglas*, 1933. Photograph.



Right: Aaron Douglas, *Dance Magic*, 1929-30. Mural in the College Room Inn, Sherman Hotel, Chicago (Destroyed).



Aaron Douglas, *Aspects of Negro Life, Panel 1: The Negro in an African Setting*, 1934. New York Public Library, New York.





Aaron Douglas, *Aspects of Negro Life, Panel 2: From Slavery to Reconstruction*, 1934. Oil on canvas. New York Public Library, New York.





Aaron Douglas, *Aspects of Negro Life, Panel 3: Idyll of the Deep South*, 1934. Oil on canvas. New York Public Library, New York.

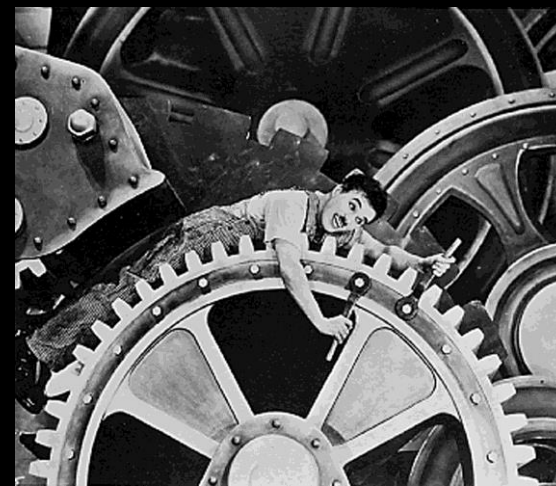




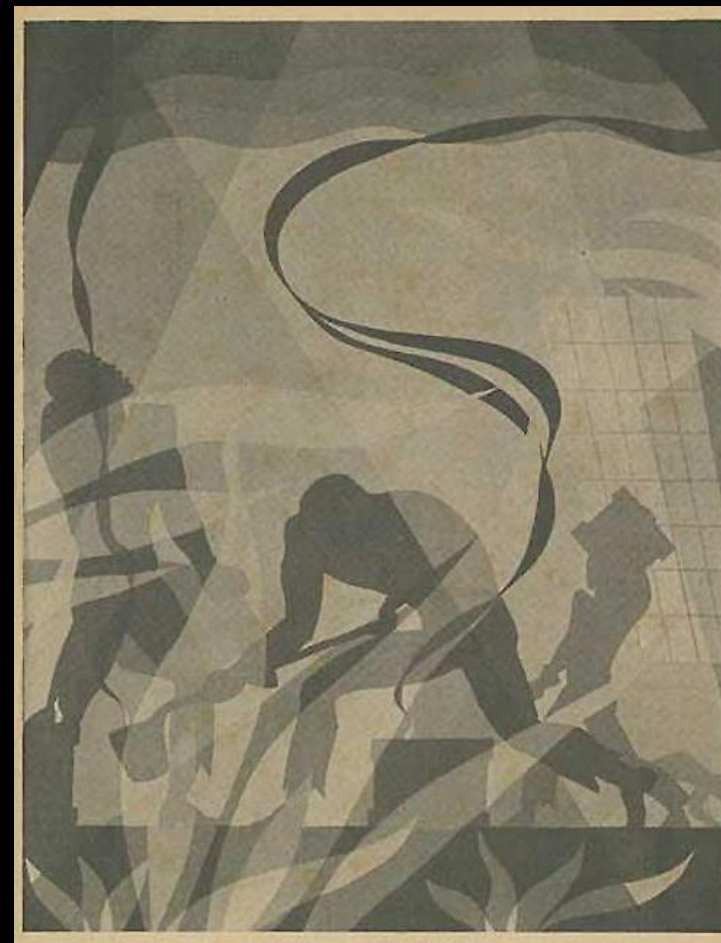
Far left: Aaron Douglas, *Aspects of Negro Life, Panel 4: Song of the Towers*, 1934. Oil on canvas. New York Public Library, New York.

Center: Photograph of Aaron Douglas showing librarian & archivist Arturo Schomburg *The Song of the Towers* (1934).

Below: Film still from *Modern Times* (USA, 1936, directed by Charles Chaplin).







Left: Aaron Douglas standing in courtyard of the Louvre Museum, Paris, 1931.

Above: Aaron Douglas, *Forge Foundry* (1931) in *La Revue du Monde Noir* (1931).





Above: Aaron Douglas, *Drama*, 1934. One of several mural installed in Fisk University's Cravath Hall, Nashville, TN.



Upper right: Aaron Douglas, *Harriet Tubman*, 1931. Oil on canvas. Bennett College, Greensboro.



Lower right: Aaron Douglas, *The Evolution of Negro Dance*, 1935. Fresco mural. Harlem Y.M.C.A., New York.





Left: Aaron Douglas, *Aspiration*, 1936. Oil on canvas. Originally exhibited in the Hall of Negro Life, Texas Centennial Exposition, Dallas.



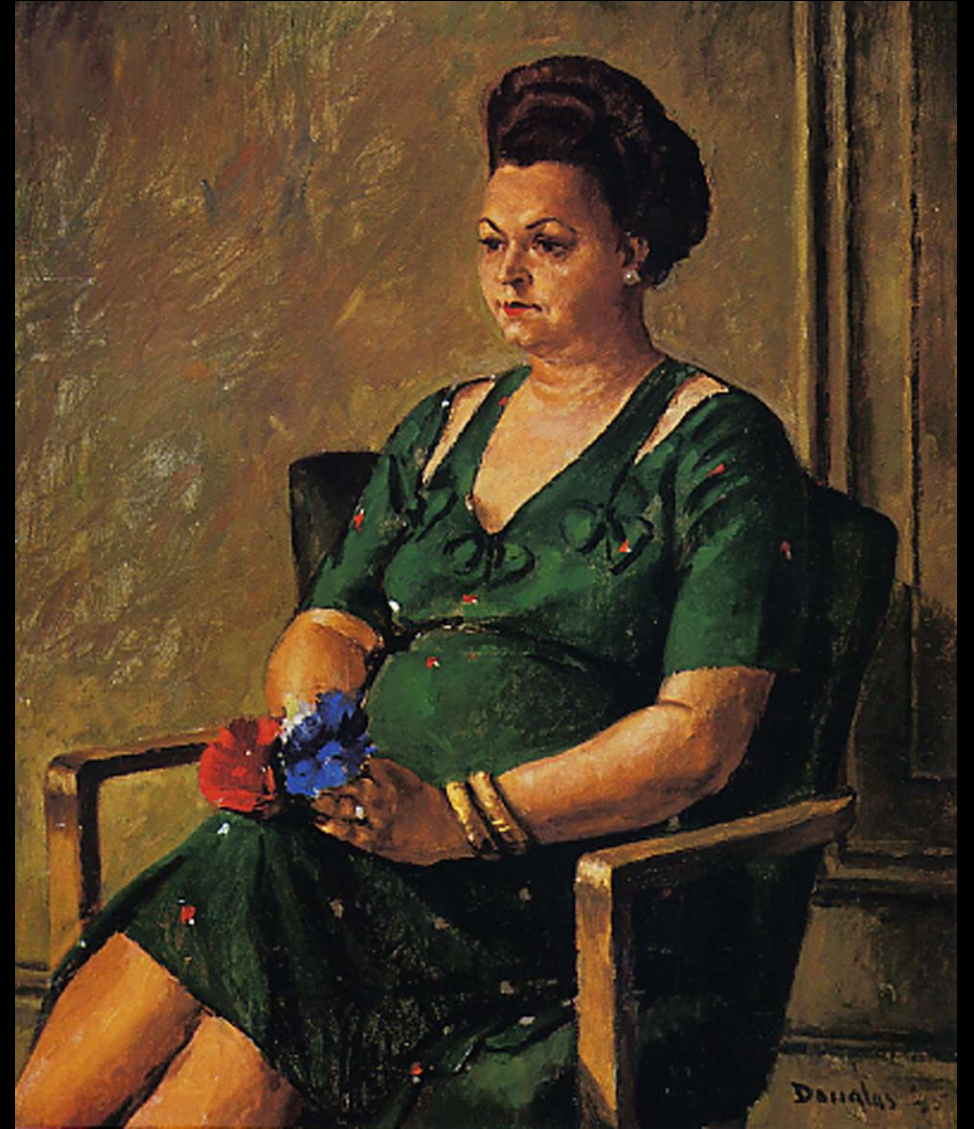
Right: Aaron Douglas, *Into Bondage*, 1936. Oil on canvas. Originally exhibited in the Hall of Negro Life, Texas Centennial Exposition, Dallas.



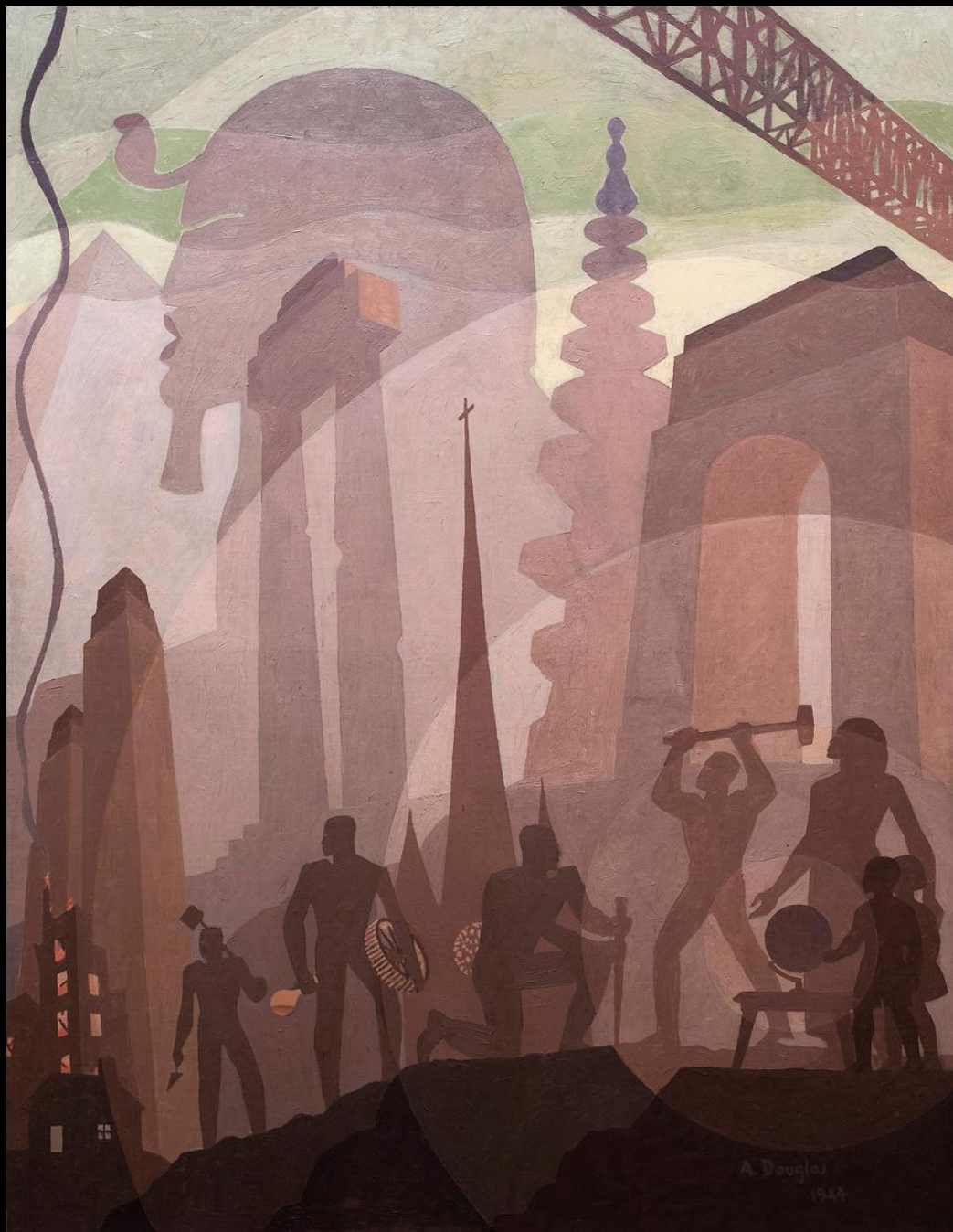


Left: Aaron Douglas, *Boy with a toy airplane*, 1938.  
Oil on canvas.

Right: Aaron Douglas, *Woman in a Green Dress*  
(Portrait sitter unknown), 1945. Oil on canvas.







Left: Aaron Douglas, *Building More Stately Mansions*, 1944. Oil on canvas.

Above: Aaron Douglas.