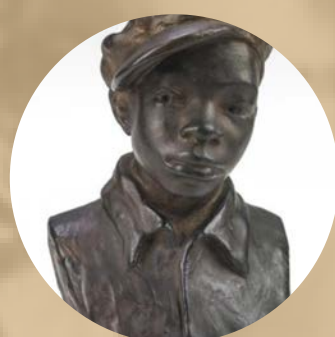


RILEY HERENDEEN & SARIT ASHKENAZI

# WOMEN IN THE WESTERN ART CANON

Celebrating overlooked black women artists/subjects from The Harlem Renaissance, Civil Rights era & Black Is Beautiful era.



1929

**AUGUSTA SAVAGE, GAMIN**

Augusta Savage's career was fostered during the Harlem Renaissance. Savage's "Gamin" sculpture shows a wise, yet bleak young boy, suggesting hardship. This boy is believed to be someone Savage had met. Some say, "The title may reflect how Savage herself felt as a young [black woman] artist in Europe, struggling to make ends meet".<sup>1</sup>

1938

**LOÏS MAILOU JONES, LES FÉTICHES**

Using imagery of overlapping masks from different African tribes, Lois Mailou Jones conveys a "mysterious spiritual dimension summoned by ritual dance". Jones' powerful painting suggests the strength and beauty of her own cultural heritage, despite existing prejudice.<sup>2</sup>



1940

**LAURA WHEELER WARING, WOMAN WITH BOUQUET**

Wheeler's works grew in popularity during the Harlem Renaissance. She often illustrated "sophisticated or dignified working-class African Americans". This painting of a confident and elegant woman counters many prevalent racial stereotypes during this time.<sup>3</sup>

1950

**LOÏS MAILOU JONES, PORTRAITS OF TWO WOMEN**

Using oil on linen canvas, Jones beautifully depicts two black women solidly standing side-by-side. Appearing both defiant and staunch, both women represent what Jones depicts as strong black women of her time, undeterred by hate and discrimination.<sup>4</sup>



1956

**GORDON PARKS, DEPARTMENT STORE**

Instead of emphasizing the demonstrations, boycotts, and brutality that "characterized the battle for racial justice", Parks highlights the ordinary moments of a family's life. Parks captures a prosaic moment of a mother and a daughter standing outside of a sign that reads "colored entrance".<sup>5</sup>

1965

**FAITH RINGGOL, SELF-PORTRAIT**

In this piece, Ringgol emphasizes the determination and power of the black woman during the rise of Black Power during the 1960's. Faith Ringgold has said, "I was trying to find my voice, talking to myself through my art."<sup>6</sup>



1965



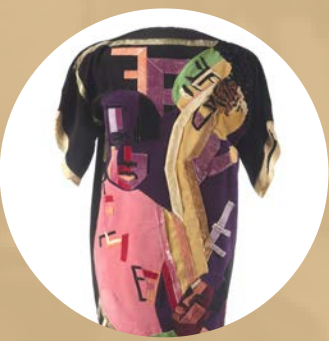
**PERRY H. KRETZ, MODELS IN EASTER BONNETS AT HARLEM FASHION SHOW**

Harlem Fashion shows began to increase in popularity in the '50s and '60s. During this time, more black people took interest in black fashion and promoted the concept of buying black. Around 300 fashion shows were put on in a year in Harlem alone.<sup>7</sup>

1968

**KWAME BRATHWAITE, MARCUS GARVEY DAY CELEBRATION IN HARLEM**

"We said, 'We've got to do something to make the women feel proud of their hair, proud of their blackness,' " Brathwaite recalled when he decided to create the Grandassa Models, named after the term "Grandassaland," which refers to Africa. These models had light to dark brown skin, full lips, and natural hair with a variety of body shapes. Brathwaite helped popularize the phrase "Black Is Beautiful" through his photography.<sup>8</sup>



1968

**JAE JARRELL, "EBONY FAMILY"**

Jae Jarrell's used fashion as a platform for protest, resistance, and expressing identity. She produced work that conveyed the pride, power, history, and energy of her communities and worked to establish a uniquely Black aesthetic, with bold colors and "a lively sense of rhythm".<sup>9</sup>

**SOURCES**

1 <https://americanart.si.edu/artist/augusta-savage-4269>

2 <https://americanart.si.edu/artwork/les-fetiches-31947>

3 <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/222525>

4 <http://www.artnet.com/artists/lo%C3%AFs-mailou-jones/portraits-of-two-women-QAVGn5fu2knMcQcGGjbluA2>

5 <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/departement-store-mobile-alabama-gordon-parks/sQFKGbsYoOhaWQ?hl=en>

6 <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/211047>

7 <https://www.crfashionbook.com/fashion/a30732699/the-history-behind-harlems-fashion-shows/>

8 <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/210701>

9 <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/03/arts/design/kwame-brathwaite-black-is-beautiful-photography.html>