

Trailblazers, Barrier Breakers

Many black artists have used their art to express their thoughts, experiences and emotions. The artworks shown, cover the period from 1867, when the civil rights movement in the USA had just formed to combat racial discrimination, up to the present day. These pioneering black artists have led the way for others to share their experiences through art.

Edmonia Lewis (c1844–1907)

Edmonia Lewis was born in New York, USA and was the first black woman to be recognised as an accomplished sculptor. The abolitionist movement greatly influenced her art.

Forever Free (1867) by Edmonia Lewis shows two people who had been enslaved but are now free. The sculpture sends a message of triumph over adversity and of hope for the future for African American people.



Forever Free

Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859–1937)

Henry Ossawa Tanner, born in Pittsburgh, USA, was the first African American painter to achieve international fame and recognition in the Fine Arts world. The lives of African American people influenced his work.

The Banjo Lesson (1893) by Henry Ossawa Tanner shows an elderly man teaching a young child the banjo, symbolising the resilience, intellect and caring nature of the once enslaved African American people.



The Banjo Lesson

Augusta Savage (1892–1962)

Augusta Savage was born in Florida, USA. She was the first African American woman to open an art gallery to showcase work by black artists. She aimed to promote black arts and community in her work.

The Harp (1939) by Augusta Savage shows the strings of a harp replaced with 12 singing African American youths, symbolising the powerful musical contribution that African American people have made throughout history.



The Harp

Gordon Parks (1912–2006)

Gordon Parks, born in Kansas, USA, became a self-taught photographer. He suffered racial abuse as a child, and so used photography to document poverty and racial segregation experienced by black people.

The Fontenelles at the Poverty Board (1967) by Gordon Parks shows a poor, black family in New York, symbolising the hardship many endured in the USA.



The Fontenelles at the Poverty Board

Elizabeth Catlett (1915–2012)

Elizabeth Catlett was born in Washington, USA. She was an activist whose art was influenced by Mexican artist's murals whose work presented public messages.

Students Aspire (1977) by Elizabeth Catlett is a relief showing two African American students. It acts as a call for cooperation and racial and gender equality.



Students Aspire

Yinka Shonibare (1962–present)

Yinka Shonibare was born in London but grew up in Nigeria. He explores the relationship between Africa and Europe, their connected history and culture, through his art.

Nelson's Ship in a Bottle (2010) by Yinka Shonibare was the first commission for Trafalgar Square by a black artist. It symbolises and celebrates the story of multiculturalism in London.



Nelson's Ship in a Bottle



Barbara Walker

(1964–present)

Barbara Walker was born in Birmingham, England. Issues of race and gender influence her work.

Vanishing Point 7 (2018) by Barbara Walker explores how the art of black people has been underrepresented in public collections of artworks through history.



Vanishing Point 7

Hurvin Anderson

(1965–present)

Hurvin Anderson was born in Birmingham, England, to Jamaican parents. The lives of Afro-Caribbean migrants living in England influence his art.

Peter's Sitters 3 (2009) by Hurvin Anderson connects his Caribbean heritage with life in England. Colour symbolises his Caribbean heritage, while the barbershop symbolises an important aspect of life in England to Afro-Caribbean immigrants.



Peter's Sitters 3

Turgo Bastien

(1968–present)

Turgo Bastien was born in Haiti in the Caribbean. He uses art to represent black and Haitian culture and teach people about the world around them.

Another Call from Africa (2009) by Turgo Bastien uses bright colours and African masks to celebrate African culture. Masks play an important spiritual and religious role in African societies and are therefore a significant feature within Turgo Bastien's work.



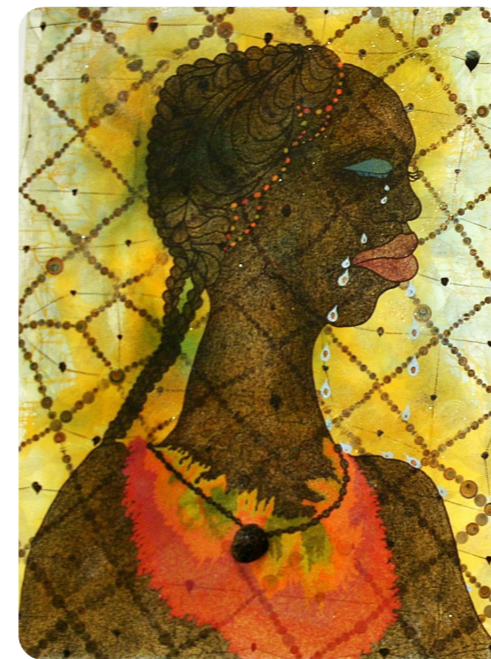
Another Call from Africa

Chris Ofili

(1968–present)

Chris Ofili was born in Manchester, England. He now lives on the island of Trinidad in the Caribbean. His art documents and celebrates the experiences of black people, including challenging racism.

No Woman, No Cry (1998) by Chris Ofili depicts Doreen Lawrence. Her son, Stephen Lawrence, was killed in a racist attack in London in 1993. Pictures of her son appear in her teardrops in the painting. The painting aimed to highlight the effect of racial discrimination, which still existed at the time of Stephen Lawrence's death.



No Woman, No Cry

Art analysis

Art analysis involves a person, the viewer, looking at a piece of art carefully and critically. A person does this by exploring aspects of the artwork, including, colour, tonal range, light sources and shadows, setting and the arrangement and dominance of objects and people. For example, if the viewer analyses tonal range, they might identify the range of dark tones, mid-tones and highlights that have been used in the artwork and why they think the artist used these tones.

The purpose of art analysis is to allow viewers to explore the different aspects of an artist's work to help them to understand why the artist created the piece and what it means.

Glossary

analysis	The act of studying something in detail.
civil rights	The rights that every person has in a society, whatever their race, sex or religion.
heritage	The features, such as traditions, beliefs and languages that belong to a society's culture from the past, which has historical importance today.
immigrant	A person who has come to live permanently in a different country.
multiculturalism	The belief that different cultures within a society are all of equal importance.
pioneer	A person who is one of the first people to do something.
racial discrimination	Unfair treatment of someone because of their race.
symbolise	To represent by symbols.
trailblazer	The first person to do something, who then inspires other people to achieve the same or similar.