



A Movement in Every Direction: Legacies of the Great Migration

Introduction to Close Looking and Upcoming Exhibition



WMA

Welcome

Merry Barnes,
Director of School and Teen Programs

WMA

What are you looking forward to
talking about during this session?

Answer in chat.

WMA

Let's take a poll.

Link in chat.

WMA

Results!
What do we know?

“Trailways, Greyhound, Train ride, shoe box with fried chicken. Communities in Chicago where you see images of successful Blackness where you share not only the bond of Blackness, but the bonds of being Black in a community that your parents & grandparents shaped and molded into the good things.”

What comes to mind when you hear “the Great Migration?”

BLACK AMERICANS AS REFUGEES FROM STATE-SPONSORED RACIAL TERROR; CONVERSELY, THE START OF SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL (E.G. JAZZ, HIP HOP, MANY OTHER BLACK CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS)

MISSISSIPPI MUSEUM OF ART
380 S. LAMAR ST., JACKSON, MS 39201

A Movement in Every Direction: Legacies of the Great Migration, organized by the Mississippi Museum of Art and the Baltimore Museum of Art, examines the profound impact of the Great Migration on the social and cultural life of the U.S. The exhibition will present new commissions by 12 acclaimed African American artists working today. We hope to see you on April 9, 2022 for the opening!

“BLACK AMERICANS AS REFUGEES FROM STATE-SPONSORED RACIAL TERROR; CONVERSELY, THE START OF SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL (E.G. JAZZ, HIP HOP, MANY OTHER BLACK CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS).”

“The movement of blacks from the South to North/Midwest/West to escape poor living conditions and bad overall treatment (oppression).”

What comes to mind when you hear “the Great Migration?”

My Grandmother moving from Louisville, MS to the West Side of Chicago. It means I have an affinity for the countryside, nature, slow living community, seeing my aunts, uncles, cousins everyday. It means Home transported but not transformed.

A Movement in Every Direction: Legacies of the Great Migration, from

“My Grandmother moving from Louisville, MS to the west side of Chicago. It means I have an affinity for the countryside, nature, slow living, community, seeing my aunts, uncles, cousins everyday. It means Home transported but not transformed.”

“When a multitude of black people moved from the south to the Midwest & the northwest for better opportunities.”

MMA

Close Looking

Romare Bearden – *The Train*,
1975

Romare Bearden (September 2, 1911 – March 12, 1988)

was an African-American artist, author, and songwriter. He worked with many types of media including cartoons, oils, and collages. Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, Bearden grew up in New York City and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and graduated from New York University in 1935.

Bearden was born in Charlotte, North Carolina. Bearden's family moved with him to New York City when he was a toddler, as part of the Great Migration.

“It is not my aim to paint about the Negro in America in terms of propaganda ... [but] the life of my people as I know it, passionately and dispassionately as Breughel. My intention is to reveal through pictorial complexities the life I know.”

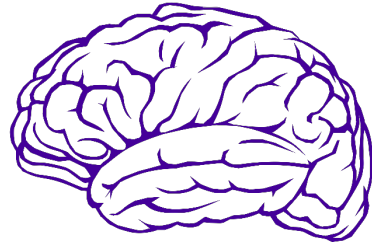
— Romare Bearden, “The Human Condition” (New York: ACA Galleries, 1991)



Instructions for Close Looking



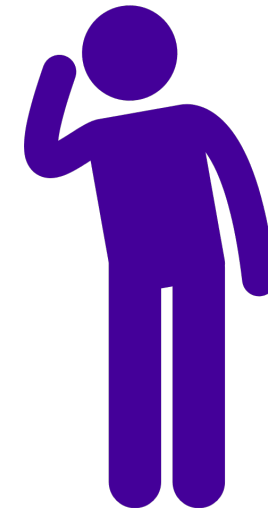
look closely



reflect on your
thoughts and
reactions



share & discuss
as a group – **be
sure to unmute
yourself**



listen to others'
perspectives



Romare Bearden (American, 1914-1988)

The Train, 1975

Color etching

22 x 29 in. (55.88 x 75.88 cm)

Collection of the Mississippi
Museum of Art

Bequest of Sara Virginia Jones

(Currently on view in the *New Symphony of Time* exhibition)



Close-ups from
Romare Bearden (American, 1914-
1988)

The Train, 1975

Color etching

22 x 29 in. (55.88 x 75.88 cm)

Collection of the Mississippi
Museum of Art

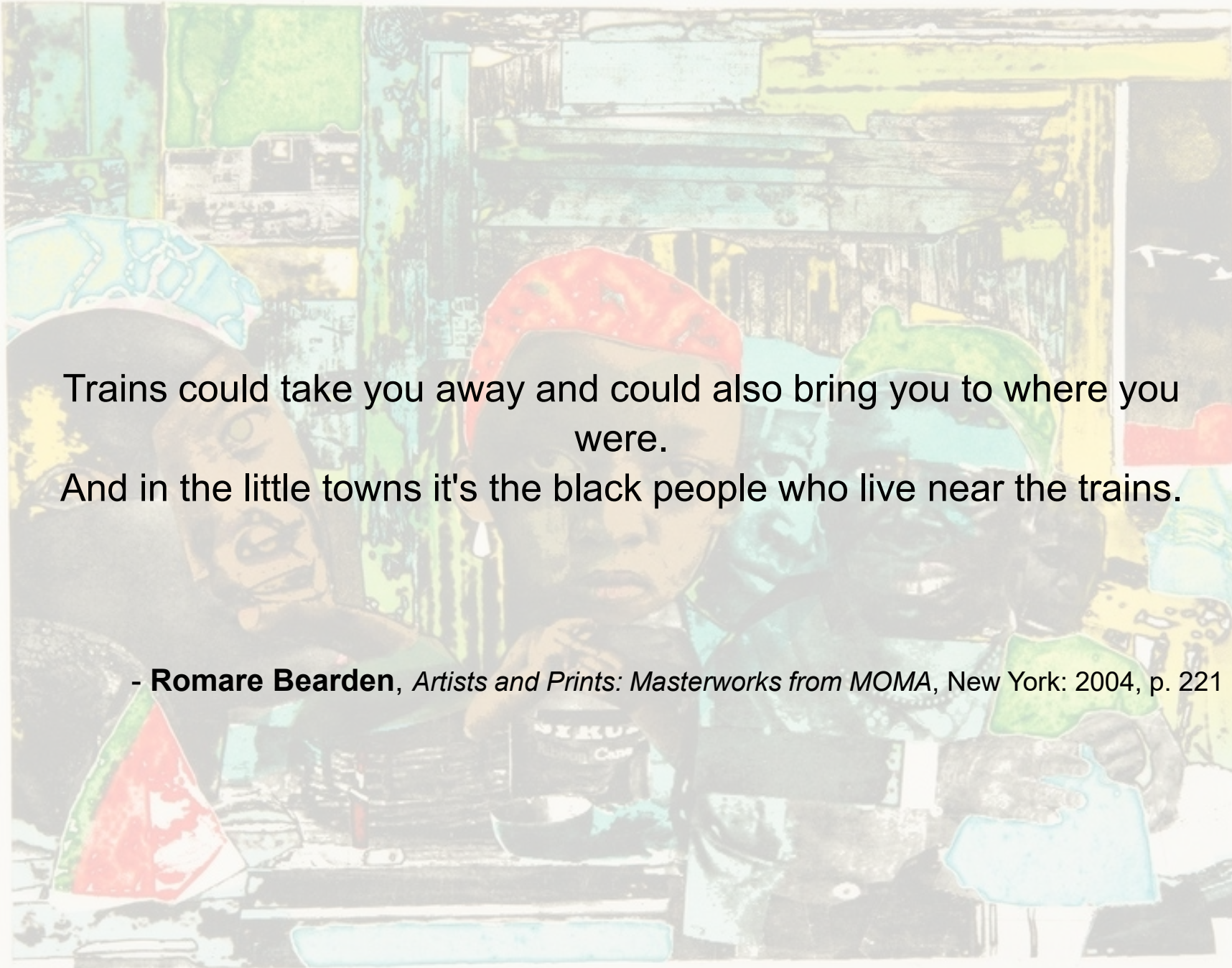
Bequest of Sara Virginia Jones

“

Trains could take you away and could also bring you to where you were.
And in the little towns it's the black people who live near the trains.

”

- **Romare Bearden**, *Artists and Prints: Masterworks from MOMA*, New York: 2004, p. 221



WMA

Now.. Why are we talking about the Great Migration and artist's depictions of it?



**A Movement in
Every Direction:**
LEGACIES OF THE GREAT MIGRATION

On view April 9, 2021 –
September 11, 2022



On April 9, the Mississippi Museum of Art (MMA) will open *A Movement in Every Direction: Legacies of the Great Migration*, which explores the profound impact of the Great Migration on the social and cultural life of the United States from historical and personal perspectives. Co-organized with the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA), the exhibition features newly commissioned works across media by 12 acclaimed Black artists, including:

Mark Bradford, Akea Brionne, Zoë Charlton, Larry W. Cook, Torkwase Dyson, Theaster Gates, Allison Janae Hamilton, Leslie Hewitt, Steffani Jemison, Robert Pruitt, Jamea Richmond-Edwards, and Carrie Mae Weems.

Through the artists' distinct and dynamic installations, *A Movement in Every Direction* reveals anew the spectrum of contexts that shaped the Great Migration and explores the ways in which it continues to reverberate today in both intimate and communal experiences. The exhibition will be open at the MMA through September 11, 2022 and will then travel to the BMA. *A Movement in Every Direction* will be accompanied by a two-volume publication that includes commissioned essays by Kiese Laymon, Jessica Lynne, Sharifa Rhodes-Pitts, and Dr. Willie J. Wright.

MMA

The Great Migration saw more than six million African Americans leave the South for destinations across the United States at the start of the 20th century and well into the 1970s. This incredible movement of people transformed nearly every aspect of Black life, in both rural towns and urban metropolises, and spurred an already flourishing Black culture.

A Movement in Every Direction provides a platform for the featured artists to explore, reflect on, and capture their own relationships to this singular historic happening, both personally and artistically. Brought together by co-curators Ryan N. Dennis (she/her), MMA Chief Curator and Artistic Director of the Museum's Center for Art and Public Exchange, and Jessica Bell Brown (she/her), BMA Associate Curator of Contemporary Art, the works offer an insightful rumination on the complexity of the Great Migration as a narrative that is still unfolding.

MMA

“We asked this group of talented artists to join us on this journey over a year ago, during a pandemic, to investigate their connections to the South. As each project has developed over the last year, informed by research, explorations, and dialogue, it has become clear that this exhibition will primarily underscore reflections on family. It will posit migration as both a historical and political consequence, but also as a choice for reclaiming one’s agency. The works examine individual and familial stories of perseverance, self-determination, and self-reliance through a variety of expressions,” said Dennis and Brown.

Many of the works in the exhibition engage with new and ongoing research by the artists, examining this history through the lens of contemporary life and establishing incisive parallels across time.

The development, strength, and resilience of community also emerged in the research and creation of individual works, and as an important thread within the exhibition. Personal and familial experiences are central to the entire exhibition, and for several artists this engagement led to the creation of particularly intimate works, including an immersive video installation exploring the disappearance and presumed death of **Carrie Mae Weems** grandfather as well as a large-scale sculptural installation by **Theaster Gates** replicating a double-wide trailer examining the interplay between the personal and the communal.

“Through this incredible spectrum of works, we hope viewers will experience *A Movement in Every Direction* as a meditation on ancestry, place, and possibility,” added Dennis and Brown.





Why is this important for you and your students?

Even though it has had a major impact on the life and culture in this country, the Great Migration is a topic not heavily covered by the CCR Standards for Mississippi.

Want to know more about how you can unpack the lasting and profound influence of the Great Migration in your classroom?

Well...



You're in luck!

MMA is partnering with MDAH and Facing History and Ourselves to offer a week-long Summer Teacher Institute this summer, July 18-22, 2022.

During this week-long institute, teachers will mirror the artist's process of being prompted to explore their family's connections to the South and any effect the Great Migration had on them. Teachers will conduct archival research to explore the Great Migration, particularly ideas about public memory, self-determination, and resilience.

The institute will introduce teachers to the historical context surrounding the Great Migration. Using this research and exploration, teachers will work to create thematic units to use in their classrooms.

Together, teachers will explore the exhibition *A Movement in Every Direction: Legacies of the Great Migration* at the Mississippi Museum of Art. Teachers will also experience *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, which is on display at the Two Mississippi Museums.



Applications go live January 12, 2022!

Workshops will be led by staff at both museums, as well as educators from Facing History and Ourselves. Facing History and Ourselves will connect the Great Migration to identity, memory, and legacy.

This workshop will welcome twenty teachers made up of both in-state and national educators. Teachers applying from states who will host *A Movement in Every Direction: Legacies of the Great Migration*, Mississippi, California, Maryland, New York, Illinois, and Michigan will receive priority. All applications are welcome and will be considered based on availability.

Educators will create materials that can be used both by themselves and teachers nationwide to introduce themes of the Great Migration to their students .

Stipends, lodging, and lunches will be covered by the institute.

Great Migration Summer Teacher Institute

Save the Date

Application live January 12, 2022

Examine the profound impact of the Great Migration July 18–22, 2022, in Jackson, MS.

email mbarnes@msmuseumart.org for more info.

