Jacob Lawrence



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出版者:

出版时间:2008-7

装帧:

isbn:9780981525013

One of the most prominent American painters of the twentieth century, Jacob Lawrence (1917-2000) worked in a highly personal manner, creating Modernist views of everyday life as well as epic narratives of American history and historical figures. His work is direct and forceful, in keeping with his lifelong conviction that art could effect social change. At the same time, it is essentially humanistic, exploring the many challenges of African-American life as a means of addressing the universality of the human experience. "Jacob Lawrence: Moving Forward, Paintings 1936-1999" celebrates the artist's long and productive career spanning more than 60 years. Beginning with lively street scenes of 1930s Harlem, when the young painter was establishing his artistic viewpoint, it highlights important examples from every decade of his working life, including a tribute to Jackie Robinson--the first African-American to play in the major leagues--and the powerful Hiroshima series, done for a reissue of John Hersey's well-known book on the horrific event. This survey concludes with some of Lawrence's final narratives of labor and leisure in his "Builders and Games" series of the 1990s. In addition to 58 images of the artist's work, this volume features an appreciation by David C. Driskell, noted artist, curator and art historian, who was a friend of Lawrence's for many decades, and an insightful overview of Lawrence's life and art by Patricia Hills, the distinguished scholar of American art.

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