

Black american artists



**ASSIGN
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At the drop of a dime, I believe that any art collector could name a prominent 19th-century artist, whether it's Vincent Van Gogh, Picasso or Henri Matisse, but names of influential black artists of that same era is not valued or established. My documentary will show this in action by exploring black American artist as it relates to the token effect and marketability, social network and the greed of white America.

The main conflict is between black American artists and the art industry. Ultimately, I want the audience to feel informed and reassured. And to understand the factors that a black American artist must overcome in their pursuit of equality in the Art Industry.

There was a time in history that you would think that Jacob Lawrence, Elisabeth Catlett, and Romare Bearden were the only black American artist. Even now, there is not an abundance of black American artist. These artists benefited from the token effect. They were expected to be an expert on the lives of all black people. People think that they represent all people and black culture; yet, they were supposed to triumph over black culture. These token artist were chosen by white America because they were not your average black person. These artist were very marketable, they were honest black people. The black person that doesn't fit the negative stereotypes of black people. Audience of other races feel a slightly less threatened by their message. They were still black enough to be mention in diversity conversations.

It's no secret that America is a place where it's not what you know it's who you know. An artist's social network helps them to succeed in the art industry without really trying. For Black Americans this tactic is not an option, they have to be an ambitious person with skills, talent, and brains to succeed. It is a matter of being in the right place at the right time and saying the right things to the right people. A prime example of this phenomenon is Basquiat. Jean-Michel Basquiat was a new black American artist in a world ran by predominantly white artists and collectors. Most of these people saw him as black American artist first, not an artist who just happened to be black. This shadowed him throughout his entire career and kept from him the fame and financial stability he deserved while still alive. It wasn't until Jean-Michel Basquiat met Andy Warhol, one of the most distinguished artists in the country and a member of the art avant guard. Andy's fame and influence were just what Basquiat needed to reach new heights in his art career. As Jean-Michel social network included the most influential friends of the time, being with them he gained fame as an artist and received more chances to show his work. Once Andy Warhol died Basquiat race and unique talent were once again held against him until he died.

In the early 1900s black artists desired only to paint landscape and portraits of white people for profits. The Harlem Renaissance started a cultural movement that cultivated African-American works, music and paintings. Black American artists use this movement to change their identity and represent their heritage and tradition with a sense of cultural pride. White American started to take notice of this collected wealth and influence of black artist as real power. There is a historical pattern of white greed

reappearing like herpes, just when black Americans start to recognize their power to actually bring about change for themselves and the black community. A great example of white America benefiting from black excellence would be the exhibit Soul of a Nation. This show is composed entirely of work by American artists but created, organized, and first exhibited in 2017 at the Tate Modern in London. It portrays black American's struggle with justice, equality, and the fight to be heard. It was brought to Arkansas's Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville. The museum was founded by Walmart Inc. heir Alice Walton. The irony in this exhibited being in Bentonville is that black America only occupies 2% of the city. The proceeds from this show, that finds financial success off the trials and tribulations of Black America, does not go back into the black community at all. These black American artists are represented by white galleries and museums and are collected by white collectors.

This story matters because I am a Black American Artist. Growing up, I don't recall ever being taught about artists that look like me, painting. I believe that this documentary is important because, it is a story that needs to be told. In this social media age it isn't surprising that, as a general trend, millennials are not buying black art the same way our parents have. I believe that because they don't understand it then they don't value it. As a result, museum and gallery visitation have decreased in recent years. With each decade, art builds on each other. Every decade is important, and the millennial generation has a lot to contribute to the art industry.