



OBSERVE

Take a few moments to look quietly at this painting. What do you notice?

RESPOND

What do you think the figures in the painting are doing? How can you tell?

CONNECT

If you were going to make a work of art that showed something from your everyday life, what would you choose? What is something you do every day?

Jacob Lawrence
"Children at Play," 1947.
Tempera on hardboard panel.

georgiamuseum.org



GEORGIA MUSEUM of ART

UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA

ABOUT THIS ARTIST

“The human subject is the most important thing. My work is abstract in the sense of having been designed and composed, but it is not abstract in the sense of having no human content.”

— Jacob Lawrence

Jacob Lawrence was born in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in 1917. His mother moved to New York City for work, and Lawrence and his two younger siblings grew up in foster homes and settlement houses in Pennsylvania. When Lawrence was 13, his mother moved him and his siblings to Harlem in New York City. She sent them to Utopia House, a community center with an after-school arts program run by Black artist Charles Alston. Lawrence was around during the Harlem Renaissance. The Harlem Renaissance was a flourishing of Black art, music and culture in the Harlem

neighborhood of New York City. He attended the American Artists School on a scholarship, then worked in the easel painting division of the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA), a government program that employed artists during the Great Depression. While working for the WPA, he completed two narratives of 30 panels each about Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman.

His best known series of paintings is called “The Migration of the Negro.” Its 60 panels show the mass exodus of African Americans

who moved North after the failure of Reconstruction in search of a better life. Lawrence’s parents were among those who migrated in the first wave, between 1916 and 1919. The series brought Lawrence great acclaim when he was in his mid-20s. Lawrence married Gwendolyn Knight, a fellow artist, in 1941 and served in the U.S. Coast Guard in World War II. He taught at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, the Pratt Institute in New York and the University of Washington in Seattle. He died in 2000.

ABOUT THIS WORK OF ART

In “Children at Play,” painted in Harlem, Lawrence shows an everyday city scene. With bright, primary colors and flattened forms, the painting shows a group of young girls playing Squares, a game similar to hopscotch. The faces of the children are similar to African masks. Lawrence was inspired by the people he saw around him in Harlem, and he often depicted everyday scenes in his community.



MUSEUM INFORMATION



THE MUSEUM IS FREE TO VISIT. It’s open on weekends and late on Thursday nights. Have you ever been to an art museum? What was your favorite work of art that you saw there?

A man named Alfred Heber Holbrook started the Georgia Museum of Art. He donated 100 paintings to start our collection. Now we have about 18,000 objects, including paintings, drawings, sculptures and even furniture. What do you collect?

Holbrook believed in the idea of “art for everyone.” He used to put paintings in the trunk of his car. Then he would drive all over the state to share them with anyone who crossed his path. How do you share your art with your school and community?

CREATE

For more information and activity suggestions about this painting:



TEACHING PACKET



ART AT HOME ACTIVITY