

## IMPRINTED ILLUSTRATING RACE

Exhibition available for travel, organized by Norman Rockwell Museum and co-curated by Robyn Phillips-Pendleton and Stephanie Haboush Plunkett.

### *Imprinted: Illustrating Race*

Replicated for mass audiences, illustration is at once ubiquitous and hidden in plain sight. Imprinted upon our hearts and minds, often without our realization, published imagery can uplift and can also be deployed to reinforce negative stereotypes and perceptions. *Imprinted: Illustrating Race* explores historical racial imagery drawn from popular culture and advertising, and celebrates the concerted efforts of twentieth and twenty-first century artists and illustrators to shift the cultural narrative with positive, inclusive imagery emphasizing full agency and equity for all. *Imprinted* has sparked considerable public interest and dialogue about the ways that art and systems of publishing have helped to frame public opinion, and how art can be a force for change.

### Exhibition Content

- Approximately 200 original artworks, artifacts, published illustration tearsheets, and advertisements, broadsides, trade cards, and other materials.
- Interpretive materials including text panels, labels, audio guide, and a video featuring interviews with exhibition curators, advisors, and catalogue writers.



Emory Douglas (b. 1943)  
*Portrait of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, 1993  
Illustration for *The Sun-Reporter*, 1993  
Collection of Emory Douglas

### Publication

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue, published by Norman Rockwell Museum, and designed by Hollis King, featuring essays by noted scholars and curators.

**Space Requirements:** Approximately 3,000 sq. feet

**Exhibition Fee:** \$45,000 for approximately a 12-week period

### Tour Availability:

Spring 2026

Summer 2026

## EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

### I. Historical Perspectives

The exhibition opens with an examination of the history of racial stereotypes in illustration, sanctioned in publishing from 1590 to the early 1900s. The roots of damaging and provocative representations of race through the construction of cultural identities of African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and immigrants from across the world, and the role of illustration as a powerful vehicle in the process is explored. Examples of the pervasive effects of blatant and implied negativity about race and culture in the pictorial press, on illustrated trade cards, advertisements, product labels, broadsides and posters, and literature, in establishing long-lasting attitudes toward race, are presented in this section.

Illustrations from *Harper's Weekly* and *The Saturday Evening Post*, along with a range of propagandistic advertising campaigns, including the Cream of Wheat and Aunt Jemima brands, reflect the prevalent demeaning portrayals of people of color before, during, and after the Civil War. In an 1853 following his visit to New York City, William J. Wilson wrote to Frederick Douglass commenting upon the lack of "distinguished black" images and figures in the galleries, concluding, "we must begin to tell our own story, write our own lecture, paint our own picture, chisel our own bust."

Thomas Nast (1840-1902)

*Emancipation of the Negroes - The Past and the Future*, 1863

Illustration for *Harper's Weekly*, January 24, 1863

Norman Rockwell Museum Collection



## II. Illustrating Change: The Harlem Renaissance through World War II

*Illustrating Change* focuses on the significant contributions of illustrators of the Harlem Renaissance, an intellectual, social, and artistic movement that took place in Harlem, as well as new African American cultural expressions across urban areas in the Northeast and Midwest United States, affected by the Great Migration, which brought hundreds of thousands of African Americans to Northern cities in search of relief from systemic economic, racial and social oppression in the post-Civil War South. The Harlem Renaissance ushered in a new focus on African American arts. Illustrated images in magazines and books, and on posters and murals called attention to significant causes, cultural traditions, and artistic styles.

Artists associated with the movement conveyed a rising consciousness of inequality and discrimination, and an interest in the rapidly changing modern world, many experiencing a freedom of expression through the arts for the first time.

This era also made unprecedented opportunities available for female artists, and the new African American magazines of the time were the best prospects for African American women to publish their work.

## III. Illustration, Race, and Responsibility: 1950s to Now

*Illustration, Race, and Responsibility: 1950s to Now* explores activism through art from the Civil Rights movements of the mid-20th century to the present day's continued conflict around confronting racism. Recognizing that illustration and mass media had established divisive narratives, illustrators, editors, publishers, and advertisers became more aware of their responsibility to feature equitable and authentic representations of race.

This section highlights the art of noted illustrators who have worked proactively to create respectful and equitable images to convey a sense of hope and cultural pride for a new generation beginning with the Civil Rights Movement and moving forward to the newspaper, periodical, picture book, and digital images of today.



Lois Mailou Jones (1905-1998)  
*The Picture-Poetry Book*, 1935  
Frontispiece for *The Picture Poetry Book*  
by Gertrude Parthenia McBrown  
Collection of Findlay University's Mazza  
Museum, Findlay, Ohio



Rudy Gutierrez  
*John Coltrane Spirit Flight*, 2012  
Illustration for *Spirit Seeker:*  
*John Coltrane's Musical Journey*  
by Gary Golio. Collection of  
Rudy Gutierrez



Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)  
*Murder in Mississippi*, 1965.  
Unpublished illustration for  
"Southern Justice," *Look*,  
June 29, 1965. Oil on canvas  
Norman Rockwell Museum,  
NRM.1978.07

# IMPRINTED

## ILLUSTRATING RACE

### ABRIDGED CHECKLIST

#### Historical Perspectives

Top Right Arthur Burdett Frost (1858-1921)

*Black and White*, c.1890

Eisenstat Collection of American Illustration,  
Courtesy of Alice Carter and Courtney Granner

Bottom Left Guernsey Moore (1874-1925)

*Uncle Sam: Americanization*, 1921

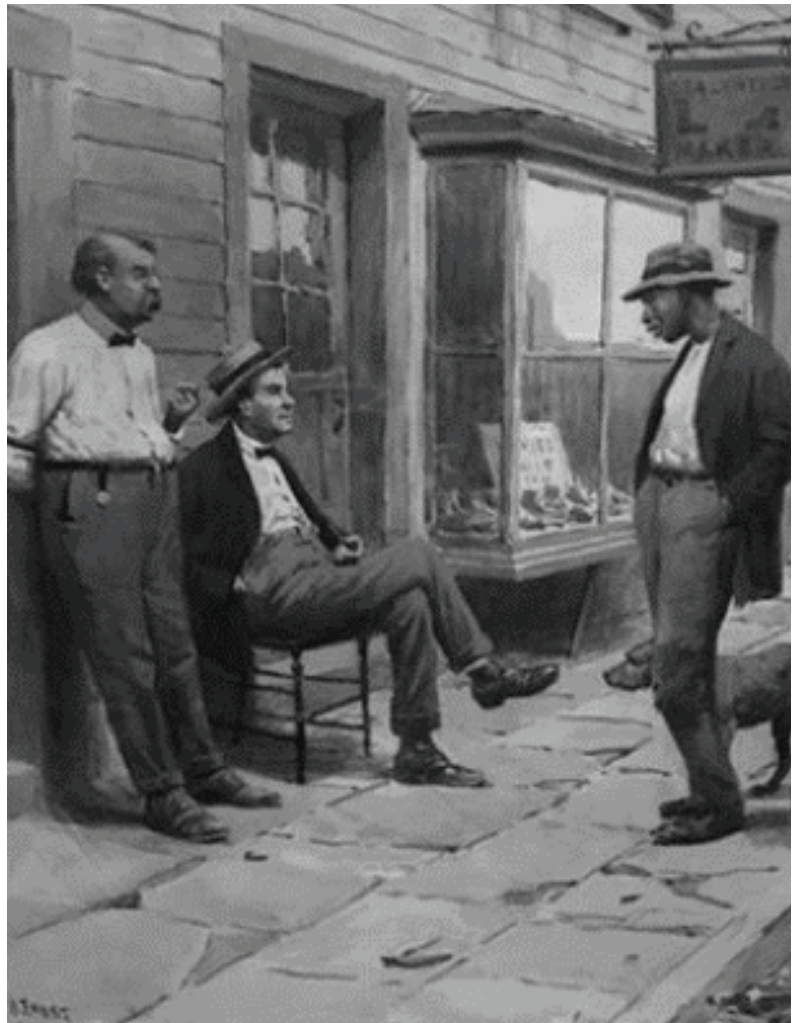
Illustration for "The Comedy of Americanization"  
by Katherine Gerould, *The Saturday Evening Post*,  
October 29, 1921

Kelly Collection of American Illustration Art

Bottom Right Edward V. Brewer (1883-1971)

*His Bodyguard*, 1921

Cream of Wheat advertisement,  
*The Saturday Evening Post*, November 19, 1921  
Illustrated Gallery Collection





## Illustrating Change: The Harlem Renaissance through World War II

Top Left Gwendolyn Bennett (1902-1981)  
Cover illustration for *Opportunity*, July 1926

Bottom Left Jacob Lawrence (1917-2000)  
*South African Gold Miners*, 1946  
Illustration for *Fortune*, October 1946  
Collection of the Flint Institute of Arts, Michigan.  
Museum purchase with a grant from the  
Harvey J. Mallery Charitable Trust

Top Right Ahmed Samuel Milai (1908-1970)  
*Facts About the Negro: Marie Laveau III*, 1966  
Illustration for *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 2, 1966  
Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum,  
Ohio State University, CGA.AC.M2.144

## Illustration, Race, and Responsibility

Bottom Left Charles White (1918-1979)

*Wanted Poster Series #17*, 1971

Flint Institute of Arts, Flint, Michigan.

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. B. Morris Pelavin, 1971.43

Bottom Right Charles Lilly (b. 1949)

*Malcolm X*, 1973

*The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

(As Told to Alex Haley), Grove Press, 1974;

Ballantine Books, 1974-2019

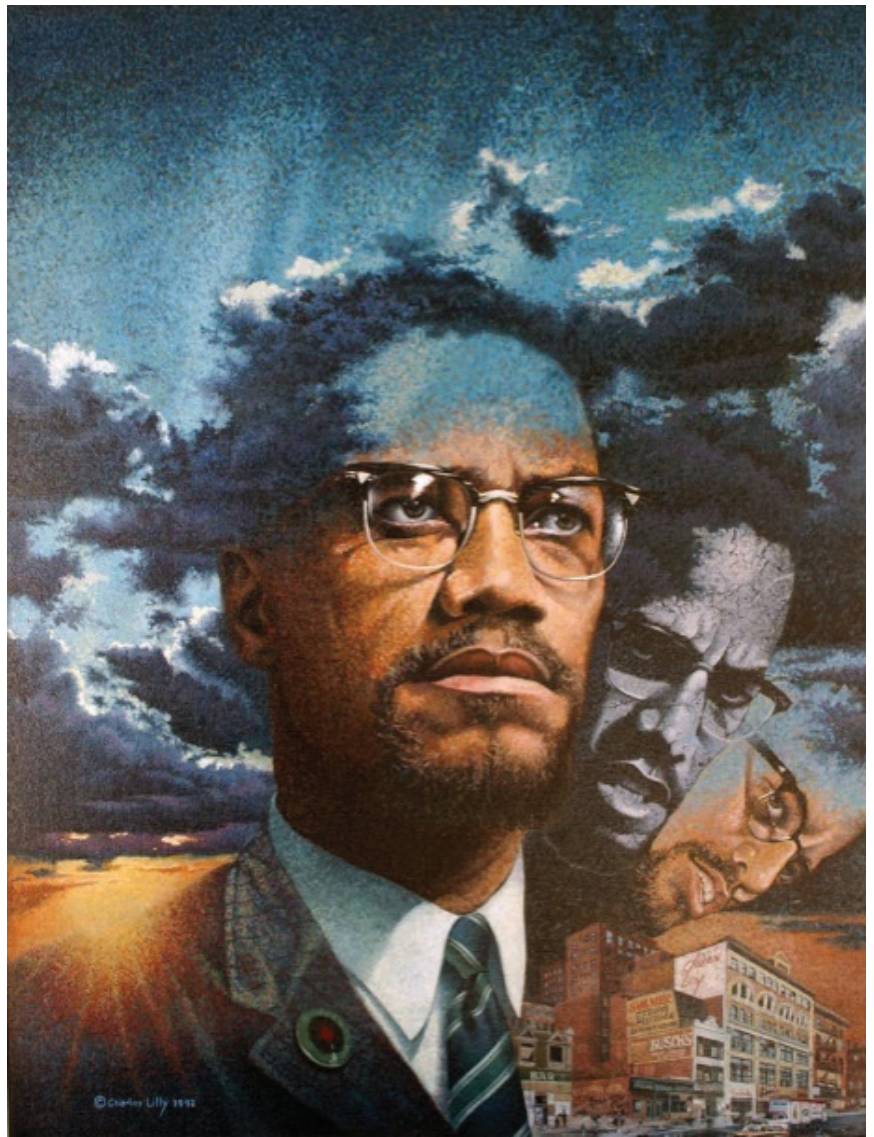
Norman Rockwell Museum Collection

Top Right Shadra Strickland (b. 1977)

*Today I Saw a Bird Outside My Window*, 2017

Illustration for *Bird* by Zetta Elliot

Collection of Shadra Strickland



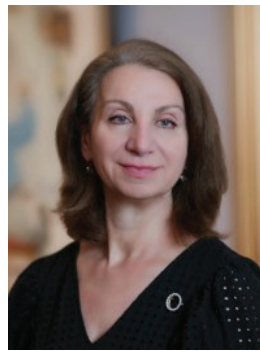
Please note that the exhibition checklist is still being developed and considered confidential until further notice.

## EXHIBITION CURATORS



**Robyn Phillips-Pendleton** is Professor of Visual Communications in the Department of Art and Design at the University of Delaware, Newark. A practicing illustrator, designer, and educator, she has exhibited her work in national and international exhibitions and is an artist for the United States Air Force Artist Program. *Imprinted: Illustrating Race* is inspired by

Phillips-Pendleton's scholarship, including her essay, "Race, Perception, and Responsibility in Illustration," which appears in *A Companion to Illustration* (edited by Alan Male, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2019). *Homework for Breakfast* is her most recent illustrated picture book.



**Stephanie Haboush Plunkett** is the Deputy Director and Chief Curator of the Norman Rockwell Museum. She has organized many exhibitions focused on the art of Norman Rockwell and the field of illustration, and leads the Rockwell Center for American Visual Studies, the first scholarly institute devoted to illustration. "The

Shifting Postwar Marketplace: Illustration in the United States and Canada, 1940-1970" in *History of Illustration; Drawing Lessons from the Famous Artists School: Classic Techniques and Expert Tips from the Golden Age of Illustration; Enduring Ideals: Rockwell, Roosevelt & the Four Freedoms; Norman Rockwell: Drawings, 1911 to 1973; and Tony Sarg: Genius at Play* are recent publications.

## EXHIBITION CONTACTS

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## NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD



**Michele H. Bogart, Ph.D.** is Professor Emerita of Art History and American visual culture studies at Stony Brook

University, where she taught from 1982 to 2020. She is the author of *Artists, Advertising, and the Borders of Art* (1995); *Public Sculpture and the Civic Ideal in New York City, 1890-1930* (1997); *The Politics of Urban Beauty: New York and Its Art Commission* (2006); and *Sculpture in Gotham: Art and Urban Renewal in New York* (2018).



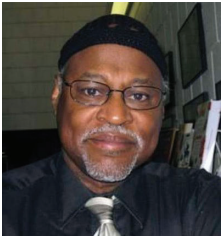
**Heather Campbell Coyle, Ph.D.** is Chief Curator and Curator of American Art at the Delaware Art

Museum. Heather has organized many exhibitions including *Seeing the City: Sloan's New York; Howard Pyle: American Master Rediscovered; and Gertrude Käsebier's Photographs of the Eight: Portraits for Promotion*. She is a Rockwell Center for American Visual Studies Fellow and the editor of *Fashion, Circus, Spectacle: Photographs by Scott Heiser*.



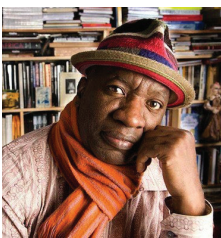
**Karen Fang, Ph.D.** is associate professor in the Department of English at the University of Houston, where

her research and teaching interests center upon surveillance, narrative, imperial and postcolonial culture, and comparative global modernities. She is the author or editor of several studies on Hong Kong and Asian film and the author of *Arresting Cinema: Surveillance in Hong Kong Film* (2017) and *Surveillance in Asian Cinema: Under Eastern Eyes* (2017). Her research also focuses on Chinese American illustrator Tyrus Wong, who was instrumental in the production of Walt Disney's *Bambi*.



**William H. Foster III** is a retired Professor of English at Naugatuck Valley Community College in Connecticut. He is an expert comics commentator for CNN News and National Public Radio and has worked with the Words and Pictures Museum

of Fine Sequential Art and the Connecticut Historical Society on projects relating to African Americans in comics and books. He is the author of *Looking for a Face Like Mine* (2005) and *Dreaming of a Face Like Ours* (2020), and was featured in the PBS documentary, *Superheroes: A Never-Ending Battle*.



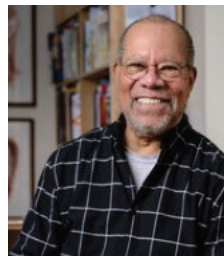
**Hollis King** is the exhibition catalogue designer for *Imprinted: Illustrating Race*, and former vice-president and creative director of the Verve Music Group, the largest jazz record label in the world. He has received numerous achievement awards as well as five Grammy nominations. Currently, he leads his own creative company and undertakes a wide range of public projects.

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**Theresa Leininger-Miller, Ph.D.** is Professor of Art History at University of Cincinnati. Her publications include *New Negro Artists in Paris: African American Painters and Sculptors in the City of Light, 1922-1934* (2001); essays in *Deborah Grant; Harlem Renaissance; Black Paris; Paris Connections: African American Artists in Paris*; and *Picture Cincinnati in Song*. She is a Rockwell Center Fellow and the recipient of awards from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Georgia O’Keeffe Museum Research Center, Kress and Luce Foundations, and Smithsonian Institution.

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**Jerry Pinkney** (1939-2021) was an award-winning artist who began his creative journey in the field of illustration in 1960. The recipient of a Caldecott Medal, Caldecott Honor Medals, Coretta Scott King Awards, and Coretta Scott King Honor Awards, Pinkney received many commendations for his outstanding body of work, including a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society of Illustrators and the Artist Laureate Award from the Norman Rockwell Museum. *A Place to Land: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Speech that Inspired a Nation*, *The Old African*, *John Henry*, and *The Lion and the Mouse* are among his many illustrated books.

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**Cherene Sherrard-Johnson, Ph.D.** is the E. Wilson Lyon Professor of Humanities and Chair of English at Pomona College, and for twenty years, she taught at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Her research focuses on Black female representation in American literature and visual culture, and her publications include *A Companion to the Harlem Renaissance* (2015) and *Dorothy West’s Paradise: A Biography of Class and Color* (2012). Sherrard-Johnson is also the author of two poetry collections, *Vixen* and *Grimoire*, published by Autumn House Press.

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**Michelle Joan Wilkinson, Ph.D.** is Curator of Architecture and Design at the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of African American History and Culture. She co-curated two inaugural exhibitions: *A Century in the Making: Building the National Museum of African American History and Culture* and *A Changing America: 1968 and Beyond*. Her research on architectural heritage in the Anglophone Caribbean has been presented to international audiences in Suriname, England, India, and the United States. Wilkinson’s recent research explores issues of representation in architectural renderings.

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