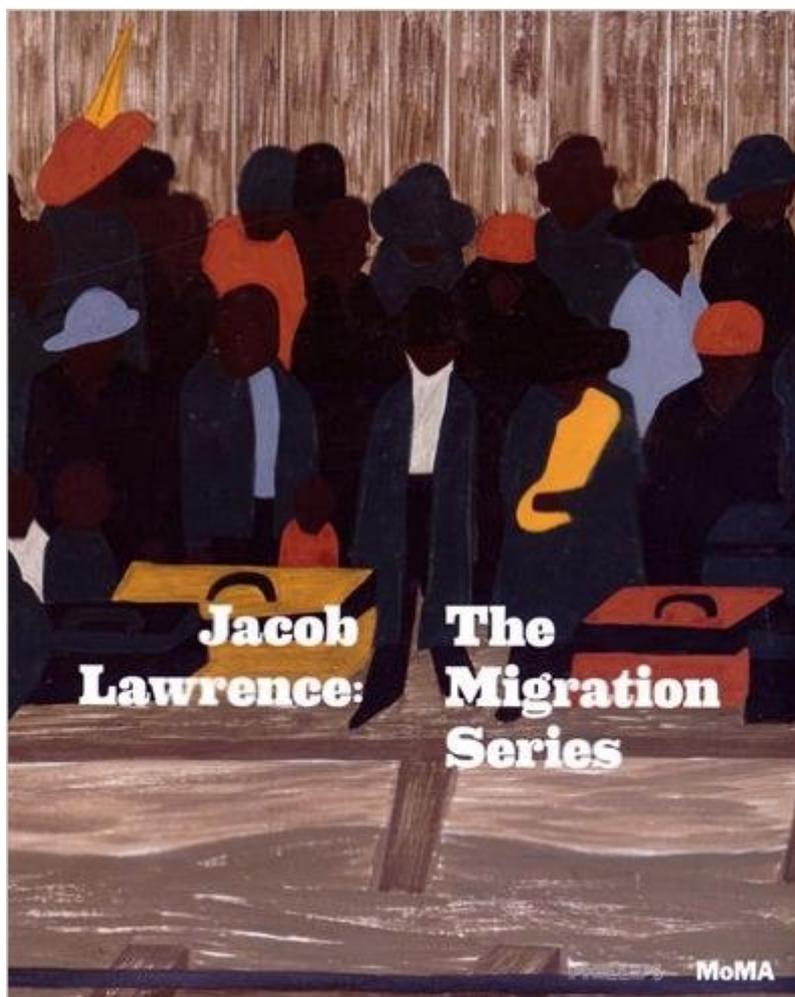


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# Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series



## Synopsis

In 1941, Jacob Lawrence, then just 23 years old, completed a series of 60 small tempera paintings with text captions about the Great Migration, the mass movement of black Americans from the rural South to the urban North that began in 1915. Within months of its making, the Migration Series was divided between The Museum of Modern Art (even-numbered panels) and the Phillips Memorial Gallery (odd-numbered panels). The work has since become a landmark in the history of African American art, a monument in the collections of both institutions and a crucial example of the way in which history painting was radically reimagined in the modern era. In 2015 and 2016, the panels will be reunited in exhibitions at The Museum of Modern Art (*One-Way Ticket: Jacob Lawrence's Migration Series and Other Works*) and at The Phillips Collection (*Jacob Lawrence's Migration Series*). This catalogue grounds Lawrence's Migration Series in the cultural and political debates that shaped the young artist's work and highlights its continued resonance for artists and writers today. An essay by Leah Dickerman situates the series within contemporary discussions about black history and an artist's social responsibilities in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Elsa Smithgall traces the acquisition and exhibition history of the Migration Series. Short commentaries on each panel explore Lawrence's career and technique, and the social history of the Migration. The catalogue also debuts ten poems commissioned from acclaimed poets that respond to the Migration Series. Elizabeth Alexander, honored as the poet at President Obama's first inauguration, introduces the section.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have Jacob Lawrence prints in my home and was delighted to have a collection of them in two formats: hardback and paperback. The books were especially important, because my grandchildren were coming to visit and have always been intrigued by the pictures. I gave the paperback to them to take home. The colors and representations captivate them. My grandson loves the story of John Henry who had been introduced to him by his father and quickly identified the pictures in the books that he could associate with John Henry. My granddaughter wants to be an artist someday, and so spends a great deal of her time drawing forms and shapes. Jacob Lawrence's use of color to suggest form and shape was ideal for her. For me, the pictures are reminiscent of the stories I heard as a child and the events that I witnessed. For these reasons Jacob Lawrence's work has always resonated with me. Of course his talent and skill as an artist are the basis for any consideration of his work.

This book is magnificent, and by giving the reproductions enough space to heighten the simplicity and even sparseness of the lives of the rural black Southerners who trekked north in search of economic opportunity and relief from the fear that Jim Crow instilled, this volume is a great aesthetic achievement.

This is a wonderful series of paintings on the Great Migration of African-Americans who moved from the old Confederacy to the north and west in enormous numbers between 1915 and 1965. The full series is seldom seen as a whole and this book, with excellent reproductions, is a great way to do so. It could usefully be read in conjunction with "The Warmth of Other Suns" by Isabel Wilkerson.

A beautiful book recording the art and writing of Jacob Lawrence, whose mother and father were part of the Great Migration of blacks to the North (1940s-1970s) searching for opportunities, and a more human life, denied them in the South. His parents settled in Harlem. Others in this important piece of American history settled in Chicago, Los Angeles, St Louis, etc. Lawrence's paintings are small, done on wood boards in vivid colors and depict many aspects of this great migratory wave; they are vibrant narrations, as are his words, of this important and tragically unfulfilled chapter in American history. I highly recommend it.

Wonderful collection of seldom seen art. I had it on my coffee table for less than a week before a coworker borrowed it. Now there are copies of some of the pictures hanging around the soft drink

machine and even in the front hallway. Excellent.

A marvelous book from a national treasure. I saw the entire series at MoMA in NYC June 2015. The entire series is on view there until Sept, after that, the other half of the panels go back to the Phillips Collection in DC. The book is wonderful to look at but obviously it cannot capture the life in the original art. It is a nice way to relive the actual experience of going through the exhibit. Definitely buy the book and go see the exhibit.

It is a wonderful depiction of migration of Americans from one part of the country to other areas where there were promises of a better life and living conditions. The presentation is simply done with beautiful colors woven into a presentation of social conflict, abuse and unequal opportunities. The accompanying descriptions of each scene tell a powerful story of the country

beautiful. purchased prior to visiting the philips collection.

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