

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
NEW YORK 19

11 WEST 53rd STREET
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900
CABLES: MODERNART, NEW-YORK

SARAH NEWMAYER, PUBLICITY DIRECTOR

October 3, 1944.

TO City Editors
Art Editors

Dear Sirs:

You are invited to come or send a representative to

Press Preview of

PAINTINGS BY JACOB LAWRENCE
Migration of the Negro, series of 60
paintings depicting the movement of the
Negro population Northward since the time
of World War I; and new paintings made
while in service with the U. S. Coast Guard.

on Tuesday, October 10
2 to 6 P.M.

at The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53 Street

The exhibition will open to the public Wednesday, October 11,
and will remain on view through November 5.

For further information please telephone me at Circle 5-8900.

Sincerely yours,

Sarah Newmeyer
Sarah Newmeyer
Publicity Director

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PAINTINGS BY LEADING NEGRO ARTIST SHOWN AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

A Negro's contribution in terms of art to an understanding of this country's racial problem will be presented in the Auditorium Galleries of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, on Wednesday, October 11, when the Museum opens the exhibition of Paintings by Jacob Lawrence. To remain on view through November 5, the exhibition consists of a series of sixty paintings, Migration of the Negro, depicting the movement of the Negro population Northward since the time of World War I; and eight new paintings made since the artist has been in service with the United States Coast Guard.

Preceding the opening of the exhibition to the public, the Museum held a private preview and a reception for Coast Guardsman Lawrence, Sp. 3C (PR) on Tuesday afternoon. At the reception, held in the penthouse of the Museum, the United States Coast Guard Quartet sang. This famous quartet, composed of two colored and two white men, is often heard over the radio networks. It is headed by Homer Smith, Boatswain's Mate 2/c, who was the leader of a noted radio quartet for many years. Other members are Thomas Lockard, Storekeeper, 2/c, Los Angeles Opera Company star; James O. Lewis, Storekeeper 3/c, who was starred in Bill Robinson's Hot Mikado; and Martin Boughan, Yeoman 3/c, Gilbert and Sullivan Opera soloist, who for several seasons starred with the Chicago Opera Company.

Coast Guardsman Lawrence paints facts, not propaganda. In spite of the stark simplification of forms and bold contrast of primary colors that give so much strength both to his Migration series and to his more recent paintings, his pictorial statements are quiet, even tempered, non-inflammatory. His pictures do not mount a soap box or preach a sermon. Yet almost imperceptibly his Coast Guard paintings suggest the gradual beginnings of a solution to the problem so movingly portrayed in the Migration series.

The earlier series, painted in 1940-41 on a grant from the Rosenwald Foundation, depicts the poverty-stricken, fear-ridden existence of the Negroes in the South; their hopeful migration to the labor-starved markets of the North in World War I; and the conditions they met there--disillusionment because of segregated, overcrowded districts, fear because of occasional race riots, yet on the whole a step forward because they could exercise their right to the ballot and their children's right to an education.

In Lawrence's Coast Guard pictures both races face the same fundamental problem--the war. Colored and white men mingle in

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recreational sports on deck, eat together, work together. Colored and white hands reach out with equal eagerness at mail call. Death and injury play no favorites, and all Uncle Sam's nephews rate the same pay in their non-racial classifications.

Half of the sixty paintings in the Migration series are owned by the Phillips Memorial Gallery in Washington and half by the Museum of Modern Art which has been circulating the entire series to museums, art galleries and colleges throughout the country during the past two years. Although the series particularly concerns the migration of Negroes to the North in World War I, it is extremely pertinent today because of the similar labor shortage brought about by World War II.

The Migration pictures were shown in May 1943 at the Portland (Oregon) Art Museum at a time when there were severe racial difficulties in the Kaiser shipyards. With the aid of a prominent Negro organization the Portland Museum arranged a forum for discussion of the immediate problems of World War II against the background of pictures which so understandingly portrayed the same problems during World War I. The forum produced good results.

Jacob Lawrence, born September 7, 1917 in Atlantic City, joined the United States Coast Guard in October 1943. He went in as a Steward's Mate but through the aid and encouragement of the Captain of the ship, Lt. Commander Carlton Skinner, found time to do some painting. While in the Service he has turned in seventeen paintings, all of Coast Guard activities and all in his favorite medium, gouache. Recently transferred to the Public Relations Branch of the Service, Lawrence has been given the rating of Specialist Third Class, and will be able to devote his time to painting. There are approximately 4,000 Negroes in the Coast Guard, about 1,000 of whom have ratings as Petty Officers.

Lawrence drew and painted since early childhood and received his first chance for recognition through the WPA Art Program. He has studied under Charles Alston and Henry Bannarn. He received a scholarship to the American Artist School and was the recipient of a painting fellowship by the Rosenwald Foundation in 1941, 1942, 1943.

In the 1943 Artists for Victory exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, his canvas won the 6th prize of \$500. His work is represented in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, N.Y.; Howard University, Washington, D. C., the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; Phillips Memorial Gallery, Washington, D. C.; Portland Art Museum, Oregon; Rhode Island Museum; University of Arizona; and the Worcester Art Museum, Mass.