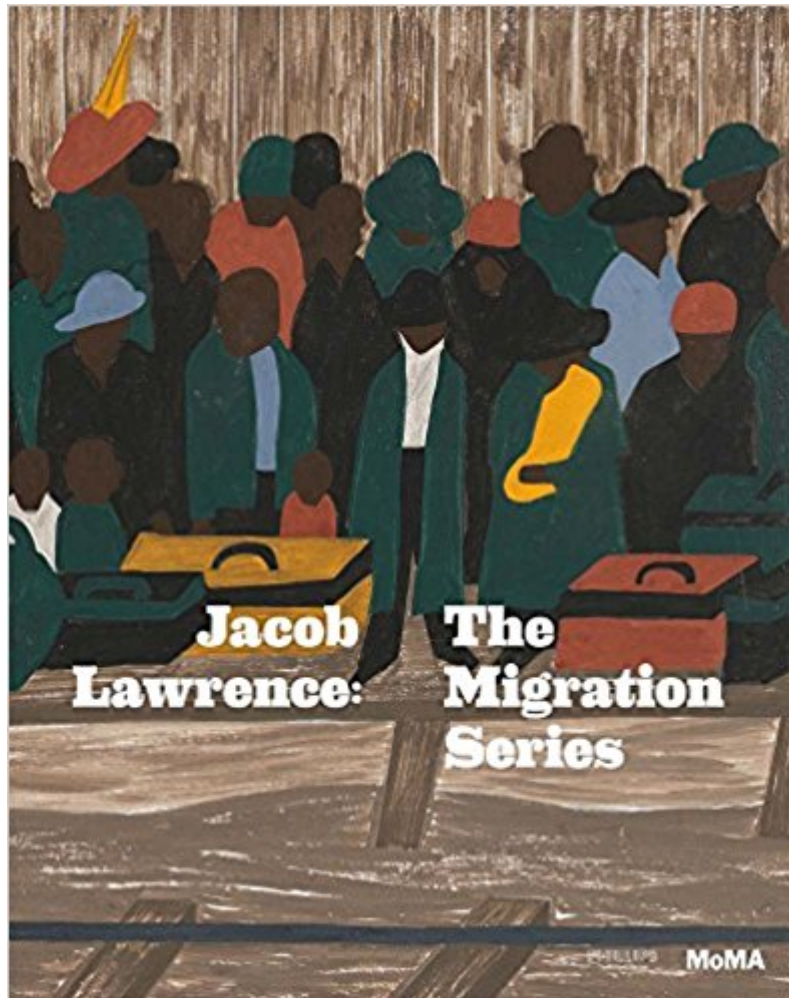




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# Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series



## Synopsis

Lawrence's landmark series on African American migration in context In 1941, Jacob Lawrence, then just 23 years old, made a series of 60 small tempera paintings on the Great Migration, the decades-long mass movement of black Americans from the rural South to the urban North that began in 1915 and continued through the 1960s. The child of migrant parents, Lawrence worked partly from his own experience and partly from long research in his neighborhood library. The result was an epic narrative of the collective history of his people. Moving from scenes of terror and violence to images of great intimacy, and drawing on film, photography, political cartoons and other sources in popular culture, Lawrence created an innovative format of sequential panels, each image accompanied by a descriptive caption. Within months of its completion, the series entered the collections of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Phillips Memorial Gallery (today The Phillips Collection), Washington, DC, each institution acquiring 30 panels. The Migration Series is now a landmark in the history of modern art. Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series, now in paperback, grounds Lawrence's work in the cultural and political debates that shaped his art and demonstrates its relevance for artists and writers today. The series is reproduced in full; short texts accompanying each panel relate them to the history of the Migration and explore Lawrence's technique and approach. Alongside scholarly essays, the book also includes 11 newly commissioned poems, by Rita Dove, Nikky Finney, Terrance Hayes, Tyehimba Jess, Yusef Komunyakaa, Patricia Spears Jones, Natasha Trethewey, Lyrae Van Clief-Stefanon, Crystal Williams and Kevin Young, that respond directly to the series. The distinguished poet Elizabeth Alexander edited and introduces the section.

## Book Information

Paperback: 192 pages

Publisher: The Museum of Modern Art; Reprint edition (February 28, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1633450406

ISBN-13: 978-1633450400

Product Dimensions: 9.5 x 0.7 x 11.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 24 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #75,448 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #27 in Books > Arts &

Photography > Individual Artists > Monographs #203 in Books > Arts & Photography > History

## Customer Reviews

YA-Full-color, full-page reprints of the 60 dramatic paintings of Lawrence's "Migration Series" fill half the pages of this catalog for the traveling exhibition. The text includes essays by various historians who relate the series to the time period and supply critical material about the painter's work.

Quotations from Lawrence himself are particularly meaningful. Excellent black-and-white reproductions illustrate the historical and cultural part of the book and include a portrait of the artist.

Beautifully printed and illustrated, the book will be useful for art classes or YAs interested in black history. Linda Sudduth, W.T. Woodson High School, Fairfax, VA

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Lushly illustrated and deeply archival in approach. . . fluidly written (Isabel Wilkerson *The New York Times Sunday Book Review*)

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.

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.

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

Lovely book.

Excellent catalogue of a recent exhibition at the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C. Very well written and researched with quality reproductions.

Saw the complete original series recently at Pa.Museum of Art. Wonderful souvenir for friend who accompanied me.

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