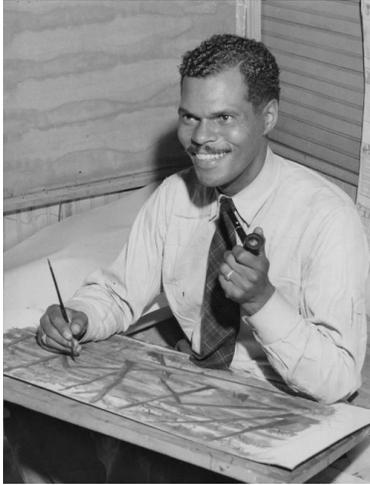


Cleota Collins by Henry Bannarn 2011.64 Plaster and pigment



Minneapolis Newspaper Photograph Collection



CLEOTA J. COLLINS

1919



Cleota Collins, 1932 by Henry W. Bannarn. Plaster, pigment 2011.64

Key Ideas (provide 2-4 per artwork)

1. The sculptor Henry Bannarn was born in Oklahoma in 1910, but his family soon moved to Minneapolis. When he was 18, he entered a painting in the Minnesota State Fair Art Exhibition was awarded first prize. He studied art at what is now MCAD, the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, which is a neighbor of Mia. While still a college student, Bannarn made his first known work, this sculpture of Cleota Collins, a singer and civil right activist. In 1934 he moved to New York City where he became famous as a painter and sculptor.
2. The 1920's & 30's was the time of the **Great Migration**. Many Black Americans moved to places like Harlem in New York City with the hope of finding better jobs, education, and housing, but also to escape **racism and Jim Crow laws**. Harlem became a center of culture, community and Black pride. The time was called the **Harlem Renaissance** (renaissance means "rebirth"). It was a time of creativity in music, dance, art, fashion, literature, theater and politics. It helped to lay the foundation for the future Civil Rights Movement. Bannarn was considered one of the greatest contributors to the Harlem Renaissance. He mentored the artists Jacob Lawrence and Romare Bearden.
3. Bannarn's daughter said that he "...liked nothing better than to teach and encourage young black artists.... He had no intellectual or artistic limits. Books were everywhere. He never stopped learning or encouraging others to do the same. This is probably because in his lifetime, an opportunity for education was never a given – it had to be taken full advantage of."
4. This sculpture shows Cleota Collins, an American singer and teacher who was born in 1893. As an opera singer, she performed with the Metropolitan Opera from 1912 to 1920. She also taught singing and piano. She was a founding member of the National Association of Negro Musicians, an organization that wanted to advance the teaching of music and support black musicians and composers.

Vocabulary (for older students)

- **Great Migration** - Migration of people refers to the movement of people to a new area or country in order to find work or better living conditions. The Great Migration mentioned here refers to the first migration of African Americans from the southern United States to the northern United States (1910–1930).

- **Jim Crow laws** - Jim Crow laws were laws meant to separate people and treat them unfairly because of their race or background.
- **opera** - a dramatic story told with music and singing

Suggested Questions (provide 2 or 3 per artwork)

1. This artwork shows the face of someone who loved music. She was a famous singer and teacher. Imagine sharing your own favorite music with her. What would you choose? What would you share about why you liked it?
2. Spend a moment looking at her face. Would you imagine her listening to singing? or piano music? or listening to someone's ideas? or something else? How did you decide?
3. Henry Bannarn made this sculpture from a hard, white material called plaster. To color the sculpture he used pigments (dry powders of different colors). What colors do you see? Imagine colors he might have mixed together? Can these colors reflect her personality? What do you think she might have been like if she was your teacher?
4. Being part of a community was very important to Henry Bannarn and Cleota Collins. In Harlem Bannarn was part of a group of very creative artistic people. Collins worked with a community of people who loved music. (Pair share) Imagine being part of a community that shares ideas and things each person has created. How can being part of a community help you to be more creative? more successful?

Research Resources

Henry Bannarn

- CONNOR ROSENKRANZ LLC <http://www.crsculpture.com/in-depth/henry-and34mikeand34-bannarn-1910-1965>
- <https://hclib.tumblr.com/post/183054693219/black-history-honored-here-henry-bannarn>
- Wikipedia

Harlem Renaissance

- <https://www.nga.gov/learn/teachers/lessons-activities/uncovering-america/harlem-renaissance.html>
- Wikipedia

Cleota Collins

Wikipedia