

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 6, 2014

Media Contacts:

Elizabeth Lubben, 202-387-2151 x235
elubben@phillipscollection.org

Online Press Room

www.phillipscollection.org/press

THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION ANNOUNCES CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT A MICROSITE CELEBRATING JACOB LAWRENCE'S INFLUENTIAL *MIGRATION SERIES*.

The Indiegogo.com campaign goes live Nov. 10. The museum aims to unveil the site next summer.

Washington, DC—Furthering its role as a leader in scholarship on the preeminent American artist Jacob Lawrence, The Phillips Collection announced today its plans to develop a robust microsite featuring previously unpublished interviews between the artist and museum curators in 1992 and 2000, including one conducted just prior to the artist’s death. The microsite aims to engage the public and scholars alike by chronicling the powerful history and contemporary context of migration through the lens of Lawrence’s epic masterwork. The microsite will be launched to coincide with the co-organized exhibition *Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series* that will be presented at the Museum of Modern Art in spring 2015, and at the Phillips in fall 2016.



Jacob Lawrence, *The Migration Series*, Panel no. 51, between 1940 and 1941. Casein tempera on hardboard, 18 x 12 in. Acquired 1942. The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC.; Visitors viewing Jacob Lawrence’s *The Migration Series*. Photo by Max Hirshfeld; Jacob Lawrence, *The Migration Series*, Panel no. 57, between 1940 and 1941. Casein tempera on hardboard, 18 x 12 in. Acquired 1942. The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC.

“To this day, *The Migration Series* resonates with the American experience—themes of struggle, freedom, and the search for a better life,” says Curator Elsa Smithgall. “This microsite is an invaluable resource, featuring archival photographs, and literary, theatrical, and contemporary migration narratives that situate *The Migration Series* within the dynamic cultural context of its time.”

THE JACOB LAWRENCE MICROSITE

The art and life of Jacob Lawrence have long been an inspiration to The Phillips Collection. Through a number of in-depth initiatives conducted over several decades, the Phillips has gathered a trove of knowledge and insight about Jacob Lawrence. Microsite users will be able to access these resources by selecting from three “tracks” that include segments of the museum’s never-before-published video interviews with the artist along with:

Page 2—Jacob Lawrence Microsite

- **Art:** High-resolution images of all 60 panels with text explaining each work
- **Culture:** An examination of the life and times of Lawrence through archival photographs, sound clips, and videos of musical or theatrical performances or historical events
- **Artist:** Lawrence's personal history, chronicling his life in biographical and autobiographical formats



Watch the video above for a closer look at "The Migration Series" and plans for the Jacob Lawrence microsite.

By contributing to this campaign, donors ensure that these extensive resources reach education systems, scholars, researchers, and historians across the globe. Among other things, the microsite:

- Complements Lawrence's first-hand accounts with a multiplicity of the latest contemporary views on migration from scholars across disciplines
- Engages audiences in the theme of migration from the rich perspectives of visual culture as well as music, theater, film, and poetry
- Highlights the events that inspired Lawrence to create the series
- Connects images of his 60 paintings to archival photographs captured during the time of the migrations
- Spotlights milestones of America's Great Migration, highlighting dates and cities on an animated map of the nation

The total cost of this project amounts to \$125,000, including production costs, licensing and rights fees, and site maintenance for five years. Through Indiegogo.com, the museum will launch a month-long crowdfunding campaign in support of the microsite, beginning November 10. Those who would like to support the campaign or learn more about the project can visit the museum's Indiegogo page beginning November 10: <http://igg.me/at/jacob-lawrence>

The Phillips Collection is grateful to A. Fenner Milton, Judy and Leo Zickler and the Zickler Family Foundation, and the Henry Luce Foundation for their generous contributions to the microsite campaign, totaling \$80,000.

ABOUT JACOB LAWRENCE

A celebrated painter, storyteller, and interpreter of the African American experience, Jacob Lawrence (1917–2000) is one of the most important American artists of the 20th century. He discovered art as a means of expression while a teenager in New York City during the 1930s, where he experienced the vitality of the Harlem Renaissance. Throughout his long career, Lawrence fixed his gaze firmly on the complexity of our American tumult, from the Civil War of the 1860s to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

ABOUT *THE MIGRATION SERIES*

Jacob Lawrence's *The Migration Series* (1940–41), a sequence of 60 paintings, depicts the mass movement of African Americans from the rural South to the urban North between World War I and World War II—a development that had received little previous public attention.

Lawrence spent months distilling the subject into captions and preliminary drawings and preparing 60 boards with the help of his wife. He created the paintings in tempera, a water-base paint that dries rapidly. To keep the colors consistent, Lawrence applied one hue at a time to every painting where it was to appear, requiring him to plan all 60 paintings in detail at once. The series was the subject of a solo show at the Downtown Gallery in Manhattan in 1941, making Lawrence the first black artist represented by a New York gallery. Interest in the series was intense. Ultimately, The Phillips Collection and New York's Museum of Modern Art agreed to divide it, with the Phillips buying the odd-numbered paintings.

JACOB LAWRENCE AND THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION

In 1942, museum founder Duncan Phillips expressed great enthusiasm for Lawrence's *The Migration Series* upon seeing it at the Downtown Gallery. That year, Phillips gave Lawrence his first solo museum exhibition, and soon after purchased the odd numbered panels. The Phillips has remained deeply committed to sharing and expanding Lawrence's legacy and achievements with broad and diverse audiences.

- *In the 1990s*, the Phillips organized an eight-city national tour of the complete *Migrations Series*. It also led a major study of Lawrence's life through symposia, conferences, and interdisciplinary panels.
- *In 2000*, Lawrence personally selected the Phillips to organize his retrospective. The highly-acclaimed exhibition premiered at the Phillips and traveled to five other major cities.
- *In 2007–08*, the Phillips launched a five-venue NEA American Masterpieces touring exhibition featuring selections from the series. The tour brought Lawrence's masterpiece to underserved communities throughout the US and was accompanied by a major educational outreach program.

The museum has led an ongoing educational dialogue with the community about *The Migration Series* for more than 20 years, from focus groups with community group leaders to an array of innovative programming including storytelling, literacy programs, professional development for teachers, outreach programs for at-risk students, and music programs.

ABOUT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION

The Phillips Collection is one of the world's most distinguished collections of Impressionist and Modern American and European art. Stressing the continuity between art of the past and present, it offers a strikingly original and experimental approach to Modern art by combining works of different nationalities and periods in displays that change frequently. The setting is similarly unconventional, featuring small rooms, a domestic scale, and a personal atmosphere. Artists represented in the collection include Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Vincent van Gogh, Edgar Degas, Henri Matisse, Pierre Bonnard, Paul Cézanne, Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee, Claude Monet, Honoré Daumier, Georgia O'Keeffe, Arthur Dove, Mark Rothko, Milton Avery, Jacob Lawrence, and Richard Diebenkorn, among others. The Phillips Collection, America's first museum of modern art, has an active collecting program and regularly organizes acclaimed special exhibitions, many of which travel internationally. The Intersections series features projects by contemporary artists, responding to art and spaces in the museum. The Phillips also produces award-winning education programs for K–12 teachers and students, as well as for adults. The museum's Center for the Study of Modern Art explores new ways of thinking about art and the nature of creativity, through artist visits and lectures, and provides a forum for scholars through courses, postdoctoral fellowships, and internships. Since 1941, the museum has hosted Sunday Concerts in its wood-paneled Music Room. The Phillips Collection is a private, non-government museum, supported primarily by donations.

###