

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2024

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In the fields of visual and performing arts, literature, fashion, folklore, film, music, architecture, culinary, and other forms of cultural expression, the African American influence has been paramount, often setting the standard for popular trends around the world. To celebrate the many ways African American artists have used art to preserve community memory, expand historical narratives, and empower the expression of lived experiences, **the theme for Black History Month 2024 is African Americans and the Arts.**

Find out more about this year's theme on the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) website at <https://asalh.org/black-history-themes/>.

**"Art does not exist only to entertain, but also to challenge one to think, to provoke, even to disturb."**

*Aaron Douglas*

## These sites offer more resources for Black History Month:

From barrier-breaking animators to pioneering portrait artists, [Black Creators](#) from Google Arts & Culture showcases the stories and artistry of U.S. Black cultural icons and lesser-known influencers who have used their talents to comfort, provoke, disturb, and entertain.

[Backtalk: Artists on Native, African, and African American Stereotypes](#) is an online exhibition from the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art featuring nine artists from the early 20th century to the present. The select works reveal how art can confront racial and cultural stereotypes through self-representation and encourage greater human empathy and tolerance within our community.

Representation is also at the heart of [Art + Justice: When We See Ourselves as Heroes](#), a panel conversation that delves into the world and cultural significance of Black superheroes in comics and scripted media. Featuring [Eve L. Ewing](#), [Tim Fielder](#), and [Jonathon Gayles](#), the panel supports the National Museum of African American History and Culture's [Afrofuturism](#) exhibition.

[Arthur Jafa](#) is an artist, filmmaker, and cinematographer who has developed a dynamic, decades-long practice comprising films, artifacts, and happenings that reference and illustrate the Black experience in both aesthetic form and content. Among Jafa's extensive catalog is his 2016 video work [Love is the Message, the Message is Death](#), an emotional convergence of viral videos and historical footage that testify to the complexity and beauty of Black life in the U.S.

Amidst *Barbie* movie mania, learn about [Kitty Black Perkins](#), the designer behind Black Barbie. Black Barbie debuted in 1980, answering the question on many minds, "Why not make a Barbie that looks like me?" Black Perkins went on create thousands of outfits for Barbie dolls and was instrumental in diversifying the franchise. Stay tuned: *Black Barbie: A Documentary* is in the works!

Looking for more? Local colleges and universities, museums, and cultural institutions are great places to check for events. **Johns Hopkins Employee Assistance Program (JHEAP)** can also provide personalized resources, referrals, and other support you may need. Reach out confidentially any time, any day.

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