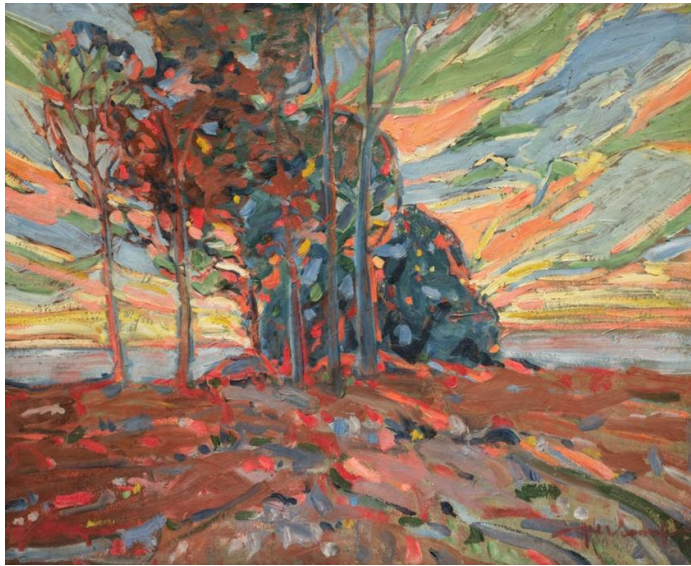


Hale Woodruff: A Closer Look

Engage with the questions for looking, ideas for making, and contextual information provided to take a deep dive into this work of art. View the work in the museum's galleries, on the [website](#), or through a classroom poster.



This resource is made possible through the generous support of the Terra Foundation for American Art.



Hale Woodruff (American, 1900–80)
Twilight, about 1926
Oil on pressed paperboard
Through prior bequest of Marguerita S. Ritman

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

- Look carefully at the work. What is your eye drawn to? Note at least five observations.
- Hold your hand up and follow the lines that you see with your finger. What do you notice?
- How do you think that the artist made this work? Why do you think that?
- If you could choose one word to describe the mood in this painting, what would it be? What makes you say that?
- What do you think the artist wanted to show or achieve through this work?
- Does this remind you of anything you have seen or a place you have been? Tell a partner about that connection.
- Read the information on the artist and this work that is provided on the back of this resource.
 - Look again—how have your observations and thoughts on this work changed?

CREATIVE RESPONSE

What is a place or a landscape that is important to you? Why? What memories do you have there? What would you see, hear, smell, taste, or feel if you were there now? Make a list of related descriptive words and feeling words.

Use the medium of your choice to recreate that scene or memory of your special place that includes the ideas you have generated. Sketch, write a poem, create a dance...

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The artist at work, date unknown.

LEARN ABOUT THE ARTIST

In *Twilight*, Hale Woodruff applied bold and thick streaks of pigment to expressively show the changing light of the evening sky. Woodruff was inspired by other painters who experimented with form, color, and abstraction including Paul Cezanne and fellow African American painter Henry Ossawa Tanner, who became a mentor and friend. In the early 20th century, racial discrimination limited opportunities for African American artists to receive training, exhibit their work, and find paid work in their field. Woodruff pushed through these obstacles to have a rich and influential career as an artist and educator.

Born in Cairo, Illinois, Woodruff grew up in Nashville, Tennessee, and then moved to Indianapolis to enroll at the John Herron Art Institute in 1920. He could not afford the fees for full-time study, however, and in 1923 he left for Chicago to enroll part time at the School of the Art Institute. Job opportunities in Chicago proved scarce, and Woodruff returned to Indianapolis to paint, working at the local YMCA as a freelance illustrator to support himself. Through the YMCA, he made important contacts in the African American artistic community who promoted and helped fund his work and study. He spent four years living in Paris, France, in the late 1920s, one of a number of African American artists, including Tanner, Josephine Baker, Alain Locke, and Augusta Savage, who fled racism in America and found greater personal and artistic freedom in Europe.

As his funding ran low during the Great Depression, Woodruff returned to the US and taught in Atlanta, where he organized Atlanta University's annual exhibition of African American art, an important showcase for young artists that continued until 1970. In 1934, he traveled to Mexico to work with Diego Rivera and learn the mural-painting techniques he later used to create his own important murals, which embraced social justice themes. In 1946 he became a professor at New York University, where he continued to paint and support the work of African American artists.

EXPLORE MORE ARTWORKS

Learn more about the work of Hale Woodruff and thousands of other artists by searching the museum's collections page by name, title, or keyword at www.artic.edu/collection. Below are suggestions of artists and artistic movements that relate to the work of Hale Woodruff. What connections and differences do you find between these artists' works?

Post-Impressionism: [Georges Seurat](#), [Paul Cezanne](#), [Vincent van Gogh](#)

Modernism: [Vasily Kandinski](#), [Pablo Picasso](#), [Fernand Léger](#)

The Harlem Renaissance and the Jazz Age: [Archibald Motley](#), [Jacob Lawrence](#), [Augusta Savage](#), [James VanDerZee](#), [Richmond Barthé](#), [Henry Ossawa Tanner](#), [Romare Bearden](#)

Abstract Expressionism: [Norman Lewis](#), [Jackson Pollock](#), [Joan Mitchell](#)