Troubling island: the imagining and imaging of Haiti by African-American artists, 1915-1940

Abstract
Images of Haiti have circulated in the social imagination of the United States through painting, sculpture, illustration, performance and film since the late eighteenth century. Although much scholarship addresses the intertwined and often problematic relationship between the United States and Haiti, sparse art historical research addresses the complexities of U.S. visualizations of Haiti. The period of the U.S. occupation of Haiti (1915-1934) and its immediate aftermath resulted in the opening up of Haiti to unprecedented numbers of writers, ethnographers, and artists who focused both on Haiti as a contemporary nation, and retold and interpreted its revolutionary history to express new social and political needs. This dissertation contributes to a greater understanding of how representations of Haiti overwhelmingly articulate issues of race, while also touching on cultural anxieties of class, religion, patriotism and national identity. This dissertation specifically examines how African-American artists have worked against mainstream representations of Haiti to create...


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