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| Douglas, Aaron (1899-1979) |
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| Aaron Douglas was an African American artist and educator often referred to as the father of ‘Black Art.’ He was a leading figure of the artistic movement known as the Harlem Renaissance. Douglas is best known for his work of the 1920s and 30s, which featured abstracted silhouettes combined with African tribal art and ancient Egyptian profile heads. European artists like Matisse, Modigliani and Picasso had been influenced by African tribal art for decades, but Douglas was among the first African American artists to blend African art with modern abstraction. Douglas produced illustrations for such magazines as *The Crisis*, *Survey Graphic* and *Opportunity* along with co-founding the short-lived *Fire!! A Quarterly Journal Devoted to the Younger Negro Artists.* He also illustrated books by several well-known literary figures, including Alain Locke, James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Claude McKay. He is recognised for several public murals, including the *Birth o' the Blues* at the Sherman Hotel in Chicago, *Evolution of Negro Dance* at the Harlem YMCA, and *Aspects of Negro Life* at the 135th Street Branch of the New York Public Library. As a professor of fine art Douglas encouraged generations of African American artists to create their own modern Black aesthetic. |
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| Further reading:  (Earle)  (Kirschke and Douglas)  (Powell) |