



## Legacy from The New York Times is a zine series honouring the underground press of the Harlem Renaissance era

The Times’ in-house content studio, T Brand, has commissioned work from Black writers, storytellers, artists and designers for a run of publications, highlighting the immense contributions of Black creatives to the arts and wider society.

Words Ellis Tree

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| Work | Graphic Design | Publication | Typography | Zine | Campaign | Art Direction | Society | History |
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New York Times Advertising’s custom content arm, T Brand Studio, has launched *The Legacy Fulfilled: The Modern Renaissance*, a campaign supported by U.S. Bank celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Harlem Renaissance. The first of its kind for *The New York Times*, this campaign takes the form of two short zines paying homage to the underground press of the Harlem Renaissance, where “artists and writers used literary journals and zines to birth a powerful underground press of poetry, prose, experimental writing and graphic expression”.

Taking direct inspiration for their hand-crafted approach from Renaissance print ephemera, specifically literary magazines such as *The Crisis*, *Opportunity* and *FIRE!!*, the series “highlights the pillars of commerce, community and culture through a series of essays, poems and reported pieces that amplify how the Harlem Renaissance continues to inspire a canon of thinkers, entrepreneurs and creatives today on a mission to build wealth,” explains, Tanisha A. Sykes, editorial director at T Brand.



Above  
T Brand Studio: The Legacy Fulfilled: The Modern Renaissance (Copyright © T Brand Studio, 2024)

The campaign aims to initiate a national dialogue about Black affluence fueled by the impact of the period of intellectual and cultural revival of African American Art in the 1920s and 30s. With contents of commissioned work from an “exclusive team of Black writers, storytellers, artists and designers” for volume one, *Legacy: Inside the stories of Black wealth’s new renaissance*, the campaign’s debut zine presents a new format to give African American creatives a voice on “family, legacy, community and wealth,” says Tanisha. This first zine, which came out with *The New York Times* paper on Sunday, August 18 put a spotlight on how Black communities are “creating intergenerational wealth and lasting change”. Volume 2 of *Legacy* is due to be launched later this year and will focus on the contributions of Black creatives in art, music, dance, literature and more.

A key feature of the publication’s design is the custom typography by designer and founder of Vocal Type Tré Seals, who created the zine’s distinct letterset VTC Sarah, inspired by his great-grandparents’ marriage certificate, in order to honour his family and “the poetry of Mahogany L. Browne, the inaugural Poet-in-Residence at the Lincoln Center, who penned an original poem that continues the conversation Langston Hughes started in Harlem,” Tanisha tells us.

“Throughout the pages of *Legacy*, we interpret what it means to hold space for Black perspectives, words, art and imagery. In a love letter lauding Zora Neale Hurston as the ‘Godmother of Rich Aunties’, words take centre stage. In our feature story chronicling the legacy of a family of fourth-generation Black ranchers in Oklahoma, the photography shines. Their work shows the myriad ways in which today’s Black creatives are contributing to the cultural landscape,” Tanisha shares.

When speaking to the message they hope the campaign gets across, Tanisha concludes: “That Black culture is American culture. This work not only pays homage to the forefathers of the Harlem Renaissance, it brings those stories forward through Black creatives who are continuing the work that their ancestors began.”

Gallery  
T Brand Studio: The Legacy Fulfilled: The Modern Renaissance (Copyright © T Brand Studio, 2024)

