

Carpenters and Windows by Jacob Lawrence

Recognizing the contribution art has had in the Mayo Clinic environment since the original Mayo Clinic Building was finished in 1914, *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* features some of the numerous works of art displayed throughout the buildings and grounds on Mayo Clinic campuses.

Jacob Lawrence (1917-2000) is noted as one of the most influential African-American painters in the 20th Century.¹⁻³ Born in



Atlantic City, New Jersey, on September 7, 1917, Lawrence spent his early years in Pennsylvania and began art training at age 13 in an after-school program in Harlem, New York City. He subsequently studied with the Harlem Art Workshop. In 1937 he received a scholarship to attend the American Artists School in New York, graduating in 1939. He participated in the Works Progress Administration (WPA) federal arts program and is best known for developing the narrative series style of painting, where he would paint as many as 40 images on a single topic. He was a veteran of World War II and became an art instructor at several institutions, including the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York; the Arts Student League in New York City; and the University of Washington in Seattle.¹⁻³

Carpenters and *Windows*, selections from two of Lawrence's series collections, are distinctly reflective of his style with rich brown skin tones

of the African-American figures; sharp contrast of line, light, and darkness; and with intensity in the broad use of primary colors. Both teem with everyday life and work, and generate a specific flavor and familiarity to a culture. Both



are created using the offset lithography process, in which the original image is created on a plate transferred to a rubber surface and then applied to the canvas or paper to produce the final image. This process is most commonly used in printing newspapers and magazines because of the clarity it retains in reproduction.⁴ *Carpenters* and *Windows* (prints 98 of 300 and 80 of 300 respectively), two editions from the Mayo collection, were printed in 1977.

Carpenters and *Windows* are located on the 5th floor patient lobby of the Gonda Building, Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota.

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1. Jacob Lawrence Biography. <http://www.biography.com/people/jacob-lawrence-9375562>. Accessed March 6, 2015.
2. Jacob Lawrence. Wikipedia website. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob_Lawrence. Accessed March 6, 2015.
3. Arts and Culture: The Legacy: Jacob Lawrence. PBS website. <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/aaworld/arts/lawrence.html>. Accessed March 6, 2015.
4. Offset Lithography, Wikipedia website. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Offset_printing. Accessed March 16, 2015.