

**Langston Hughes, Romare Bearden and Comrades -  
Countering Negative Stereotypes through African American Arts Communities**

*Barbara McDowell Dowdall  
Randolph Career Academy High School*

**Abstract**

In a curriculum unit designed to be either a stand-alone art and literary history course or a unit within English class in the junior year of high school, students will develop an in-depth understanding of the difference between media portrayals of ethnic groups, particularly African Americans, and the broader deeper reality of community life as reflected in quality literature and art.

This unit, which provides information simultaneously about pejorative images of the past and the rich cultural life of African American artists working in communities in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, will encourage a comparative analysis of the media images proliferating around us with the multi-faceted portrayals found in serious visual art and literature. Students will learn about creative individuals in a variety of fields who helped one another overcome obstacles to creation and exhibition by banding together and providing community support. Through a series of hands-on and investigative experiences, students will become conversant with individual visual and word artists and with network formation. Attention will focus on New York City beginning with the Harlem Renaissance and then on how to discover a student's own arts communities.

