

FOREWORD:

A CENTURY OF BLACK LIFE, HISTORY, AND CULTURE: AN EXHIBITION OF DR. CARTER G. WOODSON'S LEGACY

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This issue of the *Black History Bulletin (BHB)* focuses on the impact of Dr. Carter G. Woodson's vision when he espoused, "The same educational process which inspires and stimulates the oppressor with the thought that he is everything and has accomplished everything worth while depresses and crushes at the same time the spark of genius in the Negro by making him feel that his race does not amount to much and never will measure up to the standards of other peoples."¹ "In 1915 when he established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, it was born of the need he perceived for African Americans to gain a greater appreciation of their history and to defend the race against its traducers by countering falsehoods with facts."² A century later, we are celebrating the successful impact of the organization he founded, now known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH).

Woodson's legacy is the result of an effective infrastructure comprised of an organization—ASALH and a publishing company that has helped to reframe public curriculum to include the contributions of Black people to American life, history, and culture. For example, he was quite compelling and clear about the need for inclusion through multicultural education when he wrote:

In our own particular history, we would not dim one bit the lustre of any star in our firmament. We would not learn less of George Washington, "First in War, First in Peace and First in the Hearts of his Countrymen"; but we would learn something also of the three thousand Negro soldiers of the American Revolution who helped to make this "Father of our Country" possible. We would not neglect to appreciate the unusual contribution of Thomas Jefferson to freedom and democracy; but we would invite attention also to two of his outstanding contemporaries, Phillis Wheatley, the writer of interesting verse, and Benjamin Banneker, the mathematician, astronomer, and advocate of a world peace plan set forth in 1793 with the vital principles of Woodrow Wilson's League of Nations.³

As co-editors of the *Black History Bulletin (BHB)* formerly known as the *Negro History Bulletin*, established by Dr. Carter G. Woodson in 1937, at the behest of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, we contemplated how to appropriately celebrate Woodson's 100-year-old legacy. Our direction was clear, like museum curators, we would exhibit special moments of life, history and culture. Subsequently, we decided to borrow from the acumen of a contemporary museum curator who benefitted from his impact on African Americans gaining a greater appreciation of their history. Thelma Golden, director and chief curator of The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, inspired us. It was evident to us that Golden continues to carry Woodson's torch to reframe public curriculum when during an interview in *The Grio* she commented:

When the museum was founded it was with the very powerful idea that the exclusion of African-American artists from the canon of American art needed to be challenged and changed. The museum's founding principle was to create the possibility to show innovative and important works of art and to create exhibitions and programs that brought art and culture by black artists to the community and the art world at large. That continues to be our mission, though the art and culture worlds have evolved, Harlem has evolved, and the nature of how people see museums has evolved.⁴

This issue is an exhibition of authors who represent the legacy of Woodson with their articles that highlight the texture of Black life, history, and culture through articles about art, spirituality, innovation, and media. Additionally, inspired by Golden we are featuring an African American artist--Calvin Coleman II who created all of the art featured in this issue.

Notes:

¹ Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro* ed. Daryl Michael Scott (Washington D.C.: The ASALH Press, 1933/2005), xiii.

² Daryl Michael Scott, introduction to *Carter G. Woodson's Appeal*, by Carter G. Woodson, ed. Daryl Michael Scott (Washington DC: The ASALH Press, 2008), xxxi.

³ Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro* ed. Daryl Michael Scott (Washington D.C.: The ASALH Press, 1933/2005), 85.

⁴ Suzanne Rust, "The Art of being Thelma Golden, Director and Chief Curator of the Studio Museum in Harlem," *The Grio*, May 16, 2013, accessed July 2, 2014 <http://thegrio.com/2013/05/16/the-art-of-being-thelma-golden-director-and-chief-curator-of-the-studio-museum-in-harlem/#:s:goldenthelma-1>.



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