him "Little Black Sambo." Many years later, during my hours of interview with him, Hammons recalled: "They (the taunts) were very painful things to live with. It was just completely, completely ...it was just a nightmare going to school."

Dan Concholar, Rob Dickson, David Hammons, John Outterbridge, Patrick Nagatani, John Riddle Jr., Betye Saar, Dale Davis, Alonzo Davis, Mark Green and myself (a kid who dreamed of being a painter when he grew up) were part of this artistic community. We did not have a lot of money to purchase art supplies so we used found objects to create art.

When Hammons was not working on his own or hanging with artists at the Watts Towers Art Center, he often relaxed in the backyard of his newfound buddy, Johnny Riddle. Artists came there with their art, to show it and exchange ideas on the creative process. Riddle usually was welding sculptures there, sometimes assisted by his wife, Carmen, while the six Riddle children ran about.

After Hammons moved to New York, critics and gallery owners placed labels like "minimalist" and "Dadaist" on David Hammons' work. But Hammons was just being Hammons.

If a label must placed on the work of this enigmatic artist who eschews labels, "California Funk" may be a slightly better fit. As *New York Times* critic Holland Cotter noted in his November 14, 2006 review of the *L.A. Object* show at Tilton Gallery: "Much of it fits into a movement, sometimes called California Funk, that involves assemblage inspired by, among other things, beat culture, jazz, Dada and Simon Rodia's extravagant found-object monument, "Watts Towers." Although Ed Kienholz and George Herms, both in the Tilton show, were the movement's most visible exponents, African-American artists played a vital role."

At the time Paris and New York City were in competition as the art capitals of the world, Hammons made NYC aware that Los Angeles had its own deeply seeded art scene.

L.A. Art Object is the greatest collection of photographs of the African Americans working on the West Coast that certainly I have ever seen and probably has ever been compiled. Despite the inattention given to David Hammons' real roots (i.e., not Dada), this book is a "must have" for anyone interested in the genre and era that it covers.

Gary Eugene Jefferson is a visual artist and a collector of oral histories of artists. He now lives in Albuquerque, NM.

Chicago Renaissance Resurrected

ROBERT BONE AND RICHARD COURAGE, *THE MUSE IN BRONZEVILLE, AFRICAN AMERICAN CREATIVE EXPRESSION IN CHICAGO, 1932–1950*, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2011.

CHARLES E. BETHEA

WHEN I FIRST LEARNED OF *THE MUSE IN BRONZEVILLE*, I said, "It is about time!" Before reading a single sentence, I knew this volume would be well received and I was excited. Okay, I must admit it, I was biased. The authors, the late Robert Bone and Richard A. Courage, accomplished something that I and several scholars have discussed at length — the truth about the deeply rooted but largely forgotten history of the Chicago Renaissance. My late mentors, artists Murry DePillars, Margaret Burroughs, historian John Hope Franklin and I (never all at once) talked passionately about how the Chicago Renaissance was over shadowed by the more well-known and now-culturally iconic Harlem Renaissance, although the Chicago Renaissance lasted longer and had a greater impact on African American art and literature. At some point in the conversation, I would often repeat my one-liner, "You know the Chicago Renaissance was better, but Harlem just had a better public relations firm." No one ever laughed.

I am sorry that my esteemed colleagues are not here to welcome *The Muse in Bronzeville*. Finally setting the record straight, the book brings to the forefront the cultural awakening of black consciousness exploding in the Midwest during the first half of the 20th-century. Bone and Courage masterfully blend the history of Chicago's South Side as the incubator of cultural expression and the black aesthetic in page-turning prose. The volume begins with the clarification of the term "renaissance," as it is used to define the New Negro Movement and then moves through the Great Migration, the First World War and the Great Depression, inserting the contributions of African Americans in literature, fine art and music along the way.

In the introduction, Courage promises to replace the current fragmented view of history between the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Arts Movement with "a more synoptic perspective that stresses both

Painting class at South Side Community Art Center, 1942; instructor Eldzier Cortor (standing), Gordon Parks (sitting, facing forward). Photo: Jack Delano. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA-OWI Collection.

Charles Sebree, *Lady MacBeth*, 1942, watercolor, 24 x 20"
DuSable Museum of African American History. Photo: Michael Hays.

generational contrast and community." Readers of *The Muse in Bronzeville* will get a better sense of history and will no longer view the Harlem Renaissance as an isolated phenomenon, but "one part of a larger movement unfolding in two phases, first New York, then Chicago," Courage contends.

The considerable visual arts coverage includes a history of the influential Southside Community Arts Center. The Center was springboard for artists such as Margaret Burroughs, Charles Sebree, Charles White, Richmond Barthé, William Carter, Ellis Wilson and others. Courage pulls from the shadows of obscurity the impact that these visual artists first made on the South Side of Chicago. Although the volume's focus is on the 1932 to 1950 period, I would have enjoyed a more in-depth exploration of the Chicago arts scene of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. *The Muse in Bronzeville* does cite early exhibitions held by the Chicago Black Arts and Letters Society and the Chicago Art League's in 1917 and 1922 (respectively) and the wide reaching acceptance of the New Negro Movement philosophy of Alain Locke as factors leading to the support of African American artists and art by white organizations. However, I would have welcomed more information on these events and the contributions of artists such as Charles C. Dawson, William McKnight Farrow, and William Edouard Scott, who actions virtually opened the door for the acceptance of black artists in Chicago.

Although the chapters on visual art seem to be dwarfed by the sections on literature and music, *The Muse in Bronzeville* is a much-needed contribution. Before I finished the book, I envisioned a book spanning the history of African American visual arts creation in Chicago from the late 19th century through the trailblazing Chicago Art league and the Chicago Women's Club shows to the underrated impact of the School of Art Institute Chicago's support of African American students, up through the vigorous cultural revolution of the 1960s to the present.

Charles Bethea is chief operating officer and curator at the DuSable Museum in Chicago.

The Making of An American Modern

TERESA G. GIONIS, ED., *WILLIAM H. JOHNSON: AN AMERICAN MODERN*, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION TRAVELING EXHIBITION SERVICE (SITES)/WASHINGTON, DC AND JAMES E. LEWIS MUSEUM OF ART, MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY/ BALTIMORE, MARYLAND.

THE BOOK, INTENDED TO SERVE AS THE CATALOG for a touring exhibition of 20 works by W. H. Johnson (1901–1970) held by the James E. Lewis Museum of Morgan State University, is in fact a major testament to the status of the artist. It includes essays by Richard Powell, Lowery Stokes Sims, Leslie King-Hammond and Aaron Bryant and an interview with David C. Driskell. Powell is the author of the monumental *Homecoming: The Art and Life of William H. Johnson* (1991); Sims has dealt widely with the world of art in which