

Beyond the Canon: Seeking Black Women Artists in K-12 Art Education Teaching Resources

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Abstract

Despite the plethora of textbooks and teaching resources to guide the instructor in transmitting knowledge and skills for classroom instruction and curriculum development, many K-12 art education resources feature White, Eurocentric artists. Black women K-12 art educators are challenged to locate resources that enhance students' understanding and interest in racial and gender identities. This research critically explores the representation and availability of Black women artists in K-12 art education textbooks and teaching resources. The images and artists in art education textbooks are crucial and can affect students' understanding of art and teachers' development of an inclusive curriculum. I, therefore, investigated, through a Black feminist perspective, the underrepresentation of Black women artists in art education teaching resources. Drawing on narrative inquiry, I interviewed Black women elementary and

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secondary art educators throughout the United States to reveal the availability of Black women artists for classroom instruction and curriculum development. As a result, the data collected highlights emergent themes and subthemes that describe patterns of Whiteness in art education. This research demonstrates the need to diversify K-12 art education textbooks and teaching resources beyond a few token Black women artists.

Introduction

The underrepresentation of Black women artists in art education textbooks is a significant challenge for teachers to incorporate diversity to aid in student learning about art beyond the traditional White, Eurocentric-themed artists. The purpose of textbooks is to serve as a guide that saves time, makes easy accessibility of references, provides properly researched information, and supplies examples and activities to create curricula for teachers and students alike to transmit knowledge and skills (Rasmed, 2021). Several publishers of art education textbooks claim to develop diversified products to provide a superior art curriculum, studio lessons, and classroom resources. Art education publishers like Davis, Glencoe, Watson-Guption, North Light, Crystal Productions, and many more provide teaching resources, which include art techniques, art history, art lessons, and art posters to help guide teaching practices, curriculum development, and student learning. To diversify curricula and incorporate Black women artists, art educators must seek their images outside the traditional use of art education textbooks and teaching resources and find them elsewhere.

I am a Black woman who taught high school art from 1999 to 2015 and a professional artist in the United States. While teaching students of color, my school district required textbooks in the classroom. I used White, Eurocentric-themed textbooks to show images of artists to discuss their culture, history, and art techniques. The artists in the textbooks did not mirror the Black and Brown students in the classroom. I was unsettled that they would not have an art education learning experience that included Black women artists' history, art techniques, and lived experiences beyond the canon of White Eurocentric male Masters of Art (Kulinski, 2023; Sions & Coleman, 2019). I began to seek the artwork of Black women artists that students could identify with culturally and artistically.

My doctoral research is motivated by my curricular experiences as a Black woman art educator questioning the dominant White, Eurocentric canon in art education. I questioned if other Black women art educators who taught in the elementary and secondary sectors experienced the same issue of the underrepresentation of Black women artists in their textbooks and teaching resources. My research question was: *What are the curricular experiences of Black women K–12 art educators?* I was curious to understand whether, in developing their curricula, Black women K–12 art educators readily sought Black women artists in the teaching resources they had at their immediate disposal. Through this investigation, I sought to expose how the race and gender of an artist impact curriculum development, teacher engagement, and student learning in a broader effort to foster equity, diversity, and inclusion. For this paper, I focus on the representation of Black women artists in art education textbooks and how these teaching resources influence the decision of Black women K-12 art educators' teaching strategies.

Through narrative inquiry methods, this study is of 21 Black women K–12 art educators interviews conducted in 2018 and builds upon other Black women art education scholars who question art education's responsibility of producing culturally responsive textbooks and teaching resources (Acuff, 2020; Knight, 2019, 2021; Lawton, 2021; Whitehead, 2008; Wilson, 2017). In this paper, I provide a section on Black women art educators' curricular experiences they encountered from the more extensive study. First, I explain the challenges of seeking women artists, which prompted this research. I mention a brief history of art education textbooks. Then, I describe the theoretical framework related to this portion of the dissertation. I also explain my rationale for participant selection and methodology. Finally, I reveal two emergent themes and subthemes from the data collected that describe Black women K-12 art educators' stories about their textbooks and whether they teach about Black women artists based on available teaching resources to incorporate into their curriculum.

Background to the Problem

Art education has whitewashed teaching resources, challenging the recognition and placement of Black female artists (Bailey, 2023a; Lawton, 2021). There exist images and literature on White male artists like Picasso and Michelangelo. Images and literature exist on White women artists like Mary Cassatt and

Georgia O’Keeffe. Many images and literature exist, even for Black male artists such as Jacob Lawrence and Jean-Michel Basquiat and Mexican artists Jose Clemente Orozco and Diego Rivera. However, when I ordered posters of women artists, Frida Kahlo was the only woman of color. When I ordered posters of Black artists, there were mainly images of Henry Ossawa Tanner, Romare Bearden, and other male artists. The few token Black women artists mentioned were no comparison to the overwhelming amount of White men, White women, and Black men represented in K-12 art education textbooks and teaching resources. This critical gap motivated me to seek resources about Black women artists. I gathered calendars, greeting cards, magazine covers, and articles featuring Black women artists. For example, I purchased Essence magazine, featuring Bisa Butler’s artwork on the cover (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Essence Magazine Cover, Featured artwork of Artist Bisa Butler

I also visited Black-owned galleries, attended artist shows and museums, and watched YouTube videos.

Art Education Textbooks

Art education textbooks have evolved from industrial textbooks for technical training to art history and art elements for K-12 institutions. Historically, for many Black students, textbooks and teaching resources with art images were to illustrate manual training for menial labor and not for artistic pleasure (Rury, 2013; Stankiewicz, 2001). As art education shifted to more aesthetic purposes, so did teaching resources. Art education historian and scholar Mary Ann Stankiewicz (2001) reminds us that “By studying fine arts, teachers and students learned to value European artistic traditions” (p. 112). The underrepresentation of Black women artists in the mainstream art world parallels the artists’ underrepresentation in K–12 art education teaching resources. Art educators Alphonso Grant and Jessica Kee Baker (2013) argue that Black artists do not receive equal treatment in art history texts compared to White and European-born male artists. The normalcy of students learning about European Renaissance artists but not the Black women artists of the Harlem Renaissance is daunting (Grant & Kee, 2013; Kirschke, 2014). There is an assumption that the only artists worth learning about are White in elementary and secondary art education; therefore, the discussion of race and gender of the artists in textbooks is nullified.

Amelia Kraehe and Joni Acuff (2021) warn, “Ignoring the history that birth to present-day racism is to become an accomplice, contributing to the maintenance of hierarchies of racial difference through art curricula, teaching methods, and assessment tools” (p. 15). This research illustrates the historical legacy of racism and sexism toward Black women artists. I acknowledge that there are few references to White women artists and Black male artists; however, there are even fewer representations of Black women artists featured in curricular tools such as textbooks (Farrington, 2005; Grant & Kee, 2013; Kee, 2017; Mont, 2008; Staikidis, 2018; Wilson, 2017). Regardless of the student’s gender and race, this critical gap in art education textbooks and teaching resources can prevent students from learning about the rich legacy of Black women’s culture, history, and art. This discussion warrants a deeper investigation into how art education publishers negotiate racialized and gendered tensions that influence teaching practices and curriculum development.

Theoretical Framework

I adopted the outsider-within positionality theoretical framework to guide my research to focus on how gender and race unequally intersect for Black women art educators (Collins, 2000). Investigating Black women educators' struggles for equality and equity in sharing their knowledge is crucial as they receive minimum or token recognition for their contributions to art education (Bailey, 2023b). Patricia Hill Collins (1986, 2000) coined the term outsider-within positionality to investigate the absence of Black women's thoughts and experiences in educational institutions and the workforce. An outsider-within positionality framework makes explicit connections between race, gender, and power complemented by Black Feminism. Both offer a platform for 1) eradicating racial and gender oppression in educational institutions, 2) establishing a larger social-political context, and 3) voicing a Black woman's standpoint.

Educator and critical race feminist scholar Venus Evans-Winter (2019) encourages Black feminism as a qualitative inquiry for Black women to dive deeply into their experiences and establish a socio-political foundation to promote change in their lives. Black women scholars are subjected to the White man's ideology of scientific research. Evans-Winter (2019) explains, "Black women interested in the lives of Black women have much herstorical, theoretical, and practical knowledge to contribute to contemporary qualitative inquiry and discourse" (p. 14). Higher education institutions rarely encourage steering off the theoretical linear path. Using an outsider-within positionality in this study, I highlight non-white theoretical processes of formal assessment through narrative inquiry and center the lived experiences of Black women art educators as essential knowledge.

Lastly, this framework also provided a critical lens of the spectrum of voices that Black women relate to their identity. The experience of injustice and discriminatory treatment for Black woman is not monolithic. Black feminism does not have a singular, universally accepted definition. However, Black feminist theory in research highlights "the process of surviving the daily trauma of being a Black woman... needs to be understood in the context of Black women's lives" (Nayak, 2015, p.2). There is a pressing need to establish an academic platform dedicated to the research of Black women (Acuff, 2018; Whitehead, 2008). While Black women's experiences of oppression may vary, this framework serves to unite their common elements.

Methodology and Methods

Utilizing qualitative narrative inquiry through interviews is a powerful methodology for exploring the intersections between historical and social dimensions of race, gender, and lived experiences. Educator Jean Clandinin (2013) stated that narrative inquiry is “an approach to study human lives conceived as a way of honoring lived experiences as a source of important knowledge and understanding” (p. 17). Narrative inquiry is a vehicle to unpack and understand the outlook of the personal experiences of art educators to express their realities, identities, and challenges (Markello, 2013; Rolling & Bey, 2016). Many teachers have taught for years without discussing the barriers or challenges they experience with race, gender, and sexuality. Art educators and scholars James Haywood Rolling Jr. and Sharif Bey (2016) argue that narrative inquiry allows art educators to express their personal challenges, struggles, and dilemmas relating to culture, race, and gender.

Throughout history, people have spoken for Black women's experiences, publishing their stories without fully understanding their perspective and ignoring their experiences. Narrative inquiry with Black feminism theory offers a place for reflecting and healing. For Black women, narratives are a way to insert themselves into history that has excluded them (Lawton, 2022). I incorporated narrative inquiry in my research to offer a scholarly space for Black art educators to tell their stories and not have a privileged insider perspective to give a voice to their experiences. Narrative inquiry methods provided me with the data by carefully listening to the women's experiences on their art education teaching resources and accessibility to Black women artists.

Participant Selection

To comprehend the significance of teaching within the predominantly white field of art education, I deliberately chose to engage licensed Black women art educators currently working in K-12 education. I established the specific criteria that potential participants had to self-identify as Black or of African descent, be born in the United States, hold a state teaching license, and teach full-time.

Limitations

The study was limited to highlighting the impact of current curricular experiences of Black women K-12 art educators. I excluded retirees to capture the current narratives that could impact the classroom and the future of art education teaching resources. Race is a significant factor in teaching resources; therefore, White women are excluded from the study. When Black art is featured in textbooks, the focus is not on gender, I did not include Black men. I focus on the intersectionality of being Black and being a woman (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1997). I recognize the underrepresentation of other non-Black women-of-color art educators who may experience similar phenomena related to locating non-Black women-of-color artists in art education teaching resources. My decision to limit the race, gender, and employment status of the participants provided Black women K-12 art educators a safe space; as Suryia Nayak (2015) termed it, “Black-women-only...that takes account of the fact the racist social structures operate differently for Black women than they do for white women, white men and Black men” (p. 51).

The women in the study identified as Black, and all were born in the United States. They are licensed art educators who taught elementary and secondary levels in public, private, magnet, and charter schools. At the time of the study, their ages ranged from 20 to 69 years old and from 1 year to 26 years of teaching. All the participants' names were changed to protect their identities. The twenty-one Black women agreed to a one-hour interview. I used Christine Bold's (2012) semi-structured interviews to allow the participants to answer questions regarding their curricular experiences. This paper will focus on narratives for two of the four themes related to the research question describing the patterns and relationships in the participants' stories.

Theme 1: Identifying Teaching Resources

In my experience, my school district directed the use of textbooks in my art classroom. As a directive from my school district, I used textbooks in the classroom. I used Glencoe and Davis Publishing textbooks as my primary teaching resource and other textbooks for references. These textbooks provided valuable information on art history, lesson plan ideas, and art terminology. However, most of these textbooks featured one or two Black women artists in the entire book. To understand the effect of textbooks on the participants in this study, I began by asking the women:

Do You Use Textbooks?

Denise, who taught elementary art for one year, explained that based on her observations of the textbooks, she saw no need to use them at school. “I find, like a lot of the textbooks that are out there, are really based on classical Westernized art . . . that is not what I want to focus on for my students” (Denise, personal communication, December 9, 2018).

Anna, who taught middle school for 18 years, expressed a similar attitude toward textbooks:

I had textbooks when I first arrived, and I could not use them. I didn’t think they were good enough to keep using. So, I have packed them up and put them in storage somewhere. They were so antiquated and so out of date. The vocabulary was way above the heads of the students I was teaching. I just thought I could do this better. . . . I am tired of them, European White men . . . so I spend very little time on them. (personal communication, November 25, 2018)

I could sense the frustration in these women as they reflected on the last time they had relied on books. Their major complaint was that the books were outdated and invalid instructional guides.

Some teachers used textbooks for classroom instruction, definitions, and artmaking techniques. Leah, who has taught middle school art for eight years, is one of the few women in the study who used textbooks. She explained, “I do use textbooks. I have three different textbooks from Davis Art. I go back and forth with, and I like to use the readings to supplement the artmaking that we’re doing” (personal communication, December 6, 2018).

According to the women’s answers, the study reveals that 11% do not use textbooks, 7% seldom use textbooks, and 3% do use textbooks (Figure 2). The common theme arose: Black women K–12 art teachers did not perceive art education textbooks as helpful in developing a diverse curriculum. Many women believed that art education textbooks were either antiquated, biased, insufficient for classroom use, or did not enhance student learning. Art education textbooks mainly served as a supplement for providing K-12 students with art terminology or meeting a school district’s reading requirement, not diversifying the curriculum. The two major textbook publishers the teachers used were Davis Publishing and Glencoe. Other challenges arose for the women in the study who did have textbooks, such as language barriers and

limited budgets to order new books. Some teachers never had textbooks to make a comparison.

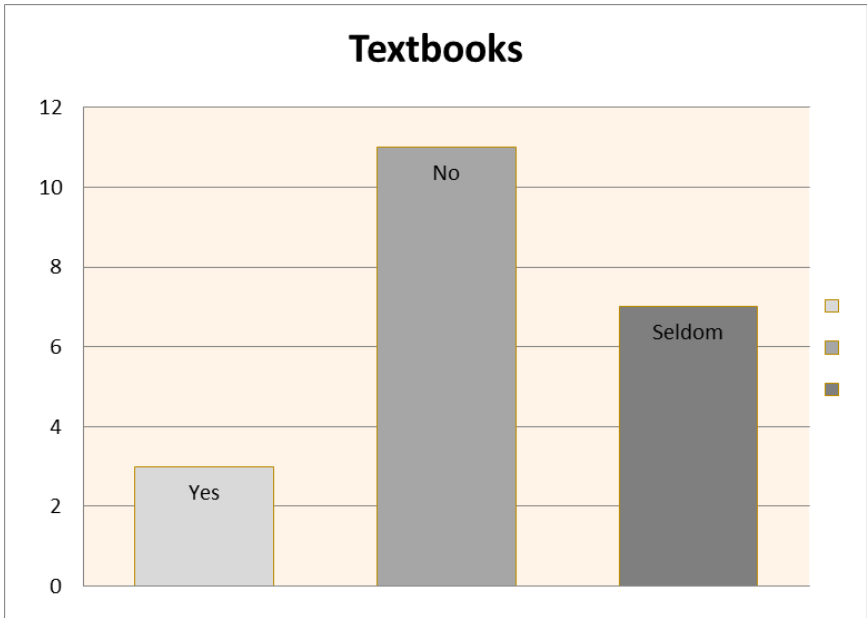


Figure 2. Teachers Who Use Textbooks in the Classroom

Where do you find your teaching resources?

I asked the women what other classroom instruction resources were available if they did not use textbooks. Michelle taught elementary art for three years and said she used textbooks but stopped. She stated that the textbooks showed great examples and instructions but claimed the textbooks showed cookie-cutter art. Michelle explains how to gain current knowledge:

I go online, and I look up artists, and I read a lot of books. Just go online, and I look at museums and see what artists are represented in the museum right now... I do Google search all the time. Yes, if I'm looking for contemporary collage artists... I don't use a specific search, and I'll look at the website that will take it to another website and take me to another one.

Courtney, who taught elementary school for 15 years, described how she locates artists on the Internet:

I go to the Internet and type in the artist's name. I start looking at sites that have either the site directly related to that artist, and they have a website, or I just start during my own research pulling up resources—print it out—pieces of artwork, showing on my screen in the classroom . . . but it's not a specific website that I actually go to find the artist; I go and do the research. (personal communication, December 2, 2018)

The women explained they sought additional resources from museums and artists' web pages.

In speaking with the women, I noticed that veteran art educators built their own library, collecting resources over a timespan, but that many of the newer art educators had not been in the field long enough to do so. The lack of instructional resources was not a primary concern of the veterans. The study revealed that they purchased textbooks and created a library for diverse teaching resources. For example, Sally, who taught high school for 20 years, stated, “Oh yes, I have my own Artist Library books. I've had for 10 years or more. Some particular artists, yes, I have my own personal books” (personal communication, December 9, 2018). Over the years, I also created a library of books and magazines that feature diverse artists from bookstores, museums, and art shows.

Based on the interviews, the women contribute to the Internet as the primary source to seek teaching resources, not art education textbooks. The women used YouTube videos, Pinterest, Instagram, and online magazines as additional resources. The National Art Education Association (NAEA) Convention, galleries, and museums were other places to purchase teaching resources. Some teachers received donations of art and books. Many of the women randomly did a Google search to seek artists or art demonstrations unless they had a particular artist they were teaching. A few teachers' school districts provided a website, such as *Art of Ed* and *Art in Action*, to locate teaching resources, but the selection was limited, and they still had to conduct their research. In listening to the Black women art educators' stories, using technology did make it quicker to locate teaching resources, but not easier to locate Black women artists.

Theme 2: Underrepresentation of Black Women Artists in Teaching Resources

The second emergent theme is the underrepresentation of Black women artists based on the teaching resources used for instruction and curricula. Black women artists historically have been scarce in educational teaching resources, regardless of the level of instruction. The inadequate representation of Black women artists in art education and art history is not uncommon, making it difficult for educators to incorporate the artists into their curricula.

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Great Women Artists DVD Series
This series of programs presents an in-depth look at some of the greatest women artists of all time. It features spectacular imagery and many rare historical photographs. 45 minutes.

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
87085-1003	Cassatt	\$19.99
87085-1001	Kahlo	19.99
87085-1002	O'Keeffe	19.99



Getting To Know... DVD Series
These entertaining, animated DVDs present an intelligent yet lighthearted introduction to the world's greatest artists in the style of Mike Venezia's award-winning children's books. Praised by Booklist, School Library Journal, and Video Librarian, these DVDs are loved by teachers, librarians, parents, and kids alike.

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
80618-1006	Cassatt, 34 minutes	\$29.95
80618-1002	da Vinci, 23 minutes	29.95
80618-1004	Degas, 22 minutes	29.95
80618-1004	Michelangelo, 23 minutes	29.95
80618-1007	Mozart, 22 minutes	29.95
80618-1001	Renaissance, 22 minutes	29.95
80618-1009	Ringling, 22 minutes	29.95
80618-1003	Van Gogh, 22 minutes	29.95
80618-1005	Warhol, 24 minutes	29.95



Who is the Artist? DVD Series
Friendly narration and beautifully reproduced artwork make this DVD series a great introduction to the life and work of famous artists. Students will learn to recognize the artists by their styles, techniques, and subjects. The interactive approach of each video encourages students to evaluate paintings as they are presented. At the end, they are shown other paintings by the same artist and asked to identify "Who is the Artist?". The complete set presents 18 artists and more than 75 works. Each DVD is approximately 30 minutes long.

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
87091-2001	Degas, Renais. Cassatt	\$24.99
87091-2002	Cornell, Van Gogh, Seurat	24.99
87091-2003	Barker, Bopper, Wood	24.99
87091-2004	Chagall, Koon, Klee/Pol	24.99
87091-2005	Dufl, Gagnon, Matisse	24.99
87091-2006	Eckstein, Debaud, Warhol	24.99

622 books & media 800.447.8192 to order

Figure 3. Great Women Artists DVD Series, Dick Blick Catalog

I examined the 2020 Dick Blick art education catalog used during this study, they feature a *Great Women Artists* DVD (Figure 3) series of Mary Cassatt, Frida

Kahlo, and Georgia O’Keeffe. The advertisement reads, “This series of programs presents an in-depth look at some of the greatest women artists of all time. It features spectacular imagery and many rare historical photographs” (Blick, 2019, p. 622). Based on this DVD in the catalog, art teachers could believe there are no Black Great Women Artists.

Art historian Lisa Farrington (2005) wrote a book, *Creating Their Own Image: The History of African American Women Artists*, dedicated to Black women artists because no cohesive historical record of these women existed. The participants revealed that they have access to various venues to seek teaching resources. I next asked them whether their teaching resources featured Black women artists.

Are Black women artists represented in your teaching resources?

The following narratives demonstrate the challenges Black women art educators face when seeking Black women artists. Keisha taught K-5 for 24 years and replied, “Other than Jacob Lawrence and Georgia O’Keeffe, I don’t think they do not have any African American women in there” (personal communication, November 23, 2018). Also, Jaime taught high school for 13 years, observed, “I didn't see any at all. I didn't see any resources featuring any Black women at all. So underrepresented, it's not even a phrase; they just were not there” (personal communication, November 27, 2018). Their experiences, unfortunately, reveal a common pattern when seeking diverse artists to teach in the classroom.

Despite the wealth of information the Internet provides, the women encountered a common challenge when trying to locate information about Black women artists online. The difficulty lies in finding comprehensive resources that consolidate information about these artists. There is not a singular digital space that highlights Black women artists as a collective. Consequently, art educators are compelled to conduct individual online searches for specific artists, relying on their names and distinctive styles for recognition. This can pose a significant hurdle, particularly for those who are unaware of these artist’s existence in the first place.

From the interviews, not all the participants noticed whether Black women artists were featured in their teaching resources. First-year high school teacher Paula admitted that she did not check for Black women artists among the teaching resources on her school’s website. Her purpose for looking at the

school's designated site was for supplies. Paula indicated that she relied on cultural institutions like the Studio Museum of Harlem.

These results indicate that K-12 art educators who are Black women artists are insufficiently represented in their instructional materials, irrespective of whether they use textbooks, materials provided by their school districts, or conduct online research. Their accounts illustrate the prevalence of teaching resources centered around White, Eurocentric artists and their challenges in identifying resources featuring Black women artists in K-12 art education.

Can you name a Black woman artist?

I asked the participants to name Black women artists they regularly recognize in teaching resources. There was one artist that the women repeatedly named. Helen, who taught for 22 years at the elementary level, explained:

There is always the standby Faith Ringgold. That's the first thing that comes to my mind that she's in several of the books with different artists that are not commonly known. You don't hear from those [artists] in the textbooks. . . . I would say out of Black females, there are probably only three Black females for a textbook, and sometimes they repeated Faith Ringgold in more than one book. (personal communication, November 28, 2018)

Felicia indicated that among her library of art books are two books that focus solely on Black women artists and one of the books Faith Ringgold's art. Felicia explained the ease of incorporating Faith Ringgold, saying,

Faith Ringgold, like, has been around for a long time and has a lot of work out there. There were some lesson plans already in place for them, but other than that, there is not a lot at all. (personal communication, November 28, 2018)

Thirteen of the twenty-one women mentioned Faith Ringgold because of the availability of her artwork in K-12 art education teaching resources. Faith Ringgold has many artwork and teaching resources readily available for teachers. With art education's promotion of primarily Faith Ringgold, this form of tokenism to claim diversity could limit the visibility of other Black women artists.

Tokenism is a significant problem in art education textbooks and teaching resources. While there is a claim of teaching diversity, showing one or two of the same Black women artists in a textbook is not diversification or equity. Often excluded are lesser-known Black women artists from K-12 art education teaching resources. The White patriarchal system of the art world benefits only a few women artists, and these artists are used to stifle the success of other women artists.

To further demonstrate the tokenism of Black women artists in art education teaching resources, I further examined the 2020 Dick Blick art education catalog used during this study. For example, Faith Ringgold is the only Black among several White male artists in the *Getting To Know* DVD series. The availability of Ringgold's artwork is remarkable, demonstrating from the narratives that they selected artists that were easily accessible to them. Examining art education catalogs that displayed the same attitude as book publishers in presenting the same Black women artists could leave art educators believing Black women are not artists. Their stories indicate the continuing quest to locate textbooks and teaching resources that include Black women artists beyond the few tokens.

When I asked the participants to recall the names of other Black women artists, I was taken aback by the moments of hesitation, with some requesting a moment to think. Most women mentioned one or two more Black women artists, but one woman could not name any. This observation highlights that even among Black women art educators, a challenge exists in naming Black women artists. It is crucial for art education to attribute the limited exposure during pre-service training and the need for more teaching resources that introduce diverse voices.

Concluding Thoughts

Black K-12 art educators, despite the plethora of textbooks, Internet searches, and catalogs at their disposal, continually find themselves on the quest for teaching resources that enable them to craft innovative and diverse art lessons. This research delved into Black women's unspoken stories and experiences in K-12 art education, merging them with Black feminist pedagogies and narrative inquiry to shed light on the stark underrepresentation of Black women artists in teaching materials. The findings drawn from interviews underscore the prevailing bias in the field of art education, where the promotion of White,

Eurocentric-themed artists takes precedence, leaving Black women artists insufficiently acknowledged.

The primary aim of this study was to identify and explore whether other Black women K-12 art educators encountered similar challenges when searching for Black women artists to include in their classroom instruction. Consequently, this paper elucidates the issues of teaching resources that fall short in providing the artworks of Black women artists to foster critical discussions on history, culture, and identity. This dearth can inadvertently lead educators to gravitate toward more accessible White and Black male artists. The data from the study indicates that art education textbooks used to develop curricula, predominantly reflect the Eurocentric framework centered around White artists (Wilson, 2017).

The accounts shared by participants have unveiled a glaring deficiency in traditional teaching materials, mainly textbooks, in their representation of Black women artists. Most art education textbooks perpetuate a cycle of tokenism by showcasing the same artworks created by Black women while sidelining lesser-known artists of color. If Black women K-12 art educators can only recall one or two Black women artists, this signifies a substantial shortcoming in art education. This topic does not affect just Black women but impacts all art educators. Regardless of their race and gender. If we are willing to instruct students of color about White male artists, we should equally be eager to introduce them to the rich contributions of Black women artists. A call to action is crucial within art education to ensure the inclusion of Black women artists in K-12 art classrooms and build a more inclusive repository of artworks.

Reflecting on my experiences with the curriculum, the narratives shared by fellow Black women K-12 art educators offer a profound sense of empowerment (Collins, 2000). I am grateful to the 21 Black women art educators who generously shared their stories. The candor, occasional uncertainty, and relief in discussing the frustrations related to teaching resources and the underrepresentation of Black women artists are acknowledged. It is crucial to emphasize that this study does not encompass the experiences of all Black women K-12 art educators; instead, it sheds light on their unique needs within the classroom. Nevertheless, the common thread is unmistakable – we are Black women art educators, and our contributions hold immeasurable value. For Black women K-12 art educators, their narrative illustrates that they must remain advocates and continue researching independently.

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