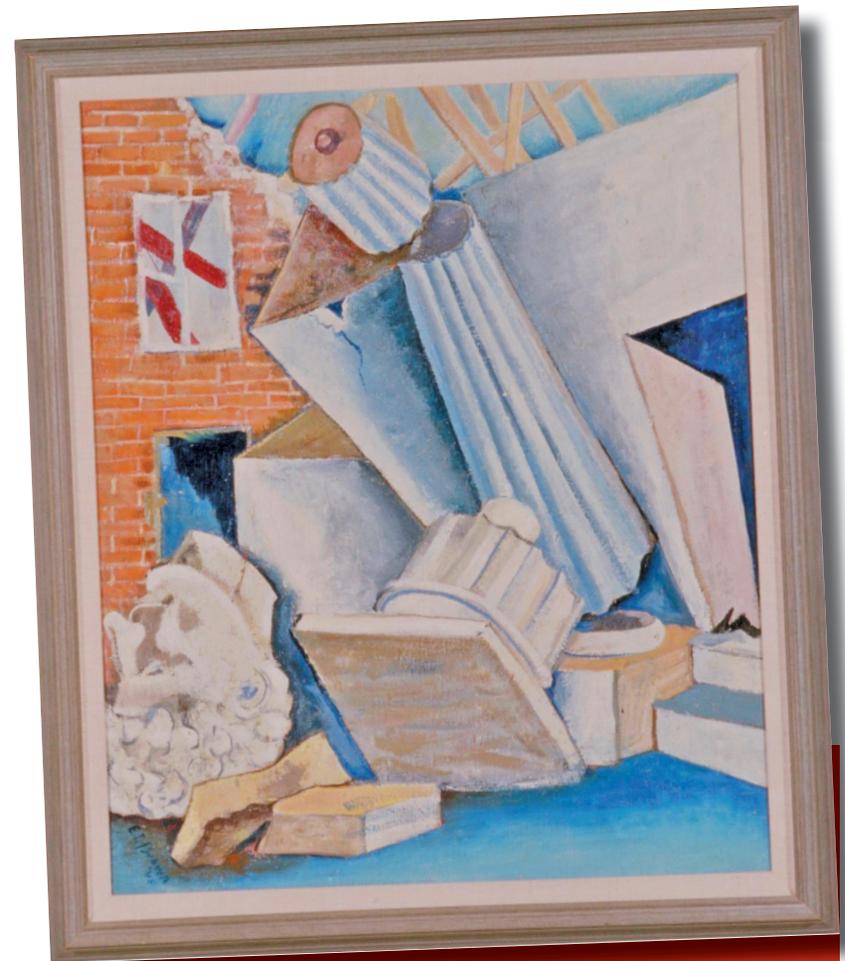


>> Eugene Jesse Brown

Eugene Jesse Brown was an African-American artist and educator. Born in Arkansas in 1895, Brown moved to Oklahoma with his family when he was a child. He studied art at the University of Kansas and at Carnegie Tech in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Brown's most notable contribution to Oklahoma was establishing the art department at Langston University, Oklahoma's historic black college. By 1930, he had established a four-year art degree program and the department was offering 22 art courses. Brown remained chair of the department for 37 years. He passed away in 1963. Brown's paintings are now collected in Oklahoma museums and institutions such as the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art in Norman, Langston University, and the Oklahoma State Art Collection at the Oklahoma Capitol.

Brown found a wealth of subject matter to paint in the urban environment around him. His paintings reflected his observations of society and depicted contemporary social issues of the working class. Through the use of the basic elements of art such as color, line, shape, form, and space, Brown told dynamic stories on canvas. He was able to create drama, tension, and emotion with his paintbrush.

Violent Times is an oil painting that Brown created in 1948. The painting depicts a tumbling, broken column with the head of a noble statue lying on the ground. Further destruction is shown in the background with falling architectural structures and crumbling brick walls. The idea of movement, or that the structures are in the act of falling, is introduced by the use of diagonal lines throughout the composition.



Violent Times by Eugene Jesse Brown (1948)

Use the activities below to develop your own interpretation of the story Brown was telling in his painting ***Violent Times***.

Feel & Respond

- List five words you think of when looking at the painting.
- How does the painting make you feel? What emotions does it evoke?
- Does the painting remind you of anything you have seen in real life?
- Does it make you think of other paintings?
- Does it make you think of any movies, stories, or songs?

Describe & Analyze

- What do you think the structures, column, and head of the statue looked like before they fell?
- Do you think they are important?
- What event could have caused them to fall?
- Will it be difficult to put them back together?
- Why do you think Brown used the word 'violent' in the title of the painting?

Compare

Using the library or Internet, research what was happening in Oklahoma in the years leading up to the creation of the painting in 1948 and the events that may have influenced Brown's artwork. Consider important historical events where society was affected, such as the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, the Civil Rights movement, and World War II. What similarities can you draw between history and the imagery of the painting?

Interpret

Using your answers to the questions above, write a story about what you think is happening in the painting. Include what happened just before the picture in the painting as well as what happened after. Remember, this is your own interpretation and anything can happen in your story. Will your story have a happy ending?