



Horace Pippin

Title

Saying Prayers

Medium

Oil on canvas

Date

1943

Dimensions

16 × 20 1/8 in. (40.6 × 51.1 cm)

Accession number

80.4

Credit Line

Purchased with the Betsy James Wyeth Fund, 1980

Web Description

Horace Pippin is one of the most important twentieth-century African American artists. Self-taught, Pippin lost much of the use of his right arm while serving in France during World War I. Upon his return to America, he created burnt-wood panels and oil paintings in his home in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Domestic scenes, including *Saying Prayers*, were among the most popular works by Pippin in his lifetime. These intimate family moments in an African American home, often around the stove or hearth, reflect Pippin's nostalgia for his own childhood—a theme that touched many in the troubled times between the world wars. Pippin creates strong emotion through simple shapes and color. The painting features a mother and her two children sharing an evening ritual. Accents of red, white, and green enliven the primarily black, brown, and gray scene. Pippin rose to prominence through such well-connected Pennsylvania friends as artist N.C. Wyeth, critic Christian Brinton, and collector Albert Barnes. Pippin was among the initial group of self-taught artists included in the Museum of Modern Art's early exhibitions of the genre in 1938 and 1942.