ART AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

What is a Portrait?
Photographic portraits from the Smithsonian’s 2008 exhibit, “Let Your Motto Be Resistance: African American Portraits.”

Frederick Douglass
Unidentified Photographer, 1856
Frederick Douglass was born into slavery and escaped in 1838. He fought to get rid of slavery and helped countless others escape to freedom.
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**Sojourner Truth**  
*by Randall Studio, 1865*  
Born a slave in 1797 in Ulster County, N.Y., Sojourner Truth spoke out against slavery and injustice and for women’s rights.
W.E.B. Du Bois

by Addison N. Scurlock, 1911

W.E.B. Du Bois is one of the most important thinkers, philosophers and activists in the history of the United States. He wrote a great deal about civil rights, focusing on the ideas behind race and inequality and how to overcome prejudice. He believed that education, science and the world of big ideas were the most important tools in fighting for change.
Sarah Vaughan

by Josef Breitenbach, 1950

Sarah Vaughan was one of the most well-known vocalists of her lifetime, 1924-1990. Her strong and beautiful voice drew attention to jazz music all over the world. She performed as a soloist as well as part of ensembles and was known for the tremendous amount of feeling and power she incorporated into her music.