

American Collection #4:  
Jo Baker's Bananas



## American Idol

*Jo Baker's Bananas* belongs to "The American Collection," a series of 12 story quilts created by Faith Ringgold to celebrate African American history and culture. This work features the U.S.-born French performer wearing her famous fruit fashion statement.



## American Collection #4: Jo Baker's Bananas, 1997

### Take a closer look

**Faith Ringgold (b. 1930)** combines textile designs with painted forms and patterns. See if you can distinguish the brushstrokes from the fabric prints.

### Something to talk about

Ringgold's story quilts often combine word and image to develop a narrative. In *Jo Baker's Bananas*, the artist omits the use of text. What tale might you tell to describe this work?

### In her own words

"After I decided to be an artist, the first thing that I had to believe was that I, a Black woman, could penetrate the art scene, and that, further, I could do so without sacrificing one iota of my Blackness or my femaleness or my humanity."

### Who knew?

Josephine Baker (1906–1975), who rose to prominence in the 1920s, refused to perform for segregated crowds. Ringgold depicted her because Baker actively participated in the Civil Rights Movement and Ringgold's mother idolized her.

Faith Ringgold, *American Collection #4: Jo Baker's Bananas*, 1997; Acrylic on canvas with pieced fabric border, 80½ x 76 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Purchased with funds donated by the Estate of Barbara Bingham Moore, Olga V. Hargis Family Trusts, and the Members' Acquisition Fund; Faith Ringgold © 1997; Photo by Lee Stalsworth

