Manierre Dawson was born on December 23, 1867, in Chicago, Illinois, to Henry and Mary Dawson. He received a degree in civil engineering from the Armour Institute of Technology (now the Illinois Institute of Technology) in 1890 and went on to teach at the Armour Institute of Technology and Illinois Institute of Technology, becoming one of the first black engineers to earn a doctoral degree in engineering at a major university. In 1914, he became the first black to be elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

Mathematics and Art

Manierre Dawson's work, especially his use of geometric shapes and perspectives, has been noted as an example of the "Cubo-Futurist" style. His paintings often feature abstract forms and shapes, which some critics have described as "mathematical" or "technical." Dawson's work has been praised for its precision and clarity, and he is often credited with being one of the first artists to incorporate mathematical concepts into his art.

Artistic Shifts

Dawson's work was characterized by its use of geometric shapes and perspectives, which were often combined with abstract forms. In his later work, he began to incorporate more organic shapes and forms, which some critics have described as a move away from his earlier, more mathematically precise style.

Discussion Questions

1. How is math incorporated in Dawson's work?
2. What do you see when you look at Manierre Dawson's Equation? How is it related to mathematics?
3. How would Dawson's career be different if he had moved to New York?

Teaching Tips: Dawson's work can be used to introduce students to the concept of the interplay between mathematics and art. His use of geometric shapes and perspectives can help students understand how mathematical concepts can be used to create art.
MANIERRE DAWSON (American, 1887–1969)

EQUATION
1914, oil on cardboard on board, 42 x 34 in. (106.68 x 86.36 cm)

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