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# STATES OF THE UNION

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Highlights from the  
TCU Permanent Art Collection

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## **January 20 - February 19, 2015**

Moudy Gallery, Moudy North, TCU

2805 S. University Dr., Fort Worth, Texas 76129

(817) 257-2588

Monday – Friday, 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Admission is free

## **Opening Reception**

January 20, 2015

6:30 p.m.

Moudy Gallery, Moudy North, TCU

## **Panel Discussion**

February 4, 2015

5:30 p.m.

Moudy Gallery, Moudy North, TCU

Featuring Rachel Livedalen, Dr. Jim Riddlesperger,  
and Dr. Mark Thistlethwaite

Visit our website for blog updates and additional material:

<http://www.tcuart.wix.com/statesoftheuniontcu>

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presented by: 

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# **The Art Galleries at TCU**

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# STATES OF THE UNION

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## Highlights from the TCU Permanent Art Collection

The State of the Union is the traditional, annual address, during which the President of the United States sets forth the country's most pressing issues to both Congress and the American people. With this premier exhibition of highlights from the TCU Permanent Art Collection we seek to engage the community in a visual exploration of historic issues our country has faced and continues to confront. We hope this display of the university's art works will be the first in a series of exhibitions centering on themes and subjects that will contribute to TCU's learning and creative environment.

This exhibition's artworks, in either context, content, and/or style, present American history and politics as interpreted by artists, some of whom were employees of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration (WPA), civil rights leaders, and military veterans. In diverse ways and differing media, these artists' compositions provoke intriguing questions regarding national identity, values, and conflicts. Also, by referencing or being influenced by American history and politics, the art works suggest a consideration of our relationship to our national past.

*States of the Union* is the fruit of a semester-long project assigned to the first-year Master of Art History students in Dr. Mark Thistlethwaite's seminar, The Art Museum. In this catalogue, you will find short essays by the exhibition's curators regarding American presidents, the WPA, civil rights leaders, Manifest Destiny, and foreign policy. We would like to thank Dr. Thistlethwaite for trusting and inspiring us with this exhibition, and, for their knowledge and support, Sara-Jayne Parsons and Devon Nowlin of the Art Galleries at TCU.

Thank you for coming to the exhibition and please enjoy this first public presentation of selected highlights from the TCU Permanent Art Collection.

Curated by:

Cathryn Bidal  
Lola Clairmont  
Alexa Ibarguen  
Anna Kern





# Contributors



**Cathryn Bidal** is from Rio Rancho, New Mexico and graduated from the University of New Mexico in 2014 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art History with a minor in Medieval Studies. Her primary area of research interest is Eighteenth Century European Art. She aims to pursue a career in curatorial work in an art museum.



**Lola Clairmont** is from Atlanta, Georgia and graduated with a Bachelor of the Arts in Art History with minors in French and Organizational Management from Agnes Scott College in 2013. Her focus is in Modern and Contemporary art with interests in the art market and unconventional mediums. She aspires to work in an art museum and eventually become a museum director.



**Alexa Ibarguen** is from Dallas, Texas and graduated from Louisiana State University with a Bachelor of the Arts in Art History in 2013. Her areas of interest include Modern and Contemporary art, Latin American art, and the history of design. After graduation, she intends to work as a museum curator before pursuing a Ph.D in Art History.



**Anna Kern** is from Dallas, Texas and graduated from Trinity University with a Bachelor of the Arts in Communication with minors in Art History and Spanish. Before attending TCU, Anna served as the Assistant Director at Kirk Hopper Fine Art in Dallas for two years. She aims to pursue curatorial work in Contemporary or Latin American art.

# George and Martha

Jane Stuart

Cathryn Bidal



Jane Stuart, *George Washington*

Portraits of American presidents are some of the most instantly recognizable images in the American visual lexicon, and representations of George Washington are no exception. Artist Gilbert Stuart painted the most famous portrait of our nation's first president, the *Athenaeum Portrait*, in 1796; this portrait distinguishes the dollar bill. The portrait was commissioned by Washington's wife Martha, whose likeness Stuart captured as well. Portraits of the Washingtons proved to be very popular and Stuart completed many copies of these portraits during his lifetime. His daughter Jane Stuart continued this tradition after his death in 1828, and one set of these portraits has been hanging in the TCU Library for many years.

Jane Stuart was active as an artist from 1828 until 1888, and while she is typically spoken of in relation to her father's artistic career, her work was well received during her lifetime. Her painting *Scene from a Novel or a Subject in Literature* was displayed in the Boston Athenaeum in 1834 and her compositions were also



*Jane Stuart, Martha Washington*

exhibited at the prestigious National Academy of Design in New York. She began her artistic career by working with her father in his workshop and was the only one of Stuart's children to become an artist. While Jane Stuart composed original pictures, her most popular paintings were after her father's portraits of George and Martha Washington. Stuart executed numerous copies of these images to keep her father's reputation as an artist alive.

These works also constituted her greatest monetary success. Images of George and Martha Washington served as symbols of patriotism and national identity for a young country, and Stuart crafted a successful career by capitalizing on the American reverence for the Washingtons with her iconic portraits. This set of Stuart's portraits has long been displayed in the library, but has largely gone unnoticed. We hope that their inclusion in this exhibit will give the TCU community a chance to rediscover Stuart's portraits of America's "First Couple."

# WPA Involvement

## Will Barnet, Alice Neel, & Lee Krasner

Anna Kern



Will Barnet, *Ariadne*

Throughout the 1930s, a period dominated by political unrest and economic upheaval, Will Barnet, Alice Neel, and Lee Krasner maintained an ambiguous relationship with the government. All three artists participated in the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which meant they were essentially employees of the federal government, yet their works and political agendas at times rebelled against the very government that allowed them to continue producing art.

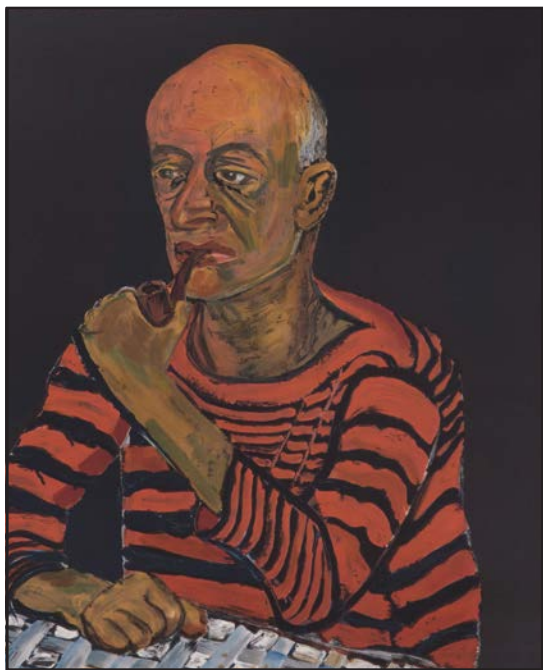
Established in 1935 as a relief measure during the Great Depression, the WPA's Federal Arts Project commissioned unemployed artists to participate in public projects. As a young artist during the 1930s, Will Barnet served as the WPA's technical adviser in lithography. Simultaneously, he embraced Social Realism—an artistic movement highlighting the desperation of ordinary people during the Depression. Additionally, Barnet created prints for the Mexican muralist José Clemente Orozco and the American political cartoonist William Gropper: artists whose works featured satirical, anti-government themes. Despite his commitment to Social Realism, Barnet moved to abstraction in the 1940s and then to simplified figuration, as evident in his works in the TCU Permanent Art Collection.

*Summer* and *Ariadne* typify Barnet's work from the 1950s and later, in their minimally detailed, flat forms produced by the silkscreening process. Inspired by vacations spent in Maine, *Summer* presents Barnet's wife and daughter in a daily scene of domestic tranquility, as opposed to his previous works featuring the everyday downtrodden. Although



Will Barnet, *Summer*





Alice Neel, *John*

similarly private, Barnett departs from familial subject matter in *Ariadne*. This work depicting the Cretan goddess stems from a mythological series in which Barnett looked to ancient sources in order to convey a sense of the iconic and eternal; he often includes profiled figures reminiscent of those found on Greek vases—a reflection of his childhood fascination with classical Greek art.

Like Will Barnett, Alice Neel, despite now being regarded as one of the major portraitists of the twentieth century, faced the difficulties of the Great Depression

and worked for the WPA. Politically, Neel supported the Left, briefly joined the Communist party and continually surrounded herself with a Communist circle. The subjects of her portraits attest to this, as they were often left-wing intellectuals and social activists. In *John*, Neel portrays John Rothschild, a long-time companion, whose bald head, concentrated eyes, and striped shirt resemble attributes associated with Pablo Picasso—an artist hugely influential on American painters, and a well-known Communist. However, despite physical similarities to Picasso, Rothschild, who supported Neel's work, was never affiliated with the Communist Party.

Another WPA artist with leftist political leanings was Lee Krasner. She participated actively in the Artists Union, an organization fighting for artists' welfare during the 1930s, and was once arrested at a Union demonstration in New York. Soon after being employed by the WPA around 1934, Krasner was promoted to a supervisory role in the mural division. In 1937, after leaving the WPA, Krasner studied with the influential artist-teacher Hans Hofmann and began embracing abstract painting. By

the mid 1940s, she was the most significant female artist in the male-dominated Abstract Expressionist group. Her lithograph *Blue Stone* from the TCU Permanent Art Collection is a post-abstract expressionist work, although it is derived from that earlier period. Interestingly, some argue that the United States utilized Abstract Expressionism as a tool for Cold War propaganda. Evidence suggests that the CIA-funded Abstract Expressionist exhibitions organized by the United States Information Agency during the 1950s that traveled throughout Europe to promote American intellectual freedom in opposition to Soviet Union art bound by Communist ideology. Ironically, the art of Krasner, who had long supported Communism—although never a member of the party—indirectly, through her involvement with Abstract Expressionism, became aligned with the United State’s anti-Communist goals throughout the 1950s.



Lee Krasner, *Untitled*

# Art and Civil Rights

Romare Bearden & Larry Rivers

Lola Clairmont

Romare Bearden, a significant artist of the Harlem Renaissance (1920s to mid 1930s), began his illustrious art career as a political cartoonist in New York, served in the United States Army in World War II, and received the National Medal of Arts. In 1963, in the midst of the civil rights movement, Bearden co-founded the artist group *Spiral*, an African- American coalition committed to confronting contemporary political issues through African- American art. The distinct shapes and colors of *Girl In the Garden* allude to Bearden's collage works, for which he is primarily known. Scholars relate Bearden's common motif of patchwork patterns to the quilts sewn by slaves, which contained coded messages pertaining to the Underground Railroad.



Romare Bearden, *In the Garden*

Larry Rivers, a precursor to Pop Art, also employs a collage-like style. Rivers visually links three black, historical figures in *Black Revue* from the *Boston Massacre* series: Crispus Attucks, a black man killed during the 1770 Boston Massacre, who is often regarded as the first American killed in the Revolutionary War; James Meredith, a black man who was shot during the 1966 civil rights March Against Fear protest; and the poet Yusef Komunyakaa, whose poetry conveys the racial tension felt by black, Vietnam War soldiers during the civil rights movement. These historic figures and the title, *Black Revue*, tie together the history of black men ironically fighting for freedoms to which they did not have access.



Larry Rivers, *Black Revue*

# Art and War

McKie Trotter

Alexa Ibarguen



McKie Trotter, *Two Levels*

McKie Trotter participated in the Fort Worth Circle, a group of artists working from 1945 to 1955 in an eclectic modernist style. Prior to his involvement in this avant-garde group, he served in the American Army and, as an infantry captain, was taken as a prisoner of war by the Germans in 1944. Forced to march in freezing weather while starving, Trotter's war experience would haunt him later in life. This painting, from the *Two Levels* series completed shortly after his return to the United States, features a somber color palette paired with menacing red shapes derived from his traumatic experience overseas.

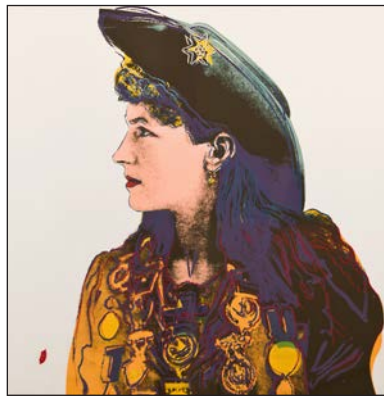
After the war, Trotter accepted different teaching jobs while completing his Master of Fine Arts degree at the University of Georgia. He eventually settled in Fort Worth, having accepted a position at Texas Christian University in 1955. Trotter dedicated the rest of his life to teaching, advocating abstraction, and exhibiting his modernist paintings around the country.

# Manifest Celebrity

Andy Warhol

Lola Clairmont

The portraits of *Sitting Bull* and *Annie Oakley* from Andy Warhol's screenprint series, *Cowboys and Indians*, serve as reminders and perpetuations of a romanticized American West. Other portraits in the *Cowboys and Indians* series include those of President Teddy Roosevelt, General Armstrong Custer, Geronimo, and John Wayne. Warhol's celebrity status as a Pop artist corresponds well with his portrait of celebrity sharpshooter Annie Oakley, who performed alongside Sitting Bull in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show in the late 1880s.



Andy Warhol, *Annie Oakley*



Andy Warhol, *Sitting Bull*

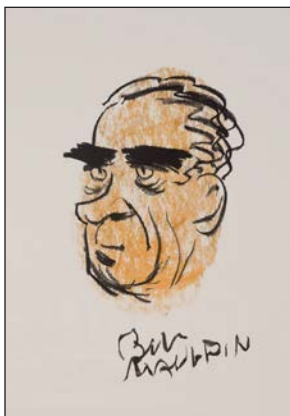
The United States government, which restricted Sitting Bull's activities outside of American Indian Territory, allowed the famed Sitting Bull to participate in the Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show as a propagandistic symbol of a vanishing people. Warhol's visually enticing style glamorizes the government justification of Western land grabs under the guise of Manifest Destiny. Warhol's work ironically celebrates Sitting Bull while contemporary American Indians continue to endure political, physical, and economic hardships.



# Presidential Caricature

Bill Mauldin

Cathryn Bidal

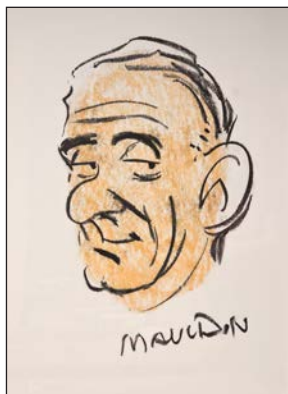


Bill Mauldin, *Richard Nixon*

Bill Mauldin was an American political cartoonist who won two Pulitzer prizes for his editorial cartoons. The success his series *Up Front* from the “Stars and Stripes” newspaper led to Mauldin’s first Pulitzer in 1945, and in 1959 he was awarded the prize again for a cartoon critiquing Soviet Russia’s treatment of Nobel Prize-winning author Boris Pasternak. Mauldin was known for representing the realities of life, regardless of how unpopular the subject might be, and for not caring whom he offended. The works by Mauldin featured in this exhibition are two cartoon caricatures from 1966 of President Lyndon Johnson and then former Vice President Richard Nixon.

The portraits represent the figures in an abstracted manner. Johnson and Nixon are represented as floating heads without bodies or outside context. This removes the presidents from the events that surrounded them and isolates their distinctive facial features. Unlike the naturalism and serious facial expression featured in Jane Stuart’s *George Washington*, the faces of Johnson and Nixon are orange and their features, particularly their eyebrows, are exaggerated. Neither figure makes direct eye contact with the viewer. Johnson glances sideways at the viewer and Nixon stares past the viewer. This differentiates Johnson and Nixon from the standard manner of presidential representation as heroic or flattering.

Mauldin’s portraits are immediate and gestural, and this too, contrasts with the formality that typically accompanies presidential portraiture. In his capacity as an editorial cartoonist Mauldin regularly criticized both Johnson and Nixon during their presidencies, particularly over their handling of the Vietnam War. These works entered the TCU Permanent Art Collection in 1966 as a gift from the artist.



Bill Mauldin, *Lyndon B. Johnson*

# Latin America

Luis Jiménez and Antonio Alvarez

Alexa Ibarguen



Luis Jiménez, *Coscolina con Muerto*  
(*Flirt with Death*)

Luis Jiménez grew up in El Paso, the son of an illegal immigrant. Affected deeply by the culture of this border town, Jiménez's subject matter is explicitly political, often making satirical commentary about American perceptions of Latin American cultures. In his lithograph *Coscolina Con Muerto* (*Flirt with Death*), we see explicit references to unwelcome American involvement in Latin America in the phrases etched into the wall, which include "El Salvador" and "Guate" (Guatemala). The terms "Nicaragua," "Los Movados," and "C/S" indicate that Jiménez is addressing the Nicaraguan conflict of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

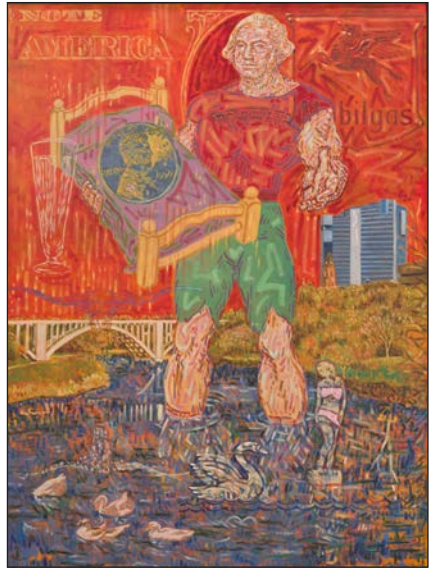
These terms surround a lascivious

American dame outfitted in an American flag dress and standing in front of a wall with jagged glass and barbed wire, possibly signifying a border, fortress, or prison. Most telling is her companion: a skeleton dressed as a Contra militant. The Contras had rebelled against the Sandinistas, who had wrested control of Nicaragua from the dictator "Tachito" Somoza in 1979. The Contra's battle against the Sandinistas was supported by illegal covert operations of the United States government, which resulted in the Iran-Contra Affair of 1986-87.

Antonio Alvarez's work is a commentary on American economics, politics, and culture based on his experiences while living in Texas from 1998 to 2000. His paintings are visually complex and layered with symbols from U.S. history and pop culture that suggest multiple meanings. He utilizes satire and humor as a critical device, and *George Washington Crossing the Trinity* is one such critique. A hulk-like, comical version of the iconic George Washington from the dollar bill, as seen in Jane Stuart's painting in this exhibition, is depicted crossing Fort Worth's Trinity River instead of the celebrated crossing of the Delaware. Alvarez modeled Washington's

body after large Paul Bunyan figures used to advertise businesses across the country, particularly muffler shops and hardware stores. He is depicted holding a bed with a penny and is surrounded by Fort Worth scenery, as well as a large glass, a small female figure, a longhorn steer, and a Mobilgas logo. Through his use of multivalent symbols, Alvarez places the meaning of his work in the viewer's hands.

*Medium Courthouse* pokes fun at the American dream with the phrase "Miracles Still Happen" positioned above the Tarrant County Courthouse in downtown Fort Worth. Alvarez superimposed the figure of a beauty queen onto the façade of the courthouse, a reference to the cult of beauty in contemporary culture. Other symbols in this composition evoke a sense of Fort Worth, such as the street map in the upper right and signage in the lower left.



Antonio Alvarez, *George Washington Crossing the Trinity*



Antonio Alvarez, *Medium Courthouse*

Alvarez completed his Master of Fine Arts degree in painting at TCU in 2000, and both of these works were a part of his thesis project *BABY DOCTOR JESUS REVEALS MAGIC GRINGOISM*. He now lives in Puebla, Mexico, where he teaches art at the University of Americas.

# Further Reading

## Jane Stuart

Barratt, Carrie Rebora, Gilbert Stuart, and Ellen Gross Miles. *Gilbert Stuart*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004.

Powel, Mary E. *Miss Jane Stuart, 1812-1888: Her Grandparents and Parents*. Newport, Rhode Island: Newport Historical Society, 1920.

## Will Barnet

Koob, Pamela. *Will Barnet and the Art Students League*. New York: The Art Students League of New York, 2010.

McGrady, Patrick J. *Will Barnet: Painting Without Illusion: the Genesis of Four Works from the 1960s*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University, 2003.

## Alice Neel

Temkin, Anna, ed. *Alice Neel*. Philadelphia: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2000.

## Lee Krasner

Gail, Levin. *Lee Krasner: a Biography*. New York: William Morrow, 2011.

Hobbs, Robert. *Lee Krasner*. New York: Independent Curators International, 1999.

## Romare Bearden

Di Giulio, Margaret, Alicia Garcia, Richard Powell, and Victoria Trout. *Conjuring Bearden*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

## Larry Rivers

Levy, David, Barbara Rose, and Jacquelyn Sewer. *Larry Rivers: Art and the Artist*. Boston: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 2002.

Wye, Deborah. *Committed to Print: Social and Political Themes in Recent American Printed Art*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1988.

## McKie Trotter

Edwards, Jim, Katie Robinson Edwards, and Mark L. Smith. *Texas Modern: The Rediscovery of Early Texas Abstraction*. Waco: Martin Museum of Art, Baylor University, 2007.

Womack, Morgan. "The Paintings of McKie Trotter." Master's thesis, Texas Christian University, 2005.

## Andy Warhol

Mason, Rainer, and Andy Warhol. *Andy Warhol: The American Indian, Paintings and Drawings*. London: Skarstedt Gallery, 2012.

## Bill Mauldin

DePastino, Todd. *Bill Mauldin, A Life Up Front*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2008.

Mauldin, Bill. *Up Front*. New York: H. Holt and Co, 1945.

## Luis Jiménez

Ramos, E. Carmen. *Our America: The Latino Presence in American Art*. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2014.

## Antonio Alvarez

Alvarez, Antonio. "Baby Doctor Jesus Reveals Magic Gringoism." Master's thesis, Texas Christian University, 2000.

# List of Works

## Jane Stuart (1812-1888)

*George Washington*, c. 1850

Oil on canvas

22 x 27 in.

Gift of Howard Walsh, 1977

*Martha Washington*, c. 1850

Oil on canvas

22 x 27 in.

Gift of Howard Walsh, 1977

## Will Barnet (1911-2012)

*Summer*, 1986

Serigraph

36 x 39 in.

Acquired in 1992

*Ariadne*, 1980

Serigraph

17 in. (diameter)

Acquired in 1992

## Alice Neel (1900-1984)

*John*, 1981

Lithograph

23¾ x 19 in.

Acquired in 1992

## Lee Krasner (1908-1984)

*Blue Stone*, 1969

Lithograph

22½ x 30 in.

Gift of Martin S. Ackerman

## Romare Bearden (1911-1988)

*In the Garden*, 1979

Lithograph

22 x 16 in.

Acquired in 1992

## Larry Rivers (1923-2002)

*Black Revue*, from *Boston Massacre*, 1970

Screenprint

19 x 27¾ in.

Gift of Martin S. Ackerman

## McKie Trotter (1918-1999)

*Two Levels #7*, c. 1950

Acrylic on canvas

47½ x 51½ in.

Gift of the Artist

## Andy Warhol (1928-1987)

*Cowboys and Indians (Sitting Bull)*, 1986

Serigraph on Lenox Museum Board

36 x 36 in.

Extra, out of the edition. Designated for research and educational purposes only.®

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

*Cowboys and Indians (Annie Oakley)*, 1986

Serigraph on Lenox Museum Board

36 x 36 in.

Extra, out of the edition. Designated for research and educational purposes only.®

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

## Bill Mauldin (1921-2003)

*Lyndon B. Johnson*, 1966

Chalk on paper

40 x 30 in.

Gift of the artist, 1966

*Richard Nixon*, 1966

Chalk on paper

40 x 30 in.

Gift of the artist, 1966

## Luis Jiménez (1940-2006)

*Coscolina con Muerto (Flirt with Death)*, 1986

Lithograph on newsprint

27 x 21 in.

## Antonio Alvarez (b. 1959)

*George Washington Crossing the Trinity*, 1999

Oil on canvas

49½ x 37½ in.

Gift of the artist, 2000

*Medium Courthouse*, 1999

Oil on canvas

49½ x 37½ in.

Gift of the artist, 2000







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COLLEGE of  
**FINE ARTS**

*School of Art*