

Portraits of Freedom

Art Exhibition

CATALOG



Jan 14 - April 16, 2017

Irving Arts Center
Dupree Lobby Gallery
3333 North MacArthur Blvd
Irving, TX 75062

FREE ADMITTANCE

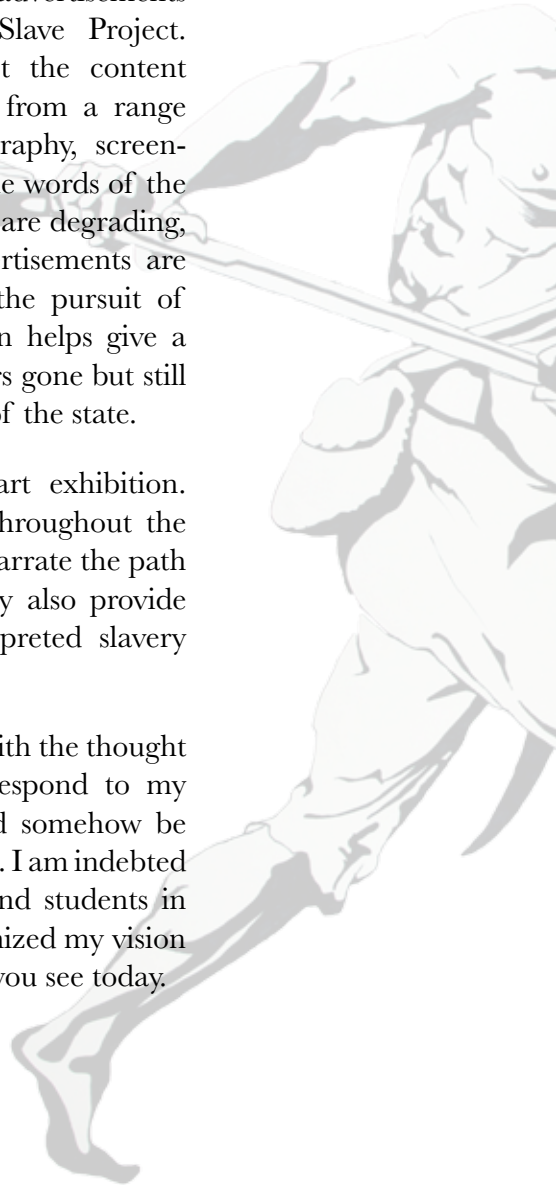
INTRODUCTION

Portraits of Freedom is a juried student art exhibition drawn from the detailed runaway slave advertisements aggregated by the Texas Runaway Slave Project. The compositions on exhibit interpret the content of advertisements and capture notices from a range of mediums (drawing, painting, lithography, screen-printing) and artistic influences. While the words of the master describing their missing property are degrading, racist and visceral, runaway slave advertisements are unintended records of resistance and the pursuit of freedom. In its own way, this exhibition helps give a human face to slavery in Texas; 150 years gone but still so important to the identity and history of the state.

Portraits of Freedom is not just an art exhibition. Museum-style panels are interspersed throughout the exhibition for historical context. These narrate the path from slavery to freedom in Texas. They also provide background for how artists have interpreted slavery during the past two centuries.

This project began in November 2013, with the thought that more people could engage and respond to my research on slavery in Texas if it could somehow be translated from a print to a visual medium. I am indebted to the administrators, artists, scholars and students in Texas and across the country who recognized my vision and helped interpret it to the exhibition you see today.

Sincerely,
Kyle Ainsworth
Project Manager



CONTRIBUTING FACULTY



Kyle Ainsworth, exhibition manager, is the special collections librarian for the Ralph W. Steen Library at Stephen F. Austin State University. He also is project manager of the Texas Runaway Slave Project.



Shaun Roberts is an assistant professor of art at Stephen F. Austin State University. Students from his fall 2014 drawing class are featured in the exhibition.



Xenia Fedorchenko is an associate professor of art at Lamar University. Students from her spring 2015 lithography and screen-printing classes are featured in the exhibition.



Adam Fung is an assistant professor of art at Texas Christian University. Students from his fall 2014 and spring 2015 drawing classes are featured in the exhibition. Fung also wrote an interpretive panel for the exhibition.



Dr. Letha Clair Robertson is an assistant professor of art history at the University of Texas at Tyler. Robertson wrote the catalog essay, as well as an interpretive panel for the exhibition.

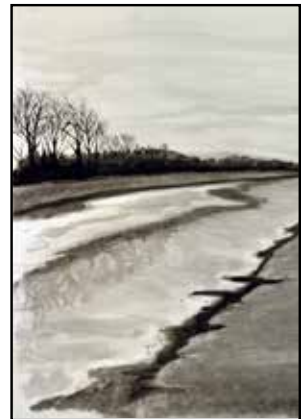


Dr. Andrew J. Torget is an assistant professor of history at the University of North Texas. Torget wrote the interpretive panels on slavery for the exhibition.



STUDENT ARTWORK

Students from five classes submitted artwork for the Portraits of Freedom exhibition. The art professors supervising each class selected the strongest works for consideration by the exhibition manager. A guest jury comprised of community members from Nacogdoches and Lufkin, Texas, selected its three favorite pieces for best-in-show awards.





\$30 REWARD.
RANAWAY, from the subscriber, on the 6th instant, a negro woman named Frances. She had on when she left home, a white homespun cotton dress. Said negress is about eighteen years old, is of yellow complexion, rather resembling the Indian, (has some Indian blood in her) eyes red, stoops in standing or walking. No other marks recollected except some few scars on her back scarcely perceivable. The above reward will be paid to any one who will deliver the said negro to Wm. Donoho in Clarksville, or at my house on Pine Creek.
JAMES H. KING.
Nov. 18th 1844. No 2 if.

An advertisement for Frances printed in the Northern Standard (Clarksville, Texas), November - December 1844.

"Frances," 2014
by Kim Jenkins

Mixed media on canvas, 22 inches by 30 inches
Stephen F. Austin State University



"Bound by Freedom," 2015
by Brandi Griffin
Oil on canvas, 24 inches by 34 inches
Lamar University



"Path," 2015
by Sunni Forcier
Woodcut lithograph on paper, 9 inches by 12 inches
Lamar University



One Hundred Dollars Reward.

RANAWAY, or stolen, from Gaines' Creek, in the Choctaw Nation, about the 7th of December last, a yellow or mulatto boy, 16 or 17 years old; said boy is about 5 feet 7 or 8 inches high, heavy set, having the fore finger on one hand bent down, occasioned by a cut,—has his thighs scarified similar to the Indians—speaks only Shawnee, or but little English—was last seen near the Cedar Springs, in Dallas Co., Texas, enquiring his way to Austin. The above \$100 reward will be paid to any person delivering said boy at Fort Wahshita, Choctaw Nation; or \$50 if lodged in any jail in the State, so that the owner may get possession of him.

R. M. JONES.


Austin, Jan. 20th, 1847. 3:3.

An advertisement for Walo-sha printed in the Texas Democrat (Austin, Texas), Jan. 20-27, 1847.

“Walo-sha,” 2015
by Riley Knight

Mixed media on paper, 11 inches by 14 inches
Texas Christian University

\$100 REWARD
STOLEN
 From 7th inst. N. side Gaine's Rd.
WALO-SHA
 Aged 16. 5 feet high. Teeth
 are very broad and not
 very close.
 Legs are marked
 by scratches done
 with needles/pins
WILLIAM WIBLE
 Choctaw Nation
 Dec. 21st 1846



\$100 REWARD.
 A Reward of Seventy five dollars will be given
 for the apprehension of a negro boy (copper color)
 named Walo-sha, aged 16 years, about five feet
 high, speaks the Shawnee Language entirely. The
 first joint of one of his fore fingers is a little bent
 down caused by a cut from an axe when small, his
 teeth are very broad and not very close to each
 other. The said Boy was stolen on the 7th inst.,
 on the North side of Gaine's Creek in the Choctaw
 Nation (supposed) by a white man named
 "Melons" a merret—from Missouri or Arkansas,
 on his way to Texas.
 IF The said Boy's thighs, are marked by
 scratches done with needles or pins.
 A Reward of twenty five dollars will be given
 for the apprehension of the thief, or one hundred
 dollars for both, delivered at Boggy Depot, "Choctaw
 Nation."
WILLIAM C. WIBLE.
R. M. JONES.
 Boggy Depot

An advertisement for Walo-sha printed in the Northern Standard
 (Clarksville, Texas), Jan. 5 - March 27, 1847.

"Walo-sha," 2015
 by Brooke Wong

Mixed media on paper, 11 inches by 14 inches
 Texas Christian University



\$100 REWARD.
RUNAWAY from Talbot's Plantation on Caney
about 15th March last, a Negro man named
DOSSON, aged about 30, black complexion, stout
thick and well set; carried off with him a double
barrel Shot Gun and a small Sorrel Poney. The
above reward will be paid if caught West of the
Colorado River, or one half the amount if caught
East of the said River, and delivered to us in the
City of Matagorda.
A. WADSWORTH & CO.
June 1st, 1842—4t

An advertisement for Dosson printed in the Colorado Gazette and Advertiser
(Matagorda, Texas), June 4, 1842.

"Dosson," 2014
by Julianne James
Mixed media on canvas, 22 inches by 30 inches
Stephen F. Austin State University



\$250 REWARD.
 I will pay the above reward, of \$250, for the delivery to me at Kleckapoo, Anderson county, Texas, or lodged in any jail so that I may get the following negroes, viz:— A negro man about thirty-five or forty years old, by the name of Rich; dark complexion, about 5 feet 8 inches high, with a scar over, I think his right eye.— Also his wife, Kittle, about 25 years old, copper color, medium size, rather stammers in her speech, and speaks rather short. They left my place on the night of the 30th of July, 1863.
 I will pay for each negro \$100 as above mentioned.
 J. B. MILLER.

An advertisement for Rich printed in the Henderson Times (Henderson, Texas), Aug. 29, 1863.

“La Tierra Prometida,” 2015
 by Marisol Lua Figueroa
 Acrylic on panel, 16 inches by 30 inches
 Lamar University



"Do things ever change?," 2015
by Audra LaCour
Woodcut print on paper, 12 inches by 18 inches
Lamar University



"Matthew Gaines," 2015
by Maria L. Vásquez
Woodblock on paper, 12 inches by 12 inches
Lamar University



\$250 Reward.

RANAWAY OR STOLEN from the subscriber, 12 miles east of Henderson, Rusk county, Texas, two Negro Boys—one a black boy, named **CHARLES** or **GRANT**, about 23 years of age, weighs 155 or 160 pounds, about six feet high, quite likely, and quick spoken; is a carpenter, and plays the fiddle well, of which he is fond. The other a mulatto boy, 18 or 19 years of age, weighs about 140 pounds, about 5 feet 8 or eight inches high, has a bushy head of hair, rather curly than kinky. Both likely and have pretty white teeth.

Should these negroes be stolen, I will pay two hundred and fifty dollars for the delivery of the negroes to me, and the apprehension and delivery of the thief to the Jailor of Rusk county, with proof to convict; or fifty dollars for the delivery of the negroes to me, or half this last amount if safely lodged in any jail in this State, so I get them. It is probable that they will attempt to make their way to Mexico.

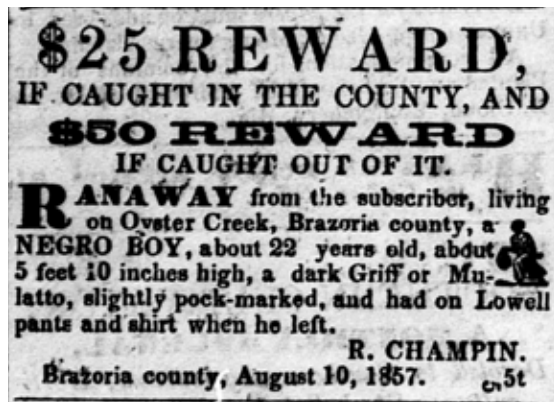
G. W. TRAMMEL.

October 16, 1852.

9:3w.

An advertisement for Grant printed in the Texas State Gazette
(Austin, Texas), Oct. 16-30, 1852.

"Grant," 2014
by DeAnndra Mercer
Mixed media on canvas, 22 inches by 30 inches
Stephen F. Austin State University



An advertisement for a runaway printed in the Colorado Citizen (Columbus, Texas), Sept. 19, 1857.

Untitled, 2015
by Ashley Crenshaw
Mixed media on paper, 14 inches by 17 inches
Texas Christian University



825 REWARD.
RAN AWAY or decoyed off from the subscriber, on Saturday the 25th inst., a light Mulatto GIRL, by the name of Melissa—hair very straight—full round features—17 years of age—about five feet high. A few days before her disappearance, she burnt the right side of her face severely, and wears a handkerchief over it. She is very still; seldom speaks, unless spoken to. The above reward will be given for the delivery of said Negro to the undersigned at Houston.
mar 23 dwf 640 W. G WATTS

An advertisement for Melissa printed in the Democratic Telegraph and Texas Register (Houston, Texas), March 30 -July 20, 1848.

"Melissa," 2014
by Harei Waja

Mixed media on canvas, 22 inches by 30 inches
Stephen F. Austin State University



"Road to Freedom," 2015
by Kelsie Liebel
Acrylic on panel, 16 inches by 20 inches
Lamar University



"Leviticus 19," 2015
by Brandi Griffin
Woodcut lithograph on paper, 5 inches by 7 inches
Lamar University



"Elias," 2015

by Shane Peters

Mixed media on paper, 14 inches by 17 inches

Texas Christian University



Untitled, 2015

by Alex Temple

Mixed media on paper, 14 inches by 17 inches

Texas Christian University



Runaway slave.

Woodville, August 31st, 1860.

TAKEN UP and committed before G. W. Vanvleck, Justice of the Peace, Tyler county, negro boy slave aged about 25 or 26 years, 5 feet 10 inches high, weighs about 175 lbs. Says his name is Ephraim, black complexion, has a scar from the left eye-brow running above the temple to the edge of the hair, has been shot, one shot still remaining between the skull and the skin back of his left ear, another in his left arm, between the shoulder and elbow. Is quick spoken.

J. T. KIRBY,
Sheriff Tyler Co.

v12n6-4w

An advertisement for Ephraim printed in the State Gazette
(Austin, Texas), Sept. 15 - Oct. 6, 1860.

"Ephraim," 2015

by Aubrey Mitchell

Mixed media on canvas, 22 inches by 30 inches
Stephen F. Austin State University



FIFTY DOLLARS REWARD.
RANAWAY from the Subscriber, on or about June 30, 1843, the negro boy **BOB** Said boy stands about six feet high, very dark, both ears bit off, stout and able bodied, and about 50 years of age, with black teeth much scattered; he has a good address. Said boy has a rifle gun with him. Whoever will apprehend said negro, and lodge him in any jail where I can get him, shall receive the above reward and reasonable charges.
WILLIAM MARTIN,
July 27, 1843. 49-3t Bossiere Parish, La.

An advertisement for Bob printed in the Northern Standard (Clarksville, Texas), Oct. 7-21, 1843.

Bob was later captured that month. Notices of his capture were advertised in the Northern Standard (Oct. - Dec. 1843) and the National Vindicator (Washington, Texas) (Feb. 3 - July 6, 1844).

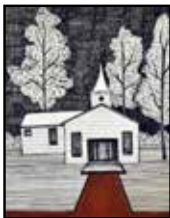
"Bob," 2014
by Kyle Rogers
Mixed media on canvas, 22 inches by 30 inches
Stephen F. Austin State University



"Dixie's Inferno," 2015
by Gonzalo Alvarez
Woodcut print on paper, 22 inches by 28 inches
Lamar University

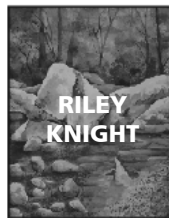
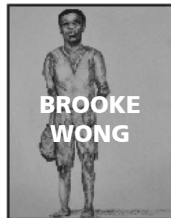
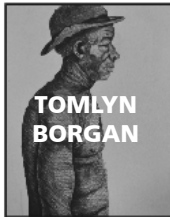
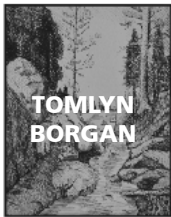
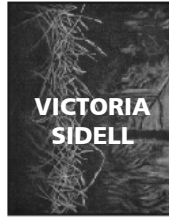
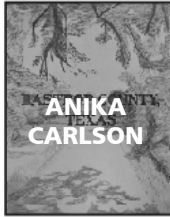
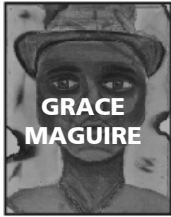
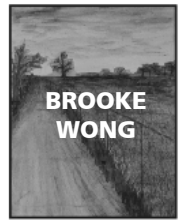
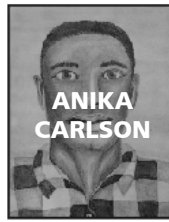
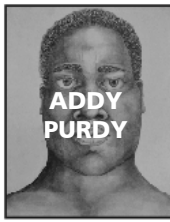


"Light of Hope," 2015
by Jade Freedman
Lithograph on paper, 8 inches by 12 inches
Lamar University



"Drawing on History," 2015
Mixed media on paper, 61 inches by 60 inches
Texas Christian University

Refer to the following page for the list of contributing artists.



Each artist composed a triptych and worked to:

- recognize the historical moment
- appreciate the social and cultural impact of art
- re-envision and bring new perspective to the work
- explore the research materials visually

The installation is a mix and sampling of the best compositions.



"Alfred," 2015
by Lillian Young
Mixed media triptych on paper, 11 inches by 14 inches
Texas Christian University



An advertisement for Alfred printed in the San Antonio Ledger
(San Antonio, Texas), March 6 - April 3, 1851.



Untitled, 2015
by Mia Eriksson
Mixed media on paper, 14 inches by 17 inches
Texas Christian University



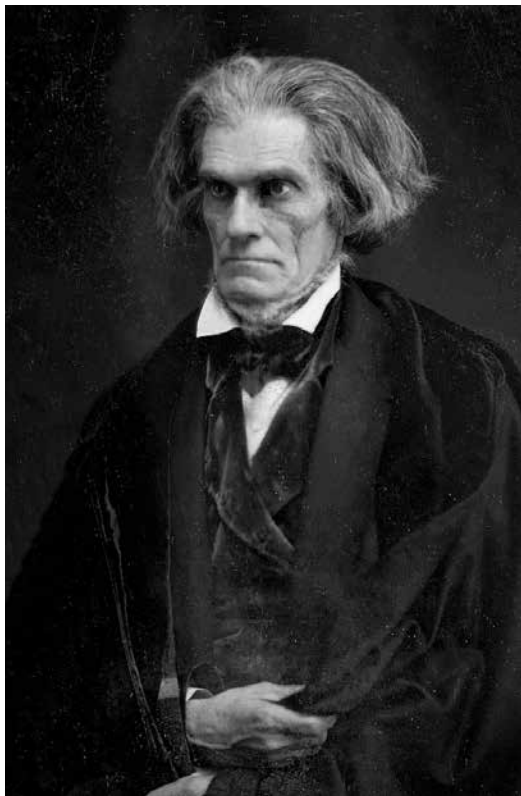
Untitled, 2015
by Victoria Sidell
Charcoal on paper, 11 inches by 14 inches
Texas Christian University

REFASHIONING IMAGES OF AFRICAN - AMERICANS DURING THE 19TH CENTURY

By Dr. Letha Clair Robertson
University of Texas at Tyler

During the 19th century, artists' depictions of African-Americans paralleled contemporary ideologies about slavery. Some images perpetuated black stereotypes that defined the race as inferior, stupid and savage. National figures such as Secretary of State John C. Calhoun seized this information and argued in favor of slavery based on "scientific" evidence. In 1844, Calhoun spoke about the annexation of Texas and the expansion of slavery. He stated, "The African is incapable of self-care and sinks into lunacy under the burden of freedom. It is a mercy to give him the guardianship and protection from mental death."¹ In other words, slavery "protected" African-Americans so they would not degenerate to "savagery." As the nation teetered on the brink of war and support for abolition increased, artists refashioned their representations of African-Americans.

John C. Calhoun
Matthew Brady Studio, 1849
Daguerreotype print



During the antebellum era, artists such as John Lewis Krimmel often depicted African-American stereotypes. In “Quilting Frolic” (Figure 1), Krimmel painted a middle-class family celebrating the completion of a quilt. He marginalized a “comical” black fiddle player at the far right side of the scene, as a young black girl serves the family beverages. Dressed in shabby clothes, they have large lips and a wide, toothy grin. While Krimmel probably meant to represent a humorous scene in the tradition of Dutch genre painting, the work reinforces false concepts about African-Americans. These physiognomic distortions also appeared in minstrel performances and ephemera in the decades that followed.²



Figure 1: “Quilting Frolic”

John Lewis Krimmel, 1813

Winterthur Museum • Winterthur, Delaware

For example, Thomas Dartmouth Rice created the first major black minstrel character, “Jim Crow,” a Southern slave who liked to dance and sing silly songs.³ As early as 1830, Rice appeared in blackface and tattered clothing during his performances. Contemporary ephemera helped to disseminate “Jim Crow” to the masses. About 1847, George P. Reed published sheet music for the “Jim Crow Jubilee” (Figure 2).



Figure 2: “Jim Crow Jubilee”

George P. Reed, c.1847

Lithograph (Library of Congress)

Illustrators for Bufford’s Lithographers depicted African-American men in tattered clothing dancing in a silly manner and playing music. However, African-Americans were not always stereotyped in paint and print during the 19th century. Artists like Eastman Johnson and Thomas Nast depicted African-Americans in a sympathetic and patriotic manner, which reflected changing ideologies about race.



Figure 3: “Negro Life at the South”

Eastman Johnson, 1859

New-York Historical Society

In April 1859, Johnson exhibited “Negro Life at the South” (Figure 3) at the National Academy of Design’s 34th annual exhibition in New York City. Johnson painted a series of vignettes of African-American life behind a tattered home: a young courting couple; an elderly man teaching a young man to play banjo; a mother teaching her child to dance; and children spying on the young white mistress who enters the scene at far right. Johnson received praise from contemporary critics who remarked about his treatment of color, composition and technique. He successfully depicted African-Americans in a sympathetic light—one would not find minstrel-like figures in Johnson’s America. However, cultural racism was still prominent as some critics argued that Johnson vulgarized high art by making blacks the focus of his composition.⁴

During the Civil War, artists also created images of African-Americans that addressed their contribution to the war effort and as agents of their own freedom. In 1863, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation cleared the way for black men to join Union troops.⁵ Perhaps best known is Col. Robert Shaw's 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment. The men fought valiantly in a number of engagements, including the Battle of Fort Wagner, South Carolina, where they were defeated by Confederate forces. Thomas Nast was the first artist to depict black soldiers in battle.

On March 14, 1863, Harper's Weekly published Nast's "A Negro Regiment in Action" (Figure 4) in which black men bravely charge a Confederate line. Nast's soldiers retain physiognomic stereotypes, however, this is countered by their fiery disposition as they fearlessly confront the enemy.



Figure 4: "A Negro Regiment in Action"

Thomas Nast, 1863

Print of wood engraving (Harper's Weekly, March 13, 1863). Kansas Colored Volunteers, The Battle of Island Mound, Bates County, Missouri, Oct. 29, 1862

That same issue included two other images of black soldiers and a commentary in which that author contested some Northern viewpoints that blacks lacked the discipline and valor required of a soldier.⁶ By the end of 1863, the Supervisory Committee for Recruiting Colored Regiments formed in Philadelphia. This committee opened the first Free Military Academy for Applicants for the Command of Colored Troops.



Figure 5: “Come and Join Us Brothers, Supervisory”
Committee for Recruiting Colored Regiments
P. S. Duval & Son, Philadelphia, 1863

The Supervisory Committee published a recruitment poster titled “Come and Join Us Brothers” (Figure 5). Like images by Johnson and Nast, the poster also countered popular imagery as a group of trained black soldiers appear in uniform and engage the viewer with steadfast gazes. While the artist depicted the black men as dignified individuals, the presence of the white officer indicates the retention of false beliefs about the black soldier’s inability to lead men in battle.

During Reconstruction, some artists completely broke from racist depictions of African-Americans. For example, in “A Visit from the Old Mistress” (Figure 6), Winslow Homer depicted palpable tension as a mistress meets with her former slaves in their dwelling. Here, they are on equal ground and look at one another with steely gazes. Homer captured a moment that seemingly occurred all over the South, whereby blacks and whites recognized that abolition had forever changed American life.⁷ Some white artists continued to challenge 19th century ideologies about race throughout the Reconstruction era. More importantly, however, African-American artists such as Henry O. Tanner gained new opportunities to depict blacks as educated and Christian people. Works like “The Thankful Poor” (Figure 7) demonstrated to the public that blacks were both fully human and completely American.



Figure 6: “A Visit from the Old Mistress”

Winslow Homer, 1876

Smithsonian American Art Museum • Washington, DC



Figure 7: “The Thankful Poor”

Henry O. Tanner, 1894

Private collection

Notes

1 Thomas Alexander and Samuel Sillen, *Racism and Psychiatry* (New York: Brunner/Mazel Publishers, 1972), 116-17.

2 Guy C. McElroy, *Facing History: The Black Image in American Art 1710-1940* (San Francisco: Bedford Arts, 1990), 14.

3 The term “Jim Crow” was adopted to describe laws that subjugated blacks in the South in the decades after the Civil War through the Civil Rights era.

4 Patricia Hills, “Cultural Racism: Resistance and Accommodation in the Civil War Art of Eastman Johnson and Thomas Nast,” in *Seeing High and Low: Representing Social Conflict in American Visual Culture*, edited by Patricia Johnston (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 106-107.

5 Lincoln’s first official act that allowed freed slaves to serve Union troops was the Second Confiscation and Militia Act of July 17, 1862. They were not permitted to serve until the Emancipation Proclamation was adopted on Jan. 1, 1863. However, their enlistment did not grant the soldiers equality—almost all officers were white, including Shaw.

6 Hills, 112.

7 McElroy, 80.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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(936) 468-1590 ✦ ainsworthk@sfasu.edu
digital.sfasu.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/RSP

EXHIBITION HOURS:

Thursday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Nacogdoches Railroad Depot
101 Old Tyler Road
Nacogdoches, Texas

TO SCHEDULE A GROUP TOUR:

(936) 468-3953 ✦ crhr@sfasu.edu

SFA SPONSORS: Ralph W. Steen Library, School of Art, Center for Regional Heritage Research, Nelson Rusche College of Business

SPONSORS: Nacogdoches County Chamber of Commerce, Nacogdoches Jaycees, City of Nacogdoches, Humanities Texas, Texas Blueberry Festival



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
STATE UNIVERSITY
NACOGDOCHES, TEXAS



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