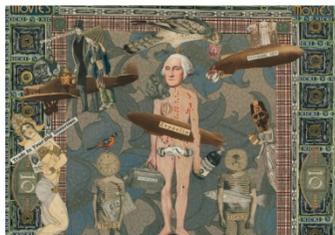


Harvard News Release Art Museums

Harvard Art Museums Receive Gift of Outsider Art from Didi and David Barrett

Cambridge, MA
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Bill Traylor, *Mule and Plow* (detail), c. 1939–42. Poster paint and ink on cardboard. Fogg Museum, Collection of Didi and David Barrett '71, 2011.64.

Unidentified artist, *Kiowa Warriors in Regalia*, c. 1890. Graphite and colored pencil on ledger paper. Fogg Museum, Collection of Didi and David Barrett '71, 2011.68.

Felipe Jesus Consalvos, *Grins and Chuckles* (detail), c. 1920–50s. Collage. Fogg Museum, Collection of Didi and David Barrett '71, 2011.43.

The Harvard Art Museums announce a gift of 38 drawings, paintings, and sculpture from Didi and David Barrett's 20th-century American Collection of Self-Taught, Folk, and Outsider Art. The gift comprises works by 24 American "outsider" artists, mostly from the 1930s through the 1990s. Among the notable figures represented in the collection are Bill Traylor, Joseph Yoakum, and Nellie Mae Rowe, whose work first came to public attention in the important Corcoran Gallery of Art exhibition [Black Folk Art in America, 1930–1980](#). In addition, the Barretts' gift includes three rare "ledger book drawings" made by members of the Plains Indian tribes in the late 19th century.

"We are grateful to Didi and David Barrett for their generous gift," said Thomas W. Lentz, Elizabeth and John Moors Cabot Director of the Harvard Art Museums. "These 'outsider' works take our holdings of American contemporary art in an exciting new direction, providing a unique opportunity for study and appreciation by students, scholars, and visitors."

Didi and David Barrett (Harvard '71) have been involved with self-taught art for nearly three decades. Didi, a writer and consultant in the not-for-profit sector, is a trustee emerita of the American Folk Art Museum and has written on self-taught art. David Barrett is a lawyer with the firm of Boies Schiller & Flexner in New York. Their son, Alec Barrett, graduated from Harvard in 2011.

"Didi and I are especially pleased to be making this gift to the Harvard Art Museums and glad that the museums are recognizing these profoundly creative artists and their powerful expressions of the American spirit," said David Barrett. "The university is an ideal venue for exploring this interdisciplinary material, not only in art-historical terms, but also in terms of history, cultural anthropology, sociology, and even psychology."

"Working with David and Didi Barrett has been both a great pleasure and a wonderful learning experience," said Theodore E. Stebbins Jr., Consultative Curator of American Art at the Harvard Art Museums. "The objects in the Barrett collection are inspirational and come at a pivotal time when our faculty and students have been asking for works of this genre."

Highlights

The Barretts' gift includes Bill Traylor's Mule and Plow (c. 1939-42), drawn with poster paint and ink on cardboard. Thornton Dial Sr.'s Talk Show (1990s) and Life Begins with Crawling (1992) are two of the largest paintings in the collection. Talk Show (1990s), an image of Oprah Winfrey, makes use of wire screen, lids from paint cans, and industrial sealing compound to fashion a rich, three-dimensional painterly surface that recalls abstract expressionist works.

The Barretts are also giving three paintings by Howard Finster, including If A House Be Divided against Itself That House Cannot Stand (c. 1978). Finster was a Baptist minister from Summerville, Georgia, who took up art after he had a vision that inspired him. Three works by Felipe Jesus Consalvos, a Cuban-born artist, are part of the gift. Grins and Chuckles (c. 1920-50) portrays George Washington with a zeppelin under his arm, surrounded by an array of cut-out figures from American history.

The three Native American ledger book drawings depict various subjects, including a battle, buffalo hunting, and a group of Kiowa warriors in their formal dress. Ledger art evolved from the Plains Indians' tradition of painting and decorating the buffalo hides they wore. Between 1865 and 1900, when Native Americans were placed in confinement by the United States government, Plains artists began painting and drawing on paper and cloth. Often the paper they drew on was discarded from lined account books, or ledgers.

About the Harvard Art Museums

The Harvard Art Museums, among the world's leading art institutions, comprise three museums (Fogg, Busch-Reisinger, and Arthur M. Sackler) and four research centers (Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art, the Harvard Art Museums Archives, and the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis). The Harvard Art Museums are distinguished by the range and depth of their collections, their groundbreaking exhibitions, and the original research of their staff. The collections include approximately 250,000 objects in all media, ranging in date from antiquity to the present and originating in Europe, North America, North Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia. Integral to Harvard University and the wider community, the art museums and research centers serve as resources for students, scholars, and other visitors. For more than a century they have been the nation's premier training ground for museum professionals and are renowned for their seminal role in developing the discipline of art history in this country. www.harvardartmuseums.org.

In June 2008 the building at 32 Quincy Street, formerly the home of the Fogg and Busch-Reisinger museums, closed for a major renovation. During this renovation, the Sackler Museum at 485 Broadway remains open and has been reinstalled with some of the finest works representing the collections of all three museums. When complete, the renovated historic building on Quincy Street will unite the three museums in a single state-of-the-art facility designed by architect Renzo Piano.

Hours and Admission

Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-5pm. Closed on major holidays. Admission: \$9 adults, \$7 seniors (65 and over), \$6 college students with valid ID. Free for children under 18, members of the Harvard Art Museums, and Cambridge Public Library cardholders. Free plus one guest for Harvard University students and affiliates. For Massachusetts residents with valid ID, free on Saturday, 10am-noon. Paid admission includes entrance to the museum, guided tours, and gallery talks. More detailed information is available at 617-495-9400 or www.harvardartmuseums.org/visit.

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