"Portraits of Freedom" Opening Reception and Art Exhibition Grant Report for Humanities Texas

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Portraits of Freedom

Mini-Grant Report submitted to

**Humanities Texas**

1410 Rio Grande Street
Austin, Texas 78701

By

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

on behalf of

The East Texas Research Center and the

Ralph W. Steen Library located at

Stephen F. Austin State University

October 9, 2015
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The Nacogdoches Railroad Depot

365° Stitch of the Exhibition, June 11, 2015

Project Manager Kyle Ainsworth
I. Executive Summary

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, on behalf of the East Texas Research Center (ETRC), Ralph W. Steen Library, Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA), was awarded a Humanities Texas mini-grant to provide programming for the opening reception of the Portraits of Freedom art exhibition, June 11, 2015. A $1,000 grant from Humanities Texas paid the honoraria for two guest speakers, Dr. Douglas Chambers from the University of Southern Mississippi and Dr. Daina Berry from the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Chambers spoke about runaway slaves in the Atlantic World and Dr. Berry about Juneteenth and the Civil War in Texas. Eighty-three people attended the opening reception and survey results showed a very positive response to the evening.

Portraits of Freedom is a juried student art exhibition featuring runaway slaves from newspaper advertisements compiled by the Texas Runaway Slave Project (TRSP). The exhibition features drawings, lithographs, paintings, and screen prints created by art students at SFA, Texas Christian University (TCU) and Lamar University (Lamar). Interpretative panels contextualize the art. The exhibit opened June 13th for the 26th annual Texas Blueberry Festival and closed September 25th. The exhibition had 605 visitors.

II. Program Changes

The project manager changed the reception venue and duration, exhibition duration, recruited new collaborators and sponsors, and modified the budget submitted in the grant.

A. Reception: Originally slated for the Twilight Ballroom in the Baker Pattillo Student Center at SFA, the reception had to be moved because of possible scheduling conflicts with new student orientation programming for summer enrollment. The program manager consulted with the City of Nacogdoches Assistant Historic Site Manager, who suggested the Nacogdoches Courthouse Annex/Texas AgriLife Extension Office all-purpose room. The project manager moved the reception up to 5:00pm and shortened it to an hour and a half. Invitations to the opening reception were not sent due to significant press coverage and budgetary considerations.

B. Exhibition Duration: The Portraits of Freedom exhibition at the Nacogdoches Railroad Depot was extended until September 25th so that SFA faculty and students might have the opportunity to view the exhibition when they returned to Nacogdoches for the Fall semester after summer break.

C. Collaborators: The Portraits of Freedom exhibition consisted of artwork from five classes at three universities. The decision by faculty not to add their own compositions was not intended, but it worked out well. The exhibition was more cohesive as a student-only project. Visitors appreciated the exhibition for giving young artists a chance to show their work and engage with a historically important and relevant subject.

- SFA art professor Shaun Roberts originally committed two classes (Fall 2014 and Spring 2015) to contribute artwork for the exhibition. He decided only to have the Fall 2014 class participate.
• TCU art professor Adam Fung originally committed one class (Fall 2014) for the exhibition. He got such good work from his students that he enlisted his Spring 2015 drawing class to submit for the exhibition.
• The project manager sent a second call to art professors in December 2014 looking for collaborators. Associate Professor of Art Xenia Fedorchenco from Lamar responded. Her Spring 2015 lithography and screen printing classes submitted artwork for consideration.
• University of Texas at Arlington adjunct professor Kathryn Yingling withdrew from the exhibition.

D. Co-Sponsoring Organizations: Additional sponsors became necessary once the reception venue changed and after it became apparent there were no walls available for loan from the SFA Art Department upon which to display the exhibition.
• City of Nacogdoches – Allowed use of the Courthouse Annex for the reception and the Railroad Depot for the exhibition free of charge.
• Nacogdoches Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees) - Purchased the materials and supplied the labor to paint, construct, and assemble 100 linear feet of exhibition walls.
• Nacogdoches Chamber of Commerce – Promoted Portraits of Freedom as the official art exhibition of the 26th annual Nacogdoches Blueberry Festival.
In addition, several units at SFA made significant contributions to the project.
• SFA Center for Regional Heritage Research – Staffed the exhibition free of charge for 15-20 hours a week during the university’s two summer sessions.
• SFA Nelson Rusche College of Business – Faculty members Dr. Jason Reese and Dr. Marlene Kahla wrote an exhibition marketing plan for free.
• SFA University Marketing Communications – At no charge, three graphic designers in this department produced the reception program, exhibition brochure and insert, exhibition catalog, exhibition flyer, and exhibition banners.

E. Budget: The award of $1,000 caused the project manager to redistribute the allocation of SFA Library’s $2,500 contribution. Four hundred dollars was shifted from printing costs to covering Dr. Berry’s travel and $100 was cut from copyright fees. The project manager grossly underestimated exhibition production costs (walls and printing), but was fortunate to have five benefactors make donations of time, money and labor to cover the difference:
• The Nacogdoches Jaycees $993.26 [lumber, nails, paint, painting supplies]
• SFA Printing $301.76 [46 copies of the exhibition catalog]
• Private Donor #1 $674.21 [printing and installation costs, artist prizes]
• Private Donor #2 $200.00 [exhibition flyers]
• Private Donor #3 $150.00 [catering]

III. Accomplishments

A. Grant Objectives

1. To provide the public with a first-rate opening program (June 11, 2015).
Excellent event planning, thoughtful scheduling, and dynamic speaking kept the audience engaged during the opening reception for *Portraits of Freedom*. The combination of these three elements cannot be over-emphasized. The program occurred early in the evening and was staged at a very accessible downtown location. The speaking location was perfect for a large crowd with a backdoor main entrance so audience members could come and go without interrupting the presenters. The catered food and beverages were excellent.

The project manager carefully arranged the timing and order of speakers for the opening reception. The event program (Appendix O) was crafted to keep the attention span of the audience. The salutary remarks by the project manager followed by the commentary on the artistic process by each of the three supervising art professors were concise and to the point. After Dr. Chambers’ presentation, there was a break for refreshments that allowed the audience to relax for ten minutes. Dr. Berry’s keynote presentation concluded the reception.

What really made the program first-rate was that Drs. Berry and Chambers are accomplished public speakers that expertly know their topics. They each gave impassioned presentations of their extensive knowledge and interest on runaway slaves and Juneteenth.

2. To encourage people to visit the exhibition at the Nacogdoches Railroad Depot (June 13 – September 25 2015).

*Portraits of Freedom* attracted 605 people to the Railroad Depot from June to September 2015 (Table 1). Monthly visitation to the Railroad Depot increased 630% (151 people/month) over the previous three months (24 people/month). Predictably, the strongest months were June (opening) and September (closing), with a slow but steady trickle of people through July and August. Seven group tours buoyed attendance figures, accounting for 23.3% (141 people) of the exhibition total (for tour groups, see Appendix T). The opening reception on June 11th (40 people) and the 26th annual Texas Blueberry Festival on June 13th (66 people) were the two best days for the show.

| Table 1: Visitors to the Nacogdoches Railroad Depot, March-September 2015 |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
|                                 | Month | Children | Adults | Total |
| Pre-Exhibition                 |       |          |        |       |
| MAR                             | 7     | 15       | 22     | 72    |
| APR                             | 1     | 7        | 8      | 8     |
| MAY                             | 32    | 12       | 44     |       |
| Portraits of Freedom Exhibition | JUN   | 57       | 189    | 246   |
| JUL                             | 33    | 68       | 101    |       |
| AUG                             | 6     | 56       | 62     |       |
| SEP                             | 38    | 158      | 196    |       |
| Total                           | 174   | 505      | 679    |       |

3. To inspire student artists at other Texas universities to participate.

As part of their artist contracts, all the students from Lamar included a paragraph on the inspiration for their composition. This description was not required by the project manager for project participation so there are not similar declarations for either SFA or TCU. Below is a selection from students whose composition was included in *Portraits of Freedom*:
**Audra LaCour** - This woodblock print was inspired by several articles on the website provided which held accounts that runaway slaves were shot and killed by Texas Rangers and other authorities. I felt that with contemporary accounts of unarmed black people getting shot by police, not much has changed in the time from the pre-Civil War era and 2015 with police brutality against black people. The title of this work is “Do things ever change?”

**Jade Freedman** - I used various slave advertisements to create the background. I used transferred images on a litho stone. I added the lantern in the foreground, made with a wood block. I used the letterpress to add the word ‘hope’ so it is titled “Light of Hope.” This was not based on any particular slave, but the time period in general.

**Gonzalo Alvarez** - Title: Dixie’s Inferno. There is and never will be a proper term to describe the inhumanity of slavery. The closest term that could come close to scratching the surface is “Hell on Earth.” I was inspired by the hardships of African American slaves. I wanted to depict a hell that they endured so the past would not be forgotten. Each level is a representative of their own Dante’s Inferno. The pig, an animal of filth, was chosen to represent white slave-owners who bathed in the blood of an entire culture. The medium is a woodcut relief print.

**Brandi Griffin** - The image I painted is showing the tight hold that America had on slaves. Slaves longed for freedom. It is rough around the edges and the hands are dirty and not perfect. America claimed that it was free but slaves were just “Bound by Freedom.”

**Kelsie Liebel** - “Road to Freedom.” During the 1800s the cotton industry was the leading textile economic money maker for large plantation owners. However, for slaves who were the property of their owners, cotton meant callous work. A slave was expected to pick cotton from sun up until dusk every day. “Road to Freedom” is a depiction of the long road to freedom for slaves. Taking from the Bible how Moses parted the Red Sea to free the Israelites from Egypt, the parting of the cotton field is the road to liberation for the unjustly, mispunished and beaten slaves.

**Marisol Lua Figueroa** - Title: “La Tierra Prometida” (the Promised Land). A lot of Texas runaway slaves fled to Mexico. In this painting I decided to create a type of narrative. There’s a runaway slave with whipped scars in the shape of the Texas and Mexico map. His broken chain ends in the Texas-shaped scars, while there’s an arrow leading to the Mexico-shaped scars. The arrow changes to blue for freedom. There’s an “underground railroad” map that also illustrates the routes runaway slaves took apart from fleeing to Mexico. The blue ocean and Harriet Tubman’s quotes create the freedom of the flow of water and assimilate the routes. I decided to include a family running away in the background to illustrate the struggles a slave family faced in running away. The light carried by the woman leads to the runaway advertisement, reminding us of the struggle of being looked for while fleeing to freedom.
4. To promote the quality of the artwork on display so that the exhibit will travel to other venues in Texas.

*Portraits of Freedom* will travel because of the combination of quality artwork, a first-rate exhibition catalog, and effective marketing/promotion efforts. The project manager is collaborating with two organizations at present. While neither of the venues are confirmed, the administrators at each have communicated their intent to host the exhibition.

**February 2016 – Orville Hancey Gallery, Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, Louisiana.** The Cane River National Heritage Area (CRNA) in Natchitoches is hosting the “Resistance, Escape, and Community: Opposition to Enslavement in North Louisiana” conference February 19-20. They heard about *Portraits of Freedom* from Red River Radio’s Kate Archer Kent, who interviewed the project manager in June for a story about the connection of the exhibition to Juneteenth. The CRNA believes the content of *Portraits of Freedom* will complement their conference topic.

**January – March 2017, Irving Arts Center, Irving, Texas.**

It is hoped that the collaborating art professors from Lamar and TCU, as well as the speaker from UT-Austin, will continue to investigate local institutions that might be interested in hosting the exhibition. The artwork in *Portraits of Freedom* is contracted with SFA until December 15, 2018, so there is plenty of time for the exhibition to travel.

B. Marketing/Publicity

The *Portraits of Freedom* opening reception and exhibition benefited immensely from word-of-mouth and online exposure generated by a rolling schedule of online, print and television media stories and interviews. These included:

- **April 9** Brickstreet News, Chamber of Commerce Edition [television] 
  (20-minute interview on the local public access TV station)
- **April 27** SFA Press Release, Bright Ideas Conference [online]
- **April 29** SFA Bright Ideas Conference [booth in exhibit hall]  
  (The spotlight exhibit from the library)
- **May 14** Brickstreet News, City Edition [television]  
  (20-minute interview on the local public access TV station)
- **May 29** SFA Press Release, *Portraits of Freedom* [online]
- **June 9** *The Daily Sentinel* newspaper [online]  
  (Photographs of exhibition tour given to the Barrio Writers Project)
- **June 10** *The Daily Sentinel* newspaper [print, online]  
  (Feature: Front-page article on the opening reception and exhibition)
- **June 11** KTRE News [television, online]  
  (Interview for the 10pm news)
- **June 19** Red River Radio [radio, online]  
  (Morning Edition interview on the exhibition and Juneteenth)
- **Sept. 9** *The Daily Sentinel* Newspaper [print, online]
IV. Evaluation

A. Budget

This was the first time the SFA library has ever brought presenters in to speak and the first public event managed by the project manager. That inexperience is illustrated in the budget. The project manager legitimately thought when he submitted the grant application that all the programming and marketing could be covered by the revised budget (Appendix B). As the actual budget reveals (Appendix A), the printing and construction costs were grossly underestimated. There were a number of spending decisions that were not properly evaluated prior to the submission of the grant proposal. Some of the price points also changed.

- Interpretative Panels – The vendor cost for ½” gator foam increased 20% between October 2014 and April 2015, necessitating the switch to the cheaper 3/16” UltraWhite board material. To help finance other promotional materials, the number of panels was cut from ten to eight and the size from six square feet to five square feet. These savings were squandered when two panels had to be reprinted.
The project manager did not consider how to physically promote the reception and exhibition from February-June 2015. It became clear very quickly in talks with the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Nacogdoches that *Portraits of Freedom* needed a brochure to give out, a brochure insert to promote the opening reception, and a flyer to post on windows and announcement boards at local businesses.

- Banners were another oversight on the submitted budget. These were needed for directional and promotional purposes to point visitors toward the reception and exhibition venues.

*Portraits of Freedom* went over budget by $2,000.00. For many projects this would have serious repercussions, but the exhibition was fortunate to receive generous donations from the Nacogdoches Jaycees and several community members.

For the budget, and thus the viability of the whole project, there were two “make or break” moments. The first was July 28, 2014 when the City of Nacogdoches agreed to give *Portraits of Freedom* free usage of the Nacogdoches Railroad Depot for the duration of the show. The Galleries at SFA’s Cole Arts Center were booked until 2017-2018 and many of the other spaces in town were either short-term rental or had inadequate climate control, security, or lighting.

The exhibition also weathered the crisis of not having any enough wall space upon which to display the artwork. As late as October 2014 the project manager assumed from talks with his collaborating SFA art professor that the SFA Art Department would build or supply walls for the exhibition. Three months later, the Art Department made the decision not to build walls because they were too expensive and would have to be stored. It was suggested that the exhibition might make due with some travel easels and free-standing X-shaped panels owned by the department head. The collaborating SFA professor emailed the mock-up drawing shown below in mid-January 2015.

The venue did not lend well to the flow or spacing of this arrangement, but this set-up would serve as a back-up plan should nothing else be figured out.

The Nacogdoches Jaycees build and run a Haunted House every year with 4’ x 8’ wall sections. The project manager proposed to the Jaycees that they build twenty 4’ x 8’ walls, loan them to the exhibition for the summer, and then take them back in early October before Haunted House construction begins. That way they could support a “project that benefits and educates the
local community” and improve their event. Although the project manager wrote the first draft of this proposal in January, it was not presented to the Jaycees until March 2015 (Appendix G). With five classes of artists and all the promotional material completed or in production, the success of the whole exhibition rode on the meeting outcome. Fortunately the Jaycees’ Board of Directors liked the idea and agreed to pay for all costs associated with building the walls.1

B. Marketing/Publicity

Promotion of Portraits of Freedom exceeded the measures outlined in the grant application and incorporated many of the recommendations in its marketing plan (Appendix X), but these efforts did not translate into the expected exhibition attendance. Section III, Part B above lists in great detail the media promotion that the project manager was able to garner for the exhibition. The Daily Sentinel newspaper ran feature front-page stories on Portraits of Freedom in June and September. The project manager taped two segments of the Brickstreet News, including an interview about the TRSP and the exhibition with Nacogdoches’ mayor. The night of the opening reception, local television station KTRE interviewed the project manager for the evening news. Red River Radio aired a Juneteenth radio interview with the project manager on its “Morning Edition.” 2 One of the disc jockeys for a local country station, 103.3 The Bull, also gave the exhibition a handful of free PSAs.

There was a fairly significant online presence for Portraits of Freedom. The project manager created a Facebook event for the opening reception and frequently posted updates. Eighty-three people on the event page listed themselves as “Going” with another 20 as “Maybe.” The TRSP Facebook page, also managed by the project manager, shared many of the reception page updates. KTRE, Red River Radio, and the Daily Sentinel (subscription) all posted transcripts of their interviews online. The project manager posted the exhibition dates to the online events calendar of the Nacogdoches Chamber of Commerce, Red River Radio, and SFA Fine Arts. Portraits of Freedom featured prominently on the Texas Blueberry Festival homepage.

The project manager printed 1,000 flyers and 1,000 brochures to help publicize the event. About half of these were saved to give to opening reception attendees and exhibition visitors and the other half circulated to the collaborating faculty, local businesses, and schools. The Nacogdoches Chamber of Commerce, Visitor’s Center and all the historical sites in town received brochures to give to tourists. Indirect distribution methods were less successful. The project manager posted flyers at local coffee shops, bars, restaurants, and at businesses owned by acquaintances. Many posted the flyer initially, but did not leave it up for the entire four months. Several businesses had very tight regulations on the locations for “approved” third-party marketing materials. For example, the two restaurants adjacent to the Railroad Depot would only post Portraits of Freedom flyers on the corkboard by the bathrooms rather than on their entrance windows.

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1 Harry’s Building Supply of Nacogdoches was not recognized as an exhibition sponsor but they sold all the materials to the Jaycees at cost instead of retail (25% more). This cut construction costs by an additional $248 not reconciled on the actual budget.

2 The project manager emailed regional newspapers, radio and television stations (Carthage, Center, Crockett, Diboll, Henderson, Jacksonville, Kilgore, Lufkin, Rusk, San Augustine, and Tyler) in May 2015 about Portraits of Freedom. Outside of Nacogdoches (Daily Sentinel, KTRE), only Red River Radio in Shreveport responded. Due to the general lack of interest in the project from regional news sources, the project manager did not email a press release to any national news outlets.
The guest jury for the exhibition was beneficial but did not quite serve in the capacity anticipated. The hope was that they would serve primarily as exhibition ambassadors, spreading the word in their respective communities about *Portraits of Freedom*. Instead, most guest jurors took their roles literally and voted for the best-in-show prizes. Eight of twelve jurors participated (see the results in Appendix H) and six came to the opening reception. The project manager should have been more explicit to the guest jury about their responsibilities. Only two jurors followed through with measurable outcomes. The author of the *Daily Sentinel*’s two articles was a guest juror. It is also likely that the Lufkin CME Church youth group (15 people) that visited the exhibition came on recommendation from the NAACP President in Lufkin, who was a guest juror. *Portraits of Freedom* relied on all of the above marketing methods to draw visitors to the exhibition (Table 2). Each promotional activity had its benefits and attracted a select crowd. Word-of-mouth from the project team, friends, and family mobilized 125 participants (20.6%). Print materials distributed by Nacogdoches, SFA, and the project manager account for 163 people (26.9%). Press coverage via Internet, newspaper, and television got the word out to another 44 people (7.3%). Tours (23.3%) and people that did not answer (19.3%) were likely influenced by multiple promotional sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did Not Answer</th>
<th>117</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tour (Private or School)</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Team</strong> (Project Manager, Collaborating Faculty, Artists)</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SFA</strong> (Press Release, SFA Today, Cole Arts Center, Flyers, Faculty)</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>City</strong> (Scavenger Hunt, Visitor’s Center, Other Historic Sites, City Officials)</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommended by Friends or Family</strong></td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Print Marketing</strong> (Brochure, Flyer, Signage in front of the Depot)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Newspaper, TV</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internet</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourist</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>605</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exhibition attendance was about 40% less than anticipated by the grant proposal. There were several opportunities that the project manager did not follow through on which might have boosted exhibition turnout. Approval for posting flyers at SFA is done at the academic college or department level. The project manager knew this but decided it would not be worthwhile to solicit both in June (for the summer sessions) and then again at the beginning of August (for the fall semester). The Nacogdoches Farmer’s Market is right across Banita Creek (maybe ¼ mile) from the Railroad Depot and open every Saturday morning while the Depot was open. The project manager did not go to the farmer’s market to post flyers even though he was invited to do so in May.

The project manager anticipated much greater interest from SFA students and faculty; around 100-200 more people (10-20%) were expected, especially in late-August and September. Two Social Work classes came during the summer and two professors (Education, English) offered extra credit to their fall semester students. The project manager was certain that there would be several classes each from the Art and History departments. The project manager sent emails to these departments and reminded professors when he saw them, to no avail.
The project manager mailed a cover letter, flyers, and brochures to 81 regional elementary, middle and high schools letting them know about *Portraits of Freedom* and the possibility of group tours. The goal was for 50-100 students (5-10%). In retrospect, the project manager should have sent these out in late August (beginning of the new school year) instead of late May (end of the school year). Only San Augustine Middle School responded and that was for eight students that needed summer school.

The timing of the exhibition probably could have been better. The show opened to closely coincide with the 150th Juneteenth. The sesquicentennial year since emancipation was a major conceptual point for the project manager as he planned the *Portraits of Freedom* project. There were other factors (availability of exhibition space), but the project manager thought that the historicity of a 150-year anniversary would help the exhibition draw visitors. In reality, most people came to see the artwork because it was something new and different, done by students and related to Texas. With this in mind, the exhibition probably would have had better attendance had it opened in the Fall (September to December) or Spring (February-May). Those dates would have likely attracted more high school and college students. The trade-off is most poignantly demonstrated in Table 3. Thirty-one percent of visitors to Portraits of Freedom came from outside 25 miles. That number is much higher than expected.

### Table 3 - Visitors to the Exhibition by Distance from Nacogdoches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance from Nacogdoches</th>
<th>Visitors</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;25 miles</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-100 miles</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-200 miles</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;200 miles</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not Indicate</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Reception

The success and quality of the opening reception for Portraits of Freedom was indicative of the hard work and planning of the project manager. Eighty-three people attended the opening reception and 48 people (58%) completed surveys. The reception audience consisted of friends and family of the project manager (including a large contingent of Nacogdoches Jaycees), faculty and staff from the SFA library, local African American leaders, and a mix of other people from SFA and the local community. Table 4 shows that the vast majority of those people that completed surveys found the program very informative (6.49/7.00). Most attendees only had a moderate knowledge of the topics (3.47/7.00). This was the very first speaker series sponsored by the SFA library and guests said overwhelmingly they would come to another program if offered (6.74/7.00).

### Table 4: Survey Results for the Opening Reception of *Portraits of Freedom*

Question 1: How much did you know about the lecture topics before coming to the program?
Question 2: Were the lectures informative?
Question 3: Would you come to another similar event?
Respondents offered over 20 possible lecture topics. There were 18 comments total, a selection of which are recorded below:

- “Loved having the speakers. Very informative.”
- “Very enjoyable and interesting!!!”
- “Fantastic and informational program!”
- “I thought the series was fantastic.”
- “Great exhibition and great lecture.”

The Nacogdoches Courthouse Annex/Texas AgriLife Extension Office all-purpose room was a significant upgrade over the Twilight Ballroom in the Baker Pattillo Student Center at SFA for four reasons. First, the City of Nacogdoches/AgriLife Extension Office secretary let Portraits of Freedom use the space for free. The project manager was very fortunate to book the room in October 2014 because effective January 2015 the city changed building usage policy to ban outside entities from using their all-purpose spaces. Because the room was booked before the policy change, the reception was grandfathered in and allowed to proceed.

Second, The Courthouse Annex is in downtown Nacogdoches with plenty of parking and easy public access. By contrast, parking at the SFA student center requires more navigation and familiarity with the campus and layout of the student center. The Courthouse Annex was much better suited to the conveniences of the anticipated audience. It is also only three blocks from the Railroad Depot. Reception attendees were able to walk over to Portraits of Freedom for a sneak peek at the conclusion of programming. Finally, the project manager could outsource catering instead of having to use a SFA-approved vendor.

The decision to start the program right at 5:00pm worked well; it caught people coming right out of work and denied them the opportunity to go home first. The project manager also budgeted time for the program just right so that even though one speaker went over their allotted time, the reception started and concluded on time.
There were several weaknesses in the planning and implementation of the reception. First, although 83 people came to the program, the projected audience in the grant application was 200 people. This shortfall (59% less) is most directly attributable to the *Taste of Nacogdoches* annual food-tasting event at the Nacogdoches Expo Center from all the local bars and restaurants. *Taste of Nacogdoches* was on the same night and time as the opening reception. The project manager was not aware of the competing event until right before the reception. It is impossible to judge if having the reception on a different day would have made any difference.

The project manager also forgot to hire an event photographer. Fortunately, The Center for Digital Scholarship at SFA recorded the reception (see DVD in Appendix N).

D. Exhibition

Visitors to *Portraits of Freedom* were overwhelmingly positive in their reviews of the exhibition. The survey sample size (6.8%, 41 surveys) was much smaller for the exhibition than the reception, but the results were still strong. Most survey-takers had a little less than moderate knowledge of runaway slaves in Texas (3.39/7.00) and found the exhibition very informative (6.37/7.00). One of the motivating reasons for the project manager in creating the exhibition was to educate Texans about their Southern roots and, in particular, the importance of slavery to the early history of the state. Many visitors told the project manager they were genuinely surprised by the prominent role that slavery had in the creation of the Republic and by just how many slaves were in Texas by 1860.

**Table 5: Survey Results for the Opening Reception of *Portraits of Freedom***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question #1</th>
<th>Question #2</th>
<th>Question #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scale</strong></td>
<td><strong># of People</strong></td>
<td><strong>Scale</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 No Knowledge</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 No Informative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Moderate Knowledge</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2 Not Informative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Somewhat Informative</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Very Informative</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4 Maybe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Expert Knowledge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Average</td>
<td>3.39/7.00</td>
<td>6 No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Average</td>
<td>6.54/7.00</td>
<td>7 Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The exhibition survey did not assess the quality of the artwork, but most survey-takers left their own insights in the comments sections. Below is a selection of some of the most incisive observations:
• “Absolutely wonderful and apropos of the current state of race relations in the U.S. I’m so thankful for a frank and meaningful installation that also shows great respect and honors these men and women who sought freedom.”
• “Art as an expression of humankind leads you to a huge knowledge; more of what lies between the eyes.”
• “Very interesting and informative. Enjoyed the artwork. I learned a lot I never knew regarding this subject. Our guide was interesting and knowledgeable. Great exhibit!”
• “This informative collection has formed a dynamic bridge from the past of African Americans to the present.”
• “Helps to break the silence and walls of misinformation so pervasive in US/Texas history and the foundations of Texan identity.”
• “The artwork is amazing! I love that each artist captured the wanted ad in their own distinct and creative way. I am an art lover and have not been to anything quite like this. Thanks for the tour?”
• “Visually moving and informative. A must see.”

Although the project manager had to build walls and make due with poor lighting (for an art exhibition), the Railroad Depot turned out to be the perfect choice to host Portraits of Freedom. The building bridged the runaway slave portraits with 20th century racism and discrimination. The symmetrical layout of the Railroad Depot (Appendix F) perfectly captures the architecture of segregation. Built in 1911 and closing in 1954, the Railroad Depot was only ever used as a segregated public building. The South room was the white waiting area and the North room the black waiting area. The ticket office is in-between the two rooms with a window to each. There were interior restrooms for whites and an exterior restroom for blacks. Segregated water fountains and restrooms, bus and lunch-counter seats, movie theaters and schools, are all gone from Nacogdoches. People can read about it and watch archival news footage, but in very few places can they walk in the footsteps of the African Americans that experienced segregated life.

Installation of Portraits of Freedom took one month (see Appendix S for photo documentation). The project manager, SFA art professor and six Nacogdoches Jaycees built twenty 4’x8’ walls on May 16th in a studio at the SFA Art Department. The next day and the subsequent morning the project manager and SFA art professor applied two coats of paint to the walls. On the 26th of May, they moved the walls to Railroad Depot. That evening, four Nacogdoches Jaycees assisted the project manager and SFA art professor to erect and position all the exhibition walls. The installation of the artwork took place on May 28th and from June 1-4. The SFA art professor did all the measurement and placement of the artwork. Wood glue and strips of canvas were used to cover the exposed edge where wall sections met. The project manager assisted with touch-up and made the final decisions about which pieces to include in the show. The SFA art professor was invaluable during the installation. He was not required to help build or paint or hang the artwork but he did so. The SFA art professor’s contribution was critical to the overall professional look of the exhibition.

One consideration the project manager overlooked in the grant proposal was staffing for the exhibition. The city of Nacogdoches website lists touring hours for the Railroad Depot. The project manager assumed that these were regular hours and planned for Portraits of Freedom with that mindset as late as February 2015. In March he learned that these were not hours of operations, but a range of hours when tours could be scheduled. Also, it was the Center for
Regional Heritage Research (CRHR) at SFA, and not the City, that staffed the Railroad Depot. Hours were flexible and determined by the class schedules of graduate student workers. The final bombshell was that the CRHR could not guarantee that it would have summer funding for graduate students. Both the City and the CHRC expected that project manager addressed staffing with the Humanities Texas grant. So for one week in March the exhibition had no hours (and anecdotally, no walls).

The Director of the ETRC offered a solution to the staffing predicament. She committed ETRC faculty and staff to cover Portraits of Freedom ten hours a week for the duration of the exhibition. These were the regular weekly hours for the exhibition on all print marketing. The CRHR also staffed the exhibition, but their hours (see Table 6) changed with the SFA academic calendar for the summer and fall.

Table 6: Portraits of Freedom Docent Scheduling

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<td>ETRC</td>
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<td>Hours/Week</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
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E. Artists and Art Professors

The project manager went with student artists versus independent or professional artists for the exhibition because early on in the conceptualization of Portraits of Freedom, the project manager asked an artist friend to draw a runaway slave for him. This artist got 80-90% done with the piece, decided they didn’t like it, and discarded the composition. The project manager realized that with a start-up project minus a venue or funding, it would be very difficult to attract enough independent or professional artists for a viable exhibition. There was little incentive the project manager could offer to make these artists complete their work. In contrast, students would need to complete their artwork to receive a passing grade in the class. Several classes of students could generate enough artwork for an exhibition and very quickly. The professors also liked that with an exhibition there would be an outcome beyond a letter grade for the students. The exhibition motivated them to work hard and engage in the class content.

There was some deserved skepticism in the very beginning from the project manager and the professors teaching the art classes as to whether the students would engage with slavery and runaway slaves in a significant and meaningful way. The project manager did not develop any sort of supplementary lesson plan for the students to learn about slavery. Instead, he mailed each professor a flash drive with reference materials: a short bibliography (Appendix C) of secondary sources on slave clothing and style, imagery and Texas slavery; PDF copies of four articles from the bibliography (Sanders, 1997 and 2011; and White & White, both from 1995); a folder with 1,653 of the TRSP advertisements and capture notices; and a list of 67 advertisements with better than average descriptions of the runaway slave.
The project manager trusted the art professors to develop and adapt both the runaway slave advertisements and the reference materials to their classroom objectives and learning criteria. The reasoning behind this was to “leave the artwork to the artists.” The project manager does not have any background or training in art or art history. In every case, including the writing of interpretative panels and the catalog essay, the project manager relied on the first-hand expertise of professional artists or historians. This grant report does not feature any commentary on the quality of the artwork. Should an outside expert like to make an independent assessment, the art catalog (Appendix I) and the TCU project assignment are (Appendix D) included in the report. The professors from Lamar and SFA did not provide a copy of their project assignments to the project manager.

Section 3 of the grant application was a summary of the *Portraits of Freedom* project. To describe the significance of the exhibition, the project manager wrote:

*Portraits of Freedom* is an opportunity for the general public to explore and engage the subject of slavery in Texas through art, a different lens than they might have previously experienced. Scholars have written extensively about how slaves lived…and interacted with their owners…but there is very not much about who these people were. Who were they? What did they look like? What did they wear and what were the things they carried? These are just some of the questions that runaway slave advertisements and capture notices in newspapers can address and that art can illustrate and interpret.

In all the above listed respects, the artists succeeded wonderfully and accomplished more than the project manager could have ever hoped for. SFA artist Kyle Rogers captures the beaten and broken down, yet still resilient and defiant, Bob. Brandi Griffin’s “Bound by Freedom” is timeless, as much identifiable with the African American experience today as 150 years ago. With a face half in the shadows and half in the light punctuated by penetrating eyes, Victoria Sidell’s portrait has a range of expression and complexity. These are just three examples in an exhibition full of stories. The ability of the artists to create real and abstract representations of runaway slaves was phenomenal.

The quality of the artwork was always the biggest concern for the project manager. Originally there were only three classes (two from SFA, one from TCU) committed for the exhibition. After seeing that artwork in December 2014, the project manager had serious doubts about the viability of a 20-30 piece exhibition. Table 7 (below) substantiates this concern, showing that of the 40 pieces produced in the Fall, only ten made the exhibition. There were a few weeks when it looked like there wouldn’t be any Spring art classes participating. The SFA art professor decided that the quality of the Fall class precluded the need for his Spring class to contribute. Luckily, the TCU professor decided that the Fall class was such a success that he wanted his Spring class to contribute as well. Two art classes from Lamar also signed on for the Spring. Five total classes participating helped assuaged the project manager concerns that there would be enough quality artwork to fill out the exhibition.
Table 7: Jurrying Process for Portraits of Freedom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SFA (Fall 2014)</th>
<th>TCU (Fall 2014)</th>
<th>TCU (Spring 2015)</th>
<th>Lamar (Spring 2015)</th>
<th>Totals</th>
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<td>1. Compositions</td>
<td>16 Students</td>
<td>8 Students</td>
<td>16 Students</td>
<td>17 Students</td>
<td>57 Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Professor’s Cut</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Exhibition Cut</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Installations</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 also breaks down the jurying system for the exhibition. Fifty-seven artists participated and submitted 107 pieces to their respective art professors. The instructors then made the first cuts, de-selecting 30 compositions (28%) from the exhibition. This was actually fewer than the project manager expected. The project deadlines (Appendix E) were very clear that only 4-5 pieces (single or multi-image installations) per class should survive the first review. The unwillingness of the art professors to de-select more of their own students’ work was probably a good thing. It forced the project manager to step into a more curatorial role and make the ultimate decisions for the exhibition cut. These choices narrowed the artwork down to a final count of 45 distributed across 24 installations.

There were weaknesses in the project and they are best illustrated in the artwork that did not make the exhibition. Some of the pieces did not meet the expectations of the art professors themselves. Other pieces were interesting and technically sound, but were not included in the exhibition because of the image subject. It is impossible to assess what the artist was thinking, but the examples below illuminate repetitive themes that suggest some of the artists would have been more successful had they been provided a stronger curriculum on the history of slavery in Texas. As noted several paragraphs before, this was not something that the project manager did.

Many of the artists looked at the institution of slavery in the United States rather than focus specifically on runaway slaves in Texas. This was fine, but it meant that several artists were not considered for the show because their piece could not remotely be linked to a project that marketed itself as an “art exhibition featuring runaway slaves from newspaper advertisements compiled by the Texas Runaway Slave Project” (promotional flyer). For example, Susan Tallant painted South Carolina free black and former slave Denmark Vesey, who

“History vs. Reality”
Susan Tallant
Lamar, Spring 2015
led a failed Charleston slave uprising in 1822. Ms. Tallant did not make the exhibition because her art did not have a Texas connection.

Several artists also used models or photographs to help them visualize what the runaway slave in the advertisement they selected might look like. This worked well except when the student did not significantly differentiate their composition from their influencing piece. In the example above, the artist paired a famous photograph of Harriet Tubman with an advertisement for Salley. The project manager decided that the drawing and the photograph were too similar for inclusion in the exhibition.

Based on the observations above, if the Portraits of Freedom project were ever replicated again at the university level, the project manager would recommend an interdisciplinary approach for participating art students and faculty. Under ideal circumstances the artists might take a full semester class on slavery before they composed any artwork. That situation not likely being very feasible, the next best alternative might be a series of narrated PowerPoint presentations (20-30 minutes) on slavery that students could download as a quick primer before they began working on their artwork. This would be a much better and more specific source than an online encyclopedia. Some artists included in their compositions direct references to the Underground Railroad and Harriet Tubman, which, though far removed from Texas, suggest they went straight to Wikipedia, which features those terms prominently in its entry from the Google search for “runaway slaves.”

The administrative processes to coordinate the completion of artwork and its transfer to the exhibition were fairly straightforward. Most correspondence was via email. Explicit project deadlines (Appendix E) and frequent updates kept everyone on track. The only aspect of this relationship that was strained was in May during pre-installation. While singularly not that big of deal, cumulatively the choices of the TCU and Lamar art professors to selectively document the
compositions submitted by their classes created a great amount of additional work for the project manager (Table 8).

Table 8: Exhibition Preparation by Participating Universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lamar (Spring 2015)</th>
<th>TCU (Fall 2014)</th>
<th>TCU (Spring 2015)</th>
<th>SFA (Fall 2014)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor’s Cut</td>
<td>19 pieces</td>
<td>12 pieces</td>
<td>37 pieces</td>
<td>9 pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs Provided</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions Provided</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runaway’s Name Provided</td>
<td>When Applicable</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist Contracts Received</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The photography took the longest. This was especially the case for the Lamar pieces, which were framed and sealed under plexi- or museum glass. The project manager had to stretch and skew these photographs in Photoshop to get an image without glare for the catalog.

The project manager and the TCU art professor disagreed about the importance of knowing the name of the runaway slave the student used for inspiration. The project manager believed the advertisements were a critical context to help visitors appreciate the artist’s vision, as well as a standalone historical document. In contrast, the art professor believed the inclusion of names and advertisements detracted from the meaning of TCU’s 20-piece installation. It illustrates both the diversity of runaways but also their anonymity and facelessness, their individual names and struggles are all but lost to history. In the end, the project manager conceded this point and moved on with installation preparations.

The TCU artists also forgot to complete artist contracts. Their professor solved this problem with one contract that he signed as the representative for the exhibition artists from each class. When issues arose, the project team always found a way to compromise.

F. Project Manager

The best outcome of Portraits of Freedom for the project manager was leadership development. Every aspect of the exhibition forced the project manager to make decisions and deal with adversity. Portraits of Freedom went from the drawing board to a full-fledged exhibition in one year. The quick turnaround time worked very well for the project manager and collaborating faculty as the succession of deadlines kept everyone productive and focused. The project manager had to be organized, prescient, and flexible to change and compromise, especially when plans did not work out as intended (i.e. exhibition walls).

The project manager also demonstrated great confidence and perseverance to make Portraits of Freedom happen. At almost every turn, the exhibition walked a fine margin between success and failure. This was the first exhibition, art or otherwise, ever organized by the project manager. The project had a certain audacity as it asked recipients to trust an untested idea (without funding or exhibit space) led by an unproven university librarian. This “risk” factor deterred the overwhelming majority of potential collaborators, but also attracted young art faculty at Lamar, SFA and TCU willing and interested to try something new and innovative.

3 In May 2014, the project manager emailed the Portraits of Freedom proposal to 155 art professors at 17 universities in Louisiana and Texas. TCU art professor Adam Fung was the only one that joined the project.
Confidence had to be high because uncertainty about the exhibition pervaded the project right up to the final month before the opening reception. The project manager promoted *Portraits of Freedom* throughout the Spring not knowing what the finished product would look like. Brochures and flyers were printed and distributed and interviews given with blind faith that the exhibition would merit the publicity already generated. Artwork for *Portraits of Freedom* was the final class project for both Lamar and TCU. The project manager did not receive the TCU artwork until May 5th and Lamar until May 18th. These compositions compromised 63% (67/107) of the total pieces juried and 78% (35/45) of the artwork in the exhibition.

Despite the inexperience of the project manager and the relative chaos of the process, *Portraits of Freedom* worked. The exhibition was a fantastic team effort. Collaborating faculty instructed the students, wrote the interpretative panels and catalog essay, and presented at the opening reception. The student artists engaged with the runaway slave advertisements and produced some stunning pieces. The project manager coordinated all these moving pieces. “*Portraits of Freedom* showcases the best that Nacogdoches has to offer when the university and the community work together….It would not be possible without the collaboration of nearly a dozen SFA departments, faculty at six other universities, and the behind-the-scenes efforts of the city of Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches Chamber of Commerce and the Nacogdoches Jaycees.”

V. Outcomes

Although the first showing of Portraits of Freedom is complete, the lifecycle of the exhibition is just beginning. There are a number of project developments that will keep the exhibition relevant for at least the next couple of years:

A. Travel – *Portraits of Freedom* will travel to at least two venues between 2016 and 2017 (See Section III-A-4)

B. Presentations
   - Fall 2015 (TBD) - University of North Texas History and Library Departments, Denton, TX. Dr. Andrew Torget, who wrote the interpretative panel text on slavery in Texas, has invited the project manager to talk about the development of the Texas Runaway Slave Project and *Portraits of Freedom*.
   - February 19, 2016 - Cane River National Heritage Area Conference Reception, Natchitoches, LA. The conference organizers would like to have the reception at the gallery where *Portraits of Freedom* is on display and for the project manager to talk about the exhibition.
   - March 3, 2016 - Texas State Historical Association Annual Meeting, Irving, TX. The panel is "Slavery in Texas: A Local, Regional, and International Perspective” and the working paper title is "History's Strange Bedfellows: How Artists, Lawyers and Archivists Built the Texas Runaway Slave Project"

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C. Scholarship – The project manager has a verbal commitment from the editor of the East Texas Historical Journal (http://easttexashistorical.org/v3/publications/ETHAjournal.htm) that the journal will run a special issue on Portraits of Freedom at some point in 2016. That special issue

- Review essay on the exhibition artwork.
- One art history professor has already approached the project manager with an interest in looking at how the Portraits of Freedom project compares and contrasts to the scholarship on traditional art education. He was intrigued by the use of the runaway slave advertisements as primary sources to teach intermediate-level art concepts. Unlike learning to draw a still life or sketch a sitting model, the runaway slave content forced the students to contemplate history as it intersects race, religion and identity then and now. The professor was also interested in more deeply analyzing the development of the exhibition. Was this a worthy first attempt? Did the project manager and art professors give the students enough to succeed? Did the students really understand what they had created?5

D. Alpha Project – Along this paradigm, Portraits of Freedom could be the beta-version or proof of concept for a large-scale national or international alpha project of the same description. This might engage professional and/or student artists from universities around the country. There is definitely plenty of content. Large databases of runaway slave advertisements are aggregated online for Arkansas, Haiti, Jamaica, Mississippi, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. Researchers can also look in published monographs, digitized and microfilmed newspapers, and court records to find records of runaway slaves. The challenge will be to find an institution willing to fund an exhibition and take on a significant role in project administration. SFA holds a “Texas National” (http://www.art.sfasu.edu/media/pdf/prospectus_txn-2014.pdf) every year, which would be a good template for the alpha project.

5 These questions made the project manager think about one of his favorite dialogues in Jurassic Park: “I'll tell you the problem with the scientific power that you're using here; it didn't require any discipline to attain it. You read what others had done and you took the next step. You didn't earn the knowledge for yourselves, so you don't take any responsibility for it. You stood on the shoulders of geniuses to accomplish something as fast as you could, and before you even knew what you had, you patented it, and packaged it, and slapped it on a plastic lunchbox…. [Y]our scientists were so preoccupied with whether or not they could that they didn't stop to think if they should.” Steven Spielberg, Jurassic Park, quoting Jeff Goldblum (1993; City: Universal Pictures/Amblin Entertainment).
VI. Appendices

A. Actual Budget

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| Best in Show Prizes (Hobby Lobby Gift Cards for $75, $50, $25) - Private Donor

PROJECT COST TOTAL

$2,495.00 | $1,599.57 | $1,401.44 | $1,000.00 | $6,296.01
## B. Submitted Budgets

### Revised Budget (Post-Award), December 2014

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C. Research Bibliography for *Portraits of Freedom* Artists

**Clothing and Style**


**Imagery**


**Historical Context**


Final Project: Drawing on History

Approaches (choose one or multiple):
- large scale silhouettes/ installation (see Kara Walker)
- re-vision/re-imagine (see Nick Cave, Kehinde Wiley)
- re-examine (Ellen Gallagher, Kerry James Marshall)
- document / envision / illustrate

Components and Goals:
- Incorporate Research component using Partner with Texas Runaway Slave Project materials provided by Kyle Ainsworth, Special Collections Librarian, East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University.
- Website: http://digital.sfasu.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/RSP
- Recognize Historical Moment
- Social + cultural Impact of Art
- Re-vision, bring new perspective to work
- Explore research materials visually
- Create a mature, well-developed drawing project that draws on techniques and skills acquired throughout the semester.

*Exemplary work will be selected for June 2015 exhibition (potentially a traveling exhibition) in Nacogdoches, Texas. This exhibition is sponsored by Stephen F. Austin State University.

Process:

1. Identify and research your reference artist
2. Review provided research materials from Runaway Slave Advertisements
3. Decide on an approach to engage with subject matter
4. Think about the social impact your project may have
5. Meet with me individually to map out and define your project’s aesthetic
6. Begin work, create time line for project

Due Date and Final Crit: Weds, December 10th, 2014
E. Artist Deadlines

**Artist Deadlines, January 12, 2015**

**Now thru Sunday, May 17—Selection and Framing**

I expect that 20-30 pieces will be selected for the exhibit (from 6 classes and one faculty artist).  
- Reception – 5-10 pieces (also back-up should the exhibit travel to a larger venue)  
- Exhibit – 15-20 pieces and 8-10 interpretative panels

There is no guarantee that each piece selected will be displayed. If the composition needs to be framed, please do so by May 17. Everything will be mounted on false walls loaned by the SFA art department. Here is the selection process:

1. **First Cut (Class Professor)** - Please select the best 4-5 pieces from each class you taught.

I know it will be difficult with so many different mediums, but for exhibit cohesiveness, I would like the framing and matting to be as consistent as possible. For instance, the artwork of Shaun's student's will be under Plexiglas due to the size. If you plan on matting, Shaun's recommended using black as the exhibit standard.

For each piece, please send as soon as possible:
- a) A JPEG of the Artwork [email]
- b) Artist's Name [email]
- c) Dimensions [email]
- d) Runway Slave's Object File Name (i.e. Maranda01)[email]
- e) Official Paperwork [mail]
  i. Artist Contract  
    There is a chance that this exhibit will travel if the initial showing is successful. Knowing how far out galleries and museums plan their exhibits, I would like to keep the exhibit content together at least 3 years.
  ii. Digital Custody (optional)  
    [link]

This will help us begin to visualize the layout.

2. **Layout (Shaun)** - He has an artist's eye and will know how to arrange the reception and the exhibit.

3. **Final Product (Kyle)** - I will look at Shaun's layout and I will have the final say so for the selection.

4. **Guest Jury** - I am going to ask 10-15 people in the local community (cross-section of business, community and SFA leaders) to judge the contents of the final exhibit (either in person or from a PDF compilation) and select their top piece in each medium and then a best in show. This should help generate local interest and spread the word. I don't know if there will be any prizes at this time.

**Now thru Wednesday, May 20 – Shipment to SFA**

I can drive to Arlington, Beaumont or Fort Worth at any time to pick up the selected artwork. Please let me know if I'll need something bigger than my Ford Focus.

**Monday, May 25 – Friday, June 5 – Exhibit Set-Up**

This gives Shaun enough time to get everything laid out and me time to get reception programs and exhibit catalogs printed.

**Thursday, June 11 – Reception, 5:00pm-7:30pm**

**Saturday, June 13 – Exhibit Opens**
F. Final Railroad Depot Layout
G. Proposal to the Nacogdoches Jaycees

Fellow Board Members,

I am the project manager of *Portraits of Freedom*, a juried student art exhibit of runaway slaves drawn from the newspaper advertisements aggregated by the Texas Runaway Slave Project.

Proposal: The Nacogdoches Jaycees build 20 wall panels, paint them, and temporarily loan them to the exhibit. The exhibit has a shortage of walls for the amount of art available for display. There are other solutions (tables, easels) but none is as desirable as additional wall space. The benefit to the Nacogdoches Jaycees is twofold:

1. Support an academic project that benefits and educates the local community. 2015 is the 150th Anniversary of the end of slavery and the Civil War.
2. The Jaycees have new walls for the 2015 Haunted House to replace older panels or add an extra room.

The exhibit will open in Nacogdoches June 13, 2015 at the Nacogdoches Railroad Depot and remain through September 25th. The exhibit will feature drawings, lithographs and screen-prints from art students at SFA, TCU and Lamar, and have interpretative panels contextualizing what’s on display. There is an opening reception June 11, 5:00pm-7:30pm, which will feature two lectures that place slavery and freedom in Texas within the larger contexts of the Atlantic world.

I am coordinating the participating artists as well as managing the financing, construction, and marketing for the event. Current sponsors are the Ralph W. Steen Library, Humanities Texas, the City of Nacogdoches, the Nacogdoches Chamber of Commerce, and the Center for Regional Heritage Research.

Would the Nacogdoches Jaycees be interested in being an exhibit sponsor?

---

Framing

4' x 8' with a center support at 5' to hang artwork.

Wall Panels Key
- Front Sheet of Plywood
- Front and back sheet of Plywood
- Support Strips (old haunted house sections)

Plywood needs to be finished, not the rough stuff used for Haunted House.

Per sheet options (Lowe’s, 5/1/15):
- ¼” Particle Board, $19.98
- ¼” Oak Plywood, $29.95
- ¼” Blondewood Plywood, $34.27
- ¼” Maple Plywood, $22.47

Delivery

Last Week of May 2015
## H. Guest Jury Ballot

1st Place Vote = 8 points  
2nd Place Vote = 4 points  
3rd Place Vote = 2 points  

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### Prizes:
- 1st: $75.00 gift card to Hobby Lobby
- 2nd: $50.00 gift card to Hobby Lobby
- 3rd: $25.00 gift card to Hobby Lobby
I. Catalog

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 moments from a range of mediums (drawing, painting, lithography, screen-printing) and artistic influences. While the words of the master describing their missing person are troubling, racist and viscera, runaway slave advertisements are unaltered 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 advocates of Texas and across the country who recognized my vision and helped interpret it to the exhibition you see today.

Sincerely,
Kyle Aimsworth
Project Manager

CONTRIBUTING FACULTY

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

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

Xenia Fedorchenko is an associate professor of art at Lamar University. Students from her spring 2013 lithography and screenprinting 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 the interpretive panels for the exhibition.

Dr. Lecha Claire Robertson is an assistant professor of art history at the University of Texas at Tyler. Robertson wrote the roman 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.
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

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

"Walo-sha," 2015
by Riley Knight
Mixed media on paper, 11 inches by 14 inches
Texas Christian University

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

An advertisement for Walo-sha printed in the Northern Standard (Clarksville, Texas, Jan. 3 - March 27, 1847.

"Walo-sha," 2015
by Brooke Wong
Mixed media on paper, 11 inches by 14 inches
Texas Christian University
"Do things ever change?,” 2015
by Audra LeCoeur
Woodcut print on paper, 12 inches by 18 inches
Lamar University

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

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

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

"La Tierra Prometida,” 2015
by Marisol LuaFigueiroa
Acrylic on panel, 16 inches by 30 inches
Lamar 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

*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

An advertisement for Melissa printed in the Democratic Telegraph and Texas Register (Houston, Texas), March 30–April 7, 1848.

*Melissa.* 2014
by Hareli Waja
Mixed media on canvas, 22 inches by 30 inches
Stephen F. Austin State University

*Elías.* 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 21st, 1860.

TAKEN UP and committed before W. W. Varncker, justice of the Peace, Tyler county, negro boy above about 20 or 20 years, 6 feet 30 inches high, weighs about 125 lbs. Says his name is Ephraim, black com- plexion, has a scar from the left eyebrow running about 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. To quick escape.

J. F. KIRBY,
Sherrif Tyler Co.

An advertisement for Ephraim printed in the State Gazette. (Austin, Texas), Sept. 13 - Oct. 6, 1860.

"Ephraim," 2015
by Aubrey Mitchell
Mixed media on canvas, 22 inches by 30 inches
Stephen F. Austin State University

Page 16

An advertisement for Bob printed in the Northern Standard (Clarksville, Texas), Oct. 7-20, 1843. Bob was later captured that month. Notices of his capture were advertised in the Northern Standard (Oct. - Dec. 1843) and the National Vindictor (Washington, Texas) (Feb. 5 - July 6, 1844).

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

Page 17

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

Page 18

"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.

Page 19
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.

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 utilized this information and argued in favor of slavery based on “scientific” evidence. In 1844, Calhoun spoke about the annihilation 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.” 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
Mathews 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, woozy 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.

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. As early as 1830, Rice appeared in blackface and tattered clothing during his performances. Contemporary performers helped to disseminate “Jim Crow” to the masses. About 1847, George P. Reed published sheet music for the “Jim Crow Jubilee” (Figure 2).

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 print 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.

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. 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, 1865, 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 1: “Quilting Frolic”
John Lewis Krimmel, 1813
Winterthur Museum • Winterthur, Delaware

Figure 2: “Jim Crow Jubilee”
George P. Reed, c.1847
Lithograph (Library of Congress)

Figure 3: “Negro Life at the South”
Eastman Johnson, 1859
New-York Historical Society

Figure 4: “A Negro Regiment in Action”
Thomas Nast, 1865
That same issue included two other images of black soldiers and a commentary in which the author contested some Northern viewpoints that blacks lacked the discipline and valor required of a soldier. By the end of 1863, the Supervisory Committee for Recruiting Colored Troops 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 of a group of trained black soldiers in uniform and engaged the viewer with salient 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 steady gazes. Homer captured a moment that seemingly occurred all over the South, whereby blacks and whites recognized that abolition had forever changed American life. 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

Notes
3 The term “Jim Crow” was adopted to describe laws that segregated blacks in the South in the decades after the Civil War through the Civil Rights era.
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. These were not permitted to serve until the Emancipation Proclamation was adopted on Jan. 1, 1863. However, their enrollment did not grant the soldiers equality—almost all officers were white, including Shaw.
6 Hills, 112.
7 McGary, 90.
Portraits of Freedom is a juried student art exhibition featuring runaway slaves from newspaper advertisements compiled by the Texas Runaway Slave Project. The exhibition features drawings, lithographs, paintings and screen prints created by art students at Stephen F. Austin State University, Texas Christian University and Lamar University. Interpretive panels contextualize what is displayed.

For information, contact Kyle Ainsworth at 936-468-1590 or ainsworthk@sfasu.edu

FREE ADMISSION
OPENING RECEPTION
5 - 7:30 P.M. JUNE 11
Nacogdoches Courthouse Annex
203 W. Main St. - Nacogdoches

EXHIBITION HOURS
JUNE 13 - SEPT. 25
Thursday and Friday - 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Saturday - 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Nacogdoches Railroad Depot
101 Old Tyler Road - Nacogdoches

Opening Reception Speakers
Dr. Dainz Ramey Berry
University of Texas at Austin
Dr. Douglas B. Chambers
University of Southern Mississippi

Sponsors
Stephen F. Austin State University
Nacogdoches Jaycees
Nacogdoches County Chamber of Commerce
Humanities Texas

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
NACOGDOCHES, TEXAS
ABOUT THE EXHIBITION
Portraits of Freedom is a juried wide-open art exhibition featuring runaway slave narratives from newspaper advertisements compiled by the Texas Runaway Slave Project. The exhibition features drawings, photographs, paintings and written pieces created by art students at Stephen F. Austin State University, Texas Christian University and Lamar University. Interested parties can contact the curator for more information.

EXHIBITION MANAGER
Kyle Alsum<br>Special Collections Librarian<br>Stephen F. Austin State University

EXHIBITION TEAM
Shawn Roberts<br>Associate Professor of Art<br>Stephen F. Austin State University
Xenia Pedrenko<br>Associate Professor of Art<br>Lamar University
Adams Pung<br>Associate Professor of Art<br>Texas Christian University
Dr. Andrew J. Boggs<br>Associate Professor of History<br>University of North Texas
Dr. Erika Clark Belozerov<br>Associate Professor of Art History<br>University of Texas at Tyler

TEXAS RUNAWAY SLAVE PROJECT
The Texas Runaway Slave Project is a database of runaway slave advertisements, articles and essays from newspapers published in Texas before 1865. The 1,793 documents more than 1,750 Texas runaway slaves compiled from the review of 9,500 newspaper issues. In 2014, the TRSP received a $16,000 grant from the Humanities Texas, Texas Bluebonnet Festival.

CONTACT INFORMATION:
Kyle Alsum — East Texas Research Center<br>(903) 468-8153 • alsum@lsus.edu<br>digital.atx.edu/adm/landlanguage/collections/TRSP

EXHIBITION HOURS:
Tuesday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Nacogdoches Railroad Depot<br>114 Old Tyler Road<br>Nacogdoches, Texas

TO SCHEDULE A GROUP TOUR:<br>(903) 468-8153 • exlib@lsus.edu

SPONSORS:<br>Nacogdoches County Chamber of Commerce<br>Nacogdoches Junior, City of Nacogdoches, Humanities Texas, Texas Bluebonnet Festival

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY<br>NACOGDOCHES, TEXAS

June 13 - Sept. 25, 2015
Nacogdoches Railroad Depot<br>101 Old Tyler Road<br>Nacogdoches, Texas
Free Admission

HISTORY OF SLAVERY IN TEXAS
Slavery was intimately intertwined with the early history of Texas. During the course of 25 years, the slave population in Texas grew from an estimated 5,000 in 1836 to approximately 180,000 in 1860. Anglo-Americans who immigrated to Texas brought slaves with them.

The term, "free soil and abundant land," was a natural frontier for the expansion of slavery. Many Texans felt slaves were the ultimate commodity because they could be exploited. Slaves were collateral for economic transactions, grew more valuable as they aged and provided a lifetime of free agricultural and domestic labor. In a very short time, Texas went from a society with slaves to a slave society.

Although bondage by definition highly curtailed their free will, slaves still found ways to create their own space. As work in the fields or in the house, slaves asserted themselves and tested the master-slave relationship. Running away was one way slaves challenged the status quo.

Wherever there was slavery, there were runaways. Wherever there were newspapers, there were runaway advertisements. This project allows a diverse audience of scholars, students, teachers and genealogists to learn more about the world of runaway slaves in Texas.


ART EXHIBITION PIECES

Paintings
Art by Kim Jenkins, SFA art student

Sculptures
Art by Kyle Rogers, SFA art student
L. Opening Reception Brochure Insert

Portraits of Freedom
ART EXHIBITION

Opening Reception
5 to 7:30 p.m. June 11, 2015
Nacogdoches Courthouse Annex
203 W. Main St.
Nacogdoches, Texas

featuring
Dr. Daina Ramey Berry
University of Texas at Austin

and
Dr. Douglas B. Chambers
University of Southern Mississippi

Lecture topics include the history of Juneteenth and runaway slaves in the Atlantic World.

This program is made possible in part by a grant from Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.
M. Banners

3' x 5'

Portraits of Freedom
Art Exhibition

1' x 5'

Opening Reception
5 - 7:30 P.M. JUNE 11
Nacogdoches Courthouse Annex
209 W. Main St. - Nacogdoches
FREE ADMISSION

1' x 5'

Exhibition Hours
JUNE 13 - SEPT. 25
Thursday and Friday - 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Saturday - 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Nacogdoches Railroad Depot - 101 Old Tyler Road - Nacogdoches
FREE ADMISSION

N. Opening Reception DVD (not pictured)
O. Opening Reception Program

OPENING RECEPTION
Portraits of Freedom
Art Exhibition

5:15 - Welcome/Project Overview
Kyle Ainsworth, Project Manager for Portraits of Freedom and Special Collections Librarian for the Ralph W. Steen Library at Stephen F. Austin State University

5:20 - Commentary and Artistic Process
Shaun Roberts - Assistant Professor of Art at SFASU
Adam Fung - Assistant Professor of Art at Texas Christian University
Xenia Fedorchenko - Associate Professor of Art at Lamar University

5:35 – Dr. Douglas Chambers Introduction
Kyle Ainsworth

5:40 – Runaway Slaves Lecture
Dr. Douglas B. Chambers - Associate Professor of History at the University of Southern Mississippi

6:05 – Q&A

6:15 – Break and Refreshments

6:25 - Dr. Daina Ramey Berry Introduction
Kyle Ainsworth

6:30 – Juneteenth Lecture
Dr. Daina Ramey Berry - Associate Professor of History at the University of Texas at Austin

6:55 – Q&A

7:05 – Refreshments

7:15-8:30 – Exhibition Open at the Railroad Depot
101 Old Tyler Road - Nacogdoches
P. Opening Reception Survey

OPENING RECEPTION

Portraits of Freedom
Art Exhibition

SURVEY

1. How much did you know about the lecture topics before coming to the program? (circle one)

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2. Were the lectures informative? (circle one)

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<td>a) Runaway Slaves</td>
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<td>Dr. Berry</td>
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This is the first speaker series funded by the Ralph W. Steen Library, SFASU.

3. Would you come to another similar event? (circle one)

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4. What are some subjects/topics that you would like to see in the future?

5. Additional Comments:
Q. Exhibition Interpretative Panels

Portraits of Freedom

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 exhibited here interpret the content of advertisements and capture notices from a range of mediums (gazette, painting, lithography, screen-printing) and artistic influences. While the words of the master describing their missing property are degrading, racist and insular, runaway slave advertisements are untold records of resistance and the pursuit of freedom. This exhibition helps, in its own way, give a human face to slavery in Texas, 160 years gone but still important to the identity and history of the state.

Portraits of Freedom is not just as an exhibition. Museum-style labels 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 over 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 here in Texas and across the country that recognized my vision and have helped interpret it to the exhibition you see here today.

Sincerely,
Kyle Ainsworth
Project Manager

Runaway Slaves in Texas

From the moment Anglo-Americans began migrating into Texas with their slaves, those enslaved people had been running away. In most cases, slaves escaped for only a few days at a time. Some fugitives left to visit loved ones on nearby plantations; others ran in protest, hoping to force their masters into various concessions; still others ran to the surrounding woods for whatever temporary freedom the countryside could provide. Nearly all returned within days or weeks to their terms and plantations, where the repressed visual rhythms

A smaller number, however, undertook the far riskier challenge of making a permanent escape to freedom, and for those bold souls Texas offered unique opportunities. Unlike Mississippi or Alabama, Texas shared a porous border with Mexico and a sparsely settled western frontier where Anglo-Texans authority remained tenuous at best. Beginning in the 1830s, and continuing through the end of the Civil War, enslaved men and women in Texas threatened their masters by running away in a bid for permanent freedom.

Such escapes made Anglo-Texans deeply uneasy, and Texas law enforcement did everything in its power to discourage and return runaway slaves—establishing county slave patrols, arming slave-captain raids into northern Mexico, and offering rewards to anyone who captured a fugitive slave—so they struggled to contain the growing problem of slave flight.

Credits

Kyle Ainsworth, Stephen F. Austin State University
Project Manager

Exhibition Topics:
Shawn Roberts, Stephen F. Austin State University
Jenna Federovich, Lamar University
Adam Fang, Texas Christian University
Dr. Andrew Torget, University of North Texas
Dr. Clair Robertson, University of Texas at Tyler
Art Professor
Art Professor
Art Professor
Art Professor
Art Professor
Art Professor

Sponsors
Galv. W. Blanton Library, SFA
SFA School of Art, SFA
City of Nacogdoches
Humanities Texas
Nacogdoches Chamber of Commerce

Special Thanks:
SFA Center for Digital Scholarship, SFA Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
SFA Center of the Americas Marketing Association
The Portal to Texas History
The Sunflower Foundation
Dana Berry, Douglas Chambers, Erica Chapman, Patrick DeJesus, Shirley Dickerson, Cheryl Fice, Hylda Hernandez, Joanna Lowe, Mark Musquiz, Jason Reese, Linda Reynolds, Paul Sandal, Michael Smith, Jessica Swett, Kelsey Snowdon, David Ybarra, Ybarra Ybarra, Dillon Wiedman, Jon Ybarra

This program is made possible in part by a grant from Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Dr. Andrew Torget, UNT

Slavery in Texas, 1821-1845

Chattel slavery came to Texas with the first Anglo-American immigrants to Stephen F. Austin’s colony, who abandoned the United States for Mexico in order to grow cotton on the massive tracts of land offered them by the Mexican government. Enslaved men and women made up 20 percent of the people in Austin’s colony as early as 1825, and by 1835 there were more slaves in Texas than native Mexicans.

This forced migration set off fierce political fights across Mexico over the future of slavery in the region, pitting Anglo-Americans against conservative keyers in Mexico City and Saltillo, Coahuila. By 1835, these fights over slavery had merged with a civil war within Mexico, and helped produce the Texas Revolution.

The Republic of Texas that emerged in the aftermath of the revolution was, at least on paper, the most ardently proslavery government in North America. Section 9 of the Republic’s constitution explicitly forbade laws from ever outlawing slavery, and even prohibited slave owners from freeing their own slaves unless they were sent to live outside Texas. The population of enslaved people in Texas rose by more than 50 percent during the years of the Republic, reaching 25,000 men and women by 1845.

Dr. Andrew Torget, UNT

Author: Kyle Ainsworth, SFA

Author: Kyle Ainsworth, SFA

Dr. Andrew Torget, UNT

Dr. Andrew Torget, UNT
Slavery in Texas, 1846-1865

Following annexation in 1845, Anglo-Americans flooded into Texas with their slaves in unprecedented numbers. During the years from 1847 to 1860, more than 70,000 people came into Texas. During the decade that followed, another 400,000 followed. Nearly all of these new Texans traded from the slavetrading stations, and the vast majority came to grow cotton.

The price of cotton boomed during the 1850s, and so cotton production in the region expanded—rising from 56,000 bales annually to more than 431,000 in Texas, emerging as the leading cotton producer in North America. That cotton empire was built on slave labor, and by 1860 the 182,000 enslaved African Americans in Texas made up nearly a third of the state’s population.

The annexation of Texas and the land taken during the U.S.-Mexican War had sparked a fierce battle in the United States over the balance of political power between slave and free states. By 1854, these ties had become so heated that a new political party emerged—the Republicans, whose sole purpose was to prevent slavery’s expansion. When that party’s candidate for president, Abraham Lincoln, won in 1860, Southern slaveholding states began seceding from the Union.

Anglo-Texans seceded in February 1861, explaining that they did so because they opposed “the degrading doctrine of the equality of all men, irrespective of race or color.” Yet that war ended with victory for the Union. General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston and declared that, in accordance with Lincoln’s orders, “all slaves are free.”

Contemporary Influences

Artists help remind us that the echoes of slavery still reverberate today. Art plays a vital role in society’s perception and memory of slavery, acting as conduit between past and present. The student artists exhibited here contribute layers of information to the slaves’ real lives, advancing the ongoing conversation about race in America. Some of their contemporary artists’ influences may include Runnels’s (Cynthia Linie, 1999), Poesy Here / Saa What happened and / I Creed (Camille Yorem, 1995) and the artists below.

Kehinde Wiley: He engages slavery through portraiture, often placing his subjects within iconic moments. Wiley’s paintings of black men and women in colonial history, replace archetypes in art history, and create alternatives to the stereotypes cast by culture today by adding black figures to historical paintings and settings.

The Texas Runaway Slave Project

The Texas Runaway Slave Project (TRSP) is an online database of runaway slave advertisements, articles and notices from newspapers published in Texas before 1865. The TRSP documents over 1,350 Texas runaway slave cases compiled from the review of 5,500 digitized and microfilmed newspaper issues. In 2014, the TRSP received a $10,000 grant from the Sumner Foundation to hire six student researchers for the summer. Visit the TRSP online at: http://digital.sfasu.edu/cmtandingpage/collection/TRSP.

The website is a resource for historians, genealogists and researchers. Users can browse or keyword search from 32 data fields like name, age, sex, race, criminal record, location, possessions, slave owner. Each advertisement has an image and transcript.

Dr. Andrew Torget, UNT
Adam Fung, TCU
Kyle Ainsworth, SFA

Dr. Letha Robertson, UT-Tyler
Kyle Ainsworth, SFA
R. Exhibition Survey

**Portraits of Freedom**

**Art Exhibition**

**SURVEY**

1. How much did you know about runaway slaves in Texas before coming to the exhibition? (circle one)

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4. Comments:

S. Exhibition Installation Photographs
Wall Installation, May 20, 2015

Artwork Installation, May 28 – June 4, 2015
### T. Exhibition Attendance

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U. Exhibition Condition Report

Portraits of Freedom
Condition Report

Action: Installation
Location: Nacogdoches Railroad Depot, 101 Old Tyler Rd., Nacogdoches, TX 75965
Institution: Stephen F. Austin State University, East Texas Research Center
Name: Kyle Amworth Title: Project Manager
Signature: Date: 6/8/2015

Artist: Lillian Young Title:
Medium: Mixed media on paper Dimensions: 11" x 14"

FRAME
Type: Glass Sticker No Frame Description:
Dimensions:
Condition: Excellent Good Poor

AUXILIARY SUPPORT
Sticker:
Sizing:
Problem:

OBJECT CONDITION
Excellent Good Poor

450 Reward
Hand in this man to
the authorities and
receive fifty dollars

NOTES: 3 of 3
V. Newspaper Articles

Daily Sentinel June 10, 2015, pp.1, 4

TEXAS SLAVES

According to the 1860 United States Census, the Texas population included about 1,500,000 African Americans, or roughly 30% of the state's total population.

Portraits of Freedom

Exhibit features runaway slaves, freedom in newspapers in the 1800s

Photographs courtesy of Daily Sentinel

Exhibit - From 18

"Portraits of Freedom" exhibit celebrates the valiant efforts of runaway slaves and their stories in newspapers.

Exhibits are open to the public at the History Museum of East Texas through September 30.

Photographs courtesy of Daily Sentinel
Bound by Freedom

Lamar student earns top honors in Portraits of Freedom exhibit

BY CHRISTINE BROUSSARD
christine@sentinel.com

Bound by Freedom (top left), Lamar University
Bound by Freedom, oil on canvas, 24 x 34

The painting, hung among dozens of others at the Navasota Railroad Depot, depicts the bonds of an African American bound tight by a nation's symbol of freedom.

The piece, titled "Bound by Freedom" by Lamar University student Brandi Griffin, won first place in the SFA Portraits of Freedom exhibit.

"I've never done anything like this before and it was an honor to participate and win best in show," Griffin said. "I really enjoyed everything about the aouthorship. I believe that every piece of work in this exhibition was outstanding."

"Brutal imagery"

The piece was the brainchild of East Texas Research Center specialist collection librarian Styke Ainsworth.

IF YOU GO
The Portraits of Freedom exhibition will remain open at the Navasota Railroad Depot, 101 Old Tyler Road, through Sept. 26. Admission is free.

After attending the Atlantic World Slave Database Conference at Michigan State University last year on the Texas Runaway Slaves Project (TRSP), Ainsworth had an idea to join history and artistry.

"The TRSP is a digital database on the ETFC website of runaway slave advertisements, articles, and notices from newspapers published in Texas. Participating in this project chose a runaway slave advertisement to render artfully.

"I chose to submit because I felt like my piece was good and truly showed that America had such a tight grip on slavery and everything going on in the time period," Griffin said.
Collaborative exhibit brings pride to SFA students, faculty

Andrew Nelson
Staff Writer

The “Portraits of Freedom” art exhibit is entering its third week of display. The project, currently shown in the public at the Nacogdoches Railroad Depot, was based off of the Texas Runaway Slave Project and features diverse series of works created by students from SFA, TCU and Lamar University.

The idea for the exhibit was first conceived by Special Collections Librarian Kellie Alwine at a conference in November 2012. By 2014, he had a game plan, and preparations for the exhibit began.

A lot of times, this stuff doesn’t happen in just a year,” Alwine said. “Usually, it’s two, three or even four years in the process.”

Alwine was not alone in seeing the exhibit come to fruition. Assistant professor Shawn Roberts, a faculty member in SFA’s College of Fine Arts, joined the project and was instrumental in moving the works being displayed.

“We’re happy that this exhibit was fun, but a lot of work,” Roberts said.

Alwine and Roberts kept a road block in the process of activating the project.

“In January, we found we didn’t actually have any walls,” Alwine said, referring to the fact that since the Railroad Depot is a historical building, the art could not be displayed the usual walls of the building. Alwine, with the help of the Atwood Chamber of Commerce, found and painted a series of display walls in the Depot on which he and Roberts could display their work. By July, “Portraits of Freedom” was finally on its feet and ready for the citizens of Nacogdoches to experience. Alwine was at the opening with a bang, as the exhibit attracted over 100 visitors in the first couple of days of being open.

The exhibit was also featured as the official art exhibit at the Texas Bluebonnet Festival that is held every spring. Since then, the guest book has logged almost 500 entries and has brought its visitors from all over.

“With a lot of people from Washington state, to Maine, to Florida, Texas. And Texas,” Alwine said.

Alwine also offers attendance to pick up speed in the exhibit.

Photo by Roseanna Thompson/The Pine Log

The 10 pieces titled “Portraits of Freedom” are on display at the Nacogdoches Railroad Depot and are housed in the Railroad Depot. SFA students and faculty created the works of various forms, and the exhibit is open to the public from now until Sept. 29.

Many styles of artwork in various mediums can also be seen in the exhibit, including photographs, paintings, prints, and sculptures.

Exhibit PoF has potential to travel

Photo by Roseanna Thompson/The Pine Log

Many styles of artwork in various mediums can be seen in the exhibit, including photographs, paintings, prints, and sculptures.

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Exhibit PoF has potential to travel
W. Online Articles

http://dailysentinel.com/news/education/image_49249af0-0ef8-11e5-9fbc-f729077de3bf.html
NACOGDOCHES, TX (KTRE) - The Portraits of Freedom reception was kicked off a week of Nacogdoches Blueberry Festival activities. The program has been named the official art exhibition of the festival.

The special display was put together by SFA's Special Collections Librarian Kyle Ainsworth.

Ainsworth worked with students from SFA, TCU and Lamar to draw portraits of runaway slaves drawn from the newspaper acts collected by the "Texas Runaway Slave Project."

"Next Friday is the 150th Juneteenth, when General Gordon Granger came [to Texas] and freed the slaves," Ainsworth said.

If you were unable to attend the opening reception, the Portraits of Freedom art exhibit will be on display at the Nacogdoches County Depot off Old Tyler Road through September 25. It's free to the public on Thursday Friday and Saturday from 11 AM to 2 PM.

Source: SFA

Copyright 2015 KTRE. All rights reserved.
Stephen F. Austin State librarian conceives runaway slave portrait exhibit

By KATE ARCHER KENT • JUN 19, 2015

Today is Juneteenth, commemorating 150 years since emancipation in Texas. An exhibit at the Nacogdoches Railroad Depot brings to life the faces of 43 runaway slaves. The artwork is based on runaway slave newspaper ads in Louisiana and Texas from the mid-1800s. It’s part of the Texas Runaway Slave Project.

Stephen F. Austin State University special collections librarian Kyle Ainsworth compiled a database of 1,400 newspaper ads. These became the inspiration for a new exhibit “Portraits of Freedom.”

“I put a call out and emailed every art professor I could find in Louisiana and Texas. I told them that I have this idea. Wouldn’t it be cool if we had art students draw likenesses of runaway slaves based on newspaper advertisements I’ve been doing research on?” Ainsworth said.

Ainsworth recruited art students from SFA, Lamar and Texas Christian University to contribute portraits based on the runaway slave ads. He says the works are diverse. Students used everything from Sharpie pens to woodcut to make these portraits. Ainsworth admits this exhibit is small, but it literally puts a face on the research.

“There were 180,000 slaves in Texas in 1860. This is a really small representation of who those people were, but by looking at the advertisements and then looking at their portraits you might get a sense of who this person was or how they might have lived,” Ainsworth said. “There’s a timelessness to appreciating the history of that.”

“Portraits of Freedom,” a juried student art exhibit, is on display through Sept. 22 at the Nacogdoches Railroad Depot. Ainsworth hopes to make it into a traveling exhibit.
X. Portraits of Freedom Marketing Plan

Dr. Jason Reese and Dr. Marlene C. Kahla
Nelson Rusche College of Business, SFA

Advertising
• Reach out to owner of Clear Spring and Auntie Pastas to get them on board with displaying flyers and other advertisements in the restaurant entries.
• We have some students that may be willing to help with flyers consistent with what you have created.

Social Media
• Facebook event that you have invited people to attend.
• Expand upon that event and include other social media platforms such as, Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter. People can take a photo from the exhibit and send it to their followers.
• And, you can post things that are going to be at the exhibit via these media.

Local Media
• Should be involved immediately.
• Have them do a story about the 12 influential people in Nacogdoches/Lufkin that are on the guest jury. It adds all the downhome interest with the personal touch from people that others in the community respect. Run this story by mid-May.
• Publicity: involve all the traditional media in the area. Talk with Donna McCollum now. Talk with Cox Publications, i.e., Daily Sentinel, Lufkin Daily News, etc. now.
• You may want to consider a fringe market of people that ride the railroad from Rusk to Palestine. While they are in East Texas, they may want another event to attend. Yours is at the depot in Nacogdoches, they may find it interesting to follow history from Rusk to Nacogdoches. They may even want to stay the night in Nacogdoches. This is not a main idea, but it is a thought.

Signage (digital and physical)
• Use a current sponsor or another potential sponsor to pay for signage campaign.
• Flyers in local businesses and community organizations
• Sandwich boards like those that sit in front of downtown businesses
• Reach out to all churches, especially those with cultural connections to the exhibit

SFA/TCULAMAR
• Have the students at each of the Universities exhibit materials in their towns and universities, i.e., flyers, bill boards and other media.

Sponsors
• NPR Red River Radio has already said they’ll do a segment on the exhibit as the date approaches
• Once the exhibition is open, I would like to submit a PDF of the exhibition content to some major Texas and national newspapers (Houston, Dallas, Austin, New York Times, Washington Post, etc.). It’s a highly unlikely to go anywhere, but I don’t see the harm in trying. I think what this exhibit is doing is unique. There are individual artists that have worked with runaway slaves, but nothing as structured and ambitious as this project.

Here your comments are good. In addition, reach out to Texas Highways now! Blueberry Festival is on the Texas calendar. Need to be sure the exhibit has visibility where Blueberry Festival has visibility.

Atmospheres

Service scape
• We would like to visit the site to help formulate ideas
• Customization of Experience
  o Customized Group Tours Interesting Idea
  o Exhibit self-paced?
• Are there stories with each piece?
  o Audio tour? This would be helpful. Is it possible? To hear the story while seeing the art has a significant effect on the consumer.
  o Sessions where interpreters exist? If the audio tour cannot be implemented at this time, then, yes, have the sessions set for interpreters.

Personal Selling
• Student Marketing/Sales Intern
Y. Other Marketing Materials

http://www.sfasu.edu/8162.asp

City of Nacogdoches Sneak Peek Reception

Portraits of Freedom Art Exhibition

Sneak Peek Reception

Monday June 8th
5:30 p.m.—6:30 p.m.
Nacogdoches Railroad Depot
101 Old Tyler Rd.

Be one of the first people to see this incredible exhibition that incorporates history into art.

This exhibit features drawings, lithographs, paintings and screen prints based on runaway slave advertisements compiled by the Texas Runaway Slave Project. The pieces were all created by art students at Stephen F. Austin State University, Texas Christian University and Lamar University.

Nacogdoches

This exhibit runs June 13th—September 25th.
Opening Reception Facebook Event Page
https://www.facebook.com/events/336725349868531/

Portraits of Freedom is a juried student art exhibit of runaway slaves drawn from the newspaper advertisements aggregated by the Texas Runaway Slave Project (https://www.facebook.com/texasrunawayslaveproject).

The reception will feature commentary by project manager Kyle Ainsworth as well as two lectures that place slavery and freedom in Texas within larger social and geographical contexts. Dr. Douglas Chambers from the University of Southern Mississippi will speak about runaway slaves in the Atlantic World and Dr. Dana Berry from the University of Texas at Austin will lecture on Juneenth. Snacks and refreshments will be provided.

The exhibit opens June 13th for the 28th annual Texas Blueberry Festival at the Nacogdoches Railroad Depot. It will remain at the Depot through September 25th. The exhibit consists of drawings, lithographs, paintings, and screen-prints from students at SFA, TCU and Lamar, along with interpretative panels contextualizing what’s on display.

For more details, please contact:

Kyle Ainsworth
Project Manager
ainsworth@sfasu.edu
936-468-1590
Portraits of Freedom Art Exhibit Opening Reception

Date: June 11, 2015
Time: 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Portraits of Freedom is a juried exhibit of five student art exhibits from the Texas A&M University-Commerce Fine Art Department. Featuring a diverse range of techniques and mediums, the portraits provide a unique perspective on the diverse experiences of American life. The exhibit, which opened on June 11, 2015, runs through September 25th. The exhibit consists of drawings, lithographs, paintings, and screen-prints from students of TAMU-T and TAMU-K. The opening reception is set for Friday, June 12th, 2015, from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM. For more details, please contact the Navigator Information Office at (432) 837-8560. The exhibit will be at the Texas Blueberry Festival Depot and will run through June 2015. For more information, please visit http://www.tbf.nacogdoches.org/page.php?id=58.