

AMERICA ON PAPER

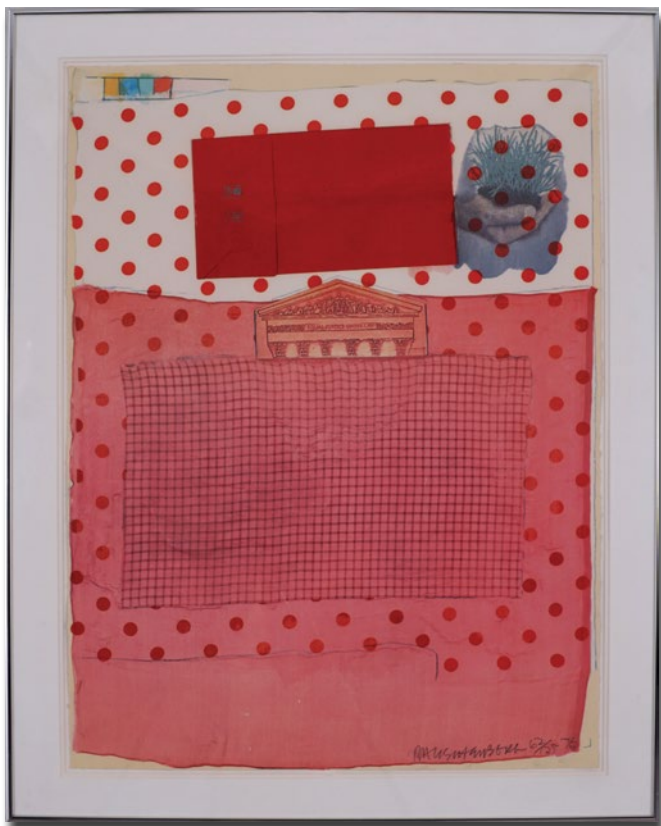
*Selections From
The Cochran Collection*



THE BO BARTLETT CENTER
COLLEGE OF THE ARTS, COLUMBUS STATE UNIVERSITY

AMERICA ON PAPER

Selections From The Cochran Collection



Artists' Rights Today, 1976
Robert Rauschenberg
Mixed Media
35.25"x28.25"x1

This project is made possible by the generous support of Jimmy and Ruth Yancey.

AMERICA ON PAPER

by David Houston

Executive Director, Bo Bartlett Center

Any collection is by necessity a singular ad-hock assemblage of objects growing out of a matrix of complex, interacting forces. Place, time, resources, and ever changing states of affairs, mean that the best planned intentions often fray into unexpected tangents and lines of flight. It is then that the successful collector learns to value the gods of serendipity and embrace that place where thought, intuition and chance intermingle. The Cochran collection is made up of three complexly intertwined, yet distinctly identifiable collections: African American works on paper, American twentieth century graphics and the art of Any Warhol. Each collection has its own trajectory, its own inner logic and unique identity, yet taken as a whole, these three distinct collections stand together as a larger body of work that is the Cochran Collection.

Wes Cochran was born in LaGrange Georgia, and after graduating college in 1974, moved to Colorado to live with his Uncle, William L. May, a dealer in old master prints who gave his nephew two points of advice: abandon academics and learn a trade and set aside extra money for buying art. Six months later, with these two bits of advice tucked away, Cochran made the adventurous decision to sign onto a two year stint on an offshore oil platform in the Persian Gulf. It was there, in this unlikely place and at the beginning of his professional life, that he also became an art collector. Taking his uncle's advice, and while working in extremely dangerous circumstances, Cochran started regularly sending money back to his uncle for the purchase of fine art prints. Cochran returned to the states to find that he already owned a small portfolio of works that established the foundations for a lifetime of collecting. His first work of art: the iconic and complex mixed media print "The Family" by Romare Bearden and printed at the Bob Blackburn workshop.

After finishing his stint in the Persian Gulf alive with all appendages intact, Wes took his uncle's second bit of advice and returned to LaGrange, Georgia and apprenticed himself to a master stone mason, a craft he would

pursue until his retirement in 2014. Wes deepened his commitment to art collecting at a moment that Pop Art was dominant and plentiful, and it is only logical that Pop, that most iconic of American twentieth century movements, is one of the cornerstones of the Cochran Collection. Cochran soon purchased works by the founders of the pop movement, James Rosenquist, Larry Rivers, Roy Lichtenstein, and Andy Warhol. In 1980 Cochran decided to pursue further works by Warhol and bought Warhol's hand painted flower and "Mick Jagger". This led to Warhol becoming a collection focus of his own with the purchase of the *Cowboys and Indian Series* in and the *Myths Series* about fifteen years ago.

In 1981 Wes Cochran met Missy Stevens, a high school math teacher, and they married in 1985. In the meantime Missy also fell under the spell of William L. May and, under his guidance, began buying artwork for herself. After their marriage, the Cochran Collection became a true lifelong partnership, with a quorum of two required to purchase any work for the collection.

The Cochran Collection has expanded and thrived with the guidance of strong advisors that are also connected art world insiders. After establishing the collection under the guidance of his uncle, their next important advisor was Camille Billops. The Cochran's met Camille in New York City in 1988 to help diversify their growing collection. As Cochran often points out, "In the mid-eighties if you were looking at mainstream galleries in New York you largely saw one kind of artists, famous white males". Having founded their collection with the iconic print "Family" by Romare Bearden, it was a natural progression to expand the range African-American artists in their collection. Camille, an artist, collector and curator, expanded their point of view and opened many doors unavailable to individual collectors. As Cochran further observes, "Largely excluded and ignored by mainstream art galleries and museums, African American artists had established their own network through dealers, personal friendships and supportive critics. Camille opened that world to us and it was the start of a rewarding journey". Closer to home, the Cochran's also collected a significant body of work and valued the advice of Atlanta artist Mildred Thomson.

This exhibition weaves together three distinct collections that constitute the Cochran Collection: African American Artists, Twentieth Century Graphic Masters, and Andy Warhol, for the first time ever in a single exhibition. The three discrete collections have travelled to over one hundred and sixty museums, university art galleries and cultural centers across America over the last thirty-three years, and the Cochran collection has amassed one of the most significant travelling histories of any privately owned and managed collection in America.

In making selections from the over eight-hundred-and-fifty works that comprise the Cochran collection I had two goals in mind, firstly, to represent the cross section of artist and stylistic trends that define the parameters of the collection. Secondly, I wanted to draw a line through the history of American art from Regionalism to the present. There are many important associations in the works herein. The earliest works, from the 1920s and 30s, are the realist drawing and pastel portrait by the brothers Charles and Morgan Smith. The next generation of African American artists includes Jacob Lawrence, represented herein by two works from the suite *Toussaint l' Overture*, as well as Romare Bearden's *The Family*. One smaller collection within a collection of great importance to the Cochran Collection documents the extraordinary personal and professional friendship of Bob Blackburn and Will Barnet. The viewer can follow the evolution of American art from the Abstract Expressionism of Willem de Kooning, the Color Field work of Helen Frankenthaler, through Minimalism (Frank Stella and Ellsworth Kelly) into the highly articulated realm of Pop Art. This moment of transition from Expressionism to Pop Art highlights on of the strengths of the collection, juxtaposing of some of America's most celebrated artists with artists alongside those who are little known or completely uncelebrated by the history of art. It is here that the eye and the sensibility of the collectors comes into play, uniting the collections flow through a highly attenuated understanding of color and form guided an intuitive, exploratory sensibility.

Iconic artists such as Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and Richard



Untitled, 1985, Ronald Joseph, Collage, 20"x18.25"x1"

Diebenkorn hang in harmony alongside lesser known artists such as Ronald Joseph in a constant weave between the celebrated and the lesser known artists throughout the galleries. Southern born artists such as Benny Andrews and Beverly Buchanan hang alongside their contemporaries in a collection assembled more along the lines of visual delight and personal relationships than fame and market values. The most recent addition to the

collection (2018) are works by Sandra Clark, El Anatsui and a portfolio of ten prints from the Alternative Museum from 1992, adding the African American artists Lorna Simpson and Adrian Piper, along with eight others that fill gaps in the collection.

Taken as a whole, the Cochran Collection represents an important non-hierarchical, widely inclusive assemblage of American works on paper that crosses traditional institutional lines and establishes new junctures and associations often overlooked by mainstream collections. It has a unique identity; assembled over decades by art world outsiders living far beyond the dominant metropolitan centers of art. As such, it is a monument to the commitment of Wesley and Missy Cochran to a lifelong journey of discovery and collaboration through art in the unlikely home base of La Grange Georgia.



Gallery View: Yarbrough Gallery
Photograph: G. Ray Sullivan

INTERVIEW WITH WESLEY COCHRAN

by David Houston
Executive Director, Bo Bartlett Center

WESLEY COCHRAN: We started collecting Andy Warhol in 1980. I saw him at the University of Miami in Miami, Florida in 1980, I believe it was. When he was opening his *Ten Greatest Jews of the 20th Century* (*Ten Portraits of Jews of the Twentieth Century*). It was at the University of Miami and Warhol was there and people were queued up for a mile around the block. But, anyway, it was interesting to see that.

WC: My uncle, William L. May, is the one who was in the inner circle of the Warhol crowd in New York and most of these pieces came directly from The Factory, Andy Warhol's factory. The *Myths* series came later on. I had taken a friend of mine to New York to buy that series from Ronald Feldman down in Soho. I went to New York with Lanier Edge...he wrote the check and bought all ten of the *Myths* series. That would have been in the late 1990s. And a few years later my friend Lanier dies unexpectedly—he's a bachelor and his younger brother inherits that collection. And eventually I talk to him and we work a deal out and we purchased the *Myths* series from him.

DAVID HOUSTON: What about Mildred?

WC: Mildred Thompson we met in 1988 through Bob Blackburn. Bob recommended that I call her since we were so close to her—she was in Atlanta, Georgia at that time. So, Missy and I did call and we hooked up with Mildred and from that very first meeting it led to a very close 15-year relationship with Mildred.

DH: What did you like about her work?

WC: Mildred was so talented, I felt like, and multifaceted artist and could do so many different types of medium. And getting to know her, she was the most brilliant person I may have ever met and she helped us.

DH: What about Bob?

WC: Bob we met in 1988.

DH: Bob Blackburn.

WC: Bob Blackburn. Camille Billops, who we had met in our early days in our

journey of collecting African-American art. Camille introduced us to Bob and Missy and I walked into Bob's workshop and thought that we had died and gone to heaven. It was just a beautiful space and Bob had been, by goodness, he had been at it over 40 years when we met him at the printshop. So, he had a beautiful inventory of artists that he had worked with—a lot African-American artists...so, a lot of our collection came through Bob's workshop.

DH: What about Bob's work itself?

WC: And then we were very interested in Bob's work—I really liked Bob's work, Missy and I both. And trying to put a body of work together of his work was not easy because Bob was not interested in that. Bob was only interested in the workshop, not his own work. And, so, when we started the idea of putting together a collection of Will Barnett and Bob Blackburn, Bob did loosen up a little bit and sort of allow us to get a lot of his work.

DH: Well, what about Will?

WC: And Will Barnett was another great influence on our life. Bob walked us over to Will's studio apartment one day and that's how we met Will and then we...

DH: What's the range of work you have from him?

WC: Yeah, Will was a little more organized maybe than Bo so were actually able to go back into the 30s with some of Will's work and all the way up to the 90s.

DH: Several different styles?

WC: Yeah, it was very figurative—early days would be Social Realism type art. And then in the 50s Will had a moment of abstraction and we have several examples of that period. And then in the 70s, 80s, 90s he's back to the figure.

DH: What about Camille?

WC: Camille Billops is the very first African-American artist we met and we met her, or saw her—I didn't really meet her in Atlanta. 1988, the first National Black Arts Festival was held and it was a beautiful show that year of five black women at the Atlanta College of Art and Missy and I went to see the show and all of the five artists were there. It was Camille Billops, Faith Ringgold, Howardena Pindell, Lois Jones, and Margo Humphrey.

DH: Quite a line up.

WC: It was a powerful line up and we actually have pieces from all of those artists in the collection. But we did meet Howardena Pindell at that show and got to talk to her a moment and say...

DH: Camille became an advisor of yours. How did that work?

WC: Yeah, Camille was a curator, really, of our African-American collection. She is an artist and an art historian and archivist and she had all the information and knew all the artists and had been documenting and taking photographs of African-American artists.

DH: What's the name of her archive?

W: It's the Hatch-Billops Collection on the corner of Broadway and Broome, and Camille is very much a big influence.

DH: Talk about Wayne Thiebaud.

WC: And then we have the Wayne Thiebaud piece that's part of the 20th century show—*Graphics by 20th Century Masters*. And I think it's one Thiebaud's fabulous prints; it is actually a woodcut, it looks like a watercolor, but it's the Japanese process woodcut and it is called *Dark Cake*.

DH: How did you come by it?

WC: That was through my uncle. If I remember this correctly, I sent him money to buy that piece, and somewhere in the shipping and the mailing it got destroyed—they story I heard. I had to pay for it again.

DH: How about Martin Puryear?

WC: Martin Puryear, yeah. I had always admired his work—had seen a lot of his shows, his sculpture pieces and then started reading more about him and discovered he actually trained as a printmaker in his early days. And, I think it was in the early 2000s, he started making some prints with Pualson Press out in California and that's where we got that beautiful piece that we have of Martin Puryear which to me, very much, has a sculptural feel to it.

DH: What about Beverly Buchanan?

WC: And Beverly Buchanan was another beautiful personality that we got to meet in Athens I think is where she was when I first met her—maybe she was in Macon. And then she came to LaGrange and spent a weekend, maybe a couple of weekends, with us and did a lot of photography. While she was here we took her around to some old, old shacks that we could get to and we have actually have one on our property that she documented. And we have a three-dimensional piece of Beverly, a shack, and we also have this beautiful lithography that's in the show called *Happy Shack*.

DH: The James Rosenquist is a most unusual piece.

WC: The James Rosenquist is called *For Artists*, I think, or *Artist's Rights Today*. It was done during the bicentennial of 1976, and I've often wondered, there's a lot of interpretation to that piece, but at that moment in the history of things we were going through where equal right amendment was very strong and I wonder—the Rosequist piece reminds me of some of that—this Tide box with the belt and washing machine motif within that piece.

DH: What about the Alternative Museum Portfolio with 10 artists.

WC: I know, I really am proud to have that set. It's recent, or most recent purchase of 10 different artists that was produced in 1992, I think, at the Alternative Museum with Geno Rodriguez and, so, we were able to get that through our good friend David Houston who's friends with Geno. And within that set, of course, is Adrian Piper and Lorna Simpson that we did

not have in the collection, which we have now, and we're very proud to have both of those African-American artists in our collection.

I: Andy Warhol

The Andy Warhol collection starts in...we begin around 1980 through my uncle's connections, my uncle William L. May—beginning to buy one or two pieces and then it leads to 1986, we buy this complete suite of *Cowboys and Indians* series that Warhol—actually, it's the last completed series that Warhol did before he dies in February 1987. So, we were fortunate to be on Warhol, a little early on, but Warhol's prices, he was very much into high volume, low price. So, we are print collectors, so we had been collecting prints for five or six years before we got to Warhol. So, it was a logical move for us to try to show one artist's contribution to 20th-century art. So now we have some 40 Warhols in that collection—there are 36 that travel in the show.

II: African American

WC: Then we have the African-American collection, which began in 1988 through Camille Billops' great help, and Corinne Jennings in New York City was another great ally for us. And it was just wonderful—these folks took us under their wing and gave us some great advice.

WC: It was a fairly determined thing to do. We had been collecting since 1976 until 1988. So, we did have a lot of prints by that time, but they were mainly white-male artists. We had very few women and only a couple African-American artists. So, it really did look a little strange and, so, we made a concerted effort to try to find out how to go about collecting African-American artists. And if you're traveling in the mainstream gallery system you are not going to see African-American art. They, once we fell into that world, we realized they really had their own web, their own, like, network and support network amongst themselves. And Camille Billops is the lady that introduced us to that world and we discovered by going to a lot of studio, artist studio visits, is where we able to get to the art and meet a lot of the artists.

III: 20th Century Graphics

We have a *Graphics by 20th Century Masters* collection which is the very first collection that we put together with my uncle. It's a nice survey of some 60, 70 pieces that covers, that features all of the American Pop artists, that collection, and, so, it's a survey show.

IV: Will Barnett and Bob Blackburn

WC: Well, let's see, Will Barnett and Bob Blackburn. That, I think is a very significant show. Will and Bob were friends for over sixty years and supported each other and Will sort of took on the role as a mentor to Bob in those early years. Bob is about 9 years younger than Will. So, we thought that it would be interesting to show these two gentlemen's—they're both tremendous printmakers and probably influenced—they both influenced a generation or two of artists with their teaching. Will was at the Art Students League for many years and Bob was at Cooper Union, I think, for many years. Bob and Will met in the 30s at the Art Students League and Will passed on a lot of this information about printmaking to Bob. And Will helped Bob set up his printmaking workshop in 1948 and in 1998 Bob was celebrating his 50th year of operations, so, we thought it was very significant to try to have a collection of these two gentlemen about the history of American printmaking.

DH: What are the years and the ranges of your collection as a whole?

WC: Yeah, as a whole, I think we basically from 1954 forward, there's some pieces that go back farther. Basically, from the latter half of the 20th century up until today.

HECHT
GALLERY

America on Paper
Selections from the Codrhan Collection





Texas Mastaba, n.d.
Christo
Lithograph and Collage
38.25"x30.25"x1"



Pink Windows are Lucky, n.d.
Beverly Buchanan
Oil Pastel
18"x20.25"x1"



Happy Shack, 1987
Beverly Buchanan
Lithograph
31"x32"x1"



Splendor of Orange, 1978
Richard Anuszkiewicz
Silkscreen
35"x34.5"x1.5"



Death, 1985
Benny Andrews
Lithograph
30"x38.5"x1



The Second Mystery, 1989
Mildred Thompson
Etching
28"x23"x1"



Untitled, 1990
Richard Diebenkorn
Etching
37"x29.5"x1.25"



Strategy, 1994
Jacob Lawrence
Silkscreen
27.25"x37"x1"



The March, 1995
Jacob Lawrence
Silkscreen
27.25"x37.25"x1"



The Family, 1975
Romare Bearden
Etching
26"x32.5"x1"



John Henry, 1960
Palmer Hayden
Watercolor
22.25"x24.25"x1"



Carnival, 1974
Norman Lewis
Etching
31"x23"x1"



Untitled, 2002
Martin Puryear
Etching
16.25"x18.25"x1"



Black Butterfly, n.d.
John Scott
Lithograph
33.25"x28.25"x1"



Striding Figure, 1971
Claes Oldenburg
Etching
29"x21.5"x1"



Steps to Freedom, 1975
Bill Majors
Lithograph
22.25"x29.75"x1"



Redfern, 1978
William T. Williams
Etching
23"x31"x1"



Viola, 1971
Jasper Johns
Lithograph
32.25"x46"x1.5"



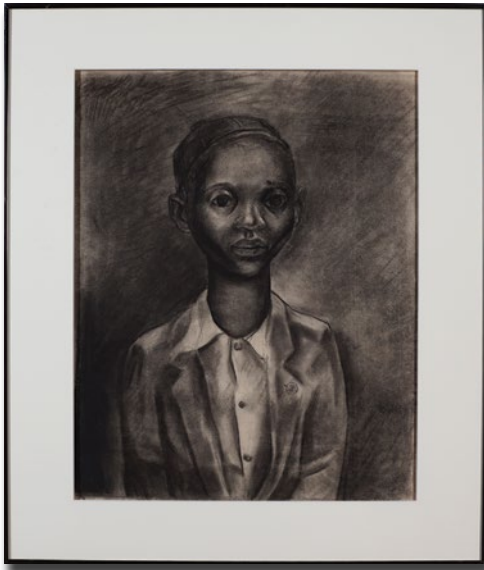
In the Garden #190, 1982
Jennifer Bartlett
Woodblock and Silkscreen
40.25"x27.5"x1"



The Man & the Big Blonde, 1982
 Willem de Kooning
 Lithograph
 28.25"x33.75"x1"



Untitled, 1986
 Helen Frankenthaler
 Etching
 22.25"x25.5"x1.5"



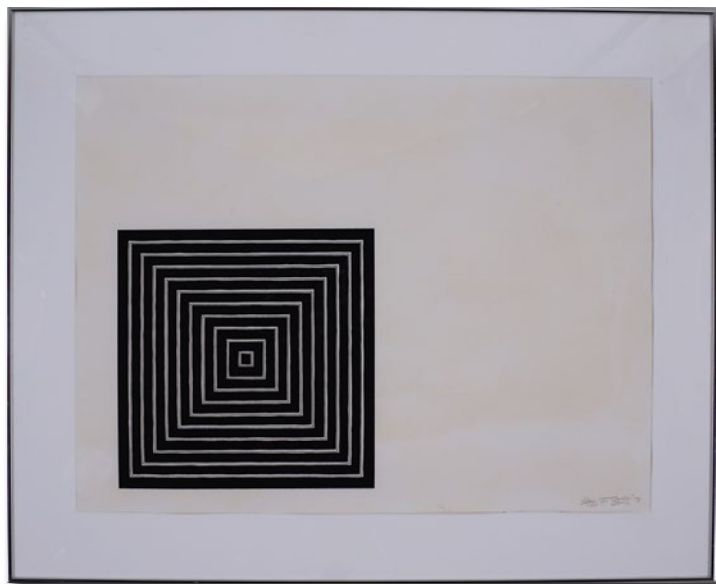
Young Boy, 1938
Charles Alston
Charcoal
28"x24"x1"



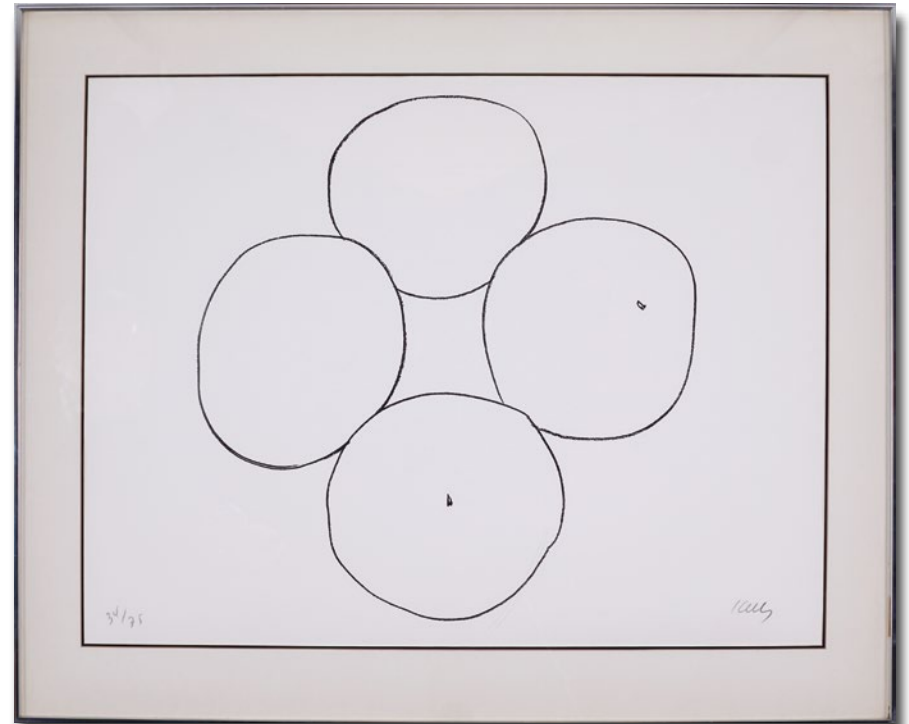
Untitled, 1932
Morgan Smith
Watercolor
28"x24"x1"



Untitled, 1934
Marvin Smith
Drawing
32"x26.25"x1"



Angriff, 1971
Frank Stella
Silkscreen
23.875"x29.5"x1"



Oranges, 1974
Ellsworth Kelly
Lithograph
30.5"x37.5"x1.25"



Dark Cake, 1983
Wayne Thiebaud
Woodcut
22.5"x4.25"x1"



Jerusalem Plant, 1979
Jim Dine
Dry Point
32"x24.5"x1"



Tree, n.d.
Joan Mitchell
Lithograph
31.75"x26.75"x1"



A Celestial Gate, 1977
Hale Woodruff
Silkscreen
28"x32"x1"



Untitled, n.d.
Bob Blackburn
Monoprint
27.75"x35"x1"



Miss Lorraine, n.d.
Whitfield Lovell
Dry Point
32"x28"x1"



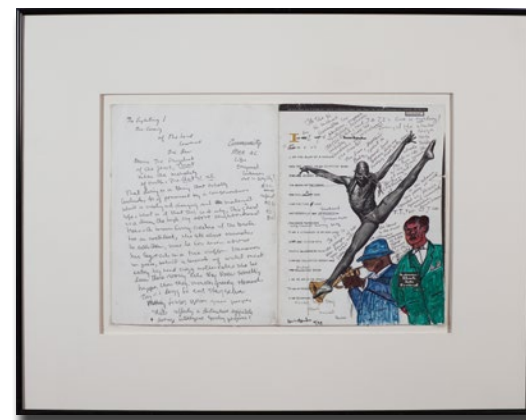
Cartas, 1986
Elizabeth Catlett
Lithograph
35"x27.75"x1"



Virginia, 1984
Elizabeth Catlett
Lithograph and Collage
25"x21"x1"



Homage to Michelangelo, 1975
David Hockney
Etching
26.125"x34.25"x1"



Untitled, 1994
Amiri Baraka
Mixed Media
22.25"x28.25"x1"



Kaohsiung Edition, 1984
Camille Billops
Hand-Colored Special Print
30.25"x24"x1"



Growing Up, 1973
Benny Andrews
Lithograph
31"x23"x1"



The Bat, 1973
Robert Rauschenberg
Silkscreen
56"x42"x1.5"

AMERICA ON PAPER: *Selections from the Cochran Collection*

Young Boy, 1938
Charles Alston
Charcoal
28"x24"x1"

Death, 1985
Benny Andrews
Lithograph
30"x38.5"x1"

Growing Up, 1973
Benny Andrews
Lithograph
31"x23"x1"

Splendor of Orange, 1978
Richard Anuszkiewicz
Silkscreen
35"x34.5"x1.5"

Untitled, 1994
Amiri Baraka
Mixed Media
22.25"x28.25"x1"

In the Garden #190, 1982
Jennifer Bartlett
Woodblock and Silkscreen
40.25"x27.5"x1"

The Family, 1975
Romare Bearden
Etching
26"x32.5"x1"

Kaohsiung Edition, 1984
Camille Billops
Hand-Colored Special Print
30.25"x24"x1"

Untitled, n.d.
Bob Blackburn
Screenprint
27.75"x35"x1"

Conversations with Marcia Scott, 1989
Frank Bowling
Lithograph
36.5"x48.25"x1"

Happy Shack, 1987
Beverly Buchanan
Lithograph
31"x32"x1"

Pink Windows are Lucky, n.d.
Beverly Buchanan
Oil Pastel
18"x20.25"x1"

Texas Mastaba, n.d.
Christo
Lithograph and Collage
38.25"x30.25"x1"

The Man & the Big Blonde, 1982
Willem de Kooning
Lithograph
28.25"x33.75"x1"

Untitled, 1990
Richard Diebenkorn
Etching
37"x29.5"x1.25"

Jerusalem Plant, 1979
Jim Dine
Dry Point
32"x24.5"x1"

Untitled, 1986
Helen Frankenthaler
Etching
22.25"x25.5"x1.5"

Conversations with Marcia Scott, 1989
Frank Bowling
Lithograph
36.5"x48.25"x1"



Homage to Michelangelo, 1975
David Hockney
Etching
26.125"x34.25"x1"

Viola, 1971
Jasper Johns
Lithograph
32.25"x46"x1.5"

Untitled, 1985
Ronald Joseph
Collage
20"x18.25"x1"

Oranges, 1974
Ellsworth Kelly
Lithograph
30.5"x37.5"x1.25"

Strategy, 1994
Jacob Lawrence
Silkscreen
27.25"x37"x1"

The March, 1995
Jacob Lawrence
Silkscreen
27.25"x37.25"x1"

Carnival, 1974
Norman Lewis
Etching
31"x23"x1"

Entablature I, 1976
Roy Lichtenstein
Mixed Media
29.625"x45.5"x1.25"

Miss Lorraine, n.d.
Whitfield Lovell
Dry Point
32"x28"x1"

Steps to Freedom, 1975
Bill Majors
Lithograph
22.25"x29.75"x1"

Tree, n.d.
Joan Mitchell
Lithograph
31.75"x26.75"x1"

Untitled, 1979
Louise Nevelson
Mixed Media
47.75"x35.5"x1.5"

Striding Figure, 1971
Claes Oldenburg
Etching
29"x21.5"x1"

Untitled, 2002
Martin Puryear
Etching
16.25"x18.25"x1"

Artists' Rights Today, 1976
Robert Rauschenberg
Mixed Media
35.25"x28.25"x1"

The Bat, 1973
Robert Rauschenberg
Silkscreen
56"x42"x1.5"

Last Civil War Veteran, 1970
Larry Rivers
Lithograph
44.25"x34.75"x1.5"

For Artists, 1976
James Rosenquist
Collage
37.5"x29.25"x2.25"

Black Butterfly, n.d.
John Scott
Lithograph
33.25"x28.25"x1"

Untitled, 1934
Marvin Smith
Drawing
32"x26.25"x1"

Untitled, 1932
Morgan Smith
Watercolor
28"x24"x1"

Angriff, 1971
Frank Stella
Silkscreen
23.875"x29.5"x1"

Dark Cake, 1983
Wayne Thiebaud
Woodcut
22.5"x4.25"x1"

The Second Mystery, 1989
Mildred Thompson
Etching
28"x23"x1"

Mickey Mouse, 1981
Andy Warhol
Screenprint
42.25"x42.25"x1.5"

The New Spirit (Donald Duck), 1985
Andy Warhol
Screenprint
41.375"x41.375"x1.5"

The Shadow, 1981
Andy Warhol
Screenprint
42.25"x42.25"x1.5"

Redfern, 1978
William T. Williams
Etching
23"x31"x1"

A Celestial Gate, 1977
Hale Woodruff
Silkscreen
28"x32"x1"



Untitled, 1979
Louise Nevelson
Mixed Media
47.75"x35.5"x1.5"



For Xavier, 1990
Sam Gilliam
Silkscreen
36" x 38.25" x 1"



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COLLEGE OF THE ARTS
COLUMBUS STATE UNIVERSITY