

Living Legacy:
60 Years of the Watkins Collection



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October 21 – December 17, 2005

American University Museum
at the Katzen Arts Center

Foreword

As an American University student in the early '70s, I learned from a great faculty, a cohort of aspiring young artists drawn from all over the world, and the Watkins Collection. Access to this collection was a great gift. It told the story of Washington art, from Duncan Phillips to the Color School, and everywhere in between and beyond. It revealed little-known masters, those not so close to the media spotlight, and it still shapes how I see the world today.

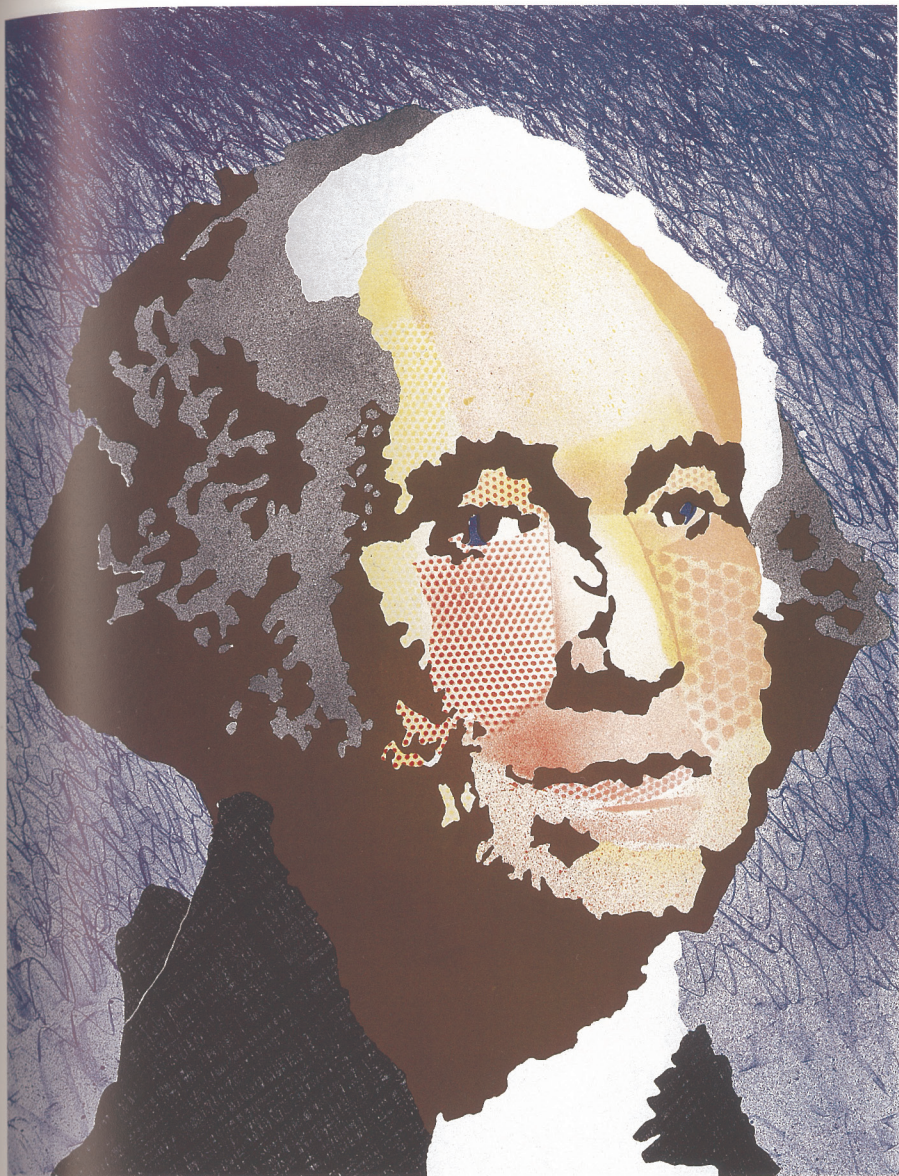
Karl Knaths and Jack Tworkov, Sarah Baker and Alma Thomas. Not necessarily household names, but truly touchstones in the history of art in my lifetime. Phillip Guston was here! In my day it was Robert Gates, Helene Herzbrun, Ben Summerford, Robert D'Arista, William Calfee, so many others! They came to Washington and changed lives.

Luciano Penay served as curator of the Watkins Collection when I was a student. I was his graduate assistant, and our job was to make the gallery work, to find solutions, to innovate. The Watkins Collection was our secret weapon. Luciano was followed by Ron Haynie, who directed the Watkins Collection and Gallery and, as an artist, made sunlight falling on a sprouting onion seem the most beautiful thing in the world. His eloquence still takes my breath away.

Integrity is the word I would apply to American University's Art Department, and that integrity is reflected everywhere in its collection. Now the Katzen Arts Center

provides a home befitting the collection. A soaring, spacious museum serves as the public gateway to American University. At the head of Embassy Row in our nation's capital, the museum beckons the world to its doors. It is especially satisfying that the gift begun in honor of C. Law Watkins and nurtured by dedicated artists for so many years, will now find the audience it deserves.

Jack Rasmussen
Director and Curator
American University Museum



Michael Clark, *Also Sally's Birthday*, 1985, Serigraph,
35.75 x 27.25 inches, Gift of Robert and Linda Simmons in
memory of Robert F. Gates.