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By dawn's early light

August 01, 2024 – May 11, 2025

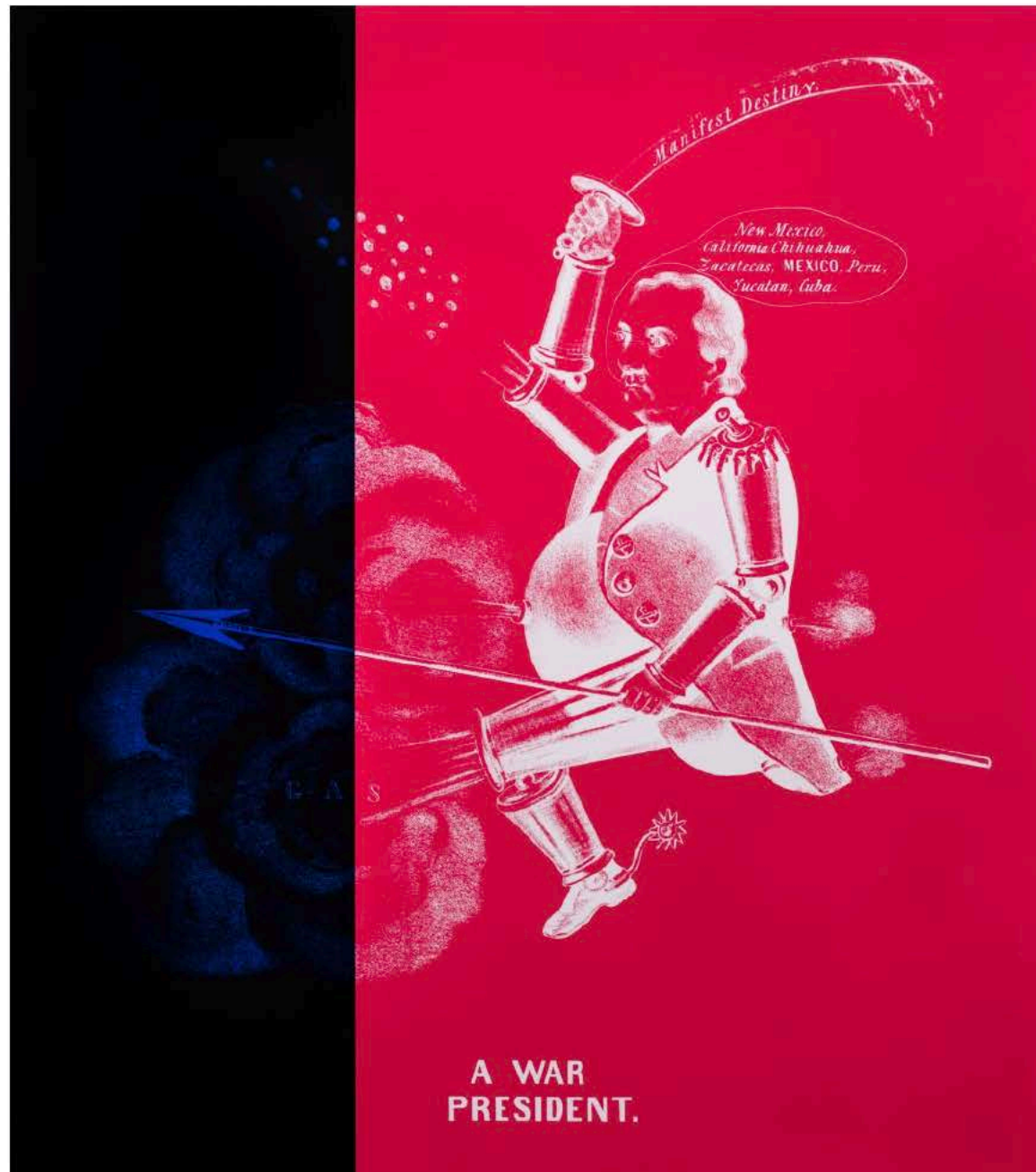
Sage Sohier, *British Redcoat re-enactor, Battle of Concord and Lexington, Lexington, MA* from *The PRC Portfolio*, 2002 (printed 2008). Pigmented inkjet print on Harman gloss fiber based paper, edition 21/35, 17 x 21 inches (43.2 x 53.3 cm). Collection of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University. Gift of Jody Vipperman Saarmaa and Erik Saarmaa, 2016.25.1.16. © Sage Sohier.

The years 2024 and 2025 mark the sixtieth anniversaries of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The two Acts transformed life in the United States for many marginalized individuals, including people of color, women, people with disabilities, elders, and others who had not had equal rights in the nation's history. This legislation was the culmination of nearly a century of work by activists and advocates.



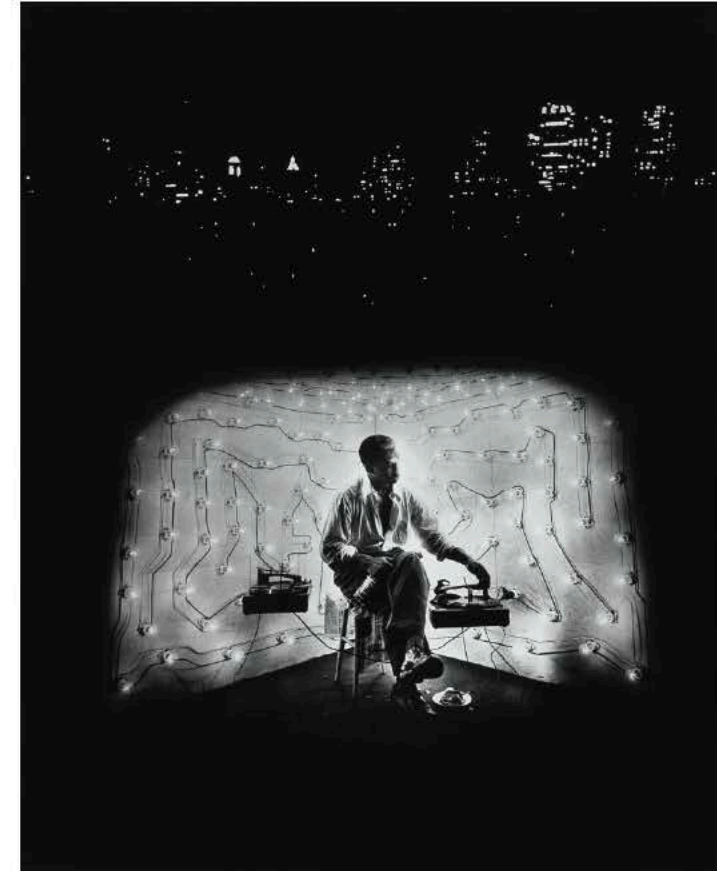
Hank Willis Thomas, *Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Us Around* (detail), 2015–2016. Installation of 17 glass, silver, and digital prints. Dimensions variable. Museum purchase with additional funds provided by JoAnn Busuttill. Commissioned by the Nasher Museum for the exhibition *Southern Accent: Seeking the American South in Contemporary Art*. 2016.18.1. © Hank Willis Thomas. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, New York.

By dawn's early light reflects on the historical context against which these Acts came into being: the U.S. Constitution's Preamble and the rights outlined in the First, Second, and Fourteenth Amendments. Each gallery features selections from the Nasher's permanent collection that speak to these documents, questioning what it means to form a nation, to have a right to assemble, to own weapons, to pursue the American dream, and to define who "we the people" are.



Kathryn Andrews, *TRINITY FOR PRESIDENT aka Historical Campaign Poster Painting No. 3 (Manifest Destiny)*, 2015. Aluminum, ink, paint, Plexiglas, and certified film costume. 107 1/2 x 95 5/8 x 3 3/4 inches (273.05 x 242.89 x 9.53 cm). 2019.28.1. © Kathryn Andrews. Image courtesy of the artist. Photo by Fredrik Nilsen

This exhibition invites us to ask ourselves: what do we hold dear and how are we using our voices to protect those things—our values—when we go to the polls in each election? The exhibition's title is not only a quotation from the national anthem but also a metaphor for the start of a new day, the hope for fresh possibilities to collectively imagine new futures.



Gordon Parks, *Invisible Man Retreat, Harlem, New York*, 1952. Gelatin silver print, edition 5/7, 30 x 24 inches (76.2 x 61 cm). Collection of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University. Museum purchase with additional funds provided by JoAnn and Ronald Busuttill, 2019.5.1. © The Gordon Parks Foundation.

Artists

Kathryn Andrews, Adrián Balseca, Bill Bamberger, Roger Brown, Diego Camposeco, Kennedy Carter, Mel Chin, Dario Escobar, Leonard Freed, Genevieve Gaignard, Scherezade Garcia, Titus Brooks Heagins, Barkley L. Hendricks, Ken Heyman, Henry Horenstein, Dapper Bruce Lafitte, Michelangelo Lovelace, Danny Lyon, Mary Ellen Mark, Vik Muniz, Kambui Olujimi, Bill Owens, Gordon Parks, Fahamu Pecou, Ad Reinhardt, Gary Simmons, Jaune Quick-To-See Smith, Erika Stone, Lou Stouman, Sage Sohler, Sarah Sudhoff, Hank Willis Thomas, Burk Uzzle, Nari Ward, Antoine Williams, Fred Wilson, Purvis Young, and George Zimbel.





Behind the scenes during installation

Organization & Support

This exhibition is organized by Xuxa Rodríguez, Patsy R. and Raymond D. Nasher Curator of Contemporary Art, with support from Julianne Miao, Curatorial Assistant.

By dawn's early light is made possible by the Nancy A. Nasher and David J. Haemisegger Family Fund for Exhibitions, the A. Courtney Shives Endowment Fund, the Frank Edward Hanscom Endowment, and the Janine and J. Tomilson Hill Family Fund.

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