



Amistad Research Center Receives \$1 Million Grant from Terra Foundation for American Art To Conserve the *Toussaint L'Ouverture* Series by Artist Jacob Lawrence

NEW ORLEANS, May 8, 2024—The [Amistad Research Center \(ARC\)](#) announced today that it has been awarded an essential \$1 million grant from the [Terra Foundation for American Art](#) to conserve a series of original paintings by acclaimed artist Jacob Lawrence (1917–2000). The grant will also support research and the future development of an exhibition co-organized by ARC and the Terra Foundation. Based in New Orleans, ARC is dedicated to chronicling and preserving the cultural and artistic contributions of the African diaspora as well as other under-studied individuals, collectives, and movements across American history. The Terra Foundation grant will allow for the critical work to conserve the *Toussaint L'Ouverture Series*, 41 paintings created by Lawrence in 1938 that capture the events surrounding the Haitian Revolution (Révolution Haïtienne) of 1791 led by its commander-in-chief Toussaint L'Ouverture (1743–1803). The grant represents the Terra Foundation's ongoing commitment to expanding the narratives of American art by supporting the preservation, interpretation, and exhibition of works by a broad and diverse range of artists across time.

"We are grateful to the Terra Foundation for American Art for their commitment to the conservation of the *Toussaint L'Ouverture Series*, an important body of work by an equally important artist within American art history," said Kathe Hambrick, the Executive Director of the Amistad Research Center. "Fortifying our abilities to preserve our extensive visual art collection and archival holdings is a critical step in our efforts to make this material readily available to independent researchers, scholars, and the public. This allows for serious and widespread study of artists representing the full depth and range of the American experience."

The *Toussaint L'Ouverture Series* (1938) chronicles the rise and death of freedom fighter Toussaint L'Ouverture across 41 paintings, which Lawrence completed at the young age of 21. It includes the visual narration of L'Ouverture's efforts to liberate Saint-Domingue from the oppressive, colonizing forces of Spain, France, and Great Britain. The featured paintings—distinguished by bright colors, dynamic patterns, and easily read narrative images—represent Lawrence's first major series and mark a pivotal moment in the development of his oeuvre. Lawrence would go on to create works that embodied the experiences and stories of notable figures like Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman, as well as significant movements, including the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Howard University professor Alain Locke has hailed the *Toussaint L'Ouverture Series* as "one of the most important" and "symbolic" works of its time.

The *Series* was gifted to ARC by the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, a later iteration of the 19th-century abolitionist society, the American Missionary Association (AMA). The complete *Series* was last on public view at the New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA) in 2010 as part of the exhibition *Beyond the Blues: Reflections on African America from the Fine Art Collection at the Amistad Research Center*,

curated by Dr. Margaret Rose Vendryes. A cultural historian and now Vice President of Collections and Partnerships at the Terra Foundation for American Art, Turry M. Flucker authored the last critical examination of the ARC's art collection and the NOMA exhibition—published in the *International Review of African American Art*. Now in storage, the works are awaiting necessary conservation to allow their public presentation once more.

“The Amistad Research Center is a significant repository for American art with vast and important archival holdings. Its collections offer incredible opportunities to deepen our knowledge of American art and to enhance our understanding of artists as global scholars and leaders,” said Flucker. “The Terra Foundation is delighted to support this multi-year project to conserve the *Toussaint L’Ouverture Series*, allowing future audiences to experience, learn, and study this dynamic body of work.”

About the Amistad Research Center

Founded in 1966, the Amistad Research Center (ARC) was a unit of the Race Relations Institute (RRI) located at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. In 1969, the ARC moved to New Orleans and was located on the campus of Dillard University. In 1987, the ARC moved to the campus of Tulane University and continues to operate as an independent repository of [historical records](#) chronicling the history and contribution of African Americans, North American Indigenous peoples, Asian Americans, Latino/a/x Americans, Jewish Americans, and people of the Appalachian region of the United States. The [Center’s extensive American art collection ranges from the 1790s to the present](#), with more than eight hundred works of art by fifty-four American artists.

About the Terra Foundation for American Art

The Terra Foundation for American Art, established in 1978 and having offices in Chicago and Paris, France, supports organizations and individuals locally and globally to foster intercultural dialogues and encourage transformative practices that expand narratives of American art through the foundation’s grant program, American art collection, and initiatives. Learn more at terraamericanart.org.

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