FAU’s Jupiter Campus Library Presents “Proceed and Be Bold,” an Exhibition of Provocative Posters by Amos Paul Kennedy Jr.

BOCA RATON, FL (March 23, 2011) -- Florida Atlantic University’s John D. MacArthur Campus Library Gallery is hosting “Proceed and Be Bold!,” an exhibition of posters by Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr., a letterpress artist who is known internationally for his controversial posters and book arts, through Tuesday, May 10, at 5353 Parkside Drive, Jupiter.

Kennedy’s “Proceed and Be Bold!” exhibition rolls language and color into a visually engaging four-cornered and sometimes four-lettered package. His posters explore social, political and racial issues with quotes from such figures as Abolitionist Sojourner Truth and Civil Rights Icon Rosa Parks, and such phrases as “Coffee Should Be Black as Hell, Strong as Death and Sweet as Love” and “Coffee Makes You Queer.”

Kennedy’s posters have made their way around the world and last year hung from wooden clothespins on twine throughout the Wimberly Library on FAU’s Boca Raton campus.

“We are so excited to bring “Proceed and Be Bold!” to FAU's MacArthur Campus Library,” said John Cutrone, director of the Arthur and Mata Jaffe Center on FAU’s Boca Raton campus, who curated both exhibitions. “It was an amazingly popular exhibition at our Boca Raton campus last winter, adding a jolt of life and even a little controversy to the dialogue here. If we can continue that dialogue by bringing Kennedy's work to other places, I think that's a very good thing.”

The artist is one of a small but growing number of artists and print enthusiasts who have rescued letterpress equipment from an otherwise bleak future. In the 1960s, letterpress printing gave way to the newer, faster technology of offset printing, which uses plates with complete pages imprinted on them, instead of individual characters and thereby could reproduce pages faster and more cheaply than moveable type. As print shops switched to newer equipment, most printers sold, destroyed or gave away their presses and type. Whatever survived was lost or taken in by those who took the medium to an artistic level.

Kennedy prints his posters in oil-based inks on rigid brown chipboard. He uses multiple ink colors and type or type high wood blocks. He changes the ink colors and combinations so no two posters are identical.
As a companion to the exhibition, the MacArthur library is offering for viewing “Proceed and Be Bold,” a film that follows Kennedy’s life and work, and explains why he walked away from a corporate 9-5 job as a computer programmer 30 years ago to work in the lost crafts of letter press printing and bookmaking.

Laura Zinger, the film’s producer, originally set out to make a film about Kennedy’s life, but after reviewing the footage, realized it was more about race and art in America and the sacrifices that an artist makes.

Originally from Louisiana, Kennedy graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champion, and lives in Gordo, a small rural town in Alabama. He also is a papermaker, book artist, educator, performance artist and author.

The exhibition is free and open to the public. The library’s hours are Sundays from 12:30 to 11 p.m.; Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 11 p.m.; Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from noon to 6 p.m. For more information on the exhibition, call 561-799-8530 or go to www.library.fau.edu/npb/npb.htm.

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Cutline:

Photo #1: Amos Kennedy, letterpress artist.

About FAU’s MacArthur Campus:

FAU’s MacArthur Campus in Jupiter offers a broad range of undergraduate and graduate degree programs. The campus is home to the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Lifelong Learning Society, the Scripps Florida research facilities and the future site of the Max Planck Florida Institute.

About Florida Atlantic University:

Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. In commemoration of its origin, FAU is celebrating its 50th anniversary throughout 2011. Today, the University serves more than 28,000 undergraduate and graduate students on seven campuses and sites. FAU’s world-class teaching and research faculty serves students through 10 colleges: the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts & Letters, the College of Business, the College for Design and Social Inquiry, the College of Education, the College of Engineering & Computer Science, the Graduate College, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. FAU is ranked as a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. For more information, visit www.fau.edu.