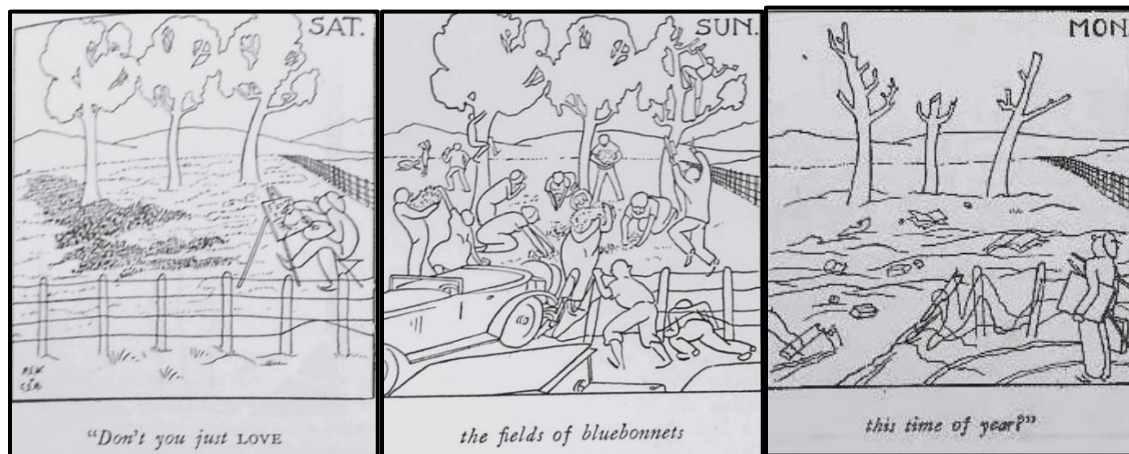


HETAG Newsletter No. 55, April 2022



Crescenciano Garza Rivera "Don't you just LOVE/the fields of bluebonnets/this time of year?", *Houston Gargoyle* April 19, 1931.

Nothing says TEXAS more colorfully than BLUEBONNETS in the Spring. We may disagree about many things, but most all of us would agree that they're one of the GREAT things about our GREAT STATE. Even here in Houston, which is, let's be honest, barely on the fringe of the Bluebonnet Belt. This issue of the Newsletter is NOT about Bluebonnets, but since it's their season, why not start with them anyway – with a tongue-in-cheek look above at how, even way back in 1931, we already loved them almost to death, drawn for us by Mexican artist, C. Garza Rivera (1895-1958), who was here for only a few years around 1930 as art director of our local "cool" magazine, *The Houston Gargoyle*. And, below, a couple of lushly beautiful, almost idyllic views of Bluebonnets at their best (and also Bluebonnet paintings at their best), by our own Emma Richardson Cherry (1859-1954). The Bluebonnet season is almost over for this year, but aren't we lucky the art lasts all year?



Emma Richardson Cherry *Blue Vista* 1943 (l) and *Texas Springtime* ca.1920s (r).

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



Please join other HETAGers for an IN PERSON HETAG Meeting

[Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries](#)

Sunday, May 8, 2022

2 PM

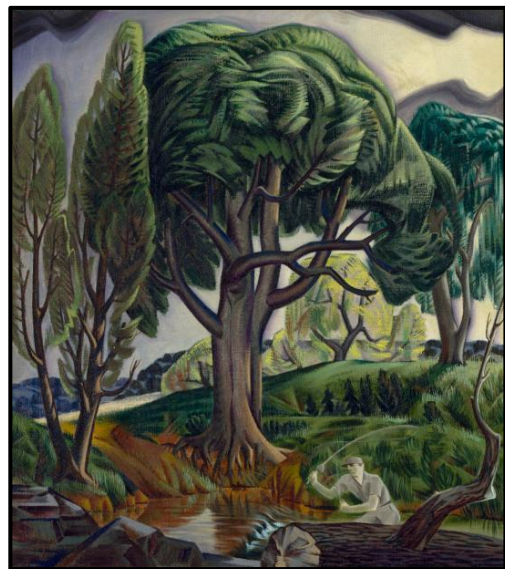
HETAGer Christian Kelleher, Head of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries, has invited us to join him at Special Collections for a look at the exhibition of art and memorabilia relating to incomparable Houston artist, Dorothy Hood (1919-2000). Hood's vast archive has now become part of the ever-growing Houston art history research collections being assembled by UofH Libraries Special Collections. In addition to the Hood materials, Christian has offered to bring out, just for us, "works and archives (or archival works, like sketchbooks) from: Bert Long, Dick Wray, John Biggers, Lynn Randolph, Earl Staley, Buck Schiwetz, Doug Michels/Ant Farm (a little something different from the usual), and of course Houston Blacklight Poster Company!" And he'll also have UofH Public Art Tour maps available, so we can follow up the indoor meeting with a self-guided tour around the campus.

So that we can give Christian an idea of how many HETAGers to expect, please

RSVP (only if you WILL be attending) to tibbits@rice.edu

Coming in August to a gallery near you:

Two Texas Modernism(s): Houston/Dallas in the 1930s
An Exhibition at the
Julia Ideson Building of Houston Public Library
August to November, 2022



Gene Charlton *Exterior #1: Arrangement Around Two Houses* c.1936 (l);
Alexandre Hogue *Squaw Creek* 1927, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (r)

During the 1930s, art flourished in Texas, and Modernism, that most current of art movements at the time, made its way to the Lone Star State, even as the depression dug in and the dust bowl grew. But Texas is vast and varied, so the Modernism(s) that took root in the major cities and academic centers in the state was varied too.

In Houston and Dallas, Modernism became the central focus for two small groups of local artists, made up mostly of youngsters, along with their forward-looking mentors: in Houston, the Cherry-McNeill Group; and the Dallas Nine (plus) up north.

Though not even 250 miles apart, the approaches to Modernism of the two groups in the two cities were markedly different, and were in some respects a microcosm of the different paths to Modernism on the national level.

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



Emma Richardson Cherry *Flying Prisms* c.1919 (above);
Frank Reaugh *Margaret's Peak* 1909, John L. Nau III Collection of Texas Art (below)

In Houston, the Cherry-McNeill Group consisted of Emma Richardson Cherry, the doyenne of Houston art, her student, Ola McNeill Davidson, and Davidson's students, Gene Charlton, Carden Bailey, Nione Carlson, Maudee Carron, Robert Preusser, Frank Dolejska and Dean Lee, along with Forrest Bess and one or two others who sometimes worked and exhibited with them. Davidson herself named the group in a 1952 letter to Cherry, recounting what they had been able to accomplish as teachers and students developing avant-garde art in the Bayou City.

Based on Cherry's own long training and catholic art interests, stretching back into the 19th Century and coming forward to the most advanced art of her day, the Cherry-McNeill Group brought a "scientific" approach to art (as Cherry described it in 1920), concerned as much, or maybe more, with the way art is made than with the subjects depicted. Cherry drew her inspiration from extensive study in Paris and New York, and contact with such artists as Marsden Hartley, Marcel Duchamp and Andre Lhote. She enthusiastically embraced the Modernism current in Europe and New York.

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



Nione Carlson [Untitled Surrealist Landscape] c.late 1930s (l);
Charles Bowling *After the Storm* nd, John L. Nau III Collection of Texas Art (r)

The Dallas Nine, on the other hand, originally including Jerry Bywaters, Thomas M. Stell, Jr., Harry P. Carnohan, Otis M. Dozier, Alexandre Hogue, William Lester, Everett Spruce, John Douglass, and Perry Nichols, along with others who worked and exhibited with them through the 1930s, founded their art-making on the conviction, as Bywaters put it in 1928, that “art, to be significant, must be a reflection of life; that it must be a part of a people’s thought.” Technique in art-making was not immaterial to them, and indeed they looked for guidance to Italian primitives, landscape artists and even Surrealists, but the subject was all important, and the subject had to be the land and people of their own region. They actively rebelled against the “European domination of American art,” as Bywaters said.

They worked in concert with other American regionalists to find an American Modernism growing out of, and speaking directly to, their own region. Bywaters and the other Dallas Nine artists viewed as fellow travelers the Midwestern American Scene painters Thomas Hart Benton, Grant Wood and John Steuart Curry, along with John Sloan and Reginald Marsh, among others, in the East. And though they sometimes ignored the influence, they even shared basic values with the older Dallas artist, Frank Reaugh, who took the life and landscape of Texas as his only valid subject from the beginning of his career, in the 1880s.

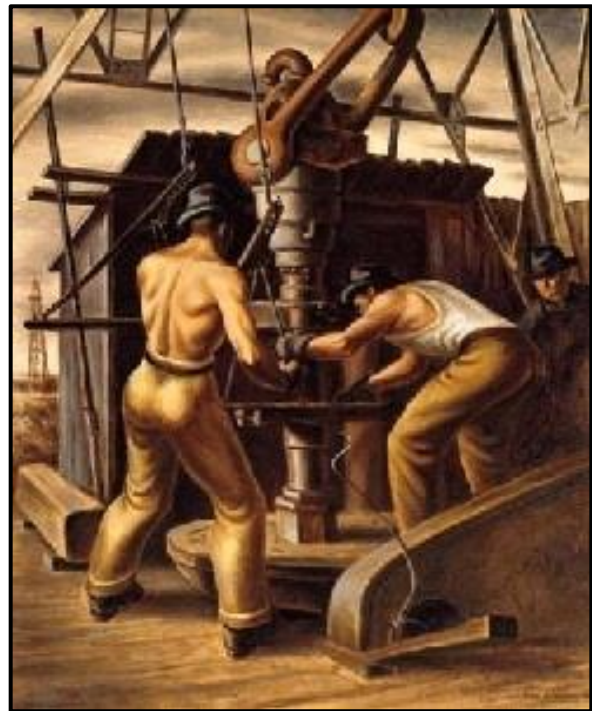
The exhibition will focus on the period from the mid-1920s, when both groups began to develop conscious concepts of Modernism as applied to their art-making, to 1942, when the entry of the United States into World War II disrupted the groups and changed their focuses, as it did the entire country. Attention will also be given to the possible impact on the differing approaches to Modernism in the two cities of the fact that in Houston most (though not all) the artists involved were women or gay men, while in Dallas, most (though, again, not all) were straight men. In this time of racial segregation, in both cities all were white, of course.

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



Robert Preusser *Elsewhere* 1938 (l);
Otis Dozier *Rooster and Grasshopper* 1945, John L. Nau III Collection of Texas Art (r)

By showing side-by-side the work of Cherry-McNeill Group and Dallas Nine artists, all working seriously as Modernists in Texas in the 1930s, the exhibition intends to explore the looks and philosophical underpinnings of two seminal aspects of the art history of Texas, which have strongly influenced later developments in their two cities, as well as the state in general. At the same time, the exhibition will serve as a demonstration that Modernism, when it came to America, was not limited exclusively to the art centers of the East and that it was not a single thing, even in a relatively contained region such as Texas. It was, rather a liberating force that could take its disciples along markedly different routes toward the shared ideal of creating a modern art for America.



Carden Bailey c.1930s (l); Jerry Bywaters *Oilfield Workers* 1940, John L. Nau III Collection of Texas Art (r)

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



Registration now open

**[CASETA's 2022 Symposium](#)
& Art Fair to be held *live* at the
Hilton Dallas Lincoln Centre, Dallas, Texas, June 10-12, 2022**

Opening Friday, June 10

6:00 pm: *"Charles Umlauf and his Muses"*

Katie Robinson Edwards, Director and curator of the Umlauf Sculpture Garden and Museum.

6:30 – 9:30 pm: **Opening of the Texas Art Fair and cocktail party sponsored by Heritage Auctions.**

Saturday morning, June 11

9:30: *"Paper Chase: New Discoveries in Texas Prints & Drawings"* Sue Canterbury, Dallas Museum of Art, Curator

10:30: *"A Conversation with David Bates: A dynamic exchange about the Artist's career and inspirations"*

Gallerist, Talley Dunn

11:30 Lunch

Saturday afternoon, June 11

12:30: *"Texas! at the San Antonio Museum of Art and the Impressionist Impulse"*
Emily Neff, Executive Director San Antonio Museum of Art

1:30: *"Kermit Oliver - An Enduring Spirit"*
Susie Kalil, Author and Independent Curator

2:30: *"Making the Unknown Known: Women in Early Texas Art, 1860's-1960's"*

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

(CASETA publication in progress)

Michael Grauer, McCasland Chair of Cowboy Culture and curator of Cowboy Collections and Western Art at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum.

Saturday Special Event 6:30-8:30pm June 11

(Buses depart the Hilton at 6:00 (for those traveling by bus).

Tour of Cele and John Carpenter Early Texas Art Collections

(Ticketed event, see registration for more information).

Sunday morning, June 12

10:00: *"Upon Reflection: Texas Regionalism and its Evolving Aesthetic"*

Author Francine Carraro, Ph.D.

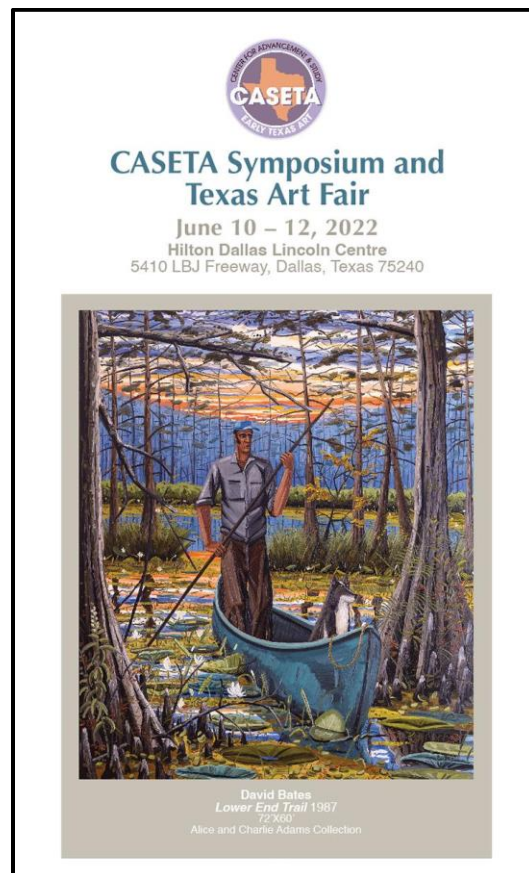
11:00: Video presentation on Restoration of Hall of State and its murals

"Women Artists of the Hall of State"

Dallas Historical Society Chair Veletta Forsythe Lill

Sunday Afternoon

Optional Tour of the Hall of State



Exhibitions around Texas:

CORPUS CHRISTI



[Texas Artists: Women of Abstraction](#)

AMST: Art Museum of South Texas

Until May 8, 2022

The exhibition of 30 Texas-based artists, of which 23 are currently working, range from modernists Dorothy Hood, Toni LaSelle, Leila McConnell, Pat Colville, and Stella Sullivan through current works by Sharon Englestein, Terrell James, and Annette Lawrence. The artists included in the exhibition tell the story of abstract art created by Texas women through the decades. AMST is partnering with the Texas Association of Museums (TAM) to spearhead an initiative to encourage all Texas art museums to showcase women artists the year 2022.

SAN ANTONIO

[James Ferdinand McCan: A Texas Artist Rediscovered](#)

The Witte Museum

May 17 – Oct. 2, 2022

Explore Texas at the beginning of the 20th century—when Texans lived on vast ranches and in small towns, animals roamed and rivers rushed by—in the first solo exhibition devoted to James Ferdinand McCan. His paintings capture Texas' wild and vivid lands and the people and animals that inhabited them at a pivotal moment in time.

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



Georgia O'Keeffe *Evening Star No. V* 1917, McNay Art Museum

[Georgia O'Keeffe and American Modernism](#)

The McNay Museum

Thru May 8, 2022

Georgia O'Keeffe is known as the “mother of American Modernism,” figuring prominently in the movement from the late 1910s onward. The synthesis of abstraction and representation in her work is a prime example of the movement, as well as the application of these disparate styles to the ordinary or conventional subject matter like still life, landscapes, and architecture. Like contemporaries Dove, Sheeler, and Torr, she blurred natural and man-made, rendering landscapes, flowers, animal skulls, and rocks with the same precision as her images of houses, barns, and skyscrapers—at times reducing subject matter to fundamental shapes and lines, or focusing on individual elements with a wash of vibrant color. And she spent some of those formative 1910s years right here in TEXAS.

Dallas

[Octavio Medellín: Spirit and Form](#)

Dallas Museum of Art

Through January 15, 2023

Octavio Medellín (1907-1999) was an influential Mexican American artist and teacher whose work helped shape the Texas art scene for six decades. This is the first-ever museum retrospective for the noted sculptor. The exhibition will include approximately 80 works, exploring the evolution of Medellín's sculptural practice, his public art commissions, and his legacy as a beloved and respected teacher. During the more than 40 years he lived and worked in the Dallas area, Medellín influenced generations of students as an instructor at the school of the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts and as founder of the Creative Arts Center.



Octavio Medellin (l); exhibition installation view (r).

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

College Station



[Texas on Paper](#)

J. Wayne Stark Galleries

Texas A& M University

Thru May 22, 2022

Gallery talk with Christopher Beer, Curator, John L. Nau III Collection of Texas Art, April 28, 5:30 P.M.

Texas artists and their works on paper during the first half of the 20th century. The exhibition offers an important re-examination of the growth and popularity of Texas printmaking among artists of the time, as well an exploration of the broader applications of various paper media in Texas art during the period. *Texas on Paper* draws from two of the state's outstanding private collections of Texas art, featuring prints from the Collection of Judy and Stephen Alton and selections from The John L. Nau III Collection of Texas Art. It also features complementary works from the permanent collections of the Texas A&M University Art Galleries.

Alpine

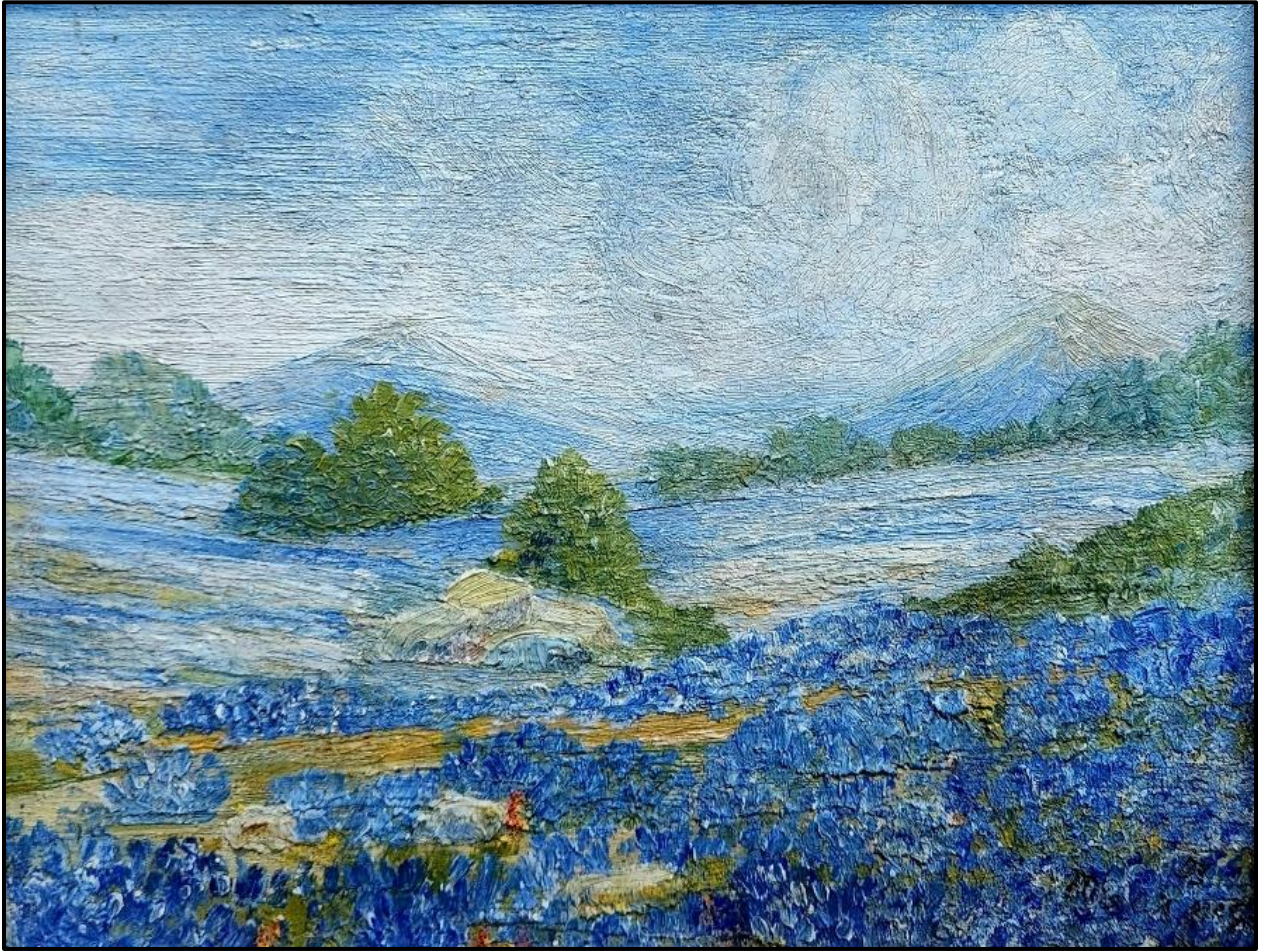
Fred Darge Paints the Big Bend and Beyond

[Museum of the Big Bend](#)

April 22–June 4, 2022

***Fred Darge Big Bend and Beyond* features works that Darge created while working on Big Bend and New Mexico ranches during the 1930s. Over 30 works from both private collections and museum holdings will be on view.**

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



Unknown artist, untitled painting – shall we call it
TEXAS BLUE?
caEarly 20th Century

The mission of HETAG is to illuminate Houston's art history by providing viewing opportunities for art, by supporting and doing research on the artists and art communities working in Houston through the years, and by spreading the word.

Back issues of the HETAG Newsletter are available via the
[University of Houston Libraries Digital Library](#)
and
[The Portal to Texas History](#)

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