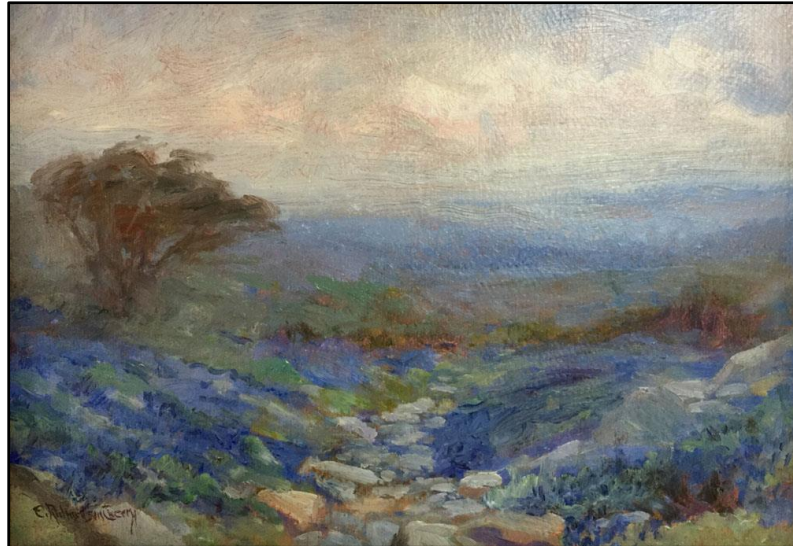


HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group Newsletter No 8, October 2016



Emma Richardson Cherry *Texas Springtime* ca. 1910s?

Houston Bluebonnets:

In honor of the exhibition [“Julian Onderdonk and the Texas Landscape”](#) at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, which includes a number of Onderdonk’s bluebonnet paintings (Yes, MFAH is showing bluebonnets!), the HETAG newsletter this month is dedicated to the Houston bluebonnet painting. We’re far enough from the Hill Country that the bluebonnet tradition hasn’t been quite as powerful for our artists as it has for those a little further west. But I admit that I was surprised at the number of bluebonnet paintings by Houston artists I was able to round up in fairly short order. And you know what? Even though they’re that sometimes disdained genre, The Bluebonnet Painting, a lot of them are pretty d*** good.



Henri Gadbois *Willow Creek Loop 12* 1991 (l); Virgie Claxton [*Untitled: Hill Country Bluebonnets*] ca. 1930s (r)

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Houston's Bluebonnet Onderdonk: Hattie Virginia Palmer

One Houston artist who did make something of an specialty of painting bluebonnets was Hattie Virginia Palmer (Mrs. Charles Palmer), 1866-1933. Though she painted other things as well, during the 1920s and early 1930s she made almost annual tours in the spring, through the Hill Country and central Texas, to her ranch at Tehuacana, sketching and painting bluebonnets at their peak. Palmer, who usually signed her work HV Palmer, was originally from Ripley, Ohio, near Cincinnati, and trained as a ceramicist. She came to Houston in the early 20th Century after living for some years in Indianapolis. By 1908 she had set up a studio in the Moore-Burnett Building in downtown Houston where she taught china and watercolor painting. She was one of the most prominent and talented Houston artists of the period, and in 1924 the Museum of Fine Arts Houston mounted an exhibition of her work.



Hattie V. Palmer [*Bluebonnet Road*] and *Alamo Heights*, both ca. 1920s



Hattie V. Palmer, ceramic tile with bluebonnet scene, ceramic vase with gallery stamp and painted china plate, all ca. 1900s-1920s.



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Happening in Houston:

[This WAS Contemporary Art: Fine and Decorative Arts in Houston 1945–1965](#) (The Heritage Society, co-sponsored by HETAG and CASETA)

Thursday, July 14–Saturday, October 15, 2016
The Heritage Society Museum Gallery, 10-4, Tue.-Sat.
Admission is free

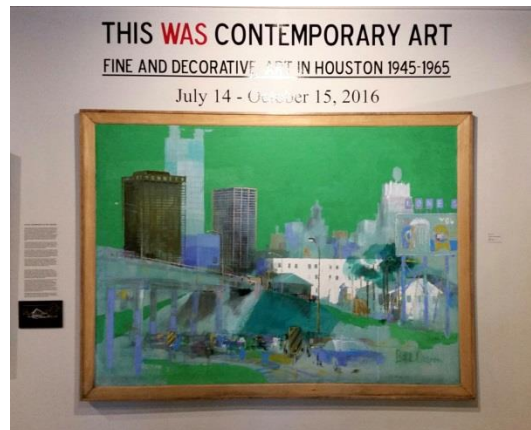
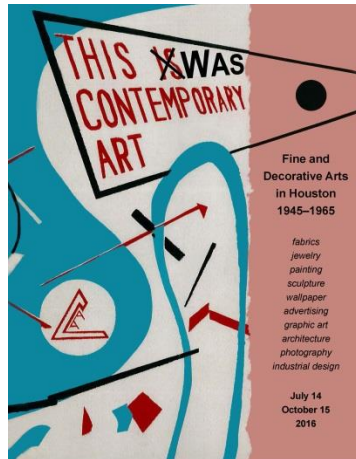
Related lecture:

Randy Tibbits, co-curator of the exhibition:

The Houston Art Scene in Transition and Disruption: Frank Freed's Opening Night- Decorative Arts in Houston 1945–1965

- Wednesday, October 5, 2016
- 7:00pm - 8:00pm (museum open 6-9 for lecture)

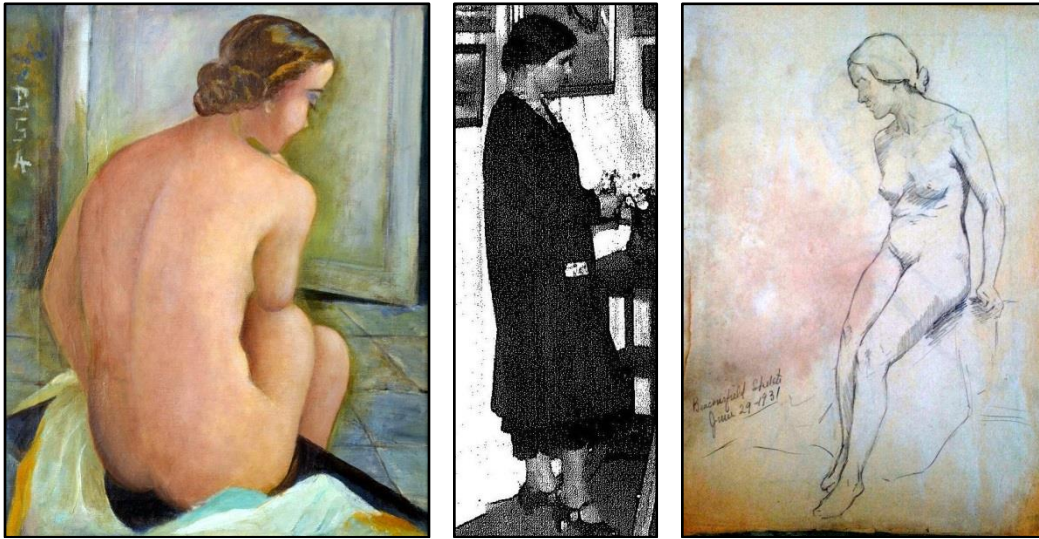
The Heritage Society Museum
Free for members, \$5 for non-members



HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

Houston Art History Notes: Drawing from the **NUDE!**

OMG, what those ladies were getting up to! Shocking! The women who were members of the Houston Artists Gallery in the early 1930s may have looked like staid matrons to the unknowing, but when they got into the studio and gallery all H*** broke loose. The brushes came out, the clothes came off and they were painting nudes like decadent Frenchmen. Here are some nudes by some of the ladies of HAG (that's Houston Artists Gallery) in 1931 or so: two paintings by Beulah Schiller Ayars plus a drawing by Emma Richardson Cherry, dated June 29, 1931, and titled "Beaconsfield Sketch" – as in the Beaconsfield Apartments, where the Houston Artists Gallery was housed in two basement rooms. Even more shocking, the model for Mrs. Cherry's drawing and the Ayars nude-from-the-back seems to be one HAG's own members, Myrtle Stedman, shown in the individual photo here. The other Ayars nude is titled "She Is I". Could this be Ayars herself? Shocking, Shocking, Shocking!

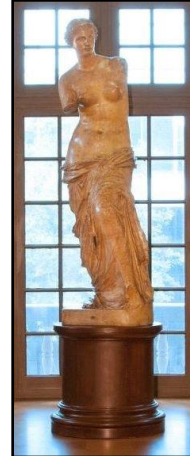


Beulah Schiller Ayars [*Nude*] ca. early 1930s (l); Myrtle Stedman at the Houston Artists Gallery ca. 1931 (c); Emma Richardson Cherry *Beaconsfield Sketch* 1931 (r)



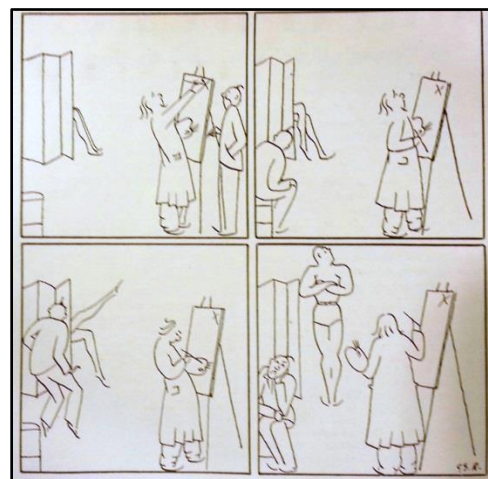
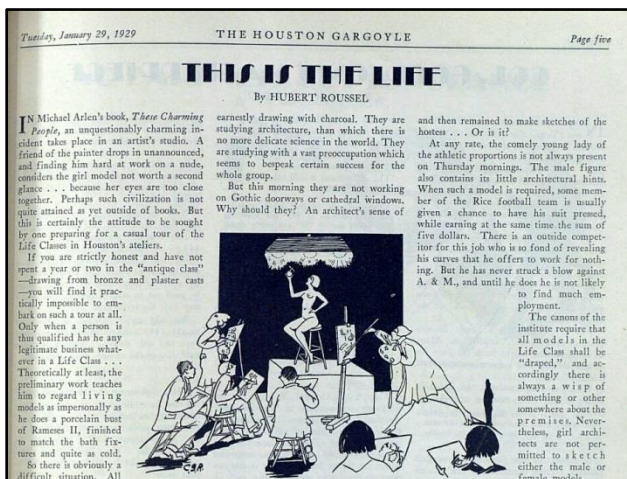
Beulah Schiller Ayars *She Is I* ca. early 1930s

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Beaconsfield Apartment Building, Houston, opened 1911; the Houston Artists Gallery, basement of Beaconsfield, ca. 1931, Myrtle Stedman (l), Beulah Schiller Ayars (c) and Grace Spaulding John (r); plaster cast of the *Venus de Milo* ca. early 1900s

And you may not believe this, but they weren't the only Houston artists taking part in this scandalous "Life" drawing. Not even the first. An article in the *Houston Gargoyle*, dated January 29, 1929, took readers on a tongue-in-cheek tour of Houston Life Classes. At that time there were three (the ladies of HAG, a couple of years later, made four): The Museum School, The Sketch Club that meet in the Outdoor Advertising Company building downtown, and Rice Institute (now Rice University). All three had both male and female models in the altogether (except at Rice, where there had to be at least a wisp of something covering something) and were open to both male and female artists (except at Rice, where the oh-so-innocent girls could only draw from plaster casts). A *Houston Gargoyle* cartoon from the period showed just how confusing (and disappointing) things could get. This in a city where only a couple of decades earlier the school board had rejected a plaster cast of the Venus de Milo as too provocative to be seen by school children. You can still see Venus today in the Ideson Building of Houston Public Library. IF YOU DARE.



Article in the *Houston Gargoyle*, Jan. 29, 1929; C. Garza Rivera [*So Hard to Tell Which*], *Houston Gargoyle*, Jan. 24, 1932

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

Exhibitions in Houston:

Museum of Fine Arts Houston

[Julian Onderdonk and the Texas Landscape](#)

An exhibition of more than 25 works by Onderdonk, on the occasion of the publication of *Julian Onderdonk: A Catalogue Raisonné*.
October 2, 2016 – January 2, 2017

[A Texas Legacy: Selections from the William J. Hill Collection](#)

A selection of furniture, drawings, paintings, pottery, silver, and other goods made in Texas between the mid-19th and early 20th centuries.
October 2, 2016 – January 2, 2017

Exhibitions around the state:

Art Museum of South Texas

Corpus Christi

[The Color of Being/ El Color del Ser : DOROTHY HOOD \(1918-2000\)](#)

September 30, 2016 - January 8, 2017

A major retrospective of one the most important Houston artists ever – which isn't coming to Houston. Thanks, Art Museum of South Texas, for showing one of our best. We'll be visiting Corpus Christi to see it.

<http://www.artmuseumofsouthtexas.org/>

Old Jail Art Center

Albany

[TEXAS MODERNS: Sallie Gillespie, Wade Jolly, Blanche McVeigh, and Evaline Sellors](#)

September 17, 2016 – February 11, 2017

<http://theojac.org/#about>

Amon Carter Museum of American Art

Fort Worth

[Abstract Texas: Midcentury Modern Painting](#)

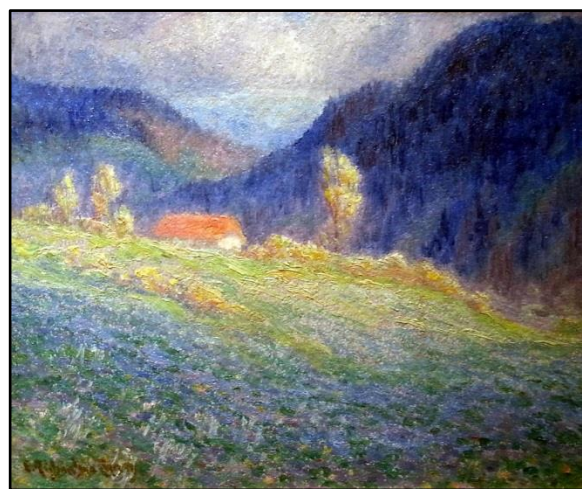
October 1, 2016–October 8, 2017

<http://www.cartermuseum.org/>

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Alyce Martin [*Bluebonnets, cactus and fencepost*] ca.1930s? (l); Minta Garrison [*Bluebonnets*] ca.1930s (r)



Dawson Dawson-Watson [*Bluebonnets*] 1926 (l); Emma Richardson [*Cherry Swiss Farm With Lupins*] ca.1900s (r) (bluebonnets are not just for Texas!)



Virgie Claxton [*Bluebonnet hill*] ca. 1930s

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

HETAG meeting Sunday, October 16, 2016, 2pm

I'll be sending time/place details closer to the day, but mark your calendar now.

HETAGers **Stan Price and Clay Huffard** have invited us to their home for a look at their art collection, focused on the work of Stan's grandmother, the Beaumont and Taos artist, **Will-Amelia Sterns Price**. The collection is fab, and so is the home in which it's housed – what must be one of the most beautiful recent examples of Houston residential architecture:

Architecture and Construction: StudioMET.

Interior design: Calvin Azzam.

Landscape design: Gregory/Henry Landscape Design.

Featured on the Houston Modern Home Tour 2015

In the galleries:

[Dorothy Antoinette LaSelle](#)

[Shouting Silence: Five Decades of Drawings](#)

Works by one of the most important North Texas Modernists.

[Inman Gallery](#) 3901 Main Street

September 16 – October 22, 2016

[Selections from The John Stone Collection of Texas Art](#)

Works from a major collection of Early Texas Art

[William Reaves Sarah Foltz Fine Art](#) 2143 Westheimer Road

September 30 - October 29, 2016

Opening Reception - Saturday, October 8, 2016 from 6:00 - 8:30pm

Randy Tibbits, coordinator
HETAG:
Houston Earlier Texas Art Group
tibbits@rice.edu