

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



Grace Spaulding John, 1890-1972

HETAG Newsletter No 19, January 2018

It may be cold outside as we launch into 2018, but where Earlier Houston Art is concerned, things are already heating up. The year ahead promises to be one of the richest and most exciting ever. The annual CASETA Symposium is only months away (in April; see info later in the Newsletter). In the second half of the year at least three exhibitions will be running concurrently: “Sense of Home: The Art of Richard Stout,” curated by our own Sarah Beth Wilson McKeel, at the O’Kane Gallery, University of Houston Downtown (after showings at the Art Museum of Southeast Texas in Beaumont and the Art Museum of South Texas in Corpus Christi); “Houston Paints Mexico” will be on view at the Ideson Gallery of Houston Public Library Downtown; and “Houston Paints Houston,” at The Heritage Society Museum. Downtown is clearly the place to be in the fall for Earlier Houston Art. And who knows what other wonders will develop as the year gathers steam!

But here at the start, the major excitement is happening, not in Houston, but in Galveston. On January 20, 2018, The Rosenberg Library will open the exhibition “Never a Dull Moment: The Art of Grace Spaulding John” (see info later in the Newsletter). Drawn primarily from the permanent collection of the Rosenberg – with a few spectacular borrowed items added in – the show will be the first major exhibition of John’s work in decades. And so the January HETAG Newsletter is the Grace Spaulding John issue, in honor of that show and the fabulous artist it showcases.



Grace Spaulding John *Houston Main Street in the Rain* 1924;
Saturday Night – Eats Galveston 1941 (r)

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Upcoming HETAG meeting:

MOODY GALLERY

Our next HETAG meeting will be a visit to

[Moody Gallery](#)

2815 Colquitt St., Houston

Sunday January 7, 2018, at 2:30 p.m.

Gallerist, Betty Moody, will welcome us for a look at the amazing paintings by

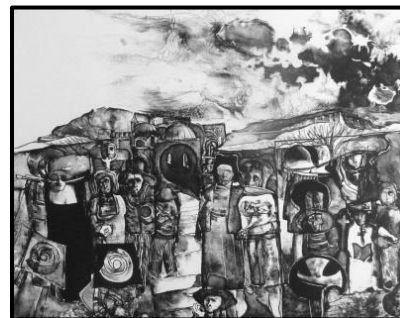
Sarah Williams



Sarah Williams *Abilene* 2017 Oil on Board 18x24

And the end-of-year gallery artist group exhibition.

There will be lots of fun and fascinating stories about the Houston art scene going back a few years, as only Betty can tell them. (On-street parking)



Michael Kennaugh *Beyond Delta* 2017 (l); Lucas Johnson *La Entrada* 1977 (r)

NOTE: Mark your calendar for our February meeting at the home of Sarah Beth Wilson McKeel and Joey McKeel. Saturday, February 17, 2018, 2:30 p.m. Details to follow.

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Galveston, Rosenberg Library:

"Never a Dull Moment: The Art of Grace Spaulding John" January 20 – July 20, 2018

Opening reception Saturday, January 20, 2018, 6-8 p.m.
I will be giving a talk at the library at 6:30 in conjunction with the exhibition.

In partnership with the Center for the Advancement and Study of Early Texas Art (CASETA)
Rosenberg Library cordially invites you to preview the new exhibit

Never a Dull Moment
•••
THE ART OF GRACE SPAULDING JOHN

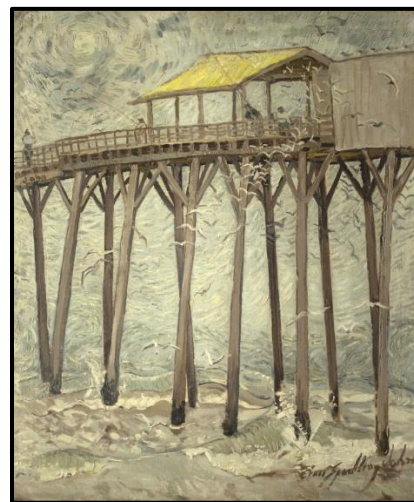
Saturday, January 20, 2018
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Harris Gallery, 4th Floor

with a guest lecture by
RANDY TIBBITS
to begin at 6:30 in the Fox Room

complimentary wine and light refreshments



Self-Portrait
Grace Spaulding John (1890-1972)
oil on canvas, 1923
Gift of Patricia John Kelghtley



Grace Spaulding John *Beach Umbrellas* 1938 (l); *Wings, Wind and Waves* 1930s (r)

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Upcoming exhibitions:

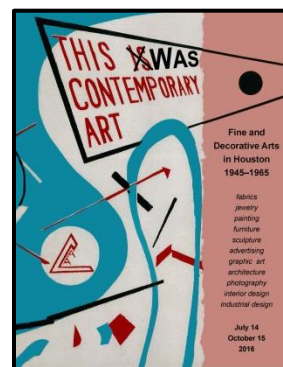
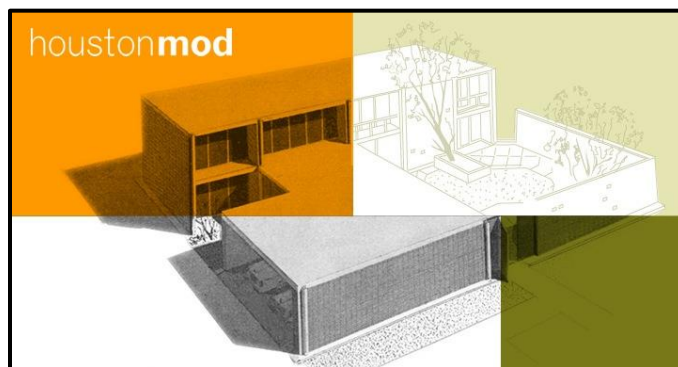
For a pair of exhibitions to be mounted in the fall of 2018 at The Heritage Society Museum and The Ideson Gallery of Houston Public Library, the curatorial teams are looking for images of Mexico by Houston artists and images of Houston by Houston artists, done before 1979. I know that many of you will have works in your collections that fit the criteria, and we would love to know about them. Please email us images including Artist/Title/Date/Medium/Dimensions to tibbits@rice.edu



Grace Spaulding John *Guadalupe Market* 1934 (l); *Parasols and Posies* 1935 (r)

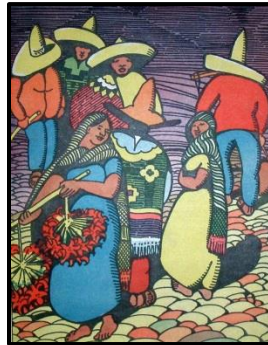
Past Exhibitions:

Many of you may remember the exhibition “This WAS Contemporary Art: Fine and Decorative Arts in Houston 1945-1965,” which was on view at The Heritage Society Museum, July 14-October 15, 2016. The catalog for the show received the 2017 CASETA award for best exhibition catalog. And now the exhibition/catalog team, composed of Ginger Berni, Tam Kiehnhoff, Ben Koush, Linda Reaves and Randy Tibbits, are pleased to acknowledge that [HoustonMod](http://HoustonMod.com) has awarded the exhibition a 2017 Preservation Award. Thanks to HoustonMod for the award; and to CASETA and all the many lenders and donors who made the exhibition possible. And thanks especially to The Heritage Society for undertaking such an extensive (and expensive) project in order to make Houston’s arts of the past available to Houstonians of the present.



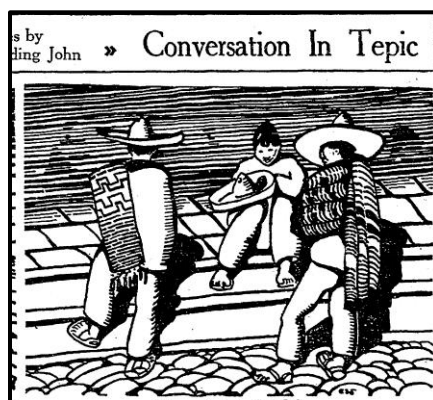
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Grace Spaulding John in Mexico:



When the exhibition “Houston Paints Mexico” opens in Houston Public Library’s Ideson Gallery on August 25, 2018, Grace Spaulding John will be a major part of the show. John made at least five trips to Mexico during the 1920s and 1930s and she produced a great deal of art during and after her tours.

In the summer of 1935 she took a train from Los Angeles down the west coast which she intended to publish as her “Mexican Meander,” illustrated with her own wood-cuts. The book never appeared, but she distilled her meander travelogue into a series of articles that did see print in the *Houston Chronicle* in August and September of 1935, under the series title “Smocking Through Mexico.” She also showed a group of her Mexican prints in the 12th Houston Annual Exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston in 1936, garnering an Honorable Mention; and the one in color above even made the cover of the *Los Angeles Times Magazine*.



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CASETA

*16th Annual CASETA Symposium
April 27 - 29, 2018
Witte Museum
San Antonio, TX*

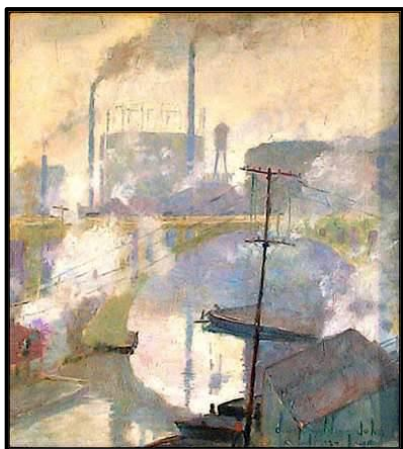
**Mark your calendar for the CASETA Symposium
At the Witte Museum in San Antonio
April 27-29, 2018**

**The program is still being planned but
We already know that our keynote speaker will be
Eleanor Jones Harvey, Senior Curator at the Smithsonian American Art Museum,
And formerly Curator of American Art at the Dallas Museum of Art**

Check the [CASETA](#) Website for Symposium updates and other ETA news.

**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.**

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



Grace Spaulding John Smoke *Steam Mist #2* 1924 (l); *Conch Shell From Cozumel* 1966 (r)

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Helen Estelle “Stella” Sullivan

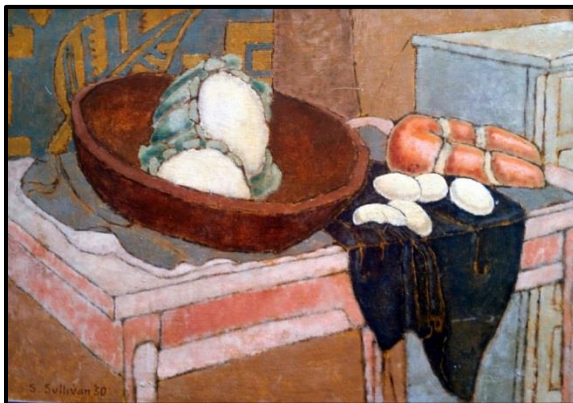
1924-2017



Stella Sullivan in her studio, 1951 (l); Stella at Reaves/Foltz Gallery in 2013 (r)

It is with great sadness that we note the passing of lifelong Houston artist and teacher of art, Stella Sullivan, who died on Christmas Eve, 2017, after a brief illness.

Stella was a shining and integral member of the Houston arts community her whole life as a painter, printmaker, fabric designer, and jewelry maker. We remember her contributions just last year in all those areas to the exhibition “This WAS Contemporary Art: Fine and Decorative Arts in Houston 1945-1965” at The Heritage Society, 2016. Without Stella’s work, at least one of the design categories in that show would have been completely empty. And without her work, that and many other exhibitions, galleries and lives in Houston and beyond would have been much diminished. Stella was also a teacher of many generations of Houston artists. She maintained a studio right to the end, and still went there to make her art almost to the end.



Still Life with Cauliflower 1950; *Symbols of the Eucharist* c1953

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Ruth Laird Pots 1964

As part of the continuum of Houston art history, Stella was the one degree of separation taking us present-day Houstonians right back to the beginnings of our modern art culture. I will never forget the thrill of hearing Stella describe going to an art class at the studio of Emma Richardson Cherry as a young child. Even after almost 90 years, she remembered that the model wore a blue shirt. She must have been the last living person to actually have studied with Mrs. Cherry, even if briefly. And how exciting to hear her recollections of another of her early teachers, Ola McNeill Davidson, and of seeing on the studio walls the newest work of her fellow (though much older) students, Gene Charlton, Robert Preusser, Frank Dolejska, and Carden Bailey. She also studies with Grace Spaulding John and Ruth Pershing Uhler. She was a 1945 Rice University graduate, and received her MFA in 1954 from Cranbrook Academy of Art.

With Stella's passing we lose an immensely talented, influential and productive artist and friend. The solace is that we have had the chance to know her, and that we still have her art to remind, comfort and inspire us. So long, Stella. We will miss you.



Maryland Club 1967; Bananas and Pears 2012