



Jack Boynton *Sunstone* 1957, mixed media on canvas, 44 x 77 in. a magnificent painting from Boynton's prime, at Foltz Fine Art.

HETAG Newsletter No. 36, August 2019

This issue of the HETAG Newsletter is filled with a variety of things to provide some Earlier Houston Art diversion during the long, hot August days when it's too late to get a plane to cooler places, and too early to nap or drink. There is news of a great little show at MFAH celebrating the art savvy and philanthropy of Miss Ima Hogg, and a rediscovered travelogue by two Houstonians in Europe in 1949; notice of an upcoming show focusing on Modernism in Houston and Dallas in the 1930s, and an invitation to float down the Seine with other HETAGers on a river cruise in 2020. Maybe you'll find something to take your mind off the weather, and remind you that good times with Houston art are in your future.



John T. Biggers *History of Education in Morris County, Texas* 1954/55, casein on muslin, 5.5 x 22 ft., one of the magnificent works by Houston artists on view at the Witte Museum.

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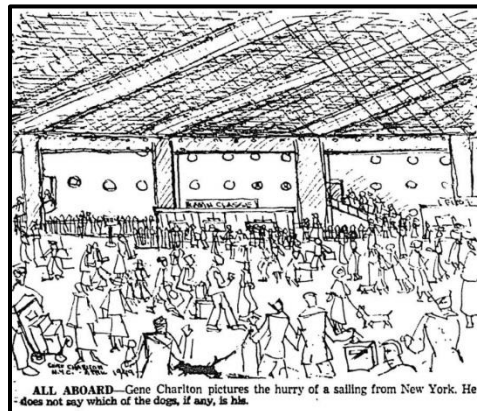
Off to Europe, 1949! Part 1 of a travelogue wherein Houstonians Gene Charlton (1909-1979) and Jon Chaudier (1921-?) set out for a year in Europe (France, Italy, Spain and Morocco) – serialized weekly in the pages of the *Houston Post* from May 1949 to March 1950 – recently rediscovered in the digitized version of the newspaper, available at Rice University Library.



In April 1949, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, awarded the first MFAH Fellowship for Advanced Art Study to hometown art star, Gene Charlton.

Charlton's career was already flying high. He'd won the museum purchase prize at the Houston Annual Exhibition in 1942, and he'd had one-artist shows at Bute Gallery (1945), MFAH (1948) and Bennett Black Gallery (1949) in Houston, and at Contemporary Arts Gallery in New York City (1947 and 1949). And now the fellowship. What an opportunity! But what how to use it?

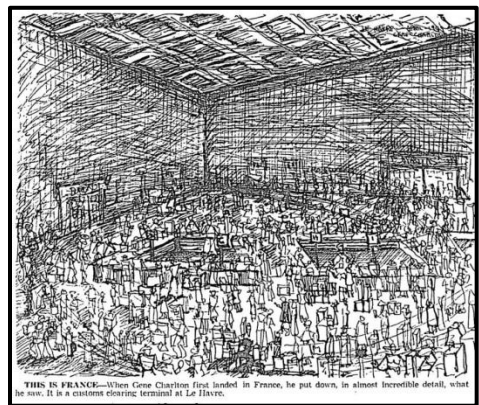
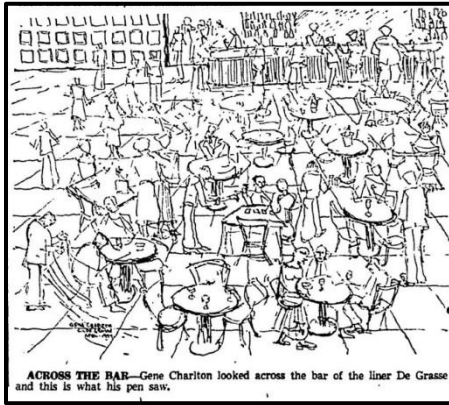
He'd spent almost a year in Mexico (1947/48), long stretches in New York City, and even time in Europe – a tour to France and Italy in 1937, and two years stationed in England during World War II. Why not more time in Europe, wandering where they wanted and absorbing the culture?



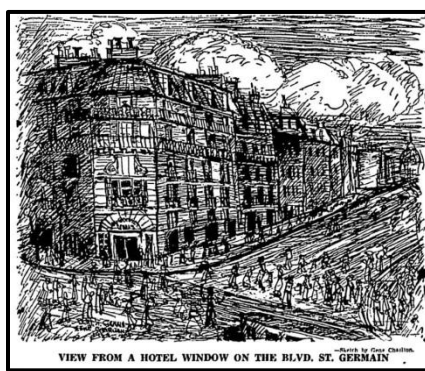
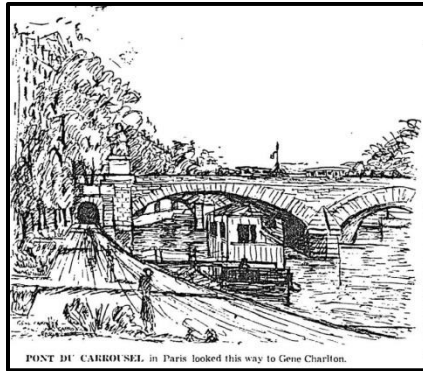
So in June, 1949, Gene and Jon set out on their year of art study and travel abroad. First the frenzy of packing; then a flight to New York, in the private plane of Houston friend, Bennett Black (with a stop to refuel in Chattanooga); 10 days of Art/Theater/Ballet/Opera in New York City, and a glitterati bon voyage party given by Edna Lewis, whom you'd met in Mexico aboard William Spratling's yacht.

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Next an 8-day crossing on the French Line SS De Grasse – days of drinking, eating, and deck sitting; the mad-house arrival hall in La Havre; a second-class carriage on the Paris boat-train.



At last: **“It is spring and we are in Paris!”**



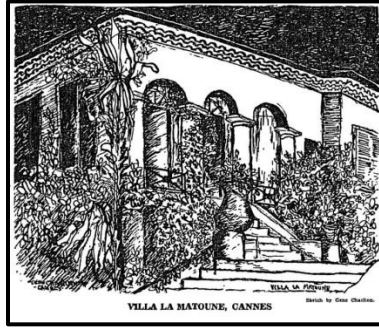
But you know the story: You’ve scoured every arrondissement in Paris for an apartment you can afford. Well, not every one. No one who’s anyone would think of living in some neighborhoods; but you’ve looked hard in the ones that count, and found nothing that will do. What next? If you’re lucky enough to have rich contacts in international art circles, like Gene and Jon, you accept the invitation from your Mexico City friends, Louise and Hubert Harmon, the jewelry designer, and head to the Riviera for the month of August. A third class seat on the train along

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the Côte d'Azur; a rented villa with servants overlooking the Mediterranean (your host is paying the bill!); a “Roman orgy” in Nice; languorous afternoons beside the yacht basin in Cannes; lunch with Errol Flynn and Princess Gyka in Cagnes-sur-Mer. After a while of this life “a person feels as abstract as a Calder mobile in a Gulf hurricane.”



BEACH VIEW AT CANNES



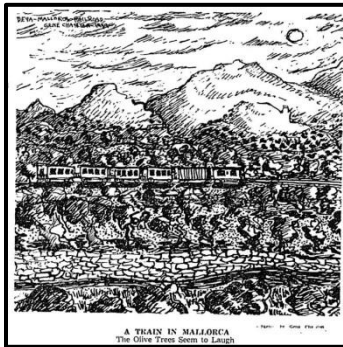
VILLA LA MAITOUNE, CANNES



YACHT BASIN AT CANNES

You can only be a guest for so long, of course. The time comes when you have to find a place of your own. The Riviera is too expensive. Even the little towns across the border in Italy offer nothing affordable. But what about Spain? People say MFAH dollars will go a long way there.

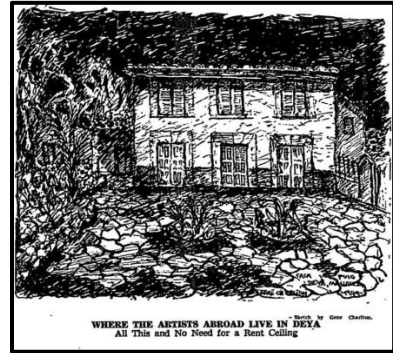
And so, it's off to Mallorca: a tiny train, like the one at the old Luna Park in Houston; a hotel with only 16 rooms, all filled with artists, in the tiny hill town, Deya (Deia on modern maps); nothing to do all day for months but paint and write, and eat and drink with the locals.



A TRAIN IN MALLORCA
The Other Trees Seem to Laugh



HILLSIDE ON THE SEASHORE AT DEYA, MALLORCA
Somebody Has a Birthday Every Night at Wine Time



WHERE THE ARTISTS ABOARD LIVE IN DEYA
All This and No Need for a Rent Ceiling

Almost Heaven, if your idea Heaven is a sleepy little town in Mallorca.



HOUSE OF THE ROCKS, INTERIOR
The Fine, Dry Wine Had Waited More Than 100 Years



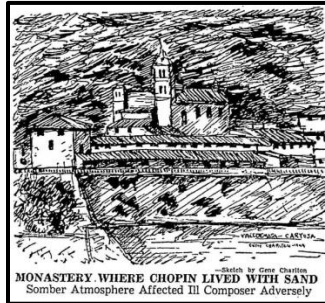
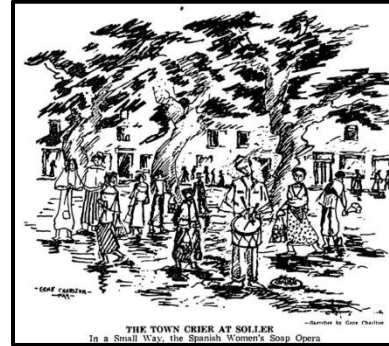
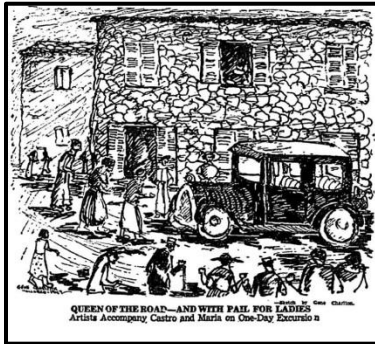
TEA FROM THE TERRACE OF CASA YEPE
The Paintings Are Bad But The Wine Is Good



GENERAL STORE, MALLORCAN STYLE
Outside, No Sign—Inside, Groceries and Shoes and Ropes

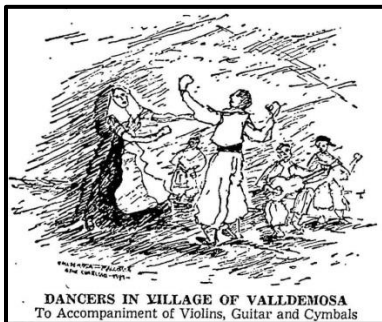
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It wasn't long before Gene and Jon settled into the Mallorcan pace, and when the day's work was done, they went exploring. One day they accompanied Castro and Maria in their big old automobile to see the ancient church in Deya; to hear the town crier in Stoller, a town nearby, spreading the news; to glimpse the thousand year old olive trees on the hillsides; and the monastery where Chopin and George Sand had lived in the 19th Century.



And everywhere they found friendly Mallorcan faces, especially when they joined in the local culture of their village in Mallorca at a festival of folk music and dancing in traditional attire.

SUCH FUN!



To be continued: In a future issue of the newsletter we'll travel with Gene and Jon as they explore Barcelona and Madrid, the beguiling cities of Andalucía and exotic Tangier, and then make their way back home after a productive, as well as pleasurable, year abroad.

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EXHIBITIONS, CURRENT AND FUTURE:



Miss Ima Hogg & Modernism

Wayman Adams *Portrait of Ima Hogg* c.1920

[MISS IMA HOGG & MODERNISM](#)

Museum of Fine Arts Houston

THROUGH NOVEMBER 3, 2019

An exhibition marking the 80th anniversary of a major donation of European and North American modernist works on paper, given to MFAH by Ima Hogg beginning in 1939. Though Hogg is perhaps better known for her [Bayou Bend home and collection](#) of American decorative arts, another of her donations to MFAH, she collected broadly in other areas as well. This selection includes work by such modernist luminaries as George Bellows, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Paul Klee, José Clemente Orozco, Pablo Picasso and many others.

No Houston or other Texas works are in the show – though a little [Emma Richardson Cherry](#) watercolor given as part of the 1939 donation might have been, especially since Miss Hogg likely would have known of Mrs. Cherry's advocacy of modernist art over the years, including the German manifestation, which Mrs. C. had written about as early as 1906 ("A Note on German Art," *Brush and Pencil*, December 1906, p244) and as late as 1929 ("Entirely Covers the Ground," *Art Digest*, March 1, 1929, p4).

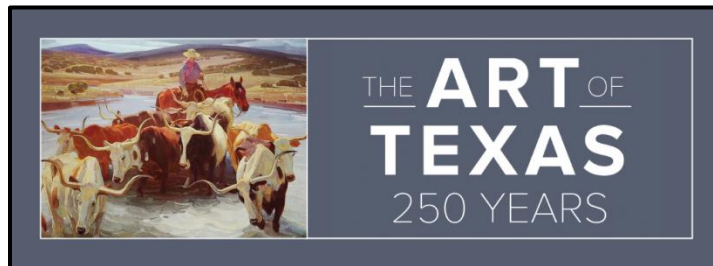
Still there is a possible direct link between these two Paul Klee works in show (Miss Ima was one of the first collectors of Klee in America) and this early work by Robert Preusser. Somehow I think young Preusser – he was only 18 when he made his painting below – may have got a look at Klee's tiny houses with red roofs, already in Houston, just down the Bayou from him.



Klee *Sel (Salt)* 1929 (l); Preusser *Dwarf Dwellings* 1937 (c); Klee *Marjamshausen* 1928 (r)

See below for info on an upcoming exhibition about 1930s modernism in Houston and Dallas.

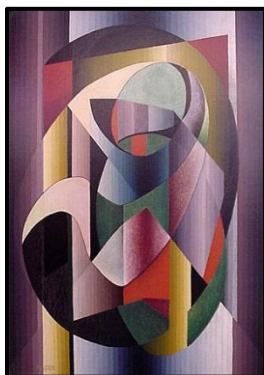
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[The Witte Museum, San Antonio](#)

On view thru August 25, 2019 (time is running out – DON'T MISS THIS ONE)

This is the really big show of Texas for our generation, featuring 180 works by almost as many Texas artists, made over 250 years of Texas history, and gathered from public and private collections around the state and country. It's not to be missed by anyone interested in the art of Texas. No matter how much you know or have seen already, you'll see and learn things about our art that are new to you. Houston is very well represented by some of the finest work created by more than a dozen of our finest artists from the past. Accompanied by a scholarly catalog, published by [TCU Press](#).



A few of the Houston modernist works in the exhibition:
Robert Preusser *Tonal Oval* 1947 (l); Emma Richardson Cherry *Flying Prisms* c1919 (c);
Gene Charlton [Untitled Collage] 1959 (l), Menil Collection

Foltz Fine Art [Summer Salon Exhibition](#) **Through August 31, 2019**

Including works from gallery stock by many Houston artists from over the decades – some at “last chance” prices – a gorgeous exhibition of Houston art in itself, and worth many visits!

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Deborah Colton Gallery

[Dick Wray: A Revelation](#)

September 7, 2019 – November 2, 2019

Opening Reception September 7, 2019, 6-8 pm

A “vibrant and bold exhibition of paintings and mixed media works” by native Houstonian, Dick Wray (1933-2011). Wray attended the University of Houston School of Architecture and Kunstakademie Dusseldorf, received a Ford Foundation Award in 1962, an Artists Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1978, and was named Texas Artist of the Year in 2000 by Art League Houston. He was represented in numerous group and solo exhibitions, including *Fresh Paint* in 1985, and is included in public and private collections, among them the Albright Knox Museum in Buffalo, National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Contemporary Art Museum of Houston and the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

The Grace Museum, Abilene

[Up Close and Personal: Portraits from the Reaves Collection of Texas Art](#)

September 7, 2019 – January 18, 2020

This exhibition features a selection of artworks from private collection of HETAGers, Bill and Linda Reaves, focusing on the human figure by well-known artists such as Kathleen Blackshear, Dixon Reeder, Stella Sullivan, Donald Vogel, Flora Reeder, Harold Bugbee, Cecil Casebier, Henry Gadbois, Edmund Kinzinger, Florence McClung, Leila McConnell, Kermit Oliver, and others.

Texas A&M University, J. Wayne Stark Galleries

[Texas in the Abstract](#)

August 22 – October 13, 2019

The midcentury strain of Lone Star independence spurred robust, progressive streams of artwork that thrived within a burgeoning stable of home-grown artists. This exhibition will examine the progression of abstract painting in the state as it advanced across post-World War II Texas, tracing the evolution of expressionist themes and highlighting examples of essential Texas painters of the period.

Note: The next HETAG meeting will be a visit to the home/collection of Bill and Linda Reaves, **Sunday afternoon, September 1, 2019**. Please RSVP (Yes only) to tibbits@rice.edu for details.

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Long-term planning has begun for an exhibition focusing on the differing manifestations of modernism in art that appeared in Houston and Dallas in the 1930s. The planning committee welcomes images of works to consider for the exhibition. All works should be from the years 1925 to 1942, and by members of the Cherry-McNeill Group, Houston, or the Dallas Nine (artists names below). Email images to tibbits@rice.edu.

Texas Modernism(s): Houston/Dallas in the 1930s An Exhibition at the Julia Ideson Building of Houston Public Library Opening in January 2021

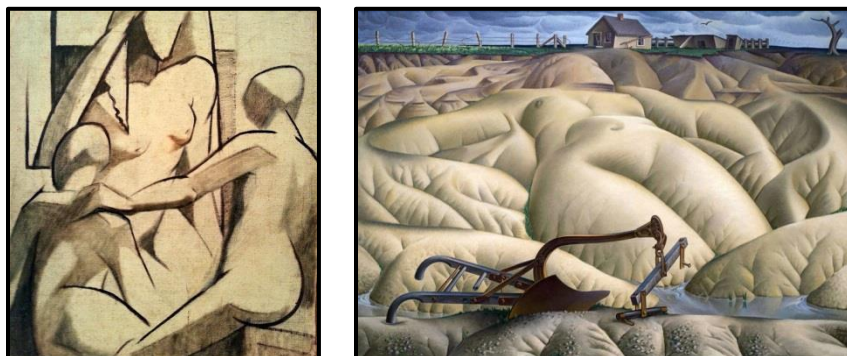


Gene Charlton (l); Alexandre Hogue (r)

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, however, 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.

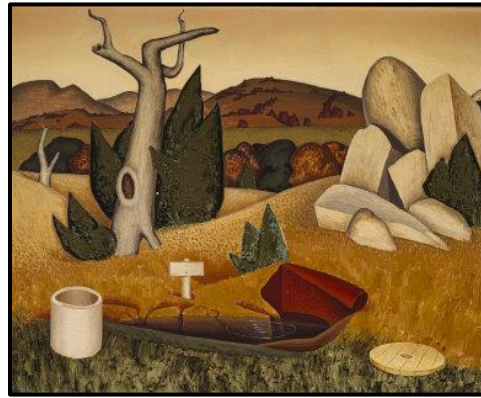


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Emma Richardson Cherry (l); Alexandre Hogue (r)

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.



Nione Carlson (l); William Lester (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 Stuart Curry, along with John Sloan and Reginald Marsh, among others, in the East. And though they sometimes denied 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.

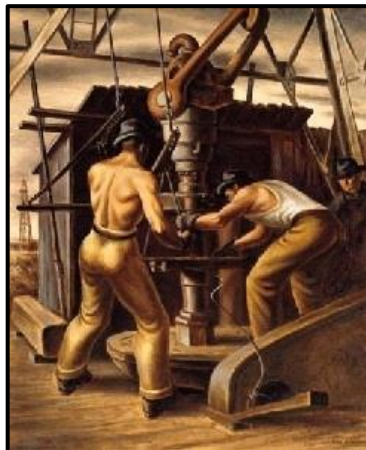
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The exhibition will focus on the period from the mid-1920s, when both groups began to develop conscious concepts of Modernism as applied to their art-making, to 1942, when the entry of the United States into World War II disrupted the groups and changed 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.



Robert Preusser (l); William Lester (r)

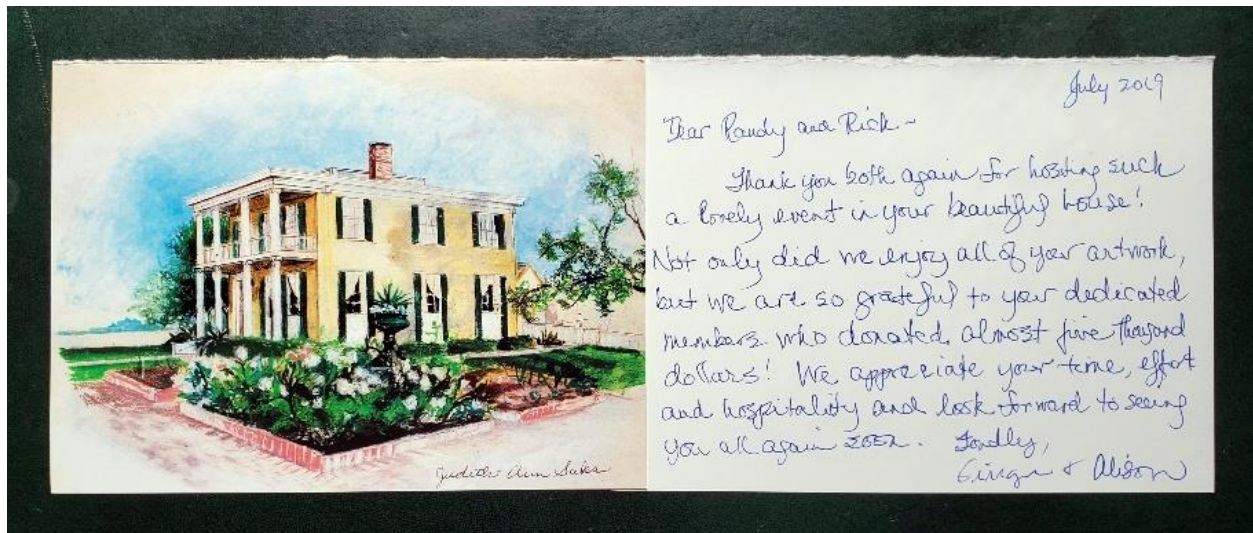
By showing side-by-side the work of Cherry-McNeill Group and Dallas Nine artists, all working seriously as Modernists in Texas in the 1930s, the exhibition intends to explore the looks and philosophical underpinnings of two seminal aspects of the art history of Texas, which have strongly influenced later 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 (l); Jerry Bywaters (r)

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**HERITAGE SOCIETY thanks HETAG
For
HETAG HELPS HERITAGE**



HETAG has received this gracious Thank You from Alison Bell and Ginger Berni, on behalf of the Heritage Society, for the HETAG HELPS HERITAGE fundraiser, to which so many of you contributed. The final tally indicates that we (and by that I mean all of you HETAGer friends who sent your checks) raised almost \$5000 to help THS through these difficult times. But it's not too late to help even more. You can still send your checks to The Heritage Society, 1100 Bagby Street, Houston, 77002, Attn: Alison Bell. Please make a note in the memo line that you're with HETAG.

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**

Now including issues 1-31, March 2016 – March 2019

<https://digital.lib.uh.edu/collection/hetag>

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