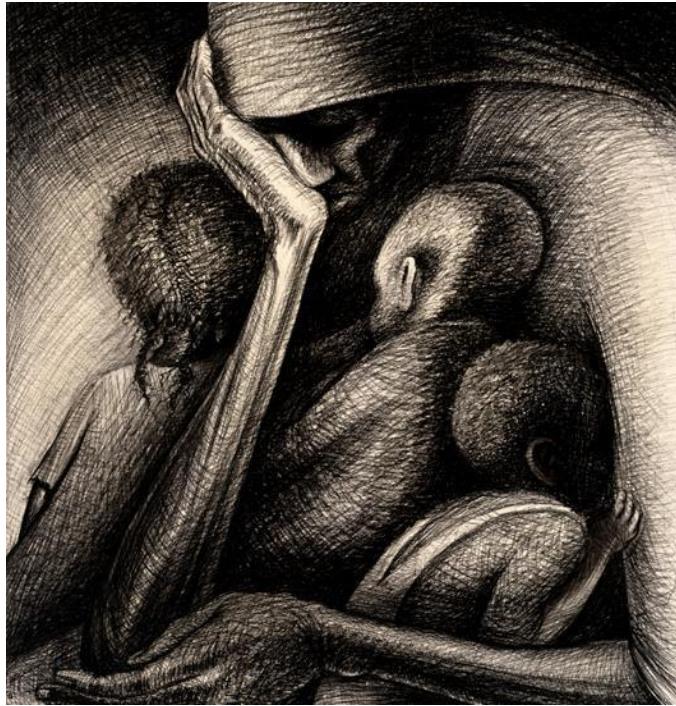


HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



John Biggers *The Cradle* 1950 Conté crayon on paper board 22 3/8 x 21 1/2
(Museum of Fine Arts Purchase prize in 1950)

Newsletter No 2, April 2016

Please Note: Our next meeting time has been changed to **5:30** due to a scheduling conflict at MFAH:

Thursday, April 14

5:30 pm (NOTE: due to a scheduling conflict at MFAH, this meeting has been moved forward a half hour from the time originally announced).

The Museum of Fine Arts Houston

Guided tour of "Statements: African American Art from the Museum's Collection"

Althea Ruoppo, Curatorial Assistant, Contemporary Art and Special Projects at MFAH, will give us a tour of "Statements". The exhibition includes African American art from all parts of the country, but has an especially large representation of Houston and other Texas artists.

<https://www.mfah.org/exhibitions/statements-african-american-art-mfah-collection/>

<http://www.houstonpress.com/arts/statements-at-mfah-is-a-remarkable-exhibit-of-artistic-steps-forward-8141569>


HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

HETAG sponsorship of the CASETA SYMPOSIUM:

Many thanks to all those **HETAGers** who joined together to make us a Silver (\$500) sponsor of the **2016 CASETA Symposium**. It shows those around the state our support of the important work CASETA is doing. If you didn't join the HETAG group, you can still become a sponsor on your own. See the CASETA website to find out how. And, of course, make plans now to attend the Symposium, May 13-15, 2016, at the Hilton Anatole Dallas. Registration details are posted at the CASETA website:

<http://www.caseta.org/sessions>

CASETA★
Center for the Advancement and Study of Early Texas Art



Florence McChung
Oil on canvas, 1941
Collection of Mark and Geraldyn Kever

Dallas Cityscape

JOIN US FOR A CELEBRATION OF
EARLY TEXAS ART
**14th Annual SYMPOSIUM
& TEXAS ART FAIR**
May 13 – 15, 2016
Hilton Anatole Dallas
2201 N. Stemmons Freeway
Dallas, TX 75207
Monet and Metropolitan Ballrooms
Tower Mezzanine Level

Register Today!
Go to www.caseta.org for more details
Questions call 325.212.4872

SYMPOSIUM SPEAKERS INCLUDE:
NICOLE ATZBACH Curator, Meadows Museum, Dallas
DOREEN BOLGER Director, Retired, Baltimore Museum of Art
CARMEN CHAMPION 2014-15 CASETA Research Award Recipient, Houston
PHILLIP COLLINS Chief Curator, Retired, African American Museum, Dallas
JUDY TEDFORD DEATON Chief Curator and Director of Exhibitions and Collections,
The Grace Museum, Abilene
REX KOONTZ Director, School of Art, University of Houston
OLIVIER MESLAY Associate Director of Curatorial Affairs, Dallas Museum of Art
ANDREW J. WALKER Director, Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth
JAY WEHNERT Director, Intuitive Eye, Collector and Dealer, Houston
SARAH BETH WILSON Curator of Exhibitions and Collections,
Museum of Southeast Texas, Beaumont

Also visit **CASETA TEXAS ART FAIR**
with the following participating dealers
Beuhler Fine Art • Charles Morin's Vintage Texas Paintings • David Dike Fine Art
Heritage Auctions • Rainone Galleries • Robert Alker Fine Art • Russell Tether Fine Art
William Reaves! Sarah Foltz Fine Art

AND MORE TO COME!
Admission to the Texas Art Fair opening Friday free with Symposium Registration
Texas Art Fair will be open free to the public on Saturday and Sunday

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

Current exhibitions of interest:

Of A Cowboy's Sentiment: Paintings and Drawings by Harold Bugbee

March 1 - April 30, 2016

William Reaves | Sarah Foltz Fine Art

Opening Reception: Saturday, April 2, 2016 6-8:30 pm

Gallery Talk with **Michael Grauer**, Curator of Panhandle-Plains

Historical Museum Saturday, April 9, 2016 2-4 pm

http://reavesart.com/Exhibit_Detail.cfm?ShowsID=151

Charles Schorre: Works on Paper

March 12 - April 8, 2016

[Contemporary Art Gallery, Houston Baptist University](#)

University Academic Center, 7502 Fondren Road, Houston, TX

[Get directions](#)

(281) 649-3678

Forrest Bess Paintings

05 MARCH 2016 - 14 MAY 2016

Michael Tracy Paintings

02 APRIL 2016 - 28 MAY 2016

HIRAM BUTLER GALLERY

4520 BLOSSOM STREET

HOUSTON

<http://hirambutler.com/>

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

Some upcoming exhibitions and events to put on your calendar:

"Bayou City ISMS: Houston Art From Impressionism to Abstract Expressionism, 1890-1960"

May 7th, 2016 10:00 to 11:00am

Glassell School of Art Auditorium

I'm honored and excited to be giving this talk for members of the Glassell School community; it will also be free and open to the public.

<http://www.mfah.org/visit/maps-directions/glassell-school/>



Grace Spaulding *John Negro House on Dowling* 1924 (City of Houston Collection) (l)

and

Dean Lee [untitled] c1938/9 (from the collection of Emma Richardson Cherry) (r)

HETAG is happy to be working with **The Heritage Society** on this exhibition:

This WAS Contemporary Art: Fine and Decorative Arts in Houston 1945–1965

Thursday, July 14–Saturday, October 15, 2016

The Heritage Society Museum Gallery

<http://www.heritagesociety.org/exhibits/>

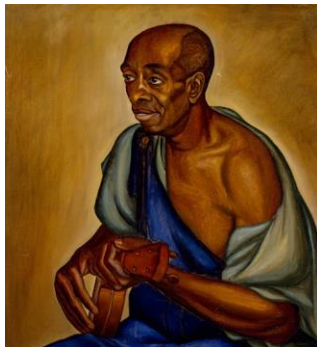
HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

Research notes:

The Museum of Fine Arts Houston has a large collection of Houston-made art going back even before the founding of the museum (though you might not know it from what you see on the gallery walls, since not much of it ever gets put on exhibition). Until recently most of these works were virtually impossible to see, even in reproduction. But thanks to the push that MFAH has made over the past few years to make images of almost all permanent collection items available online, you can now get a look at this wealth of earlier Houston art, using the search function available on their website at this link:

<https://collections.mfah.org/art/>

Unfortunately there's not a database index term that pulls it all up – at least not one that I've found (but if there is one that someone can tell me about, I'll be forever grateful). So search with anything you can think of that might work: artist name, TEXAS, HOUSTON – and browse the results to see the things you're after. One search that I've found useful is ANNUAL EXHIBITION – which gets many of the items that came to the collection as purchase prize winners from the annual juried exhibitions of Houston art held at MFAH from 1925-1961. A few of those prize winners are shown here.



Kathleen Blackshear *The Strummer* 1927 (Purchase prize in 1930) (1) and William McVey *Compositional Study* 1927 (Purchase prize in 1929)



Frances Skinner *Exercise for a Rainy Afternoon* c.1942 (Purchase prize in 1943) (1) and Jack Boynton *Thunderstorm* 1955 (Purchase prize in 1955)

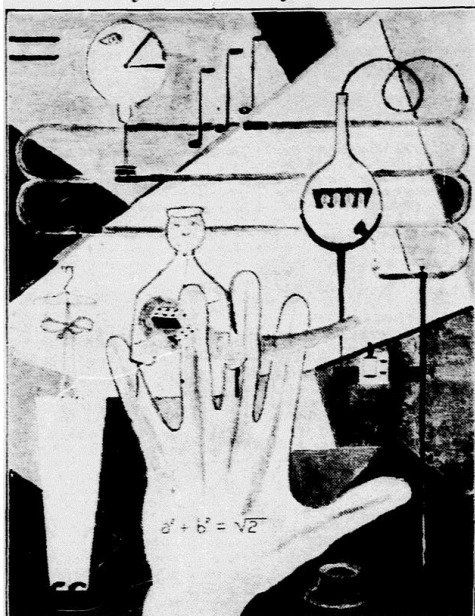
HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

Earlier Houston Art history notes:

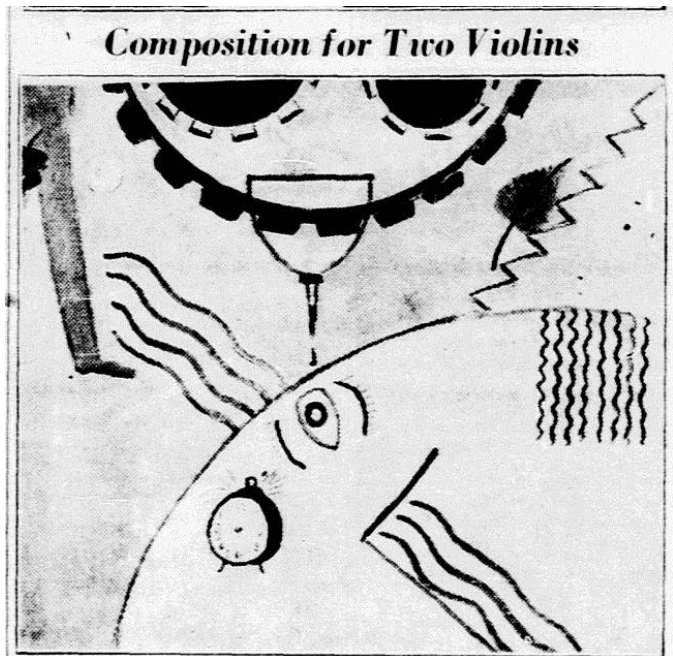
The Great Houston Art Hoax of 1935

A previously unknown Houston artist named Louise Metcalf made quite a stir when two of her paintings were accepted for the Houston Annual Exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston in January of 1935. In order to make it into the galleries, which showcased the best work of local artists from the past year, the paintings had to pass muster with a jury made up of some folks who were pretty prominent in the Texas art world at the time: Grace Spaulding John, Houston artist; Coreen Spellman, member of the art faculty of the Texas State College for Women in Denton; and Lloyd LaPage Rollins, director of the Dallas Museum of Art. Pass muster they did, and as some of the more daring works exhibited in Houston up to that point, they got lots of notice. Perhaps it's lucky that they didn't actually win any of the prizes, however, since it was embarrassing enough that they even made the cut, when it came to light that Louise Metcalf and her art was actually a hoax concocted by Houston Artist, Julian Muench, and Rice University psychology professor, Dr. Frank A. Pattie, each of whom made one of Metcalf's paintings as part of the plot. Apparently the two were not friends of "Modern" art, and set out to show that anything could make it into the show if it was just outlandish enough. See what you think of Metcalf's work, shown here along with an article from the newspaper. After the hoax was exposed, the paintings were exhibited in Dallas. Not bad, actually, for a brand new artist to get shown in both major Texas cities, and written up in the newspaper for her very first work. (Of course, nothing like this could ever happen now!)

Cosmic Ray-N.R.A. - By Louise Metcalf



Composition for Two Violins



HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

By HUBERT ROUSSEL
Reporter for The Press

Part of the mystery surrounding "Louise Metcalf," one of the most talked-of exhibitors in the eleventh annual Houston Artists' Show at the Museum of Fine Arts, was cleared up Sunday when half of the lady was found wrapped in a red bathrobe in the studio of Julian Rhodes Muench, artist, at 4316 Elsbury avenue.

"Yes," said Mr. Muench, removing a cigar from his mouth, "I am

Louise. At least I am part of Louise. I like to think of myself as the more spiritual part—the part with the dreams and blonde hair. But maybe I'm wrong about that. Will you have a cigar?"

The artist sat in a chair and elevated his feet to a window sill.

"Where's the other half of Louise?" he was asked.

"Shaving, I imagine," he said. "She gets up later than I do. Come to think of it, now, I haven't seen her in a couple of days. Maybe

we're painting a picture. We're impulsive as the devil, you know."

Mr. Muench, who won the purchase prize at the Museum in 1933, was much calmer than osem others in art circles of Houston.

The news spread Saturday that a hoax—and a pretty big hoax, at that—had been perpetrated on the judges of the current show. While this relieved certain officials of the museum from the duty of trying to explain the meaning of two "surrealist" paintings on exhibit, it didn't alter the fact that they are there and that they passed a committee of art authorities who selected the entries.

The paintings bearing the name of "Louise Metcalf" were considered more worthy of hanging than some 223 others which the judges rejected. Many of the latter were the products of artists well known in the city and state. "Louise Metcalf" was a stranger to everyone, but the judges found an "original and sophisticated" note in her work, so both of her paintings were accepted. After all, it isn't every day that a good surrealist bobs up in the city.

But in future there ought to be more. For it developed Sunday that a surrealist good enough to break into an art show can be made in about 15 minutes.

One of the two Metcalf masterpieces is the work of Dr. Frank A. Pattie, professor of psychology at Rice Institute. By his own admission, Dr. Pattie is incapable of drawing anything more than a fairly straight line or a simple curve. Except for touching up furniture around home, he had never had a brush in his hand prior to painting his present entry.

Mr. Muench painted the other work "with the idea of expressing nothing at all in the worst possible way." He thinks he succeeded.

Back of the robot are a number of other glass tubes, and emerging from one are three musical notes, possibly left-overs from Dr. Pattie's conception. On the floor is a cuspidor, painted red on the inside and bearing the numerals 2-9-1, which, the artist explains, are a line from a poem by Gertrude Stein.

Over all this, a hand has been painted in green. On the hand—apparently a sailor's hand—is the tattooed equation, A-square plus B-square equals the square root of 2.

Visitors Pause

For the past week, visitors to the show have been pausing to stare at the Metcalf paintings. Letters have been written to newspapers about them. Artists have asked the privilege of meeting Miss Metcalf, and a number have been heard to compare the painting with the work of Paul Klee, one of the leaders of the surrealist school.

"How and why were the Metcalf works done?" Mr. Muench was asked.

"For no particular reason," he said, "except that every year, at the Houston show, I hear people say that if they had a brush and some paint they could do as well as some of the artists. I thought we would test that theory."

Furnished Implements

"One afternoon, a few days before entries were closed for the show, Dr. Pattie and Conductor Frank St. Leger of the Symphony Orchestra were visiting me. We got to joking about painting, and they said they would like to give it a fling. I like to encourage ambition, so I turned over some brushes and paint.

"Mr. St. Leger started a composition in oil—a Mexican scene with a dog and a tree in the foreground—but had to leave at attend a rehearsal. He left the dog in a pretty uncomfortable pose. Dr. Pattie finished his work, and I made one of my own to keep him company."

Nothing Related

"The idea was to be as senseless as possible. Nothing in the paintings is related to anything else, nor are the titles related to the objects. The color harmony is as rotten as possible. There is no drawing at all. Every line in the pictures is traced. For the curves we used plates and ash trays; for the straight lines we used fingers, rulers, books or anything handy.

"They are, in short, as terrible as any paintings could be. You often hear artists explaining their work—in this case it can't be done. Louise Metcalf is unanimously agreed that her work is awful. As the Houston show closes, we had to send it to the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

"You see, we are pretty encouraged. Any person gifted with a complete lack of artistic talent could turn out 40 or 50 such paintings in a week-end. There may be

money in the mass production of surrealist art."

Judge Can't Remember

Grace Spaulding John, one of the three judges of this year's show, said she didn't remember seeing the Metcalf paintings at all.

"I was astonished to find them in the show," she added. "We judged more than 450 works in a very short time, but I can't recall any as queer as these two."

The other judges were Lloyd L. Page Rollins, Dallas art museum director, and Coreen Mary Spellman of Denton, art teacher at the College of Industrial Arts.

Director James Chillman Jr. of the Museum said the paintings would continue to hang.

Sophisticated Work

"I understand Miss Spellman and Mr. Rollins had an argument about letting them in," he said, "but they were admitted because, while childish in technique, they were sophisticated in composition."

An invitation to the reception opening the show, mailed by the Museum to the fictitious address of the fictitious Louise Metcalf, finally was delivered by the post office to a woman of that name. Somewhat surprised, she presented it at the Museum Sunday, a week late, and asked to have a look at her paintings.

Dr. Pattie's production is entitled Composition for Two Violins, because there are no violins in the picture. He thought of calling it Composition for Three Violins, but dropped the idea. It is said, because of the difficulty of omitting another violin from the small space. Instead, he put in an oil can.

The lower half of this picture shows part of a sphere. In it is an eye with brows over and under the lid. The central space is taken up by an alarm clock with the numerals backwards and the bell ringing. In the upper left hand corner is a suit of red flannel underwear with what appears to be a leaf on the front. The top center is taken up by a series of cog wheels, none of whose teeth are in mesh, and the oil can is placed there, dripping oil into the eye. The rest of the painting consists of some wavy lines and another green area, possibly from the back of the underwear.

Cosmic Ray

The Muench-Metcalf entry is entitled Cosmic Ray—NRA and is even a little harder to de-symbolize. The most prominent item is a robot cut in two in the middle, with his lower half neatly suspended from a coat hanger. In the arms of the upper half, which is floating in mid-air, is a long lass tube, roughly in the shape of a gourd, which Mr. Muench describes as a Cosmic Ray Telescope.

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

Out of Town:

JOSE ARPA SPANISH PAINTER IN TEXAS

Apr 9, 2016 - Monday Sep 5, 2016

Panhandle Plains Historical Museum

Canyon, TX

This exhibition will be the first major Jose Arpa exhibition since 1998. It will attempt to add Arpa to the pantheon of Texas artists who brought Impressionism to the Lone Star State and to give a more complete picture of Texas artists contribution to American and world Impressionism.

<http://panhandleplains.org/gallery.asp?pageid=7&galid=481>



Jack Pagan *Montrose Boulevard, Houston, Texas* 1942 WC 14 x 10 ³/₄

Randy Tibbits, coordinator
HETAG:
Houston Earlier Texas Art Group
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