

Newsletter No 14, June 2017



Harry Worthman [On the Gulf Coast] 1973, oil on board

At the Shore

Here it is summer already and for many of us that means it's time to head for the shore. It meant that for lots of Earlier Houston Artists too, so June seems like a good time to do an At the Shore issue of the Newsletter. There will be Galveston and other Gulf Coast shores, of course, but our artists did a good job of getting around, so there will be quite a few more exotic shores too. Don't forget to put on your sunscreen.



Emma Richardson Cherry *Long Beach* [California] c.1922, oil on board; Jack Boynton *Beach Formation* 1953, oil on canvas.

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Eva McMurrey [At the Lake] c. 1959, oil on board

Don't Mess With Texas Art:

Tam Kiehnhoff, HETAG member and collector extraordinaire, has done a terrific podcast on the adventures and joys of collecting Texas art, as part of the series "Collecting Culture." You can hear it here:

[Collecting Culture – Episode 6: Don't Mess With Texas Art](#)

HETAG Newsletter online (soon):

I'm pleased to announce that back issues of the HETAG Newsletter will soon be available online, thanks to our friends at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston's **Hirsch Library**. I'm talking about you, **Jon Evans**, librarian. In fact, they already are available if you're on the MFAH campus, but plans are to lift that restriction as soon as some technical issues can be addressed. So if you've been lamenting that you missed an issue, your troubles will soon be over. But don't everybody search for them at once. We don't want to crash the system! The Hirsch Library at MFAH is open to all, so check out their art resources in person or via the web:

[Hirsch Library, Museum of Fine Arts Houston](#)

What's in Woodson? (that's Woodson Research Center at Rice University Library):

A lot! And a great way to find out about it all is to follow the What's in Woodson blog. HETAGer **Dara Flinn**, Woodson archivist and special collections librarian, is beginning a series of posts specifically about the Houston art resources.

[Art in the Archives – William Ward Watkin](#)

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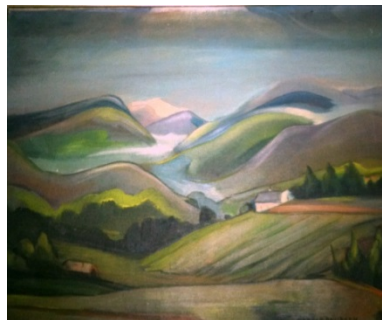
Upcoming Exhibition:

Planned, Organized and Established: Houston Artist Cooperatives in the 1930s

An exhibition to be presented in the Julia Ideson Building, Houston Public Library
August 12 – November 10, 2017

focusing on two artists cooperatives, one all white, the other all black, the Houston Artists Gallery and the Negro Art Guild, separate-but-parallel groups organized by Houston artists so that they could exhibit and sell their art. Though work by artists of the different groups could not be exhibited in the same gallery in their time, now they will be shown together, so that Houstonians of today can learn more about the art and the social environment from which it grew. Among the 60 paintings and sculptures in the show, highlights will include Samuel Countee's *My Guitar*, a star of the art exhibition in the Hall of Negro Life at the Texas Centennial in Dallas in 1936; all five of Ruth Pershing Uhler's "Earth Rhythms" paintings, shown in the Houston Annual Exhibition of 1936, and reunited for the first time since then; and Grace Spaulding John's fabulous *Patterns: Portrait of Ruth Pershing Uhler*. This is sure to be the Earlier Houston Art not-to-be-missed exhibition of the season.

Devon Britt-Darby writes a great preview of the show for **Arts & Culture Texas** here:
[Parallel Lines: Uniting Jim-Crow Era Works by Black, White artists at Houston Public Library](#)



Just a few of the great paintings that will be in the show.

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Grace Spaulding *John Sylvan Beach, La Porte* 1924, Oil on Canvas; Paul Maxwell [untitled] 1957, oil on Masonite.

Exhibitions:

[Dignity in Labor: Texas Regionalism from the Bobbie and John L. Nau Collection](#)

Pearl Fincher Museum of Fine Arts

6815 Cypresswood Drive
Spring, TX 77379
Phone: 281.376.6322
June 10 – September 9, 2017

Including Jerry Bywaters, Alexandre Hogue, Merritt Mauzey and many more.

[The Texas Aesthetic XI: The Search for "Texas" in Contemporary Art and Culture](#)

William Reaves – Sarah Foltz Fine Arts

2143 Westheimer, Houston, Texas 77098
Phone: [713.521.7500](tel:713.521.7500)
May 12 - July 1, 2017

A selection of the best of contemporary Texas Art.

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Out of town exhibitions:

[Mentoring a Muse: Charles Umlauf & Farrah Fawcett](#)

[Umlauf Sculpture Garden & Museum, Austin](#)

February 16-August 20, 2017

Exhibition explores the powerful relationship of sculptor Charles Umlauf and legendary actress Farrah Fawcett.

Jose Arpa: A Spanish Painter in Texas

[Witte Museum, San Antonio](#)

June 14 through August 27, 2017

This is the last stop for this major touring exhibition of Arpa's work – don't miss it!

Join [Michael Grauer](#), Associate Director for Curatorial Affairs/Curator of Art and Western Heritage of Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum and Curator of *José Arpa: A Spanish Painter in Texas* as he explores what Arpa brought with him to Texas from Mexico, which ultimately made early Texas art so rich.

Wednesday, July 12 at the Witte
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.



Chester Snowden *Chinese Junk* c.1940s, oil on canvas; Mildred Wood Dixon *Bay of Naples* 1954, oil on board

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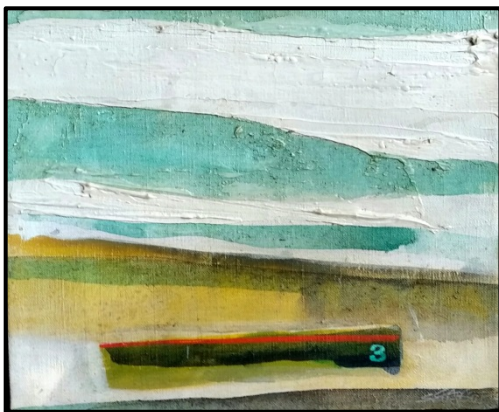


Ruth Pershing Uhler [untitled shore scene] c.1920s, oil on board; Leila McConnell *River Styx* 1961, oil on canvas.

HETAG Mission Statement:

HETAGer **Kay Sheffield** answered my call in the last issue of the HETAG Newsletter for suggestions toward a mission statement for HETAG. It's about time we had one after 15 years. Here is the Kay's pithy and persuasive suggestion. Thank you, Kay. Other HETAGers please send your suggestions too.

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.



Charles Schorre *Nobody's Boat* c.1962, oil on canvas; Richard Stout *On The Bay* 1991, watercolor

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Houston Art History Notes: Mrs. Cherry paints with Marsden Hartley

(This piece originally appeared a few years ago in the newsletter of CASETA: Center for the Advancement and Study of Early Texas Art as an e-article, but it is no longer available. It is reprinted here because the events described took place when Mrs. Cherry was at the shore in 1920 – in Gloucester, Massachusetts.)

From at least the time of her first known drawing done in 1873 at age 14,¹ straight through her life -- she was still painting and keeping up with modern trends in art at 93² - Emma Richardson Cherry (1859-1954) maintained a clear focus on the career in art she wished to pursue. Though she did follow the path of wife/mother/homemaker expected of women in her time and place, and though she felt, at times, that she had not fully succeeded in any of her roles as a result,³ by 1920, at age 61, she could already look back on a long and full career as a professional artist, art teacher and initiator of arts institutions. Even so, she was not ready simply to look back and to rest on her laurels.

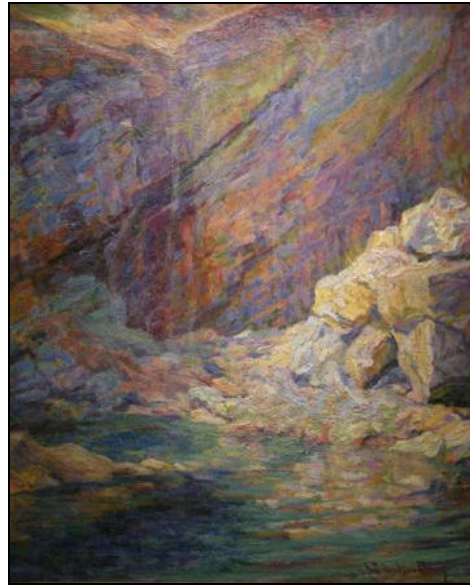
Cherry lived most of her life in places that were literally frontiers when it came to art: Lincoln, NE, Kansas City, MO, Denver and, after 1896, Houston. To stay abreast of happenings in the greater art world she had either to travel, which she did often; to stay in touch with art colleagues around the world, which she did throughout her life; or to bring fragments of that greater world to her art frontiers, which she did everywhere she lived through founding schools, clubs and museums, mounting exhibitions with borrowed works, and reading the world art press.

For Cherry on her frontier, staying abreast was work, but it was work well worth the effort. She always wanted to know what was happening -- what was new -- in art so that she could incorporate into her own art and teaching what she found interesting and useful in the new.

In an interview she gave to the *Houston Chronicle* in 1937, she said, “I learned to do academic, pretty things when I was young. As I became more mature, I wanted to make my work different. I wanted to inject modernism into it. I studied hard to acquire that modernism.”⁴

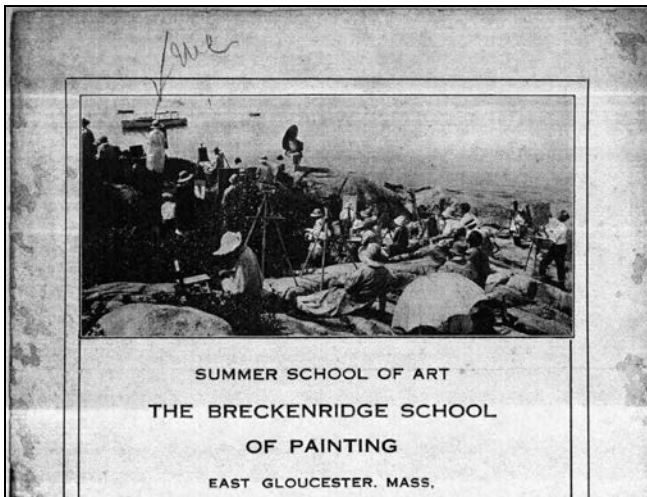
In 1920 as part of her studying “hard to acquire that modernism,” Cherry enrolled in the [Breckenridge School of Art](#), founded that year as a summer program in East Gloucester, MA, by Hugh Breckenridge,⁵ an artist himself and a teacher at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. She had encountered Breckenridge the summer before at the Academy’s summer institute in Chester Springs, PA.

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The Wayside Inn by Breckenridge (Pastel on Board, nd) (l) and *Sulphurous Pool* (Oil on Canvas, ca1919-20) by Cherry (r). Study with Breckenridge at Chester Springs, PA, inspired Cherry to experiment with both neo-impressionist brushwork and expressionist color in her work in the early 1920's.

Though not so widely known today, in the earlier 20th Century [Breckenridge](#) was a noted exponent of neo-impressionism and other modernist trends. Gloucester itself at the time was an art colony that drew many who would later be recognized as stars of modernism in America: such artists as [Marsden Hartley](#) and [Stuart Davis](#) (both of whom Cherry met in Gloucester) among others. So it made perfect sense that she would seek out the Breckenridge School.



Mrs. Cherry identifies herself painting at the Breckenridge School, East Gloucester, MA, 1920 (from a later promotional brochure produced by the School) (l); and Cherry's *Portuguese Fishing Boats*, Gloucester, MA, ca1920 (r).

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And as she told her daughter Dorothy⁶ in a letter home, she found what she'd hoped to find. One day in particular – Sunday, September 26, 1920 – was a “red letter day”, a day that warranted a whole letter all by itself ...

Tuesday 28th [1920: Sept 28]

Dearest Dorothy,

I skipped your letter Sunday because I knew you were not reading letters in the hospital, and also because I had such a full day I could not find a minute.

I guess I told you of a man who writes modern poetry, a friend of the Pancoasts⁷ – Marsden Hartley. Well he also paints very modern pictures – like some of those things we saw at the autumn Salon in Paris.

I did some flowers a while ago – a bit in that direction and I like them better than the naturalistic ones – and I have tried to get some suggestions in the same way in some of my summer's work. Mr. Breck rather encouraged it altho [sic] he was not exactly a help as he does not do those things himself. However he is most liberal and always willing you should try out things.

I have been satisfied to a certain extent with what he has given me but I felt too that I wanted more modern help. So the other day I asked Mr. Hartley if he would come & look at my summer's work & see if he thought I had any inclinations that suggested I could break loose and really do modern stuff. (He had already told Mr. Pancoast that Miss Dercum⁸ & myself were the only ones in Breck's class that showed thought in our work)

Well he came & was quite interested – said I had plenty of things good enough for my Baltimore show⁹ – and to go on with it by all means. Then I showed him my modern flower one & he was very enthusiastic – said “well, if you can draw like that you can go any length you wish.” You can imagine I was pretty happy.

I had on the table a thing I had just brought in & we talked about it & I asked him if he would let me pay him for a few crits & show me some things I did not know how to go at to express – said he would be glad to and therewith started in on my wet paint & I can tell you its far & away a mighty interesting thing he is doing, with my puddling around in it, pretending to help. I am so happy & enthusiastic over this chance it seems worth the whole summer. I wish I had had him all this month of Sept. but it never dawned upon me he would be willing and I was timid about speaking up.

That's always my fault.

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Hartley's *Still Life* ca1920 and Cherry's *[Flowers On a Table]* ca1920's? make an interesting comparison. Both are in stark contrast to her "naturalistic" (and probably earlier) flower paintings (below): *Cape Jasmine In a Copper Cup* and *[Roses]*.



Then [Paul Cornoyer](#)¹⁰ – one of the well known painters in N.Y. – was talking to Mr. [Pancoast](#) about how much he wanted to drop his old methods & get hold of modern color & Mr. P. told him he ought to talk to their friend Mrs. Cherry. It was while we were over on the beach the other night watching them make movies.¹¹ So we talked & Sunday he came & was also enthusiastic – quite so – and before he got away Mr. & Mrs. Baker¹² – Alice – Ruth & Murray Jones – (Alice's husband -) & Alice's little girl all came – in their grand car, and walked into my humble rooms. You can believe with my self added we were closely packed. Rooms are each about 14ft square! But they seemed to enjoy it all very much. We had a real jolly time & Mrs. B. seemed quite seriously inclined toward two of my best things. She has gone to N.Y. to put Ruth in school & I will be gone by the time she returns. But she said she would see them again when we get home.

This filled Sunday with the exception that I was invited to go see [Eben Comins](#)¹³ pictures by himself, in his own studio. He met me in the street carrying one away from the Hawthorne Inn where it had been shown a month,¹⁴ said he liked it so much &

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wanted me to send more work next summer if I came - & introduced himself. So then I asked the favor of coming to his studio & had a most delightful visit.

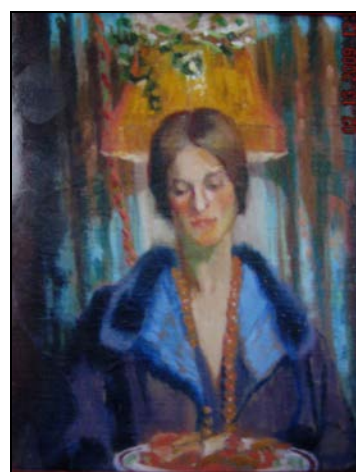
This has been a red letter day in a red letter summer. If only you had been with me I would have been so glad. The air here is delightful & its [sic] an interesting place – to me – to be.

I am going now to Mr. Hartley's studio to see his last work – as he is packing this afternoon to go to N.Y. He says when I go there he will let me know his address & will himself take me around to see the modern things. That will be fine because I will meet the dealers & I hope some of the artists.

Think about coming on for November – to be under Dr. Christian. Then I will stay for the exhibitions – 4 in November -- & he will tell you just how you can live to avoid all this. I will deliver Mrs. Wallace's picture when I get to Baltimore & then I will have enough money to help out. Come on to Lou's[?] & we will go up to N.Y. together – live simply somewhere & you will get well. Lots of love to you all. Frances¹⁵ let me know you went to Los A.

Good bye
Mamma

And so Mrs. Cherry's red letter day came to a close. But her interest in modernism did not end when she left Gloucester. Over the next few years she made and exhibited several paintings that she considered modernist, sometimes including them in a separate section in her shows that she titled "Modernist Group." A few times she even exhibited the painting on which Hartley had worked, with the title *Sequence In Form And Color*.¹⁶



Color Sequence (l), first exhibited at the Eighth Annual Exhibition of Society of Independent Arts, New York, 1924, and *Reflected in a Mirror*, 1922, (c) are two paintings that appeared in the "Modernist Group" in lists of Cherry's paintings in the early 1920's. *La Madonna a la Spaghet*, ca-early 1920's, (r) is another example of her modernist work.

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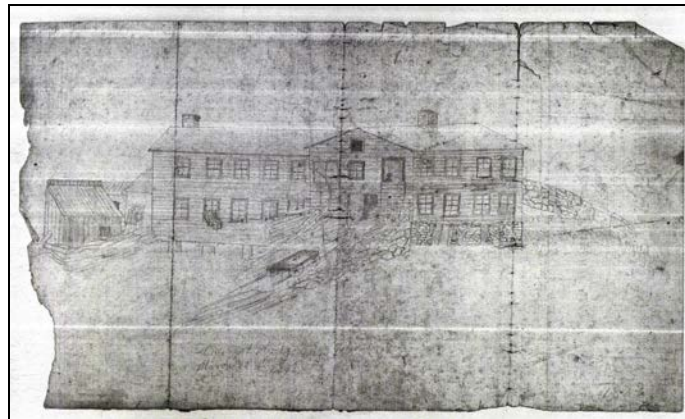
Ever the professional, Mrs. Cherry was “painting canvases to sell.” Selling was important to her for more than just validation; she used the proceeds from her sales to fund, at least in part, many of the things she most enjoyed – not the least, travel. Since the demand for modernist paintings in 1920’s Houston was small, she often found it necessary to disguise their modernist aspects in order to sell them.¹⁷

But her dedication to modernism persisted, and a few years later, in 1925, she even went off to Paris where she painted what seem to be the first Cubist paintings by a Texas artists. But that's a story for another issue.



Cherry, *Flying Prisms* c1925.

¹ The drawing is a pencil sketch titled “Sash Factory” with a note in Cherry’s hand that says “Drawn at Montgomery Factory/March 22nd 1873”. The drawing is on the verso of a printed form for her father’s business: Office of P. & R. Richardson/Manufacturers And Dealers In/Sash, Doors, Blinds, Mouldings [sic], &c/Montgomery, Kane Co., Ill. Cherry Papers B10.



² Gordon, Lila. “Houston Artist Is Still Painting at Age of 93,” *Houston Chronicle* Feb 28, 1952.

³ “I have made the mistake of not having a regular studio and of not shutting myself up in it and working – no matter what happened – But I tried to be a good and economical house keeper – and paint at odd moments and I failed in both – For you know the first is impossible for me – It’s a good thing your heart is not set on it for it’s such a joke!” ER Cherry to her husband DB Cherry, Aug 1st [1910?]. Cherry Papers B1 F1.

⁴ *Houston Press*, April 16, 1937.

⁵ [Hugh Breckenridge](#) (1870-1937).

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⁶ Dorothy Cherry Ennis Reid (1892-1970). Her second husband, Col. Walter H. Reid (c1891-c1958/59) commanded Ellington Field beginning in 1940. Mrs. Cherry visited the couple often at various postings and, after the death of her husband, Dillin Brook Cherry (1856-1937), lived with them for a period at Randolph Field in San Antonio. While there she did several paintings of buildings at the Field. After Col. Reid's retirement, he and Dorothy and their son, Walter Brook Reid (1928-) lived with Mrs. Cherry in Hosuton.

⁷ [Morris Hall Pancoast](#) (1877-1963) and Minnie Pancoast (1871-1954).

⁸ [Elizabeth Dercum](#) (ca1893-)

⁹ This show was presented at the Arundel Club, Baltimore, in October, 1920.

¹⁰ [Paul Cornoyer](#) (1864-1923).

¹¹ The movie Cherry watched being filmed was an episode of the serial thriller "Bride 13", starring Marguerite Clayton, written by Edward Sedgwick, and directed by Richard Stanton. The serial was not a success and is now considered lost.

¹² [James Addison Baker](#) (1857-1941), Houston attorney and wife, Alice Graham Baker (1865-1932); daughter Alice Baker Jones (c1888-); daughter Ruth Baker Moore (1905-); son-in-law Murray Brashear Jones (c1887-); and granddaughter Alice Baker Jones Meyers (1915-2008) .

¹³ [Eben Farrington Comins](#) (1875-1949).

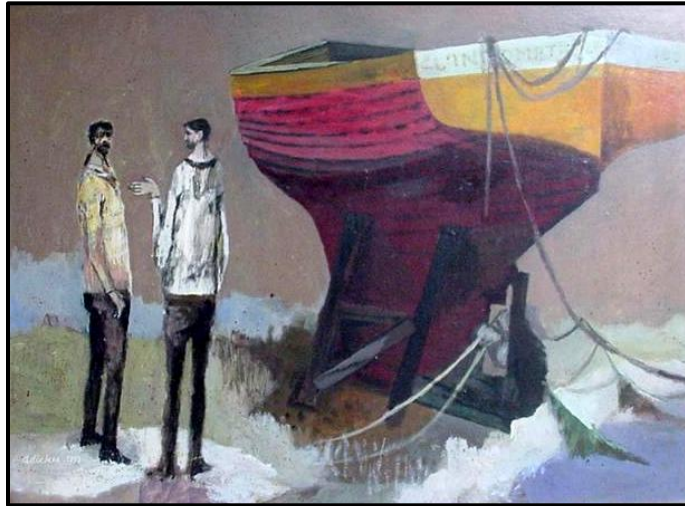
¹⁴ Though this sentence is somewhat awkwardly phrased, Cherry seems to have been carrying one of her own paintings.

¹⁵ Frances V. Mayberry (1900-), Cherry's niece, daughter of Cherry's sister Ruth and James B. Mayberry. The 1910 US Census lists the Mayberry's in the Cherry household, but by 1920 they had moved to California.

¹⁶ *Sequence in Form and Color* last appeared in the painting list for her show at the Witte Memorial Museum in 1925. In her copy of that list, Cherry has written "Hartley" after the title. The whereabouts of the painting is unknown.

¹⁷ *Houston Press*, April 16, 1937.

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David Adickes [title not known] 1953

Randy Tibbits, coordinator
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Henri Gadbois *Regata* 1954