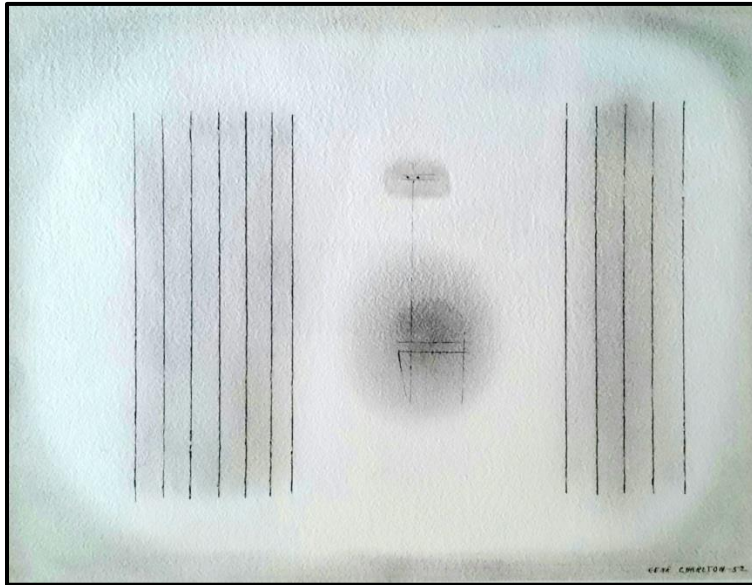


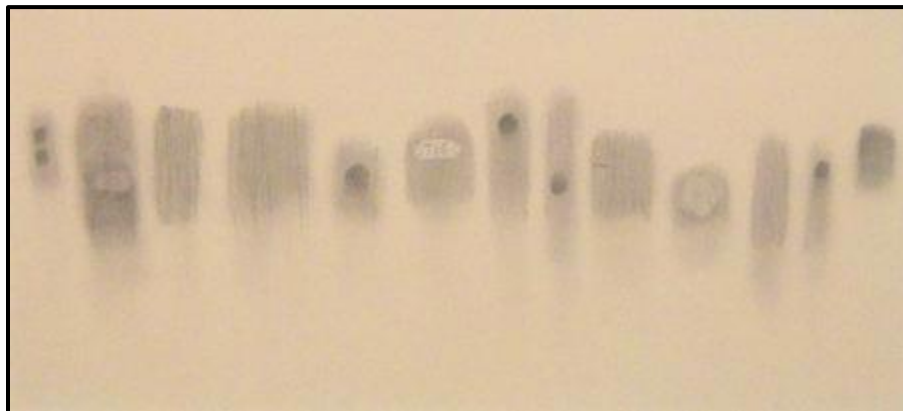
Newsletter No 11, February 2017

The Houston Drawings Issue



Gene Charlton *Tender Little Animal, Guarding* 1952 Graphite on Paper

Big things are happening these days here in Houston when it comes to drawing – what with the opening of the Menil Drawing Institute in October and some major exhibitions like the soon-to-open *The Beginning of Everything: Drawings from the Janie C. Lee, Louisa Stude Sarofim, and David Whitney Collections* at the Menil, and *Vignettes: Masterworks on Paper 1520 to 1870* at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (not just drawings, but including some pretty fabulous ones) – not forgetting those of the recent past: *Picasso The Line* (Menil), *Line: Making the Mark* (MFAH) and others. So this month let's make the HETAG Newsletter the **HOUSTON DRAWINGS** issue. Take out your pencils and sketch!



Jack Boynton *Same Old 7 and 6* 1959 Graphite on Paper

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



15th Annual CASETA Symposium
April 28 - 30, 2017
Fort Worth, TX

But first, it's time to make plans to attend the 15th Annual CASETA: Center for the Advancement and Study of Early Texas Art Symposium and Texas Art Fair in Fort Worth, April 28-30, 2017

As always there will be a full weekend of talks, tours and Early Texas Art looking (and buying) opportunities. The keynoter this year will be **Richard R. Brettell** Founding Director of The Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History in Dallas, TX; we'll be treated to a Saturday night reception at the **Amon Carter Museum**; and Houstonians **Althea Ruoppo** (MFAH) will speak on Robert Preusser; **Susie Kalil**, on Dorothy Hood; and **William Reaves** (William Reaves/Sarah Foltz Fine Art) will moderate a panel on collecting ETA from three perspectives.

See the whole program and find registration and hotel information at the CASETA website:

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

And please join the effort to make HETAG a listed sponsor of the symposium again this year by sending your check in any amount, made out to CASETA and with the memo HETAG Symposium Sponsorship to:

Valerie C Bluthardt
Administrator
CASETA
PO Box 3726
San Angelo, TX 76902

When you join the HETAG sponsorship group, please drop me an email to let me know – I'm keeping a little list to pass on to CASETA so that all our donations get into the correct account.

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

Houston Art History Notes: A Brief Sketch of Drawing in Earlier Days, 1896-1930

Drawings sometimes don't get much credit, because, after all, they're "only" drawings, not "major" works like paintings, sculptures or even water colors. This is unfortunate, because, despite the "only," most artists recognize them as fundamental to almost all works of art, and because they can often be spectacular works of art themselves.

In recent times this attitude has begun to change, and drawings, historically viewed as only preliminary, have often come to be viewed as finished works. Any lingering drawing disdain in Houston is due for a big re-thinking with the opening in October, 2017, of the Menil Drawing Institute, "the only freestanding facility designed expressly for the exhibition and study of modern and contemporary drawings." Already, exhibitions like "The Beginning of Everything," opening at The Menil this month, and last year's "Picasso The Line," as well as shows like "Line: Making the Mark" at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston in 2014, and others, have laid the groundwork for this burgeoning of attention to drawings in Houston.

But, in fact, there's a long history of attention to drawing here, stretching back into the 19th Century. A sketch club met weekly in Houston as early as October, 1896¹, when the city with a population of maybe 35,000, could hardly be called a city at all. It is perhaps not a coincidence that this sketch club in Houston began only a few months after Emma Richardson Cherry moved here permanently from Denver, where she'd already been a founder of sketch groups, as she had been in Kansas City before that.

Cherry was a well-trained artist when she arrived in Houston, a member of the Art Students League in New York, where she studied from 1879-1885, and an alumna of the Académie Julian in Paris (1888-1889). Drawing was a major element of the curriculum of both, so instituting drawing in Houston would simply have been establishing the art training she knew and valued in her new home.



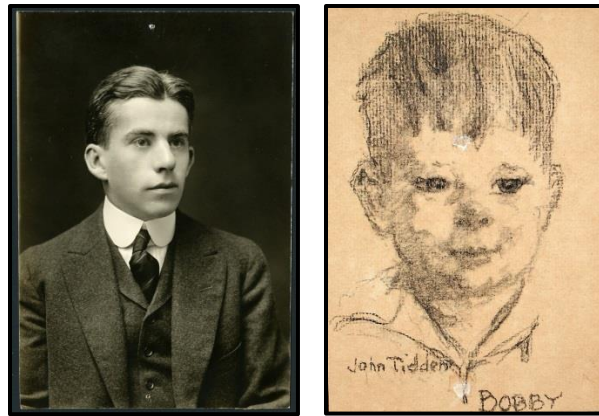
Emma Richardson Cherry *See Yourself as others see* c1880s Graphite on paper (l). This sketch, done while Cherry was studying at the Art Students League in New York, may be her only self-portrait; **ER Cherry** *Giverny: Dawson* 1888/89 Graphite on paper (r). Cherry did her sketch of the young Dawson Dawson-Watson in Giverny, where both were among the earliest artists to work, and years before either would become a Texas artist.

¹*The Houston Daily Post*, October 11, 1896, p.19.

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

Men as well as women were among the “earnest workers” who gathered on Friday afternoons to sketch from the live model (live, though clothed – it was Houston in 1896 after all) – one week costumed as an Indian, another as a “colored housemaid,” a milkmaid, a Japanese lady or some other exotic, if sometimes politically incorrect, figure. At some meetings Mrs. Cherry lectured on modern artists, including her Art Students League teacher, William Merritt Chase, and often the sketches of members lined the walls. The club continued at least until May, 1897.²

The first institutional art instruction in Houston also focused on drawing, when, in 1914, William Ward Watkin hired John Clark Tidden (at the suggestion of Hugh Breckenridge, whose other suggestion was the now better known Arthur B. Carles³) to come to Houston from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts to teach “free hand and water color” in the newly founded Rice Institute Architecture School.⁴ With a short break to serve in the US Army during World War I, Tidden continued as a popular member of the Rice faculty, founding such enduring traditions as the Archi-Arts Ball, and stimulating both the art and theater cultures of Houston, until he resigned to return to the East in 1925.



John Clark Tidden in about 1920 (l); Tidden’s portrait sketch of his son, *Bobby*, early 1920s Graphite on paper.

In 1916, James Chillman, Jr., also came to Houston from Philadelphia, where he was an instructor in “free hand” at Penn, to teach in the Rice Architecture School, including classes in art. In fact until the early 1960s, the only art classes taught at Rice were in the Architecture School, and included an emphasis on drawing, which may explain why much Earlier Houston Art has a strong architectural quality. Chillman became the founding director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, while continuing on the Rice faculty, and established the Museum School in the early days of that institution.

Mrs. Cherry, of course, continued her life-long habit of drawing, but infused her own drawings with a new, modern spirit when she studied cubism and dynamic symmetry with André Lhote

² *The Houston Daily Post*, May 9, 1897, p.20.

³ Breckenridge, Hugh H. (Hugh Henry), 1870-1937. "Letter from Hugh Breckenridge to William Ward Watkin, Oct. 12, 1914." (1914) Rice University: <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/12902>.

⁴ Watkin, William Ward, 1886-1952. "Letter from William Ward Watkin to John Tidden, Oct. 17, 1914." (1914) Rice University: <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/12903>.

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

and other modernist teachers in Paris in 1925/26. And, of course, she shared her new learning with her students and colleagues when she returned to Houston.



Emma Richardson Cherry [Lhote sketch] 1925 Graphite on paper. Cherry's note on the left margin reads, "On acct. of his [Lhote's] admiration I gave him the one in oil colors" (l); The study on the right is one of a progressive series done by Cherry in 1926, while studying the theory of Dynamic Symmetry at the Paris branch of the Parson's School (r).

By the late 1920s, Houston artists were drawing all over town – at Rice and the Museum School, in the studios of a number of artist/teachers, and at the meetings of a latter day sketch club founded by advertising men William McKenna and H.S. Crawford around 1923. The sketchers met once a week at the offices of Crawford's Southwest Outdoor Advertising Co⁵. In 1930 the Sketch Club (open to all, including women) joined forces with the (members-only) Houston Artists Gallery to open a gallery and salesroom in the basement of the Beaconsfield Apartment Building on Main Street⁶. As I mentioned in the Houston Art History Notes section of the HETAG Newsletter for October, 2016, under the title "**Drawing from the NUDE!**", artists sketched from live models at all these locations, but by 1930, the cloths had come off – except for the young women at Rice, whose innocence required that they sketch from bronze and plaster casts⁷.



C. Garza Rivera [A Houston Life Class] 1929 *The Houston Gargoyle*, January 29, 1929, page 5.

⁵ "Sketching Club Three Years Old Has No Officers," *Houston Post*, December 12, 1926.

⁶ "Houston Artists Open Gallery And Salesroom," *Houston Chronicle*, November 24, 1930, p.11.

⁷ Roussel, Hubert "This Is the Life", *The Houston Gargoyle*, January 29, 1929, p.5, 28.

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



Henri Gadbois *Boomin' Houston (1)* and *Residence on Leeland* both 1948 Ink and wash on paper.

Upcoming events:

The 6th Biennial David B. Warren Symposium on American Material Culture & the Texas Experience

Friday evening Feb 24 and All day Saturday Feb 25

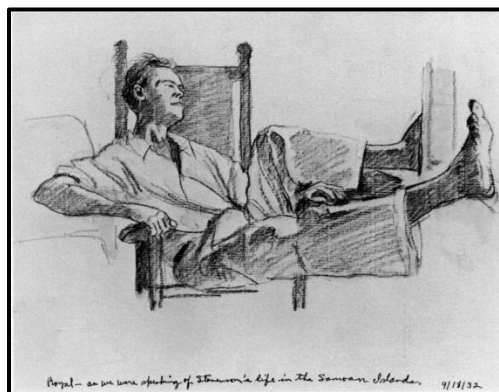
Information and registration at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston website:

<https://www.mfah.org/calendar/the-6th-biennial-david-b-warren-symposium>

The Warren Symposium is always filled with fascinating information and this year the Keynote on Friday evening concerns an important 19th Century Texas artist:

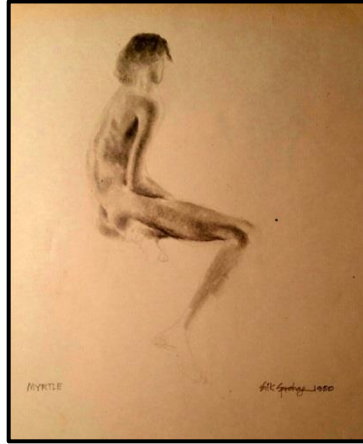
“The Paintings of Hermann Lungkwitz as a Type of Texas Material Culture”

Speaker: Kenneth Hafertepe, chair of museum studies department, Baylor University



Chester Snowden Royal [Dixon] – *as we were speaking of Stevenson's life in the Samoan Islands* 1932 Graphite on paper. Naturalist writer and lecturer, Royal Dixon, was Snowden's life partner.

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



Erik Sprohge *Myrtle* 1950 Graphite on paper (l); **Otis Huband** [classical male figure] 1967 Graphite and chalk on green paper

Exhibitions:

On My Journey Now: The Legacy of John Biggers

Arts Brookfield, curated by Sally Reynolds

January 11, 2017 - April 3, 2017

[Two Allen Center](#)

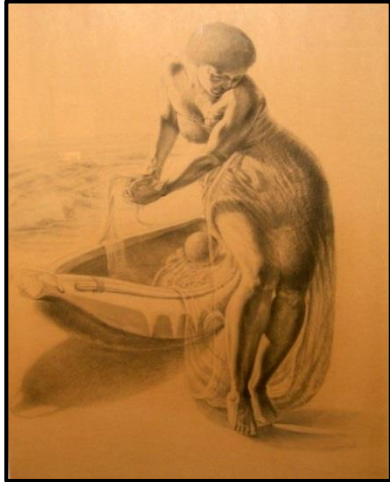
1200 Smith St.
Houston, TX 77002

<http://www.artsbrookfield.com/event/on-my-journey-now/>



Opening reception for artists included in *On My Journey Now: The Legacy of John Biggers*

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



John Biggers *Birth From the Sea* 1950s? Graphite on paper (1); **Gene Charlton** *Scarab* 1953
Ink & wash on paper.

Out of town exhibitions:

JOSE ARPA: A SPANISH IMPRESSIONIST IN TEXAS

Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Beaumont

A major touring exhibition of Arpa's work – not getting any closer to Houston than Beaumont, so don't wait!

March 11 through May 28, 2017

Opening Reception: 6:00 - 8:00 p.m., Friday, March 17, 2017

<http://www.amset.org/future>

Julian Onderdonk and the Texas Landscape

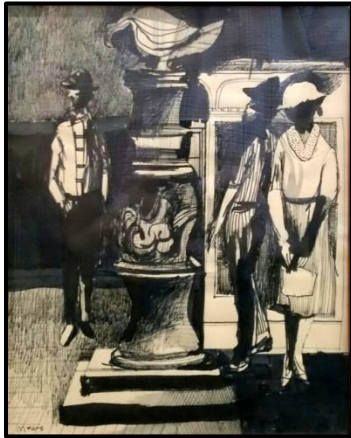
January 20 – April 23, 2017

San Antonio Art Museum

<http://www.samuseum.org/exhibitions/current-exhibition/895-julian-onderdonk-and-the-texas-landscape>

This is the exhibition we saw at MFAH last fall, which is now touring to other Texas museums.

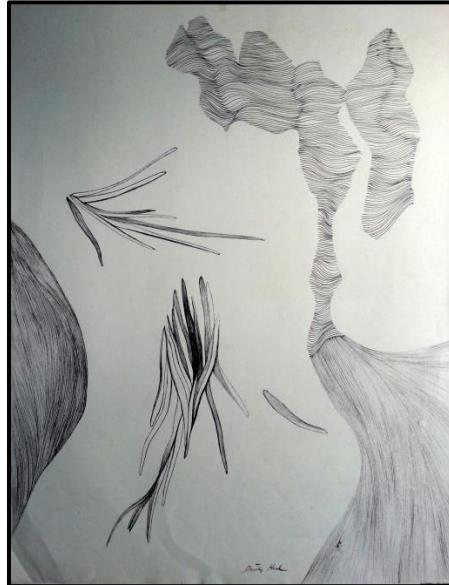
HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



Herb Mears [untitled] 1960s? Ink on paper (l); **C. Garza Rivera** [untitled] 1928 Ink on paper.

Next HETAG Meeting:

Mark your calendar now for the next HETAG meeting, Sunday, March 19. A couple who are loyal HETAG members have invited us to their home to look at their collection and for a member show-and-tell – a format we haven't tried in a long time, but which is always fun. Bring a work of Earlier Houston Art from your collection that you want to share with the group, or that you'd like to get more information about from our always-knowledgeable members. Details will follow closer to the date.



Dorothy Hood [untitled] 1960s? Ink on paper

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