

## Newsletter, August 2017



Downtown Houston inundated by the flood of 1935 (l); Emma Richardson Cherry *Buffalo Bayou Flood Control* c1937 (r)

### Delayed by Harvey!

It has been a hard two weeks for Houston and all of Southeast Texas. Many of our friends and neighbors have lost their homes and had their lives disrupted in ways that would have seemed unimaginable just a few days ago. Some have lost their lives. And a long, hard period of recovery is ahead. This issue of the HETAG Newsletter has been delayed by the storm. I almost decided to skip it altogether. But I believe, and I suspect most HETAGers would agree, that art can be part of the recovery of our city and region. It has been in the past, as the images included here attest (though, since Houstonians are always looking to a better future, I've found surprisingly few images of disasters past by our artists of the past). Earlier Houston Art exhibitions and programs that may provide some respite – maybe even some comfort – are already planned, rescheduled in some cases, and I wanted to let you know about them. We'll probably need them now more than ever.



Julius Stockfleth *Tremont Street, Galveston, During Hurricane of Sept. 8th 1900* 1900

# HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

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## Upcoming Talks on Earlier Houston Art:

### [Focus on the 70s and 80s: Houston Foundations Part II](#)

August 26, 2017 - November 4, 2017

#### [Deborah Colton Gallery](#)

2445 North Blvd. Houston, TX 77098  
713.869.5151

In conjunction with the exhibition Deborah Colton Gallery will be presenting a series of talks and panel discussions throughout September and October, 2017.

Foundations Symposium Series: Panels and Lectures during "Focus on the 70's and 80's - Foundation II"

#### **Saturday, September 9<sup>th</sup>: Houston: Respecting Our Past Strengthens Our Future**

Panelists will be **Dean Lisa German**, Dean of the University of Houston - School of the Libraries, and **Minnette Boesel**, who was the Mayor's Assistant in charge of Cultural Affairs and is a historical preservation patron and activist. They will speak about the importance of preserving our art history as we become a thriving international destination city of the arts. Moderator: **Deborah M. Colton**

2:00 to 2:30 pm: Open House, see the exhibition and visit with the artists.

2:30 to 3:30 pm: Panel Discussion, then Open Forum with Questions and Conversation.

3:30 to 6:00 pm: Opening Reception

#### **Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup>: Thoroughly Modern: The Cherry-McNeill Group and the Foundation of Modern Art in Houston, 1896 - 1954**

**Randy Tibbits**, curator and art history enthusiast, will speak about Houston's early art history, the artists, trends that influenced future generations and who we are today.

2:00 to 2:30 pm: Open House, see the exhibition visit with the artists.

2:30 to 3:30 pm: Panel Discussion, then Open Forum with Questions and Conversation.

#### **Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>: Exploring the 50's and 60's Art Scene in Houston TBA**

2:00 to 2:30 pm: Open House, see the exhibition and visit with the artists.

2:30 to 3:30 pm: Panel Discussion, then Open Forum with Questions and Conversation.

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### **Saturday, September 30<sup>th</sup>: Focus on the 70's & 80's and Houston**

**Pete Gershon** will be focusing on the art scene and the artists, what has made us unique as an art community and discussing the contents of his book which will be published next fall, "Collision: Contemporary Artists Working in Houston, 1972 - 1985". From a patron perspective, **Carrington Weens**, who was the Chairman of the Board of the CAMH during its pivotal time and headed the architecture selection committee to help raise the funds for the current building will speak about his experiences during this period of time also. Introduction by **Catherine D. Anspen**

2:00 to 2:30 pm: Open House, see the exhibition visit with the artists.

2:30 to 3:30 pm: Panel Discussion, then Open Forum with Questions and Conversation.

### **Saturday, October 28th: Panel Discussion: Sewing the Seeds: Houston's Non Profits and Alternative Spaces in the 1980s**

The untold and under-known chapters of the founding of many of our art organizations during the 80s. Panelists include **Michelle Barnes**, **Patricia Hernandez** and **Robert Morris**. Moderator: **Catherine D. Anspen**

2:00 to 2:30 pm: Open House, see the exhibition and visit with the artists.

2:30 to 3:30 pm: Panel Discussion, then Open Forum with Questions and Conversation.

### **Saturday, November 4th: Panel Discussion and Closing Reception: The Power of Houston - An Art City of the Future!**

Closing and Summary Panel which will address where we have been, what makes us special and where we are going in the future, with talks of plans for a major city wide event for the fall of 2018 and other grass root art projects which are developing. Several community leaders will be on this panel including artists, patrons and gallerists.

2:00 to 2:30 pm: Open House, see the exhibition and visit with the artists.

2:30 to 3:30 pm: Panel Discussion, then Open Forum with Questions and Conversation.

Closing reception and celebration of Houston: 7:00 to 9:30 pm



Melissa Miller *Flood* 1983 Museum of Fine Arts Houston

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Richard Stout *On the Bay* 1991

### **Upcoming Exhibitions:**

**Opening September 29 at the Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Beaumont**

#### **[Sense of Home: The Art of Richard Stout](#)**

On view beginning **September 30, 2017**

Opening Reception: **6:30 - 8:30 p.m., Friday, September 29, 2017**

(Please note that the dates have changed due to Hurricane Harvey.)

### **Current Exhibitions:**

#### **[Celebrating Houston's Founding Modernists: David Adickes, Leila McConnell & Henri Gadbois](#)**

#### **William Reaves|Sarah Foltz Fine Art**

2143 Westheimer, Houston, Texas 77098

[713.521.7500](tel:713.521.7500)

August 18 - September 9, 2017

#### **[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

# HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

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**“Planned, Organized and Established: Houston Artist Cooperatives in the 1930s”  
August 12 – November 9, 2017**

**The Julia Ideson Building, Houston Public Library Downtown  
550 McKinney Street, Houston, Texas 77002**

<http://houstonlibrary.org/learn-explore/exhibits/houston-artist-cooperative>

**(Please Note: The Ideson Building is temporarily closed due to Hurricane Harvey;  
Please check the [HPL website](#) to verify reopening before going downtown.)**

## Houston Artist Cooperatives in the 1930s

In racially segregated Houston during the 1930s, two separate-but-parallel groups of artists—one Black, the other White—organized artist cooperatives, hoping to expand opportunities for exhibiting and selling their work. Both the Negro Art Guild and the Houston Artists Gallery are little known today. The artist-members of each are seldom acknowledged as the serious-minded workers in art that they were. But through their cooperative efforts they laid down the foundation on which the vibrant modern art culture of Houston stands.

In December 1930, the White artists, led by Grace Spaulding John, opened their cooperative gallery in two basement rooms in the Beaconsfield Apartment Building (still standing on Main Street in Downtown Houston). According to John, the Houston Artists Gallery had been “planned, organized and established within the period of a week.” Though many of the members were women of secure social standing, they were dedicated to their art, hard-working and willing to take on the challenge of starting a business during the Depression. Most of the leading White Houston artists of the day were members at some point during its existence from 1930 to 1939.

Due to segregation, no Black artists could be members of Houston Artists Gallery, but there were Houston Black artists at the time who wanted to show their work. Until now little has been known about these early artists, who were working years before Dr. John Biggers arrived at Texas Southern University in 1948, when the previously known history of Black art in Houston began. These earlier Black Houstonians presented exhibitions of their own at the Colored Carnegie Library through the 1930s; and, following their fifth annual exhibition in June 1937, they organized the Negro Art Guild.

This exhibition and the accompanying catalogue present the histories of these two artist organizations in order to explore the development of art made by Houston artists in an earlier era, and to illuminate the impact of segregation on the cultural life of the city. The present exhibition brings the two groups together and lets modern-day Houstonians see and come to appreciate their work. Separation turned into unity makes for a stronger, fairer Houston in all areas, including art.

This exhibition is generously supported by Houston Public Library, City of Houston,  
and Houston Public Library Foundation

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Samuel Countee *My Guitar* 1936, collection of Sam and Juli Stevens.



Ruth Pershing Uhler *Growth* c1934, Panhandle Plains Historical Museum (l);  
Grace Spaulding *John Patterns: Portrait of Ruth Pershing Uhler* 1932, The  
Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Gift of Patricia John Keightley and John Spaulding  
John (r).

These three magnificent paintings frame the entry mini-gallery of the exhibition.

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The amazing Ruth Pershing Uhler “Earth Rhythms” series, 1935. Brought back together from various collections for the first time since 1936.



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The Exhibition Team worked to make every view interesting,



all the way to the back wall.

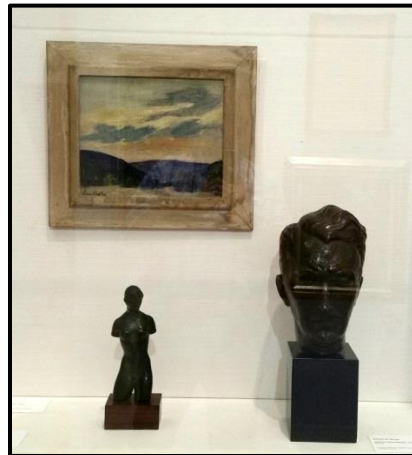


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Trees in the front, but to draw you further back – Samuel Countee’s *The Harpist* 1934, first prize winner in the Fourth Annual Art Exhibition at the Colored Carnegie Library.



Not just paintings – there’s sculpture too.

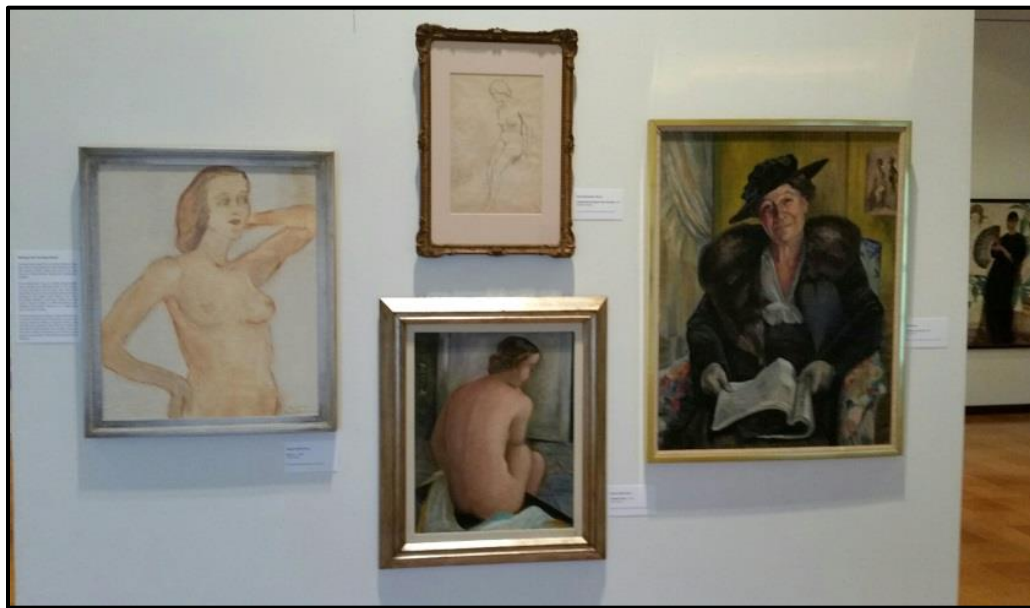


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In the Ideson Gallery the magnolias, iris and spider lilies look great.



And we even have an R-rated section – but it's discretely around the corner (and on the last page!).

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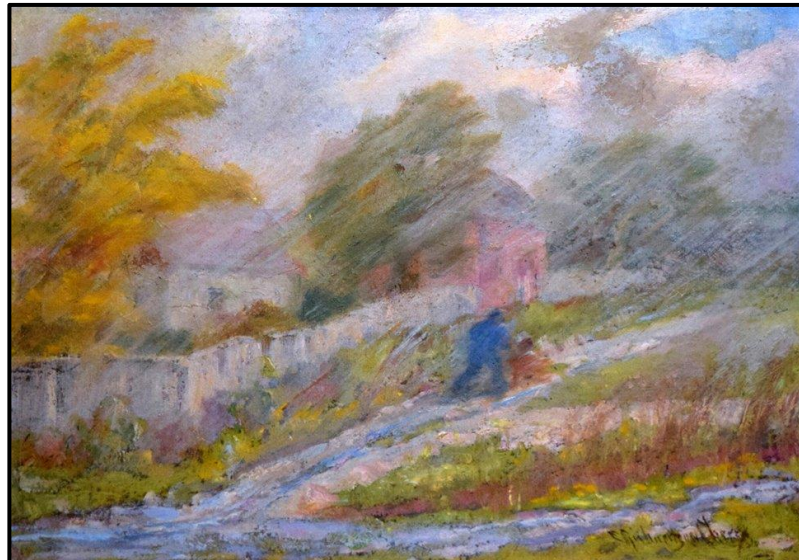
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Gene Charlton *The Wind and the Trees* 1951 (l); Genevieve Filson *Wind Trees* c.1939 (r)

**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](mailto:tibbits@rice.edu)**



Emma Richardson Cherry *Rainy Day in Houston* c1940s