

NINA CULLINAN PAPERS

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March, 1979.

NINA CULLINAN PAPERS

Contents in order of filming:

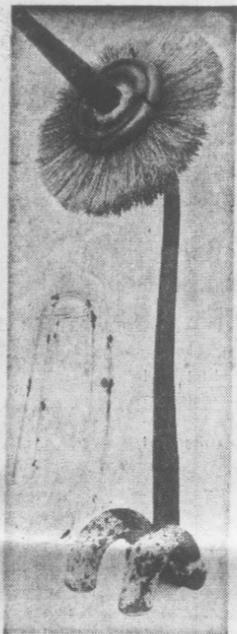
1. Correspondence
2. Scrapbook and Clippings
3. Photographs

Nina Gullinan

Clippings

1962

BY JIM LOVE — "Figure" by Jim Love, who exhibits at the New Arts, has been purchased by the Museum of Modern Art in New York for its permanent collection. It was included in the museum's recent Assemblage exhibit which is currently on view in Dallas.



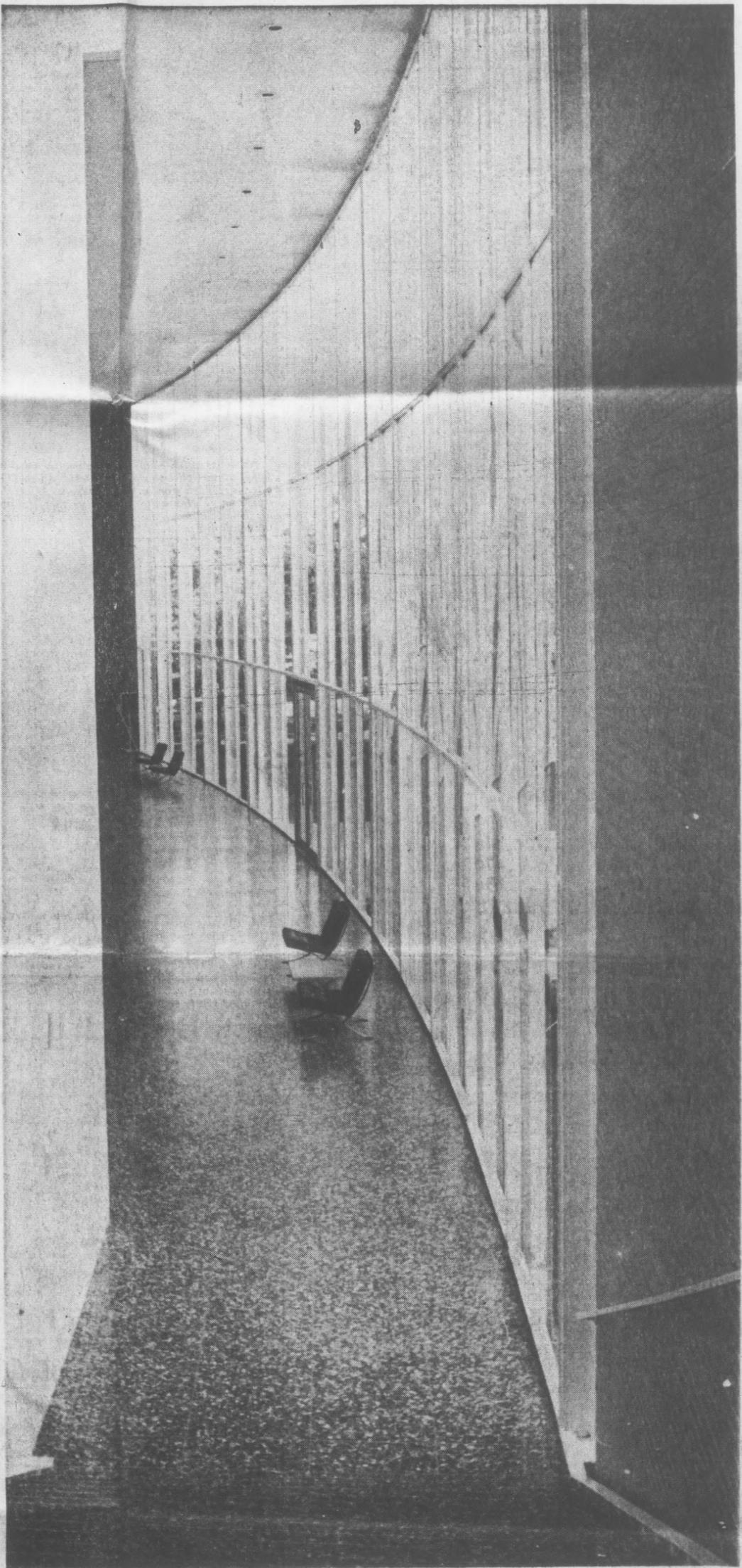
THE LIVELIEST ARTS TOWN

THE Post women's section continues its photographic tour of the liveliest arts in Houston with this special section on painting and sculpture. It includes comments on Houston's art.

THE series of special sections began with the theatre last Sunday. A section on music will follow on Jan 21. A section on writing will be published on Jan 28.



AT WORK—Houstonian Dick Wray is a young abstract expressionist painter who works in his apartment. Three of his paintings were included in the Contemporary Arts Museum's Ways and Means exhibition last fall. Wray has studied painting in France and Germany.—Post Photo by Chuck Farmer



FOCAL POINT—This is the facade, photographed from the inside, of Cullinan Hall, the Mies Van der Rohe-designed wing that marked the beginning of a more vivid life for the Museum of Fine Arts. The enormous exhibition space, pro-

vided by Miss Nina Cullinan in memory of her parents, has already been the site for some of the most stimulating exhibitions in Houston. James Johnson Sweeney became director of the museum last summer.—Post Photo by Dan Hardy

PART II: PAINTING AND SCULPTURE



DR JERMAYNE MacAGY—Dr MacAgly is head of the art department at the University of Saint Thomas and, in addition to her duties as a lecturer, she also installs two major exhibitions on the campus each year. Dr MacAgly came to Houston five years ago as director of the Contemporary Arts Museum. She did the first major exhibition, of primitive sculpture, in Cullinan Hall when it was first opened.—Post Photo by Ed Valdez

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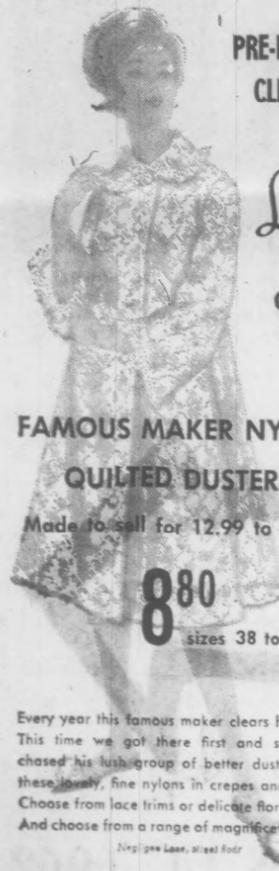
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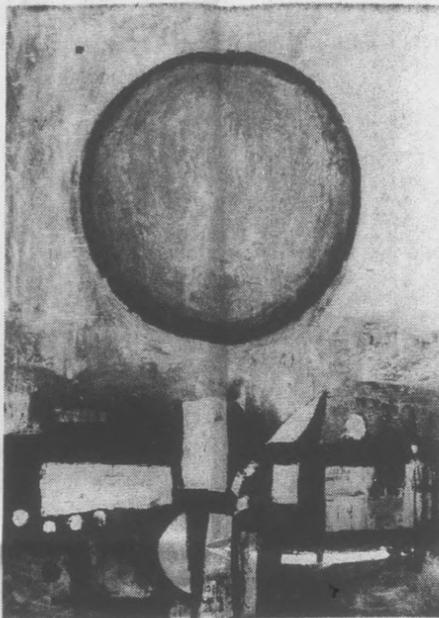
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AFTER JAPAN—This painting was included in an James Bute Gallery exhibit of David Adickes' work after his return from a visit to Japan. Adickes, who was born in Huntsville, still insists that Houston is his home, although he spends most of his time in the south of France.

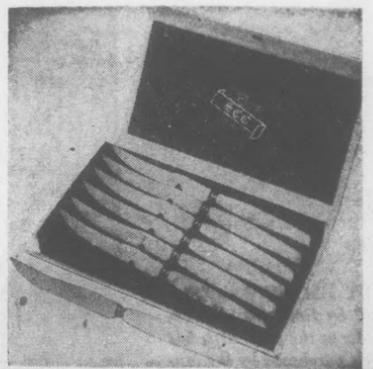
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Sunday, Jan 21, in This Week:
Russia as the Russians Know It



FORREST BESS—Bess lives on a houseboat in Bay City. This picture of him at home on the boat and the statement by Meyer Shapiro, the art historian, below are taken from the brochure describing his one-man show, a retrospective exhibit, now on display at the Betty Parsons Gallery in New York City.

A Real Visionary Painter

Meyer Shapiro is an art historian. He teaches at Columbia University.

By MEYER SHAPIRO

Forrest Bess is that kind of artist rare at any time, a real visionary painter. He is not inspired by texts of poetry or religion, but by a strange significance in what he alone has seen. He also paints what he imagines and is faithful to its character as the imagined. It may be the heavens or the ocean, but the picture is small, true to the size of the image in his head, and a unique picture, never repeating or rearranging an already achieved view.

This painted image is perfectly clear like a printed emblem or sign. Skill, power of rendering, the delights of spontaneity of the hand, do not tempt him; the handling is straightforward like the simple forms, soberly objective, without trace of the exaltation that comes with experience of a sought-for hidden sign.

So plain and frank is the painting, so much like the un-moulded strips of weathered wood with which he frames his pictures, that it seems at first sight the work of a self-taught civilized primitive with limited skill. But look at his wonderful blacks, of many nuances: Granular, matt, shiny and rough, and you will recognize his knowledge and discipline, his mastery of an exacting technique.



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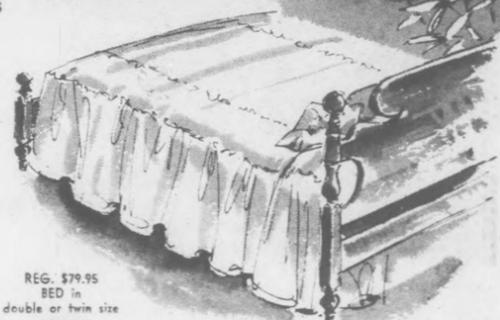
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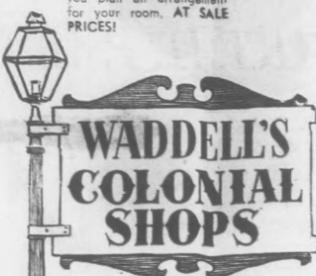
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THE SPOTLIGHT**Picasso's 'Bathers'
Stopping Traffic**

BY ANN HOLMES
Fine Arts Editor

If the traffic coagulates unduly at the corner of Main and Bissonnet, blame it on Sweeney's swimming hole and bronze Picasso figures playing around it.

On their way to work Monday, Houstonians saw to their surprise that a 38-foot pool had been constructed on the sidewalk outside the Museum of Fine Arts over the weekend. On their return home Monday afternoon, they paused in their cars and stared at six tall bronze flat figures disporting themselves around the pool, which is about four feet deep and filled with real water.

To museum director James Johnson Sweeney, the six bronzes in Picasso's group entitled "The Bathers," were not put there as a teaser to the show just inside the door, "Three Spaniards: Picasso, Miro and Chillida." But those joyous natatorial figures made an informal welcoming committee, as it turned out, for visitors, to the show which opened Monday night.

Designed for Pool



See Picture, Sec. 3, Page 1

tallest of which is eight feet, seven inches, were designed to go around a pool and Sweeney had the pool made especially for them. One is a figure for a diving board, so Sweeney had his workmen put in a diving board. If the figure on it seems to be in full clothes, there is at least one male figure in the group who most certainly is not.

The yard of the museum hasn't been so lively since the art fair was held there with dancing in the streets a few years ago.

The Bathers, as a group valued at about \$150,000, are a feature of the Three Spaniards show. Inside Cullinan Hall, Sweeney has arranged a small group of very large works, three blue Miro's called Blue I, II, and III; a Picasso oil entitled "Nude Under a Pine Tree," and a giant sculpture by Eduardo Chillida, made of hewn oak beams and resembling a Bunyonesque wood block puzzle.

Hall's Challenge Met

The paintings are suspended from the high ceiling on strong, thin wires and are unframed.

It would seem that for the first time the challenge of the hall's extensive proportions have been met with paintings and sculptures of the perfect heroic dimensions. Sweeney has not made the mistake of crowding the hall with too many works, but has shown these few works with enormous importance.

The Blue canvases of Joan Miro with their single threading black line and their beacon lights of red that seem to pulsate, suggest a mordant wit.

Picasso's "Nude Under a Pine Tree" is an important, highly characteristic work done in 1959 and, like Chillida's abstract sculpture, is being seen in America for the first time. It is the Picasso of shifting visual planes, with pendulous bosom and a flat mask for a face; a Recamier as only Picasso would see her.

The Picasso bronzes which continue their swimming outside even at night could well be saying: Come on in, the art's fine.

HOUSTON CHRONICLE

HOUSTON, TEXAS, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1962



Photo by Al Startzman, Chronicle Staff

TRAFFIC-STOPPING "BATHERS" HAVE OWN POOL AND BEACH IN FRONT OF CULLINAN HALL
Among Guests at Preview Were Mrs. John Blaffer, Ralph Anderson, and Mrs. John de Menil

ART

By CAMPBELL GEESLIN

Picasso's Friends

The Museum of Fine Arts is a wildly stimulating place these days.

Scarcely had the outstanding exhibit of Derain's early works been removed from Cullinan Hall when James Johnson Sweeney, the director, installed the most startling exhibit that's ever been in the museum.

CULLINAN HALL is an enormous space. I was told once that *Mies Van der Rohe* originally saw the area as a sculpture court with galleries ranging on several levels across the facade. I have always thought that it would be impressive to import three or four of Henry Moore's larger sculptures into Cullinan Hall and let them stand there in all that space—just to see what would happen.

Mr Sweeney has done the next best thing. His "Three Spaniards" exhibit has four paintings and one sculpture. They are big. A major part of the exhibit, six sculptures by Picasso, is outside at the entrance.

The one piece of sculpture inside is massive, strong, architectural and mounted on a large white platform to add to its stature. It is constructed of heavy, rough-hewn oak by the Spanish sculptor Chillida. It is the color of honey and the play of light through the openings and across planes is complex, subtle and difficult to absorb.

THE THREE Miro paintings are huge—bigger than many murals. They have very little going on in them—that is, they appear to be simple paintings.

The background and title of each is blue. The shade is strong, but pleasant. Each of them has a red spot of a different shape on it. One has a line of black dots of fairly smooth edges; another has fuzzy-edged blobs of black; the third has a black line in addition to its black blob.

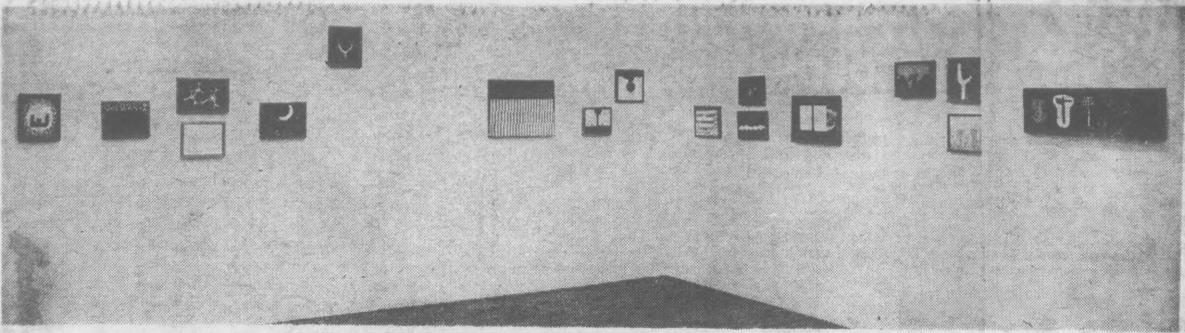
They are astonishing paintings. Mr Sweeney's arrangement of them—they float in a staggered group so that the visitor sees all three at the moment he enters the hall—is superb. One can walk up to them and between them and compare them and see them all together or singly.

AT THE REAR of Cullinan Hall is a 1959 Picasso painting of a nude woman under a pine tree. She is much larger than life. She is a whole landscape in herself. She is more sculpture than the Picasso "Bathers" out in front of the museum (yes, I'm warming up to them).

She is a woman—which no one can possibly mistake for anything else. She is lying out of doors under a pine tree—that, too, is quite clear. But the Picasso distortions are arbitrary, complex and exactly right. The color in the painting is limited. Why does Picasso do this to a human figure? Why does he take the sensuous nude, long the delight of painters and sculptors, and turn her into this preposterous cartoon?

Picasso insists on amazing his viewers. We are supposed to be delighted at his ability to bring these impossible things off. He has presented us with a canvas on which he has briskly defined outlines that suggest a woman. They suggest mountains and caves, too.

BUT MOST of all the painting says: This was done with



THIS IS THE WAY BETTY PARSONS HUNG FORREST BESS' SMALL PAINTINGS IN NEW YORK GALLERY
"Mrs Parsons Used My Work as Notes, or as Codes . . . Therein Lies the Charm"

paint on a flat surface. No one else can create this kind of magic. It is a woman that is actually a painting. It has a beauty that belongs—not to woman—but to this picture alone.

The group of Picasso sculptures, for which Mr Sweeney provided a swimming pool, are even more difficult to assess.

Originally, they were assembled of junk which Picasso found around his studio. He is a most prolific doodler—in both two and three dimensions. And because he is wealthy and adored by critics and collectors he can have his doodles of sticks and old boards and canvas stretchers cast in bronze.

The most unbelievable quality of the "Bathers" is that, although they were created in play, they are not comic. Their skinny arms never conceal for a second that they were originally wooden frames. The feet are still the turned knobs on furniture. Faces and other details are scratched into the surface.

BUT ARE they laughable? This is their great paradox. These objects, put together with wit and in obvious pleasure, convey an air of grand remoteness. They are of this world and yet outside it. Their size, the richness of the dark bronze, their weight and awkward, arrested movements convey a kind of brooding that makes one smile at them uneasily. They are junk — and yet they are people: Men, woman and child. Their reflections ripple across the dark water.

They are like great poetry. The words are common; as common as a broomstick and a jagged board. But when an artist put it all together, his imagination turned these common elements into original, unfamiliar, magnificent gods.

And Upstairs . . .

Now, as if this most thought-provoking exhibit weren't enough for his museum visitors, Mr Sweeney has installed upstairs in the Jones Galleries drawings from two of Cezanne's sketch books. This is their first public showing.

Mr Sweeney has a mission about this drawing business. He talks about an artist's line as if it were a sensuous, living thing — and indeed that is the quality he most admires.

The Cezanne drawings are beautiful. They are delicate, sensitive and revealing — both of subject matter and artist. What more can a drawing give?

The Cezanne drawings are like little maps of life. The whisps of soft line move across the paper — always exploring. They describe the face of a sleeping child, the shape of a ceramic jug, the curve of a nude back. They are small and fresh. And visiting the drawings and studying them is like reading a poet's letters to his great love. Such tenderness is a rare, rare thing.



BROODING 'BATHERS' BY PICASSO
By Pool in Front of Museum of Fine Arts

— Post Photo by Owen Johnson

ARTISTS and EXHIBITS

Comments on Display

Letters to the art editor during the past week make some interesting comments. Two of them are reproduced in part here. The first is from Forrest Bess of Bay City:

"I was interested in . . . that section concerning hanging of art in bookstores, restaurants, coffee houses, etc. Mrs Parsons sent me these photographs of my recent retrospective at her gallery. I thought you might be interested in them because they bear out your point of seeing painting in a gallery or museum . . . In this show it seems as if Mrs Parsons used my work as notes, or as codes, even like braille, with spaces and variations and therein lies the charm of her display . . .

"YOUR CITY needs much better galleries with greater integrity and then the establishment of the relationship between the artist and the gallery. There must be a mutual respect between the two. I have seen my gallery hang a painter three times before one sale, and the rent goes on, and the critics may deride but the gallery believes in the work of its painter and that makes good relationship. You go to a gallery to see the work of one particular artist — not to meet the artist . . . nor see vases of flowers, or attend a luncheon, or look at art magazines or artifacts. Paintings alone. And then you can say—this painter has stuck out his neck — what about it?"

The second letter shall be anonymous.

"Just as a matter of a little private combat with you on your very unkind remarks (Art column, Jan 28) on Mrs Cobler's new book store at Post Oak and San Felipe. I have found your opinion very much in the minority. Everyone I have chanced to see or talk with since the opening has commented on the beauty and interest of the brilliant and successful opening and the very clever idea on Mrs Cobler's part to combine the two cultural interests — books and art through painting. The paintings tie right in with the outstanding books on art found at Cobler's. Paintings and books are very compatible subjects.

"THE PAINTINGS may not have been to YOUR liking but, after all, they were done by some of YOUR 'SUBSCRIBERS' — who may not like The Post so well now. Neither is Picasso, Matisse or many of the abstract works enjoyed or understood by most of us . . .

"So there may yet be many customers who will return to Mrs Cobler's lovely shop for some painting that did appeal to them. The paintings were, most of them, hung above eye level but were very easy to view . . .

"Miss Angna Enters is world

renowned as an artist through paintings. You may not like her colors — but she has exhibited all over this continent and Europe . . ."

Sculpture at Bute

Invitations were sent out last week announcing an exhibit of sculpture by Robert Wiemerskirch at the James Bute River Oaks Gallery.

The opening preview was held Friday evening. The gallery is at 1983 West Gray Ave.

Leger's Last

NEW YORK — The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum will present, from Feb 28 through April 29, an exhibition of works by Leger, consisting of a selected group of monumental paintings, referred to as "Etat Definitif," which will be accompanied by about 100 preliminary and related works.

Yunkers To Teach

SAN ANTONIO — Adja Yunkers will be the guest instructor at the San Antonio Art Institute for the month of March. Yunkers, who lives in New York City, is presently teaching at Cooper Union.

Registration for the special four-week course, which will begin on March 5, are being accepted. Classes will be conducted on a day and evening basis. The institute is at 6000 North New Braunfels, San Antonio 9, Texas.

In Rice Library

Twenty-seven hand-colored lithographs by the French artist Carl Nebel, published in 1851 in book form, are on exhibit until Feb 20 at the Fondren Library on the Rice University campus.

The title of the book is "An Illustrated History of the Mexican War." Most of Nebel's sketches were made on the spot.

Watercolors

The Art League of Houston will exhibit watercolors by Don Bolen and sculptures by Jack Burch and Mary Narceus.

The exhibit will hang through March 24. The Art League Building, at 906 Tuam St, is open from 12 to 4 Tuesday through Saturdays and on Sundays from 1 to 5.

Entries Invited

TYLER — Invitations are going out to all artists in the U. S. to enter the Juried Arts National Exhibition, conducted by the Tyler Art League.

Initial judging of color slides will begin March 20 and entries should be submitted before that date. Charles Umlauf and James Johnson Sweeney will be the jury.

Interested artists should write for a prospectus to the Junior League Center, Box 1425, Tyler, Texas.

The civilizing influence of James Chillman

By ELEANOR FREED

There was a spark and sparkle about James Chillman, a gaiety and incisive wit, a deep love for learning, an incredible gift for teaching. Above all there was a love for people. All of this he imparted to generations of those who knew him.

A resident of Houston from 1916, Professor James Chillman (1892-1972) a splendid Classicist and Renaissance scholar, taught at Rice Institute and University for 50 years. At a recent memorial service his close friend and esteemed colleague, Dr. Radoslav A. Tsanoff, spoke of an initial impression of the "irresistible friendliness" of his "jean and lanky alert young colleague... the generous outgoing spirit of Jimmie's personality.

"For over half a century he was to us all the living expression of what the intelligent enjoyment of creative art could mean to a person. This sort of living expression is an educational power that is deeper and more abiding than the most competent imparting of reliable information. This is especially true in the field of fine arts. In a very real way Jimmie Chillman's work has been to all of us, at Rice and in Houston, a finely civilizing influence which we shall remember and cherish."

For decades James Chillman was the art department at Rice. He was the spirit of the architectural department, instilling in his students an emphasis on design rather than mere construction, which had become the backbone of most architectural departments.

When the Museum of Fine Arts was founded as an outgrowth of the Houston Art League and its predecessor, the Houston Public School Art League (no relation to the present Art League of Houston), the entire community turned to James Chillman to become director of a non-existent museum with a still non-existent collection. The initial building was dedicated in 1924.

In an extended tape of recollections a few months before his death, Chillman commented that "as things are going well today" (the Museum is in the midst of a \$15 million capital fund campaign) "we are apt to forget an even bigger effort in 1923-24." He also reminisced that except for a few sizeable gifts the building was built through small donations and even the nickels and dimes of school children.

As I listened to the tape with chief security officer, James E. Hutcheson, who had worked with Mr. Chillman on what was to have been a series of invaluable documents he underscored a very important part of the man who was James Chillman. He was always courteous and interested in the guards as people, as part of a team effort. And this indeed was one of his great strengths, an ability to project concern for the museum to all members of the community, from presidents of banks and oil companies to people of lesser estate.

Directors have come and gone. James Chillman was acting director, interim director, director emeritus (always on a part time basis) throughout the almost 50 years existence of the Museum. And without him the collection would not be what it is today. He



James Chillman with 15th century Madonna and Child from Straus collection

was never one to self-aggrandize and for that reason his tremendous contributions to the cultural life of this community may not have been adequately heralded. He did his job without benefit of public relations specialists, but all of us who love the visual arts recall that it was his excellent eye and uncompromising standards as well as his ability to get along within his community at all levels which have created the existent strengths, and strengths to build on, within our museum.

I have spoken to a number of people since Mr. Chillman's death and have assembled many capsules of appreciation as well as countless vignettes. One of the museum's major benefactors, Mrs. Robert L. Blaffer said: "Mr. Chillman meant a great deal to me personally. He had intelligence, a terrific instinct about art and architecture and even about human beings. His analysis was impeccable.

"When he first came here we were just coming of age in economics, in art, in many ways. He was almost like a flower in a new area that up until then had been almost a

desert devoid of art. Yet he never made us feel that art had been neglected. He brought out the best in each of us. I had the incentive but had it not been for Mr. Chillman I might not have had the confidence in myself and in my own eye. It was he who gave me the courage to select the paintings now in the Blaffer Room which I gave to the museum in memory of my dear husband, and which I think can take their places in any gallery in any museum in the world."

The other day Percy Selden confirmed what I had always heard, that the gem collection of 14th and 15th century paintings given by his parents, Edith A. and Percy S. Straus, came here largely because of their great respect for Mr. Chillman and for his special expertise in the art of the Renaissance. Nathan Broch, editor of the Rice University Review, quotes Mr. Chillman's first and enduring impression of the Straus paintings: "The tone of the collection was very quiet and non-violent. In fact the most violent piece in the entire collection was a small bronze of Hercules and Antaeus. Jones (Jesse Jones) and I agreed that we

simply had to have this collection for Houston."

Miss Ima Hogg, whose devotion and generosity to the museum, spans the near 50 years since its founding said: "I knew him as a man of great character, of integrity, taste and knowledge. He could be very firm. I remember when I was first on the board we were deluged with all sorts of objects being offered to us. Despite the fact that we had so very little in the museum he would never deviate from his great standards of excellence. Perhaps he hurt some people's feelings but he kept the museum from being loaded down with things that were not of museum quality.

"I recall speaking to him when I was in New Mexico during 1928 to see if he would be interested in my purchasing (to give to the museum) a collection of American Indian paintings. He encouraged me to buy these works as well as to purchase select examples of pottery from each Indian pueblo. Now we have, not a large, but a comprehensive collection.

Both Miss Hogg and Mrs. W. Browne Baker talked of the annual exhibitions of American paintings, available for purchase, from New York's Grand Central Galleries... works by Childe Hassam, George Bellows, Robert Henri, Maurice Prendergast etc. Many times the painters as well as the paintings would come for the openings. The nucleus of many Houston collections were formed as a result of these visits.

Although Chillman's own field was the Renaissance, his appreciation of 20th century art is apparent as I review the exhibitions which he brought into Houston on infinitesimally small exhibition budgets: Maffio, Kolbe, Brancusi, Pascin, Mestrovic, Archipenko, Moholy-Nagy. He also brought in paintings by Van Gogh, Homer, a memorial exhibit of Marin, Latin American Exhibitions, Calder's sculpture, Negro Artists of America (1930), excerpts from many important museum collections.

He secured the initial paintings of the Kress Collection, although some of these were reshuffled later. His salary was always paid by Rice and the amount that he received from the Museum was generally so small that it might have been considered an honorarium, and during the depression he even returned that in order for the janitor to be paid. As Mrs. Baker recalls the Museum's budget was so lean at times that there was scarcely money for the ice for the watercooler.

Mary Buxton (now Mrs. Gordon Cain) found Mr. Chillman's aid and advice of incalculable help during the interim period when she headed the Museum. He knew the art of keeping and maintaining friends through the years, and sooner or later these friends became significant contributors to some phase of the Museum's development. Through Mrs. Baker's plan, which he accepted and which later became a prototype plan in other museums, he secured the services of the women of the Junior League as docents.

My own introduction to Jimmie Chillman first came through his spirited, informative radio talks entitled "Art is Fun." It was fun for James Chillman and it became fun, if it wasn't already fun, for his listeners. He was never stuffy. According to his daughter, Helen, now art librarian at Yale, "he truly felt that everybody could enjoy great or good art if they were only not afraid of it... that it was not simply for the elect or the few." In whatever Valhalla Jimmie Chillman now is, he is probably helping all kinds of people enjoy and appreciate art.

THE HOUSTON POST

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SEPTEMBER 30, 1962

THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS



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THE BLACK AND WHITE BALL

Lowell Collins, the director of the Museum of Fine Arts School, sketched his impression of the museum's annual ball on museum stationery. This year it is called the Black and White Ball, and it will be held Friday in the Cullinan Hall of the museum. An Arabi-

an stallion, a sailboat, an automobile, a gold, ruby and diamond pin, a piece of sculpture by Charles Umlauf, a gold and jeweled watch and a round trip for two to Mexico City for a week are among the items which will be given away at the ball.

FASHIONS IN FOCUS

At the Paris openings it was obvious to me that Paris is thinking and designing in terms that we in the United States can understand without translation.

Women in Europe today lead the same sort of lives that we do. They travel, go on long weekends, jam the roads with

their cars. It's all just like home. And the kind of clothes that they—and we—need are uncomplicated, easy, comfortable, simple to pack clothes with what I call a country-city versatility.

So the newest looking clothes in Paris today are casual—what the average woman everywhere can wear with assurance.

Yes, the clothes that made this fall's Paris headlines are not futuristic—they're geared to today's living, at home and abroad.—TOBE

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DISTINGUISHED VISITORS — *Visiting the Houston Museum of Fine Arts last week were Vicomtesse L. Benoist d'Azy of Paris and Baron Michel Dard, director of fine arts at Unesco in Paris. Museum Director*

James Johnson Sweeney and Mrs John Blaffer were on hand to show a group of 19 members of the International Art Critics Association through the museum's galleries. At left are the vicomtesse and the baron.