

NINA CULLINAN PAPERS

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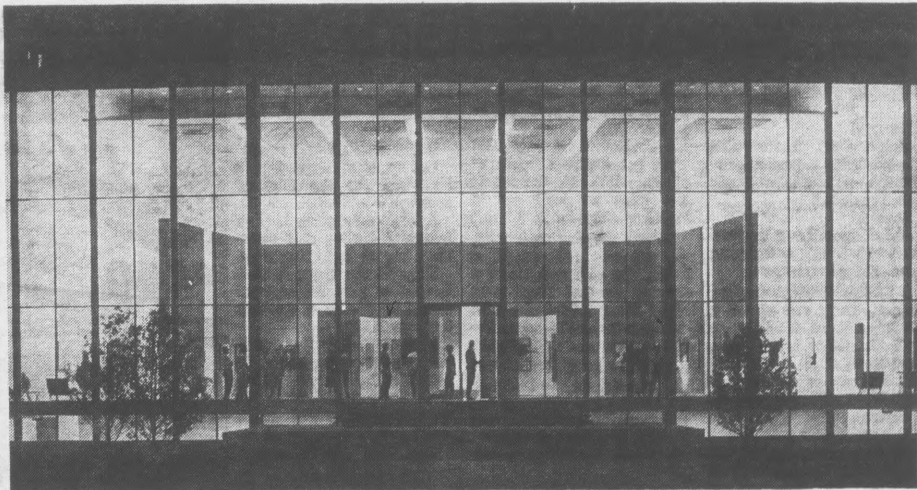
NINA CULLINAN PAPERS

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Clippings

Nina Cullinan



ART MUSEUM—The Houston Museum of Fine Arts is one of the finest institutions of its kind in the nation. Cullinan Hall, designed by the famed architect, Mies van der Rohe, is considered a model of the form.

Showcase Of Houston's Fine Arts

When the lights go up for the first time in the new Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts next month, they will illuminate the opening scenes of the greatest season of the arts ever experienced in Houston—a season which will begin with a crowded month-long schedule of music and drama, painting and sculpture, lectures and light entertainment to tempt every taste.

This will be the community-wide Arts Festival sponsored as a major project of the Civic Affairs Committee of the Houston Chamber of Commerce—planned as a showcase of the arts here and as a tribute to the new Jesse H. Jones Hall.

Already, critics and writers from throughout the nation are making their plans to be in attendance as the great new hall is opened and the public sees for the first time its majestic dignity and elegance—and to view the drama, hear the music, savor the art which is Houston's distinctive contribution to this nation's culture.

The arts in Houston have been nurtured in recent years by the gift of the \$6.7 million hall to the city by Houston



THE NEW JESSE H. JONES HALL FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS . . . as the lights were tested to ready the hall for its formal opening in October

Endowment Incorporated—a foundation created by the late Mr. and Mrs. Jesse H. Jones—as well as by Ford Foundation grants to the Houston Symphony Orchestra, the Houston Grand Opera Association, and the Alley Theatre.

Only days after the Foundation this summer announced a \$500,000 gift and a \$2 million grant (to be matched by local funds) to the Houston Symphony, announcement was made of a new \$1.4 million grant to the Alley Theatre. This new grant from the Ford Foundation is in addition to \$1 million granted by the foundation and matched locally three years ago for construction of a new theatre. (Houston Endowment also aided the Alley in its building plans, giving land for the theatre in the fast-developing civic-cultural center downtown.) The new Ford grant provides the funds necessary for the building project, which proved greater than originally estimated.

Immediately after the grant was announced, the W. S. Bellows Construction Company was named general contractor for the new Alley Theatre building, and was authorized to begin construction at once.

In announcing the release of the additional building funds, the Ford Foundation said its action was based on the "attainment of an important theatrical and architectural statement, not only for the Alley and for Houston, but for the American theatre, architecture itself, and the national interest."

The grant to the Houston Symphony includes the \$500,000 gift (to be paid over a period of five years) and a \$2 million endowment which must be matched locally within five years. Symphony Manager Tom M. Johnson said the annual installments of the gift will add support to the orchestra until income from the endowment begins in about 10 years.

The Symphony will present the opening public performance in the new Jesse H. Jones Hall on October 3, with Sir John Barbirolli conducting and the Houston Chorale joining with the orchestra. (The Chorale also will sing at the civic ceremonies marking the formal presentation of the hall to the City of Houston by Houston Endowment on October 2. This invitation-only program also will include music by the Houston All-City Symphony Orchestra, made up of high school student-musicians.)

American Composer Alan Hovhaness has been commissioned to write a new work for the Symphony's opening performance—"Ode to the Temple of Sound." The composer said the work will be a festive overture "in praise of a new hall where the art of orchestral music may flourish and achieve an ideal in sound which the classical painters of China called the "Spirit of Resonance."

The Jesse H. Jones Hall not only will



FORD FOUNDATION AWARDS \$1.4 MILLION TO ALLEY THEATRE . . . and construction begins on this new complex designed by Architect Ulrich Franzen

our birds come back to Houston 9 times a day



and leave again:
For Albuquerque, Amarillo,
El Paso, Los Angeles, Lubbock,
Midland-Odessa, Phoenix,
San Antonio, and Tucson.
Each flight is an opportunity
for you to feel the difference
pride makes. To feel good.
Comfortable. Confident.
These feelings come from the
pride Continental's people
have—in their jobs, in
themselves, and in their airline.
And that's understandable
because, as major airlines go,
Continental is not a great
big, impersonal one.
So Continental's people can
and do maintain their
individuality, their interest and
involvement in how their
airline is run. It's not what they
do. It's how they do it. And
that's what feels so good. Our
proud birds come back to your
airport every day. Come
travel with us and feel the
difference pride makes. Your
travel agent or Continental
will arrange it... please call.



Education & Arts

be a jewel case for music, but will hold its own treasure in sculpture—American Sculptor Richard Lippold's shimmering metal work which suspends from the ceiling high above the vast crimson-carpeted lobby. His work was commissioned by Houston Endowment to complete the magnificence of the hall.

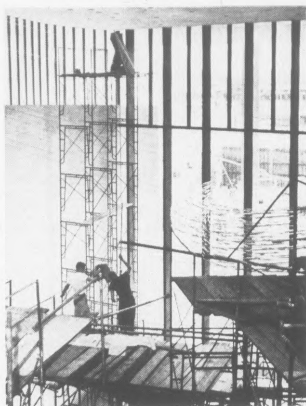
Another outstanding piece of sculpture will be unveiled on the lawn of the South Garden of the Museum of Fine Arts on October 4. It will be a 60-ton work by Spanish Sculptor Eduardo Chillida, another gift to the City of Houston from Houston Endowment. The formal unveiling will be by invitation only, but will be followed by a "Retrospective Exhibition of Chillida Works" at the Museum continuing throughout the entire month of October.

Joining in the first week's festivities at the new hall will be the Houston Grand Opera Association—presenting Verdi's "Aida." Conductor Walter Herbert will direct the opera orchestra, with Stars Gabriella Tucci and Richard Tucker singing the leading roles.

Virtually every theatre—professional or amateur—in or near Houston will have a production on stage during October, and for most of them this is only the first of a full season. The Alley Theatre will observe its 20th consecutive season with the opening on October 19 of "The World of Sholom Aleichem." Theatre Inc. will have a special revue—"Theatre Inc's Spotlight"—with Executive Director Johnny George directing.

Houston Theatre Center's Director Marietta Marich will extend the run of "The Fantasticks" through October for the Festival, and at the recently-opened professional Houston Music Theatre, Star Jane Powell will conclude a two-week run of "Brigadoon" early in the month, and Dame Judith Anderson will be seen in "Medea" from October 4 through 16.

The many music, art and other cultural organizations of the city are planning special programs and exhibits to



SCULPTOR RICHARD LIPPOLD ...
... (dark figure) high atop scaffold

observe this month-long festival, and the Music Hall, Sam Houston Coliseum, and other halls and auditoriums throughout the city will be busy. The universities have full schedules emphasizing the arts, and organ concerts are slated in many Houston-area churches, as well as activities slated by private groups and organizations.

These are only a few of the major events scheduled during the week-long celebration of the opening of Jesse H. Jones Hall and the month-long Arts Festival. A complete schedule (subject to additions and changes) for the month of October will be found on Pages 71 through 86.

Place of Learning

A vital element in Houston's educational and cultural life is the Houston Public Library—an institution dedicated not just to the enjoyment of reading but specifically to the dissemination of information.

This month—as thousands of students



SPANISH SCULPTOR EDUARDO CHILLIDA'S 60-TON WORK...
... will be unveiled at Museum of Fine Arts during first week of Arts Festival

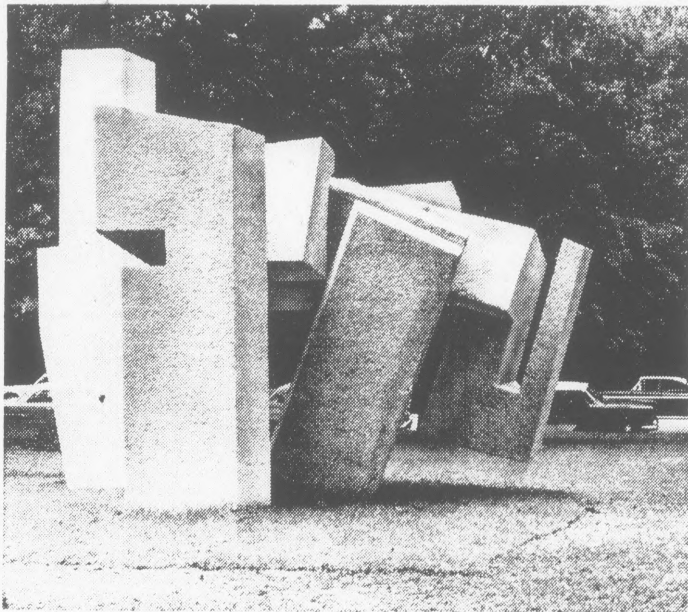
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Sculpture: Eduardo Chillida in Houston



"Abesti Gogora V," by Eduardo Chillida, is in garden of Houston's Museum of Fine Arts

By HILTON KRAMER

Special to The New York Times

HOUSTON, Oct. 14 — The art of sculpture is currently enjoying something of a boom in this city. As part of the citywide arts festival that Houston has organized to mark the opening of the Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts, the Museum of Fine Arts has unveiled a 50-ton sculpture in rose granite by the Spanish artist Eduardo Chillida. The work was specially commissioned for the museum's garden, and is a gift to both the museum and the city by the Houston Endowment, Inc.

While Mr. Chillida's work is frequently exhibited on both sides of the Atlantic, he cannot be said to be one of the most celebrated of modern sculptors. The bulk of his work is unknown even to conscientious observers of the contemporary scene. For this reason perhaps, the director of the Museum of Fine Arts, James Johnson Sweeney, has taken the occasion of this notable gift to mount a full retrospective survey of the artist's work. Forty-one sculptures and a generous selection of drawings, graphics and collages are included. The visitor to the museum is thus able to see Mr. Chillida's monumental stone carving, called "Abesti Gogora V," in the context of the sculptor's

Full Survey Points Up Artist's Development

whole artistic development.

Mr. Chillida is 42 years old. Though trained originally as an architect, he has been working as a sculptor since 1948. He is best known for his forged-iron open-form works that deploy very elegant slender masses as a form of drawing in space. There are indeed a good many such works in this retrospective, yet the artist emerges from it as a more interesting and various sculptor than one had formerly supposed. Moreover, his large stone sculpture for the garden turns out, in the context of the exhibition to be a culmination of certain abiding interests rather than a leap into an untried realm.

The exhibition begins, chronologically with two white plaster torsos from 1948-49. Though the female torso owes a good deal to Arp and Laurens and the male betrays a certain archaism, they are both clearly the work of an artist with a natural sensibility for sculptural form. It was in the early nineteen-fifties that Mr. Chillida turned to working directly in metal, and thus to the airy, open, linear forms for which he is best known. While there are many attractive pieces of this sort in the exhibition, they (both from 1956) are out-

standing: "Eloge de l'Air" and "Musica Callada."

The surprise of the exhibition, however, is the mastery that Mr. Chillida shows in working with the construction of heavy masses. In this respect, the outstanding works are two sizable constructions of oak beams—"Abesti Gogora," 1960-61, and "Abesti Gogora III," 1962-64. In these works, the square-cut masses are still handled as elements in a drawing, and the deployment of these masses follows a more or less cubist strategy. Without being wholly original in either conception or execution, they are very strong, forthright works carried out with impressive economy and sensibility.

The new stone work for the museum's garden continues the series begun in these oak constructions. The solid granite masses are cut into severe cubist forms that are handsomely articulated by the changing light and shadow of the outdoor setting. The scale of the whole is monumental, yet the work's interior spaces confer an air of intimacy and lyricism upon its individual units. Without being gross, the sculpture boasts a very emphatic masculine presence. Without being stunningly original, it is nonetheless one of the most artistically successful outdoor sculptures of recent times.

The Trustees of the Museum of Fine Arts take the liberty of bringing to your attention this review by a New York Times critic.

Texas Art—Iron to Astrodome

Alexander Fried

What is art? This is an old question—with many answers, and in the end with no answer.

Art, according to some modern aesthetics, is any sense experience at all that makes you feel you want to call it an art experience. Hence art is what it is and where you find it.

In a visit to Houston, Texas, for the recent opening of a new concert hall opera house, I discovered a surprising quantity of visual art experiences, on many levels, and in surprising places.

For a city like Houston to have an art museum is nothing unexpected — something short of a top-rank museum, but an extensive one, with many important merits and big-city direction.

For a 20-year-old college, the University of St. Thomas, to hold an exhibit called "Made of Iron" also would not seem unusual — except that the show was so beautifully, comprehensively chosen, in its 500-piece range from antiquity through the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Baroque, Oriental, folk arts, etc. to our own day when the mashed body of an automobile also is sculpture.

That the new Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts has hung in its superb, lofty lobby a swooping sculpture of silvery rods and gilt wires by Richard Lippold, of New York, was standard procedure. The ingenious Lippold has placed sculpture in New York's Philharmonic Hall as well.

* * *

WHAT MAY PUZZLE YOU, though, is that I even found art experiences, more or less valuable, at NASA, the government's Manned Spacecraft Center; and at the famous Houston sports Astrodome. Art? There?

On a NASA tour, I saw big models of portions of spacecraft — sheer bundles of machinery — that had precisely the look of modern mechanistic sculpture.

And when, peering into a mock space rocket cabin, I saw uncanny war dummies of astronauts, in space suits, and tightly seated amid honeycombs of gadgetry, the sensation was much like seeing surrealist social commentary sculptures by artists like Kienholz.

But whereas the Kienholz sort of commentary concentrates on what is seedily tragic in life, NASA sculpture



HOUSTON'S UNIQUE SPORT ASTRODOME
It looks and acts like "Pop" art sculpture

puts superman wings of optimism into its flights of infinite imagination.

* * *

AS TO THEIR ASTRODOME, Houstonians call it the biggest room in the world. That it is. It is also the world's biggest "Pop" art construction, with added suggestions of hard-edge visual art and kinetic sculpture.

Even Texans see the fun of the Astrodome. The tour guides' commentaries were three quarters proud and one quarter saffirical.

Under the girdered roof of the Astrodome, the Houston

Astros play baseball. The hard-edge aspect of the layout lies in all sorts of structural rhythms and candy-sharp color schemes. It lies likewise, through a different sensibility than the visual, in the crisp feeling of its air conditioned climate.

In its fantastic collage of possibilities, the Astrodome houses college football, bloodless bullfights, polo, boxing, conventions, circuses, rodeo and livestock shows and church revivals. Its seating capacity is changeable, up to 60,000 seats.

What invites hilarity, in its glib feat of engineering, is its use of plastic, lividly green "Astroturf" to cover the playing fields — a synthetic pseudo-grass that is laid out in patches gripped together by zippers.

Kinetic art — the art of movement — joins the "Pop" art effect when a Houston ball player hits a home run, and the \$2 million scoreboard flares up like a gigantic pinball machine, for a 40-second electric light show, picturing cowboys, Indians and general hurrah.

* * *

OF COURSE the Houston Museum and the University of St. Thomas art department are serious matters. A few years ago the museum got architect Mies van der Rohe to build it an addition. The main new element is a vast, tall, glass-faced gallery, which in its scale, light and design may well be the most beautiful, large museum gallery in the world.

Director of the museum is that genial, if fanatical, partisan of avant-garde art, James Johnson Sweeney. However, the museum is versatile, running a liberal course among old masters, the South Seas, pre-Columbians, and the moderns from Cezanne to a big figure cutout that is surely the silliest Picasso I've seen anywhere.

Sweeney is so persuasive that, as part of a month's civic art festival to honor the new Jesse Jones Hall, he was able to charm banks and business firms into posting sculptures by such moderns as Calder, Tinguely and Marisol at key indoor and outdoor points all over Houston's downtown.

The late Jermaine MacAgay, of San Francisco, was for some time director of exhibits at St. Thomas. Now the director, formerly associated with her, is the French-born art patroness Dominique de Menil. Her "Made of Iron" appears to have been only one of a series of scholarly, sensitive exhibits that any museum could be proud to put on.

We hear a great many things about Texas. My report from Houston is that it has an art life, too.

FOR 30 YEARS

An Artist Behind the Scene

By SARA MEREDITH, Post Society Editor

"She is the museum, you know. It's hard to describe just how important she is. But when she's away, there are gaps you'd never expect, and she is as close as anyone ever came to being indispensable."

The young man was speaking of Ruth Pershing Uhler, curator of education at the Museum of Fine Arts, who is celebrating her 30th anniversary with the museum, 30 years that have made her place in the museum as solid as a cornerstone.

To mark the anniversary, several old friends recently took Miss Uhler to lunch and announced that they were giving a museum school scholarship in her name, an appropriate gift since the mu-

seum is almost an extension of her family.

The luncheon list read like a museum roll of honor—Miss Nina Cullinan, Mrs. S. M. McAshan, Hugo Neuhaus Jr., James Chillman Jr. (first director of the museum), James Johnson Sweeney (present director), Mrs. Fred Buxton, and Mrs. David Persha.

Ruth Uhler's family moved to Houston in 1909 from Pennsylvania. Ruth returned to Philadelphia where she attended art school, had a studio, and exhibited her work in New York. She lived a while in Santa Fe and later came to Houston to stay.

In 1936 she won the museum's purchase prize for her painting, "Earth Rhythms," which is in the permanent collection.

"It is a very interesting painting," said a colleague.

"There is nothing else at all like it in the museum. It is stylized hills and dales, taken from nature and put through a patternization."

"All artists seem to have bonfires. We think that Ruth had one too. You see a few of her paintings in homes where families bought art in the 1920s and 1930s. Another was displayed recently in the museum—sea forms with shells in gray and green. Still another is a mural on the stairway at the public library, an early Texas interior scene. But apparently she destroyed some of her work."

Ruth Uhler taught art at the museum when she first joined the staff. Now she co-ordinates all museum activities, plans movie and lecture series, plans receptions, handles school registrations, knows where things are hidden, smooths ruffled feelings, polishes silver, hammers and nails and paints, and maintains a warm dignity at all times that establishes the museum's tone.

"When I stop to think of the qualities she has — the ones that I can appreciate," said one museum employee, "the quality that stands out



RUTH UHLER IS A MUSEUM MAINSTAY
She Is Curator of Education at Fine Arts Museum

—Post Photo by Dell Von Dusen

most is her tremendous tact. She always knows the right answer and even knows how to give no answer at all. Mr. Sweeney said once he wished he had this ability."

(From a man who also has a great ability to charm and who is possessed of abundant Irish blarney, this is a great tribute.)

"The museum staff adores her," said another fellow worker. "She is so calm — sort of like a schooner just gliding along."

The affection her friends have for her is revealed in many small ways, like last spring when she was in the hospital and an artist came to her room and painted a huge bouquet while she watched. There wasn't room for anything three-dimensional because of all the real bouquets.

One main love of Miss Uhler's is the junior gallery, founded in 1959. "Our first show," she recalls, "was 'Children and Chopsticks.' Since then we have had six shows a year with no repeats."

"The Post sponsors the

Spring Art Festival for high school students. The co-operation for all these shows is marvelous. We borrow a lot because our budget is low. We are all thrilled about our January show, 'Touch Me.' It is not only for the blind children but for everyone."

Ruth Uhler's face lights up as she talks about the museum. "I am everybody's little helper, I guess," she said, lightly minimizing her role. But someone else said, "She is a great lady, absolutely, completely a very great lady."

Trinacria Club

Mrs. Sam Restivo and Mrs. Nick Bua are the chairmen of the Trinacria Club's Christmas Party Dec 18 in the Grecian Room of the Shamrock-Hilton.

Philomathian Club

Mrs. R. C. Brooks will be the hostess for the Christmas program meeting of the Philomathian Literary Club at 1:30 PM Wednesday.

The Right to Beauty

No. Post
12/31/1966

The new Harris County Center for the Retarded is being acclaimed by many as the outstanding institutional building complex in Houston.

And remarkably, there is nothing institutional about it.

Without being bizarre, it is never pedestrian, is never routine, is free of cliché. No visitor can walk along a hall and predict what he will find around the next corner.

Without ornamentation, the therapeutic swimming pool seems as luxurious as a Roman bath. Shallow steps lead down into the water, and a great glass wall brings the outdoors in. Rare among indoor swimming pools, it does not echo or reverberate.

DESIGNED BY the Houston firm of Barnstone and Aubrey, it was built to last, and to last with a minimum of maintenance costs. But in its proportions and ideas, it is beautiful.

Staircases soar to spirit-lifting heights. Walls of glass set a factory room free. Courtyards open with mind-stretching loveliness.

"Maybe it is my imagination," said Harris Masterson, president, "but it seems to me that I can see an improvement in the children since we moved in."

The center is a symbol of what might have been, and what still might be in Houston.

There was little major construction done throughout World War II, and in 1946, Harris

County was still largely an open canvas to be drawn upon.

If Houston had, at that time, dedicated itself to great architecture, it could have become one of the world's most beautiful cities. The space was here. Millions of dollars were ready for the spending.

Tourists of every nation go to Venice to see its architectural beauties. Houston could have been the Venice of the 20th century.

But most of the millions were spent on routine architecture.

THE CULLINAN wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, the Saint Thomas University, the Tennessee Gas Building, the First City National Bank are among the few buildings which have made good use of the city's land and air space. The unique and distinguished buildings could probably be counted on two hands.

In this generation, the greatest living architects live in the United States. Great architecture need cost no more—and often costs less—than architecture which is merely elaborate or imposing.

Government, business and industry, non-profit institutions—all have an obligation to add beauty to the city which gives them life.

The people of a city have a civic right to expect beauty from those who build within the limits of the city.