

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



David Gray *Is The Question* 2011

HETAG Newsletter No. 45, October/November 2020

Here we are in month nine of the pandemic, with no one knows how many more months (years?) to go before the world spins back into something like "normal." Some days – most days – it feels as though we're hanging on by a thread. We always need art, but as we enter what is predicted to be an especially difficult time, we may need it more than ever. As HETAGers we may find comfort remembering that our artists have been making their art for lifetimes and sharing it with us. As a special feature for this issue, one of our artists, David Gray, is sharing paintings he has made focusing on others of our artists – some sadly no longer with us – and a long-standing informal institution they have all been part of, The Friday Morning Artist Breakfast. We have to believe that, after all these decades, not even the pandemic will keep these artists from gathering for breakfast again, once the new normal has arrived.

Also in this issue of the Newsletter you'll find a listing of some exhibitions of interest in Houston and around Texas. Even though we may not be able to get to them in person, it's always good to know they're out there – and it's often possible to enjoy them online. And you'll find another edition of "Lost and Found" highlighting a work of Earlier Houston Art that has come back to us after being a long way away for a long time. Also included is the first of a two-part "new" look at the question, "Why did modernism come to Houston?" So even in the pandemic, there's still plenty happening in the exciting world of Earlier Houston Art!



Jack Boynton [Untitled] 1957, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Boynton is seen at the far right in David Gray's painting, above.

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David Gray's Friday Morning Breakfast paintings:



Breakfast at Theo's Gertrude, Richard, Roberta and Penny (l); Dot Brings Breakfast 2017 (r)

David P. Gray, Houston, Painter-Photographer, former Instructor of Art at the University of St. Thomas and Instructor of Computer Graphics at North Harris County College. He paints people in their own environments and natural genres. Most of the people in the paintings pictured here are local Houston Artists from the Friday Morning Breakfast Group, who have been Gray's friends for many years, so they are natural choices for subjects for in his paintings. They include Jack Boynton, Earl Staley, Richard Stout, Harvey Bott, Dick Wray, Bas Poulos, Gertrude Barnstone, Penny Cerling, William Camfield, Roberta Harris, Don Shaw, Andy Feehan, Barry Rose (a collector), and Ibsen Espada to name a few. Gray has been meeting them for breakfast every Friday morning at several locations since the 1970s. In Houston the Art community is a small, tight knit group of Painters, Sculptors, Dancers, Chorographers, Musicians, Writers, Cinematographers, Videographers and Photographers, who all know each other; most of them are former faculty members at local Universities. So with Friday breakfast meetings and bar meetings for the last forty seven years, Gray has had his subjects trapped. His camera is always present. He uses photography and sketches to assemble digital working images for painting guides. Gray feels his paintings are notes to the future of the way we were. His paintings in this style have been shown at Anya Tish Gallery and at Deborah Colton Gallery in Houston.



The Calder 2-16 (l); Breakfast at 59 diner with Harvey, Earl, and Jack 2016 (c); The Conversation 2012 (r)



Harvey Takes Decaf 2010 (l); This Is the One (c); Richard and Andy at 59 (r)

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Lost and Found –



John Clark Tidden in theatre mode at Rice, 1918 (l) (he's the one with the monocle and straw hat); and a 1920 photo (c).

From the time he came to Houston in 1915 to teach at Rice University, until he left to return east in 1925, John Clark Tidden (1889-1957) was one of the three or four most prominent artists in town. He was very popular with his students, set a new benchmark in art making and art education in Houston, and had a tremendous impact on the development of community theater. His departure was such a shock that it made front page news in the Rice University student newspaper in 1925. We profiled Tidden at some length in the [HETAG Newsletter No 21, March/April 2018](#). Despite our best efforts, however, today Tidden is almost completely forgotten, and his paintings are scarce as hen's teeth.

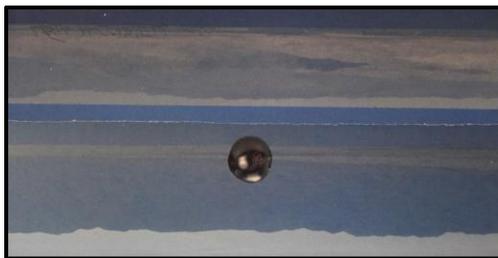
So wasn't it a surprise when one recently turned up on an online auction out of Cincinnati. News of this treasure actually came by anonymous email from someone who had discovered our contact info by searching past issues of the HETAG Newsletter!



The untitled work (above left), from 1930, was done as a cover for *The Household Magazine*. At the time, magazine cover art was often based on fully finished easel paintings, and Tidden did several of them through his career. Some may remember the recent Norman Rockwell exhibition which included dozens of such Rockwell works. Sure, Tidden did this one after he'd left Houston, never to return - this was after his divorce from Agnes Lilienberg (1895-1968), also an artist, who later married one of Tidden's students, Julian Muench (1901-1965), an artist too. But even though it's not technically a "Houston" painting, one doesn't quibble when an artist's known works are as few and far between as Tidden's. Besides, it's quite an appealing work.

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Some exhibitions of interest:



Leila McConnell [*Untitled Collage*] 2016

[Another World : Recent Collages by Leila McConnell](#)

Foltz Fine Art

October 24 – November 28, 2020

"McConnell's work with collage and iconic "sky paintings" originates in the 1950s, inspired largely by abstract artists and colleagues of the time. Her continued exploration of the landscapes, deconstructing the real to create often ethereal, imagined spaces remains as compelling today as it did half a century ago."

[From the Vault: Tyler Museum of Art](#)

Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Beaumont

October 3, 2020 – February 28, 2021

An exchange exhibition which enhances the relationship between AMSET and TMA, featuring "a selection of early Texas paintings and works on paper from the permanent collection of the Tyler Museum of Art (TMA), with a spotlight on early Texas artist and educator Coreen Mary Spellman (1905-1978). Concurrently, an exhibition of contemporary Texas paintings and works on paper from AMSET's permanent collection, [From the Vault: Art Museum of Southeast Texas](#) will be on view at the Tyler Museum of Art September 13-November 29, 2020."

[Opening of The Nancy and Rich Kinder Building](#)

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

November 21, 2020

Marking the completion of the MFAH campus expansion project underway since 2012, further cementing the place of MFAH as one of the preeminent international art museums. Works of both Contemporary and Earlier Houston Art will be included in the opening exhibitions. See the MFAH website for information on opening celebrations.

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.

Back issues of the HETAG Newsletter are available via the

[University of Houston Libraries Digital Library](#)

and

[The Portal to Texas History](#)

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Modernism in Houston – Another Look

"Why did Modernism come to Houston?" This is the question with which Alison de Lima Greene, curator of Contemporary Art & Special Projects at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, began her groundbreaking 2003 essay, "[Modernism in Houston](#)" (*Artlies* 41, 2003-2004). In laying out her answer, Greene meticulously documents a series of actions taken from the late 1920s to the late 1960s, by collector/patrons and institutions whose sponsorship and funding transformed a conservative, provincial art culture into one in which Modernism flourished. The chief characters in Greene's story include the collectors, curators and administrators, [Ima Hogg](#); [James Chillman, Jr.](#), and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; John and [Dominique de Menil](#); [Jermayne MacAgy](#) and the [Contemporary Arts Museum](#); [James Johnson Sweeney](#) and others. Even the names of a few Houston artists find a place – [Robert Preusser](#), [Frank Dolejska](#), [Buck Schiwetz](#), [Frank Freed](#), [Herb Mears](#) among them – with their relatively late (in the 20s-60s span considered) contributions through the Contemporary Arts Association (later CAMH), in the late 1940s and 1950s.

In distilling her intriguing findings to answer that beginning question, "Why did Modernism come to Houston?" Greene concludes, "MoMA [Museum of Modern Art, New York] was the muse of Modernism in Houston. Almost every major step that helped establish Modernism in Houston during this era can be traced to an example set by MoMA's staff and board. Perhaps it is [Alfred Barr](#) and the institution he founded, then, that should finally be acknowledged as the compelling force that explains why Modernism came to Houston."

As a supplement to Greene's findings, I'd like to add another, and I think crucial, element to the answer: the Houston artists who brought the ideas of Modernism to the city through their art-world contacts, their art interests and their own art, from the early 1910s through the 1930s – a small, but forward looking and influential group, who created an environment in the city in which the consolidating work of collectors, patrons and institutions could flourish.

As with so many aspects of the art culture of Houston, including the Museum of Fine Arts, and, at a generational remove, the Contemporary Arts Museum, this look must begin with [Emma Richardson Cherry](#). Though she came to Houston in the 1890s, long before the advent of Modernism, and though she had already had a significant influence both here and elsewhere as an exponent and practitioner of Impressionism, which was, of course, the modern art of it's day (see William Keyse Rudolph, "Texas and Its Impressionists," in [America's Impressionism: Echoes of a Revolution](#) 2020), this look will focus only on her involvement with Modernism, particularly in the 1920s, but spanning from 1912, well before the founding of MoMA in 1929, to 1941. (A second piece will carry the supplement through the work in the 1930s of a group of artists who drew energy and inspiration from Cherry and the broader art world in which they too traveled, worked and thought.)

As one commentator said, "all that Mrs. Cherry does comes back to us in one way or another. When she is not creating she is imparting (*Houston Post*, October 19, 1919)." The observation is as pertinent to her involvement with Modernism as to all other aspects of her long career in art.

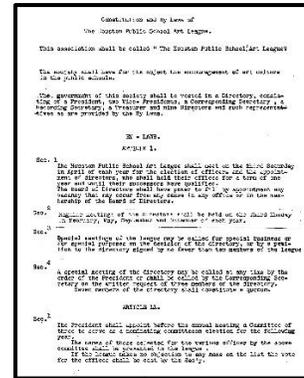
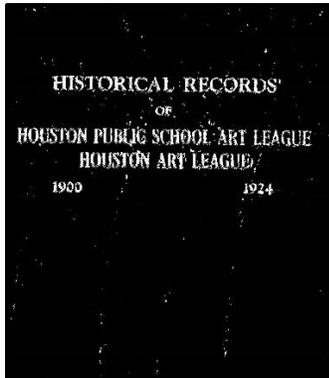


Emma Richardson Cherry c1920s

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Part 1, Emma Richardson Cherry and Modernism – Just the Facts, an Illustrated Chronology

1900 – **Houston** – Emma Richardson Cherry joins with others to found the Houston Public School Art League, an organization that evolved over the decades into the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, now one of the preeminent international art museums. As Greene points out, MFAH was eventually a significant Houston showcase for Modernism.



Aerial view of the MFAH campus, with the new Nancy and Rich Kinder Building, flanked by early historical records of the Houston Public School Art League.

1911: Sept 9 – Emma Richardson Cherry and Dorothy Cherry, her daughter, **sailed from New York** aboard the Lapland, beginning a 14 month tour that would take them to Belgium, France, Italy and other countries of Western Europe. The passage was smooth; they traveled First Class. Among other First Class passengers were Michael, Sarah and Allan Stein, who, as Cherry noted in her copy of the passenger list, lived in "Paris." They were also important patrons of Henri Matisse and other avant-garde Paris artists, along with Michael's brother and sister, Leo and Gertrude Stein. No doubt, Cherry would have been tantalized by their art interests.



RED STAR LINE NEW YORK ANTWERP CALLING AT DOVER.	
BELGIAN ROYAL AND U. S. MAIL STEAMSHIP "LAPLAND" SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1911, AT 10 A. M.	
Captain: H. D. DOXRUD	
Purser: A. Koppenjan	Surgeon: Dr. R. Kemel
Asst. Purser: C. Bechtolf	Chief Steward: F. Batens
FIRST CLASS	
Miss Maud Andrews	Mr. E. G. Gibson
Mr. J. Benjamin	Mr. Carl Hoffmann
Miss Mary Lindsay Carter	Miss Barbara D. Houston
Mr. Samuel A. Chapin	Mr. Kurt Huegin
Mrs. D. B. Cherry	Mr. Louis K. Hall
Miss Dorothy Cherry	Mrs. Hall
	Mr. George S. Jackson
Mr. Ralph C. Norton	Mr. M. D. Stein
Mrs. Norton	Mrs. Stein
	Mr. Allan Stein



Michael, Sarah and Allan Stein in their Paris apartment, with Matisse (l); Emma Richardson Cherry and Dorothy onboard ship, 1911 or 1912.

1912: Oct 13 – **Paris** – “This morning to the [Salon d’Automne](#). Certainly the new things are queer but interesting. The Cubists – how queer!” Dorothy Cherry recounting the visit she and her mother, Emma Richardson Cherry, made

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to the exhibition, in her 1911/12 European travel diary, now housed at The Heritage Society, Houston. This visit happened the year before the Armory Show in New York, Chicago and Boston, which introduced this radical new art to America.



Cubist works on view at the Salon d'Automne, Paris, Oct. 1912, including Francis Picabia *La Source (The Spring)*.

1917: March 22 – **San Antonio** – "Mrs. Cherry went into detail in regard to the different schools of art, defining the impressionistic as a set of artists who tired of the classical school and injected into art new blood. The Cubist school came in for its share of the discussion with its squared lines and blocked-out construction. Then the Futurists were dealt with. ... Her injunction to her listeners was to study construction and technique." *San Antonio Express*, March 22, 1917.

1917: April 24 – **San Antonio** – "The art of Pan America was discussed most interestingly by Mrs. E. Richardson Cherry. ... Mrs. Cherry said that modern culture did not appreciate primitive art, which was the highest art after all. She said that the more cultured people became the more they grew away from this art, which was possessed of genuine truth and beauty." *San Antonio Express*, April 24, 1917.

1919: Summer - **Chester Springs, PA** – Studied with Hugh Brackenridge and Henry McCarter, focusing on color theory and Post-impressionism.



Emma Richardson Cherry *Decoration* and *Sulphurous Pool*, with *Decoration* (top center) in the Chester Springs exhibition, 1919.

1920: Jan 4 – **Houston** – Cherry interviewed about her recent work. "... Mrs. E. Richardson Cherry consented to be interviewed about her paintings on exhibition at the Y.W.C.A. ... [She] carefully and clearly explained what the modern aspect toward color is, as exemplified in her recent work ... only those who have had the privilege of hearing Mrs. Cherry tell of this modern conception of painting can really know how absorbingly interesting it is as well as attractive to look upon. ... she also spoke of her willingness to give an informal talk on this modern phase of painting if enough persons were interested and cared to have her do so." "She is pursuing this art for the love of it and she says she has at last found, in this new school, what she has been seeking all her life..." "We are accustomed to think of painters as being supernaturally endowed as persons who 'paint in their sleep,' and of the art as an art merely and not as a science. Now these modernists teach that painting is scientific from its very elements, and taking the prism as an

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instrument they study what they call the sequence of color and the relation of color to the landscape and nature and especially under out of door conditions." Society Section, *Houston Post* Sunday, January 4, 1920.



Emma Richardson Cherry *Flying Prisms* c1919

1920: Sept 28 – **Gloucester, MA.** – "I guess I told you of a man who writes modern poetry, a friend of the Pancoasts – [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.

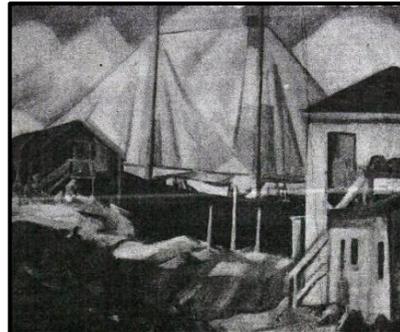
I have been satisfied to a certain extent with what he [\[Hugh Breckenridge\]](#) has given me but I felt too that I wanted more modern help. So the other day I asked Mr. Hartley if he would come & look at my summer's work & see if he thought I had any inclinations that suggested I could break loose and really do modern stuff. (He had already told Mr. Pancoast that Miss Dercum & 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.

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."



A Modernist drawing of flowers by ER Cherry (l); Marsden Hartley (c); *Sequences in Form and Color(?)*, by Cherry and Hartley 1920 (r)
1921: Oct. – Cherry becomes a member of [Société Anonyme, Inc.](#)

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COMMITTEES

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Members: Joseph Stella, Max Ray

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Those contributing \$100 per year

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Those contributing \$5.00 per year

FOUNDERS
Miss D.A. Drexler, Miss K. S. Dorrer

SOCIÉTÉ ANONYME, INC.
19 EAST FORTY-SEVENTH STREET
NEW YORK

I hereby consent to become
A \$ 5.00 Acquaintance of the Societe Anonyme, Inc.

Check enclosed

*E. Richardson Cherry -
607 Tappan Ave.
Wallingford, Conn.*

Cherry's Soci t  Anonyme, Inc., membership list from annual report, 1921, including Cherry and such other luminaries of Modernism in America as Marcel Duchamp, Marsden Hartley, Joseph Stella, Florine Stettheimer and Man Ray.

1920: Oct 11 – [Katherine Dreier](#), founder of Soci t  Anonyme, to Cherry, **New York City** – "Do send us a catalogue of your work, and maybe at the close of [your Baltimore show] send us two of your modern paintings, which I would like to see, to see if we can enter it into any of our this years' exhibitions. It would interest me especially to see the picture which you and Mr. Hartley worked on together. I am so glad to get news of him, as I have many messages from his Berlin friends, who I saw this summer. Won't you send me his address."

1920: Nov 8 – **New York** – Visited the *exhibition* of drawings by Paul C zanne at the New York gallery of Marius de Zayas, where she may also have seen *Blue Nude* (1907) by Matisse, which was in the gallery at the time.

DRAWINGS
By
CEZANNE
Nov. 8th to 28th.
Open from 3 to 6 P. M.
M. DE ZAYAS
549 FIFTH AVE.

1920: Nov 13 – Invitation from Marsden Hartley – "Mrs. Cherry, Sorry you can't be here to listen to my talks on Modern painting. When shall you be in New York? I hope before long. Met Mrs. [?] the other day. She spoke kindly of you and your enthusiasm for my teaching etc. I thank both of you. Do let me know when you are coming. Sincerely yours, Marsden Hartley."

*Dear Mrs. Cherry,
Sorry you can't be
here to listen to
my talks on modern
painting. When shall
you be in New York?
I hope before long.
Met Mrs. Brinton the
other day. She spoke
kindly of you & your
enthusiasm for my
teaching etc. I thank
both of you. Do let
me know when you
are coming.
Sincerely yours,
Marsden Hartley
550 East 25th St.
Rising Center 7265
in the South Annex.*

THE SOCIETE ANONYME, INC.
INVITES YOU
TO AN INFORMAL TALK ON MODERN ART
BY
MARSDEN HARTLEY
ON
TUESDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER THE THIRTIETH, AT HALF PAST EIGHT
AT
19 EAST FORTY-SEVENTH STREET
L 1920 3
ADMISSION FIFTY CENTS

Marsden Hartley to ER Cherry, 1920

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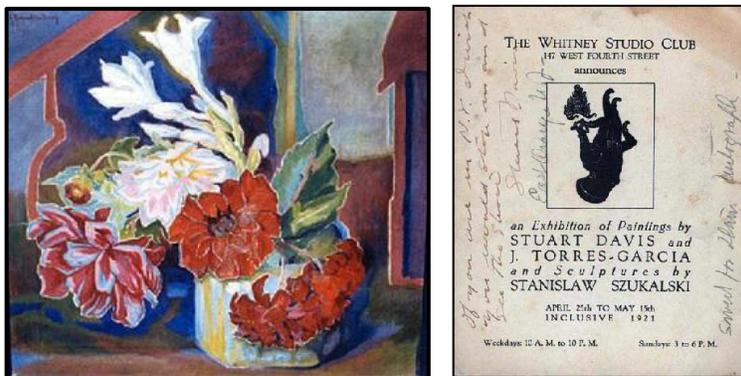
1920: Dec 8 – Letter in *The Freeman* [magazine] – AT THE PHILADELPHIA ACADEMY – "[Charles Demuth](#), with a group of four 'Bermuda Landscapes,' shows so strong a Cezanne influence, that, having seen the Cezanne exhibition now on at the Zaya gallery [i.e. [Marius de Zayas](#)] in New York I felt again some of the sensation I experienced in the presence of the master's work."



Charles Demuth *Bermuda Landscape #1* 1917 (l);
Paul Cezanne *Rocks Near the Caves above Château Noir* 1895–1900 (r).

1921: March 15 – Cherry to Dreier, **Los Angeles** – "I am tremendously interested in my new point of view and have made a couple of trials which may be a beginning for me. There are some good painters out here, but so far I have seen nothing new in point of view, except some prints at the International showing now here. This is a wide awake city and I expect someday, when they can forget to do 'California subjects' and look for other things, some good must come." Cherry to Katherine Dreier, March 15, 1921.

1921: March 29 – Dreier to Cherry, **New York City** – "The box is safely at hand, and has been unpacked, and I have looked at the six pictures it contained. There is one of flowers which I hope that we can use. It is not strictly modern enough, but we might use it in a large exhibition, to show the tendency and the growth, so I shall hold it for a while longer. ... I think you have charming color, and if you could develop a little more design and a little more abstraction, you would soon be a Modernist. This is of course, all in the point of view, for the modern painter does not paint what he sees, but as music is constructed on a mathematical basis, so the modern painter constructs his picture along the same lines. It is the colors in juxtaposition to each other, of color within color which has balance of color, which are to speak to the eye, as sound constructed speaks in music. I did not feel that this point your pictures as yet show."



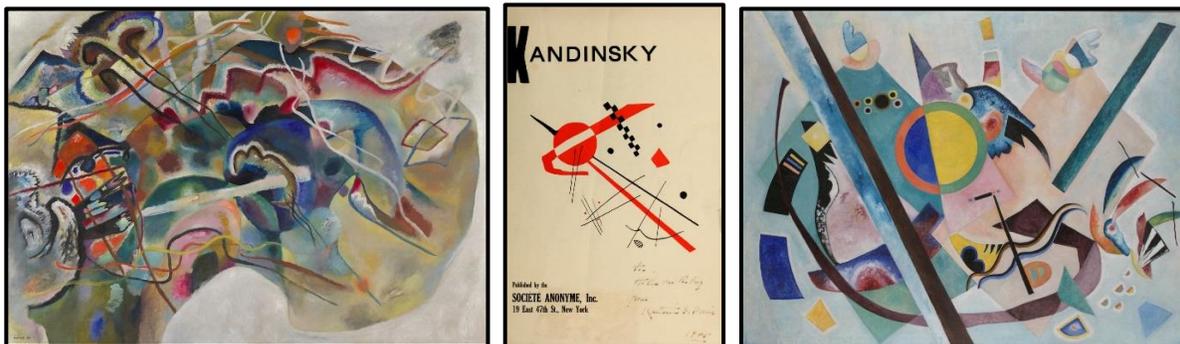
Emma Richardson *Cherry Decoration* c1920 (l); Stuart Davis to Cherry, 1921 (r)

1921: April/May – Invitation from Stuart Davis – "If you are in N.Y. I wish you would stop in and see the show. Stuart Davis. East Orange, N.J."

1923: Jan 25 – **Houston** – "[Mrs. Cherry] discussed the scientific aspect of painting ... 'I am not an extremist.' Mrs. Cherry concluded, 'but I have tried to express the modern idea of color.'" "Two Texas Artists Exhibit Work Here/Percy Holt and Mrs. E.R. Cherry Speak," *Houston Chronicle*, January 25, 1923.

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1923: April 6 – Cherry to Société Anonyme, from **Baltimore** – "Would you be so kind as to give the closing date for the Kandinsky [sic] exhibition? I want to reach New York in time to see it."



Vasily Kandinsky *Painting with White Border* 1913 (l) and *Multicolored Circle* 1921(r) with the exhibition catalog.

1923: April 7 - Société Anonyme to Cherry – "... the closing of the Kandinsky exhibition is April 25th. Hoping that you will reach New York in time ..." Note: This was the first exhibition of Kandinsky's work in the United States.

1923: April 28 – Dreier to Cherry, **New York City** – "It would give me great pleasure if you would come for tea next Friday, May 4th, at five o'clock." Katherine Dreier to Cherry, April 28, 1923.

1923: Apr/May – **Philadelphia** – Went to the first exhibition of the [Barnes Collection at Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts](#), where she first saw work by Amedeo Modigliani, among many others.



1923: June/July/August – **New York City** – "Mrs. Emma Richardson Cherry writes that she is located for the summer at the Metropolitan Art School, 58 West Fifty-Seventh Street, New York [the Sherwood]. She is acting as critic, substituting for Michel Jacobs, the director of the school, who is conducting a summer school at Gloucester, Mass. Mrs. Cherry will be in New York during June and July and possibly August, and will be glad to have Houston friends in the metropolis call at the summer school." *Houston Chronicle*, Thursday, May 31, 1923. "Mary Ellen Bute of the same city [Houston] is a studio partner." *The Art News*, June 9, 1923.

1923: June 19 – **New York City** exhibition – "Unfortunately, the paintings of Mrs. Richardson Cherry were on exhibition at the Metropolitan Art School for only one day, June 19. ... Not only is Mrs. Richardson [sic] a painter of ability, but also an inspiring teacher. She makes her pupils realize the importance of the science of their art, this knowledge plus emotion are the materials of the artist. Many of her pupils are already putting their art to an industrial use. She helps them meet their problems with much sympathy and imagination." *The New York Times*, Sunday, June 24, 1923.

1923: Nov 1 – **Houston** – "'Dynamic line,' 'color sequence' and the 'foil of the complementary' are terms fresh from the studios of the ultra-modernists which have a peculiar fascination when they appear in the vocabulary of a painter trained in the fine French manner of several years ago. It is the fundamentally conservative, well-trained artist, such as Mrs. Cherry is, who is making the new step in art really intelligible. The 'wild men' and the pure cubists can not always be followed when they paint green flesh and purple hair, but when thoughtful, thoroughly trained artists select

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from the new theories and practices what seems to them to be true, the art lover begins to realize that the new work may mean that art has extended its boundaries; that color, line and 'pattern' have taken on new and deeper meaning." "Without loss in the quality of her painting, Mrs. Cherry has incorporated into it much of the new interpretation of color, the new emphasis upon 'pattern,' the modern conception of line, and the result is extremely interesting." Stella Shurtleff, "Texas Artists Series: Mrs. E. Richardson Cherry," *The Houston Chronicle*, November 1, 1923.

1924: March 19 – **Houston** – "I'll try and send my dues to the Soci  t   [Anonyme] as soon as I get all this local necessary work cared for. I enjoy so much the literature you send – only I wish I had wings – so I could see your exhibits." Cherry to Katherine Dreier, March 19, 1924.

1924: March 27 – Dreier to Cherry, **New York City** – "We have great plans for the Soci  t   Anonyme. Just when they will complete themselves, I am not sure, but we hope to re-open some time next season in our own building, with the emphasis laid on the museum end. ... This will mean that we will have a very beautiful permanent exhibition besides our transient exhibitions, so that the high water marks of modern art can be studied at any time." Dreier to Cherry, March 27, 1924.

1924: April 2 – Cherry to Dreier – "I have a small, very small head at the Independents [exhibition in New York City] – "Color Sequence" which I think is quite a step for me. If you go in again would you look at it? I have the "Reflected in a mirror" – which you saw in my studio in New York – not advanced enough to interest you, of course." Cherry to Dreier, April 2, 1924.



Reflected In a Mirror and Color Sequence ca Early 1920s, by Emma Richardson Cherry

1925: Jan 31 – Feb 28 – **Houston** – Exhibition of her work at MFAH, including a designated "Modernist Group." This group designation (with somewhat different paintings included) also appeared when the exhibition travelled to Denver and San Antonio, 1925-1927.



Cherry paintings which she included in her MODERNIST GROUP in exhibitions of the mid-1920's.

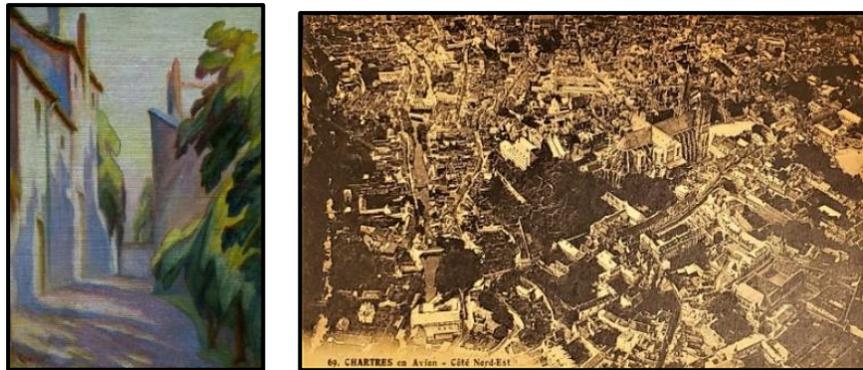
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More of Cherry's MODERNIST GROUP paintings.

1925: March 6 – Cherry to Dreier, from **Houston** – "By the enclosed [exhibition catalog for the MFAH show above] you will see I have been very much occupied all this past winter – getting things in order for my show. It seems to create a great deal of interest – in attendance, which was the largest our museum had received up to this date. Nothing sold, however, but some prospects. This is the hard problem among creators, to dispose of output. Glad I do not have to depend upon it, although I try to make it pay its own financial burden. As you know, the expense of such a large show is heavy. That explains why I am so tardy in sending my dues to the Société [Anonyme]. I am planning to go abroad in June ... I wish I could have seen the recent exhibition under your guidance. If it's still in or near New York as I go east perhaps I may."

1925: August 7 - **Guérande, France** – "Cherry has torn loose and made her first modernistic picture [below left], since our arrival – she is pleased as punch." Clemens Tanquary Robinson, Letter #17 to her husband Geroid, 7 August 1925, Columbia University Library.



1925: September – **Chartres, France** - "These air views fascinate me." (Cherry Chartres post card #108). "Great possibilities for modernism from air plane views – Someone, sometime, will do stunning things with this idea – But I'll not be there to see!" (Cherry Chartres post card #106). (above right)

1925: October 8 – **Paris** – "Yesterday ... I walked miles and miles, through the boulevards back of the Am. Express Opera district and down toward the Madeline [sic] direction – taking in all the ultra-modern art shops, seeing Renoir and Sisley, and Modigliani, Marie Laurencin and a lot of other moderns. Yes, Vlaminck too, whom I admire muchly. ... I want a month at least here to have some work in a studio of a man [[Andre L'Hote](#)] [sic], who gives one Dynamic Symetry [sic] applied to the figure. I've seen the work of one of students and talked with her. He is modernist, of course, else I would not want him. ... I'm not as yet planning to go to Clem Tan's [art class (?), 2 words illeg], as she will give it to me when they give it to her. I am however[?] going once more to the Exposition, to see my favorites, and once more to the Autumn Salon – (all modernists). Of course, here in Paris, there are always exhibits one can see.

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When I tell you I have been here almost a month and have not been to the Luxembourg – nor to see my pet Mona Lisa in the Louvre you will hardly believe me." ERC to Dorothy, October 9, 1925.



Maurice Vlaminck *The Street* 1925; Amadeo Modigliani *Le Grand Nu* 1917; Marie Laurencin *Jeune Danseuses* c1925

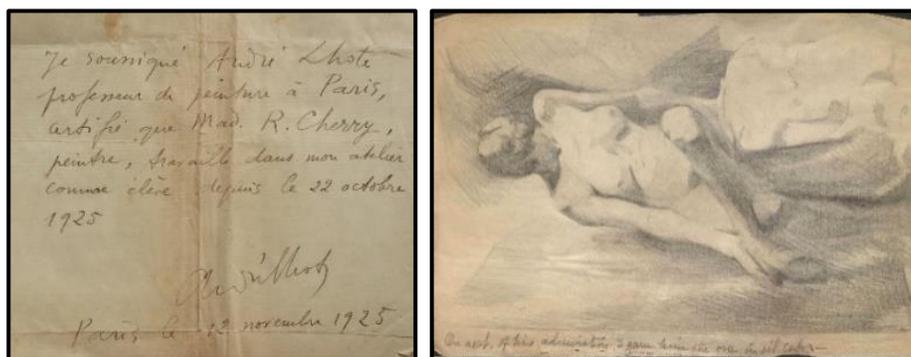
1925: Oct. – **Paris** – Combining her two passions – art and shopping – Cherry discovers Sonia Delaunay's *Boutique Simultanée* at the *Exposition internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels modernes*, where avant-garde art and fashion meet – and she is delighted, tucking Delaunay's card into her address book for future use.



Boutique Simultanée (l), Sonia Delaunay in her studio (c), and Delaunay fabric designs (r), all 1925.

1925: Oct. 14 – **Paris** – "The party for the Spanish trip has been postponed ... I am sorry as I wanted to get back here and to work in L'Hote's [sic] studio, where I expect to apply the dynamic theory to the figure. That will throw the month in his studio to the 15th November opening and end on the 15th of December." ERC to Dorothy, October 14, 1925.

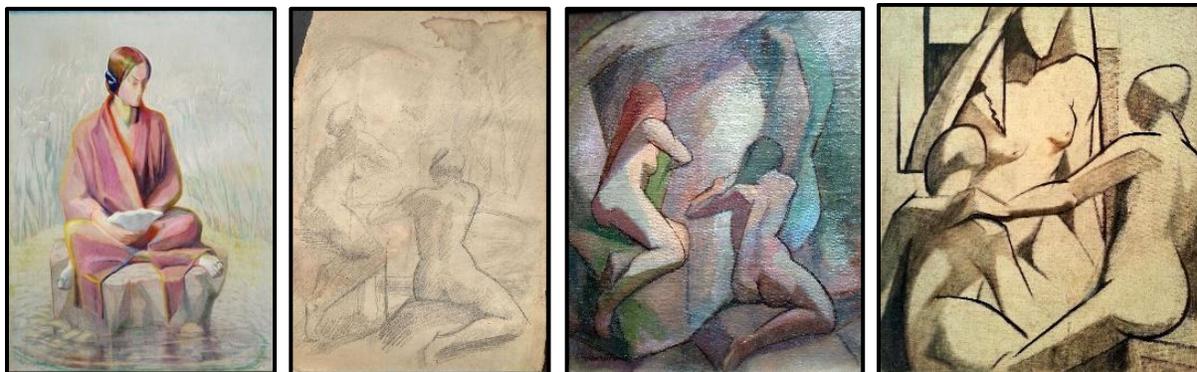
1925: Oct. 22-Nov. 12 – **Paris** – Cherry studies in the atelier of cubist painter, Andre Lhote, as he attested in his handwritten "diploma." The two even exchanged paintings, the one she gave him being an oil version of a female nude drawing based on the poses he arranged for his students. In her note on a the drawing, she says: "On acct. of his admiration, I gave him the one in oil colors."



Andre Lhote's handwritten certificate (l); Cherry's drawing, with her notation of her gift to him (r).

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1925: Oct. 25 – **Paris** – "I asked her [Ola McNeill Davidson] to read you the letter as there is a lot in it about L'Hote's studio and his ideas. It's just what I am trying to work out & did to some extent in Caroline's picture [ERC's *Precious Bowl* for which Houston friend, Caroline Levy, was the sitter], so I am doubly pleased." ERC to Dorothy, October 25, 1925.



Precious Bowl c1923 (l) and Cherry sketch and paintings executed in L'hote's atelier, including *Arrangement* c1925.

1925: Oct. 31 – **Paris** – "Yesterday Clemmie Tan & I took a spree. ... At the [Champs Elysee](#) [sic] little theatre (by the side of the big one) there were to be some Jewish dances, in native costumes and also modern, by the director of the theatre in Palestine – and it sounded interesting and much in the lines of our modernist tastes – so we went – And I want to tell you it was tremendously interesting. I hope he will go to America – and that Caroline and the doctor can see him – Baruck [Agaditi? (1895-1976)].

Before this we met at [a gallery](#) where were being shown some recent work by [Modigliani](#) [sic] – one of the most modern modernists – and Clemmie was absolutely overcome with his things. I had seen some in Philadelphia in [Dr. Barnes](#) marvellous [sic] collection of modernist things – so was somewhat prepared –" ERC to Dorothy, November 1, 1925.



Modigliani exhibition at Galerie Bing, Paris, Oct/Nov 1925.

1925: Nov – **Paris** – "I'm pretending to be a young art student again, joining a private class in Andre L'Hote's studio. He is considered the leading exponent of modified cubism in Paris. He is a very keen appreciative critic, giving endless time to his followers. L'Hote takes life lightly but art most seriously. The studio is a jolly place during rest times, but a beehive during the poses. It's fine to assimilate a growing idea, especially when so well founded upon the great art of the 'old Masters' as L'Hote's is. 'Organization' is his hobby, and he is a very constructive worker. If all 'modernists,' so-called, had his hold upon the underlying principles of composition, it would be a resurrection from incoherent and unassembled painting, sculpture and applied art. I'm all ready to be picked up by a small party who leave by auto for Avignon at 9:30 this morning. We then go to Nice and Carcassonne, then over into Spain for a three weeks' trip. Some go on to Algiers, but I will see about that when we get to Southern Spain. One can't see all the earth and study, too. One has to take a 'limited train' at times." "Houston Artist Enjoys Study In Parisian Studio," *Houston Chronicle* December 27, 1925, from a letter ERC to Ola McNeill Davidson, early December 1925.

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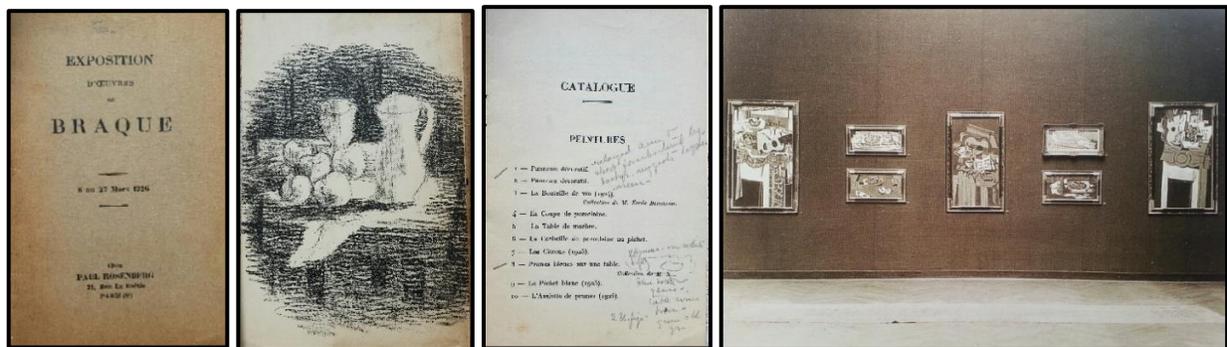
A view of Andre Lhote in his atelier with students, and two Cherry sketches done there, c1925.

1926: March – **Paris** – "I hope to get right to work and have plenty of inspiration in the Retrospective Independents and a special [Odilon Redon](#) show on now at the Dec. Arts dept – in the Louvre." Cherry to Dorothy, March, 1926.



Some of the Redon works Cherry saw in the 1926 exhibition

1926: March – **Paris** – Attended the [Georges Braque](#) exhibition at Galerie Paul Rosenberg, making extensive notes in her copy of the catalog about the paintings she saw.



Pages from Cherry's copy of the 1926 Braque exhibition at Galerie Paul Rosenberg, with her notes, and an installation photo show of the show.

1926: After March 27 – **Paris** – "... I really might like to have a month in Lhote's studio after I get this picture out. One month is not enough to get what he has to give. Still, I have a good idea of it all – but not much practice, of course. This is only an idea of yesterday and I thought I would write it to you. Lhote closes his studio the 1st of July – and I could take the July boat as well as the June one – if you & Pops are willing. You will think I am a great postponer – but after Pops letter I felt there was no need to pull up if I was accomplishing things. But one always can anyway – so maybe it doesn't matter whether I go or stay. I'm too old a bird to gather much grain I suppose – except in ideas. Had a wonderful trip two mornings, going around to Modernists studios – helping Miss Lynch

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solicit things for a show the Irish are putting on in London in May." Cherry to her daughter, ND, After March 27, 1926.



Cherry Study in Compositional Spaces c1925/26, employing principles of dynamic symmetry.

1926: May 18 – Paris – "Took this last week off from Lhote's – so as to get some work done in my room ... But am back there in the afternoons this week – my last one there." Cherry to her daughter, May 18, 1926.

1926: May 20 – Paris – "I am on my last week at Lhote's studio. When I wrote and got an answer about extending my time here, I took two more weeks as he is such a fine critic." Cherry to her husband, May 20, 1926.

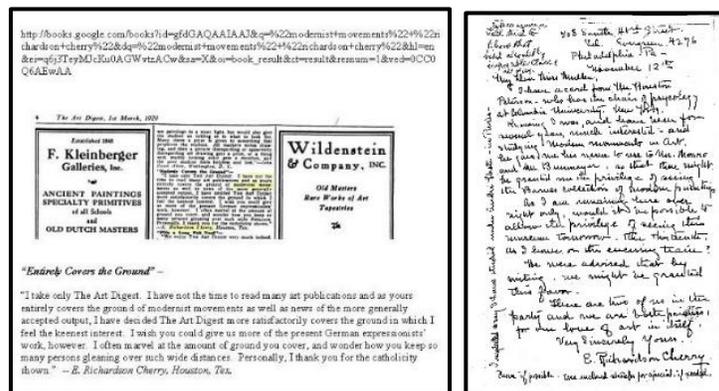
1926: June 7 – Paris – "Paris is filling up so with strangers & tourists and my work here is done." Cherry to her daughter, June 7, 1926.

1926: Nov 14 – San Antonio – "Mrs. Cherry will speak on composition, color, the impressionistic, romantic and modernist movements." *San Antonio Light*, Nov. 14, 1926.

1926: Dec 12 – San Antonio – "Among the modernist group [at the Witte Museum] that Mrs. Cherry has painted, Dawson-Watson pointed [out], he favors two entitled *Sequences in Form and Color*, and *Bourg de Batz*. The latter, it was explained, appeared in the French Exhibition in Dublin this year." Unidentified newspaper article, Dec 12, 1926.

1928: April 17 – Houston – "... her work ... has recently undergone a rapid change in matter and manner ... The modern art attitudes concern her intensely. The new theory that texture and line are of as much importance as idea and content finds in her and her 'new' work a practicing exponent ... 'I am not a big painter,' Mrs. Cherry said. 'But if I could have known earlier what I have just recently found out, I think my painting would have created a sensation.'" Ruth West, "Presentations 2. Mrs. E. Richardson Cherry, *The Houston Gargoyle*, April 17, 1928.

1929: March 1 – Letter to *Art Digest* asking for more on German expressionism. It seems likely that Cherry's views on "modern" German and French art influenced fellow Houstonian, Ima Hogg, who "On trips to Paris, Munich and Berlin in 1929 and 1930 ... sought out drawings, watercolors, etchings, and lithographs" by many of the leading avant-garde artists of the day – works she eventually donated the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, in 1939.



Cherry writes on German art to *Art Digest*, 1929 (l); Cherry writes to Albert Barnes, 1929 (r).

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1929: Sept 22. Cherry to Dorothy, **Birchmont, North Conway, NH**. “They all wait on me like I was a real genius – and Mrs. Jones follows me around like a pet does its mistress – and so very solicitous that I have everything I need – I have a regular suite – my bedroom – and another for my painting traps – and two big closets – one for my clothes and the other for my trunk – stretchers &c – and a bath room all my own – plenty of hot water and everything. A lovely view across the valley to Moat Mountain – and at the right Mt. Washington – away off in the distance.”



Cherry *Across the Valley* 1929 (l); Marsden Hartley *Mountains, no. 19* 1930 (r), Dallas Museum of Art. Both artists paint the same New Hampshire mountains.

1929: Nov 12 – **Philadelphia** – Applied for permission to visit the Barnes Collection during a one-night stay in Philadelphia. “I have a card from Mr. Houston Peterson – who has the chair of psychology [sic] at Columbia University, New York. Knowing I was, and have been for several years, much interested – and studying Modern movements in art ... he gave me his name to use ... so that there might be granted me the privilege of seeing the Barnes Collection of modern paintings. ... We were advised that by writing we might be granted this favor. ... I neglected to say I have studied under Andre Lhote – in Paris.” (Permission denied! Notation on letter: “Either ignore or tell Alice to phone that visit absolutely impossible. Closed all day.”)

1930: Aug 7-10 – **Venice** to attend the 11th Venice Biennale, and visit with Zanetti-Zilla. “... found a good German hotel just across the canal – opp. the station – a long way up to San Marco – but the canal always interesting – and reasonable at \$3.36 a day which included four glasses of wine – the 10% service – 2 stamps – city tax – and shoes shined – which was pretty good for exposition time.” Source: ERC Letter to Dorothy, 1930:Aug 14, from Duingt, France.

1930: Sept 6 – **Amsterdam** – Attends the private opening of the Van Gogh exhibition: “By bluffing I got into the Van Gogh for an hour ... and all the next afternoon was allowed to make notes – being a press woman – an artist and a lecturer on art – and this p.m. was the official private opening, to which I managed to get a card! Asked the dame [sic] who took them to let me keep mine as a souvenir – so she kept the envelope & handed me the card.” Leave on a special nine o'clock train for the Hook – where I cross that dreaded channel.”



Van Gogh exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam 1930, from *Algemeen Handelsblad* (7 September 1930)

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1933: Sept - **Chicago** - Went with other Houston women, including Ola McNeill Davidson, to the Chicago World's Fair, and to visit art galleries, a trip they had made previously in 1904. "Mrs. McNeill Davidson and Mrs. E.R. Cherry have gone to Chicago for a visit at the World Fair." "Mrs. E.R. Cherry has returned from Chicago, where she toured the art galleries ..." *Houston Chronicle*, September 10 & October 1, 1933.



A Century of Progress: Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture, The Art Institute of Chicago 1933.

1934: June – **Houston** – "It was jolly!" In June 1934, for a special party at her home (now known as the historic Nichols-Rice-Cherry House in Sam Houston Park in downtown Houston), Emma Richardson Cherry had all the guests come in costumes inspired by artists. She made a very special one herself: "the nude descending the stairs." It "brought down the house!" That Mrs. Cherry was such a wild thing!! Unfortunately there are no photos, but it might well have looked something like this.



[The Cherry House at Night] (l), along with photoshopped images of what her "jolly" Modernist evening might have looked like.

1935: Feb 3 – Cherry to Katherine Dreier, Société Anonyme – "I wish I might be in New York to see the exhibition – also to take part – probably only as an onlooker, for the color discussion. It is such a privilege to live in New York! But my destiny seems otherwise decided for me." Cherry to Katherine Dreier, February 3, 1935.

1937: April 16 – **Houston** – "I learned to do academic, pretty things when I was young... As I became more mature, I wanted to make my work more different. I wanted to inject modernism into it. I studied hard to acquire that modernism. But many people do not like it. And I was painting canvases to sell. So I worked out a plan. My canvases are built carefully, almost on the cubistic plan – but I shield the underlying structure with detail, sheer prettiness. It gives me

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pleasure, and not many are the wiser." Newspaper profile, "Dean of Houston Painters Counts Day Lost Unless Something Put on Canvas," *Houston Press*, April 16, 1937.



Cherry *Red Oaks House, Randolph Field* c late 1930s, with a sketch emphasizing the underlying Cubist elements (sketch by the author).

1937: May – **Houston** – "The recognition accorded Mrs. Cherry here and abroad by critics of repute bear testimony to the work wrought by this art pioneer, who in more recent years rapidly changed to modern art in subject matter and technique." Lucy Runnels Wright, "A Woman Extraordinary," *The Texas Outlook*, May, 1937.

1939: Aug 18 – **Houston** – "A gift to the Houston Museum of Fine Arts of 84 original watercolors, drawings, etchings and lithographs by old and modern masters of the French, German, Mexican and American schools was announced Friday by James Chillman, Jr., director. They have been presented by Miss Ima Hogg ... in the American group ... E. Richardson Cherry." "84 Originals ...," *The Houston Chronicle*, Aug 18, 1939.



Cherry [*Bouchout Castle, Belgium*] c1911, gift of Ima Hogg to Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1939.

1940: June 9 – To Marsden Hartley, from **San Antonio** – "We liked your show here [at the Witte Museum] very much. So strong and virile. The weight of nature pleased me, for I like that solidity on canvas. How bravely you paint! I wish I had your courage." Cherry to Hartley, June 9, 1940, Beinecke/Yale.

Note on sources: The Cherry/Dreier correspondence is in the Katherine S. Dreier Papers / Société Anonyme Archive, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University. Most other Cherry correspondence is held by The Houston Public Library, The Heritage Society in Sam Houston Park, and private collections.