

TheMedium

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An Evening at The Menil

The annual meeting in Houston began with a tour of The Menil's "treasure rooms," which delivered exactly what they promised. A line of sculptures by Max Ernst greets visitors upon entering. There are rows of Magrittes and Picassos. Pollock, Rothko, and Matta all hang side by side with one another. A folding screen artfully decorated with cigar bands. And beaded masks and wooden carvings of animals are just the beginning. The rooms are full from floor to ceiling of works by surrealist and abstract masters as well as works by unknown African and Byzantine artists. There are four rooms that are divided by Surrealism, Abstraction and Decorative arts, Byzantine, and African and Oceanic arts.

The "treasure rooms" are located on the second floor of the Menil Collection. The building's cantilevered roof creates an optical illusion that hides the second floor from the ground level. The "treasure rooms" house a large portion of the collection when the items are not on display. The rooms are open to museum staff and scholars. Scholars will need to make arrangements to visit.

Following this tour, members were invited by Eric Wolf, Head Librarian at The Menil Collection, to see the library. *Kurt Schwitters: Color and Collage*, an exhibition at The Menil, was open to the public that evening and provided members the opportunity to see these rarely exhibited works.

Marianne Bidgood

Annual Meeting 2010 Business Meeting Minutes

ARLIS Texas/Mexico Chapter Meeting Minutes

November 14, 2010, Houston, Texas

Executive Committee of the ARLIS/NA Texas-Mexico Chapter

Craig Bunch, President

Beverly Mitchell, Vice-President, President Elect

Karen Sigler, Secretary

Edward Lukasek, Treasurer

Minutes

I. Call to Order (President Bunch)

The Art Libraries Society of North America, Texas-Mexico Chapter's Annual Business Meeting 2010 was held at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas on Sunday, November 14, 2010. The meeting was called to order by President Craig Bunch.

II. Introductions (President Bunch)

President Bunch asked those present to introduce themselves. In attendance were Lynn Wexler (MFAH), Catherine Essinger (U of Houston), Jon Evans (MFAH), Kelly Fielding (UNT), Gloria Selene Hinojosa (Texas State), Chia-Chun Shih (Kimbell), Margaret Culbertson (MFAH), Tara Spies Smith (Texas State), Laura Schwartz (UT), Martha González Palacios (UT), Carla Ellard (Texas State), Shari Salisbury (UTSA), Eric Wolf (Menil Collection), Beverly Mitchell (SMU), Jet M. Prendeville (Rice), Samuel Duncan (Amon Carter Museum of American Art), Merriann Bidgood (University of Houston), Craig Bunch (Hamilton MS, Houston I.S.D.), Edward Lukasek (Hirsch Library, MFAF) and Karen Sigler (Texas State).

President Bunch thanked Delana Bunch for all her support and help in arranging many of the conference activities, along with driving the van that transported a majority of the members during the conference to the scheduled events. Beverly Mitchell was thanked for her help and support as incoming President, Edward Lukasek was thanked for his assistance with the duties of the treasurer and membership and Karen Sigler for duties as secretary. A big thank you went to Margaret Culbertson for extending her home and hospitality to the Chapter members for their dinner on Friday evening. Eric Wolf and Clare Elliott from the Menil were thanked for their very informative behind the scene tours of the Menil Collection, along with all the MFAH staff

who gave additional tours and Jim Harithas for his talk on the Broken Obelisk and the James Drake show at the Station Museum of Contemporary Art.

III. Secretary's Report and Approval of 2009 Business Meeting Minutes (Secretary Sigler)

Minutes from the 2009 meeting had previously been submitted to Chapter members for comments. Copies of the revised minutes were given to those in attendance with suggested changes (inclusion of the names of the Executive Board in the minutes and a spelling correction for a member name). Secretary Sigler asked that the 2009 Business Meeting Minutes be approved by the members. Secretary Sigler moved to have the minutes approved. Carla Ellard seconded the motion.

IV. Treasurer's Report (Treasurer Lukasek)

Treasurer Lukasek reported we had 36 attendees. We started with a 2010 pre-conference balance at \$721.51. \$1,985.00 was credited to our account from conference registration and annual membership dues. Included in that amount was \$305.00 for the Lois Swan Jones Award. After expenditures for the dinner party on Friday, Bayou Bend lunch on Saturday, and the conference breakfast on Sunday, the current balance is \$1,835.13.

V. Nominating Committee and Elections (Past Presidents Ellard and Hinojosa)

Martha González Palacios was nominated for upcoming Vice-President/President Elect and Shari Salisbury was nominated for Secretary. There was a call to see if there were any others interested in serving in one of the upcoming positions and there none. Both were unanimously elected.

VI. Lois Swan Jones' Award Committee Report (Tara Spies Smith)

Committee chair, Tara Spies Smith, reported that Elizabeth Schaub was given the Lois Swan Jones Award (\$500) to supplement her attendance at the National ARLIS North America Conference in Minneapolis. The committee was made up of Tara Spies Smith, Shari Salisbury and Beverly Mitchell.

VII. Call for new LSJ Award Committee Volunteers (President Bunch)

President Bunch made a call for volunteers to serve on this committee. Tara Spies Smith and Shari Salisbury agreed to continue serving. Karen Sigler volunteered to serve as a member of this committee. Treasurer Lusasek is a member by default. Tara will put out a call in January for applicants. The amount of the award for next year was discussed and it was agreed the amount for next year's award would remain at \$500.

VIII. Chapter Welcome Party (Treasurer Lusasek)

Treasurer Lusasek stated that the chapter could afford to donate \$300 to the Welcome Party at the 2011 ARLIS/NA Annual Conference in Minneapolis. Edward Lusasek moved that the chapter donate \$300. Carla Ellard seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

IX. ARLIS/NA Strategic Planning Initiative (Jon Evans and Eric Wolf)

Preliminary goals drafted and will be circulated at large before the end of 2010. ARLIS National is considering the basic identity and vision of the organization and how they work with other institutions, along with mentoring, professional development and financial stewardship. ARLIS NA is looking for input and would like to improve communication between themselves and the chapters. Beverly offered to look into a wiki to see if this might be a useful way to facilitate communication.

X. Access to L-soft listserv software for chapter listserv (President Bunch)

Letter from Vanessa Kam (ARLIS/NA Chapter Liaison), reviewed. The Texas-Mexico Chapter is being asked if they want their listserv to have an archive capability and if are they willing to pay the costs associated with this functionality. A discussion followed regarding the members thoughts on this question and the costs that would be involved in being able to do so through ARLIS NA. The group discussed the pros and cons of using ARLIS NA, along with the possibility of using an individual institution to host the site and problems which occur if the person leaves the position. Members from UT at Austin offered to check into the possibility of their institution hosting the site.

XI. Searching for a Mexican colleague to attend ARLIS/NA Minneapolis 2011 Conference (Vice President Mitchell and Carla Ellard)

Once again we discussed the difficulties in trying to attract librarians from Mexico. It was proposed that we try to market to students or on listservs to get them interested.

XII. New Business (President Bunch)

Jon provided an in-depth ARLIS/NA Board Report to the ARLIS/Texas-Mexico Chapter. Report included here for further information:

Jon mentioned some of the new features to the next National ARLIS NA Conference will be 1 ½ hour sessions, along with 3 simultaneous sessions. The opening or closing address will be given by a photographer. They are combining membership at the Welcome Party Lunch to include ARLIS and DRA. The meeting in 2012 will be held in Toronto and 2015 in Pasadena, California. He announced incoming board members. The national conference in Boston was much more successful than they anticipated.

Martha González Palacios made a suggestion that the Sunday business meeting be moved to Saturday. A

discussion followed and it was suggested that all chapter members be polled to determine the preference of the entire Chapter membership. Beverly will draft a poll and send it out to all the members for their input on this suggestion.

XIII. 2011 Meeting Planning (Vice President Mitchell)

Incoming President, Beverly Mitchell, discussed ideas for activities for the next chapter meeting to be held in Fort Worth. She will research art events being held to determine if October or November would be a better time for the meeting. She also asked for and received volunteers for submissions to The Medium related to our conference events in Houston.

XIV. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Annual Meeting 2010, Houston, Group Photos



Museum of Fine Arts, Houston



Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

At The Menil: Rothko Chapel, Byzantine Fresco Chapel, and the Cy Twombly Gallery

At the end of the day on Saturday, members had time to see the Rothko Chapel, Byzantine Fresco Chapel, and the Cy Twombly Gallery, all of which are part of The Menil collection. The large paintings by Mark Rothko fulfill the de Menils' intent for The Rothko Chapel to serve as a sacred space regardless of any particular sect. It provides an interesting dialog with the Lysi frescoes in the Byzantine Fresco Chapel, which is across the street. The frescoes are amazingly beautiful in their chapel, which is equal in austerity to the Rothko Chapel. Dominique de Menil recovered these frescoes from complete destruction after they were stolen in the 1980s, and she saw that they were restored to their current, well-conserved state. The last visit of the day was an intimate tour given by Delana Bunch at the Cy Twombly gallery. Delana recited poetry by the German poet, Ranier Maria Rilke, whose work served as a source of inspiration for five of the Twombly paintings.

Beverly Mitchell

Barnett Newman's Broken Obelisk

On the evening of November 12th, ARLIS/NA Texas-Mexico members gathered together at Barnett Newman's *Broken Obelisk* to listen to Jim Harithas give a brief talk. Installed in a reflecting pool, the Newman piece is illuminated beautifully from below. Harithas spoke about its history, Newman, Rothko, and the de Menils. The work was completed in 1963 and exhibited in Washington D.C. at the Corcoran before its permanent site and dedication to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the Rothko Chapel in 1971. Harithas' unique perspective on the piece comes from his experience as director of the Corcoran during the installation of the *Broken Obelisk* and from his current position as director of the Station Museum of Contemporary Art in Houston. He provided an animated account of the controversy surrounding the piece beginning with its installation in D.C. through the negotiations over the logistics of its installation in Houston. The work now constitutes an integral part of the Menil Collection and serves as a spiritual landmark for many members of the community.

Mary Wegmann

Benjamin Patterson: Born in the State of FLUX/us, exhibit at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston

Benjamin Patterson, active in the 1960s Fluxus Art scene, is exhibiting fifty years of his career at the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston. The exhibit features video installations, annotated scores and books, sculpture, painting, and video and sound pieces of his musical performances. There is also a room filled with newspaper articles, other ephemera, and annotations by the artist printed on sheets of Plexiglas that cover events of Patterson's life and hang in a maze-like structure, which the viewer is to read by flashlight.

Patterson received a degree in music composition and performance from the University of Michigan in 1956 and an M. S. in Library Science from Columbia University in 1967. He spent twenty years of his life out of the art scene as a reference librarian and later as an arts administrator until 1989 when he returned to Europe where he created several of the pieces that are shown for the first time at this retrospective.

Patterson also created the *Museum of the Subconscious*, which was in the loading dock alley between the Contemporary Arts Museum and The Jung Center of Houston. He marked it with a sculpture that is in the photo below. It is Annex No. 3. The original museum is in Namibia and two other annexes are in Israel and Argentina. Museum attendees may fill out a form to bequeath their subconscious minds after they die.

Tara Spies Smith



Image courtesy of Tara Spies Smith

References

Britt, D. (2010). *Fluxus artist's legacy is tricky*. Retrieved December 9, 2010, from <http://www.29-95.com/art/story/camh-rediscovers-elusive-pioneer>

Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. (2010). *Exhibitions: In the Brown Foundation Gallery: Benjamin Patterson: Born in the State of FLUX/us*. Retrieved December 9, 2010, from http://www.camh.org/exhib_MAIN.html

Black light white noise: Sound and light in contemporary art. Houston, C. A. M., curator, e. and Oliver, V. C. (2007). [Video/DVD] Houston, TX: Contemporary Arts Museum Houston.

Dario Robleto at Inman Gallery

Describing himself as a "materialist poet," Dario Robleto introduced us to several fine examples of his work. "Who Will Mend Your Phantom Limbs" (2007) is composed of "excavated bullets from various wars carved into spools, hair salvaged from excavated locket, homemade paper (cotton, passion flower), stretched audio tape of the earliest recording of time (experimental clock, 1878), 10,000 year old flower caught in amber, carved bone and ivory, braided hair, lead coated rose stem, ribbon, mourning handkerchief, locket photograph, cast lamp black, resin, typeset, paint," according to the checklist of works generously provided by Kerry Inman. Anticipating wonder at his use of unique or precious materials, Dario answered his own question: "Is alteration destruction or construction? For me it's always one way." And again: "Is it destroying or is it unlocking something else within it?" Another work on display, "Words Tremble With The Thoughts They Express" (2008) has an equally poetic title and cast of materials including "feathers made from stretched audio tape of the last recordings of now extinct birds and now extinct languages" and "volcanic ash from Mt. St. Helens."

In another vein, Dario discussed his archival inkjet prints on Epson Somerset Velvet paper: "The Sky, Once Choked With Stars, Will Slowly Darken: Cash/Coltrane-Paris" and "The Sky, Once Choked With Stars, Will Slowly Darken: Sun Ra/Coltrane-Shepp" (both 2010). These photographic diptyches reproduce classic album covers from which all but the light sources and their glows have been removed. Archie Shepp is apparently still with us, but Johnny Cash, Sun Ra, and John Coltrane have passed on though their glows remain bright.

Kerry Inman noted the humor in much of Dario's work. Representing this side of the artist and, like the photographs above, a profound interest in the packaging of music, Dario has created his own fictitious vintage album covers: "Christian Car Wash," "Sound Odyssey," and "Don't Even Think About Livin' " (2003). They have the ring of truth.

Our deepest thanks go to Dario Robleto and Kerry Inman for hosting us to this very special exhibition and journey.

Craig Bunch

German Impressionism at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

On Saturday, November 13, members of the Texas/Mexico chapter were treated to not one, but two tours of current exhibitions at the MFAH, led by their respective curators. The two pendant exhibitions were "Drawing from Nature" and "A Variation of Impressionism: German Impressionist Landscape Painting," both focusing on the work of three late 19th through early 20th century German artists: Max Liebermann, Lovis Corinth, and Max Slevogt.

First, Dena Woodall, curator of drawing, led the group through "Drawing from Nature," an exhibition of prints and drawings by the three artists. The works on display ranged from studies for paintings to illustrations of books. This tour was followed by curator Helga Aurisch leading the Texas art librarians through her exhibition of landscape paintings by the German Impressionists. The two exhibitions in tandem clearly established the place of this group of artists, seldom seen in the United States within the art of their time. A clearer understanding of the late arrival of Impressionism to Germany as well as an appreciation for some remote German landscapes emerged from these gallery visits. The expertise, generosity and good humor of Mesdames Woodall and Aurisch provided for an enlightening morning, provocative discussion and an appreciation for three artists who were previously unknown to the majority of the audience.

Eric Wolf

Lora Jean Kilroy Visitor Education Center and Library, and Ima Hogg's home and gardens at Bayou Bend

Following lunch at the Lora Jean Kilroy Visitor Education Center and Library, chapter members were able to tour the library, hosted by Director Margaret Culbertson, as well as Ima Hogg's home and gardens at Bayou Bend. The library, which opened in 2010, is available to the public and holds over 6,000 volumes on American art, culture, history and gardening. Ima Hogg's home displays a collection of furniture and decorative objects ranging in dates from 1620 to 1870. The surrounding gardens comprise fourteen acres of organic gardening, and fortunately, the showers before lunch cleared so that members were able to enjoy the beautiful sunshine and light weather.

Beverly Mitchell

News update from Vanessa Kam, Chapters Liaison for ARLIS/NA

Greetings Texas-Mexico ARLIS/NA Chapter members!

It's my privilege to provide for you a brief update for your newsletter on behalf of the ARLIS/NA Executive Board.

Just a few months ago (September 23-24), the board met for its mid-year meeting in picturesque Santa Fe, New Mexico. We met at the lovely Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, where we mused and dialogued about many things. Here are a few highlights:

-The Board is very excited about the upcoming ARLIS/NA Annual Conference in Minneapolis in March 24-28, 2011. This conference will be a joint conference with our Visual Resources Association colleagues, and planning for the conference is moving along smoothly. The sessions should be fascinating and we look forward to exploring Minneapolis, the Walker Art Center, and the city's other cultural offerings.

A preliminary website for the conference is up and running that includes the conference schedule and a link to the conference hotel: <http://www.vra-arlis2011.org/>

- We also spoke about many other interesting topics such as the upcoming Summer Educational Institute (SEI); updates from TEI (our management company), approved the ARLIS/NA budget, the wonderful new ARLIS/NA Executive Board slate, and more!

- Strategic Plan (2010-2015). A committee has been struck to spearhead the strategic planning process for ARLIS/NA. The composition of this committee has changed slightly to include Jamie Lausch, Hannah Bennett, Jennifer Garland, Eumie Imm-Stroukoff, Barbara Rockenbach, Eric Wolf, and Patricia Barnett, Chair.

Fall is crunch time for this committee, as they are eager to gather input from ARLIS/NA members about the plan. The committee was especially pleased that the preliminary goals were discussed at many chapter meetings this fall. Jon Evans kindly collated Texas-Mexico's comments, and I am interested to see your strong interest in a blog or wiki for sharing ideas around the strategic plan, and other items of interest to your chapter.

Also, your comments reflected the ongoing challenge of recruiting more Mexican members to your chapter. That is a complex issue with lots of facets to unpack. I'm glad to see that there continues to be thinking around it. If I, or the board in general, can help your chapter unravel this in any way, please let me/us know.

To wrap up my little report on the strategic plan, please be on the look out for more communications from the Strategic Plan committee, including surveys, information about focus groups they are planning on assembling, and other requests for feedback as the plan develops.

Onto TEI matters. In October, some of the ARLIS/NA board members asked chapter members and other members of ARLIS/NA to give us feedback on how our management company, TEI is doing thus far. As far as I know, we are in the process of going through that feedback. Related to TEI is your chapter's interest in a listserv with more functionality, including the option to archive. One possibility is TEI's L-Soft listserv. You might recall that I sent out an email asking chapters if they would be interested in upgrading to L-Soft. A couple of other chapters expressed an interest in L-Soft as well. The next steps are for the board to tabulate how many chapters and ARLIS/NA committees are interested in L-Soft, and determining whether the board can support the increased cost in getting enough L-Soft licenses to accommodate all the requests. The board is still gathering the data on this and we will report back to you just as soon as we can.

Finally, tis the season to renew your ARLIS/NA memberships! I encourage you to be the first on your block to get that taken care of! I can assure you that another staggeringly wonderful year of involvement in our fabulous organization awaits!

That's about all I can think of for now. If any of you have questions about this update or anything at all, please feel free to send me an email at vanessa.kam@ubc.ca

I look forward to reading this newsletter and seeing what you have all been up to!

Best wishes for a beautiful holiday season!



Vanessa Kam, ARLIS/NA Chapters Liaison

Station Museum of Contemporary Art

Station Museum of Contemporary Art was one of the last stops of the day showcasing the art venues of Houston. Currently, the Museum is hosting a provocative show called James Drake: A Thousand Tongues Burn and Sing. We were fortunate to have James Harithas, the Director of the Station Museum, provide an in-depth interpretation of the exhibit.

James Drake is an artist currently living in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He has lived in Guatemala, Mexico and El Paso. He works in various media including video, drawing, sculpture, and installation. Themes in his work include the conflict between humans and animals, the relationship of language and gesture, identity and the Border.

The Station Museum of Contemporary Art is known for organizing provocative and compelling exhibitions. Over the past several years they have organized shows on the following topics:

- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual civil rights
- Iraqi artists in exile
- Colombian artists
- Palestinian artists

James Harithas has had an esteemed career himself as former Director of the Corcoran Museum of Art, Everson Museum at Syracuse University, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston and founder of the Art Car Museum.

To learn more about Drake, see *James Drake*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008.

To learn more about the Station Museum visit www.stationmuseum.com.

To learn more about Harithas visit:

http://www.artleaguehouston.org/documents/2008_texas_artist_of_the_year...

Laura Schwartz