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Archives of American Art

Celebrating 175: Mel Casas, Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1971-1974

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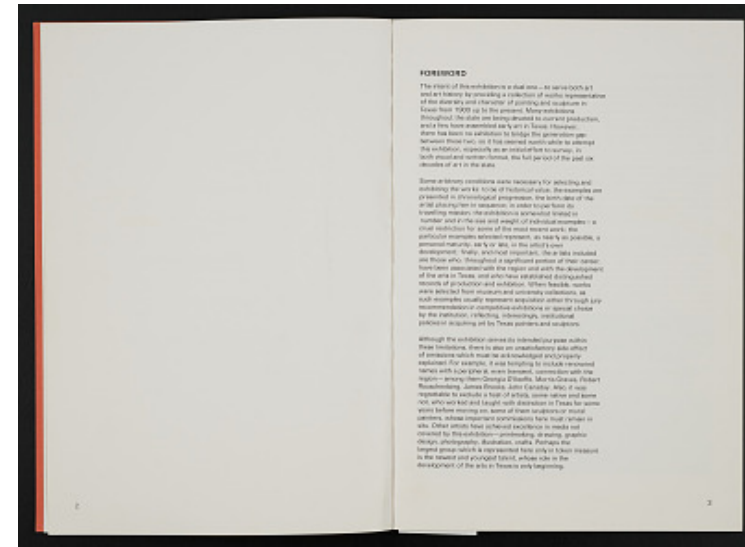
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FOREWORD

The intent of this exhibition is a dual one—to serve both art and art history by providing a collection of works representative of the diversity and character of painting and sculpture in Texas from 1900 up to the present. Many exhibitions throughout the state are being devoted to current production, and a few have assembled early art in Texas. However, there has been no exhibition to bridge the generation gap between these two, so it has seemed worth while to attempt this exhibition, especially as an initial effort to survey, in both visual and written format, the full period of the past six decades of art in the state.

Some arbitrary conditions were necessary for selecting and exhibiting the works: to be of historical value, the examples are presented in chronological progression, the birth date of the artist placing him in sequence; in order to perform its traveling mission, the exhibition is somewhat limited in number and in the size and weight of individual examples— a cruel restriction for some of the most recent work; the particular examples selected represent, as nearly as possible, a personal maturity, early or late, in the artist's own development; finally, and most important, the artist's included are those who, throughout a significant portion of their career, have been associated with the region and with the development of the arts in Texas, and who have established distinguished records of production and exhibition. When feasible, works were selected from museum and university collections, as such examples usually represent acquisition either through jury recommendation in competitive exhibition or special choice by the institution, reflecting, interestingly, institutional policies in acquiring art by Texas painters and sculptors.

Although the exhibition serves its intended purpose within these limitations, there is also an unsatisfactory side-effect of omissions which must be acknowledged and properly explained. For example, it was tempting to include renowned names with a peripheral, even transient, connection with the region—among them Georgia O'Keeffe, Morris Graves, Robert Rauschenberg, James Brooks, John Canaday. Also, it was regrettable to exclude a host of artists, some native and some not, who worked and taught with distinction in Texas for some years before moving on, some of them sculptors or mural painters, whose important commissions here must remain in situ. Other artists have achieved excellence in media not covered by this exhibition—printmaking, drawing, graphic design, photography, illustration, crafts. Perhaps the largest group which is represented here only in token measure is the newest and youngest talent, whose role in the development of the arts in Texas is only beginning.



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