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Archives of American Art

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

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John Tidden left Rice in the late twenties and his place was taken by Frederic Browne who soon had a group studying with him in addition to those students from the campus. Evelyn Bessel and Browne were invited to bring their classes to the Museum and they used the unfinished upper rooms as studios. Sculpture classes were started under William McVey. Others to join the teaching staff were Francis Skinner, Robert Joy, and Ruth Pershing Uhler who, at her death, was Curator of Education. Since the thirties the Museum School has continued to grow under a continuous line of excellent teachers, many of them practicing painters and sculptors and some represented in this exhibition.

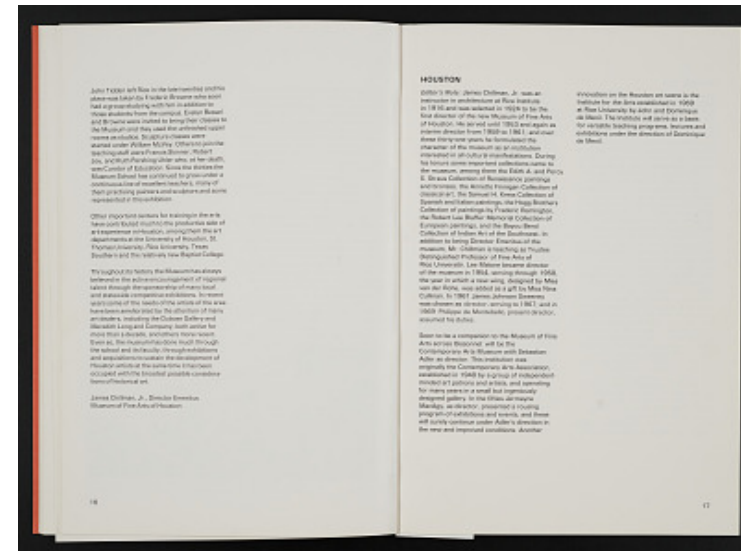
Other important centers for training in the arts have contributed much to the productive side of art experience in Houston, among them the art departments at the University of Houston, St. Thomas University, Rice University, Texas Southern and the relatively new Baptist College.

Throughout its history the Museum has always believed in the active encouragement of regional talent through the sponsorship of many local and statewide competitive exhibitions. In recent years some of the needs of the artists of the area have been ameliorated by the attention of many art dealers, including the Dubose Gallery and Meredith Long and Company, both active for more than a decade, and others more recent. Even so, the museum has done much through the school and its faculty, through exhibitions and acquisitions to sustain the development of Houston artists at the same time it has been occupied with the broadest possible considerations of historical art.

James Chillman, Jr., Director Emeritus
Museum of Fine Arts of Houston

HOUSTON

Editor's Note: James Chillman, Jr. was an instructor in architecture at Rice Institute in 1916 and was selected in 1924 to be the first director of the new Museum of Fine Arts of Houston. He served until 1953 and again as interim director from 1959 to 1961; and over these thirty-one years he formulated the character of the museum as an institution interested in all cultural manifestations. During his tenure some important collections came to the museum, among them the Edith A. and Percy S. Straus Collection of Renaissance paintings and bronzes, the Annette Finnigan Collection of classical art, the Samuel H. Kress Collection of Spanish and Italian paintings, the Hogg Brothers Collection of paintings



by Frederic Remington, the Robert Lee Blaffer Memorial Collection of European paintings, and the Bayou Bend Collection of Indian Art of the Southwest. In addition to being Director Emeritus of the museum, Mr. Chillman is teaching as Trustee Distinguished Professor of Fine Arts of Rice University. Lee Malone became director of the museum in 1954, serving through 1958, the year in which a new wing, designed by Mies van der Rohe, was added as a gift by Miss Nina Cullinan. In 1961 James Johnson Sweeney was chosen as director, serving to 1967; and in 1969 Philippe de Montebello, present director, assumed his duties.

Soon to be a companion to the Museum of Fine Arts across Bissonnet will be the Contemporary Arts Museum with Sebastian Adler as director. This institution was originally the Contemporary Arts Association, established in 1948 by a group of independent-minded art patrons and artists, and operating for many years in a small but ingeniously designed gallery. In the fifties Jermayne MacAgy, as director, presented a rousing program of exhibitions and events, and these will surely continue under Adler's direction in the new and improved conditions. Another innovation on the Houston art scene is the Institute for the Arts established in 1969 at Rice University by John and Dominique de Menil. The Institute will serve as a basis for versatile teaching programs, lectures and exhibitions under the direction of Dominique de Menil.

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