

In 1968, no one really took notice when an old, abandoned stone jail in a remote West Central Texas town 120 miles west of Fort Worth was inherited by an art collector. Today, that same building is the very visible anchor of a multi-million dollar, accredited art museum that serves as a regional center for art exhibition and education. The town was Albany, and the old jail is now The Old Jail Art Center. The museum has grown considerably



since its humble beginnings in 1980. Starting with the donation of four private collections, the permanent collection has expanded to include over 1,800 works spanning important periods in Asian, European, American, and ancient art. Successful capital campaigns in 1984 and 1996 added an education wing, as well as additional exhibition and operations space. The museum facilities now occupy over 14,000 square feet.

The collection is strong in a number of areas, with most works dating from the 20th Century. Well-known artists whose work is represented in the collection include Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Gustave Caillebotte, Amedeo Modigliani, Paul Klee, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Henry Moore, John Marin, Charles Demuth, and Alexander Calder. In addition the museum has strong representation of the Fort Worth Circle (active 1945-55), the regional Taos Modern group (active 1948-1979), a small, impressive Asian Collection, and the W. O. Gross, Jr. Collection of Pre-Columbian art and artifacts. The outdoor sculpture collection is installed throughout the grounds, with key pieces placed inside the Marshall R. Young Courtyard, including Jesus Bautista Morales' granite *Sun Symbol*, Pericle Fazzini's *Conversation*, and several other post-World War II Italian figurative bronze works. The museum makes a point to collect and show the work of emerging Texas artists.

The Old Jail Art Center is one of the few accredited fine art museums between Fort Worth and El Paso. Presently, the OJAC's yearly calendar includes four-to-six exhibitions that rotate between selections from the permanent collection and curated, temporary exhibitions. Guided tours, public lectures, special events, and an active docent program complement ongoing art education programs for children, teenagers, and adults.

The Old Jail Art Center is located on Highway 6, two blocks east of Highway 180. The museum is open to the public Tuesday-Saturday 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM and Sunday 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Admission is free. Please note: the museum is closed on Mondays and major holidays.



THE OLD JAIL ART CENTER

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THE
BARRETT

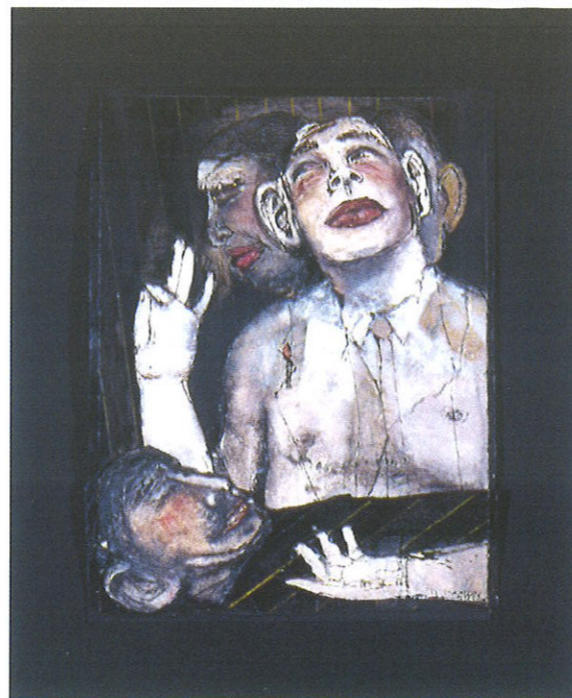
Legacy

February 28 – May 23, 2004

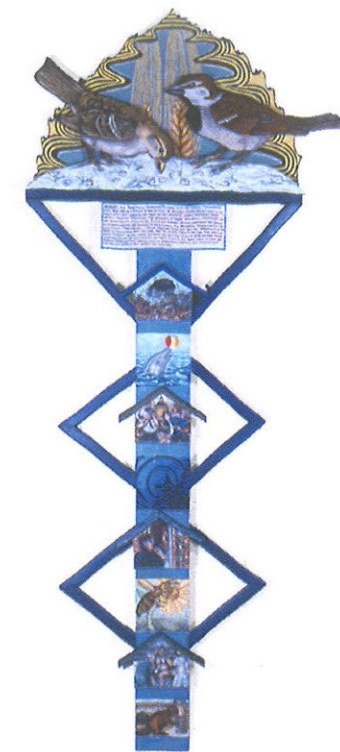
Nona and Richard Barrett are quintessential collectors. Over the past twenty years they have immersed themselves in collecting—from early Texas artists of the Fort Worth and Dallas schools to contemporary Texas artists and on to a recent fascination with European painting. In the course of the collecting process, they decided that to make way for newer accessions they would divest themselves of some earlier purchases. The beneficiaries of this decision were, initially, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and later, twelve more Texas museums. The Barretts donated over three hundred works to the MFAH, with the eventual fortuitous decision for all concerned that the Museum would keep some works for their permanent collection and share the rest with other collecting institutions in Texas. The Old Jail Art Center is one of the fortunate recipients of their largesse.

The Old Jail selected 19 paintings, works on paper, and sculptures for its permanent collection. And a wonderful selection it is. As with much of Texas art produced over the past two decades, the

Sleep of Reason, 1989, Denise Brown, American, Mixed media on tar paper



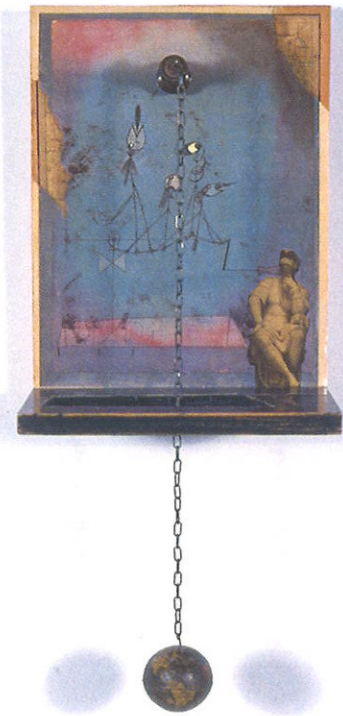
works concern themselves with the land and the figure, many containing a narrative element and often including found, appropriated, or fabricated elements. Landscapes by Dennis Blagg and James Woodson from Fort Worth deal with the Southwest. Blagg's *Chihuahuan Heat Study* is a realistic representation of a climb up a foreboding mountainous rocky terrain, while Woodson's *Ghost Ranch, New Mexico* has the remnants of a campground and some ghostly figures in the foreground of a majestic mountain vista in Georgia O'Keeffe land. Both are beautifully rendered oil paintings by artists that the Old Jail has made commitments to in previous and future exhibitions.



Trail of Breadcrumbs, 1991, Bill Haveron, American (b. 1957), Oil and metal on wood

The Phone Call, 1991, Michael Collins, American (b. 1955), Oil on linen





Houston-based Michael Collins' *The Phone Call* presents a mysterious interior scenario involving a desk, a phone, a slab of meat with an axe imbedded in it, a prone female form and a voyeuristic figure peering in through the window. The artist leaves the interpretation to the viewer. Bill Haveron, also from Fort Worth, tells us his story by including text in the totemic work, *Trail of Breadcrumbs*. In addition to the text, this sculptural painting includes constructed birdhouses and is populated with other flora and fauna.

In *Slipping Through the Cracks (Tettering Thoughts)* Dallas artist

Slipping Through the Cracks (Tettering Thoughts), 1997, Norman Kary, American (b. 1951), Mixed media assemblage

Norman Kary constructs a mixed-media assemblage with old hardware, a purloined globe, and a collage of maps and appropriated art materials, once again leaving the viewer to arrive at his or her own conclusions. Deceased Austin artist and long-time University of Texas professor Robert Levers is represented by two enigmatic

Citizens Throwing Meat, 1988, Robert Levers, American (1930 – 1992), Watercolor, pen and ink, and litho crayon on paper



A Couple of Centuries, 1993, Susan Miiller, American, Oil on canvas

mixed-media drawings from a series titled *Citizens Throwing Meat* that explore an apocalyptic world.

Other artists represented in this gift include Houstonites Gail Siptak, J. Hill, and Lydia Bodnar-Balahutrak, Dallas painters Denise Brown and Susan Miiller, and Robert McAn from Fort Worth. Siptak paints double-sided altar-like panels in oil depicting bucolic landscapes and mythical figures, while Bodnar-Balahutrak makes darkly moody allegorical and historical narrative works. Brown and Miiller also concern themselves with narration. Brown's mixed-media on tar paper summons Goya's famous etching *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*, while Miiller's oil painting and mixed media study for the same work include art historical references in a plotless panoramic scene. Both Hill and McAn are sculptors – Hill combining materials (glass, steel, bronze and silk) into an altar-like assemblage; McAn creating a humorous miniature, yet larger-than-life, daddy-long-legged chair.

The Barretts' collection lives on as a legacy to the entire state. Thirteen institutions in thirteen communities have enriched their collections, dozens of Texas artists have found new homes for their work, and thousands of visitors for years to come will have the pleasure of discovering (and decoding) just what many artists in Texas in the late 20th century were puzzling over.

CLINT WILLOUR
Executive Director/Curator
Galveston Arts Center

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

All pieces are from The Barrett Collection, gift of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Chihuahuan Heat Study, 1991
DENNIS BLAGG
American (b. 1951)
Oil on canvas
2003.007

History Burning, 1993
LYDIA BODNAR-BALAHUTRAK
American
Oil and mixed media on paper
2003.008.01

Another Circle of Hell, 1992 - 93
LYDIA BODNAR- BALAHUTRAK
American
Oil on paper
2003.008.02

The Lunatic Child, 1994
LYDIA BODNAR- BALAHUTRAK
American
Oil on paper
2003.008.03

The One They Left Behind, 1994 - 95
LYDIA BODNAR-BALAHUTRAK
American
Oil and mixed media on paper
2003.008.04

Sleep of Reason, 1989
DENISE BROWN
American
Mixed media on tar paper
2003.009

The Phone Call, 1991
MICHAEL COLLINS
American (b. 1955)
Oil on linen
2003.010

Trail of Breadcrumbs, 1991
BILL HAVERON
American (b. 1957)
Oil and metal on wood
2003.011

Positive Void, 1993
J. HILL
American (b. 1964)
Glass, steel, bronze, silk
2003.012

Slipping Through the Cracks (Tettering Thoughts), 1997
NORMAN KARY
American (b. 1951)
Mixed media assemblage
2003.016

Citizens Throwing Meat, 1988
ROBERT LEVERS
American (1930 – 1992)
Watercolor, pen and ink, and litho crayon on paper
2003.013.01

Citizens Throwing Meat – Version #2, 1988
ROBERT LEVERS
American (1930 – 1992)
Pen, ink, and charcoal on paper
2003.013.02

Daddy Long Legs, 1997
ROBERT McAN
American (b. 1958)
Steel and mixed media
2003.014

A Couple of Centuries, 1993
SUSAN MILLER
American
Oil on canvas
2003.019

Study for A Couple of Centuries, 1993
SUSAN MILLER
American
Pastel on paper
2003.020

Old Man/Leaves, 1988
GAIL SIPTAK
American (b. 1944)
Oil on panel
2003.017

Millay Woods, 1988
GAIL SIPTAK
American (b. 1944)
Oil on panel
2003.018

Ghost Ranch, New Mexico, 1986
JIM WOODSON
American (b. 1941)
Oil on canvas
2003.015