



Art in Embassies Exhibition

United States Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Brussels

Tom Lea (1907-2001)

At the Edge of the Brush, 1981

Oil on canvas, 24 x 30 in. (61 x 76,2 cm)

El Paso Museum of Art, Texas; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. I. T. Schwartz and family

Art in Embassies Exhibition

United States Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Brussels

Art in Embassies



Established in 1963, the U.S. Department of State's office of Art in Embassies (AIE) plays a vital role in our nation's public diplomacy through a culturally expansive mission, creating temporary and permanent exhibitions, artist programming, and publications. The Museum of Modern Art first envisioned this global visual arts program a decade earlier. In the early 1960s, President John F. Kennedy formalized it, naming the program's first director. Now with over 200 venues, AIE curates temporary and permanent exhibitions for the representational spaces of all U.S. chanceries, consulates, and embassy residences worldwide, selecting and commissioning contemporary art from the

U.S. and the host countries. These exhibitions provide international audiences with a sense of the quality, scope, and diversity of both countries' art and culture, establishing AIE's presence in more countries than any other U.S. foundation or arts organization.

AIE's exhibitions allow foreign citizens, many of whom might never travel to the United States, to personally experience the depth and breadth of our artistic heritage and values, making what has been called a "footprint that can be left where people have no opportunity to see American art."

<https://art.state.gov>

Welcome

Bluebonnets, a sunset, and springtime. These are the subjects of a few of the great works of American art on display at Truman Hall, the official residence of the U.S. Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). When guests visit the estate in Tervuren, they will enjoy fourteen pieces of fine art that provide a glimpse of America from a particular perspective. Through these works, I am bringing a little of my native Texas to Brussels. The pieces range from landscapes to iconic images depicting Texas scenery, venues, and people. They represent the beauty, ruggedness, and vastness of a part of America I call home.

Since I came to Belgium, I am reminded every day about the importance and benefits of the transatlantic bond. That is why I am also pleased to have a wonderful piece, on loan from the Dallas Museum of Art in Texas, by the indomitable Winston Churchill. Prime Minister Churchill was one of the visionaries of a transatlantic security umbrella to avoid future world wars. The result was NATO.

These works are here through the U.S. State Department's Art in Embassies (AIE) program. AIE curates temporary and permanent exhibitions for the representational spaces of U.S. embassies and residences worldwide. This exhibit would not have been possible without the cooperation of the Texas museums that loaned their works including the Dallas Museum of Art, the El Paso Museum of Art, the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in Canyon, and the Witte Museum in San Antonio.

Through these works, Americans and our friends in Belgium can reflect on the strength of our bonds and commitment to a secure and peaceful world. I hope this exhibit brings the United States closer to the people of the countries who contribute to the NATO alliance and its mission of peace through strength.



Kay Bailey Hutchison
U.S. Ambassador to NATO

Brussels
April 2018

Texas Impressionism

The regional splendors of nature and artistic talent coalesce in Texas impressionism, a movement born on the eve of the Great Depression and Dust Bowl. Between 1927 and 1929, Edgar B. Davis, a successful Texas oilman, issued invitations for three competitive exhibitions to selected painters nationwide with the hope of encouraging the arts in Texas. His challenge: to paint Texas wildflowers. A painted panoply of blue-bonnets and other native wildflowers resulted, forming the initial subjects of the Texas impressionist movement and spawning the new style that influenced art scenes across the state. Since 1927, when English-born Dawson Dawson-Watson of San Antonio won the first Competitive Wildflower Competition, Texas impressionism has been practiced by native Texans and international artists—including the Spanish painter José Arpa y Perea of San Antonio; English-born and U.S. immigrant Robert Wood; and Mexican-American artist Porfirio Salinas.

Now, Art in Embassies is pleased to present an exhibition of Texas impressionism installed in Truman Hall, residence of the U.S. Ambassador to NATO in Brussels, Belgium. In acknowledgment of NATO, the exhibition includes a painting by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who with U.S. President Harry Truman, helped pave the way for the Alliance that would be founded in 1949. Politician and painter, Churchill created light-filled landscapes, seascapes, cityscapes, and portraits through loose brushwork and

evocative color, influenced by late nineteenth-century French impressionism and akin to early twentieth-century Texas impressionism.

French impressionism, named for Claude Monet's painting, *Impression: Sunrise*, burst on the Paris art scene in 1874 and was characterized by short, broken brushstrokes and bright, unblended color. Criticized for its unfinished, sketch-like qualities and absence of neutral gray and black tonalities, impressionism departed radically from traditional old master painting. Rooted in light and color, impressionist art captures the effervescence of the landscapes, cityscapes, and portraits of modern life.

Influenced by the French school, American impressionism had flourished on the East Coast but Texas impressionists made the style their own. Dawson Dawson-Watson had studied in Paris and in Claude Monet's Giverny before immigrating to the eastern U.S. and then to Texas. Emma Richardson Cherry trained in France and brought impressionist ideas to Houston. Texas impressionists rendered scenes indigenous to their state, teaching and establishing a plein-air school (the art of painting outdoors) and studying the effects of light and atmosphere on rural Texan subjects. Painter Julian Onderdonk influenced the style, while Porfirio Salinas, known for his landscapes of the Texan Hill Country, studied with José Arpa y Perea, a fundamental contributor to the movement. Frank Klepper

extended the style's reputation by creating murals for the Works Progress Administration, while Tom Lea adapted its qualities in his World War II paintings.

In this exhibition and catalogue, bluebonnets by Julian Onderdonk, ranch scenes by Harold Dow Bugbee and Louis Griffith, a sunset by Reveau Bassett, a Texan monument by Frank Klepper, and scenery by Tom Lea join the company of works by the original Texas wildflower competition painters. A vista by Don Warren, who collaborated with Robert Wood and knew Porfirio Salinas, is also included. Together, these artists' paintings attest to the lasting effects and appeal of the Texas impressionist movement.

References

- *Heritage: Early Texas Art Auction*. Catalogue. Dec. 2, 2006. Dallas, Texas. Online access 4/18/18.
- *Hitting the Road to Find Impressionism in Texas (But Not Texas Impressionism)*. Beth Shook. July 27, 2015. Online access 4/18/18.
- Panhandle. Play Here with Chip Chandler. *PPHM to examine influential Texas impressionist in new exhibition*. April 5, 2016. Online access 4/19/18.
- Russell Tether Fine Arts Associates, LLC. *An Introduction to Texas Impressionism*. October 14, 2012. Online access 4/18/19.

A Taste of Texas in Truman Hall



Jose Arpa y Perea (1858-1952)

Verbena (Morning), c. 1927

Oil on canvas, 19 3/4 x 23 5/8 in. (50,2 x 60 cm)

Courtesy of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, Canyon, Texas; Gift of James D. Hamlin



Reveau Bassett (1897-1981)

Sunset, undated

Oil on canvas, 42 ¼ x 54 ¼ in. (107,3 x 137,8 cm)

Courtesy of the Dallas Museum of Art, Texas

Gift of Summerfield G. Roberts



Winston Churchill (1874-1965)

Harbour scene, Cannes, c. 1933

Oil on canvas, 29 ¼ x 34 ¼ in. (74,3 x 87 cm)

Courtesy of the Dallas Museum of Art, Texas

Gift of Dr. William Osborne in honor of Cheryl and Kevin Vogel



Dawson Dawson-Watson (1864-1939)

Prickly Pear, 1927

Oil on canvas, 27 7/8 x 23 in. (70,8 x 58,4 cm)

Courtesy of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, Canyon, Texas; Purchase funded by Friends of Southwest Art



Harold Dow Bugbee (1900-1963)

Moving the Wagon, 1958

Oil on canvas, 29 5/8 x 35 3/8 in. (75,2 x 89,9 cm)

Courtesy of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, Canyon, Texas; Gift of Harold D. Bugbee



Louis Griffith (1875-1956)

Cows in the Milkweed, c. 1906

Oil on canvasboard, 15 1/8 x 17 1/4 in. (38,4 x 43,8 cm)

Courtesy of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, Canyon, Texas; Purchase funded by Friends of Southwest Art



Frank Klepper (1890-1952)

A Texas Shrine, 1933

Oil on canvas, 32 5/8 x 32 3/4 in. (82,9 x 83,2 cm)

Courtesy of the Dallas Museum of Art, Texas; Gift of The History Club



Tom Lea (1907-2001)

At the Edge of the Brush, 1981

Oil on canvas, 24 x 30 in. (61 x 76,2 cm)

El Paso Museum of Art, Texas; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. I. T. Schwartz and family



Tom Lea (1907-2001)

The Way to Chihuahua, 1970

Oil on canvas, 30 x 36 in. (76,2 x 91,4 cm)

El Paso Museum of Art, Texas; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Lea



Julian Onderdonk (1882-1922)

Untitled (Field of Bluebonnets), 1918-1920

Oil on canvas, 33 5/8 x 48 3/4 in. (85,4 x 123,8 cm)

Courtesy of the Dallas Museum of Art, Texas; Bequest of Margaret M. Ferris



Porfirio Salinas (1910-1973)

Bluebonnets (April in Texas), undated

Oil on canvas, 37 1/8 x 47 in. (94,3 x 119,4 cm)

Courtesy of the Witte Museum, San Antonio, Texas; Gift of Paul D. Crawford and Kathryn N. Crawford



Don Warren (1935-2006)

End of Spring, undated

Oil on canvas, 30 x 40 in. (76,2 x 101,6 cm)

Courtesy of a private collection



Robert William Wood (1889-1979)

Springtime, 1953

Oil on canvas, 29 5/8 x 35 1/2 in. (75,2 x 90,2 cm)

Courtesy of the Witte Museum, San Antonio, Texas; Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Asher R. McComb



Robert William Wood (1889–1979)

Untitled (West Texas Landscape), undated

Oil on canvas, 36 5/8 x 46 3/4 in. (93 x 118,7 cm)

Courtesy of the Witte Museum, San Antonio, Texas; Gift of Paul D. and Kathryn N. Crawford

Truman Hall

*Residence of the United States Ambassador
to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*



Truman Hall

Designed in the style of a Flemish country house, the Residence of the U.S. Ambassador was built in the 1960s for the Jean Michiels family, owners of the Belgian chocolate firm, Côte d'Or. Named in honor of President Harry S. Truman, it became the official Residence of the U.S. Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1984.

With its generous doorways and corridors opening onto airy, elegantly proportioned reception rooms, the Residence provides a gracious setting in which numerous guests and visitors are welcomed each year.

Grounds & Gardens

Much of the estate's charm comes from the extensive gardens, paths, and pastures designed by Belgium's René Pechère, who has become one of the best-known contemporary landscape architects in Europe. Through Pechère's vision, 27 acres of barren agricultural land was transformed into a lovely landscape of gentle hills and valleys, meadows, and delightful formal gardens that blend harmoniously with the natural woodland and surrounding countryside.

A curving drive, lined with roses, leads the visitors to the tree lined approach to the Residence, which sits high on the property, overlooking a great sweeping lawn, towering cedar tree, English gardens, and a kitchen garden. The steeple of the church in nearby



Vossem is visible on the horizon, and in the spring and summer, the grounds abound with a rich variety of colorful blooms.

A gardener's cottage on the property has been restored as the Vandenberg Guest House, named for Senator Arthur Vandenberg, (Republican, Michigan, 1928-1951), who was instrumental in gaining bi-partisan support in the U.S. Congress for the establishment of NATO.

Acknowledgments

Washington, D.C.

Sarah Tanguy, Curator

Jamie Arbolino, Registrar

Tori See, Editor and Curatorial Assistant

Tabitha Brackens, Publications Manager

Amanda Brooks, Imaging Manager

Brussels

First Lieutenant Ellen C. Brabo, Photographer

Sergeant 1st Class Clint Carroll, Photographer

Vienna

Nathalie Mayer, Graphic Designer



Published by Art in Embassies | U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. | May 2018

<https://art.state.gov/>