

**“TO DELIGHT AND INSTRUCT”:
CHILDREN’S EDUCATION AT THE
MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON
AT MIDCENTURY**

**A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Art
At the University of Houston**

**In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Art History**

**by Heidi Vaughan
May 2016**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis describes and analyzes two programs for children's education in art museums at midcentury – the Masterson Junior Gallery in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York's Education Department, which was the leader in art education for children at midcentury. I propose that both programs were modeled on the educational philosophy of John Dewey and his notion of art as an experience. In detailing selected programs from both museums, I trace how they each developed. The Masterson Junior Gallery program had great impact in Houston. It ran from 1958 through 2007, and reached more than a million Houston school children.

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INTRODUCTION

Harris and Carroll Sterling Masterson III (fig. 1) left an enormous legacy to the city of Houston, including their home, Rienzi (fig. 2), now open to the public as the house museum for European decorative arts and paintings that is part of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH). Rienzi is considered the most important public collection of its kind in the American Southwest. What is less known is the enormous impact the Masterson's donations had on the city through their leadership and patronage of the Masterson Junior Gallery for art education, an exhibition space with programs that served more than a million school children from diverse backgrounds from 1958 through 2007 at the museum.¹

In the history of the MFAH, the Masterson's total contribution is particularly significant. As life members, they donated their time, funds, a significant number of art objects, and two mansions to the museum (both designed by the famed architect John Staub). They underwrote the Frank Pryor Sterling Wing, in honor of Carroll's father (a founder of Humble Oil & Gas, now Exxon Mobil), which houses the museum's Kress Collection of later Renaissance Italian and Spanish art, and they served on the board of trustees, contributing to planning and fundraising at the museum for decades. They also and importantly brought art education to the children of Houston.

¹I arrived at this number through many different documentary sources within the MFAH Archives, including the records of Ruth Pershing Uhler and Mary Buxton, and especially figures found in annual reports. The way attendance numbers were calculated was not standardized, though reporting methods became more sophisticated over time. The Masterson Junior Gallery functioned under that name for approximately 50 years, until some time in 2007, when the name was dropped. The one million number assumes an average of about 20,000 children per year. In many years the actual number of visitors was considerably higher than that, and this figure is therefore considered conservative.

The purpose of this project is to better understand the function of the Masterson Junior Gallery, how it served to educate the children who participated in its exhibitions and programs, and to situate it within art education at midcentury in America. I will compare the Masterson Junior Gallery and its activities to that of the Education Department at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA)², which was the institution leading the way in the field in America at midcentury. In so doing, I will compare the work of Ruth Pershing Uhler (fig. 13), who ran MFAH educational classes starting in 1937, and was the director and curator of the Masterson Junior Gallery since its opening in 1958, to the efforts of Victor E. D'Amico (fig. 5), the director of the MoMA's Education Department organized under Alfred H. Barr, Jr. (fig. 4), also beginning in 1937. The bridge connecting the two programs will be the educational theories of John Dewey (fig. 3), a pioneer in the field of aesthetics and art education who advocated for active, experiential processes, or "learning by doing," to create passion for participants and meaningful learning opportunities.³ The MFAH in general was still very much a volunteer-led organization at midcentury, and it did not have the funding or the professional staff that the MoMA did at this time. Despite this fact, there is much to indicate that its educational exhibitions and programs functioned to provide experiential learning opportunities for the children they served. I argue that the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston's Masterson Junior Gallery regularly provided direct experiential learning opportunities, and therefore functioned like the MoMA's Department of Education in engaging children through individually significant, hands-

² Over the years, the MoMA's Education Department has gone by various names. For the sake of simplicity, throughout this paper I will refer to it only as the Education Department, as it was most commonly known. For both the MFAH and the MoMA as I write about them here, I am focused on the programs for school children, not the respective schools of general art making.

³ Morgan, "From Modernist Utopia to Cold Water Reality," Carol, "From Modernist Utopia to Cold War Reality: A Critical Moment in Museum Education" in *The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century Continuity and Change*, ed. John Elderfield, (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1995), p. 152.

on instructional methods like those advocated by John Dewey, which allowed participants to arrive at their own meaningful conclusions regarding art objects.

The purpose of my research has been to understand the education department at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston in its early years. Regarding the significance or contribution of my research to the field of art history, according to Lorraine Stuart, chief of the museum's archives, I am the first person to conduct research on the Masterson Junior Gallery or to investigate any of the museum's files regarding its Curator of Art Education, Ruth Uhler. Therefore, the state of research in the field regarding art education at the MFAH is wide open. This thesis will provide a baseline for further research in this area.

Chapter 1

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston was the first art museum in Texas, founded in 1900, and its origins coincide with the rising fortunes of the city's residents. In its early days, Houston was a mecca for wildcatters, cotton and timber barons, and real estate investors who were attracted to "slippery money-making deals" in the newly forming and still unstructured town.⁴ According to independent art critic and curator Susie Kalil, these factors at the turn of the century led to a "staggering sense of freedom among pioneers," which made Houston an attractive place for dynamic and strong individuals coming to town in search of their fortunes.⁵ Roughnecks scraped and clawed and turned themselves into oil barons, and many of them became the city leaders who built Houston's cultural institutions.⁶ The independence that these early citizens experienced gave way to great opportunities that were a reflection of the realities of "living in an industrial city where bizarre frontier beliefs infiltrated daily life."⁷ Rapid development was focused on industry, and "Houston had grown from a swampy mosquito-infested village to an oil boom town without becoming a cultural center."⁸ The city was growing and it needed some sophistication. While ambitious men created their city, it was smart women who provided its culture. Some of these early women were simple schoolteachers, and others were ladies who had attended the finest schools in the East.⁹ They advocated taste, beauty, and, being in the Bible Belt, spiritual renewal. Some men understood the significance of the arts, and

⁴ Kalil, *Fresh Paint The Houston School*, p. 11.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Kalil, p. 12.

⁹ Kalil, p. 11.

offered the funds to support them, but most of the organizations were spearheaded and run by strong-willed women who were determined to push the arts forward in Houston.¹⁰

It is notable that the first art museum in Texas was created primarily as a place for education. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, was in fact established as the Houston Public School Art League on April 13, 1900.¹¹ Its founders were all volunteers, and all women.¹² The simply stated purpose of the Houston Public School Art League was “the encouragement of art and culture in the [Houston] public school system.”¹³ From its inception, art education for children was the museum’s purpose. Its founders were all women: Emma Richardson Cherry, Mrs. Robert S. Lovett (Lavinia Abercrombie), Miss Lydia Adkisson, Miss Roberta Lavender, and Miss Cara Redwood.¹⁴ These founders decided that the way to encourage art and culture among Houston school children would be through circulating “good graphics,” in this case meaning reproductions of noteworthy paintings, hung in the schools, giving children the opportunity to view important art on a daily basis.¹⁵ In fulfillment of this decision, the first thing the Houston Public School Art League did was purchase and hang framed copies of 35 selected paintings in each of the city’s then dozen public schools.¹⁶ There is no readily available documentation regarding the particularities of how paintings were selected, or what they might have been. It is perhaps a fair assumption, however, to guess that the replicas would have included some of the world’s best-known works of art.

¹⁰ Kalil, p. 12.

¹¹ Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, *A Guide to the Collection*, p. xiii.

¹² MFAH Archives, *Volunteer Program History*.

¹³ MFAH Archives, *Chronology of Events in MFAH History*.

¹⁴ MFAH Archives, *Chronology of Events in MFAH History*. Cherry was an artist who exhibited many times at the Houston Art League and also at the MFAH.

¹⁵ Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, *A Guide to the Collection*, 1981, p. xiii.

¹⁶ Johnston, Marguerite, *Houston The Unknown City*, 1994, (Texas A&M University Press), p. 161. The author notes that the League went into debt in acquiring them, however.

At the turn of the century, there were few opportunities to view art in Houston, and very little public art was on view. Travel to see important works from around the world would have been limited to people of means. For the rest, the Houston Public School Art League bought the replicas, and in so doing, brought art to the children of Houston. One purchase on record is a life-sized replica of the *Venus de Milo*, which the Houston Public School Art League placed in the city's one high school, with the idea that it would expose students to classical art.¹⁷ After the sculpture had been installed, however, some had second thoughts about the choice, and worried the semi-nude sculpture was too racy for regular contact with young high school students.¹⁸ The controversy at the school ended when the replica was moved to the new Carnegie Library. Later that library was closed, and the sculpture was moved to the Julia Ideson Building, the downtown home of the Houston Public Library, and it has been there ever since.¹⁹ It is on the second floor of the reading room even today. Probably few who view it now would know that it was one of the first purchases made by the MFAH.

The museum went through a series of changes in the early years that were a reflection of its founders' and supporters' efforts to determine what it should be.²⁰ In 1913, the Houston Public School Art League was chartered in Texas as Houston Art League.²¹ It is not related to the organization now called Art League Houston, which was founded in 1948.²² The reason for the name change is unclear, but by this time, the museum's scope had expanded to serve the entire

¹⁷ Johnston, *Houston The Unknown City*, p. 161. This was likely Central High School.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Johnston, *Houston The Unknown City*, chapter 30 footnotes.

²⁰ Loomis, Sylvia Glidden, Archives of American Art Smithsonian Institution, *Tape Recorded Interview with Ruth Uhler*. May 11, 1965.

²¹ MFAH Archives, *Chronology of Events in MFAH History*.

²² Artleaguehouston.org, accessed March 1, 2016. This assertion also was confirmed by Misha Storm in the MFAH Archives, who noted there is no relationship whatsoever between the two organizations on March 21, 2016.

municipality, not just the school system. As Houston Art League, the museum sponsored art exhibitions, musical performances, and other cultural events.²³ Its budding art collection was exhibited around town at the mayor's office, in city council offices, and at the homes of some of the League's members.²⁴ Also in 1913, the City of Houston made a gift of land to Houston Art League, with the stipulation the land would be home to an art museum.²⁵ That property was located at Austin and Holman Streets, less than two miles from the MFAH's current location. For unclear legal reasons, the lease was unacceptable, and the City withdrew the offer.²⁶ That meant another location would have to be found.

The early business leaders who understood the significance of the arts for Houston, and how they might impact the city's reputation nationally or even internationally, were determined to have an art museum in town.²⁷ George Hermann promised the land on which the MFAH is located today just a few months before his death in 1914.²⁸ Hermann was a native Houstonian of Swiss immigrant parents whose wealth came from cattle, land, and oil holdings.²⁹ Hermann's estate made the land available, but it was not offered as free to the museum. Joseph S. Cullinan, who built the first Texas oil refinery, paid \$3,300 to legally purchase the property for the museum.³⁰ He had created Magnolia Petroleum Company, and was a founder of what became Texaco.³¹ In 1923, ground was broken on the central block section for the museum's first

²³ MFAH Archives, *Chronology of Events in MFAH History*.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Kalil, p. 12.

²⁸ MFAH Archives, *Chronology of Events in MFAH History*.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid. In today's dollars, \$3,300 is worth \$78,053.25.

³¹ Ibid.

building.³² The architect was William Ward Watkin, who also oversaw the construction of what would become Rice University. Watkin would go on to become director of that university's architecture program.³³ In 1924, Watkin's building was officially dedicated as the Museum of Fine Arts of Houston (fig. 9).³⁴ At the opening, 700 guests were in attendance, and as the masses traveled around the new building, they managed to wear the varnish off the new floors in four hours.³⁵ The public must have really wanted an art museum for Houston. One thousand people had to be turned away at the door on that first day.³⁶

In its earliest years, the museum functioned through the generosity of its many community benefactors and volunteers. In addition to Hermann and Cullinan, some of the early museum patrons included George M. Dickson, a native of Chicago who bequeathed his collection, the first art gifts given to the museum; William C. Hogg, who had large interests in real estate, cotton, and oil; and William L. Clayton, a cotton trader and public servant.³⁷ The first director of the MFAH was named in 1924, James H. Chillman, Jr. (fig. 10), a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, and one of the first faculty members (Agnes Cullen Arnold Professor of Fine Arts in the Architecture Department) at the Rice Institute, later Rice University.³⁸ He was able to continue his work as a professor at Rice, which was a part-time position, because his role as director of the MFAH was only part time, too.³⁹ Chillman's

³² MFAH Archives, *Chronology of Events in MFAH History*.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Rice University Archives, James H. Chillman, Jr. Papers, 1891-1972, MS 482. Chillman had a popular radio show many years later in the 1950s called "Art is Fun," that featured Houston art, popular trends, and stories that aimed to get people in Houston excited about art. He remained a leader in the Houston arts scene all his life.

³⁹ MFAH Archives, *Directors of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston*.

involvement with both institutions is likely the reason for ongoing assistance from important Houston architects, many of whom were also involved at Rice University, during the MFAH's first decades. While the museum had a terrific building by now, its leadership did not seem to have the funds, or the priority, for much of a staff. It seems that the Depression played a significant role in curtailing civic programs in the early years, also.⁴⁰ In fact, at times, Chillman received no remuneration whatsoever so that the janitor's salary and other bills could be paid.⁴¹ Archival records show the museum regularly struggled to meet operating expenses during these early years.⁴²

James Chillman was a key figure in the early decades of the museum's history, and served the institution in the role of director up through the 1953/1954 fiscal year.⁴³ He later served as interim director from July 1959 through 1960.⁴⁴ Back in 1954, when he officially retired, Chillman was given the title of Director Emeritus.⁴⁵ The fact that he was a professor taking on the role of director does seem to follow a trend amongst museum directors at the time. As noted earlier, the MoMA also had a professor, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., as its first director. An early inclination for museum directors to emerge from teaching institutions dates as far back as Paul Sachs, one of the founding trustees of the MoMA in 1929, who was also associate director of Harvard's Fogg Art Museum.⁴⁶ Sachs was one of the first people in America to teach a course on museum curatorship, when, in 1921, he created a course at Harvard entitled *Museum Work*

⁴⁰ Kalil, p. 16.

⁴¹ MFAH Archives, *Chronology of Events in MFAH History*.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid. He is credited with creating much of the museum's collection by securing for the MFAH the Blaffer Collection, the Strauss Collection, the Kress Collection, and the Hogg Indian Collection. In this document, his contribution to the museum is categorized as "legendary."

⁴⁶ Moma.org, Museum History, accessed March 1, 2016.

and Museum Problems.⁴⁷ His course was conceived specifically with the purpose of developing and preparing its students for roles as museum directors and curators.⁴⁸ The course taught connoisseurship, as well as the administrative and financial aspects of museum management, with a particular emphasis on the cultivation of wealthy donors. Sach's course offered practical instruction on wining and dining people of means, with advice on what and how to order at the top restaurants and clubs, what to wear, and how to ask for money.⁴⁹ Of Sach's many protégés at Harvard, one was Alfred Barr. His colleague Victor D'Amico was the head of the art department at Fieldston School, and an instructor of art education at Columbia University, before becoming director of the Education Department at the MoMA. These three men also attended John Dewey's important lectures on aesthetics in art at Harvard, which will be discussed presently. Following that discussion, I will go into depth regarding the MoMA's Education Department, and compare it later to Ruth Uhler's programming at the MFAH's Masterson Junior Gallery.

⁴⁷ Edsel, *The Monuments Men*, (Center Street Hachette Book Group, 2009), p. 18.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Chapter 2

JOHN DEWEY AND ART AS EXPERIENCE

John Dewey was an influential presence in American education since founding the Laboratory School in 1896 at the University of Chicago. This effort is considered the start of child-centered education in the United States.⁵⁰ Child-centered education refers to the process of putting students in the position of coming to their own conclusions through their own efforts, the opposite of rote learning, which focuses on memorizing facts and repeating them.⁵¹ After the trauma of World War I, more educators were exploring Dewey's theories to fully develop the individual student. The 1920s and 1930s "was the era during which creative self-expression became the dominant concern in education,"⁵² according to Carol Morgan, a former Acting Director of the Department of Education at the MoMA.⁵³ The value of original thinking became the priority, and education that fostered it surpassed rote learning amongst progressives in education at this time.

At the heart of Dewey's theory is the idea of honoring the contribution of creativity to society. Emphasis on this kind of thinking represented a shift, which was a byproduct of the times. Morgan argues a reason for the shift is that progressive educators felt a kinship with modern artists, and considered artists to be working towards a similar goal, that of fostering creative self-expression to better the world.⁵⁴ Cyclical educational reforms occur for a variety of reasons, and are the culmination of various societal factors coming together at once. According to Morgan, paradigm shifts in art education coalesce around trends in art, society, and general

⁵⁰ Morgan, "From Modernist Utopia to Cold Water Reality," p. 152.

⁵¹ Dewey, *Art as Experience* (Minton, Balch & Company, 1934), p. 37.

⁵² Morgan, "From Modernist Utopia to Cold Water Reality," p. 152.

⁵³ Morgan, "From Modernist Utopia to Cold Water Reality," p. 253.

⁵⁴ Morgan, "From Modernist Utopia to Cold Water Reality," p. 151.

education. She argues that the MoMA's programs were the result of the kinds of art the museum exhibited.⁵⁵ The art was progressive, and it led to progressive modes of thinking to understand it.

Dewey's theoretical ideas appealed to intellectuals with interests in aesthetics. He had risen to fame upon delivering a series of ten lectures on the subject of aesthetics in art, architecture, music, and literature at Harvard University in 1932.⁵⁶ These ten lectures were made into an influential book, *Art as Experience*, first published in 1934. Dewey's theory emphasized the importance of the art process as an experience that has personal resonance in one's unique life.⁵⁷ This was a shift from the idea of an object's importance as related solely to the physical manifestations found within a work of art. The enjoyment of an object, according to Dewey, would occur when the aesthetic elements were "made manifest for their own sake."⁵⁸ By this, one can understand Dewey to mean what is characteristic and important about an object is the way the viewer relates to it on a personal level, as an experience that personally affects his or her own life. The experience is a product of the interaction between the viewer, the object, and the world. The object becomes the site for dialectical processes of a personal experience. It is through the experience that the artist and the viewer meet each other. At this meeting point, there is an active exchange between mental states, the materials, and the culture at large.

At this time, in the years between the world wars, individual creativity was understood to be vital to learning. According to progressive educational reformers Harold Rugg and Ann Schumaker in their 1928 book, *The Child-Centered School*, the goal was "the development to the highest possible point of all the powers of the individual – his capacity to adjust through the

⁵⁵ Morgan, "From Modernist Utopia to Cold Water Reality," p. 152.

⁵⁶ Dewey, *Art as Experience*, vii.

⁵⁷ Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 35.

⁵⁸ Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 57.

release of his powers of creative self-expression.”⁵⁹ The goal was to equip a student with the capacity and confidence to be a creative individual, and to learn from the experience. Self-expression was in opposition to the idea of a student as a passive sponge-like spectator. Instead, the philosophy of self-expression promoted the notion that knowledge would have a greater impact when the student arrived at a conclusion through his or her own creativity and work. Facts would be more meaningful to the student who discovered them on his or her own than to the student who was merely told the information. Creative experiential learning through art was opposed to methods of instruction that, in an art historical sense, focused on memorizing dates, artists’ names, and titles, for example. Modernist poet, critic, Harvard University professor, and Librarian of Congress, Archibald MacLeish, promoted experiential education over art-historical practices in a speech to the Committee on Art Education (more on this committee will be addressed later). In his speech, MacLeish noted that experiential learning was the only way to understand the relationship between an artwork and the self.⁶⁰ Comparing art historical facts to carrying coins in one’s pocket, MacLeish claimed students could know that the facts have value, but they would not personally understand the reason for their value.⁶¹ That is to say, with no personal connection between the student and the fact, information would have less value to the student, and be less meaningful. Students could only possess art historical facts told to them like they possess coins. Such a concept is in keeping with Dewey’s belief that real knowledge could not be acquired passively or exist separate from one’s actions. Instead, Dewey suggested that art performed a social function, and participation was the element that connected the psychological

⁵⁹ Morgan, “From Modernist Utopia to Cold Water Reality,” p. 151. The quote is taken from in *The Child Centered School: An Appraisal of the New Education* (1928).

⁶⁰ Morgan, “From Modernist Utopia to Cold Water Reality,” p. 165. MacLeish gave the speech in 1954.

⁶¹ Ibid.

and social factors involved in learning.⁶² Experiential learning involved action, and required a student to interact with others, to come to conclusions with the guidance and encouragement of trained instructors and other participants.

Dewey's theories emphasized the way engagement with the arts contributed to the growth of the mind, how subtle and complex ways of learning would occur with exposure to creating images or scrutinizing them. He described an aesthetic experience as one that provided an enriching exchange between a person and an event that celebrated a society or civilization, and emphasized that artistic production manifested and reinforced what people found important in a society at a given time.⁶³ Active involvement with art would lead to creative problem solving, he argued, while the individual's lived experience of art and culture would produce interactive learning as a way of life.⁶⁴ Dewey envisioned schools as social centers where children could explore subjects that interested them, learning by doing, alongside the needs of the local community and modern industrial society. In such an all-encompassing, holistic way, Dewey believed, people could experience art as a way of understanding what it means to be human, and in so doing, empathize with humankind.⁶⁵ After the stress of war, such beliefs must have been refreshing.

Dewey set up a system of binaries to explain his pedagogical theories on progressive education. In *Experience and Education*, which Dewey wrote in 1938, he described these designated sets of binaries. The first in each set represented a traditional means of learning, to which he was opposed. The second in each set represented the progressive action he advocated.

⁶² Jones, Anne G., and Michael T. Risku, "The Butcher, the Baker, and the Candlestick Maker: John Dewey's Philosophy of Art Experience Saving Twenty-First-Century Art Education from Limbo." *Education and Culture* 31, no. 1 (2015), 77-87.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

The progressive approaches would lead to an activated learner, or a participant in an experiential type of learning. The binaries he identified state that:

“Imposition from above is opposed [to] expression and cultivation of individuality; to external discipline is opposed free activity; to learning from texts and teachers, [is opposed to] learning through experience; to acquisition of isolated skills and techniques by drill, is opposed [to] acquisition of them as means of attaining ends which make direct vital appeal; to preparation for a more or less remote future is opposed [to] making the most of the opportunities of present life; to static aims and materials is opposed [to] acquaintance with a changing world.”⁶⁶

Dewey advocated a style of learning that cultivated the individual student, that supported his or her own free activity, that enabled his or her own ability to learn from personal experiences, and that encouraged taking advantage of real opportunities as they arose in the real world. At its core, Dewey’s theories put students in an activated, dynamic role, fostering independent and creative thinking and problem solving, to arrive at conclusions, which he and other likeminded progressive educators, including Alfred H. Barr, Jr., director of the MoMA, and Victor D’Amico, a student of Dewey’s at Columbia, and later director of the Education Department at the MoMA, advanced in their own practices.

Morgan has argued that the new, progressive nature of modern art was directly related to the progressive educational models that arose at the MoMA. The fact that the museum’s first director, Alfred Barr, created the first contemporary art course in America, in 1927 at Wellesley College, is especially relevant.⁶⁷ Wellesley, founded in 1875, was among the first colleges in

⁶⁶ Dewey, *Experience and Education*, pp. 5-6.

⁶⁷ Meyer, Richard, “Young Professor Barr,” *What Was Contemporary Art?* (2013), p. 37. There is some difficulty with the distinctions “contemporary” and “modern” art at this time. Contemporary art as an art historical term generally refers to art from 1960 to the present, while modern art typically refers to art produced between 1840 and 1960, according to UH Professor Dr. Natilee Harren, and others. In this instance, the author himself refers to Barr’s course as “contemporary,” meaning here “art of the now.”

America to establish an art department, and it was the only school that offered a degree in art history.⁶⁸ It was an institution devoted to the higher education of women. In 1911, it offered the first course in museum management, as part of its graduate school.⁶⁹ In 1927, when he was only 25, Barr became a member of Wellesley's faculty.⁷⁰ He organized a variety of exhibitions while there, and taught an art history course that was unlike anything that had come before it, covering 20th century contemporary art.⁷¹ Entitled "Tradition and Revolt in Modern Painting," Barr included lectures pertaining to design, architecture, theater, film, and music, and related how each of these areas influenced the art of the moment overall.⁷² He encouraged his students to experience these different areas first hand, instead of studying them from a "dispassionate remove."⁷³ What Barr was doing was advocating experiential learning. He employed learning-by-doing through something Wellesley called "laboratory work."⁷⁴

Laboratory work was a way for students to engage directly with art objects. The concept of laboratory work was first introduced as a part of the Wellesley curriculum in 1897, by department chair Alice Van Vechten Brown.⁷⁵ With regards to art history, laboratory work placed students in the active role of artist, requiring them to draw, paint, or recreate sculptures based on the artworks they studied.⁷⁶ The purpose of their experiential learning was to infuse art

⁶⁸ Meyer, Richard, *Young Professor Barr*, p. 70.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 37.

⁷¹ Here I would like to point out that I am using the terms "modern" and "contemporary" art interchangeably because modern art at this time was the "art of now," thus making it also contemporary art.

⁷² Meyer, p. 37.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 42.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

history with “a sense of material immediacy through hands-on engagement.”⁷⁷ With such direct contact activating the material, students utilized methods similar to science class laboratory experiments. The process was known as the “Wellesley Method,” and students responded positively it.⁷⁸ In implementing a direct, experiential method, they came to understand the ground-gold panel painting of the Trecento in Italy, for example, by replicating the ground-gold process, and they observed a live model posed like a figure from Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel, whom they regarded and sketched, to better understand the artist’s particular representational technique.⁷⁹ In addition to these experiential approaches, Barr advocated a pedagogy of art that also emphasized “firsthand viewing.”⁸⁰ He regularly took his students on field trips to look at art and related objects. He was fond of walking around the city with his students, asking them to describe what they saw, thus facilitating their ability to look critically.

Experiential learning was turning students into art critics. Barr’s course, “Tradition and Revolt in Modern Painting,” was based on cultivating expertise. It did not have any exams. Instead, Barr designated each of his students as a member of the faculty, in a move designed to encourage the acquisition of individual areas of knowledge.⁸¹ Student-faculty members would then instruct the rest of the class, and Professor Barr, on their unique expertise-area of contemporary art. In this way, the students taught various aspects of modern art to the others. Each student was responsible for an area of modern art and followed it throughout the duration of the course. In such a way, students witnessed modernity as it was happening.⁸² Barr’s course was multidisciplinary in another way, too. Students were led through the creative output of

⁷⁷ Meyer, p. 42.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 86.

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 41.

⁸² Ibid, p. 44.

Europe, Russia, and Mexico through painting, architecture, and the industrial arts, including automobile design, furniture design, and appliance design.⁸³ Comic book art, posters, magazines, and advertising were considered along with film, music, dance, and modern aesthetic criticism, and all of it was related back to contemporary art.⁸⁴

A holistic approach to the study of art included all aspects of creative output aimed at the comprehension of the relationship between modern expression and contemporary civilization.⁸⁵ Barr's multidisciplinary pedagogic practice was not concerned with conveying established knowledge, but was conceived to function as a laboratory for the observation of modern culture.⁸⁶ In this way, Barr drew a distinction between aesthetic interest and visual pleasure that would be the key to his later efforts to broaden the audience for contemporary art and culture at the MoMA.⁸⁷ This holistic approach, taking into consideration the design of many different sorts of things, including objects not previously considered as necessarily having artistic value, was truly innovative at the time. By giving merit to various kinds of designed objects, Barr demonstrated to his student/teachers that there was a link between contemporary design and the world of modern expression.

To link contemporary design and contemporary life was a progressive concept. Victor D'Amico, who would go on to direct the MoMA's Department of Education, understood it, and also advocated the holistic approach. He had studied the fine arts, illustration, and costume design at Cooper Union, and became interested in art education while a student at Pratt

⁸³ Meyer, p. 44.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 45.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 89.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 83.

Institute.⁸⁸ D’Amico also trained with John Dewey at the Teacher’s College at Columbia University.⁸⁹ From there, at age 22, D’Amico was employed at the progressive Ethical Culture Fieldston School (ECFS) in Riverdale, New York, as head of its art department.⁹⁰ It was a position he held from 1926 to 1948.⁹¹ In fact, he remained at the helm of the ECFS art department while also acting as director of the Department of Education at the MoMA.⁹² ECFS, which continues today, was founded in 1878 by Felix Adler to encourage creativity and morality. Adler declared the purpose of ECFS:

*The ideal of the school is not the adaptation of the individual to the existing social environment but to develop individuals who will be competent to change their environment to greater conformity with moral ideals.*⁹³

The philosophy of ECFS, at its founding and even today, focuses on the development of the student as a creative individual, and is firmly rooted in Dewey’s progressive doctrine. It was conceived to promote individual pursuit of intellectual freedom, racial equality, and social justice, while not discriminating based on religion, creed, or color.⁹⁴ At ECFS, D’Amico’s pedagogic philosophy focused on the individual, and specifically on the individual making his or her own art, instead of memorizing dates and learning through rote techniques.⁹⁵ Throughout

⁸⁸ MoMA Archives, Victor D’Amico Biography.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Hudson, Suzanne Perling, *Robert Ryman*, MIT Press (2009), p. 43.

⁹³ Ethical Culture Fieldston School: General FAQ, ECFS.org, retrieved 12/1/15.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ McGill, Douglas, “Victor D’Amico Obituary,” *The New York Times*, 4/3/1997.

D'Amico's long career, no matter where he taught art, his programs remained based on this belief.⁹⁶

D'Amico became a national leader and spokesman for experiential art education. In 1932, he had written an important book in this area, *The Visual Arts in General Education*, which served as a report for the Committee on the Function of Art in General Education, established by the Executive Board of the Progressive Education Association.⁹⁷ At the heart of the report was the stated belief that education should be relevant to individual students as they acted within their particular social environments at home and school, within their communities, and in the wider world.⁹⁸ As chairman of the committee, D'Amico particularly sought to understand how art could develop the individual student as a whole person.⁹⁹ Together with the members of the art education group, he put forth what he saw as the ultimate purpose of art: "helping the student achieve a socially adequate and personally satisfying life in a democracy."¹⁰⁰ By the 1940s, most of the leaders in education had lived through war, and as a result, had fears regarding conflict, violence, and the spread of Communism. In the period leading up to the Cold War, the emphasis on the individual in a democracy, and what progressive art education could contribute, was certainly relevant. The goals for progressive art education were stated by the Progressive Education Association committee, as follows:

Under the older conception the teacher imparted knowledge (subject matter), had the student acquire or copy what others had discovered, formulated, objectified. Under this newer conception the teacher has a responsibility; to study the needs of the students as revealed by consideration of the individuals themselves and of the environment in which they must function; to do whatever is possible to make the environment in which the

⁹⁶ McGill, "Victor D'Amico Obituary."

⁹⁷ MoMA, "Victor D'Amico Biography."

⁹⁸ Progressive Education Association, *The Visual Arts in General Education*, D. Appleton-Century Company, (1940), p. v.

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. vi.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. vi.

*student lives and works a rich and stimulating one; to see that he grows in awareness of the resources it presents; to see that he grows in creativeness, in the disposition and skill to deal with the potentialities in his environment so as to secure greater satisfaction for himself and for others; to see that his experiences are such as to facilitate his continued best growth.*¹⁰¹

What the report suggests is that by working directly with the student as an individual, taking into consideration where and how that student lives, and in understanding his or her own specific needs, educators could create an environment that would allow for direct interaction with educational materials. In so doing, students would be in a position to creatively make use of their resources, which would result in growth through the acquisition of meaningful, salient information. Ultimately, such individually focused progressive education would lead to innovation.

Experiential education could even lead to peace. In 1942, shortly after the bombing at Pearl Harbor, with young adults joining the armed forces and America fully engaged in WWII, D'Amico wrote of "the need to develop the creative power of our youth – at a time when youth were being mobilized to destroy," and he advocated "courage to defend the creative arts through the crisis, and vision to see their role in the peace to follow."¹⁰² There was a positive power in art, which, at its deepest levels, was even capable of leading to empathy with humankind, a notion which Dewey first espoused and D'Amico furthered at this time. D'Amico wrote in a newsletter to the National Committee on Art Education about the way U.S. military systems encouraged control, rewarding compliance over innovation. He emphasized the danger that: "Military control will tend to erode our American principles of respect for individual worth and

¹⁰¹ Progressive Education Association, p. 10.

¹⁰² Morgan, "From Modernist Utopia to Cold Water Reality," "From Modernist Utopia to Cold War Reality," p. 161.

thought.”¹⁰³ Without freedom of the individual to act on his or her own imagination, schools might feel like boot camp, and students working to comply with direction from above could in the long run change American values. On the other hand, students learning in schools run like a democracy would end up being visionary innovators, working towards peaceful solutions to the world’s problems.¹⁰⁴ Something more humane, geared for the needs of the individual, was needed. The emphasis on experiential education could lead to creative solutions for students, including even in math and science.¹⁰⁵

For 50 years, progressive education models encouraged creative problem solving. Then, in the 1950s, there was a shift away from experiential learning back towards traditional learning methods. Instruction that called for a renewed emphasis on math and science gave way again to rote, information-based learning, and put less emphasis on creative problem solving.¹⁰⁶ There were a few major reasons for this shift. Life at mid-century included the rise and threat of Communism all around the world, and the success of the Soviet space program posed a specific threat in America. According to James Dean, founding director of the NASA Art Program and former curator of art at the National Air and Space Museum, and Bertram Ulrich, author and curator of the NASA Art Program, “With a Sputnik satellite in Earth’s orbit in 1957, followed by Yuri Gagarin, [a Russian and] the first man in space, in 1961, the Soviet Union had a clear lead in the exploration of the space frontier.”¹⁰⁷ These achievements by the Soviet Union put pressure on the United States to make progress with its own space program. The perceived problem was

¹⁰³ Ibid, p. 163.

¹⁰⁴ I include a reference to the government of East Germany to make a point, not to suggest that it actually had anything to do with American schools.

¹⁰⁵ The Museum of Modern Art, *The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century Continuity and Change*, p. 163.

¹⁰⁶ The Museum of Modern Art, New York, *The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century Continuity and Change, Studies in Modern Art, no. 5*, 1995, p. 151.

¹⁰⁷ Dean, James and Bertram Ulrich, *NASA/Art 50 Years of Exploration*, p. 15.

that America had failed to educate and create scientists good enough to compete with Russia. According to Morgan, “Responding to a social and political climate that dictated a return to learning basic skills, educators returned to information-based practices.”¹⁰⁸ That is to say, there was an urgency that gave way to an intentional trend in education away from the individual experiential learning practices that nurtured creativity in children, back toward rote learning. At the same time, the wave of Baby Boomer children were entering schools at numbers that exceeded classroom capacities, which resulted in a need for order that came at the expense of a focus on the individual.¹⁰⁹ Order in crowded classrooms could be achieved through strict control, and as a result, there was a shift back towards authority and conformity to school boards’ predetermined standards.¹¹⁰

The shift in educational goals had implications at institutions with programs rooted in creative self-expression. Education that promoted conformity to predetermined benchmarks was at odds with experiential learning.¹¹¹ Progressives who promoted creative thinking worried that the obsession with national defense, and the emphasis on subsequent economic advances, would effectively cancel any humanistic argument for education in the arts.¹¹² According to Morgan, the annual conferences of the Committee on Art Education would come to serve as a way of understanding the conflict between advocates of progressive education and others who promoted educational modalities that preferred rote, discipline-based practices.¹¹³ For all these reasons, in the 1950s, many schools dropped art education all together. For those who remained proponents

¹⁰⁸ Morgan, “From Modernist Utopia to Cold Water Reality,” p. 152.

¹⁰⁹ The Museum of Modern Art, *The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century Continuity and Change*, 152.

¹¹⁰ Morgan, “From Modernist Utopia to Cold Water Reality,” p. 152.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

of art education, creative efforts in the classroom were defended as an important counterpoint to the emphasis on authoritative teaching approaches. As such, experiential, hands-on approaches continued to be valued in progressive circles, by those who saw danger in authoritarian, information-based educational models that promoted conformist values.¹¹⁴ These trends led to the need for outside organizations like museums to bridge the gap and bring art to young people. Institutions like art museums reacted by establishing or bolstering art education programming specifically designed for children.

At mid-century, there was one more thing that threatened American's individuality: the influence of television. Mass media, by its very nature, emphasized mass comprehensibility by large audiences. In fact, large, easily influenced groups were desirable to fascists and dictators.¹¹⁵ Progressive intellectuals considered mass popular influences a threat to society, and in reaction emphasized the need for more creative education that honored the individual. Progressive educators did not want to create a generation of blind followers. Kenneth Winebrenner, a professor of art and the chairman of the National Committee on Art Education in 1964, put his finger on the pulse of Cold War concerns when he asked, "Does art, by its very nature, have something to offer education as an antidote to the effects of standardization, conformity, and the new authoritarianism of the machine?"¹¹⁶ Creative education could help counter the effects of all these. Concerns of autocratic education creating sheep-like masses had relevance all across America, even in Houston. NASA, formed under President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1958, was responding to the Sputnik crisis, and the resulting widespread fears to national security the satellite posed. The existence of the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, opened in 1961 in

¹¹⁴ Morgan, "From Modernist Utopia to Cold Water Reality," p. 162.

¹¹⁵ The Museum of Modern Art, *The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century Continuity and Change*, p. 163.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 169.

Houston, further underscored to local progressives that an antidote to standardization, pressures to conform, and the autocracy of machines was needed. One powerful way toward accomplishing that antidote could be found in experiential modes of art education.

Chapter 3

VICTOR D'AMICO AND THE MOMA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

In 1937, Alfred Barr hired Victor D'Amico to run the MoMA's new Education Department. As noted, D'Amico had a profound impact on arts education in America, even before getting to the MoMA. He founded the Committee on Art Education (COAE), and was its leader for its duration of existence, which was about 20 years. At its peak the COAE had more than a thousand members. Its conferences, which usually took place at the MoMA, were attended by 2,000 members annually, including art teachers of all types, school administrators, and artists. The conferences provided a forum for theoretical discussions at a changing time in art education.¹¹⁷ In reaching thousands of arts educators a year, D'Amico was among the most influential people in art education in America during this time.

D'Amico's first year as director of the Education Department at the museum was a productive one. He worked with ten private New York City schools, and he held eight exhibitions at the museum. Among them were "Modern Architecture," "The Modern Poster," and "Materials and How the Artist Changes Them."¹¹⁸ These programs were all designed specifically for young people. There were also four demonstrations of artistic techniques, some of which he led himself. At this time D'Amico also established "a place for children in an adult museum, to communicate the ideas and activities of the Department [of Education], and to bring new experiments in art education to parents, teachers, and the general public."¹¹⁹ That is to say, D'Amico didn't just work with children, but included their parents, and the educational community at large, in a shift that de-emphasized the typical elite museum-going crowd. He

¹¹⁷ Morgan, "From Modernist Utopia to Cold War Reality," p. 151–152.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

desired to bring art education to as many people as he could. In fact, D'Amico's reach would eventually extend all across the United States, and even internationally.

D'Amico had a talent for writing books, and the MoMA readily published them. In addition to his *The Visual Arts in General Education*, D'Amico would write a number of widely-dispersed hard-cover art education books, including: *The Art of Assemblage*, *Collage Kit*, *Found Objects*, *Experiments in Creative Art Teaching*, *Art for the Family*, *How to Make Objects of Wood*, *How to Make Modern Jewelry*, *How to Make Pottery and Ceramic Sculpture*, and *Theater Arts*.¹²⁰ The books are practical and easy to follow, full of pictures showing everything from materials required to specific artistic methods. They are still relevant and available in public libraries even today. D'Amico's educational method was sophisticated, based on an understanding of a child's psychological growth stage and the best way to reach a student based on her or his level of development. The youngest children, aged three to five, were started with a basic introduction to artistic materials. Six- to twelve-year-olds were guided in a way that emphasized craftsmanship and design in their own art making. Teenagers were instructed on individual artists and art movements, to help them understand the creative process beyond their own personal artistic expression.¹²¹ At the same time, D'Amico reached out the students' parents, working with them alone and with their children, to instruct them on how to continue to foster their own child's understanding and appreciation of art.¹²² All these efforts were complimented with student visits to the museum's collections. According to Morgan, D'Amico believed that "the progression from making one's own art to thinking about and understanding

¹²⁰ MoMA Archives, "Victor D'Amico Biography."

¹²¹ Morgan, "From Modernist Utopia to Cold Water Reality," p. 156.

¹²² Ibid.

the art of others was a natural progression.”¹²³ By making art, students could better understand the art made by others. This is a concept that persists among educators, that learning by doing makes the lesson more salient, or readily or holistically understandable. Likewise, ideas then as now become concrete via the consequences that arise in their application, because they become personally meaningful, a belief upheld by both Dewey and D’Amico as imperative to learning.¹²⁴ Exposure to one’s own art would also lead to the student’s ability to better appreciate the art of more advanced artists.

On the occasion of the MoMA’s 30th anniversary, in 1959, it published a book, *The Museum of Modern Art as an Educational Institution*, in conjunction with a \$25 million drive for funds to expand the museum, especially its educational offerings. The book opened with the statement that, “The educational purposes of the Museum of Modern Art are not only defined in its charter – they are implicit in its organization and pervade all that we do.”¹²⁵ A chart printed at the end of the book listed the educational programs D’Amico initiated. They included: art making classes; classes for teachers and parents; local, national, and international circulating exhibitions for children; a film library, also with circulating films; in-depth visual archives, including 75,000 different circulating photographs and 25,000 different circulating slides; the publication of D’Amico’s books, sent for free to schools and libraries far and wide; the Children’s Carnival of Modern Art; a television program, called “Through the Enchanted Gate”; also there were docent-led museum tours for children, and special student memberships.¹²⁶ That education was the premier concern was further emphasized the following year, in 1960, with the

¹²³ Morgan, “From Modernist Utopia to Cold Water Reality,” p. 157.

¹²⁴ Hudson, *Robert Ryman*, p. 43.

¹²⁵ MoMA, *The Museum of Modern Art as an Educational Institution*. This quote is found in the introductory letter from Henry Allen Moe, chairman of the board.

¹²⁶ Ibid, found in the chart listing programs.

MoMA's progress report on the Department of Education, published in book form and entitled *Experiments in Creative Art Teaching*. Written by D'Amico, he called the MoMA a pioneer in art education for people of all ages, noting that educators from all corners of America looked to the museum for help and leadership.¹²⁷

Both books detail the history of the museum's educational activities, listing each program, its purpose, the public it benefitted, and other comments. As to classes offered specifically for children, the MoMA's stated purpose was, "to develop the child's creative ability and appreciative powers" and "to develop new teaching methods for art education in general."¹²⁸ Its goals were not concerned with the quality of a student's own artistic output. Instead, the emphasis was on fostering the student's ability to look and think creatively, to understand and appreciate art. The documents spell out the importance of education for children, a policy that would be a major driver of activities at the museum, and the education programs beyond it. According to the 1959 report, the MoMA's programs reached approximately 800 children who were enrolled in weekly classes every term, including those who received scholarships. Of particular importance is this fact: "As there are no art teachers in New York's 620 elementary schools, and high school art courses are either non-existent or inadequate, for many children these classes provide their sole guided experience in art."¹²⁹ Art was not being taught in the New York public elementary schools, perhaps because information-based lessons now emphasized math and science. The decision of the New York public school system to rely completely on the MoMA to handle early art education seems to put significant trust in the instructional methods

¹²⁷ D'Amico, *Experiments in Creative Art Teaching*, p. 8.

¹²⁸ Ibid, p. 1.

¹²⁹ Ibid, p. 1 of the section entitled *The Museum of Modern Art Educational Activities, 1929-1960*. There is no specific information regarding the reach of programs presented outside the New York City school system.

and capacities of its Education Department. According to the report published in 1960, “Throughout the country, educators seeking fresh ideas and improved methods of teaching look to the Museum for help and leadership.”¹³⁰ The MoMA considered itself the leader and source for art education across the country, and certainly had invested significant attention and resources to do so. Its Department of Education provided a variety of instructional materials to teachers and thousands of children through its outreach to schools far and wide, including via films that reached even Houston’s MFAH (more on this later). The MoMA called itself “an important center for the development of new teaching methods and techniques.”¹³¹ Its leadership role was likely possible because as a private institution, it was free to experiment in ways public institutions, bound by restrictions, could not.¹³² There is little doubt the MoMA could be flexible in ways that New York public schools, encumbered by bureaucratic red tape, just could not.

The MoMA educational offerings extended to all kinds of people, not just children. There were courses for war veterans and seniors.¹³³ Summer courses for children and families were offered each season on Long Island, in what is described as a program to make an “art experience a creative vacation adventure and a focus of family life.”¹³⁴ The Long Island summer program was a way to help parents spend quality time with their children. In fact, D’Amico was a strong advocate for teaching parents how to help their children see, understand, and appreciate art. He often saw parents who unwittingly discouraged their children’s creative development through the way they guided their efforts. D’Amico did all he could to reverse that by teaching

¹³⁰ D’Amico, *Experiments in Creative Art Teaching*, p. 9.

¹³¹ MoMA, *The Museum of Modern Art as an Educational Institution*, Letter from Henry Allen Moe, Chairman of the Board.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ There is so much to say about the MoMA’s commitment to art instruction for war veterans and senior citizens, but that is beyond the scope of this paper.

¹³⁴ MoMA, *The Museum of Modern Art as an Educational Institution, Educational Activities*, p. 1.

parents to encourage their children's creative inclinations. He discouraged parents from judging or criticizing their children's work. The point was always to let the student make whatever they wanted to, however they wanted to do it. D'Amico worked directly with parents to help them understand basic goals and methods of art education. Through his efforts, parents would learn how to talk to their children in a way that would embolden creative thought and action, through input meant to be encouraging and constructive, resulting in positive influences at home.

D'Amico's stated objective was to develop and apply effective philosophies and methods of teaching art as widely as possible.¹³⁵ He noted that all the MoMA's extension programs combined must have reached millions of children and teachers, and they certainly attained world recognition and influence through his publications, television show, and the Children's Carnival.¹³⁶

The Children's Carnival (fig. 6) was the MoMA's most well-known educational offering, and an annual event at the museum, in place since 1942, designed to demonstrate how every child, regardless of his or her background, could be stimulated through the exploration of the artistic merit of art, toys, and other objects.¹³⁷ Held annually at the museum, the Carnivals reached 50,000 children.¹³⁸ The Carnival also took place at the International Trade Fairs in Milan and Barcelona, in 1957, and the U.S. Pavilion at the Brussels World Fair in 1958, reaching 16,400 children and 2,000 teachers from many countries.¹³⁹ Morgan characterizes this as the program that earned D'Amico the most recognition. The inaugural event at the museum had a specially designed Contour Gate in the shape of a four-year-old and a 12-year-old child, through

¹³⁵ D'Amico, *Experiments in Creative Art Teaching*, p. 9.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ MoMA, *The Museum of Modern Art as an Educational Institution*, p. 7.

¹³⁸ Ibid, p. 8.

¹³⁹ Ibid, p. 7.

which children entered.¹⁴⁰ Those who were taller than the gate could not enter the space, which meant parents were not allowed inside, but they could view their children through special observation windows (fig. 8).¹⁴¹ Once the child walked through the Contour Gate, he or she encountered an area D'Amico described as:

*A semi-darkened room... filled with toys either in pools of light or lighted from within, giving off a jewel-like effect. The mood intended is one of magic and fantasy, of a friendly forest, cool and quiet, with delightful surprises beckoning the child from every direction... The Inspirational Area provides a new approach to art teaching, for here the child is stimulated to think creatively and is oriented to the fundamentals of design without words or dogma of any kind.*¹⁴²

Children who visited the Carnival entered a special place, only for them, and without their parents or any specific instruction, they could explore at their own pace, for as long as they wanted, under the guidance of trained teachers.¹⁴³ This allowed the children the freedom of an individual, participatory experience, like the kind Dewey advocated. The children could work on specially sized easels and tables stocked with art materials, with minimal direction, for as long as they liked.¹⁴⁴ The first carnival was such a success that it became the model for the U.S.

Department of Commerce's Children's Creative Center pavilions that took place in Europe, as mentioned above. Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi attended the Brussels event and was so inspired she sent the Children's Art Carnival on a tour of India (fig. 7).¹⁴⁵ At the close of the tour in 1963, First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy presented the carnival to the National Children's

¹⁴⁰ D'Amico, *Experiments in Creative Art Teaching*, p. 35.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Morgan, "From Modernist Utopia to Cold Water Reality," p. 159.

Museum in New Delhi, as a permanent gift.¹⁴⁶ This gift was paid for by the International Council of the MoMA and Asia Society.¹⁴⁷ The international Carnivals demonstrated that art is a universal language, regardless of the nationality of the child.¹⁴⁸ At each location, children immediately understood what to do. No matter the time of day, at each location the Carnival was always filled to capacity.¹⁴⁹ The Carnival also demonstrated that the potential creative development of a child is independent of his or her background.¹⁵⁰

Another important educational program D'Amico initiated with legs far beyond the museum was “an experiment in teaching art to children at home, providing practical ideas and creative art projects to aid parents in fostering their children’s creative development” via a television program, “Through the Enchanted Gate.”¹⁵¹ It ran on NBC, which co-sponsored the project, in 1952 and 1953.¹⁵² NBC listed the series as public service programming, and financially supported it.¹⁵³ The series was created by D'Amico and NBC vice president Ted Cott, and consisted of 13 30-minute programs targeting children aged three to ten.¹⁵⁴ Its host was Ben Grauer.¹⁵⁵ According to D'Amico, “The natural, spontaneous reaction of the children on the program is so contagious that it produces a similar reaction in those viewing it.”¹⁵⁶ Like the Carnival, the program began with children walking through a special gate into a room stocked

¹⁴⁶ Morgan, “From Modernist Utopia to Cold Water Reality,” *The Museum of Modern Art at Midcentury*, p. 159.

¹⁴⁷ MoMA Press Release No. 107, October 13, 1963.

¹⁴⁸ D'Amico, *Experiments in Creative Art Teaching*, p. 40.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ MoMA, *The Museum of Modern Art as an Educational Institution*, p. 8.

¹⁵¹ MoMA, *The Museum of Modern Art as an Educational Institution, Educational Activities*, p.

2.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Harvey, “Through the Enchanted Gate,” p. 28.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

with art supplies.¹⁵⁷ The host presented an artistic concept, and the children created works of art related to it. In one episode, called “Making a Feeling Picture,” children were instructed to close their eyes while they were presented with objects to touch, including a live rabbit.¹⁵⁸ After talking about what touching the items made them feel and think, they were encouraged to make a collage.

Each of the episodes in the series focused on a particular theme. Other episodes included “Discover What You Can Do with Paint,” “Paint How You Feel Inside,” and “Make an Imaginary Paper Animal.”¹⁵⁹ On the show, D’Amico himself walked around and talked with the children, discussing their creations with them. He also encouraged the children watching at home to work along with the children on the show, and send their finished works to him at the museum. The next week, some of the art sent in by the home viewers was shown on the television program.¹⁶⁰ Each of the episodes ended with D’Amico talking to parents about ways to promote an understanding of the concepts covered with their children.¹⁶¹ Parents were given an address at NBC where they could write in for additional instructions. More than 3,200 requests for more information were received, presumably over the two years of the show’s run.¹⁶² According to MoMA’s director at the time, René d’Harnoncourt, “‘Through the Enchanted Gate’ points the way to far-reaching possibilities in the Museum’s constant aim to extend all its educational opportunities to wider and wider audiences.”¹⁶³ The groundbreaking program was a positive experience for the children who participated in the studio, and for those working at

¹⁵⁷ Harvey, “Through the Enchanted Gate,” p. 29.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

home. It also had a positive benefit for the museum, in that it extended their educational message, as well as to NBC, who viewed their airing of the show as a beneficial public service. In all, the television show provided educational art instruction that was useful to those who were exposed to it, as well as those who created it.

In addition to these programs, the MoMA also supplied schools and institutions across the country, including the MFAH, with visual materials and teaching aids from an extensive photographic, slide, and film library.¹⁶⁴ It held teacher in-service courses for New York City schools.¹⁶⁵ It also circulated exhibitions across the United States and internationally. Between 1931 and 1959, the museum circulated more than “500 exhibitions which had over 4,000 showings in 894 localities in the United States and Canada.”¹⁶⁶ These were exhibited at 1577 colleges and universities, and 517 schools.¹⁶⁷ Finally, it published numerous instructional books that were circulated to 25 educational institutions in 22 cities and 18 countries, including to public libraries, museum libraries, schools, universities, and institutes of design.¹⁶⁸ Perhaps the most influential of these was *Creative Teaching in Art*, published in 1942. It opens with D’Amico’s line: “The concept of the child as artist implies that every child is a potential creator endowed with those sensibilities that characterize the artist.”¹⁶⁹ By exalting the child to the level of an artist, the tone of the book placed the participants in a nearly sacred position, and emphasized that his or her creations were of value, regardless of any particular skill or talent. From the outset, D’Amico emphasized that the purpose of MoMA’s art education was to promote art understanding and creative thinking. It was never intended to produce a professional

¹⁶⁴ *The Museum of Modern Art as an Educational Institution, Educational Activities*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ D’Amico, *Creative Teaching in Art*, 1.

or accomplished artist, nor did it claim to attempt to.¹⁷⁰ The important point at the heart of D'Amico's pedagogic philosophy was that: "experience, and not the product, is the precious aim of art education."¹⁷¹ This is an idea that relates back directly to the influence of D'Amico's teacher, Dewey, who advocated most of all for the enjoyment of art as an experience.

¹⁷⁰ D'Amico, *Creative Teaching in Art*, 1.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

Chapter 4

RUTH PERSHING UHLER AND ART EDUCATION AT THE MFAH

Art education was an important part of life in Houston from the city's earliest days. In 1927, under James Chillman's leadership, the MFAH opened its Museum School of Art, offering six art making courses.¹⁷² The classes provided basic education in the fundamentals of painting, drawing, and design, for people 16 and older.¹⁷³ Classes were held in a newly renovated wing of the museum that had been donated by Frank Prior Sterling, Carroll Sterling Masterson's father, in 1926.¹⁷⁴ The program was taught by four instructors, one of whom was in fact the part-time museum director, Chillman.¹⁷⁵ The students had an annual museum show every spring, starting in May 1928.¹⁷⁶ Scholarships for "talented children" were initiated in 1929.¹⁷⁷

In 1930, thirty years after its founding, the museum only had five employees, and at that time volunteers played an enormous role in the success of the institution.¹⁷⁸ That same year a new group of volunteers from the Garden Club of Houston began taking care of the museum grounds.¹⁷⁹ In 1932, the Junior League began an affiliation at the MFAH still in existence today, 84 years on, providing volunteers for the museum and its programs.¹⁸⁰ Junior League assistance has been crucial to the museum, and was especially so during the lean times during the

¹⁷² MFAH Archives, "Chronology of Events in MFAH History."

¹⁷³ Ibid. I want to make the distinction here between courses taught at the museum for children and adults in art making, and those for children that focused on learning from objects in the museum. The work at the Masterson Junior Gallery was focused on the latter.

¹⁷⁴ MFAH Archives, "Chronology of Events in MFAH History."

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Museum of Fine Art, Houston Archives; RG 11:01 Museum Publications; Series 6 Annual Reports. The report does not specify who the employees were, or what their positions were in 1930.

¹⁷⁹ MFAH Archives, "Chronology of Events in MFAH History."

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

Depression. In 1937, the MFAH created a Junior School for younger children.¹⁸¹ The ages served is not clear from archival records, but as the prior program served students aged 16 and up, it is fair to assume the new program served children younger than 16.¹⁸² Also that year, Houston painter Ruth Pershing Uhler was named curator of education at the MFAH (fig. 11).¹⁸³ It is an interesting coincidence that 1937 was the same year that D'Amico took on the role of director of the Education Department at the MoMA. D'Amico retired from his position in 1969, and Uhler held her position until her death, in 1967, so both figures spent about 30 years directing the educational initiatives at their respective museums.¹⁸⁴

Uhler in fact had a relationship with the MFAH since its earlier days. She had participated in the first Annual Exhibition of Houston Artists held there in 1925, and other Houston exhibitions held there over the years.¹⁸⁵ Chillman was involved with the Southern States Art League, and through that organization brought its exhibitions circuit to the museum.¹⁸⁶ The MFAH's Houston Artists Show was a program Chillman initiated than ran from 1925 through 1960.¹⁸⁷ All winners of the annual exhibitions had their works added to the museum's permanent collection.¹⁸⁸ Uhler's "Flamingos" c. 1930, and "Earth Rhythms No. 3" c. 1935 both won first prize and became part of the MFAH permanent collection as a result, in 1934 and 1935,

¹⁸¹ MFAH Archives, "Chronology of Events in MFAH History."

¹⁸² Ibid. The document does not mention the age of participants in the Junior School.

¹⁸³ Archives of American Art Smithsonian Institution, "Tape Recorded Interview with Ruth Uhler."

¹⁸⁴ MoMA Archives, "Victor D'Amico Biography."

¹⁸⁵ Archives of American Art Smithsonian Institution, "Tape Recorded Interview with Ruth Uhler."

¹⁸⁶ Powers, John and Deborah, *Texas Painters, Sculptors, and Graphic Artists*, Woodmont Books (2000), Appendix B, p. 590.

¹⁸⁷ MFAH Archives, "Chronology of Events in MFAH History." Uhler's work also could be seen at City Hall, in the Julia Ideson Building of the Houston Public Library, and in the Heights Public Library. She was an award-winning muralist.

¹⁸⁸ Collections.mfah.org, accessed March 1, 2016.

respectively.¹⁸⁹ Through the Southern States Art League, Chillman also established an annual exhibition of work by Texas artists, which took place every year at the MFAH from 1940 to 1961, as well as an annual show of work from Texas photographers, from 1926 to 1953.¹⁹⁰ These exhibitions were popular with local Houstonians and people traveled to see the works from around the state. Uhler stopped painting when she went to work for the museum, noting that her job fulfilled her creative urges.¹⁹¹ She had been a graduate of the Moore Institute of Design in Philadelphia, and was a practicing artist in Pennsylvania and New Mexico before joining the museum.¹⁹² Her work was exhibited in 28 separate exhibitions over the years, including at many museums across the United States.¹⁹³ She was employed with the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), part of the New Deal program initiated by Franklin D. Roosevelt during the Depression.¹⁹⁴ Chillman recommended Uhler for the PWAP mural projects at City Hall (fig. 12), at the Julia Ideson Library, Heights Public Library, and the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art in Kansas City, Missouri.¹⁹⁵ The Ideson mural depicted Texas and local history, and she painted it during 1934 and 1935 with Emma Richardson Cherry, one of the original founders of

¹⁸⁹ Powers, *Texas Painters, Sculptors, and Graphic Artists*, Woodmont Books (2000), p. 527.

These can be viewed at collections.mfah.org, accessed March 1, 2016.

¹⁹⁰ MFAH Archives, "Chronology of Events in MFAH History."

¹⁹¹ Crumbacher, Marge, "Ruth Pershing Uhler Named Houston's Outstanding Leader in the Arts," *Houston Press*, January 10, 1961. The author notes about her subject, "She's declared to be as valuable to the museum as any Michelangelo, Renoir, or Cezanne." This article offers the most complete list I came across regarding Uhler's activities, described as managing 19 children's classes a week (five for preschoolers, four for "talented youngsters," two free sketch classes open to all children, and eight "membership classes").

¹⁹² Archives of American Art Smithsonian Institution, "Tape Recorded Interview with Ruth Uhler."

¹⁹³ Powers, *Texas Painters, Sculptors, and Graphic Artists*, Woodmont Books (2000), p. 527.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

the MFAH.¹⁹⁶ Around this time, Uhler had a large studio at 2008 Main Street, in one of the houses that formed the Houston Art League.¹⁹⁷ While it is not clear from archival records, it seems inevitable that Uhler was involved with very early planning at the museum, given that she lived in one of these houses and was friends with the museum's founders.

In her role as director and curator of educational programming at the museum, Uhler was mainly occupied as an organizer and instructor of classes that provided basic art making instruction for adults, and later younger children. Anecdotal evidence suggests she had a larger role helping Chillman run the museum, but this is not immediately clear from reading her personal files in the archives.¹⁹⁸ As director and curator of education, in 1939, Uhler began the museum's educational film series, which screened films loaned from the MoMA's collections.¹⁹⁹ This fact indicates she had knowledge of the MoMA's Education Department, though any other comments regarding an exchange between the two programs would be speculative. These film screenings were held at the Sidney Lanier Junior High School and San Jacinto High School auditoriums, and were regularly attended by Houston audiences.²⁰⁰ While the archives do not include specifics regarding who those attendees were, it might be assumed that some of the participants were students attending the two schools. By 1939, as there was still only limited

¹⁹⁶ Archives of American Art Smithsonian Institution, "Tape Recorded Interview with Ruth Uhler."

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Interview with Richard Stout, Henri Gadbois, and Leila McConnell, who worked with Ruth Uhler as art instructors at the MFAH. We discussed their impressions working with Uhler in the 1950s and 1960s and the museum in general, which they characterized as "run on a shoestring budget." February 7, 2016.

¹⁹⁹ MFAH Archives, "Chronology of Events in MFAH History." This would be a great area for further research to better understand what the films were, who the audiences were, and how these activities relate back to the Masterson Junior Gallery. The archives closed during the course of researching this paper, and were unavailable for scholarly research, as a result.

²⁰⁰ MFAH Archives, "Chronology of Events in MFAH History." Unfortunately, there is no documentation in the archives regarding who attended the screenings or made up these audiences.

funding for employees at the museum, the Art Museum Guild was set up to provide additional volunteer help, which included even volunteer curatorial work.²⁰¹ In fact, an executive committee consisting of Chillman, Uhler, the Guild president, and the Guild committee chairwoman, established all the procedures and policies for the whole museum, including the development of the annual program of activities.²⁰² Under these circumstances, it is probably fair to say that the museum was not run with the professionalism of other, more established institutions, such as those found in the East, including the MoMA.

The role played by volunteers in the Art Museum Guild was very important to the running of the museum. The main focus of Guild activity was primarily to provide hostesses at receptions and openings at the MFAH during the 1940s and 1950s.²⁰³ The records in this regard do not provide many concrete answers regarding the roles or duties of staff members or volunteers. According to Annual Reports, the museum had 12 employees in 1940 (four administrators, three in the education department, and five in the school of art), and 21 staff members by 1952 (eight in administration, eight in education, and five in the school of art).²⁰⁴ The allocation of staff, with eight administrators and 13 people in various roles in education, speaks volumes about the educational priorities at the museum. Still, there were a lot of volunteers running things.

By midcentury, there were certainly many wealthy people in Houston who could have provided financial support for operating expenses at the museum. The first major oil gusher in

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Museum of Fine Art, Houston Archives; RG11:01 Museum Publications; Series 6 Annual Reports.

Texas was on January 10, 1901, at Spindletop, in the then lumber town of nearby Beaumont.²⁰⁵ Since that time, local people had been getting rich, some very fast. To fill the gaps in staffing at the museum, in 1943, the Junior League further increased its involvement at the MFAH, when its Docent Program was initiated.²⁰⁶ The significance of this fact is that Junior League trained volunteers conducted much of the early work of the MFAH education department, such as leading the tours for public school children who visited the museum, including 318 sixth grade classes in its first year.²⁰⁷ It seems that the education department, or any other department at the museum, would be run best with a trained, professional staff. Leaving so many jobs up to volunteers, no matter how well trained, means the museum might have lost some level of control over the content and quality of the activities that were performed there.

In the first decades of its existence, the priority for funding often went to improvements to the building. In 1950, the MFAH began to renovate the museum. The renovations affected parts of the Sterling Wing, including the area used for museum school classes. The funding for this work came from the sale of the Frank Prior Sterling House, located at 1505 South Boulevard in neighboring Broadacres, which had been donated to the museum by Carroll Sterling Masterson, her mother, Mrs. P.E. Turner, and her brother, Lewis Sterling, in 1948.²⁰⁸ This would be the first time Carroll Sterling Masterson would donate a house to the MFAH. The second time occurred when she and her husband, Harris, donated their home, Rienzi, in 1991.²⁰⁹ Nineteen fifty-three was a year of big changes at the museum. It had received a major donation from the

²⁰⁵ Burrough, *The Big Rich*, Penguin Group (2009), p. 1.

²⁰⁶ MFAH Archives, "Chronology of Events in MFAH History."

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ MFAH Archives, "Chronology of Events in MFAH History." The house actually was sold to Gus Wortham, but because the house was donated to the museum by Carroll and her brother, proceeds from the sale went directly to the museum.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

family of Robert Lee Blaffer, and a memorial wing was opened to the public in his honor.²¹⁰

Also in 1953, Lee Malone became the first full-time director of the MFAH, and Chillman was at that time named Director Emeritus (he would serve as interim director several years later).²¹¹

Malone was an art history major at Yale University, and had been director of the Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts in Ohio.²¹² During his six years at the helm of the MFAH, he managed major construction and renovation projects, obtained new sources of funding, and oversaw 39 national and international exhibitions.²¹³ In 1954, an important art patron, Nina J. Cullinan, whose father had purchased the land on which the museum is located, made a major gift. In memory of her parents, Joseph Stephen and Lucie Halm Cullinan, Nina Cullinan bequeathed funding to construct a new, very large exhibition hall, to be designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and called Cullinan Hall.²¹⁴ She also established an Endowment Fund for the operation and enhancement of that space a year later.²¹⁵

The following year, 1956, was an important one at the museum for many reasons. In January it was announced that a Permanent Endowment Fund had been established, to help defray costs of operating the museum, including the maintenance of the building, furnishings, and fixtures, and, finally, much needed salaries for employees.²¹⁶ In 1956, Malone also announced that a new children's gallery would be established in a 2,000 square foot space on the first floor area in the museum, known as the Sterling Wing, which had also housed the Samuel H. Kress Collection of late Renaissance Italian and Spanish paintings. The new children's

²¹⁰ Ibid. It housed the Blaffer Art Collection, which his widow had begun donating in 1947.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, *A Guide to the Collection*, p. xv.

²¹⁵ MFAH Archives, "Chronology of Events in MFAH History."

²¹⁶ MFAH Archives, "Chronology of Events in MFAH History."

gallery, which would open two years later, would be possible with a gift of \$35,000 from Harris and Carroll Sterling Masterson III.²¹⁷ In addition to educational programming, the funds would be used to renovate downstairs classrooms, including the installation of special lighting, and the addition of a mobile stage and display cases.²¹⁸ Malone also reported plans for film projectors, record players, and special acoustical ceilings and walls.²¹⁹ In making the gift, the Mastersons declared “they felt provision must be made for the youngsters as well as the adults of a city to participate in the arts.”²²⁰ With their gift the museum would be able to offer space and object-based programming to educate Houston school children in art beyond making their own art in art classes. While the Mastersons had a reputation for supporting all kinds of artistic endeavors in town, including particular generosity with the Houston Symphony, they often funded causes that directly benefitted children.²²¹

The gift of the Masterson Junior Gallery had a very significant impact for a great many children in Houston. At the time the gift was made, Malone announced: “To delight and instruct the children of Houston, that will be the job of the Museum of Fine Art’s new children’s museum.”²²² With such a simple goal, it is difficult to speculate what the mission of the children’s museum might have been, and the archives do not hold a definitive answer. What one can know is that the Masterson Junior Gallery had the education of children as its focus. Unlike the education program at the MoMA, under the leadership of the experienced art educator Victor

²¹⁷ Uhler, “Museum News,” Oct. 11, 1956, MFAH Archives, Folder 24, Junior Gallery General Information, 1955-1966. There also is a news clipping regarding the donation that ran in the *Houston Chronicle* in the Masterson personal scrapbooks in the MFAH Archives, but that article is not dated, nor is its author listed, as I have not, therefore, cited it.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ *Houston Post* Editorial Board, “The Masterson Gifts,” November 1981.

²²² Ibid.

D'Amico, much of the success of the Masterson Junior Gallery, especially in the early years, is directly attributable to hard work on the part of its curator, Uhler, and to volunteer efforts. The first volunteer chairman was Mrs. McClelland Wallace, a devoted supporter of children's causes in Houston, who was also an active member of the Houston School Board.²²³ Wallace volunteered to work with a planning committee to establish exhibits that would appeal to young minds. Carroll Sterling Masterson was on the advisory committee during this initial planning phase, though her name only appears once in the archived reports from these meetings.²²⁴ An exhaustive search of the MFAH archives reveals that her involvement must have been chiefly as patron, appearing historically to give funds more than her time to the museum. While both Carroll and her husband, Harris, consistently spent time on the board of the museum for decades, only Harris appears to have been more involved in a hands-on way.²²⁵ As noted, the archives reveal no mission or master plan for the Junior Gallery. The bulk of what can be known comes from the personal files of Ruth Uhler, who held the position of curator of education from 1937 until her death, 30 years later in 1967.²²⁶ She was deeply involved with all aspects of running the museum, not just the Masterson Junior Gallery, however. She is said to have influenced three generations of Houston artists, acting as the mother to staff and volunteers.²²⁷ While we do know

²²³ Johnston, *Houston The Unknown City*, p. 365.

²²⁴ MFAH Archives, RG11:01 Publication Records; Series 6 Annual Reports; Box 1; "Masterson Junior Gallery 1959 Annual Report."

²²⁵ *Houston Post* Editorial Board, "The Masterson Gifts," November 1981. At times, he was deeply involved in even the smallest aspects of museum event planning. Judging from his scrapbooks, he knew how to throw a good party.

²²⁶ MFAH Archives; RG09 Education Records, Series 01, Ruth Pershing Uhler Papers, Box 1, Folder 1.

²²⁷ *Ibid.* Let me also mention that on February 7, 2016, I met with three artists, Leila McConnell, Henri Gadbois (Leila's husband), and Richard Stout, who all worked as art instructors at the MFAH during the time Uhler was running the Masterson Junior Gallery. They told me it was not a particularly sophisticated organization at that time, and that Malone, Uhler, and one security guard basically ran the museum.

that Uhler made use of films provided by the MoMA while acting as curator of the education department, there is no documentary evidence that indicates she ever communicated directly with Victor D'Amico, or attended any of the meetings of the National Committee on Art Education. Considering his leadership in the field, and the popularity of his nationally televised show, "Through the Enchanted Gate," which he created and appeared in, she probably was aware of him and his work. No archival records link Uhler directly to D'Amico, however. Of all the correspondence documents found in her files, nothing is addressed to anyone at the MoMA, and there is no mention of anyone at that museum in any of her hand-written notes.²²⁸

The future opening of the Masterson Junior Gallery was announced on October 11, 1956, by Lee Malone. In a letter that ran in *Museum News*, a publication distributed to the museum's members, he noted that it would be established in approximately 2000 square feet of the first floor of what is now known as the Law Building. Renovation of downstairs classrooms was initiated at the same time that Cullinan Hall and other older areas of the museum were being renovated, and at this same time, the Watkin building was air conditioned for the first time.²²⁹ According to records found in the Annual Report from 1956 through 1957, the museum actually was closed for the last eight months of 1957, while all the construction was taking place.²³⁰ With the new Masterson Junior Gallery, Malone called for a place where children could find "more than the routine visual entertainment and education."²³¹ By this he likely meant that the Masterson Junior Gallery would be offering a multifaceted program that would allow children to engage directly in a variety of ways with the materials, which is what they did.

²²⁸ It truly pains me to not be able to draw any direct link between Uhler and D'Amico.

²²⁹ MFAH Archives, "Directors of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston."

²³⁰ Museum of Fine Art, Houston Archives; RG11:01 Museum Publications; Series 6 Annual Reports.

²³¹ MFAH Archives, RG09 Education Records, Junior Gallery: General Information, 1955-1966, Subject Files F-L, Folder 24.

From the start, plans for the Masterson Junior Gallery were ambitious. There was a full calendar of activities prepared, comprised of six exhibitions in 12 months. Two would be sponsored on an ongoing basis: a juried exhibition of junior and senior high school students, paid for by the *Houston Post*, and a “Christmas Around the World” show made possible every year through the largesse of the Garden Club of Houston.²³² While the Christmas show does not seem to have much of an art historical perspective, the annual show was part of a trend at art museums. Even the MoMA had holiday-themed shows every year, called “Children’s Holiday Circus of Modern Art,” which ran through the 1940s, 1950s, and into the 1960s.²³³ Beyond these two sponsored shows at the MFAH, the remaining four annual exhibitions would be planned by Uhler and her volunteer committee members. The committee would select the shows, with an effort to create displays that made use of local objects, local expertise, and local materials. In this way, it was easier and cheaper to acquire what was needed for the exhibitions. For these early shows, the spaces themselves were designed by local architects, who donated their services and supervised the installations.²³⁴ This all was in keeping with the volunteer spirit of the museum.

The Masterson Junior Gallery opened to the public in early 1958. The Mastersons were not in attendance at the inaugural event that honored them for their gift, to the dismay of the committee.²³⁵ They were traveling, and one might assume by their absence that the opening of

²³² Ibid.

²³³ MoMA Exhibition History List, Exhibition #247, December 8, 1943 – January 3, 1944, Exhibition #273, January 16 – February 18, 1945, Exhibition #303, December 4, 1945 – January 6, 1946, Exhibition #338, December 3, 1946 – January 5, 1947, Moma.org.

²³⁴ MFAH Archives, RG09 Education Records, Office of Curator/Director Ruth Pershing Uhler, Subject Files F-L, Folder 24.

²³⁵ Letter to Carroll Sterling Masterson from Junior League President Mrs. John Lindsey notes disappointment the couple will not attend the opening. MFAH Archives Collection, Education Records, Office of the Curator/Director Ruth Pershing Uhler, RG# 9:1, Series 1, Box 2, F-L, Folder 16.

the Masterson Junior Gallery was not terribly important to them.²³⁶ Other members of the family did make it, however. They included Mr. and Mrs. Percy E. Turner (Carroll's mother and her husband), Mrs. Libby Johnston Masterson (Harris's mother), Mrs. Bert Farmer Winston, Jr., (Carroll's son), and Mr. and Mrs. Neill T. Masterson, Jr. (Harris's brother and his wife).²³⁷ That first exhibition, which opened January 25 and ran through March 2, 1958, was titled "Indian Festival."²³⁸ The archives do not contain information regarding why it was chosen as the inaugural event, but it might be assumed that those involved had items that were appropriate to loan for the exhibition, and chose the particular subject as a result. "Indian Festival" was sponsored by the Junior League of Houston, and the budget was \$2,400.²³⁹ The exhibition emphasized life along the Mississippi and Ohio River Valleys, where thousands of Indian Mounds were discovered filled with buried relics. The display included information about Pacific Northwest Coast Native American culture.²⁴⁰ Entrance to the exhibition was through a specially designed bear-shaped portal that was child sized, perhaps an influence of the MoMA's Enchanted Gate (fig. 15). Though nothing in the archives links the two, it is possible Uhler would have been aware of it, as the television show aired nationally. Objects on display in this first MFAH exhibition for children included Native American artifacts such as weavings,

²³⁶ MFAH Archives, MS32, Masterson Family Scrapbooks, Scrapbook I 1951-1971, p. 31.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ MFAH Archives, RG09 Education Records, Office of Curator/Director Ruth Pershing Uhler, Subject Files F-L, Folder 24.

²³⁹ MFAH Archives, RG09 Education Records, Office of the Curator/Director, Ruth Pershing Uhler, Folder 10, Junior Gallery Annual Reports, 1958-1960. This report is done in pencil, and also lists the committee for the first show, composed of the following people: Mrs. Thomas D. Anderson (chair), Mrs. Ben Weems (co-chair), Miss Ruth Uhler, Mrs. Harris Masterson, Mrs. E.A. Blackburn, Mrs. Ernest Thompson, Mrs. Wendell Steward, Mrs. Braxton Thompson, Mrs. Sarah Jane Weaver, Mr. Preston Frazier, Mrs. David Searls, Mrs. J.R. McGonigle, and Mrs. Macrery B. Wheeler. The group's stated function is to assist Uhler by providing suggestions regarding possible exhibitions, and to assist in organizing the shows.

²⁴⁰ MFAH Archives, RG09 Education Records, Office of Curator/Director Ruth Pershing Uhler, Subject Files F-L, Folder 24.

woodcarvings, sand paintings, Kachina Dolls, musical instruments, ceramic pots, clothing and textiles, feather works, masks, and small sculptures, as evidenced by the photos of the exhibition.²⁴¹ Visitors wandered along a papier-mâché scale model of an Indian mound that ran along the floor and was shaped like a snake, designed by S.I. Morris, an important Houston architect.²⁴² Documentary photographs of the show reveal a display that bears resemblance more to an anthropological exhibition at a public library or small science museum than to an art museum. Interestingly, one photo shows an open window in the exhibition space. As mentioned, air conditioning had recently been installed in parts of the building. The open window, which could be a source of damage to the art, is perhaps an indication of the level of sophistication at the museum. Another indicator is the fact is there was not much art in the first exhibition. Overall, there would be lots of room for improvement in subsequent shows.

While “Indian Festival” was lacking in art, its planners made up for it with a number of well-conceived activities planned for school-aged children from public and private schools in and outside of Houston, as well as members of community clubs like the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. This extensive outreach to children from throughout the community would be a hallmark of the shows in the Masterson Junior Gallery. Activities were held on school days and on weekends at the museum, presumably to accommodate the different schedules of the participants and perhaps to accommodate as many people as possible. Informative facts about each exhibition and a schedule of activities were included in a take-away brochure, and, like the catalogs for subsequent children’s shows, were generally two or four pages, made of folded pieces of paper

²⁴¹ MFAH Archives, RG09-2 Photography Collection, Masterson Junior Gallery Exhibition Installation Photographs, Box 1.

²⁴² MFAH Archives, RG09 Education Records, Office of Curator/Director Ruth Pershing Uhler, Subject Files F-L, Folder 24.

(figs. 16-19).²⁴³ In this first show, the activities included traditional performances by the Laubin Dancers, and demonstrations by Navajo craftsmen, including weaving and pottery. Themed plays were performed by a local private school, The Kinkaid School. Campfire Girls demonstrated beadwork, while Boy Scouts presented Native American dances. The Junior League put on themed puppet shows. Students from St. John's School, another private school, put on a Kachina doll style show (fig. 14). In all, there were many ways that the children were able to experience the concepts introduced via the exhibition. This was the start of what would become an experiential, hands-on approach to Masterson Junior Gallery exhibitions.²⁴⁴ To say the show would have met with the approval of Victor D'Amico or John Dewey would not be a stretch, as there were so many opportunities for participants to come into direct contact and engage with the materials on display. Wearing clothing similar to what Native Americans wore, dancing their dances, and telling their traditional stories are all examples of the way the participants interacted with, activated, and experienced the art. The opening weekend was considered a rousing success, too, with an attendance in excess of 10,000 visitors.²⁴⁵

While the MoMA kept excellent records of its educational endeavors, it is necessary to draw conclusions about the Masterson Junior Gallery exhibitions and activities for children through the photographic evidence of the events, and the brochures that accompanied them, as

²⁴³ MFAH Archives, RG 5 Registrar's Records, Exhibition Files, Exhibition Catalogues, 1957 – Jan. 1959, Folder 7. This information and all that immediately follows comes directly from the "Indian Festival" brochure. The brochure was in fact four pages. A few others over the early years were four pages, but most were one page folded in half.

²⁴⁴ MFAH Archives, RG 5 Exhibition Catalogues, 1957 – Jan. 1959, Folder 7.

²⁴⁵ MFAH Archives, RG09 Education Records, Office of the Curator/Director Ruth Pershing Uhler, F-L, RG# 9:1 Series #1 Box #2. Letter from Uhler to Miriam C. Stryker, chairman, Children's Museum Section for 1958, The American Association of Museums. There is no information regarding who the children were that came to the first show, but presumably, it included the students from St. John's and Kinkaid, as well as Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, among many others.

the archives reveal very little. As mentioned, the records for the Masterson Junior Gallery are not nearly as complete as the MoMA's Department of Education documentation. In general, there was a lack of a standard, systematic way of documenting the exhibitions within the MFAH's archives. Some of the files contain no more than hand-written notes. Highlighted in this paper are the early shows that were fairly well documented and photographed. Many of the shows were not. Also, there was no single way of tracking numbers of visitors to the various exhibitions and activities until after the tenure of Ruth Uhler, when Mary Buxton replaced her, in 1967.²⁴⁶ For this reason, there was some difficulty in accurately understanding the numbers of children who encountered the shows. At times, there was a mixing of factual information about the six yearly exhibitions in the Masterson Junior Gallery and the hands-on art making classes, which were a separate activity, and beyond the scope of this paper.

After the inaugural exhibition, another show with clear evidence that it functioned as an example of experiential learning was "Buddhas, Bells, and Bamboo," which ran from September 23 through November 19, 1961 (fig. 20). As with the early Masterson Junior Gallery shows in general, many of the objects on display were loaned by local collectors. Photographs and exhibition files provide only a partial record of the contents of the exhibition, however (fig. 21). A take-away brochure serves to explain the curatorial message (figs. 22-25). This show appears to have contained many more art objects than the inaugural show.²⁴⁷ These included authentic puppets, clothing, and masks.

²⁴⁶ MFAH Archives, Director's Records, Mary H. Buxton, Subject Files A-Z, RG 2:4, Series #2, Box #1, Folder 4, Personal files of Mary Buxton.

²⁴⁷ Ibid. The registrar's records indicates the following objects were on view from a private collector, Ralph C. Altman of Los Angeles, The Brooklyn Museum, the Taylor Museum Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, and the Detroit Museum of Art. Some objects displayed included:

Six Javanese Hide Puppets

Two Flat Wooden Javanese Relief Puppets

Masterson Junior Gallery exhibitions regularly provided multiple ways of engaging directly with the materials, which is what links them to John Dewey’s progressive educational theories. Activities to support “Buddhas, Bells, and Bamboo” included: a dance drama performed by G’Ann Boyd Dance Group, entitled “Misi and the Great Sir Barong”; a slide show, “View to Bangkok”; a presentation, “The Story of Javanese Puppets,” presented by Puppeteers of America; storyteller performances of “The Wonderful Garden of Dreams,” “Aruman, The Hero of Java,” and “Princess September and the Nightingale”; and film presentations included screenings of “Siam” and “Trance and Dance in Bali.” To illustrate an artistic technique, Davis Senior High School students conducted a demonstration of wax-resist painting, and there was a special presentation by the Playhouse Children’s Theatre.²⁴⁸ The students who performed along with the exhibition must have spent time researching various aspects of Asian culture, which would put them in direct contact with the materials. This kind of work is part of the experiential learning process that Dewey, Barr, and D’Amico advocated.

Three Shadow Figures
One Javanese Court Robe
One Balanese Mask with Hair
Five Muslin Squares
One Necklace of Silver Coins
One Copper Wire Bracelet

Four Javanese Marionettes
One Javanese Topeng Mask
Two Batiks
One Dancer’s Headdress
One Pair Metal Anklets
Fourteen Siamese Puppets

Objects obtained locally came from the following collectors:

Mrs. Charles Farrington
Gen. and Mrs. Maurice Hirsch
McFarlands Interiors
Mrs. I.K. Nichols
Wells Design

Sam Goldman
Jorge’s
Gale MacLane Martin
Mr. and Mrs. Ben H. Powell, Jr.
Mr. Joe Pritchett²⁴⁷

Activities included: a dance drama performed by G’Ann Boyd Dance Group, “Misi and the Great Sir Barong”; a slide show, “View to Bangkok”; a presentation, “The Story of Javanese Puppets.”

²⁴⁸ Ibid, Folder: Publicity and Education Activities.

As with other exhibitions at the Masterson Junior Gallery, a brochure served to articulate the curatorial message of “Buddhas, Bells, and Bamboo.” To create the scene in participants’ minds, the text began with a description of what it is like to fly 5,000 miles east from Houston and arrive in Asia.²⁴⁹ It described the kinds of housing one might expect to find upon exploring the highlighted areas, as well as the foods, jobs, forms of government, places of spiritual worship, and cultural practices of the peoples who created the art. Today, an exhibition of this type would be more likely seen at the Houston Museum of Natural History, as it reads as more anthropological than art historical. As a backdrop to the exhibition, colorful murals depicted scenes of temples, fields of local crops, native animals, and plants. In all, visitors experienced a multi-media approach to understanding the art of Indonesia.²⁵⁰ What the materials offered were opportunities for large groups of children to interact with the subject matter on multiple levels. This aspect of the program gave the shows their learning-by-doing value. “Buddhas, Bells, and Bamboo” functioned as an example of experiential learning in that subject matter was not introduced only in a didactic way. It also was presented in such a way that students had the opportunity to take part in the lessons directly, through demonstrations, plays, dances, and other activities that enabled their individual participation and involvement with the materials. In this active way, children could draw their own conclusions about the material presented, making it more meaningful to them personally. In this exhibition, photos reveal a more sophisticated display with a depth of variety of art objects that illustrate the curatorial argument of the show, with an overall effect that looked significantly more museum-like than previous Masterson Junior Gallery shows.

²⁴⁹ MFAH Archives, Registrar’s Records, Exhibition Files, “Buddhas, Bells, and Bamboo,” January 1957 – April 1958. RG #5, Series #1, Box #19. This information and what immediately follows all comes from the brochure for “Buddhas, Bells, and Bamboo.”

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

A year later, Uhler and her team were creating exhibitions with more art and more extension activities (figs. 26-27). “Ancient Legacies,” on view from January 27 through March 18, 1962, showed “the influences of Greek and Roman culture on modern day architecture, furniture, costumes, hair styles, dress, jewelry, household accessories and utensils, and mediums of exchange.”²⁵¹ This exhibition presented information in an integrated way that related directly back to students’ own current experiences, making the ideas conveyed personally meaningful. Considered against John Dewey’s philosophic theory, this, too, was art as experience. Items on view featured contemporary objects and their ancient antecedents. The backdrop of the exhibition contained specially conceived drawings and enlarged pictures of Houston architecture created by representatives of Rice University’s architecture department. Scale models of local buildings were displayed to show their ancient Greek and Roman influences. These included McAllen State Bank, by Cowell and Neuhaus, St. Martin’s Church, by Milton McGinty, and Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, by Philip Johnson.²⁵² Objects on display also included a Greek bronze mirror, Greek silver coins, a bronze statuette of Jupiter, a Roman bronze askos, a Roman padlock and iron key, and a bronze Roman lamp.²⁵³ These were presented along with similar current objects that directly demonstrated the influence of the ancient versions on their modern day design. Ancient coins were compared to modern ones children might find in their own pockets. In this way the exhibition was relevant to the students on an individual level. By showing them buildings that were familiar from town, for example, and then relating them back their classical antecedents, the exhibition activated the objects for the children.

²⁵¹ MFAH Archives, Registrar’s Records, Exhibition Files, RG #5, Series #1, Box #21, “Ancient Legacies,” a takeaway brochure, Folder 5.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

A number of planned activities enhanced the physical exhibition and provided a holistic view of ancient Greek and Roman culture. These activities and the curatorial argument were presented in a takeaway brochure (figs. 28-31). Activities included: a presentation of Aesop's Fables by Theatre, Inc.; a performance of a dramatic narrative using costumes and masks entitled "Greek Legends"; the screening of several films, including "Ancient Paestrum, Ancient Greece," and "Rome, The Eternal City"; a concert of ancient music was performed by members of Rice University's Shepherd School of Music; lyrical dances, titled "Stories from Greek Vases," were performed by the Elizabeth Symmonds School of Dance; and a play about ancient Greek culture was performed by the drama department from St. John's School.²⁵⁴ According to a press release at the time, "Huge photos of Grecian and Roman architecture models and scale drawings of existing contemporary edifices demonstrate the effect of classical architecture upon the modern building arts."²⁵⁵ The press release itself notes how items on display drew direct comparisons between ancient Greek and Roman objects and modern American versions. Contemporary glass and ceramic articles were juxtaposed with ancient versions in displays to "illustrate the lasting of ancient legacies,"²⁵⁶ directly explaining how modern versions derived from ancient ones. Elsewhere, antiquities appeared next to contemporary vases, lamps, statuettes, jewelry, and household accessories, to directly "show the relationship of past to present."²⁵⁷ In these very specific ways, the exhibition provided an experiential learning opportunity for its participants.

Various activities enabled visitors to participate in hands-on art making that related to the exhibition, providing another kind of experience. Examples of these included a project on

²⁵⁴ MFAH Archives, Registrar's Records, Exhibition Files, RG #5, Series #1, Box #21, "Ancient Legacies," a takeaway brochure, Folder 5.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ MFAH Archives, Registrar's Records, Exhibition Files, RG #5, Series #1, Box #21, Ancient Legacies, Folder 8, Publicity and Education Activities.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

ancient scrolls with detailed instructions on how to make a modern version of a scroll, for sixth graders.²⁵⁸ Story lines that were suggested were: a day in ancient Athens or Rome; the diary of a school day for a Roman boy; a Greek or Roman boy's visit to the capital; the history of papyrus, scrolls, and/or the alphabet; and a Greek boy's account of his visit to the Olympic games.²⁵⁹ Interestingly, no suggestions were given for diaries for girls' activities. By this we can understand that in 1962, girls were not treated with equal respect to boys. Nevertheless, for Latin classes, proposed writing assignments to be made into scrolls included: a list of books a wealthy Roman might want in his library; a diary of Aeneas, Caesar, Cicero, and/or Virgil; and modern names for girls or boys derived from Latin.²⁶⁰ An activity entitled *The Greek Loom* described ancient weaving materials and techniques, and provided instructions for participants on how to build a replica of a Greek loom, and gave directions regarding how to use it.²⁶¹ Finally, there was a project about wax tablets that described how ancient records were kept. Participants were instructed on how to construct and use a wax tablet.²⁶² All of these hands-on activities would put children in direct contact with objects and materials similar to those on display. In creating their own works, students would be learning by doing, arriving at their own conclusions while activating the works on display. This is another example of how MFAH programs followed the MoMA's educational style, resulting in experiential learning for the participants.

One of the most popular exhibitions for children at the MFAH was "The Circus." It ran from June 23 through August 25, 1963. Of special note is the fact there was actually a live baby

²⁵⁸ MFAH Archives, Registrar's Records, Exhibition Files, RG #5, Series #1, Box #21, "Ancient Legacies," a takeaway brochure, Folder 5.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

elephant in the museum, which the children could touch (fig. 32).²⁶³ Despite the seemingly unusual nature of the art exhibit, it appears those who helped create the show saw artistic merit in the display of a circus with a live elephant, and considered it an appropriate opportunity to learn about art. As mentioned earlier, the MoMA had a number of exhibitions for children with a circus or carnival theme, including an internationally traveling one. While it is unclear to what extent Uhler or any of her volunteer helpers were aware of these MoMA shows, it is probably safe to say that the circus theme was chosen because it has universal appeal for children. It may also be the case that the circus was chosen entirely for its ability to get children in the doors. Lenders to the exhibition included many well-known Houstonians, such as sophisticated art collectors John and Dominique de Menil, among them.²⁶⁴ The de Menil's involvement implies their approval of the curatorial message and theme. Objects also came from the Contemporary Art Museum, including a wire construction, "Acrobats," by Alexander Calder, and the local chapter of the National Circus Organization TENTS loaned items.²⁶⁵ A photo of the exhibition shows a number of animal sculptures made up the bulk of the art displayed (fig. 33). Objects were arranged under a literal "big top" style of decoration. The photos do not indicate that this was an exhibition of profound artistic merit.

²⁶³ MFAH Archives, Registrar's Records Exhibition Files, June – October 1963, RG #5, Series #1, Box #26, folder #11, Publicity, exhibition takeaway brochure. Is it a stretch to consider touching an elephant as an example of experiential learning? I think not, even though the direct relation to understanding art through such an experience is vague. Missy was a 6-month-old elephant in 1963. This visit to the museum was her first time off the ranch where she lived in Wallace, Texas. Her owner was Bill Kilroy, and her trainer was Smoky Jones, of the Barnum and Bailey Circus.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ MFAH Archives, Registrar's Records Exhibition Files, June – October 1963, RG #5, Series #1, Box #26, folder #11, receipt. Even though the CAMH is not a collecting museum, the receipt indicates the Calder sculpture was loaned by the museum.

An accompanying brochure provided no information whatsoever about any of the art on display, which seems to be an indication of the lack of professional curatorial guidance (fig. 34-35).²⁶⁶ The text placed the circus in an historical context. It describes the parade of chariots drawn by elephants and mules, the gladiators, soldiers, and performers who followed behind it, and the fighting displays between lions, elephants, giraffes, tigers, and criminals in the first circuses. There is no link between the historical information in the brochure and the art objects, and one can only assume the choice of works was simply inspired by the circus theme.

According to an internal museum publication, “The whole gallery appears as a circus tent with circus wagons, circus rings, murals of crowds giving an atmosphere where you could smell the popcorn and hear the calliope.”²⁶⁷ In fact, the exhibition is another example of a MFAH Masterson Children’s Gallery show that appears more as an anthropological display than an artistic one. Like the other shows, it did, however, engage its participants with a number of activities.²⁶⁸ The one with the most direct relation to art production might be the demonstration of balloon sculpture making, or the application of clown face make-up. Several films were screened during the show, including: *Alexander Calder’s Circus*, two Russian films, *Bear Circus* and *In the Moscow Zoo*, and films specifically for children, *Little Yellow Train* and *The Circus Baby*.²⁶⁹ The extent to which any of these referenced the art on display is unclear, and of all the exhibitions highlighted in this report, this one seems to have offered the least in the way of experiential art participation.

²⁶⁶ MFAH Archives, Registrar’s Records Exhibition Files, June – October 1963, RG #5, Series #1, Box #26, folder #11, Publicity, exhibition takeaway brochure.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid. The rest of the activities described are listed in this brochure.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

The final exhibition I will discuss in this thesis is perhaps the most innovative and directly fostered opportunities for personal engagement with art as an experience. It was conceived to bring art to a new audience: blind and visually impaired children. Called “Touch Me,” it took place at the museum from January 21 through March 5, 1967, and it was so successful it was installed two more times in later years.²⁷⁰ “Touch Me” would be the last exhibition Ruth Uhler curated at the museum. She died later that month.²⁷¹ The exhibition was based on the idea that when someone looks at art only with one’s hands, he or she receives an important impression that is different from a sighted one. According to the exhibition brochure, “By seeing with our hands we may come to know of the subtle transitions of surfaces and the many nuances of form and texture that stimulate our tactile imagination and makes each work of art an exciting aesthetic experience.”²⁷² What “Touch Me” provided was a new experience, perceiving art without one’s eyes, as well as an activity seldom experienced at an art museum, the opportunity to touch an art object. With an emphasis on understanding an object exclusively by the way it feels, the exhibition provided a depth of understanding that it claimed would surpass sighted viewing. The brochure, which for unknown reasons did not include any writing in braille, engaged visitors in the following way:

²⁷⁰ MFAH Archives Collection, Registrar’s Records, Exhibition Files October 1966 – February 1967, RG #5, Series #1, Box #37, “Touch Me,” Folder 23.

²⁷¹ Woodmont, *Texas Painters, Sculptors, and Graphic Artists*, p. 527. The entry for Ruth Pershing Uhler lists two days that her obituary ran in the *Houston Post*, March 29 and 30, 1967. Prior to her death, a scholarship in her name was established in her honor, and it is still awarded at the museum school, now known as the Glassell School of Art.

²⁷² MFAH Archives Collection, Registrar’s Records, Exhibition Files October 1966 – February 1967, RG #5, Series #1, Box #37, “Touch Me,” Folder 23.

“Imagine being able to see two sides of a sculpture simultaneously. It is impossible with our eyes, but with our hands we encompass the whole form, and by moving them over the surface gain an immediate impression of what the artifact is attempting to convey.”²⁷³

Compared to the others, this exhibition contained many art objects. There is no record regarding the numbers of blind people who attended the show, but the fact that it was repeated two more times in later years is testament to the success of the exhibition. Whether or not sighted viewers participated while blindfolded, or merely with eyes closed, is not part of the archival records, either. We can know this exhibition provided a different type of experiential learning compared to other shows in that it allowed for a direct physical encounter with art for increased understanding of the object. Each “viewer” would be able to come to his or her own conclusion regarding what she or he “saw,” through activation of the work of art on a purely physical, individual level. The pictures from this show reveal young people who look moved by the experience of touching the art (fig. 36).

This show was ambitious. According to the brochure (figs. 38-41), its stated purpose was

“To reach a large new audience of people for whom a museum visit has been meaningless due to their lack of sight. It can be a most sensitive audience because their other faculties are so highly trained. It should be a cause for rejoicing among artists who wish to communicate, the blind who wish to experience, and the sighted who wish to learn.”²⁷⁴

It is unclear why the creators of the brochure did not print the words in braille, which would have engaged the blind and visually challenged in an even more direct and inclusive way. One can assume that the way blind participants understood the curatorial message was through verbal

²⁷³ MFAH Archives Collection, Registrar’s Records, Exhibition Files October 1966 – February 1967, RG #5, Series #1, Box #37, “Touch Me,” Folder 23.

²⁷⁴ Ibid. The direct reference to an opportunity for art as an experience seems to indicate the planners may have known something regarding Dewey’s concept.

communication and direction. The children's ease moving around the space was made possible by a specially designed smooth, curving railing that was installed. This is apparent from the documentary photographs that also show art objects positioned near the railing just above waist level (fig. 37). Among the objects on view were many loaned by important Houston collectors, again including, John and Dominique de Menil, who would later form their own museum, as well as other local people and institutions.²⁷⁵

Here was an opportunity to really accomplish something important with regards to an innovative curatorial exhibition. There were no notes in the archived files from this show regarding how sighted participants experienced the show, however, or if the extension activities related to the art on display or helped sighted people better understand the life of the blind. It would be interesting to know if both sighted and blind participants engaged with the exhibition at the same time, or if they discussed their different experiences. According to the brochure, there was a pottery demonstration. It is likely that it involved a verbal description of the artistic process, augmented perhaps by an opportunity to feel pottery as it was being shaped, or at least to feel the finished version, something that is evident from a documentary photo. Students may

²⁷⁵ MFAH Archives Collection, Registrar's Records, Exhibition Files October 1966 – February 1967, RG #5, Series #1, Box #37, "Touch Me," Folder 23. Objects included:

Jean Arp, *Cristal* (1954, bronze)
 Jacques Lipchitz, *Half-Standing Figure* (1916, bronze)
Head of Youth (15th century, limestone)
Ceremonial Axe (Chinese, archaic jade)
 Kurhajec, *Teddy Bear* (1963)
Eagle (12th century, bronze)
Pig (American, 20th century)
Monkey Mask (African, 20th century)
Mask with Feathers
African Spoon
Stirrup Spout Jar (Peru, 4-6th century)²⁷⁵

have been able to make pottery, too. There were a number of activities that provided aural experiences, such as a performance by a harp and accordion player, a German band, and the Bellaire Bell Ringers.²⁷⁶

This exhibition was a specific response to the needs of blind and visually impaired students, and it provided a new, direct way for all the visitors to interact and engage with art and their environment. “Touch Me” had the potential to reach students in a way that would allow for their further creative and artistic growth, by confronting the art directly and thinking and talking about it. All of these ideas relate back to the educational theories of John Dewey, who most of all encouraged direct involvement with art as a personal experience.

²⁷⁶ MFAH Archives Collection, Registrar’s Records, Exhibition Files October 1966 – February 1967, RG #5, Series #1, Box #37, “Touch Me,” Folder 23.

CONCLUSION

John Dewey advocated a creative style of learning that provided specific opportunities for students to actively engage with art and artistic materials and draw their own unique individual conclusions about them. He championed situations that placed students in a dynamic role and fostered creative thinking and independent problem solving in their learning environments. Victor D'Amico advanced these theories in his own practices as director of the Department of Education at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. He advocated an approach that resulted in students arriving at their own answers, as opposed to being told the answers. This activated approach, called learning-by-doing or experiential learning, results in personally meaningful conclusions and solutions. This paper has set out to demonstrate how the Masterson Junior Gallery at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, functioned as an institution for art education for the children it served. I have attempted to prove that both the MFAH and the MoMA functioned as opportunities for creative self-expression, demonstrated through their advancement of programs that provided experiential learning. Ruth Pershing Uhler, despite her limited staff and budget at the MFAH, created opportunities for learning about art that fostered the expression and cultivation of the individual through free activity. This was accomplished through art making based on the exhibitions, as well as participation in direct ways of engagement with the material, such as performing in a play, playing music related to works on display, or recreating a Greek scroll. Students learned by the experiences they encountered because nobody told them what to think. They were encouraged to arrive at their own conclusions, which is a more meaningful approach than being told the answers. While I hoped to find a direct link between the goals of the Masterson Junior Gallery exhibitions and experiential learning as advocated by John Dewey and

Victor D'Amico, I did not. Nonetheless, the programs offered under Uhler's direction were progressive, and they provided opportunities for direct engagement that resulted in experiential learning. Whether she intended to or not, Uhler's programs related to the individual needs of the students. She was able to create a rich and stimulating environment that fostered opportunities to consider the materials on display through numerous related activities. In so doing, Uhler's programs encouraged the participants to grow in their own creativity, and to gain a personal satisfaction as a result of these experiences.²⁷⁷

Future research on the Masterson Junior Gallery could consider other educational theories and philosophies, beyond John Dewey's ideas. It might include an assessment of the records of the Junior League, to determine if there is more information about the goals for the programs and exhibitions there. It is unclear if the people who planned each of the shows were also members of the Junior League, or if their connection to the museum came through another entry point, but there might be value in taking a look. There was some difficulty researching in the MFAH Archives, because the facilities closed in December 2015, when the building that houses the materials was sold, and they will not be open again until perhaps the summer of 2016, but I was able to thoroughly review all the Masterson Junior Gallery files, and all of Ruth Pershing Uhler's files. It would be helpful to investigate the directors' files on this topic also. Also, there might be a benefit to visiting the MoMA archives to uncover new information about the Education Department and the Committee on Art Education. Perhaps a connection to Ruth Uhler lies there. Another area that could contribute to a better understanding of art education around midcentury is a study of the extensive educational slide files. Slides were routinely

²⁷⁷ I especially offer my heartfelt thanks to my thesis advisor, Dr. Sandra Zalman, and my friend in the MFAH Archives, Misha Storm. Both provided invaluable guidance and assistance in making this thesis all it could be.

distributed all around the United States to museums and educational institutions to inexpensively bring art to students. Slide presentations were a regular part of the offerings made available by the MFAH, too. Understanding how art slides fit into the educational offerings in the schools would be valuable to understanding the total picture of art education in Houston. Of course, the story would be more complete if other educational programs from other art museums were investigated and compared to Masterson Junior Gallery exhibitions and programs.

Here I will end this thesis with a list of all the exhibitions held at the Masterson Junior Gallery in the 1950s and 1960s, in chronological order, which I compiled from the MFAH Archives. Many of these have very little documentation:

1. A pilot program, Children and Chopsticks (1957)
2. Indian Festival (1958)
3. Eighth Annual Easter Art Show
4. 30th Annual Exhibition of Work by Houston Public School Children, Students of the Museum School of Art, and Free Art Classes for Talented Children
5. Sculptures by Roszak
6. Techniques of Sculpture and Ceramics
7. Texas Heroes
8. Toys Past and Future
9. Christmas
10. Mythological Journeys (1959)
11. Ninth Annual Easter Art Show
12. 31st Annual Exhibition of Work by Houston Public School Children, Students of the Museum School of Art, and Free Art Classes for Talented Children
13. Techniques of Painting
14. A Visit to Venice
15. Christmas
16. Sail Ho! (1960)
17. 10th Annual Easter Art Show
18. 32nd Annual Exhibition of Work by Houston Public School Children, Students of the Museum School of Art, and Free Art Classes for Talented Children
19. Hiroshima to Houston
20. Hands in Ink Printmaking
21. Pre-Columbian Mystery
22. Christmas
23. Of Knights and Armor (1961)
24. 11th Annual Easter Art Show

25. 33rd Annual Exhibition of Work by Houston Public School Children, Students of the Museum School of Art, and Free Art Classes for Talented Children
26. World of Fantasy
27. Travel Posters
28. Buddhas, Bells and Bamboo
29. Christmas
30. Ancient Legacies (1962)
31. 12th Annual Easter Show
32. 34th Annual Exhibition of Work by Houston Public School Children, Students of the Museum School of Art, and Free Art Classes for Talented Children
33. Sculpture: Birds and Beasts
34. Land Without Shade
35. Christmas
36. We Lived Then: Vignettes of Children (1963)
37. 13th Annual Easter Show
38. 35th Annual Exhibition of Work by Houston Public School Children, Students of the Museum School of Art, and Free Art Classes for Talented Children
39. The Circus
40. The Versatile Shell
41. Christmas
42. The Shape of Things (1964)
43. 14th Spring Art Festival
44. I Am a Flower
45. Myth & Magic
46. Christmas
47. The Heart Image (1965)
48. 15th Spring Art Festival
49. Annual Student Exhibition: Museum Junior and Adult School Student Exhibition
50. Children at Play
51. Theatre: The Magic Mirror
52. Christmas
53. Ages of the Peacock (1966)
54. 16th Spring Art Festival
55. Annual Student Exhibition: Museum Junior School Student Exhibition
56. The Greenhouse
57. Festival
58. The World of Christmas
59. Touch Me (1967)
60. 17th Spring Art Festival
61. Annual Student Exhibition: Museum Junior School Student Exhibition
62. Sand and Sea
63. Our Mexican Heritage
64. Christmas
65. Touch Me (1968)
66. 18th Spring Art Festival
67. Annual Student Exhibition: Museum Junior School Student Exhibition

- 68. Sicilian Marionettes
- 69. Benin
- 70. Christmas
- 71. American Primitives and Poets (1969)
- 72. 19th Spring Art Festival
- 73. Annual Student Exhibition: Museum Junior School Student Exhibition
- 74. Indian's Image
- 75. The Eskimo
- 76. Christmas

APPENDIX



Figure 1. Harris and Carroll Sterling Masterson III. They provided the funding for the Masterson Junior Gallery at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, which opened to the public in 1958.



Figure 2. Rienzi, donated to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston by Harris and Carroll Sterling Masterson III, and opened to the general public as the house museum for European decorative arts and paintings in 1999.



Figure 3. A portrait of Ruth Pershing Uhler by Lowell Collins, director of the Houston Museum School, now the Glassell School of Art, and part of the MFAH.



Figure 4. Victor D'Amico was the first director of the Department of Education at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Among the many books he wrote on art education were *The Visual Arts in General Education* and *Experiments in Creative Art Teaching*.



Figure 5. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., first director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. He taught the first contemporary art course in America, "Tradition and Revolt in Modern Painting," in the 1920s.



Figure 6. John Dewey, educational reformer whose influential theories promoted experiential learning. His Harvard University lectures on aesthetics were turned into the book *Art as Experience*.



Figure 7. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston in the 1920s. The oldest art museum in Texas, it is located at 1001 Bissonnet.



Figure 8. The first director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, James H. Chillman, Jr.



Figure 9. A scene from the Children's Carnival, an annual event at the Museum of Modern Art in New York starting in 1942.

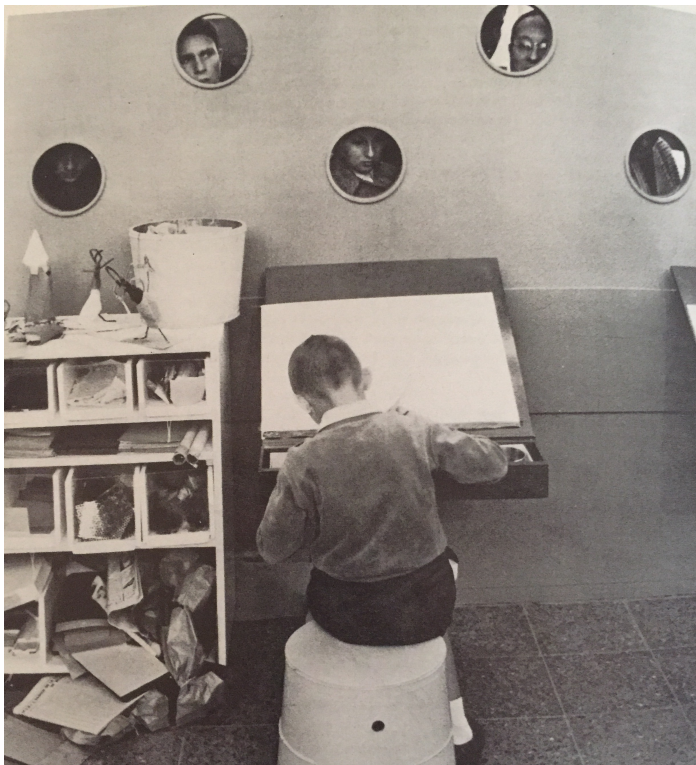


Figure 10. A scene from the MoMA's Children's Carnival, which traveled to countries around the world at midcentury.



Figure 11. First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy presented the MoMA's popular Children's Carnival to the National Children's Museum in New Delhi as a permanent gift in 1963.



Figure 12. Ruth Pershing Uhler, an artist and the first curator of education at the Masterson Junior Gallery at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, is fourth from the left.

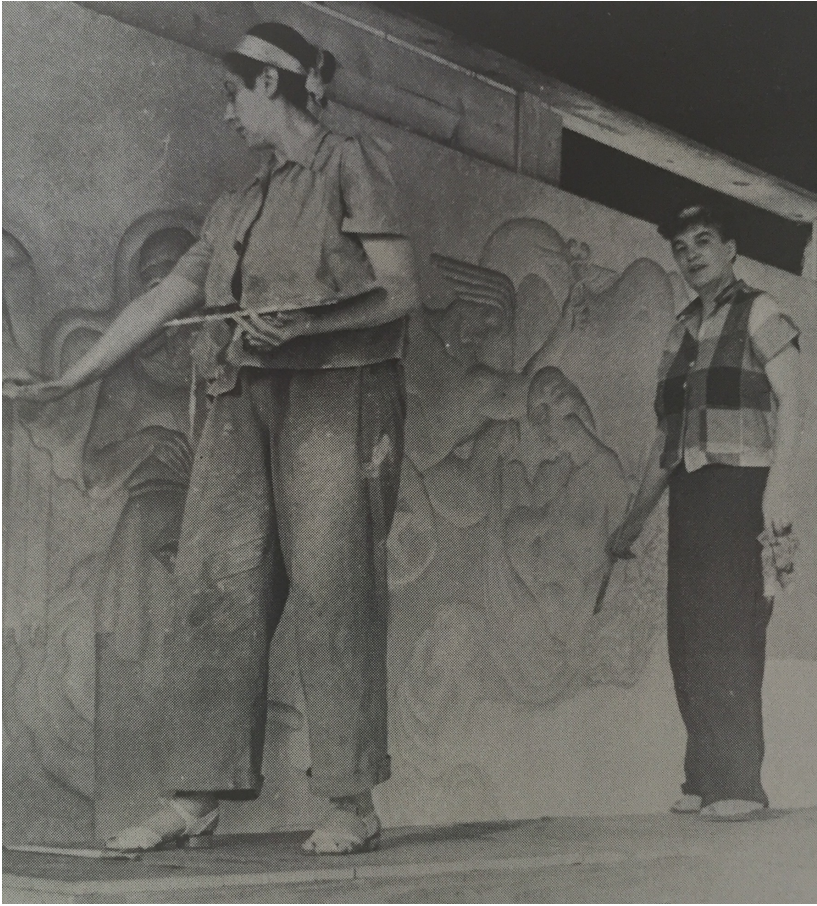


Figure 13. Ruth Pershing Uhler, at left, with Grace Spaulding John, at work on a mural commission for the Julia Ideson Library in Houston.



Figure 14. Installation shot of the first exhibition at the Masterson Junior Gallery, called "Indian Festival." The space was designed by famed Houston architect S.I. Morris. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.



Figure 15 The cover of the takeaway brochure for the first exhibition at the Masterson Junior Gallery at the MFAH, "Indian Festival." Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.

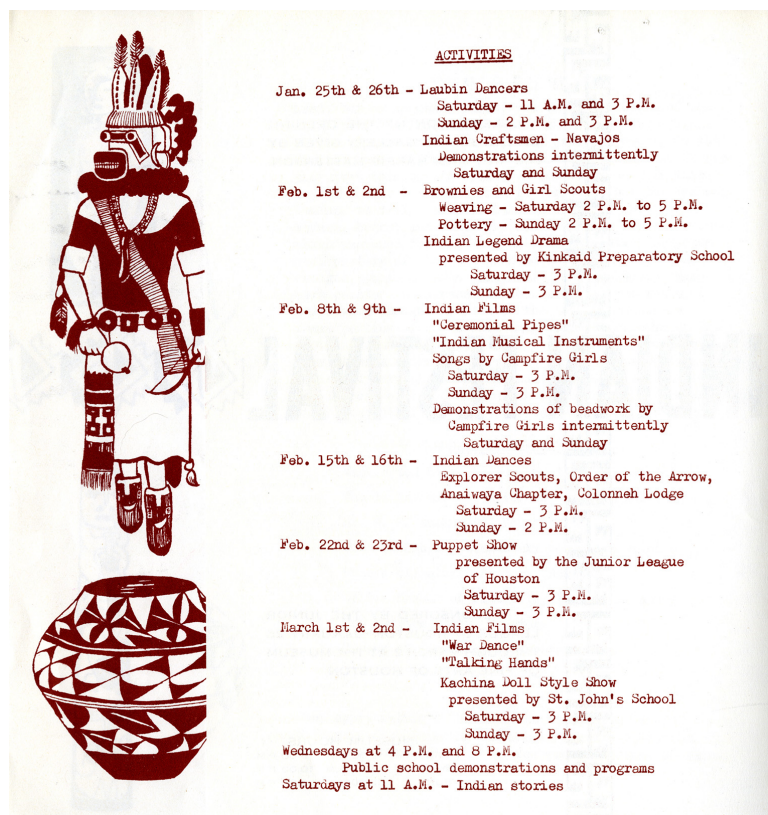


Figure 16. The exhibition brochure for "Indian Festival" lists many activities that provided the children who participated with opportunities for experiential learning. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.

MOUND-BUILDERS

Along the Mississippi and Ohio River Valleys are thousands of Indian mounds which have fascinated white men ever since they were first discovered. At first it was thought that they were simply small hills, but when the land was ploughed many Indian relics were unearthed. Since the Indians who had built these mounds had disappeared before the white man came, all that we know of their way of life is what we can learn from these buried articles that were left behind. The cone-shaped mounds were used for burials, the flat-topped mounds were used as bases for houses, and those in the shape of birds, animals, serpents, and humans merely as decoration. When burying their dead, many articles which might be used in the next life were placed in the graves; bowls filled with grain, necklaces of fresh-water pearls, pipes made of stone, tools, implements of war, and ornaments worn on the head. Many of these objects, as well as a replica of the 1,348 ft. serpent mound located in Ohio, are here for you to see and enjoy. Since many mounds are still unexplored, we hope to learn much more about these mysterious and fascinating people in years to come.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST COAST INDIANS

As you step through the bear you enter the realm of the Pacific Northwest Coast Indians who lived along the shores of southern Canada, Washington, Oregon, and northern California. Since the climate was cold and damp many months of the year, it was necessary for them to have sturdy wooden houses for protection. These, and the building implements, were all made from the abundant cedar trees growing in this area. Even the large canoes used in whale-hunting were hewn from cedar, as well as wooden boxes, masks, totem poles, and some items of clothing. Year after year, huge ceremonies called "potlatch feasts" were held. At this time all the fish, meat, and other foods which had been readied in the spring and summer were displayed for the many guests. Each tribe usually tried to outdo the other in serving the most food, giving the most presents, and even threw copper coins into the ocean to demonstrate great wealth. There are tribes of these Indians still living and many can be found working as fishermen and in the numerous salmon canneries in the Pacific Northwest.



Figure 17. "Indian Festival" was an exhibition at the Masterson Junior Gallery that could be considered anthropological in nature. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.

INDIANS OF THE SOUTHWEST

Last, but by no means least, you enter the world of our neighbors, the Indians of the Southwest who live in New Mexico and Arizona. The majority of these belong to the Pueblo group, the name "pueblo" meaning village in Spanish and given them by the Spaniards when they were in this country. The Southwest area is very dry, but the Indians learned to irrigate their land in order to raise corn, squash, beans, and other crops. They also hunted buffalo which was used for clothing as well as meat. The women made pottery of clay and painted them with beautiful designs, while the men made dolls of cottonwood. Many were painted and dressed to look like the kachina spirits which were thought to live on the tops of mountains. These particular dolls were hung from the rafters of the adobe houses and used to teach the children about the many kachina spirits. Navajo rugs have a distinctive style and natural wools are usually used in the weaving. The Indians of the Southwest have many colorful dances which they still perform at certain times of the year.

LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

Washington State Museum, Seattle, Washington
The Taylor Museum, Colorado Springs, Colorado
Mr. A. T. McDannald, Houston
Dora S. Lantrip Elementary School, Houston
Museum of Natural History, Houston
Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, Dallas, Texas
Mr. Maurice Angly, Houston
Museum of Fine Arts of Houston

Deep appreciation is extended to Fred Buxton and Si Morris for designing and installing the exhibition and to Southern Printing Co. for providing this brochure.



Figure 18. The "Indian Festival" exhibition brochure lists the lenders to the show, many of whom were from Houston. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.



Figure 19. From the inaugural exhibition, “Indian Festival,” at the Masterson Junior Gallery, in 1958. The children depicted were part of a Kachina style show put on by students from The Kinkaid School. The scene illustrates an example of experiential learning, or “learning by doing.” Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.



Figure 20. “Buddhas, Bells, and Bamboo,” an exhibition from 1961 at the Masterson Junior Gallery. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.



Figure 21. “Buddhas, Bells, and Bamboo” offered many opportunities for experiential learning. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.



Figure 22. The exhibition catalog for “Buddhas, Bells, and Bamboo.” Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.

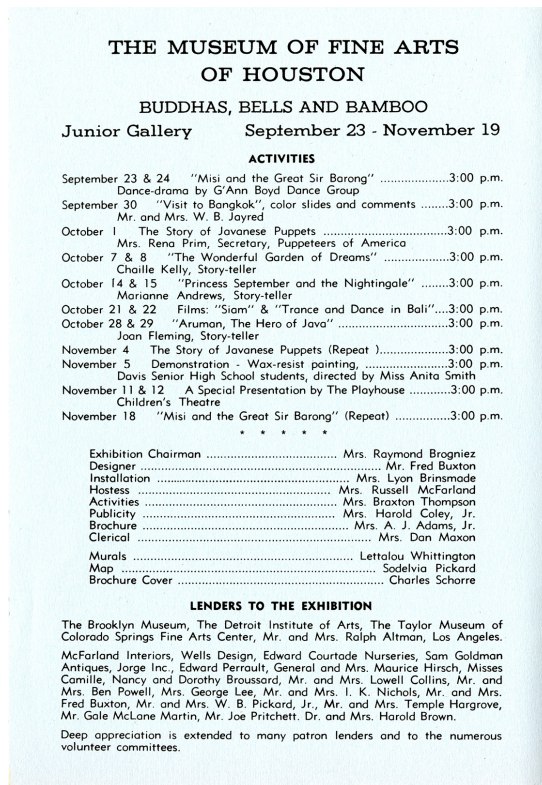


Figure 23. "Buddhas, Bells, and Bamboo" offered many activities for the children who participated in the exhibition. This page from the catalog also lists the volunteer committee that put on the show, as well as lenders to the exhibition, many of whom were local Houstonians. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.

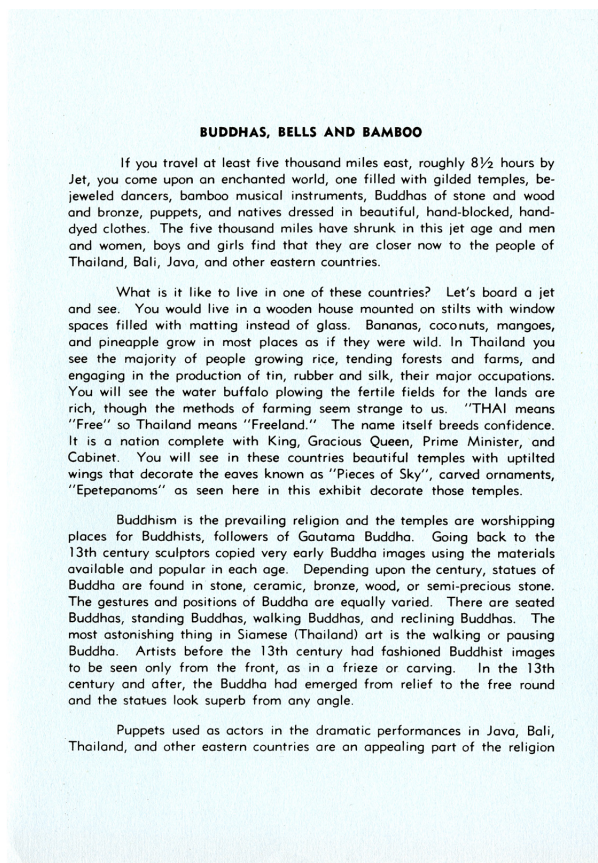


Figure 24. This page from the exhibition catalog reveals more of an anthropological approach than a curatorial argument for the objects selected. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.

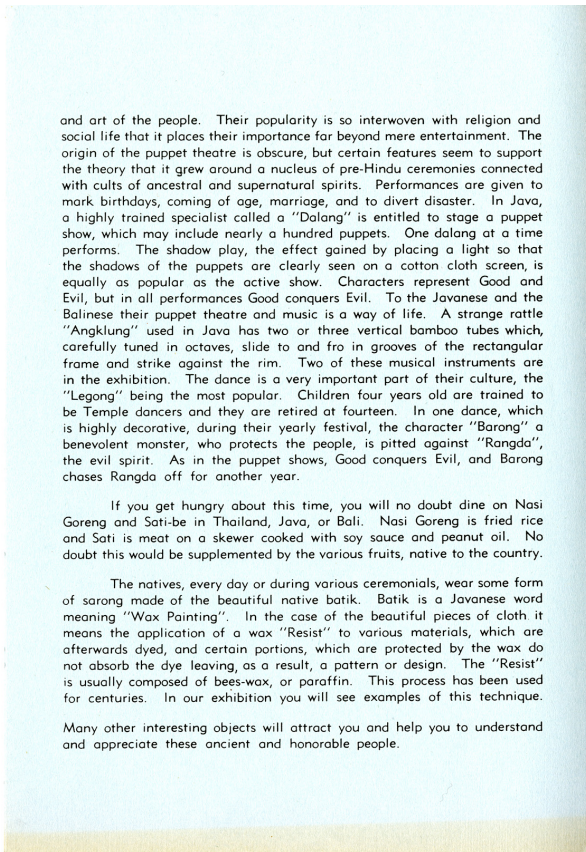


Figure 25. More from the exhibition catalog for "Buddhas, Bells, and Bamboo." Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.



Figure 26. A scene depicting girl scouts participating in activities associated with "Ancient Legacies," an exhibition at the Masterson Junior Gallery from 1962. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.



Figure 27. An example of children involved with experiential learning through the exhibition “Ancient Legacies” at the Masterson Junior Gallery. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.



ANCIENT LEGACIES

Figure 28. Cover of the exhibition brochure for “Ancient Legacies.” Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.

ANCIENT LEGACIES
January 27 — March 18, 1962
Junior Gallery Museum of Fine Arts

ACTIVITIES

January 27 and 28	AESOP'S FABLES, Presented by Theatre, Inc.....	3:00 PM
Dramatized by children, Narrated by Frank Crawford		
February 3 and 4	GREEK LEGENDS.....	3:00 PM
Told by Jean Warner using costumes and masks		
February 10 and 11	FILMS	3:00 PM
"Ancient Paestrum"; "Ancient Greece"; "Rome, The Eternal City"		
February 17 and 18	AESOP'S FABLES Repeat	3:00 PM
February 25	ANCIENT MUSIC, Presented by Dr. Arthur Hall	3 PM
And The Shepherd School of Music, Rice University		
March 3 and 4	ELIZABETH SYMMONDS SCHOOL OF DANCE.....	3:00 PM
Lyrical Dances		
March 10 and 11	MRS. H. FLETCHER BROWN	3:00 PM
"Stories from Greek Vases"		
March 18	DRAMA DEPARTMENT OF ST. JOHN'S SCHOOL	3 PM
Presented by Fowler Osburn		

* * * * *

Exhibition Chairman	Mrs. M. B. Wheeler, Jr.
Co-Chairman	Mrs. Eugene Ellingson
Designer	Mr. Charles Tapley
Research	Mrs. L. B. Wilby
Activities	Mrs. Bert C. Engel, Mrs. Harold Coley, Jr.
Installation	Mrs. David Rude
Hostesses	Mrs. Winston Baber
Murals	Lettalou Whittington
Mosaics	Frances Royston
Cover	John Zemanek
Language Consultant	Dr. Donald MacKenzie

LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania; The Walters Gallery, Baltimore; Westmoreland, Inc.; Maxfield G. Taylor, Furniture Inc.; Sunland, Inc.; Wells Design; Edward Perrault; Neiman-Marcus; Handmakers; Mrs. Kenneth Dale Owen; Mr. and Mrs. John C. Jacobs; Mrs. Theo Tusa; Mr. and Mrs. Fred Buxton; Miss Peggy Weaver; Miss Ruth Laird; Michael and Barbara Wheeler, Dr. Arthur Hall.

Models: Midland Office Building, Cowell and Neuhaus
St. Martin's Church, Milton McGinty
Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, Philip Johnson
U. S. Post Office, Wilson, Morris, Cain and Anderson

Deep appreciation is extended to the many patron lenders and to the numerous volunteer committees.

Figure 29. An interior page from the "Ancient Legacies" brochure lists activities related to the exhibition, the volunteer committee that put on the show, and lenders to the exhibition, many of whom were local Houstonians. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.

"ANCIENT LEGACIES"

America, 1962, is a world leader with a people who are proud of their independence and of the pioneer spirit which has made our country what it is today. But all of our culture is not original. Greece and Rome were two giants of yesteryear whose influences are felt in many aspects of our lives today.

Excavations have proven that as far back as 1500 B.C. there existed a comfortable and remarkable Grecian civilization. On the island of Crete, the palace of King Minos who lived in 1400 B.C. was unearthed. Besides the great courtroom, there were two story apartments, a bathroom complete with child's bathtub, and a sewage system still in good working order. The paintings on the walls revealed a well dressed, bejeweled group of people who knew how to entertain in the grandest manner.

From palaces and kings the Greeks developed into a group of self-ruling, independent states. Trade with Asia and the Mediterranean coast flourished, and from this trade developed a monetary system to include copper pennies. Athens and Sparta were two of the most successful Greek states. Sparta was famous for its soldiers and athletes — Athens for her culture.

Our modern theatre was born on the hills of Athens 2200 years ago. Plays then were entertaining capacity audiences — some ten to twenty thousand strong. On Broadway today are versions of the Greek originals. Our doctors when they graduate from medical school take the oath of Hippocrates. Hippocrates, the father of medicine, was a Greek doctor who believed in the highest ideals of medicine and was the first to separate practical medicine from philosophy and religion.

Religion played a great part in stimulating the magnificent Greek buildings such as the Parthenon, the Acropolis and the Temple of Apollo. Marble, which abounded in the Greek mountains, provided the material. The buildings were built to house the gods, who were thought of as special and privileged human beings. The Greek imprint was so strong that it has influenced our architecture and sculpture ever since. Our Lincoln Memorial and Supreme Court Building in Washington are examples of this enduring art.

Because of their love of exercise and physical training, Greek statues are beautiful to behold. Praxiteles was the most famous of these sculptors, and his tools were simple — flat and pointed chisels and surfacing hammers.

Our word "music" is derived from the arts of the nine Muses of

Figure 30. The text from the "Ancient Legacies" exhibition at the Masterson Junior Gallery is more anthropological than art historical. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.

Greek mythology. These arts included culture of the mind as separate from gymnastics, or culture of the body. The lyre was the Grecian ancestor of our harp. The Greeks also played a flute and had the first pipe organ. The Romans gave us most of the other wind instruments of the modern orchestra — the oboe, clarinet, trombone and trumpet.

Rome comes to light in mid-eighth century B.C. With the development of the Roman empire, there comes the second great influence upon the Western world. Begun as a trading settlement at the mouth of the Tiber River in Italy, Rome developed slowly for three centuries. Then her power expanded. She conquered Greece in the third century B.C. and her delight with the Grecian civilization caused her to imitate and improve upon Greek customs and comforts.

The Romans were a cruder and more serious people than the Greeks, but also more practical, and we owe them for our calendar, the names of our months, and even our leap year began when Julius Caesar changed the calendar! In architecture they followed the Greek style, but they perfected the arch, and their aqueducts which brought water into the city of Rome were engineering gems. Roman roads were superb and parts of them are still being used in Europe today. The most famous is the Appian Way. The administration building at Rice University is a good example of the use of the Roman Arch.

Roman leaders had a respect for law and justice and they were the codifiers of the first legal system. Their law buildings were the models for the Roman meeting hall from which Christian churches were modeled. Romans liked comfort and their public baths were luxurious. Some could accommodate 3000 people, and hot water was run through pipes heated by a furnace.

Both Greece and Rome had libraries, and their famous citizens often presented libraries to their home towns. Their houses were comfortable and airy with floors of mosaic patterned tile and paintings were drawn directly onto the plaster walls. The ladies were gracious and their use of cosmetics included lipstick, rouge, mascara, eye-shadow and powder.

Americans share the same love of freedom, enjoyment and independence with the Greeks. Our desire of peace with order and laws based on individual rights are shared with the Romans. Our letters are Roman; our speech is nearly a third Latin, and the fundamentals of our science and learning are those which Greece began and Rome preserved and transmitted.

For the legacies of these two civilizations, Americans should be eternally grateful.

Figure 31. More from the exhibition catalog for “Ancient Legacies.” Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.



Figure 32. A baby elephant was included in the exhibition for “The Circus” in the Masterson Junior Gallery, in 1963. As this photograph illustrates, there was a live elephant inside the museum. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.



Figure 33. An interior shot of the Masterson Junior Gallery exhibition, “The Circus.” Major Houston art collectors John and Dominique de Menil were among the donors of art for this exhibition. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.

COME ONE COME ALL

Junior Gallery Museum of Fine Arts
The Circus June 23 - August 25

LENDERS

Mr. and Mrs. George R. Brown
Contemporary Arts Museum
Miss Chaillie Cullinan
Cushman Gallery, Inc.
Mr. and Mrs. John de Menil
Dreyer Galleries
Mr. and Mrs. William T. Fleming
Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Hershey
Meredith Long's Houston Gallery
Mr. and Mrs. Ford Hubbard, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Kroll
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Mosbacher
Neiman Marcus
Mr. Berthold Schiwetz
Mr. and Mrs. Fred Stanciloff
Mr. and Mrs. Robert D. Straus
Mr. Richard Wood
"TENNIS" Houston Chapter, National Circus
Organisation - represented by Mr. George Christy

ACTIVITIES

June 23	3-5 pm	"CLOWN JEWELS" - Making balloon sculpture	Garden
	3 pm	"CIRCUS SECRETS" - Told by Mrs. Fred Stanciloff	Lecture Hall
	4 pm	"ALEXANDER CALDER'S CIRCUS" - Film	Lecture Hall
June 30	3 pm	GLID LISTER IN HIS INDIAN MAGIC ACT	Lecture Hall
	4 pm	REPEAT OF CALDER FILM	Lecture Hall
July 7	3 pm	JERRY BARTOSCH AND TROUPE IN "CIRCUS TIMELINE"	Garden
July 14	3 pm	"BEAR CIRCUS" and "IN THE MOSCOW ZOO" - Films	Lecture Hall
July 21	3 pm	"CLOWN MAKE-UP" - Mrs. Fred Stanciloff	Lecture Hall
July 28	3 pm	"LITTLE YELLOW TRAIN" and "THE CIRCUS BABY" - Films	Lecture Hall

COMMITTEES

Chairman:	Mrs. Douglas E. Johnston	Co-Chairman:	Mrs. Robert Mosbacher
Designer:	Mr. Hugh Gragg	Mirals:	Mrs. Richard Whittington
Installation:	Mrs. James MacWilliam, Jr.	Assistants:	Mrs. David Hinchman
			Mrs. Anthony Wilson
Program:	Mrs. David Brinker	Brochure:	Mrs. Wallace S. Wilson
Hostesses:	Mrs. Peter B. Elliman	Assistant:	Mrs. Ford Hubbard, Jr.

Figure 34. The exhibition brochure for “The Circus,” held in the Masterson Junior Gallery in 1963. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.

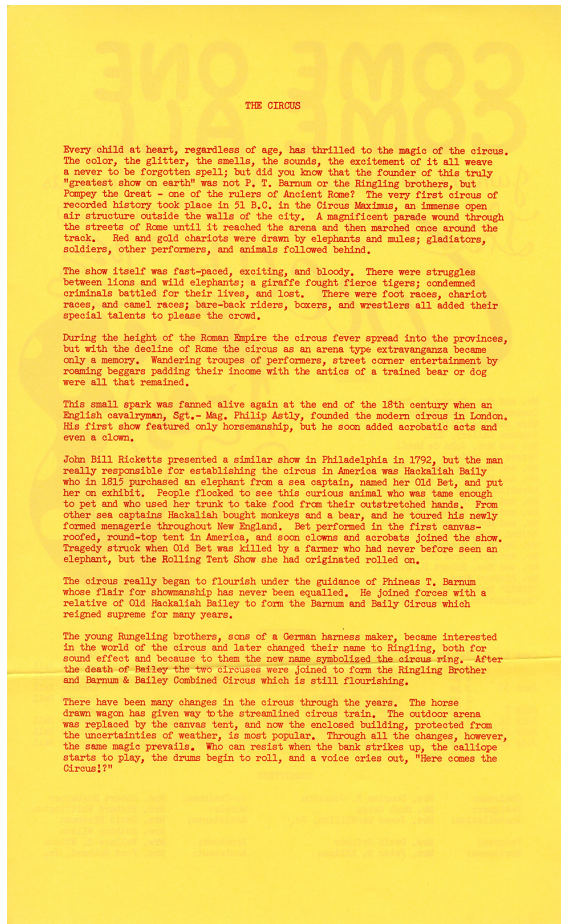


Figure 35. The exhibition brochure for "The Circus," which makes no mention of the art on display. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.



Figure 36. Visitors to the Masterson Junior Gallery exhibition for blind and visually impaired children, called "Touch Me." Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.

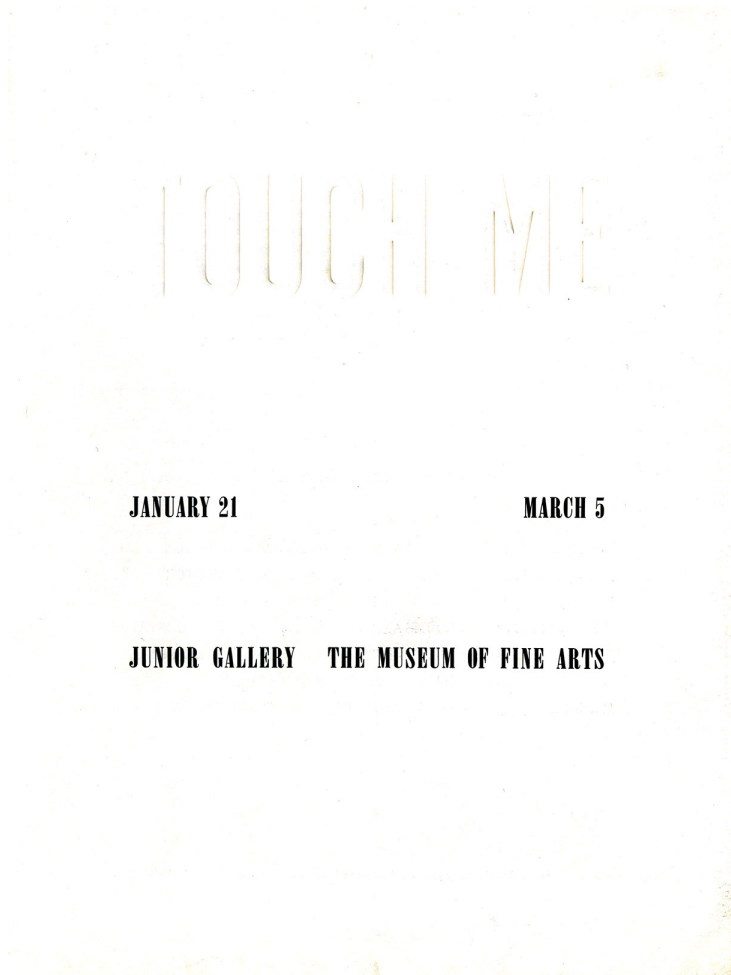


Figure 37. The exhibition brochure for “Touch Me.” While the installation was created especially for the blind and visually impaired, the brochure was not available in Braille. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.

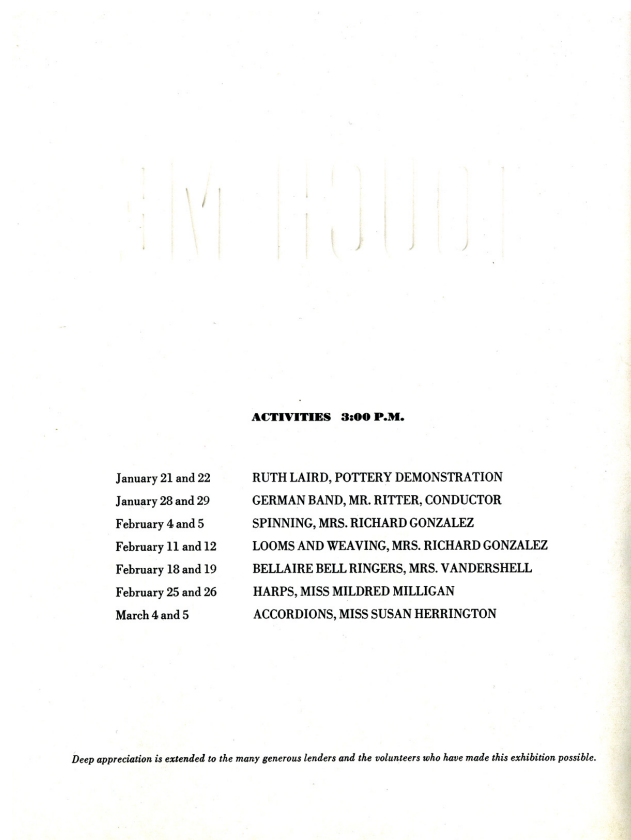


Figure 38. The exhibition brochure for “Touch Me” lists the activities that provided experiential learning for the participants, including the blind and visually impaired. These included tactile and auditory activities. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.

TOUCH ME

Do you know that you can "see" through your fingers? Try it by looking briefly at an object then look away and try to describe what you have just seen. Now, close your eyes and run your hand over the same object and you will be amazed by the vivid impression your hands receive.

Our blind friends can teach us much about the importance of touch, that sense which is often unappreciated by those gifted with sight. By seeing with our hands as they do we may come to know of the subtle transitions of surfaces and the many nuances of form and texture that stimulate our tactile imagination and makes each work of art an exciting esthetic experience. Their depth of comprehension is a challenge to the artist whose work is so often viewed without really being seen or understood.

When we look at the many beautiful and interesting artifacts in our Museum we are often receiving only a visual impression of inanimate objects. But touch one of these objects and it seems to come alive. The marble we admire is not just white, it is also cold; the metal rough, with a feeling of strength. Terra-cotta has a smoothness and contains the warmth of the earth lacking in marble or metal; glass a cool formality, and woolen textiles convey warmth and softness. A fourth dimension is added to our vision through the sense of touch, forming a more complete and lasting picture in our minds.

Imagine being able to see two sides of a sculpture simultaneously? It is impossible with our eyes, but with our hands we encompass the whole form, and, by moving them over the surface gain an immediate impression of what the artist is attempting to convey. The size, the shape, the rough or smooth surface, the gentle curves, straight lines or abrupt angles, pliable or rigid construction, even the temperature of the material are all recorded in our minds.

In this, our first exhibit assembled for the blind, we hope to reach a large new audience of people for whom a Museum visit has been meaningless due to their lack of sight. It can be a most sensitive audience because their other faculties are so highly trained. It should be a "cause for rejoicing among artists who wish to communicate, the blind who wish to experience, and the sighted who wish to learn."*

*Quoted from Museum News, Oct. '66. Mr. Wm. Roerick, Salt Lake City Art Center's Program for the Blind.

EXHIBITION VOLUNTEERS

Chairman	Mrs. Braxton Thompson
Co-Chairman	Mrs. Rodman Saville
Exhibition Coordinator	Lettalou Whittington
Designer	Albert Picore
Installation	Mrs. Lewis Johnson
Brochure	Mrs. Nelson Robinson
Activities	Mrs. Paul Ache
Hostesses	Mrs. Frank C. Smith Jr., Chairman
	Mrs. Braxton Thompson
	Mrs. Wm. D. Hawkins
	Mrs. Winston Baber
	Mrs. Howard Smith
	Mrs. Rodman Saville
	Mrs. H. Blanding Jones
	Mrs. Edward Heath
	Mrs. Nelson Robinson
	Mrs. C. Webster Butts
Clerical	Mrs. Benjamin Bloom

LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

Mrs. Gertrude Barnstone
 Mrs. Carol Crow Brown
 Mrs. Richard Gonzalez
 Mrs. Lewis Johnson
 Mrs. Maurice McAshan
 Mrs. John de Monil
 Mrs. Edwin Mory
 Mrs. J. D. Perryman
 Mrs. Nelson Robinson
 Mrs. Percy Seldon
 Mrs. Robert D. Struss
 Mrs. Richard Whittington
 Mr. Jim Lane
 Mr. David Parsons
 Kiko Galleries
 From Museum Collection
 Louise Nevelson
 Ted Schiavetz



Figure 39. The brochure for "Touch Me" clearly laid out the curatorial argument for the exhibition. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.

Figure 40. In terms of planning the shows and loaning the art objects, it is clear from the "Touch Me" exhibition brochure how important volunteers were for the Masterson Junior Gallery. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Archives Photo Collection.



Figure 41. The exhibition installation of "Touch Me." The railings were designed so that the blind and visually impaired could walk throughout the space and focus on the art, which they could touch. This exhibition provided an opportunity for experiential learning for a new audience at the museum. Archives Photo Collection.

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