the building that he thought were reasonable or necessary. "I suppose they take that to say that everything that is put there is totally with my approval, which is of course not so at all," he protests.

For many architects, Johansen's Mummer's has been a compelling and influential source, occupying a special niche in the history of 1960s design. Is it inconceivable that in 50 years' time there will be a movement to restore the Mummer's original appearance? The case of the Mummer's and the recent flirt over the now-canceled Kimbell Art Museum addendum underscores the need for landmark recognition of significant buildings that are fewer than 50 years old by the National Register. The arts council would do well to consider, during its renovation that this intervention is but the beginning of a new act in the continuing history of this much-loved and much-maligned building.

The vulnerability of monuments of modern architecture in an issue that has recently been addressed in Europe at the inaugural conference of Documomo, held in September in The Netherlands, this European pressure group was formed to grapple with the problems of documentation and conservation of important modern buildings. The need for such a similar organization in the United States is all too apparent. If and when it is formed, perhaps its first conference could be held in Oklahoma City.

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Notes


3 The prototype for the Ford Foundation's Program for Theater Design, a group of models for innovative theatre proposals, one of which was selected by David Hays and Peter Blake, that was prepared and called as a traveling exhibition under the title The Ideal Theater: Eight Concepts by Richard E. Goodson, ‘The Creative Vision of Arts, which also issued a catalogue under that title (New York, 1962).


6 "At the Oklahoma Theater Center," John M. Johansen to author, 28 September 1990.


8 Hughes, "Toward a New Slag," p. 68.

9 Blake, "The Mummer's Theaters," p. 35.

10 "AIA Honor Awards," AIA Journal (February 1972). See Mummer's Theatre, p. 34, and Alley Theatre, p. 32. The Alley Theatre received the Butterfield Award.


18 John Johansen, "In Current teaching a seminar for the Pratt Institute and is a critic in its graduate program. He lectures in the U,S, and abroad. He has retired from active practice, but he prefers to say that he has graduated to the investigation of point conceptual design work. He describes this body of work as 'experimental'—using advanced technologies produced 40 to 90 years into the future." See Johansen, M. "The Modernity," and Urbanism, no. 228 (September 1989), pp. 47-55.

19 Elliot Associates' work has been published in several interior design magazines, and Architectural Briefly cited the firm's work in May 1988 and August 1990, and reviewed a bank design in the October 1990 issue. See also Architectural of the United States of America, 1989-1990 (Melbourne, Australia: Images Publishing Group, 1989), pp. 52-53.

20 It is not surprising that Johansen moved quickly. He has witnessed the demolition of two of his houses, one in New Canaan and one in Westport, Connecticut. See Susan R. Wingers, "Donald's Demolition," Progressive Architecture, September 1988, p. 26; see also Progressive Architecture, May 1962, pp. 181-86.

21 The Mechanic Theatre in Baltimore presents a major modification of its thrust stage without Johansen's collaboration; and he has now found himself to be the butt of a critique of the altered building. See Allen Freeman and Andrea D. Dean, "Evaluating A Troubled Theater: Anchors Baltimore's Downtown," Architectural 67 (February 1978), pp. 23-27.


25 "Ala Nabil, "Central Council of Architects' Wishes."


27 Hughes, "Toward a New Slag," p. 68.

28 Documomo's first conference was attended by 170 participants from 20 countries. See John Allen, "Instruments for Invention," Architectural Record, no. 1125 (November 1990), pp. 5-9.

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Houston exhibits public art in all its varieties, functions, and range of meanings. Surveying the relatively wide range of work without too much driving, in less than two hours — especially with the help of the Cultural Arts Council of Houston's brochure A Cultural Guide to Houston, the American Institute of Architects' Houston Architectural Guide by Stephen Fox, and the University of Houston's pamphlet Art on Campus. The list that accompanies this article attempts to bring the works mentioned in those guides together in one place with works on other lists provided by Paul Winkel of the Menil Collection, William Camfield of Rice University's Department of Art and Art History, and Marii Mayo, director of the Blaffer Gallery at the University of Houston.

It is easier to point to examples of public art than to define it: the water wall adjacent to Tramco Tower, Chip Oldenberg's Zonometric Vits from Houston Public Library's Central Building; Ruffino Tamayo's mural America in the second-floor banking hall of Bank One, Texas. Public art is found in places where one might come upon it in the course of routine activities, even driving around town. It is a manifestation of the belief that art is tied for us, that the works of art enrich our lives by heightening our sensitivity to our surroundings and making us aware of their expressive qualities. We are surrounded by concrete and steel. What is their expressive potential? Look at the work of Mark di Suvero or the works of Miquel Barcelo, but in a museum but in a park, in the context of the city, in the midst of daily life. This aspect of public art, its location in places people do not frequent but deliberately to see art, is at the heart of all the controversies surrounding it. Location is therefore an essential consideration for an appraisal of public art.

Location offers a useful way to categorize public art and to think about its functions. Where is it found? In Houston, four types of locations account for virtually all the public art in the city: the grounds of museums, college campuses, the places and lobbies of major commercial and public


The next impression the garden provides is one of textures—granite, concrete, gravel, and grass—and their ordered arrangement. Noguchi’s garden is about texture and proportion as much as anything, the hidden dimension made visible. The enclosing sky, buildings, trees, and walls create a perceptible perimeter around what at first seems to be an open space. But freestanding walls and low earth berms subtly break up the space. One has a clear sense of a perimeter from which one is cut off, and this creates a spatial parable: an open labyrinth. The labyrinth is occupied by challenging objects, if not a minotaur. In such a setting one has to ask, What do these objects have in common? Certainly the large sculptures that command attention—the Marine Barks, Ellsworth Kelly’s Houston Triptych, and Anthony Caro’s Argentine—create a sense of metaphors, of forms arranged in the midst of change. This feeling is reinforced as one moves around the garden: everything seems to undergo a metaphors. Spatial relationships and the objects change in one aspect or another; Pietro Consagra’s Conversation With the Wind actually moves. One is forced to confront the fact that the more one tries to grasp the relationship of the objects to each other and to the space, the more complex that relationship becomes. Among other rewards, the sculpture garden provides a place to sharpen one’s perception before encountering works in less controlled environments, such as one can find just a block away on the south lawn of the Museum of Fine Arts. That spit of land divides a stream of traffic that dresses one’s imagination from such fine works as Paul Mandel’s Heroes Upbuilding the Heavens and Eduardo Chillida’s Montev Gana V.

The Menil Collection has managed to project its aesthetic of passion and artistry from inside its galleries to an area of several blocks that includes the Rothko Chapel and the campus of the University of St.
Thomas with remarkable skill and subtlety. Of course, chronologically it might be more accurate to say that the aesthetic first manifested at St. Thomas and the chapel has been concentrated in the Menil. 

Surrounded by small houses painted a uniform gray, so like many well-behaved parochial school children in matching jumpers and slacks, the grounds of the Menil are hardly less controlled than the MFA's sculpture garden. It is amazing that this obvious aesthetic gambit works, but the effect is actually pleasing, perhaps because little houses are part of the fabric of the whole district, only here the walls has been dyed grey. The sensibility that judged that effect so nicely was clearly at work in the placement nearby of Mark di Suvero's Bygones. Though made of two massive steel I-beams, Bygones is mostly hidden from view by trees until one is practically upon it. The trees, which create a roughly square perimeter around the sculpture, obviously mark the site where another small house once stood. What happened to the house? Who lived here? Did these intersecting beams form a cross, erected to memorialize the place, that has fallen in its turn? Or are the trees passing over an earlier structure itself that has been partially excavated? Were there buildings here of heroic proportions before these little houses were built? In this aspect, Bygones recalls 19th-century photographs of the great sphinx at Giza, because both are monuments whose head alone rested mysteriously on the sand.

The trick of hiding a work of heroic scale in a residential neighborhood is repeated on the adjacent lot, where Barnett Newman's awesome Broken Obelisk peers out of a small pool beside the Rothko Chapel. Here again is another work one might associate with Egypt and the ancient world and, as the break in the walls implies, with ruins and our present fallen state. But how can an object that at first glance appears so august also be relatively unimmitating? This response exposes an ambivalent view of the past and its monuments: one can be seduced by them and at the same time feel superior, simply because those who made them have vanished. The irony here, of course, is that this is not an ancient monument but a work of our own time. Broken Obelisk repeats extended contemplation; the setting is perfectly complementary.

More amusing but no less calculated is the Menil's placement of two pieces by Tony Smith where Mulberry Street runs into Brunnard: Marriage and Spiall. Here again is a residential lot, vacant except for a small building, probably a remodeled garage apartment, on the back corner. The sculptures are roughly the same size as the little building; their juxtaposition encourages one to make comparisons. From the northeastern corner, across the street, Marriage perfectly frames the door of the house. Is there some sort of equivalence between the sculptures and the building? Is this a demonstration of the differences between real structures and ideal structures? For- mally, the Smith pieces are similar to Pennsroll Place; they could be maquettes for alternative versions of the twin towers.

Perhaps that is why they seem so much at home near Philip Johnson's University of St. Thomas campus. However, the little house asserts its own vernacular aesthetic from the back corner of the lot. If one were to combine the aesthetic of the little house with that of Smith's works, would the result look like something by Robert Venturi?

The next step in location is the campus of Texas Southern University. In the central plaza stand three works by Carroll Harris Simms, African Queen mother, Jonah and the Whale, and The Tradition of Music. Prominently placed on this traditionally African-American campus, these sculptures are as unambiguous as the bronze portrait of The Founder by John Angel in the academic court at Rice -- but how much more challenging and rewarding Simms's pieces are. Angel's portrait of William Marsh Rice can be associated with seated portraits of founders on any number of American college campuses, with seated figures of statesmen (notably Washington and Lincoln), and, ultimately, of course, with ancient Egyptian stone sculptures of seated pharaohs. On the other hand, Simms's figures evoke the forms and textures of African cultures and the integration of those cultures into the American experience. The Tradition of Music presents an abstract figure that could be either an opera singer or a gospel singer, overlaid with shapes that suggest Victorian puffed sleeves as well as the textures of African textiles, sculpture, and even ritual scarification. Simms celebrates this rich mixture of traditions, and anyone looking upon his sculptures can share in that celebration. His works can hold their own in any setting -- we another example of

Johann and the Whale near the tennis courts at the University of Houston, for example, or the artist's Goujon Solo in the lobby of the Music Hall downtown. But in the center of the campus, where the association with the mission of Texas Southern University is clear, they are inspirational.

The University of Houston displays the benefits of a policy that dedicates a percentage of building funds to public art. In the courtyard of the Fine Arts Building on the main campus there is a bronze figure of Orpheus by Gerhard Marcks that represents the best qualities of public art. In a simple and direct way, it tells one expectations of public art by raising the question. What would this space be like if this sculpture were not here? For one thing, the space would be virtually indistinguishable from many similar courtyards in garden office buildings and hotels. So on a very fundamental level, this figure, which holds a violins, functions as a sign: this space, it signals, has something to do with music and with art. And it has something to do with performance, not that the figure is in the act of playing his instrument. He

Judy Project artist are elsewhere in the building.

**MENIL COLLECTION/ UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS**

Mark di Suvero  
*Large Standing Woman I*  
Bronze, 1990; Lilie and Hugh Roy Cullen Sculpture Garden.

Alberto Giacometti  
*Walking Man II*  
Bronze, 1986; Lilie and Hugh Roy Cullen Sculpture Garden.

Robert Graham  
*Gargoyle*  
Bronze, 1984; Lilie and Hugh Roy Cullen Sculpture Garden.

Barbara Hepworth  
*Brother II*  
Bronze, 1961; Lilie and Hugh Roy Cullen Sculpture Garden.

**RICE UNIVERSITY**

John Angell  
*Founders Memorial: William Marstine & John Barne*  
Bronze, 1936; Academic Court.

**MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON**

Emile-Antoine Bourdelle  
*Adam*  
Bronze, 1888; Lilie and Hugh Roy Cullen Sculpture Garden.

Auguste Rodin  
*The Kiss*  
Bronze, 1906; Lilie and Hugh Roy Cullen Sculpture Garden.

Joel Shapiro  
*Entitled*  
Bronze, 1986; Lilie and Hugh Roy Cullen Sculpture Garden.

David Smith  
*Two Circle Sentinel*  
Welded stainless steel, 1961; Lilie and Hugh Roy Cullen Sculpture Garden.

Frank Stella  
*Stainless steel, bronze, and carbon steel work*  
Lilie and Hugh Roy Cullen Sculpture Garden.

Charles Umlauf  
*Paisley*  
Bronze, 1947; South lawn.

**RICE UNIVERSITY**

John Angell  
*Founders Memorial: William Marstine & John Barne*  
Bronze, 1936; Academic Court.

Buscass  
*Carroll Simms, The Tradition of Music, 1960, Texas Southern University, central plaza.*
TAMSAH SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

John Biggers
Weal of Life
Mural, 1958. Texas Southern University, Samuel M. Nubent Science Center, interior.

Carroll Sims
African Queen Mather Bronze, 1966. Texas Southern University, Samuel M. Nubent Science Center.

Carroll Sims
Women and the Universe 1968. Texas Southern University, Samuel M. Nubent Science Center.

Carroll Sims

Hyman Marcus

Scott Burton
Bouches, 1985, at the entrance to the Architecture Building at the University of Houston, in the background. Brian Wall, All, 1976.

Gerhard Marcks, Orpheus, 1953. University of Houston, Fine Arts Center courtyard.

stands as if waiting for a cue, resting his instrument against his shoulder. He holds the bow vertically in front of him, lightly touching his forehead with its tip, a posture of reflection and preparation that creates a certain amount of tension. The placement of the figure within the courtyard enhances the sense of performance: it stands to one side, in front of a blank brick wall that could serve as a stage curtain. Because the center of the courtyard is essentially empty, a viewer standing there is in effect in the wings of the auditorium where Orpheus is about to perform. In this arresting way the figure commands the entire space—no less magical than the mythological Orpheus’ ability to charm beasts and rocks and trees with his music.

Walking out of the Fine Arts courtyard into the central campus reveals an antidote to the perhaps overly sentimental Orpheus: large-scale sculptures made from steel beams, plates, and cylinders. Here is a different world. What are these objects? Are they puzzelings and it seems perfectly appropriate for a college campus to be littered with puzzles. The campus resembles one of Saul Steinberg’s cartoons in which ampersands, question marks, and equations dominate a landscape populated by tiny human stick figures. Such works as Clement Meadmore’s Split Level can be seen as an analogy for statistical tables, philosophical statements, and the formal qualities of literary texts. These aesthetic and physical manifestations of intellectual challenges dominate the campus. Most of the university’s sculptures are large enough—bigger than a car—to be seen at a considerable distance, and they are interesting enough to command close inspection, so one is drawn from one part of the campus to another in search of them, an enjoyable way to spend a Saturday morning. Though much larger in scale than the areas dedicated to outdoor sculpture at the Menil or the Museum of Fine Arts, the campus still functions much as the sculpture garden does.

Like the recent graduate, one is faced beyond the campus with the real world, where the relationship between art and its setting cannot always be so carefully controlled. This is the realm where art becomes really public. Nevertheless, the lessons learned from the figure of Orpheus still apply. What would the downtown library plaza be like without Geometric Mouse X; what would the plaza of First City Tower be like without The Family of Man; what would Hobby Airport be like without Call Ernie? Why a mouse? In front of a library, a replica of Jimmy Carter singing “E-N-C-Y-C-L-O-P-E-D-I-A” to entice children into the world of books might seem more appropriate. But libraries are complex institutions, not exclusively for children—especially a downtown library— and Geometric Mouse X is a complex work of art. Of course the
association with Mickey Mouse is irresistible, but what prompts it? The disks that represent cars! And what else? The color? The size? The material! A cartoon mouse is already an abstraction, but what do the chains have to do with Mickey Mouse? And the flaps or doors to which the chains are attached, where the eyes would be—how can they be related to Mickey? Everyone has different associations with these elements. The chains could suggest an anchor; the flaps look like inspection ports of some sort, or theater projection windows—a tenuous connection with Mickey Mouse cartoons. This is not a piece to be labeled simply and dismissed. Even in its current distressed condition—faded, rusted in patches, and evidently battered by its own chains and steel disks—Geometric Mouse X manages to retain its delightful qualities and demand repeated, thoughtful examination. It complements the library, which has many similar qualities as an institution as well as a building.

The same mental process that transforms orange-painted steel plates into a mouse easily turns Barbara Hepworth's abstract broncos onto the planks of First City Tower into The Family of Man. The simple interpretation is that the family of man (allowing for Hepworth's prescient phrase) consists of a wide variety of types, represented here by abstract shapes. But what shapes these are. One could make endless lists of forms evoked by Hepworth's "family": Maya glyphs, Cycadic figures, somatic forms of the Northwest Coast and Oceania, the forms of Klee and Miró rendered in bronze, even the monolith in the film 2001: A Space Odyssey. No doubt many of these associations are reinforced by the collections at the Menil, but Hepworth has not just created an inventory of shapes, and they do not merely stand for or represent the diversity of humankind. They stand for Hepworth's belief that forms themselves are part of the family of man. In this way The Family of Man, perhaps more than any other piece of public art, reinforces the fundamental premise of the public art movement.

It is hard to imagine a better urban location for Hepworth's Family of Man than the First City Tower's triangular marble plaza at Fannin and Lamar. At a pedestrian level, in every sense of the phrase, these pieces function as a sign of accessibility and democracy. Their eternal or timeless quality seems particularly desirable for a financial institution at the moment. Hepworth's sculptures lend the bank many of the same values associated with Greek temples before the modern era in architecture.

If a discussion of public art in Houston and the importance of location leads anywhere, it is to Enrico Cuccurachi's bronze equestrian portrait of Sam Houston and his magnificent location at the entrance to Hermann Park. The interpretation is straightforward. Even for those unfamiliar with Texas history, the elements are easy to read: a man, a horse, a gesture, a triumphal arch, an elevated site that terminates a prominent boulevard; here is a victorious leader of untold civic prominence. The sculpture and its location work together to create meaning as effectively as any of the other pieces discussed in this essay. Particularly notable is the fact that it manages to address itself equally well to passing cars and to people on foot in the park.

Sam Houston demonstrates that public art has as much of a history in Houston as many other cultural institutions. Clearly, much has changed in the neighborhood of Hermann Park since Cuccurachi's monument was erected, and the buildings of the city's patron hero has probably defended the park and its environs as effectively as anyone could. The well-placed pieces of great public art elsewhere in the city have equally beneficial effects.

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