

WITTE MUSEUM

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For Immediate Release

Note: This is art at the Witte Museum ... A rare glimpse at a selection of 152 paintings from the museum's Texas collection, which includes nearly 3,000 items.

Texas Paintings Featured In New Witte Exhibit

San Antonio, TX – Many important works from the Witte Museum's acclaimed collection of Texas art are offered as part of the exhibition, *New Acquisitions, Old Friends*, which opens Saturday and runs through January 1, 2006.

This is the first public exhibition of these notable works of art since the 1991 landmark exhibition, *Art for History's Sake*, which, like *New Acquisitions, Old Friends*, was organized by the Witte's legendary Curator Emeritus, Cecilia Steinfeldt, a widely regarded and tireless promoter of Texas art, whose decades-long devotion to the region's culture has earned her a storied reputation as the 'godmother of Texas art history.'

"New Acquisitions, Old Friends is a celebration of not only one of the most important collections of Texas art, but also of Cecilia Steinfeldt, the individual who is

largely responsible for shaping the field of Texas regionalist art,” said Marise McDermott, president and CEO of the Witte.

New Acquisitions, Old Friends will also spotlight select new additions to the collection, in addition to featuring some of the Witte’s most iconic works of art, among them works by Louise Wueste, Xavier Gonzalez, Frank Reaugh, Carl von Iwonski, Thomas Allen, Theodore Gentilz, Seth Eastman, Herman Lungwitz, Robert Onderdonk and Julian Onderdonk.

The Witte’s collections were established almost 80 years ago, through the pioneering efforts of Ellen Schultz Quillin, the museum’s founding director, who encouraged and nurtured the keen interests and drive of Eleanor Onderdonk, the Witte’s first Curator of Art. Established under the Witte’s parent institution, the San Antonio Museum Association, initial acquisitions were made possible by a special bequest of \$10,000, the interest from which was specified “for the purchase of paintings.” This modest, but defining legacy was devoted almost entirely to the acquisition of the early Texas paintings, prints, drawings and handcrafted artifacts that form the nucleus of the collection.

Through the years, the Witte Texas Collection grew in scope and recognition under the expert guidance of Onderdonk’s successors, Martha Utterback, and Ms. Steinfeldt. The collection has been the impetus for many groundbreaking exhibitions, collaborative projects with other institutions, traveling exhibits, and much lauded catalogues documenting its significance. And, in Cecilia Steinfeldt’s own words, “Each exhibition project inspired by this incomparable collection continues to display the full

splendor, depth, maturity and interpretative meaning that this most important assemblage of Texas art brings to the field.”

Today, the collection continues to grow in scope and importance, thanks to the visionary support of donors who share the Witte’s commitment to telling the sweeping story of Texas through its art.

All works of art in the Texas Collection have deep connections to San Antonio, and represent the diversity and character of Texas art, from the nineteenth century to the present.

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