

27^{OR} 29 STORIES?

PAGE N. PILAND
PAINTING & ILLUSTRATING
LIFE ON TEXAS.

ABOUT TEXAS MEN'S PERSONALITIES, BEHAVIORS, OPINIONS, TALENTS, PREJUDICES &... EXCUSES.

This Catalogue Raisonné/Book is the comprehensive, annotated listing of all, or nearly all, of the known fine artworks by the Texas artist Page Newton Piland in all media as of 2022. The works are described, and photos presented, in such a way that they may be reliably identified by third parties.

This is an on-going project started in 2021. Over 200 pages as of early 2022...

Early examples of catalogue raisonnés consisted of two distinct parts, a biography and the catalogue itself. Their modern counterpart is the catalogue and biography which may also contain personal views and stories or essays by the author or artist. That would be closer to this presentation.

This is presented as a catalogue raisonné but hopefully presents enough biographical information and personal recollections so as to cast a light on a Texas artist's early life and how it influences his later life and work. It offers a good description of early Austin and University of Texas life and their lifelong influences, too.

Introduction

Recent Work

Early Work

Date Biography, Artists Notes

Exhibitions, Shows, Bibliography

Reproduction of each work

Title and title variations

Dimension/Size

Date of the work

Medium/Media

Current location and owner (owners actual names are not shown in this book/publication)

Provenance (history of ownership) if known

Exhibition history

Condition of the work

Bibliography/Literature/Exhibitions that illustrate the work

Essays by the artist and editors

Critical assessments and remarks

Full description of the work

Signatures, Inscriptions and Monograms of the artist

List of works attributed, lost, destroyed and fakes

This exercise was started to save my family and art associates the agony and irritation of having to figure out any of my art work left behind. Gathering images and history seemed boring so notes, memories, and stories were added. Because of this process, I encourage all artists to start a Catalogue Raisonné during their lifetimes.

Maybe, as the old saw says, artists should stick to what they know best. So please humor me as I am not a gifted writer. However, if any of these ramblings interest or encourage other artists, I will be happy. The work from all those years was for my own enjoyment and, yes, there were disappointments and many setbacks and hardships, but not so many as one might imagine. Additionally, and hopefully, this presentation offers some insight into why Texas men behave as we do. Thanks are owed to Pat and David for their patience and interest in my art "careers" and for putting up with the endless drama and goings-on.

I want to mention my beliefs as to how, and from where, creativity and inspiration spring. Of course, many more complicated explanations of the origins of creativity are recognized and championed by more scholarly experts.

I believe that creativity begins in early childhood feelings and play. How quickly our thoughts and memories are filled with vast instructions, information, and facts so that early thoughts and ideas and play habits are just... lost. Have you ever watched children at play when they are comfortable and happy or even unhappy? This will often bring immense joy and inspiration to an observer. In later life, if one can access their own childhood feelings, memories, and behaviors, it may prove to be a secret pathway to unlocking, re-storing, or discovering creativity. I have also found that creativity or an idea arrives when actually working (or playing) and "looking about", without plans, instructions, deadlines, or goals.

Having watched children discover secrets in some of my work makes me cherish those moments. At these times, I feel something meaningful has actually been accomplished by all that time spent on the projects. Seeing that "Aha" moment of discovery in children or recognition from an adult is pretty good, too. I remember being most happy when I found myself grinning like a fool or giggling like a child whilst working, playing, or discovering ideas and secrets in the project.

I did love that old UT Library Tower! Still do, in spite of her old age, fickle nature, and silly-sad past.

I grew up in Austin, Texas, always living near the University of Texas campus. As kids we'd ride our bikes to the tower and run up the 29 stairs (or 27 stairs depending on who was counting) – that went all the way to the top windows that we could barely see out of. My brothers and I and our buddies loved to perch on that outside top deck peering out between the balustrades of the wall. We could see forever. And sailing paper airplanes from the very top deck was exhilarating! Why, we could sail them as far as the “Drag” (Guadalupe Street). Or so we “remember” and brag about.

Later I lucked into a summer job working for The Humanities Research Center in the secret tower basement. I toiled in my lil' brown smock sitting on a tiny stool in the basement “oiling” (from tiny bowls of hot oil) parchment covers of rare and secret books. The books and art collections came from donors and collectors from all around the world. I was 15 or 16 at that time. They even let me catalog a vast American Indian collection that came packed in old cardboard boxes. Priceless artifacts were piled in stacks in the boxes. I bet they had to re-catalog everything later, but I was enthusiastic and welcomed the task. I learned a lot about Native Americans during my Scouting “Indian Dancing” days!

Later my mom became registrar of the UT Library. My wife Pat and some of her friends worked for “Ms. Caffey” as they called her.

The Tower shooting tragedy occurred in August 1966. I watched from the Art Building. Pat and Mom were in the Tower building. I was listening on the radio and saw tiny puffs of smoke and heard rifle reports coming from my old lookout perch. Many students and Austinites grabbed rifles, pistols, and shotguns and rushed to join in shooting at the top deck. Police on the radio kept asking the folks to “please stop shooting at the Tower”. A report published later said the police were “urging” participation in the shooting. A horrible day. And a sad memory of my beloved old Tower.

I graduated that same, hot, August month. Pat and I gathered up baby David, packed our meager belongings in a U-Haul Trailer and left Austin in an old Hillman Minx. We did not return to Austin for quite some time.

The painting features an ancient long-leaf pine plank with old, black nail holes. It reminds me of the Tower's bullet holes/scars/smoke. The other half of the Tower is oil on canvas painted as new pine would appear. I burned the top, left side out in the Spring Street Studio parking lot in Houston in 2018.

My question is, how do we choose to remember, or forget, that Tower Tragedy and that old, too hot day, not so long ago.



Choosing Sides of The Tower. A Portrait.

72" x 48" x 2". 2019. • Mixed media: Oil on canvas with actual long leaf wood pine plank inset flush with the surface of the painting. • The plank was burned in Houston at 1824 Spring Street outside Page Piland's studio in the parking lot. It was purchased at Clarks Fine Woods in Houston, TX. • Owned by Page Newton Piland. 2021. • Located in Piland home in Bellaire, TX. • Exhibited in Piland's Spring Street Studio in Houston. • Excellent condition. 2021. • Piland Biography/ C.R. "Long Book"- 29 Stories discusses the works in detail. • Mentioned and discussed in the publication: Art Houston, Issue 11, 2020. • See photo of work in The CR Book written by the artist in Bellaire, Texas. 2021. • Signed by the artist on the back of canvas and stretcher bars.

One of the first works produced after graduation was in the series of “Leaving Home” drawings and paintings. This drawing was done in Houston around 1968. It was selected for The Dallas Museum of Fine Arts 69th Southwestern Drawing Exhibition. I was fond of drawing turtles, and several more drawings were produced. This one was titled *Leaving Home*.

I studied turtles. Fascinating history and folklore stories appear to be told and re-told. My interest was not so “euridite” however. This drawing was in remembrance of a family member... well, almost a family member. We had a tiny green turtle as a pet that we kept in a Pyrex dish and fed lettuce and turtle food. We were heart broken when the little turtle disappeared. I did the drawing from memory and took it to Dallas in my old Austin Healy for the big exhibition. Time proved that many art stars emerged from that show and became familiar names in Texas art circles. The show also toured for a couple of seasons. The little turtle drawing is a favorite, and we still have it. Eventually, the real turtle DID return. He had lived under the refrigerator for six months.

In 1966, we moved to Dallas where I worked in a big fancy ad agency - Wyatt & Williams, Inc. I learned a lot there, but it was a little too advanced and sophisticated for me at the time. Great designers and art directors worked there, but, as I was “bottom man on the totem pole”, I accepted a lead-design position in Houston at Middaugh Associates. My original plan was to become a free-lance graphic designer, and in 8-10 months, I did just that. I now had time and a place to pursue my fine art and design work. It was the perfect set-up for a good while.



In 1969, I rented the studio space on Richmond Avenue at Lake Street. I learned years later that the tiny building was an early office of the Houston ad agency Weekley & Valeti. Of course, P. R. man Jack Valeti left home for Washington, DC with LBJ on that plane from Dallas in 1963 and did NOT return to Houston anytime soon after that infamous, too hot, too sad, day so long ago.

In the famous photo Jack Valeti is the crouching man on the left.



Leaving Home. 1968.

Mixed Media. Markers on parchment paper cut out and fixed/glued to Strathmore Drawing Paper. 8”x10”.

- The drawing was made in Page’s studio on Richmond in Houston. • Owned by Page Newton Piland. 2021.
- Located in Piland home in Bellaire, TX. • Dallas Museum of Fine Art 69th Southwestern Drawing Exhibition.
- Excellent condition. 2021. • Piland Biography/ C.R. “Long Book”- 29 Stories discusses the works in detail.
- The DMFA Press Release of 1969 discusses the show. It was typed on an old typewriter and corrections can be seen. • See photo of work in The CR Book written by the artist in Bellaire, Texas. 2021. • Signed by the artist.

This mixed media painting for a Houston family has a long history. The story traces back to Austin, Texas, from the early 1960s.

In 1962, I got a part-time job with a design firm that made all kinds of displays for local businesses, city events, and parades. The display company was located in the downtown warehouse area near the Colorado River (now called Town Lake). My job included tasks such as going to downtown movie theaters to decorate the street display windows and set up tables inside with photos of the “stars” and information about the current movie. Also, I helped with some store displays which were made of paper mache’ and airbrushed by incredible, hispanic artisans. I was expected to cut templates and “box up” small displays to ship. I had no idea what I was doing; I was cutting my hands to ribbons on sharp cardboard edges. Yikes! The owner was not pleased with my lack of expertise. I quit saying the work was ruining my hands. He was probably glad to see me go.

Fifty-five years later a young couple came to my Spring Street Studio for the Second Saturday Open House. They said they were interested in a large painting that would go in their new home. They liked some of the Bois D’ Arc wood planks, and we made a plan, but nothing was set in stone. For fun, I moved forward with the painting which was exhibited in a couple of galley shows. About 3-4 years after working on the project, the young couple who had married, had a child, and bought their first home, showed up again. They liked the painting and were still interested. Turns out the guy’s Granddad was my boss 55 years earlier at the display shop in Austin. The couple planned to decorate their new living room with one of his granddad’s paintings plus mine. How thoughtful and flattering! (His GD’s paintings remind me of some of the old Dallas Nine Group’s paintings and drawings.)

My painting has half of a broken plank inset into the canvas and the other half is painted to match. I cut out and shaped the knotholes in the painted side, too. I felt I had repaired something that had been irreparably broken.

This was, indeed, the last painting completed in the Spring Street Studio #109. That was December 2020. The pandemic was still a concern. After 10 years at Spring Street, I had an “Annual” Going Out Of Business Sale” and moved on. The paintings are in an air climate controlled storage unit near our home in Bellaire.

Family Commission. A Portrait. ●

72 inches x 38”.

- 2015-2020. • Mixed media: Oil on canvas with 1/2 of the actual plank inset into the canvas. • The plank was found at Clark’s Lumberyard in Houston. The painting is in the collector’s home in The Houston Heights. • Made and exhibited in Piland’s Spring Street Studio and several Gallery events in Houston.
- Piland Biography/ C.R. “Long Book” - *29 Stories* discusses the works in detail. • See photo of the work in the Book written by the artist in Bellaire, Texas. 2021. • Signed by the artist on the back of canvas and the stretcher bars.



The two mixed media paintings, *Choosing Sides Of The Cello – Front* and *Choosing Side Of The Cello – Back*, have meanings and questions. They are from a lineage of “Choosing Sides” works I produced over the years. Like *Choosing Sides Of The Mansion* done in 2009 and *Choosing Sides Of The Tower*, 2020.

The cellos came to mind as I remembered my days of attempting to play the family violin. The instrument was given to my mom, Dorothy Piland/Caffey, by my granddad, Page Stanley Mangum, in the 1920s or 30s. It was pretty used up by the time it came down to me. I still have the instrument.

I’m always amazed by the different way folks viewed the instruments. Were they really beaten up and used up, or were they absolutely beautiful in every way.

I found the cello in Lisle’s Violin shop on Richmond Avenue in 2019. It was about to be abandoned as the luthiers could not repair it. To me, it was very beautiful, and I bought it along with a carrying case and other parts.

I learned how to remove the cello face and back by watching videos of luthiers at work. I also learned about the history of bow making and what woods were used. I chose to cut the cello sides to leave enough “sides”, or roundabouts, to inset the front flush with the canvas. I carefully cut the fingerboard to lie flat and added a 5th string with a child’s violin peg. The peg box was broken. I repaired it with violin strings as well as the face. I found an old broken bass bow at Quantum Bass Shop near HCC in downtown Houston. I “repaired” the bow, inset it, and wove the horsehair about the cello strings. I painted in a broken “too tall” stand. I cut down the bridge to allow the strings to be close to the surface of the canvas. I cut the face down the middle, inserted the canvas on the right side, pulled it tight and painted that side. Quite a time consuming and tedious job. I then painted the back side work which is perfect in every way. Half of the back is real.

My question: Which side would I, or an adult viewer, or a child choose to see or like best... and why?



Choosing Sides Of The Cello. Two Portraits. Front. Back. ●●

72 inches x 48" x 2". ● 2020 ● Mixed media: Oil on canvas with actual cello parts inset into the canvas. ● The cello was found at Lisie Violin shop in Houston. ● Both paintings are in a Houston collectors home. Purchased in December 2020. ● Made and exhibited in Piland’s Spring Street Studio in Houston. ● Piland Biography/ C.R. “Long Book”- 29 Stories discusses the works in detail. ● See photos of the work in The same book written by the artist in Bellaire, Texas. 2021. ● Signed by the artist on the back of canvas and the stretcher bars.

Purpleheart is my favorite exotic wood. I discovered it at Clarks in the Heights. It has a wonderful color, and many works were made using this wood.

Of course, the vessel or boat theme keeps returning. I was thinking about a voyage I took as a kid in a 12-foot boat built by Dr. Cleveland and given to my granddad. In it, I set off by myself to Lake Travis, even though I had been warned not to do this until I was older. Of course, that just made me really want to go! I remember there was a good wind, but with a rainstorm coming. No problem, I thought. It was a problem, a big problem! I had to turn back and let the wind push me to the dock. I was so disappointed. We had great adventures in that boat powered by a lawnmower motor refurbished by our Uncle Frank. We spent much of our time bailing out the boat. And, I recall being in the boat when smart-alecky water skiers “buzzed” us. We got even by filling pails with bilge water and dousing the skiers as they raced by.

I used long planks in this purpleheart work, and carefully cut and shaped the curves and paddle with 50-year-old wood files, handsaws, and saber saws. I was most careful to avoid gaps that might “leak”.

The painting was exhibited in The Galveston Art Center Show presented by master curator, Dennis Nance, in 2017. (GAC is a great fine-art venue in an historical building in downtown Galveston.) I offered the painting to the Houston Airport System Collection in 2021.



The Departure. A Portrait.

130" x 48" x 2". • 2016 • Mixed media: Oil on canvas with actual wooden planks inset flush with the surface of the painting. The planks were found at The Clarks Fine Woods Lumberyard near The Piland Studio in Houston. • In the artists collection at 2021. Located in Piland home/storage in Bellaire, TX. • Exhibited in Piland's Spring Street Studio in Houston and The Galveston Art Center Exhibition in 2017. Curated by Dennis Nance. Featured in magazine story in Art Houston, 2020, Issue 11. • Excellent condition in 2021. • Piland Biography/ C.R. "Long Book"- 29 Stories discusses the works in detail. • See photo of work in The C.R. Book written by the artist in Bellaire, Texas. 2021. • Signed by the artist on the back of canvas and the stretcher bars.



Working in The Old First Ward neighborhood of the Spring Street Studio in Houston was a great experience. My first studio space in 2011 was upstairs in #213. Later, I moved to a larger space downstairs (#112) with a two-story roll-up door. Still later, I moved back upstairs, first to #210, and then back to #213. At last, I moved into #109 – a space I had always hoped to be in. I moved out of Spring Street during the COVID pandemic in December 2020. The paintings were moved to a climate-controlled storage unit. I “tongue-in-cheek” staged a “First Annual Going Out of Business Sale”. (Inspired by Houston ad man, Bruce Henry Davis, who hosted an annual going-out-of-business sale and party for over 20 years.) It was a great success, allowing me to make up revenue lost as a result of the pandemic. I regretfully sold some of my favorites including the two 72-inch cello works. But they went to a faithful collector of my work, so I’m thankful they’re safe.

When driving to the studio, I used to cut through from Washington Avenue on Silver Street all the way up to the studio at 1824 Spring Street. About a half block north of Washington sat an old warehouse complex that appeared to be an old-time car repair/junk yard shop. Over the years it deteriorated, and finally was torn down with the remnants abandoned. For about a year, I watched as the blue planks sat in the sun and rain. When satisfied they were set in their color and done aging, I moved quickly to haul off the very best examples. 2x12 inch and 1x12 inch planks, originally painted dark blue, had faded to light robin’s- egg blue with grains showing through in tones of gray. I used the planks in several works. One of my favorites is the 130”x48” Silver Street Warehouse Remnants II. A Portrait. It reminded me of a historic vase or vessel. The wood plank and painting is presented exactly as I found the plank.



I was so very cool in those days as shown in this photo. The accepted costume of that era was dark blue, not light blue, jeans with a dark blue or black jacket and tie. And the artist must not smile while always looking serious and troubled, yet... serene. I got it down pretty good!

Silver Street Warehouse Remnants II. A Portrait.

- 130 inches x 48” x 2”. 2016 • Mixed media: Oil on canvas with actual wood pine plank inset flush with the surface of the painting. The plank was found in Houston near Piland’s studio on Silver Street.
- In Piland collection in 2021. Located in Piland home/storage in Bellaire, TX. • Exhibited in Piland’s Spring Street Studio in Houston and the curated Exhibition by Clint Wilour in Silver Street Studio in about 2016. Also shown in The Galveston Art Center Exhibition curated by Dennis Nance in 2017.
 - Excellent condition in 2021. • Piland Biography/ C.R. “Long Book”- *29 Floors* discusses the works.
 - See photo of work in The Longer C.R. Book *29 Floors*. Written by the artist in Bellaire, Texas. 2021.
 - Signed by the artist on the back of the canvas and the stretcher bars.



So, dear readers, I bet you think artists are working for lofty altruistic reasons, right? Well, maybe some are, but not very many as per my experience. We are just getting by.

We are slaves to the lure AND necessity of constant public relations, social media and show after show after show and the sound of the “adoring” crowds. Not to mention the silly art supply prices we pay. And don’t remind an artist about the studio rent unless you have time for a real rant and, of course, sales are the big worry all the time.

We (me?) tell ourselves we are working on our “legacy” and doing this for the betterment of mankind. And don’t forget our self importance mentioning time & space over and over again.

Really? However, at the end of the day, or the career, I do wonder why I spend every waking hour concerned about art and it’s importance. The endless work on large format paintings that were never even shown outside the studio. The weekends spent working in old musty, too hot, garages or on kitchen tables. The constant hauling about of the work and the endless rejections. I have no understandable or coherent explanation for this behaviour.

Peter Plagens is quoted as saying, “What I like most now is just sitting quietly in a dimmed room”. What I like most now is just doing and looking at art work and not trying to understand it or explain it.



ArtHouston Magazine Story. 2020. Issue 11.

A crowd scene. NRG. 2016.

Yet another studio open house “flyer”. I entertained myself designing all those PR and digital announcements about any and all of the studio events. My mailing list group is probably glad to be rid of me and those mailings!

SPRING STREET STUDIOS FALL BIENNIAL.
SATURDAY, OCT 1ST. 5-10PM
 VALET & FREE AIR CONDITIONED COACHES BETWEEN THE 4 BUILDINGS!
 AT SPRING STREET: 44 ARTISTS, MELANGE CREPES, WINE, CATALINA COFFEE!

HERE IS WHERE PAGE PILAND WORK WILL BE EXHIBITED!

WISCONSIN WHISPERS A PORTRAIT. MIXED MEDIA. 130"X48"
 CURATED EXHIBITION: THE SILOS ON SAWYER. THROUGH DECEMBER.

A BOOK WRITTEN ON THE WIND AND SIGNED BY THE AUTHOR. MIXED MEDIA. 30"X40"
 SPRING STREET STUDIOS #213

PURPLEHEART. A DEPARTURE. MIXED MEDIA. 130"X48"
 SPRING STREET STUDIOS #213

BLUE SILVER STREET WAREHOUSE REMNANT. A PORTRAIT. MIXED MEDIA. 130"X48"
 EXHIBITION CURATED BY CLINT WILLCOFF IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE HOUSTON FINE ART FAIR. SILVER STREET STUDIOS. THROUGH OCT. 9th.

SILVER STREET WAREHOUSE REMNANT. A PORTRAIT. MIXED MEDIA. 30"X40"
 CURATED EXHIBITION: THE SILOS ON SAWYER. THROUGH DECEMBER.

HOUSTON'S OWN TALL FOREST. MIXED MEDIA. PERMANENT INSTALLATION. 48"X144"
 GR BROWN CONVENTION CENTER. TOUR WITH HOUSTON FIRST CURATOR. CHRISTINE WISE. SUNDAY MORNING. OCT 2ND. *MUST MAKE RESERVATIONS WITH THE TEXAS CONTEMPORARY ART FAIR*

THE TEXAS CONTEMPORARY ART FAIR & THE HOUSTON FINE ART FAIR WILL HAVE A SHUTTLE BETWEEN THE 2 VENUES.