

# 27<sup>OR</sup> 29 STORIES?

PAGE N. PILAND  
PAINTING & ILLUSTRATING  
LIFE ON TEXAS.

## ABOUT TEXAS MEN'S PERSONALITIES, BEHAVIORS, OPINIONS, TALENTS & PREJUDICES... AND 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 2021. 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, so far, 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 which may also contain personal views and stories 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.

Reproduction of each work

Title and title variations

Dimension/Size

Date of the work

Medium

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

Provenance (history of ownership)

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

Catalog number

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

I grew up in Austin, Texas, always living near the University of Texas campus. As kids we would ride our bikes over there and run up those 29 stairs (or 27 stairs depending on who was counting). There were stairs all the way to the top with windows that we could barely see out of at first. 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” parchment covers of rare and secret books from tiny bowls of hot oil. The books and art collections came in from donors and collectors from all around the world. I was about 15 or 16 at that time. They even let me catalog a vast American Indian collection that came in packed in old cardboard boxes. Priceless artifacts were just piled up 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 The Registrar of The Library. My wife Pat and many of her friends worked for “Ms. Caffey” as they called her. (Caffey was her re-married last name.)

The Tower shooting tragedy occurred in August 1966. I watched from the Art Building. Pat and “Ms. Caffey” were in the Tower. 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 their rifles, pistols and shotguns and rushed to join in shooting at the top deck. The police on the radio kept asking the folks to “please stop shooting at the Tower”. (Another 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, too hot, August month. Pat and I gathered up baby David, packed up our meager belongings in a U-Haul Trailer and left Austin in that old beat up Hillman Minx. We did not return for quite some time.

This painting features an ancient long leaf pine plank with old black nail holes. It does remind me of the Tower and those bullet holes/scars/smoke. The other half of the Tower is oil on canvas painted in oil as new pine would appear. I burned the top left side out in the Spring Street Studio parking lot in Houston in about 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 in about 1968. It was shown in The Dallas Museum of Fine Arts 69th Southwestern Drawing Exhibition. I was fond of drawing turtles and several more were produced. This one was titled *Leaving Home*.

I studied up on 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. We kept it in a Pyrex dish and fed it lettuce, tomatoes 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 in 1969 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. During this time the real turtle DID return. He had been living under the refrigerator for about 6 months.

We moved to Houston in 1968 from Dallas where I worked in a big Dallas Ad Agency - Wyatt & Williams, Inc. I learned a lot there but it was a little too advanced and sophisticated for me at the time. There were great designers and art directors employed there but I was the bottom man on the totem pole. So I accepted a lead design position in Houston at Middaugh Associates. My original plan was to become a free-lance graphic designer and after about 8-10 months in Houston I did just that. This also gave me time to pursue my fine art. It was the perfect set up for a good while.



I rented a studio space in 1968(9?) on Richmond Avenue at Lake Street. I learned years later that this tiny building was the early office of the Houston Ad Agency Weekley & Valeti. Of course, P. R. man Jack Valenti left home for Washington DC with LBJ on that plane from Dallas in 1963 and did NOT return to the Ad Agency or Houston anytime soon after that infamous, too hot, too sad, day so long ago.

*In the famous photo Jack Valenti 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.



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

In about 1961 or 1962 I found a part time job with a display design firm that made all kinds of displays for local business, city events and even parade float decorations. The Display company was located in the downtown warehouse area near the Colorado River which is now called Town Lake. I learned that my job included things like going to the downtown indoor movie theaters and decorating the street display windows and setting 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 often airbrushed by incredible hispanic artisans set up out back in an indoor-outdoor spray booth. 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 razor-sharp cardboard edges. Yikes. The owner was not pleased with my lack of expertise. I quit saying that this was ruining my hands. He was probably glad to see me go.

Anyways, about 55 years later a young couple came into the Spring Street Studio on the open house Second Saturday. 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 proceeded to move forward with the painting. The plan was put on hold for many years for various good reasons. It was shown in a couple of Galley shows about town but it was not really finished. About 3-4 years after working on the project, the young couple who had gotten married, had a child and bought their first home in The Heights, 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 as we learned discussing Austin. They planned to decorate their new living room with one of his Granddad’s paintings and mine. How thoughtful and flattering! His GD’s paintings remind me of some of the old Dallas Nine Group’s paintings and drawings.

The 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 knot holes in the painted side, too. I felt that I had repaired something 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. So after 10 years I had an “Annual” Going Out Of Business Sale and moved on, The paintings are stored in a big storage unit that is air climate controlled, and safe, in Bellaire, Texas near our home.



*Family Commission. A Portrait.* ●

72 inches x 38" x 2". ● 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* have meanings and questions. They are from a lineage of “Choosing Sides” works I had produced over the years. Like *Choosing Sides Of The Mansion* done in about 2009 and *Choosing Sides Of The Tower*, 2020.

The cellos came up in my mind as I remembered my days of attempting to play the old family violin. That old instrument was given to my Mom Dorothy (Piland) Caffey by My Granddad Page Stanley Mangum in the 1920 or 30s. It was pretty used up by the time it came down to me. I still have the instrument.

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

I found the cello in Lisie’s Violin shop on Richmond Ave. near Kirby Drive in 2019. It was about to be abandoned as the luthiers could not repair it. It was very beautiful to me and I carted it off with an old 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. What fun! I ended up cutting the cello sides to leave enough “sides”, or roundabouts, to inset the front flush with the can-

vas. 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 photo 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.

**P**urpleheart is my favorite exotic wood. I “discovered” this variety at Clarks in the Houston Heights. The color is wonderful and many works were made using this wood.

Of course, the vessel or the boat theme keeps coming back. I was thinking about a voyage I “took” when just a kid of about 8-9 years old in the old 12 foot boat Dr. Cleveland built and gave to our Granddad and my brothers, I set off by myself to finally head out to Lake Travis from our dock on tiny Cypress Creek outside Austin, Texas. I had been warned by the adults not to try this until I got older. That just made me really want to go! I remember a good wind blowing and a rain storm coming on. No problem, I thought. It was a problem, a big problem, and I had to turn back and let the winds push me back into the dock area. I was so disappointed. We had many great adventures in that little boat powered by the lawnmower motor that our Uncle Frank fixed up. Some were more fun than others.

We spent a great deal of time bailing out that boat and the other old boats. I recall being out in that leaky old boat when smart aleck water skiers would “buzz” us. We got even by filling our “bailing” pails and coffee cans with filthy, oily, bilge water and dousing the skiers as they raced by. What fun we had!

I used long planks in this purpleheart work and carefully cut and shaped the curves and paddle with 50 year old wood files and hand saws and skill/saber saws. Being most careful to avoid gaps that might “leak”. What fun I had!

The painting was exhibited in The Galveston Art Center Show curated by Dennis Nance in about 2017-18. I offered it 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.



**W**henever we drive through the Bastrop State Park area on the way to Austin, I recall my childhood days spent in that pristine old park. It is referred to as the Lost Pines Park. Seems to have the only growth of tall pines the Austin side of Houston.

As scouts, we spent many days and nights camping and swimming and hiking in the park. Later the old Scout Camp Tom Wooten relocated to nearby the Bastrop Park.

In about 2008 an awful forest fire destroyed much of the area. It left behind heart-breaking tall black tree trunks with no leaves, no branches, no bark.

After watching the charred tree trunks age and stabilize for many years, I longed to do a painting in memory of the Park. So I made plans to salvage a tree trunk and bring it back to the studio in Houston. I packed a skill saw, a saber saw and other hand tools. Then I located the perfect tree trunk. It was about 20-30 yards off the road. I began to cut the 9 foot tall trunk into 3 parts to fit in the car trunk. When the park rangers drove by, I simply dropped the saw in the tall grass and pretended to be "relieving myself". They waved and moved on. I was fearless and reckless and stubborn in the old days.

In the studio, I re-joined the parts and inset them into a 130 inch canvas. A messy job. I reasoned that a Doctor would first xray a patient with broken parts and then go from there. I dutifully painted an xray of the tree beside the real trunk. Then I carefully rubbed the blackest charcoal I could find all over the surrounding background. It took many weeks just to do the rub. I loved the finished product. It was shown about the area and won some cash awards as I remember.

When I moved out of the Spring Street Studio in December, 2020, I took the work apart and carefully wrapped each piece in plastic and stored it in a big storage unit in Bellaire, Texas. I just waved and moved on.

*Bastrop Burn Victim. Attempted Repairs.*

130 inches x 48" x 4". • 2016. • Mixed media: Oil on canvas with actual charred tree trunk inset flush with the surface of the painting. • The remnant was found near Bastrop, Texas. • In artist's collection in 2021. Located in Piland home/storage in Bellaire, TX. • Exhibited in Piland's Spring Street Studio in Houston and curated Exhibitions in about 2017-19. • 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.

