

The vessel or canoe theme keeps appearing over the years in the projects. Canoes, boats, rafts, houseboats, and water-bound vessels of all kinds were indeed an integral part of growing up in central Texas in the 1950s and 1960s.

We dutifully took canoeing lessons at the Boy Scout camp Tom Wooten where we earned our merit badges. The camp was just outside the Austin city limits on Bull Creek Road on wonderful Bull Creek. We learned the basics and joys of feathering our paddles and strokes and how to right an overturned canoe in the middle of a lake. These life instructions seemed very, very important to me, and not to be taken lightly. The canoe/vessel became a symbol of freedom and independence to me. One always yearned to take the great voyage of life as the sole captain of his own ship. However, this meant learning not to paddle against yourself or your mates, even if it meant starting out in a tiny vessel against all odds. Ah, those were heady and dramatic goings on back in the day!

This essay also reminds me of another “camp” boat that I did a painting about. At the summer camp, we also took boating or rowing classes to prepare for the boating merit badge, but we took it mostly for fun! We learned the intricacies of water safety, rowing, feathering the oar, and rescue methods, too. I did a smaller realistic painting of one of the tiny green rowboats in a secluded lake or grotto. It was shown in an early gallery exhibition in San Antonio. Several small works were sold, and as a favor to a buyer, the gallery owner said he gave him the tiny boat painting. So, I lost the painting and was never paid for it. Aren't art galleries just great... Yikes!

The double-paddle canoe work was cut and shaped from old pine planks. I used my “secret” stain and the color is just right! Even the tiny canoe is half wood! Early in its life, a couple discussed a similar painting on commission made. I allowed as how I would give them \$1,000 off if they would not ask for the tiny vessel to be included in the new work. It was impossible to cut and inset pieces that small. I remember the couple then moved on to request a commission of old wood that would resemble a cross. I had to refuse. But that's another story.



The Journeyman's Voyage. A Portrait. •

72" x 48" x 2". 2019-20.

- Mixed media: Oil on canvas with actual pine plank inset flush with the surface of the painting.
- The plank was found in Montalbano's Lumber on Houston Avenue near Page Piland's studio.
- In a Cypress, Texas collector's home.
- Exhibited in Piland's Spring Street Studio in Houston and the Galveston Art Center.
- Piland C.R. book - *29 Floors* discusses the works in detail.
- See photo of 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 Houston flood “Harvey” in 2017 took the city “by storm”, and held the area’s attention for many days. It left a deep and lasting scar. Years later, citizens are still trying to repair their homes and reconstruct their lives.

We watched the waters rise around our home, thinking the rain would quit. It was unrelenting for so many days. The water rose to just below our living room floorboards, and we were thankful we had escaped damage. Unfortunately, several days later, floorboards started to curl, and we had to replace some of them. I was able to save a few boards barely touched by the water and use them in art works.

The 72 inch by 48 inch red painting does indeed have one of our home’s floor boards. I guess the red reflects how we felt afterwards.

I love the painting and proposed we hang it in our living room. Pat didn’t want a reminder of the flood in our home.

The painting was in the Lawndale Big Show in 2018 and appeared on their home page. A Houston collector/dealer purchased this painting.



Harvey Took The Floor. A Portrait. ●

2016. 72" x 48". 2016.

- Mixed media: Oil on canvas with actual pine floor board cut and inset flush with the surface of the painting.
- The plank is from The Piland home.
- Located In Houston. 2020.
- Exhibited in the Lawndale Art Center 2018 Big Show in Houston.
- Excellent condition. 2021. • Piland C.R. book - *29 Stories* discusses the work in detail.
- See photo of work in that book written by the artist in Bellaire, Texas. 2021.
- Signed by the artist on the back of canvas and the stretcher bars.

The mixed media painting *The Messenger's Voyage* did indeed have a voyage. When building art racks years ago, I could only afford the cheapest lumber. The #3 yellow pine 2x4s were pretty gnarley. The edges were rough and many still had the bark showing. However, the areas under the bark were fascinating. Markings looked like hieroglyphics, American Indian markings, or a secret alphabet.

Years later, I went back to the same lumberyard, Montalbano's, on Houston Avenue to look for similarly marked pine. I carefully explained what I wanted to the guy at the counter, and he knew exactly what I was looking for. What he called samples were brought out and were perfect!

I hauled the 1" x 8" planks back to the studio and began work. I did many computer "what ifs", but the canoe shape kept coming back. So be it.

The "under bark" area was beveled or rounded, and I dutifully rounded out the templates for the painted side to look the same. The markings really did look like a message from the tree's past. I faithfully reproduced the markings in the oil painting side. It was exhilarating and I felt like I was communicating with the past.

I was very sad when a painting on the wall above the pine painting fell and punched a hole in the canvas. My friend Syd Moen who is an artist/photographer saw the damage and my distress and brought in several old paddles from her childhood days spent at Ms. Pickles Summer Camp in Oklahoma. I split a paddle in half, built a new template, and inset it into the canvas. I painted the other side of the paddle and it matches pretty good. Problem solved!

While having a studio at Spring Street, I had the opportunity to get to know not only local artists, but artists from all over the world. Many were here with their spouses who were in the energy or medical field and they were transferred to Houston with their companies. At one time or another there were artists in the building from the UK, Norway, France, Germany, Mexico, South America, India, and Iran. I was especially happy for this opportunity because when I was a student at UT, Austin, there were students from all over the world, but I was too shy to introduce myself. Instead I hung out with my high-school crowd, as always. At Spring Street, I felt like I had been given a second chance at a lifetime goal.

The Messenger's Voyage. A Portrait. ●
72" x 48" x 2". 2020.

- Mixed media: Oil on canvas with actual yellow pine plank and paddle inset into the canvas.
- The plank was found at Montalbano's Lumber Yard in Houston.
- The painting is in an Austin, Texas collector's home who purchased it in December 2020.
- Made and exhibited only in Piland's Spring Street Studio in Houston.
- Piland C.R. book - *29 Stories* discusses the work in detail.
- See photo of the 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.

