

14 Artworks to Covet From Culture Place — Innovative Online Marketplace Makes Art Accessible

As Culture Place rolls out its next edition, collectors have been making inquiries and snapping up acquisitions from many of the galleries featured in Round One — including an epic Robyn O’Neil, offered by Inman Gallery, which appeared in PaperCity’s September print issue. For the next installment of Culture Place, thematic exhibitions within the 19 participating galleries have been encouraged by Dallas Art Fair/Culture Place director Kelly Cornell.

From those, we bring you a baker’s dozen (plus one) of paintings, sculptures, and photography we’d select for our own walls. Here’s what to covet, spun around and/or intersecting the topics of Flora, Fauna, Faces, and Places:

Doubting Thomas

At Moody Gallery, Al Souza is a good bet for his epic oil on canvas *Doubting Thomas*, 1989, which melds Post Modernism with witty raids on art history plus classic cartooning. Among the stars of the Whitney Biennial 2000, the former University of Houston professor — who now resides in Massachusetts — is an inventive imagist as well as master of materials.

Souza is represented in the permanent collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Dallas Museum of Art; the Whitney Museum of American Art; Yale University Art Gallery; Parrish Art Museum, and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

Fort Worth Power

Yale-educated Fort Worth native Sedrick Huckaby is a community builder, as well as one of the most accomplished portraitists in America and a commended finalist at the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery’s 2016 Outwin Competition. Huckaby’s visceral, thickly lathered canvases speak of the African-American experience via depictions of family, friends and acquaintances.

Little D, 2005, offered by Valley House Gallery & Sculpture Garden, is unique in the painter's genre, featuring oil, mixed media, and currency to represent the likeness of a young boy.

Unique Talents

A diminutive painting that packs a punch is London-based artist Myra Barraza's *Predicament of the Subject 3*, 2017, a 7-by-5-inch oil on board that looks at how identity is constructed. The El Salvador-born artist boasts an extensive international exhibition history coupled with a feminist stance. Barraza is among the activist talents represented by Liliana Bloch Gallery.

Provocateur Jeff Gibbons is elusive — and that's a good thing. The Dallas-based talent is among the brightest lights in Conduit Gallery's stellar stable, equally at home with performance, painting, and sculpture. The witty conceptualist's *Young Joe*, 2020, serves up a Surrealist symbol for our time with a dash of Dada.



Jeff Gibbons, *Young Joe*, 2020, at Conduit Gallery

Cary Leibowitz, whose Contemporary Arts Museum Houston exhibition was a highlight of the 2018 Texas museum calendar, is a disrupter of the art world. His brand stands for social consciousness, identity issues and queer politics, all wrapped in wit-filled text works encased in kitsch. Case in point is this cat-shaped canvas from the artist's series *Respect for the United States Constitution* is a *Turn On*, 2020, through 12.26 gallery.

Out of This World

We suspect life on Venus would look a bit like L.A. Light and Space artist Gisela Colon's *Spheroid (Gold Aqua)*, 2018, available through McClain Gallery. A nifty blow-molded pod of buoyant hues, this wall sculpture is sci-fi alien culture at its best — perfect for futurists and tech-obsessed collectors with pared-down, minimal aesthetics.



Gisela Colon, *Spheroid (Gold Aqua)*, 2018, at McClain Gallery

Also conjuring extraterrestrial worlds, Philadelphia painter Jackie Tileston creates canvases awash with golden pigment offset by meticulously painted details informed by the history of ornamentation. Reflective of months living in Italy and India, *Expanse of the Space Treasury*, 2018, also mirrors Tileston's time in Texas, where she was a Core Fellow at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, based in the home city for NASA. The artist is offered through Holly Johnson Gallery.

A haunting futuristic landscape that posits life in other solar systems, Eduard Portillo's *Cassiopeiae*, 2020, is named after a star in the constellation Cassiopeia. An acrylic on shaped canvas, this abstract work hovers between painting and sculpture. Born in El Salvador, based in Houston, Portillo has been featured at the Dallas nonprofit space Site131 and is in the esteemed stable of recent Culture Place arrival Barbara Davis Gallery.

Texas Innovators

Frank X. Tolbert 2 — the son of his namesake, a noted Texas journalist and chili parlor owner — is a mid-career Texan whose expressionist work often features flora and fauna. Avians are

his calling cards, and perfectly in step with next-gen environmental consciousness. The six-foot x six-and-half-foot *Reddish Egret*, 2017, available from William Campbell Contemporary Art, bears all the hallmarks of a signature Tolbert, with its dramatic handling of graphite and oil on canvas, deftly existing as both a painting and a drawing.

One of the leaders of the San Antonio art scene — and an early Artpace resident — the late Chuck Ramirez redefined contemporary Texas photography. His image-making mirrored identity and cultural issues and alluded to the fleeting quality of life. Nationally collected by prestigious players such as the Pérez Art Museum Miami and the Smithsonian, Ramirez's estate is exclusively represented by Ruiz-Healy Art, which offers this poignant image of a hospital arrangement uncannily in step with today: *Quarantine: Turquoise*, 2000/2011.

At David Shelton Gallery, Houston artist Robert Hodge addresses the African-American experience in *It's All Good Baby Baby*, 2020. Hodge's text-based collages incorporate mashups of current events, social consciousness and rich historical currents of blues, hip hop, soul and other musical stylings. Their Baroque surfaces are exuberant and encourage deciphering.



Robert Hodge, *It's All Good Baby Baby*, 2020, at David Shelton Gallery

The late Texas talent Harry Geffert was known for his depictions of the natural world, often informed by humor, which were meticulously cast in his Green Mountain Foundry. In the

elegiac Cabbages the Crop I, 2005, the artist departs from bronze to render a ghostly vegetable in cast paper. The artist's estate is represented by Cris Worley Fine Arts.

Wingman

Internationally exhibited and Met-, Guggenheim-, and Whitney-collected Hunt Slonem embraces fauna such as this preferred subject: a kaleidoscope of butterflies. Emblematic of the human soul, the gossamer-winged creatures also evoke Slonem's childhood memories of growing up in Nicaragua as the son of a Navy officer, then later his time as a foreign exchange student. The painter's *Guardians and Butterflies Cloak*, 2019, is available from his Texas gallerist, Laura Rathe Fine Art.



Hunt Slonem, *Guardians and Butterflies Cloak*, 2019, at Laura Rathe Fine Art

Border Politics

Houston-based, Venezuela-born Gerardo Rosales' work also addresses identity politics — race, class, gender, sexuality, and immigration status. Painting in a naïve style, Rosales' cosmology speaks to notions of “the other” and the poignant concept of home, border, and belonging in an adopted homeland. In the deftly painted *Firefly II*, 2019, through Bill Arning, Rosales metaphorically reveals a landscape free of walls or barriers.

- CATHERINE D. ANSPON