



LSU Museum of Art • Shaw Center for the Arts
100 Lafayette Street – Baton Rouge, LA 70801

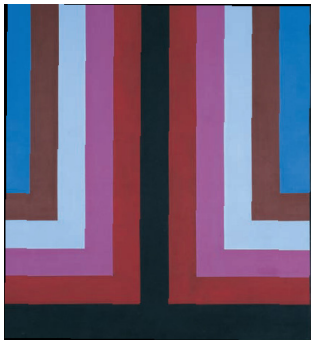
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***American Masters from the Blanton Museum of Art's
Mari and James A. Michener Collection
June 27 – November 30, 2008***



Howard Mehring (American, 1931-1978). Element of Blue, 1965



Carl Robert Holtz (American, 1900-1973). Circus Forms, 1938



John Sloan (American, 1871-1951). Carol with Blue Ribbon, 1913.

**"James Michener is as much an American institution as the Fourth of July or apple pie."
Harrison Salisbury, *Chicago Tribune***

BATON ROUGE, La. — *American Masters from the Blanton Museum of Art's Mari and James A. Michener Collection* opens at the Louisiana State University Museum of Art on June 27, 2008. This exciting summer exhibition is the second, broad American art exhibition to come to LSU MOA and highlights the best American art trends from 1900 to the turbulent 1960s.

James A. Michener is best known for his literary achievements. He wrote more than 40 titles during his life and is immediately recognized for panoramic sagas which tended to cover multiple generations while focusing on a specific locale. During WWII, Michener served as a naval officer assigned as an historian in the Pacific theater. Following the war, he turned his notes and observations into *Tales of the South Pacific*, which won a Pulitzer Prize in 1948.

And throughout it all, he and his wife Mari collected art. Throughout the 1930s, Michener repeatedly visited the Whitney Museum of American Art during his lunch hours and was "staggered" by the extraordinary paintings he discovered there.

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“My wife and I decided early on that since we made our living in the arts, we would plow back all our earnings to the arts and education and to museums and universities,” he said. “Whenever we got a few bucks ahead at the end of the year, we spent it on art. And we wanted art to represent what was being done during my lifetime – we were rather strict on that. That figures from 1907 through abstract expressionism and the flowering of New York art” in the 1950s and 60s.

The Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Texas received the first installment of the Michener art collection in 1968. The couple had always intended their paintings to serve as a teaching tool for students, faculty and scholars. *American Masters* is a unique opportunity for audiences to see the development of 20th century American paintings unfolds on the walls of a Baton Rouge museum.

Visitors will see the development of landscape painting from the realism of Robert Henri and Stuart Davis to the Precisionism of Niles Spencer. They will see the way that different artists used the human figure as a dominant theme, including John Sloan, Milton Avery and Larry Rivers. Pop Art is represented by Robert Indiana’s distinctive work which blurs the divisions between commercial design and fine art. Various styles of abstract art will be on display with works by such artists as Sam Francis and Carol Holtz. The evolution of Modernist painting to Abstract Expressionism and color as a central motif is evident in the works by Kenneth Noland and Jules Olitski.

The Michener’s spent time with the artists, visiting studios and buying canvases often before the paint had dried. As a result, the collection represents the great variety of artistic movements throughout the country.

American Masters from the Blanton Museum of Art’s Mari and James A. Michener Collection was organized by the Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Texas and made possible by Bob and Linda Bowsher and Henry Insurance Service, Inc.

About the LSU Museum of Art, Shaw Center for the Arts

The LSU Museum of Art (LSU MOA) in the Shaw Center for the Arts is located in downtown Baton Rouge overlooking the Mississippi River. The 4000-work collection is highlighted in galleries of American and British portraiture, decorative arts, landscape painting, New Orleans Coin Silver, Newcomb Pottery, and Chinese Jade as well as contemporary Louisiana and American painting. LSU MOA also presents special exhibitions of paintings, sculpture, works on paper and photography to the local art public. There is something for everyone at the LSU MOA.

General Admission to the museum: Adults - \$8; Seniors (65+), students and LSU faculty/staff (with I.D.) - \$6; Children 5 to 17 - \$4. Children under 5 are admitted free.

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