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10 best art exhibits in Southeast Texas



Andy Coughlan/Beaumont Enterprise

An installation shot of "Earlie Hudnall, Jr.: Homeward," on display at the Art Museum of Southeast Texas.

Work from across Texas shows a wide range of styles

By **Andy Coughlan**
CONTRIBUTOR

Another year is in the books, and the nation is divided as usual. But the one thing we can agree on is the local arts scene is strong. Here are a few of my favorites exhibitions from the year. As usual, it's one man's opinion:

Earlie Hudnall, Jr.: "Homeward"

Art Museum of Southeast Texas
It seems that AMSET leads the way every year, and 2024 is no exception. Through Hudnall's thoughtful photographs, we saw more than 40 years of Houston's Black Third, Fourth and Fifth Wards. Inspired by his grandmother, Hudnall documents these communities and reveals a people who are bonded through shared values. The black-and-white images have a timeless quality that capture the universal human truths of dignity, compassion and respect.

Michael Roqué Collins: "Legacy"

Dishman Art Museum
Collins' paintings are steeped in art history, and he is just the latest step on the rich legacy. The show also featured work by his father, Lowell Daunt Collins, a longtime educator, artist and gallerist. Michael Collins' work is richly textured and infused with mythology, history and spirituality, most evident in "Rupture of the Nave," a scaffold-like wooden structure that reaches to-

ward the light like a stairway to heaven. "Legacy" was a show that stays with the viewer past first glance.

Various Artists: "Multiplicity: Blackness in Contemporary American Collage" and "Black Pioneers: Legacy in the American West"

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and Stark Museum of Art

I cheated here and combined two shows into one entry (it's my column and I'll make the rules). Both exhibitions explored historical and contemporary Black culture through assembled materials — one through collage, the other through quilting. Both were inspiring and fascinating. The MFAH show featured multiple artists working in as many different media as one can imagine. Everywhere one turned, there was a slap of color or a detail to catch the eye. The Stark Museum show, featuring pieces by the Women of Color Quilters Network, showed a wide range of techniques as they offered historical portraits of Black pioneers. It was as much history lesson as art show. The exhibitions made for an excellent pairing.

Henri Matisse and André Derain: "Vertigo of Color: Matisse, Derain and the Origins of Fauvism"

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Large blockbuster shows are always a big draw, but there's nothing better than a narrowly-targeted theme to really excite the art histori-

an. "Vertigo of Color" focused on a mere nine weeks in the summer of 1905 that was to have a monumental impact on modern art. Along with Picasso, Matisse forms the twin towers that dominate 20th-century painting. But he was struggling to be recognized until he spent a vacation in the south of France with young Andre Derain. In a few weeks, the pair blew the doors off conventional color theory and invented what became known as Fauvism (fauve is French for wild animal). The exhibition took us to the birth of a movement.

Jane Silvernail: "Best-in-Show"

Beaumont Art League
Silvernail's show was a whimsical delight. The winner of BAL's 2023 Membership Show filled the gallery walls with her assemblages that incorporate a cornucopia of knick-knacks, papers, photos and bric-a-brac. A lot of people try their hand at Joseph Cornell-style boxes, but few can pull off Silvernail's consistent quality. A self-professed object addict, Silvernail has a sharp eye for composition and a flair for juxtaposition. And they are affordable, too. She's local and prolific so look for her work at local shows.

Various Artists: "The Alternative Show"

The Art Studio, Inc.
I generally don't review large open-entry shows because they are too broad, and the tendency is just to

Art continues on A3

Orange man indicted for injuring teens

Also shot at house in Beaumont

By **Megan Zapalac**
STAFF WRITER

A man from Orange has been indicted after shooting at a house and injuring two teens in Beaumont.

The 19-year-old was indicted on Dec. 18 by a Jefferson County grand jury for two counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

Around 2:06 p.m. on Dec. 7, Beaumont police received reports of shots fired in the 1000 block of Harrison. When officers arrived, they saw the house had been hit by bullets several times and found several .223 used casings on the ground around the house, according to a probable cause affidavit.

A 15-year-old and 14-year-old inside the home were hit by bullets and shrapnel.

Police determined that several people inside the home were arguing with the 19-year-old over the phone just before the shooting, according to the probable cause affidavit.

The 19-year-old is being held at the Jefferson County jail where he remains on a total bond of \$65,000.

Have you ever wondered how those giant U.S. flags are handled?

By **Kim Brent**
STAFF WRITER

Just south of Parkdale Mall along Eastex Freeway, a massive American flag waves like a beacon of patriotism over the Doggett Ford dealership.

Measuring 80-by-40-feet atop a roughly 130-foot flagpole and weighing nearly 3,000 pounds, it's easily the largest flag in Beaumont — mirroring that of the Houston Doggett Ford dealership, which boasted the biggest flag in Texas when it opened in 2020.

That dealership, which also has a similarly large Texas flag, "can be seen for miles away," Beaumont Doggett Ford's Victor Ruvalcaba said. "It's eye-catching. Doggett is really big into big flags."

It draws more than attention to their business, but also comments from people who "thank us for being so prideful," he said.

They're also the first to comment when the sizable Stars and Stripes becomes damaged. But more often than not, the comments are positive.

Attention to the flag, ensuring its proper care and handling, requires an effort matching its size.

Just how do you run a flag of that size and weight up the flagpole without letting it touch the ground?

"We grab an F-150 or -250 and load it immediately (into the bed after receiving the flag)," Ruvalcaba said. The flag will touch the truck bed as it's attached to the flag pole and hoisted skyward, but not the ground.

Once aloft, they have to keep an eye on the weather to ensure the flag doesn't suffer undue damage before its time.

"The weather, especially the wind, tears it up," Ruvalcaba noted.

On inclement days, they'll lower the flag, bringing "it down just a little, but not to where it touches the ground," he said.

Still, they've replaced plenty of flags due to wear and tear that, even at half-mast in bad

Flag continues on A3

Farmers claim tainted fertilizer killed livestock

By **Alejandra Martinez**
TEXAS TRIBUNE

JOHNSON COUNTY — Tony Coleman recognizes the signs all too well. A cow drools strings of saliva. Then it starts to limp, each step slower. Then it grows

stiff.

Then it's quick. There's nothing to be done. The cow dies.

Since early 2023, the Grandview rancher has watched more than 35 of his 150 Black Angus cattle perish. July was especially brutal. In the span of a week, Coleman lost a

3-week-old calf, a cow and Little Red, a strong bull full of spirit, leaving Coleman with nothing but unanswered questions.

"This is destroying our lives," Coleman said. "You never know what you're going to get every

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Azul Sordo/Texas Tribune contributor

Tony and Karen Coleman stand over a plot of land where they buried a deceased calf and bull on their property in Grandview.



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Advocates say there aren't enough of them in Texas long-term care facilities

By Jess Huff

THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

LUFKIN — Tonya Jackson left an Angelina County nursing home on a recent December day, happy with the successful resolution she brokered between the staff and a resident.

The elderly woman faced eviction after communication broke down between her family and the facility. That's when Jackson stepped in.

Jackson is the Deep East Texas managing local ombudsman for long-term care facilities. Each day she serves Texans living at these facilities as a state-assigned independent advocate.

"We do not enter a nursing facility to wreak havoc," Jackson said. "We enter the nursing facility to assist and advocate for the residents who do not feel they have a voice. We are there to help mend the broken bridge."

There are not enough people like Jackson in Texas, which has a dismal track record for long-term care. The state ranked 42nd for safety and quality, on a 2018 scorecard from AARP, the last time the survey was taken.

The lack of ombudsmen — which include both paid staff and volunteers — is a statewide issue, and is acute in Deep East Texas, which includes Angelina, Nacogdoches and Newton counties. Just five people, two paid staff and three volunteers, bounce between 48 long-term care facilities — 34 nursing facilities and 14 assisted living facilities.

"We would be lost in the long-term care community without them, but they definitely need more support across the board," said Andrea Earl, the associate state director of advocacy and research for the AARP.

In early December, the Deep East Texas Council of Governments, a group made up of representatives from local governments, called for more volunteers to bolster this program.

Jackson prays the extra hands will better support her small team. She believes one volunteer for each facility would go a long way toward improving the lives of residents.

At the same time, state officials hope the Legislature will step in to provide extra support when they reconvene in January.

Patty Ducayet, the state's lead ombudsman, wants lawmakers to fund more full-time and part-time positions, regulate the use of Medicaid and create a portal to handle involuntary discharge, the eviction of residents.

Texas legislators have signaled they intend to prioritize dementia care and research this session. Earl hopes this means they'll see the value in prioritizing the ombudsman program as well.

The program has faced an uphill battle in past sessions.

The role of an ombudsman

The state ombudsman works independently from the Health and Human Services Department, which oversees the state's long-term care facilities. This independence provides ombudsmen the chance to work on behalf of residents without fearing retribution.

Texas utilizes full-time employed ombudsmen to investigate complaints related to the health, safety, welfare and rights of residents in care facilities and help resolve any issues.

Their work is ideally supplemented by a large force of volunteers who do similar work but for only a few hours a week.

Jackson tries to see 15 to 20 people at each facility during her monthly visits. If she's successful, she'll meet with every resident at least once a year.

The job requires patience and empathy, Jackson said. In many places, ombudsmen are the only visitors residents get from the outside world and the conversations provide them a level of peace.

Her visits serve not only to connect with residents but also to establish a rapport with staff at each facility so she can more effectively address complaints.

Facilities without that rapport may see ombudsmen as people just trying to stir up problems, Earl said. Ombudsmen and facilities have clashed before. In 2023, the Texas Assisted Living Association worked with Rep. Travis Clardy, R-Nacogdoches on legislation that Earl said would have made the job of ombudsman harder. The legislation would have limited what files ombudsmen could review, even when it is requested by the patient, Earl said.

"Accessing those documents and looking at history, especially when we're talking about dementia patients and those facing severe medical issues, is a key part of what they do," Earl said.

Carmen Tilton, the vice president of public policy for the Texas Assisted Living Association, said the organization supported House Bill 4220, which would have impacted ombudsman access to patient records. Their goal wasn't to curb access, however, but to bring Texas regulation in line with federal regulations.

Prior to this, even volunteer ombudsmen — without consent from residents — could access any resident information. This meant they could access Social Security numbers, bank account information, doctors information, prescriptions, and more, Tilton said. The bill also sought changes to training to clarify the differences between facilities and to establish guidelines for what is an ombudsman's job and what is that of law enforcement.

"It was perceived as an attack on the program, which was not our intent," Tilton said.

Clardy dropped the bill before it went for a vote. Since then, the ombudsman office has worked with the Texas Assisted Living Association directly to institute many of the changes Tilton hoped to see within the organization's framework without requiring legislative intervention.

Making changes actually happen within the facility can be difficult, slow and may result in backsliding instead of progress, Ducayet said. An ombudsman may fix a problem for one resident only to be back in the same facility facing the same problem with another resident. This can be extremely frustrating and requires volunteers and staff to have patience.

When done right, the issues are resolved within the facility — between the administration, residents and their families — and don't require state intervention. Jackson does a good job of this, said Lynne Nix, the business office manager for Shady Acres Health & Rehabilitation in Newton County.

Nix's relationship with

Jackson has been built on the belief that Jackson's interventions help both the facility and the resident. Sometimes a resident isn't comfortable speaking their mind and the situation deteriorates quickly. The ombudsman is the logical answer.

"They're the true advocates for the residents," Nix said.

A shortage of ombudsman

In 2024, the state ombudsman program had a 25% turnover rate of paid staff, the highest it has ever been. Those who have stayed are overworked, Ducayet said. Ideally, Texas would have one staff member for every 2,000 licensed care facility beds. Right now, Texas has one person for every 2,514 beds, she said.

If the program was fully staffed, then paid personnel could focus their work on recruiting and supporting more volunteers, Ducayet said. An additional 22 full-time employees would further improve advocacy statewide.

Local volunteers, who are often people whose family members are in long-term care facilities, or are eyeing a facility for themselves, serve as the "boots on the ground," Earl said.

They can accomplish a lot if they can focus on one or two facilities at a time, Ducayet said. But that's not a reality for Texas right now. Since 2019, the number of active volunteers has decreased by more than 100 people, leaving only 300 people to serve as volunteers across the state.

The work, whether as a volunteer or a full-time staff member, takes its toll.

Residents, who are often elderly or ailing, die. The sudden loss of a person who you have been meeting with for months, or even years, can be extremely difficult, Ducayet said. After serving in the field for 18 years, she learned that any meeting with a person could be her last.

"Those are hard things," Ducayet said. "It takes resilience and grit, like most hard things do."

Fewer staff and volunteers means longer times between visits to care facilities. Having more eyes and ears on the ground helps address problems at a facility more quickly, Ducayet said. This could go a long way toward improving elderly care and preventing problems from escalating to the point where state intervention feels necessary.

What can be done

Ducayet has several goals this legislative session to improve the ombudsman program and care for residents of long-term care facilities overall.

First is increasing state funding for the ombudsman program by about \$3 million. This would cover the cost of 22 additional full-time ombudsmen statewide, including a quality assurance officer and discharge rights officer at the state level.

She also wants to resolve noncompliance with state and federal discharge rules by nursing facilities. Involuntary discharge, like what Jackson's client was facing in early December, is the No. 1 complaint received by the program. Ducayet believes creating an online portal for nursing homes to file discharge notices, hiring for a position that is over discharges statewide and making it increasing fines if a nursing home violates discharge laws will help.



Photos by Andy Coughlan/Beaumont Enterprise

Artist Michael Roqué Collins' work on display in "Legacy: The Art of Lowell Daunt Collins and Michael Roqué Collins" at the Dishman Art Museum.



An installation shot of "Multiplicity: Blackness in Contemporary American Collage," on display in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.



Artist Jane Silvernail's exhibition of her work at the Beaumont Art League.

ART

From page A1

pick a few pieces that stand out. TASI's Alternative Show is a free-to-enter, first-come, first-served show that encourages everyone to exhibit, from earnest amateurs to seasoned artisans. Accordingly, one expects a wide range of quality, with some not so good. But this summer's show was chock-full of really nice work, which speaks to the health of the local arts scene and shows the importance of having these types of shows available.

Maudee Carrón: "Retrospective"

Museum of the Gulf Coast

When curator Robert Fong found a quantity of Maudee's works in the museum's collection, he jumped at the chance to hold a mini-retrospective of this local legend's paintings and sculptures. The 38-pieces, supplemented by work from local collectors, highlighted Carrón's experimental career that spanned six decades. From an early painting of a New Orleans house to her signature "pook peo-

ple," the exhibit reminded us of what an influence she was on Southeast Texas art history.

Dina Litovsky: "Where the Amish Vacation"

Dishman Art Museum

There is always something interesting to be found when someone allows us to glimpse behind a cultural curtain. Litovsky's marvelous photographs take us inside the insular anabaptist communities that vacation in Florida, a world closed to most outsiders. But these are more than simply documentary photos. Litovsky's bright and colorful images are beautifully composed. One photo of young women wading in the sea could even be described as glamorous. I visited the show many times and was intrigued and excited every time. Probably the standout show of the year.

Paul Gauguin: "Gauguin in the World"

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

I know I said earlier that blockbuster shows are often not as interesting as smaller shows, but that

doesn't mean a good blockbuster isn't worth seeing. The Gauguin show is a wonderful retrospective which spotlights how influential he was on modern art. He broke new ground on the use of color and is a bridge between Impressionism and the aforementioned Fauves. When an artist is so well known it can sometimes be a struggle for art historians to find something new, but this show gives us three sets of prints that alone make it a worth a visit. And you can still see it through Feb. 16.

If you read this far, you are clearly at least interested in the arts. Every year we are immersed in a variety of shows encompassing multiple media. The Dishman Art Museum on Lamar University's campus has multiple exhibits both national and local. The Art Studio and the Beaumont Art League have monthly openings, many of them open entry. Add in the small gallery shows and area museums and there is always something to see. So, hit the openings or even enter yourself. Then you can look at next year's list without feeling like you missed out.



Kim Brent/Beaumont Enterprise

A huge flag flies above the car lot at Doggett Ford in Beaumont.

FLAG

From page A1

weather, is almost unavoidable given its size and elevation.

"We typically replace the flag one to two times a year," Ruvalcaba said.

If that's the case in Texas, one can only imagine

the maintenance and cost involved in the nation's largest U.S. flag.

Yes, it's true, not everything is bigger in Texas.

When it comes to Old Glory, Long Beach, California holds that record.

Dubbed the "Super-flag," it measures a whopping 225-by-505-feet, with each star standing 17-foot

high, and each stripe measuring 20-feet wide.

If Doggett Ford Houston's flags can be seen for miles, California's mammoth flag might be visible from outer space, which is where the furthest U.S. flag resides, flying continuously at full mast from its flagpole pitched on the moon.