



Fort Worth Art Collections and the Kennedys

“When power corrupts, poetry cleanses, for art establishes the basic human truths which must serve as the touchstone of our judgment.”

---John Kennedy

President and Mrs. Kennedy’s appreciation of the arts was well known before their visit to Fort Worth in November, 1963. Because of their love of the arts, Fort Worth art patrons wanted the Kennedys to have the opportunity to see some of the choice items from Fort Worth collections. As a result, sixteen pieces representing modern art and sculpture, American art, and Impressionist and Impressionist –inspired works were selected to be displayed in Presidential Suite 850 in Hotel Texas. To accompany the art, a special catalog, “An Art Exhibition for the President and Mrs. Kennedy,” listing the artist, title and medium, and the owner of the work was printed and also placed in the suite.

Read and discuss the article “Suite 850” in Section D of the February 4, 2001 edition of the Fort Worth *Star-Telegram*.

1. Make a graphic organizer of the 5Ws (Who was responsible for the exhibit? What specific pieces of art were included? When was the exhibit conceived and completed? Where specifically were the pieces placed? Why was the exhibit put together?). Ask students if they have seen any of the works in the exhibit. If so, have them share their reactions to the art.
2. What was the reaction of President and Mrs. Kennedy to the art exhibition?
3. Based on information in the article, what conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between the citizens of Fort Worth and art in the 1960s? What would you say is the relationship today?
4. The current President of the United States and First Lady are scheduled to visit your city next month. Put students in groups and ask them to compile a list of works they would hang in a presidential suite.
5. As a class, brainstorm and make a list of basic human truths. Examine the quote by John Kennedy. How does art “establish the basic human truths”? What does the quotation indicate Kennedy’s attitude toward literature and art?
6. What role do you think art plays or should play in your life?

Extend the lesson by putting the class in groups and assigning each group one of the pieces of art to research. After researching, ask students to present the following information to the class: title of work, medium (oil, watercolor, bronze, etc.), owner of work or current museum location, information



about the artist, explanation of the piece, and a picture of the piece. After presentations, the class could select its favorite piece.

Stevenson, Ruth Carter

Sunday

THE ARTS

INSIDE



TV

Gregory Hines mixes showmanship and superficiality in Showtime biopic *Bojangles*.

7D





MOVIES

Terence Davies casts a dubious eye on turn-of-the-century America in *The House of Mirth*.

7D



ART

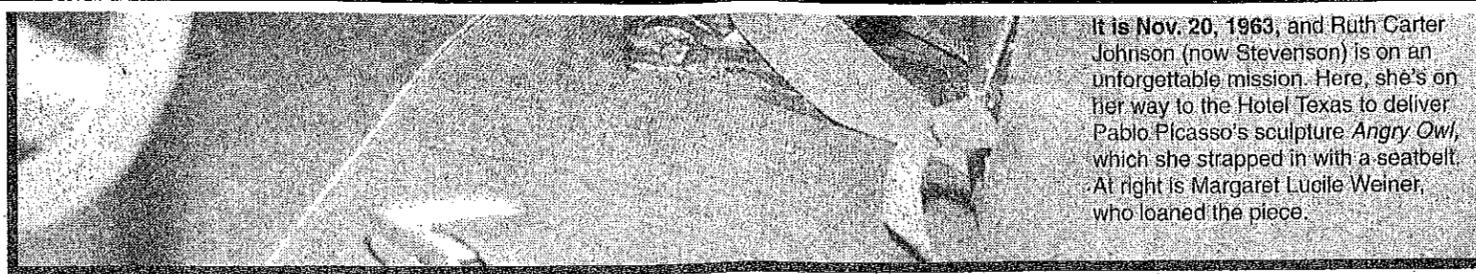
Ultrabaroque disturbs and delights at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth.

3D

BOOKS

Terry McMillan examines twisted family relationships in *A Day Late and a Dollar Short*.

8D



It is Nov. 20, 1963, and Ruth Carter Johnson (now Stevenson) is on an unforgettable mission. Here, she's on her way to the Hotel Texas to deliver Pablo Picasso's sculpture *Angry Owl*, which she strapped in with a seatbelt. At right is Margaret Lucile Weiner, who loaned the piece.

Star-Telegram Archives

Suite 850

On the eve of one of America's darkest days, a small band of Fort Worth art lovers transformed a modest hotel suite into a mini-museum of priceless art fit for a president and his first lady

Page 5D:

- The presidential suite room by room.
- The future of Fort Worth's JFK Plaza and a proposed Kennedy museum.

BY SCOTT GRANT BARKER
Special to the Star-Telegram

The daughter of Fort Worth publishing legend Amon Carter Sr. undertook her extraordinary errand on Wednesday, Nov. 20, 1963, crisscrossing Fort Worth's most exclusive neighborhoods to gather up two of the city's most treasured pieces of art. Ruth Carter Johnson's first stop was the west-side estate of Fort Worth oilman Ted Weiner, owner of several priceless pieces, including Pablo Picasso's sculpture *Angry Owl*, which ended up strapped into the front seat of Johnson's station wagon like a petulant child.

Her next stop was the Westover Hills home of another prominent oilman, the vacationing Perry Bass, as she removed a painting by Raoul Dufy from his dining room wall. Now the Dufy, too, rode in the back of Johnson's car as she set out for her final destination — not another mansion, not a gallery, but a rather nondescript suite on the eighth floor of the Hotel Texas downtown.

The next day, Nov. 21, Johnson entered the suite in stocking feet, because the hotel's head housekeeper, Iva Estes, had forbidden anyone going in to wear shoes. Workers from the Amon Carter Museum had delivered other priceless pieces the day before, so inside the suite the most unusual private art exhibit in Fort Worth history was taking shape. A Monet painting now hung above the table in the foyer, a Pellini bronze sculpture stood on a black coffee table, the Picasso sculpture on another table nearby. A van Gogh was hung in the master bedroom, and Thomas Eakins' masterpiece, *The*

Swimming Hole, in the smaller adjoining bedroom, near a Western painting by Charles Russell.

The makeshift gallery, 16 pieces in all, was complete by noon that Thursday, the triumph of Johnson, and local art aficionados Sam Cantey, Owen Day and Mitchell Wilder. A rapidly prepared catalog of the exhibit was placed on the low black coffee table in the parlor, awaiting the young couple who would occupy the room that night.



Star-Telegram Archives

It was strange to think that all the priceless art should be assembled for an audience of only two, a man and his wife whose plane would land at Carswell Air Force Base only a few hours after the hotel suite exhibition was completed. Of course, that man was President Kennedy, and his wife was the sophisticated beauty named Jacqueline.

(More on SUITE 850 on Page 4D)

JFK's Last Telephone Call?
Mrs. Johnson Thanked for Art

The last telephone call President Kennedy made may have been to Mrs. J. Leo Johnson III here. It was after 10 a.m. Friday when she took the call in her

helped with the special exhibit. MRS. JOHNSON recalled her response: "We were happy to do it. We wanted you to have a memory of a hospitable and friendly city."

was sick and didn't go to school at the breakfast. Friday and Mrs. Johnson was home with her or she might have missed the call. She said she had at first planned to be

"It was most gracious of them to call. It certainly was not necessary," she reflected

JFK Called Art Exhibit Compiled

An Art Exhibition for THE PRESIDENT and MRS. JOHN F. KENNEDY

SUITE 850

From Page 1D

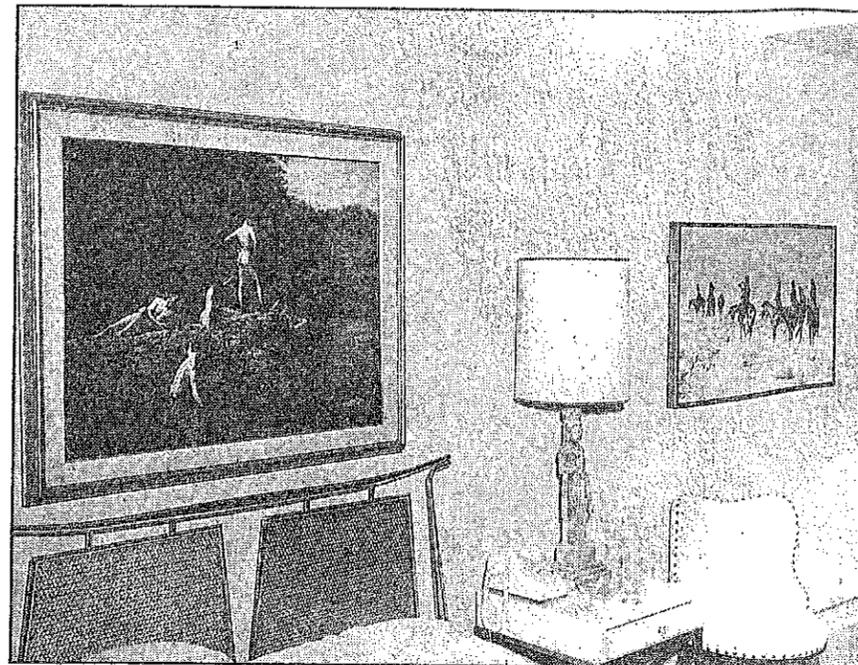
The city had been abuzz ever since it became known that the young president and his wife would spend a night of Kennedy's two-day visit to Texas in Fort Worth.

Local newspapers reported that the Kennedys would land at Carswell Air Force Base at 10:45 p.m. on Nov. 21, 1963, and proceed by motorcade to the Hotel Texas, the venerable downtown establishment where 150 rooms were reserved for the president and his entourage. Vice President Johnson and his wife, Texas Gov. John Connally and his wife, and the entire Texas Democratic congressional delegation accompanied the president.

Five days before their arrival, rather tedious descriptions of Suite 850, where the president and his wife would sleep, were published in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* and the *Fort Worth Press*, which characterized the decor as "oriental modern" and "Chinese modern."

The suite consisted of a master bedroom, a smaller bedroom, three bathrooms, and a parlor with windows overlooking the Continental Trailways bus station at Eighth and Commerce streets and a view of the parking lot. The parlor, painted a Dutch blue with draperies accented jade green and gold, contained a table and several chairs suitable for a game of cards. The only entrance was through a door off the eighth-floor hallway.

A turquoise spread covered the bed in the master bedroom. The existing framed prints were distinctly unimpressive. At



Byron Scott/courtesy of Owen Day

Thomas Eakins' *The Swimming Hole* rests above the modest bed where the president was to sleep. At right is Charles Russell's *Meeting in a Blizzard*.

\$75 a night, Suite 850 wasn't even the most expensive suite in the hotel, and clearly, in the eyes of the reporters, less than fit for a president. The newspapers wondered why the vice president and his wife were given the hotel's plushest suite, named in honor of Will Rogers. Although never fully explained, it was speculated that the suites were assigned in this manner for security reasons.

It was Owen Day, a 33-year-old part-time art critic for the *Fort Worth Press*, who decided to do something about it. The Kennedys loved art. Day loved art. Art, he thought, could transform Suite 850. With only a few days to make it happen, he turned to one his most influential contacts in the Fort Worth cultural world: Samuel Benton Cantey III.

Cantey, 49, was vice president of the First National Bank of Fort Worth, and like Day, a third-generation resident of the city. As a leader of the Fort Worth Art Association, Cantey was highly familiar with every major art collection in Fort Worth, and he and his wife, Betsy, owned a sizable collection, as well.

Day proposed his idea: Remove the cheap prints hanging in Suite 850 and replace them with original artwork. Cantey quickly saw the possibilities and called close friend Ruth Carter Johnson (now Ruth Carter Stevenson), among the Fort Worth art world's most prominent personalities and perhaps the one person who could pull off the idea before the Kennedys' arrival.

Ruth Johnson was the overseer of one

of Amon Carter Sr.'s principal legacies, the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, which was Fort Worth's second free-standing art museum when it opened in 1961. Though Johnson did not support Kennedy politically, the notion of a private exhibition for the visiting president appealed to her. With her staff at the Carter Museum, people accustomed to hanging and caring for priceless art, white gloves and all, Johnson knew she had the resources to make it happen.

So Carter and Cantey met to assemble the exhibition on Tuesday, Nov. 19, joined by Carter Museum Director Mitchell Wilder. In the meeting, Cantey proposed an exhibition based on information that the president would sleep in the suite's smaller bedroom, with his wife in the master bedroom.

Cantey envisioned an exhibit to unfold in three parts: The Kennedys would be greeted in the room's parlor by an intriguing mixture of modern sculpture borrowed from the collections of Johnson and Fort Worth oilman Ted Weiner, and by modern paintings that were the property of the Fort Worth Art Center.

For the smaller bedroom, where the president would supposedly sleep, Wilder helped Cantey select late-19th and early 20th-century American art, including Eakins' *The Swimming Hole*, which had been owned by the Fort Worth Art Association since 1925, and arguably was the finest American painting in the city. Perhaps the group hoped the painting might remind Kennedy of his own carefree days. No Fort Worth exhibit would have been complete without something once belonging to Amon

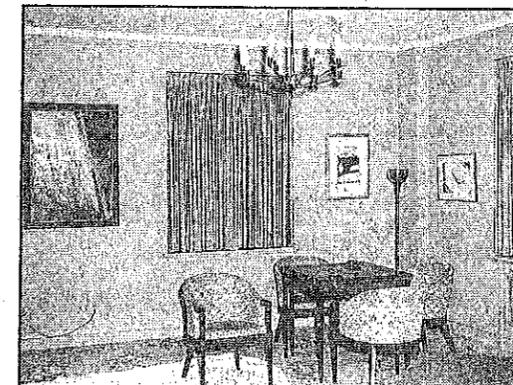
Carter Sr. himself, so Wilder selected Russell's painting *Meeting in a Blizzard*, which would be hung near the Eakins piece.

In the master bedroom, Cantey, Wilder and Johnson catered to Jacqueline Kennedy's famous affinity for French impressionist and impressionist-inspired art. They knew the first lady had studied in France, was fluent in French, and had recently charmed Charles de Gaulle.

Thus the final phase of the exhibition, in the master bedroom, would feature four paintings rooted in 19th-century French impressionism borrowed from private Fort Worth collections, among them van Gogh's 1888 *Road With Peasant Shouldering a Spade*, which normally hung in Ruth Carter Johnson's Rivercrest home.

With the pieces selected, Cantey rushed to fashion a catalog that would further add another touch of sophistication to the remarkable arrangements. The catalog included the names of 16 artists,

(More on SUITE 850 on Page 5D)



Byron Scott/courtesy of Owen Day

Adorning the walls of the suite's sitting area are *Manhattan II* by Lyonel Feininger, an oil-on-paper work by Franz Kline and *Spirit Bird* by Morris Graves.

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An art exhibit for two

Much of the art chosen for this remarkable exhibit in Suite 850 has left the city, and the suite at the Hotel Texas (now the downtown Radisson), where it once hung, no longer exists. This diagram of the suite is an approximation based on personal recollections and newspaper reports of the time.

In the parlor:

For a dramatic first impression, exhibit organizers decided to mix modern sculpture and painting with the work of Impressionist icon Claude Monet. Above Suite 850's entry table, they hung Monet's *Portrait of the Artist's Granddaughter*. Picasso's *Angry Owl*, borrowed from Fort Worth oilman Ted Weiner's private collection, was situated on the entry table, just below the tender image of Monet's grandchild. They placed a bronze Pellini nude on a low, black coffee table, and the two other bronzes — *Sacrificial Goat* by Jack Zajac and *Three Points* by Henry Moore — on small wooden pedestals attached to a mirrored wall. Weiner loaned the Pellini and the Moore, as well as a small oil study, *Study for Accent Grave* by late abstract expressionist Franz Kline, while Ruth Carter Johnson pulled *Sacrificial Goat* from her private collection. They also chose a 1940 modernist painting, *Manhattan II* by Lyonel Feininger, and a 1956 tempera on paper, *Spirit Bird*, painted by American Morris Graves (both borrowed from the Fort Worth Art Center).

Portrait of the Artist's Granddaughter, oil, by Claude Monet



Angry Owl, bronze, by Pablo Picasso

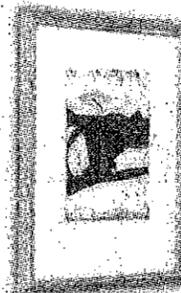
In the master bedroom:

To appeal to Jacqueline Kennedy's well-known affinity for French Impressionism, a 19th-century van Gogh and three early 20th-century paintings were chosen for the master bedroom. Where the first lady could not fail to see it, Mitchell Wilder and Brownie Brown, the Amon Carter Museum building supervisor, hung the van Gogh landscape *Road With Peasant Shouldering a Spade*, centered on the wall above her bed. The 1888 landscape by the troubled Dutch master came from Johnson's Rivercrest home. It was an experiment in pointillism, and the only other van Gogh like it in the United States resided at Yale University. From the Perry Bass family, Cantey solicited *Basin de Deauville*, a 1938 landscape by French master Raoul Dufy. Ranch owner William Fuller offered *Summer Day in the Park*, painted around 1918 by Maurice Prendergast, an American modernist whose visual language was shaped by years of study and travel in Italy and France. And from his own private collection, Sam Cantey chose, especially for Jacqueline Kennedy's eyes, *Sea and Rocks*, a small watercolor by John Marin.

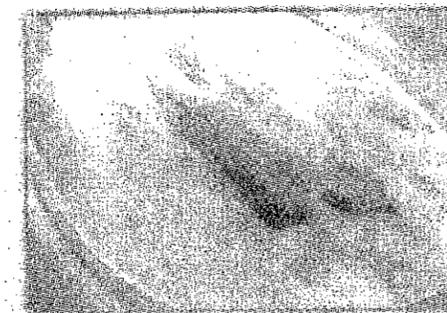
Sea and Rocks, watercolor, by John Marin



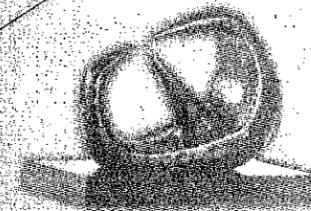
Manhattan II, oil, by Lyonel Feininger



Study for Accent Grave, oil on paper, by Franz Kline



Spirit Bird, tempera, by Morris Graves

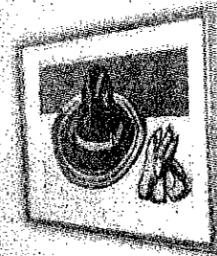


Three Points, bronze, by Henry Moore

Sacrificial Goat, bronze, by Jack Zajac
Image of artwork not available



Nude, bronze, by Eros Pellini



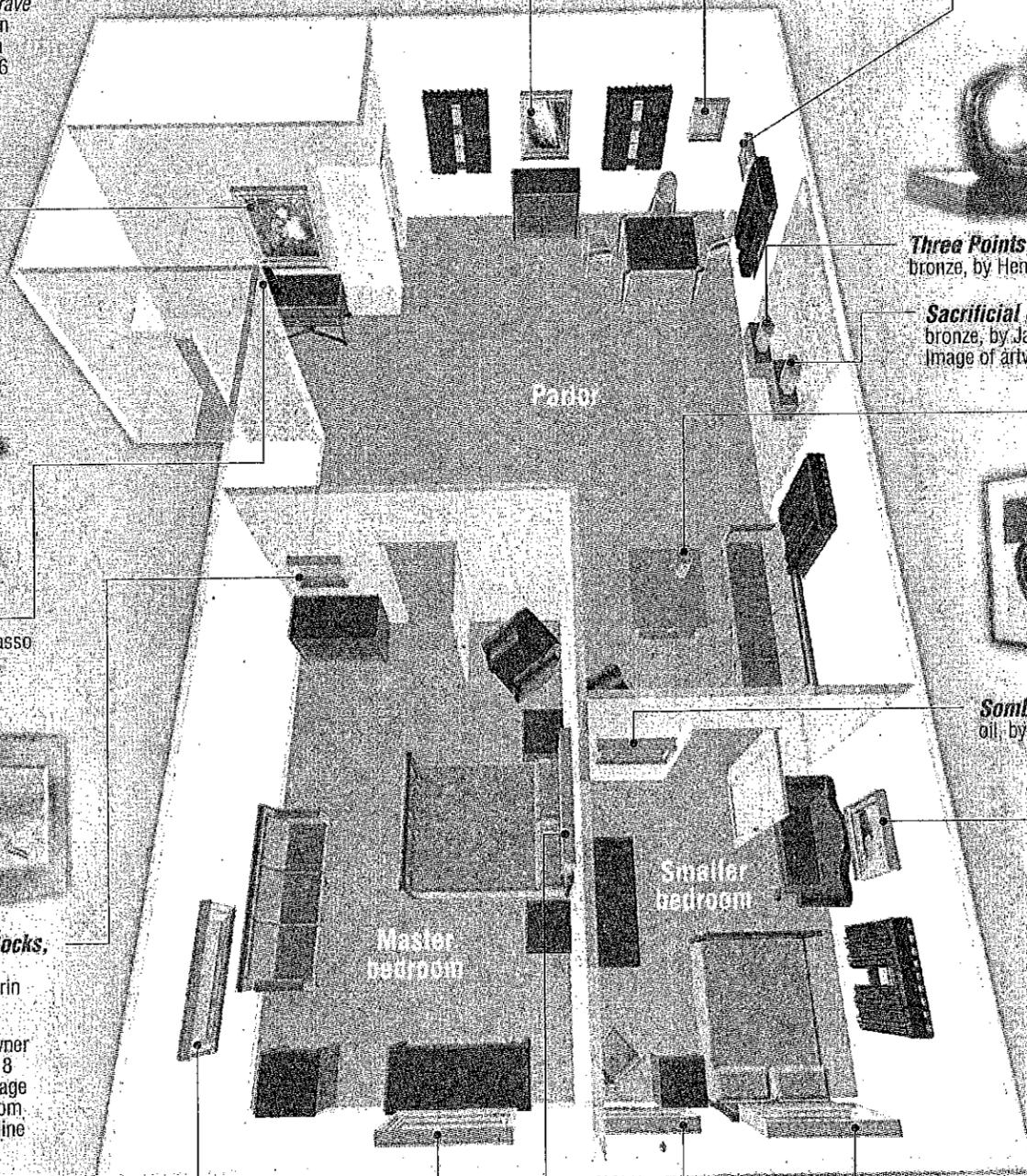
Sombrero and Gloves, oil, by Marsden Hartley



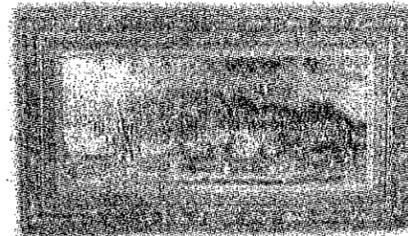
Geyser Pool, Yellowstone, oil, by John H. Twachtman

In the smaller bedroom:

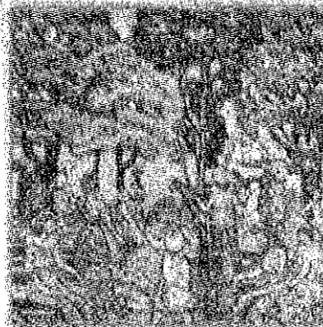
In the place of honor, as a tribute, exhibit organizers hung *The Swimming Hole* by Thomas Eakins over the bed where the president was expected to sleep. Completed in 1885, the Eakins masterpiece had resided in the collection of the Fort Worth Art Association since 1925 and was arguably the finest American painting in the city. On the same wall, separated by a bedside table and lamp, they placed the chilly 1888 masterpiece *Meeting in a Blizzard* by Charles Marion Russell, a piece once owned by Amon G. Carter Sr. As a counterpoint to Eakins' classic style, they chose a circa-1895 landscape, *Geyser Pool, Yellowstone* by American Impressionist John H. Twachtman. To complete this picture of late-19th and early-20th century American art, they dug into the vaults of the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art for *Sombrero and Gloves*, painted in 1936 by New York modernist Marsden Hartley.



Basin de Deauville,
oil, by Raoul Dufy



Summer Day in the Park,
oil, by Maurice Prendergast



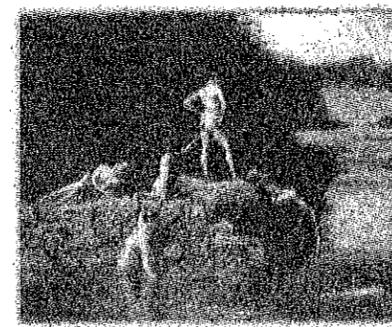
Road With Peasant Shouldering a Spade,
oil, by Vincent van Gogh



Meeting in a Blizzard,
oil, by Charles M. Russell



The Swimming Hole,
oil, by Thomas Eakins



Star-Telegram/STEVE WILSON

SUITE 850

From Page 4D

some of them among the most recognizable in the world — Thomas Eakins, Claude Monet, Henry Moore, Pablo Picasso, Charles M. Russell, Vincent van Gogh. Others — Raoul Dufy, Marsden Hartley, John Marin — were chosen to bring a glint of recognition to the eye of the urbane visitors.

A hundred copies of the exhibition catalog were printed the day before the Kennedys arrived, 10 of them for the room and two specially inscribed to be given the couple personally.

"An Art Exhibition for The President and Mrs. John F. Kennedy," read the catalog's cover. And farther down, near the bottom: "The Presidential Suite. Hotel Texas. Fort Worth. 22 November 1963."

As expected, President Kennedy and the first lady arrived at the Hotel Texas shortly before midnight on Thursday. Despite the hour, a crowd of 5,000 greeted them at Carswell Air Force Base and 3,500 more at the hotel. The Kennedys made their way through a packed lobby, then to the eighth-floor suite. The president ordered a pot of coffee about 45 minutes later. Some time after that, the couple retired for the night.

For reasons known only to them, Jacqueline Kennedy chose the small bedroom and John Kennedy the master. Both were up early for a brief appearance by the president outside the hotel at 8:50 the next morning. Shortly after 9 a.m., he delivered a breakfast speech to 2,000 invited guests in the hotel's grand ballroom.

Ruth Carter Johnson, Owen Day and Sam Cantey might never have known if their efforts were worth it. Because of a sick child, Ruth Carter Johnson missed a scheduled meeting that morning to shake the president's hand outside the eighth-floor elevator. A Secret Service agent had assured her that the presi-

dent would want to personally express his gratitude. But at 3 a.m., Johnson called the Secret Service to say she couldn't come.

But midmorning, while she was sitting in bed with her sick child, the phone rang. The voice on the other end of the line asked: "Are you the Ruth Johnson responsible for the art exhibit in President Kennedy's hotel room?" The aide then announced: "The president would like to speak with you."

Johnson was astounded. The familiar male voice came on the line and told her how much it meant to him and his wife to be surrounded by so much wonderful art. Johnson managed a polite reply.

Then Jacqueline Kennedy took the phone. Ruth Johnson was struck by how small the first lady's voice sounded; so small for someone of her stature. Jacqueline Kennedy told Johnson that when they arrived in the suite near midnight, she and the president had been exhausted. They went to bed not realizing that the artworks on the walls were originals. That morning as Jacqueline Kennedy walked through the rooms, she picked up

one of the small catalogs, and was swept away by what she read. Jacqueline Kennedy said she didn't want to leave; it was all too beautiful to quickly let go. Then the call, the last of John Kennedy's life, was over. At 10:35 a.m. Friday morning, Nov. 22, 1963, the Kennedys were driven by motorcade out Henderson Street and the Jacksboro Highway to Carswell, where they boarded Air Force One for the short flight to Love Field in Dallas.

Day and a Bell Helicopter company photographer, Byron Scott, returned to Suite 850 shortly after the Kennedys left to look over the quarters of the famous visitors. Newspapers lay strewn about the floor beside the bed in the master bedroom. A bottle of mineral water sat on one bedside table and a small pill bottle on the other. In the bathroom, Owen Day observed daubs of shaving cream on the counter, water splashed on the floor, and a towel carelessly tossed in the tub.

In the small bedroom, Scott photographed *The*

(More on SUITE 850 on Page 6D)



Star-Telegram Archives/UTA Special Collections

A newspaper photographer snaps Sam Cantey III in front of a Monet, careful not to show his sock feet. The housekeeper made everyone remove their shoes.

Championing a JFK statue and museum in Fort Worth

BY MALCOLM MAYHEW
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

Farris Rookstool says there's something very important missing from John F. Kennedy Plaza: John F. Kennedy.

For more than 10 years, the 39-year-old historian has been urging the city of Fort Worth to give him the thumbs-up to erect a statue commemorating Kennedy's stay and historic speech at the Hotel Texas, now the Radisson Plaza Hotel. The General Worth Square park across the street from the hotel, near where Kennedy gave that final public address, is where the statue will rest, in an area of the park known as JFK Plaza.

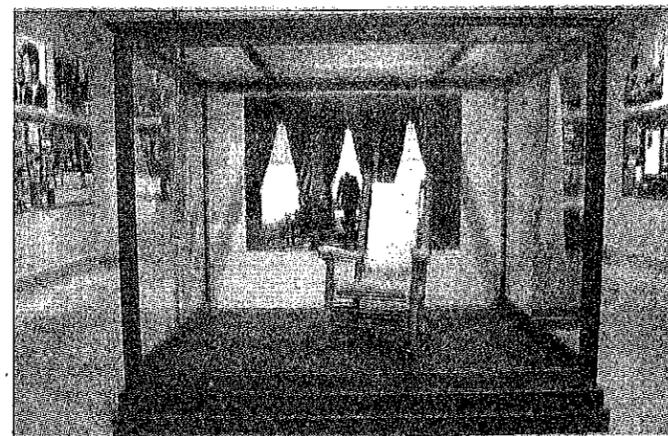
Rookstool got the city's blessing. And through donations, especially \$50,000 from the hotel itself, Rookstool has already scraped together enough cash to get the ball rolling on the statue. Actually, he says, it's almost done.

"We're looking at it going in sometime in the spring, maybe in April," he says. "The 8-foot clay model is almost finished. Once the clay figure is approved by myself, it goes to the foundry for casting into bronze."

Rookstool says he and his JFK statue collaborators and investors are still quite a few pennies short, though.

"We always need more money," he says. "We held a fund-raising lunch in October with Prince Albert of Monaco, and that helped. Right now, I think we need about \$60,000. The total is around \$150,000."

The statue is one of many ongoing JFK projects that Rookstool is immersed in. Besides the statue, Rookstool is touting an impressive



Star-Telegram/SHARON M. STEINMAN

The rocking chair used by President Kennedy in the Oval Office is displayed in the center of the "Kennedy: The Man, The President, The 1960s" exhibit in the Joe B. Rushing Center at Tarrant County College South Campus.

JFK exhibit currently on display at Tarrant County College South Campus.

"Kennedy: The Man, The President, The 1960s," running through April 25 at the campus' Joe B. Rushing Center for the Performing Arts, features an extensive collection of Kennedy-related artifacts, including Kennedy's rocking chair used in the Oval Office, a cigar box used aboard Air Force One, books and maps from the Cuban missile crisis, and the presidential seal used on the morning of Nov. 22 at the Hotel Texas when Kennedy delivered his final speech.

"It's a very pertinent, historical collection," says Douglas Harman, the president and CEO of the Fort Worth Convention and Visitors Bureau and a JFK historian.

The exhibit pieces were loaned to the school by the John F. Kennedy Museum Foundation, which Rookstool, a former historian for the unre-

lated Sixth Floor Museum in Dallas, co-founded and serves as executive director.

After its run at TCC, the exhibit will visit museums and schools in Europe and New York.

By the time the exhibit makes its way back to Fort Worth, Rookstool is hoping, it will have a permanent place to settle downtown.

First, though, Rookstool is focusing on getting the JFK statue completed and in the park.

"There are still some things that need to be done, like the city is going to need to do some site repairs to the park," he says. "It needs a tune-up, maybe some new greenery. Then some dedication events need to be planned. I'm hoping the city really rallies around it. This could be the crown jewel in downtown Fort Worth."

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Star-Telegram/SHARON M. STEINMAN

Now and then: Art lover Owen Day inspired this remarkable exhibit.

Three who made it happen: Where are they now?

Ruth Carter Stevenson: As president of the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, she has more than upheld a promise to take her father's original vision into the future. Stevenson is currently overseeing a \$39 million expansion of the museum, scheduled for completion in November. In her career, she has led the board of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and has twice served as a trustee of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.



Star-Telegram/ROD T. ENNIS

Sam B. Cantey III: Sam Cantey once said he fancied himself the Vasari of Fort Worth, and few people would have argued. Self-taught, Cantey was a knowledgeable and articulate spokesman for the visual arts. He was twice president of the Fort Worth Art Association and a driving force for creation of the city's first free-standing art museum. Sam Cantey died in Oaxaca, Mexico, in November 1973, while on vacation. He was 59.

Ruth Carter Stevenson

Owen Day: In 1963, Owen Day was a part-time art critic and reporter for the *Fort Worth Press* and also worked at Bell Helicopter Textron. Today, he continues to work in public affairs at Bell, where for 20 years, he has produced national and international trade shows that have taken him across the world. Day is the last of the original local workforce hired in 1951 to work in Bell Aircraft Corporation's then-new Texas helicopter division. His role in the exhibition for the Kennedys remains one of his most vivid life experiences.

SUITE 850

From Page 5D

Swimming Hole above the rumples twin-size bed. Day noted how neat the bedroom was. In the tiny bathroom, he counted six

splatters of makeup on the counter and items in the wastebasket that could only have been left by a woman. It was clear that the room planned for the president had been occupied by his wife instead. He and Scott left the room just before 12:30 p.m.

At 12:29 p.m., on Elm Street in Dallas, about 30 miles away, Lee Harvey Oswald fired two, perhaps three, high-powered rounds into the president's open limousine. John F. Kennedy was pronounced dead at Parkland Memorial Hospital 30 minutes later.

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Sponsored by
Star-Telegram

VIOLIN
FEBRUARY 6, 2001
8:00 PM
BASS PERFORMANCE HALL

joshua BELL

*"...visceral excitement
and passionate lyricism."*

THE NEW YORK TIMES

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GOLDBARK
Suite for Violin and Piano in D Major, Op. 11

SCHUBERT
Fantasy in G Major, Op. 159

YSAYE
Sonata No. 2 in A Minor for Solo Violin, Op. 27

RAVEL
Sonata for Violin and Piano

PIANO
MARCH 6, 2001
8:00 PM
BASS PERFORMANCE HALL

barry DOUGLAS

Kennedy was pronounced
dead at Parkland Memorial
Hospital 30 minutes later.

A museum employee was
standing on the bed, removing
the van Gogh from the hotel
wall, when word of the shoot-
ing reached Suite 850. Day
learned about the assassination
while walking back toward the
Fort Worth Press offices at
Fifth and Jones. A stranger
started yelling at him. "What?"
Day yelled back.

"The president has been
shot," the stranger replied.

Day thought that was
impossible. He had just seen
Kennedy an hour before. But
soon he and the rest of Amer-
ica knew the horrible truth.

In the avalanche of events
of that November day, the
exhibition in Suite 850 was
reduced to a footnote. The
paintings and sculptures were
quietly returned to their own-
ers. In the years following the
assassination, most of the art
in the Kennedy exhibition was
sold or sent away from Fort
Worth, much of it having
grown too valuable to decorate
the walls and tables of private
homes. Death and inheritance
and a booming art market in
the 1980s all contributed to the
dispersion.

Japan became the eventual
destination of the van Gogh
landscape under which
Kennedy spent his final night.
Ted Weiner relocated to Palm
Springs, Calif., and took most
of his sculptures with him. The
Eakins masterpiece and the
Russell painting, both of which
continue to reside at the Amon
Carter, remain the only acces-
sible reminders of the last art
John and Jacqueline Kennedy
would ever enjoy together.

After numerous changes in
hotel ownership and remodel-
ings, Suite 850 was broken up.
After a time, few people
recalled that it ever existed.
But with everything that hap-
pened to her that day, Jacque-
line Kennedy never forgot. In
William Manchester's *The
Death of a President*, she
related how priceless art had
once transformed a dingy Fort
Worth hotel room into a place
of memories, both bitter and
sweet.