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indulge your passion—for art, for education, or for local history—at the Old Jail Art Center

The Old Jail Art Center is a small part of a big phenomenon. There are more museums in America (about 35,000) than Starbucks and McDonald’s (about 25,000) combined. Nationwide, museums employ more than 400,000 Americans; directly contribute $21 billion to the U.S. economy each year; and generate billions more through indirect spending by their visitors. Museums serve diverse communities in every corner of America, and specialize in everything from coffins (the National Museum of Funeral History, Houston, Texas) to velvet Elvis paintings (The Museum of Bad Art, Boston, Massachusetts). Every collection is different and so, too, every museum is different.

Unlike these more niche museums, some museums have more than one outstanding collection. While the Old Jail Art Center certainly focuses on our art collection, another equally impressive, if less visible, collection resides in the Robert E. Nail, Jr. Archives. Together, the photographs, newspapers, letters, maps, and rare books help tell the story of Albany and Shackelford County over the last century and a half. Although the OJAC archives are a great local resource, professionally managed and organized and accessible to all, the Caldwell Family expansion allows us to think bigger. While we are justifiably proud of our art collection, not everyone will go out of his/her way to visit an art museum. The new archive space, slated for completion in 2016, will give everyone—locals and visitors to the area—a new reason to visit the Old Jail. The new archive space will include a gallery to display archival and ranching history materials, a beautiful reading room, and a separate space for researchers to work. The archives also contain artists’ papers, and the new gallery space will allow for more expansive exhibits of these fascinating documents, sketchbooks, diaries, and watercolors.

So the next time you tell someone about the wonderful offerings at the Old Jail, be sure to let them know that we have art and we have history. We may be a small part of the larger museum phenomenon, but we are getting bigger, better, and more interesting to more people every day. So come one, come all, and indulge your passion—for art, for education, or for local history—at the Old Jail Art Center.

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Executive Director

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The Real Show
6 June - 6 September 2015
Curated by Patrick Kelly

For centuries, artists have attempted to accurately depict or re-create objects, landscapes, people, and animals in two and three-dimensional form for various reasons and with varying degrees of success. Artistic merit was, and still is, attributed to those artists who have the capacity to render, through artistic skills and techniques, a reality that is precise and above all believable. Success allows viewers to wonder at the artists’ skills and accept the truth presented through “the real.”

Realism as an art movement began in the mid-19th century with other labels and categories to follow that included painterly realism, hyperrealism, allegorical realism, magic realism, neo-realism, and countless other real-“isms.” The artists included in The Real Show are more concerned with their individual uses of realism—their personal means to an end—rather than willingly following or sustaining established formulas. The aim of this exhibition is to present the creative ways in which various contemporary artists utilize the illusion of depicted realities to convey individual messages or observations that extend beyond mere mechanical copying.


This exhibition is sponsored by the Museum's Exhibition Fund.

The West Texas Triangle was formed in 2006 to define West Texas as a “Space for Art,” promoting the unique collections and exhibitions of institutions within this region to a wider audience. The group includes the Grace Museum, Abilene; the Old Jail Art Center, Albany; the Museum of the Southwest, Midland; the Ellen Noël Art Museum, Odesa; and the San Angelo Museum of Fine Art, San Angelo.

Each year, the WTT selects an artist whose work will be represented at each of the participating institutions during the summer. For 2015 the WTT selected sculptor Ben Woitena.

Woitena’s sculptures in the OJAC permanent collection vary greatly in how they are made and their interaction with the surrounding space. Yet, each employ subtle manipulation of planes, shadows, mass, color, texture, and positive/negative space. The seemingly stagnant elements, created from iron and steel, interact with the intense Texas light to cast ever-changing shadows that are associated with time and movement.
Sculptor Joe Barrington, from Throckmorton, Texas, brings his unmistakable style and approach to art making to the next installment of the Cell Series.

Barrington grew up in a welding shop in the Texas oilfields and was exposed to “hard work, hard living, and tall tales.” These and other experiences of life have shaped him and his work over the years and his materials are as raw and evident as those influences. Using what’s readily available paired with a keen instinct, he selects the most relevant materials to construct and illustrate his ideas and stories. The scavenged or recycled materials are not selected arbitrarily, but carefully chosen for their particular shapes and textures.

Being an artist, while staying in touch with the world from which he draws inspiration, demands Barrington straddle two worlds. Joe Barrington makes aesthetic and creative decisions that go hand-in-hand with being an artist. Little Joe Hammer (the voice in Barrington’s head) serves as the “manly-man,” with no need for such “artsy” concerns. The persona of LJ Hammer is the granddad from East Texas who went to school three days total and is the skilled hunter, fisherman, and welder, as well as binge drinker. In other words, he represents the common man with all his faults and follies. More importantly, he is Barrington’s muse, albeit without the mythical robes and wings.

For his installation in the upper galleries of the museum’s 1877 jail building, Barrington continues his investigations and creations based on the raven. Barrington utilizes found and appropriated materials to construct the forms—much like a raven would do. The unexpected diversity of materials, the confronting size of the objects, along with the myth and legends associated with the subject are catalysts for amusement and contemplation.

Cell Series Sponsors:
Susie and Joe Clack
Amy and Patrick Kelly
Juli and Mac McGinnis

The Cell Series presents living artists and their work. It offers a rare opportunity to encounter work that is attempting to interpret and translate the world we universally experience in unique and surprising ways. The founders of the Old Jail Art Center were passionate about supporting and showing living artists and their work—the museum continues this important mission with the Cell Series.
Left to right: 1. Families browse artwork at Student Art Show: Talking Back. 2. Mother’s Day Workshop: Savannah Perez explores silk painting. 3. Cell Series artist Natasha Bowdoin installs paper sculpture. 4. Students create “Memory and Money” sculptures inspired by the art of Ken Little. 5. Jean Buchanan and Leta Bell at Silk Painting Workshop.
SOUVENIRS OF SUMMER

Whether it be a unique trinket picked up on vacation, an outdoor project completed, or a good memory made with a friend at camp—these are treasured souvenirs of the Summer Season.

For over 20 years, Camps and Workshops at the OJAC have inspired hundreds of students each July and August, offering countless opportunities to play, learn and create.

At Cultural Connections Camp, kids (grades K-6) discover the food, music, theater and visual art traditions of a world culture represented in the Museum Collection. Keep in touch with us through Social Media this summer to watch campers taste, dance, create and compete as they explore the country of Greece! Grades 4-7 will also enjoy a Sculpture Workshop focused on the art of 2015 West Texas Triangle artist Ben Woltena.

Teens (grades 7-12) will investigate the influences and processes of contemporary Cell Series artist Joe Barrington. Weekday workshops will include studio instruction in metal and found-object sculpture.

In our new Cross-Gen program, The Craft Preserve, students of all grades will connect with older generations of makers in our West Texas community—trying their hand at the “lost” skills and craft processes of times past. From leatherwork and quilting to canning and vintage game nights, this program is sure to strengthen relationships and reclaim invaluable traditions!

We look forward to a summer of warm memories in 2015. Register your students for these souvenirs today.

Top: Junior Docent Henry Kelly at 2014 Teen Digital Photography Workshop. Bottom: Gyotaku (Fish Printing) at Cultural Connections Camp: Japan.
1st Monday
JUNIOR DOCENT MEETING
5-6:30 pm
September - May
Teen Volunteer Program
ages 13-18

2nd Tuesday
FOOD FOR THOUGHT
12-1:00 pm
Brown bag lunch and
documentary films for adults

3rd Tuesday
DOCENT MEETING
5-6:30 pm
Adult Visitor-Service Volunteers

3rd Thursday
ADULT WORKSHOPS
6-8:30 pm
Programs rotate monthly
Childcare provided

4th Friday
HOME SCHOOL FAMILY FRIDAY
2-4:00 pm
September - May
Hands-on activities for home
educators and students

Middle: Metallic Animal Masks inspired by 2014 West Texas Triangle artist Ken Little.
Bottom L: Hudson Thomas tries his hand at Chinese Calligraphy.
Bottom R: Junior Docent Riley Scott teaches Kol-Flag Craft at Lunar New Year Family Festival.
Fandangle Focus: Watt Matthews
6 June - 6 September 2015

The Robert E. Nail, Jr. Archives of The Old Jail Art Center recently debuted a new Fort Griffin Fandangle exhibit—this year with a focus on the late rancher Watkins Reynolds Matthews (1899-1997). Son of pioneers John Alexander Matthews and Sallie Reynolds Matthews, Matthews was an Albany native and much loved member of the community. He was not only a skilled, hard-working rancher who oversaw the management of the historic Lamshead Ranch, but also an ardent contributor to the preservation of regional history and the continued success of the Fort Griffin Fandangle.

Watkins Reynolds Matthews (known to residents locally as Watt) was the youngest of nine children, born in the last year of the nineteenth century. He was a living link with the region’s frontier past and spent considerable time and resources on historic preservation, including the restoration of the Old Stone Ranch, which had been his mother’s childhood home. Following the death of original Fandangle creator Robert E. Nail, Jr., Matthews was one of the leading forces encouraging and empowering the Albany community to continue its production. For years the annual membership samplers were held at Reynolds Bend at Lamshead Ranch. Matthews also served for decades as chairman of the board for the Fandangle Association.

A V brand
J.A. Matthews, Lamshead Ranch

Fandangle Stagecoach, undated.
Inside L to R: Bob Owens, Reilly Nall, Joe Blanton.
Outside L to R: Bob Nall, Matt Blanton, Bill Blanton,
Tom Blanton, and Watt Matthews.
INMATES’ Kickoff Party!

This spring, the Old Jail launched a young members’ organization called The Inmates. The Inmates is a social support group with an overarching purpose of developing a future generation of donors and supporters. Membership is offered to individuals and couples in their 20s, 30s and 40s at reasonable prices. The Inmates enjoy exclusive opportunities to learn about and experience art and heritage in a social setting in and outside of Albany. Inmates membership includes membership to OJAC for one year, an Inmates t-shirt, a car decal and invitations to Inmates-only events as well as Western Swing, exhibition openings, Wild About the Old Jail and others.

On Friday, April 24th, a committee comprised of 38 individuals hosted the Inmates’ Kickoff Party at Chuck and Betsy Senter’s home in Albany. The evening under the stars featured a Mugshot Photo Booth, exciting raffle prizes and music by Cody Culberson. The event was a huge success and brought in new Inmates from all over the state of Texas and even beyond its borders. There are currently nearly 100 Inmates, and that number is continuing to grow. Plans are currently underway for a late summer event in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, where many of our Inmates call home.

It’s not too late to be a part of this exciting new adventure. Call the OJAC to join today!
SHOP OJAC

This summer, the Museum’s shop features both new items and old favorites inspired by The Real Show and Fandangle Focus: Watt Matthews exhibitions.

The Games We Played: The Golden Age of Board & Table Games by Margaret Hofer

OJAC members $18  nonmembers $20

Watt Matthews of Lambshead
by Laura Wilson

OJAC members $40  nonmembers $44