

The 2006 Rex Procession: "Beaux Arts and Letters"

Tuesday, February 28, 2005
New Orleans, Louisiana

1. Rex, King of Carnival, Monarch of Merriment Rex's float carries the King of Carnival and his pages through the streets of New Orleans on Mardi Gras day.

2. His Majesty's Bandwagon A band rides on this permanent float to provide music for Rex and for those who greet him on the parade route.

3. The King's Jesters Even the Monarch of Merriment needs jesters in his court. Rex's jesters dress in Mardi Gras colors—purple, green, and gold.

4. The Boeuf Gras This is one of the oldest symbols of Mardi Gras, symbolizing the great feast on the day before Lent begins.

5. Title Float: "Beaux Arts and Letters" While Rex Processions of past years have presented the history and culture of far-flung civilizations, this year's theme explores the joys and beauties of Rex's own empire and domain. New Orleans has a long and rich artistic history and has produced a wealth of artists and writers of national and international renown. Sculptors and painters, writers and poets have called New Orleans home, and have found inspiration for their work in her history, culture, and landscapes. Mardi Gras, the celebration unique to this city, has influenced the work of many of our artists and writers.

6. John James Audubon (1785-1851) Audubon, the pre-eminent American painter of birds and wildlife, was born in Haiti and came to America at age eighteen, living in Pennsylvania and Kentucky before traveling south with little more than his gun and his painting equipment. He arrived in New Orleans in 1821, living for a time at 701 Barracks St. where he painted and taught drawing. He worked for several years in the Felicianas, especially at Oakley plantation. He is best known for his great work, "Birds of America."

About Audubon:

<http://www.audubon.org/nas/jja.html>

Birds of America: http://www.audubon.org/bird/BoA/BOA_index.html

John J. Audubon:

<http://www.answers.com/topic/john-j-audubon>

Biography:

<http://www.famousamericans.net/johnjamesaudubon/>

7. Robert Tallant "Voodoo" (1909-1957) Born and educated in New Orleans, Robert Tallant is best known for a series of books and articles describing the history and culture of New Orleans. As an editor working with the Louisiana Writers' Project for the WPA he helped write "Gumbo Ya-Ya," which described the rich folklore of New Orleans. "Voodoo" was one of his later books, a detailed (if somewhat sensational) exploration of this interesting part of New Orleans

culture. He also taught English at Newcomb College and wrote for the *New Orleans Item*.

Robert Tallant:

<http://nutrias.org/~nopl/mss/tallant.htm>

Voodoo/Wikipedia:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voodoo>

Encyclopedia:

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/html/v1/voodoo.asp>

8. George Ohr (1857-1918) Sometimes called “the mad potter of Biloxi,” George Edgar Ohr learned many of his potting skills in New Orleans before returning to Biloxi to create the unique pots he called his “mud babies.” He claimed the motto “no two alike,” and his style of pinched and twisted forms produced art pottery which was not really valued during his lifetime. Thousands of his pots were left in boxes to be discovered many years after his death. This unique artist and his work are honored in the recently founded George Ohr Museum in Biloxi, Mississippi.

George Ohr Museum:

<http://www.georgeohr.org/bio.htm>

Biography:

<http://mshistory.k12.ms.us/features/feature27/ohr.html>

9. Perry Young “The Mistick Krewe” This float honors the Mistick Krewe of Comus on its 150th anniversary, with float elements depicting the Comus cup and the celebrations of the “Cowbellians,” from which the Mistick Krewe took inspiration. Perry Young is best known for his 1931 history of Carnival in New Orleans, “The Mistick Krewe: Chronicles of Comus and His Kin.” In his preface Young describes Carnival as “a butterfly of winter, whose last mad flight of Mardi Gras forever ends his glory.”

Arthur Hardy/Carnival History: <http://www.mardigrasguide.com/history/>

Nola.com/Carnival:

<http://www.nola.com/mardigras/about/index.ssf?/mardigras/about/content/stories/history.html>

10. John Kennedy Toole “Confederacy of Dunces” (1937-1969) In his best-known work, Toole created a most colorful New Orleans character, Ignatius P. Reilly. Toole’s description of Reilly begins: “A green hunting cap squeezed the top of the fleshy balloon of a head...” Toole earned degrees from Tulane and Columbia Universities and taught English at Dominican College. “A Confederacy of Dunces” was published after his death through the persistence of his mother, Thelma Toole, and with the help of Walker Percy. It won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1980.

Toole links:

<http://www.levity.com/corduroy/toole.htm>

Toole/Wikipedia:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Kennedy_Toole

11. Louis Andrews Fischer "Living Jewels" (1901-1974) Louis Fischer was given her father's name when she was born in Mobile in 1901. An imaginative child who loved poetry and fanciful fiction ("Alice in Wonderland" was a favorite) she studied art at Newcomb College. In her Pontalba apartment she designed many beautiful Carnival parades, including the Rex parades from the 1920's through the early 1930's. One of her most beautiful Rex parades was that of 1930, titled "The Jewels of Rex," which inspired this float.

12. Grace King "New Orleans, the Place and the People" (1852-1932) Grace King was a life-long New Orleanian whose fiction and non-fiction writing helped the nation and the world better understand post-Civil War New Orleans and the South. She was well known and respected in national literary circles, and was proud to call herself, in the title of her autobiography, "A Southern Woman of Letters." "New Orleans, the Place and the People," published in 1895, is her best-known non-fiction work, an affectionate and beautifully illustrated history of our city.

Biography:

http://college.hmco.com/english/lauter/heath/4e/students/author_pages/late_nineteenth/king_gr.html

Online Book: "New Orleans: the Place and the People":

http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Gazetteer/Places/America/United_States/Louisiana/New_Orleans/_Texts/KINPAP/home.html

Biography:

<http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/king.html>

13. Caroline Durieux "Mardi Gras Day" (1896-1989) Caroline Spellman Wogan Durieux studied art with Ellsworth Woodward at Newcomb College, and later at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts. Prior to teaching art at LSU she was the director of the Federal Art Project in Louisiana. She is best known for her humorous and satiric lithographs, many drawing on the characters and culture of New Orleans. "Mardi Gras Day" is a 1948 compilation of sketches and drawings by Durieux, Ralph Wickiser, and John McCrady depicting images from a "typical" Mardi Gras day.

Portrait:

<http://louisdl.louislibraries.org/cgi-bin/viewer.exe?CISOROOT=/LHP&CISOPTR=8&CISORESTMP=&CISOVIEWTMP=>

Biography:

http://www.gilleysgallery.com/PAGES/BIO_PAGES/DURIEUX.html

Biography:

<http://www.lib.lsu.edu/special/findaid/d3827.html> - biog

Lithographs:

http://www.askart.com/AskART/artists/search/Search_Repeat.aspx?searchtype=IMAGES&artist=19448

14. The Streetcar Named Desire This permanent float honors the most famous of all of New Orleans' streetcar lines.

His Majesty's Royal Calliope The Rex procession presents a musical interlude provided by His Majesty's traditional calliope.

15. Lyle Saxon "Father Mississippi" (1891-1946) Lyle Saxon began his writing career as a reporter for several New Orleans papers, ending his newspaper career as one of the *Times-Picayune's* most renowned journalists. In 1926 he went to New York City to write novels, one of which, "Father Mississippi" (1927) inspired this float. During the WPA years he was Director of the Louisiana Writer's Project. A resident of the French Quarter, where his literary circle included William Faulkner, Saxon also did some of his writing in a cabin at Melrose Plantation.

Loyola Saxon Page: <http://www.loyno.edu/%7Ejwitman/saxon1.html>

Southern Writers:

<http://media.louisianatravel.com/literary/>

Portrait:

<http://nutrias.org/~nopl/monthly/july97/july97b.htm>

16. Enrique Alferez (1901-1999) Enrique Alferez was born in northern Mexico and divided his time between New Orleans and the land of his birth. A prolific artist and sculptor, many of his works grace New Orleans' favorite public spaces, including the New Orleans Botanical Garden and City Park, and can be found in many distant cities as well. Mr. Alferez was an energetic and enthusiastic man, and is remembered as one of New Orleans' most unique characters. The human figure inspired many of his drawings and sculptures.

Ogden Museum: <http://www.ogdenmuseum.org/exhibitions/exhibition-alferez.html>

City Park:

http://www.neworleanscitypark.com/nobgtour_art.php

Molly Marine:

http://members.tripod.com/womenmarines/molly_marine.htm

Peggy Alferez:

<http://www.nola.com/living/t-p/index.ssf?/base/living-5/113238555735800.xml>

17. Ida Kohlmeyer (1912-1997) Ida Kohlmeyer did not take up painting until she was in her thirties, but she developed a unique style which made her one of New Orleans' favorite and most renowned artists and sculptors. Her first degree from Newcomb College was in English Literature, but she returned to its art school for her Master's Degree. Her work is found in major national museum collections and graces many homes and public spaces in New Orleans, where she painted and sculpted nearly every day until her death. New Orleans' own Ogden Museum of Southern Art is home to the Ida Kohlmeyer Study Center, which preserves an extensive Kohlmeyer archive.

Ogden Museum: <http://www.ogdenmuseum.org/exhibitions/exhibition-becomingida.html>

Biography:

http://www.gprc.org/gallery/ida_kolmeyer.htm

Biography and Work:

<http://www.lizweiman.com/ida.html>

18. Bror Anders Wikstrom “Rex 1885-1910” (1854-1909) While Wikstrom is honored here for his elegant designs for some of the most beautiful of all Rex parades, he was also a versatile and accomplished painter. Born in Sweden, he ran away to sea at the age of fourteen, but returned to study painting at the Swedish Royal Academy. During his 25 years in New Orleans he helped found the Artists’ Association of New Orleans, taught art and drawing, and was part of a distinguished circle of artists which included the Woodward brothers.

Biography:

<http://lsm.crt.state.la.us/painting/wikstrom.htm>

Design examples:

<http://nutrias.org/~nopl/plauche/lhpinv.htm>

Ogden Museum:

http://www.ogdenmuseum.org/collections/from-artist.html?my_artist_id=6435

19. Walker Percy “The Moviegoer” (1916-1990) Walker Percy trained to be a physician, but contracted tuberculosis when he was twenty-six. Following his extended confinement, he began to write, exploring the human condition in a series of novels and non-fiction works. His literary characters were often engaged in a search for greater meaning in their lives. This was certainly true of Binx Bolling, an alienated stockbroker, and the moviegoer of this float’s title. Dr. Percy lived and worked in Covington, Louisiana.

Wikipedia Biography:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walker_Percy

Biography:

<http://www.ibiblio.org/wpercy/biography.html>

20. William Faulkner “Mosquitoes” (1897-1962) William Faulkner grew up in Oxford, Mississippi, and lived and worked for many years in New Orleans. “Mosquitoes” was his second novel, and is not widely read. It takes place on a yacht in Lake Ponchartrain, and is loosely based on the characters in his literary circle during his New Orleans years. He won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1954, cited for “his powerful and artistically unique contribution to the American novel.”

Nobel Biography: <http://nobelprize.org/literature/laureates/1954/faulkner-bio.html>

Faulkner on the Web:

<http://www.mcsr.olemiss.edu/~egjbp/faulkner/faulkner.html>

21. Newcomb Pottery Josephine Newcomb's gift in 1886 encouraged a broad vision of education "both practical and literary." This surely was true in the Art Department, where Ellsworth Woodward and others encouraged the study of art both as a program of vocational training for young women and the creation of fine works of art. The Newcomb Pottery, established by Woodward and Mary Given Sheerer in 1894, exemplified this blend of beauty and function. Newcomb Pottery became famous for graceful forms, exquisite glazes, and designs drawn from Louisiana flora. The pottery closed in 1940.

Newcomb Pottery: <http://www.tulane.edu/~wc/pottery/intro.html>

History: http://www.justartpottery.com/collectors_pottery/newcomb_pottery_history.htm

Newcomb Pottery / Arts and Crafts:

<http://lsm.crt.state.la.us/newcomb/newcomb1.htm>

22. Clementine Hunter (1886-1988) Clementine Hunter, one of the south's most famous and beloved self-taught artists, was born on a cotton plantation near Cloutierville, LA. When she was a teenager she moved to the Melrose Plantation in Cane River country. Melrose was a haven for artists and writers, and Mrs. Hunter's creativity with quilts and dolls was noticed and encouraged. She began to make paintings with leftover materials or paints given to her by the "real" artists. Her first painting was on a linen window shade. Over her long life she created more than 4000 "memory paintings," each telling a story in her clear and straightforward way.

Biography:

<http://www.jantjeblokhuismluder.com/articles/clementinehunter.shtml>

Ogden Museum:

<http://www.ogdenmuseum.org/education/pdf/placemats-Clementine-Hunter.pdf>

Ogden Museum Biography:

<http://www.ogdenmuseum.org/exhibitions/featured-artist-hunter.html>

23. Tennessee Williams "The Glass Menagerie" (1911-1983) Born Thomas Lanier Williams, III in Columbus, Mississippi, Tennessee Williams was one of America's greatest playwrights. He moved to New Orleans in 1939, and wrote "A Streetcar Named Desire" while living on St. Peter Street. While he lived in New York and other cities, he always called New Orleans his "spiritual home," and New Orleans celebrates his work with the annual Tennessee Williams Festival. Williams grew up in a conflicted and dysfunctional family, and many of the characters in his plays mirror the troubled and tumultuous world he knew well. That is certainly true of the characters in "The Glass Menagerie."

Biography:

http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/english/ms-writers/dir/williams_tennessee/

Wikipedia Biography:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennessee_Williams

Tennessee Williams Festival:

<http://www.tennesseewilliams.net/>

24. Lafcadio Hearn "The Night of All Saints" (1850-1904) Born in Greece, Lafcadio Hearn was a prolific and colorful writer in New Orleans in the 1880's. He wrote for several of the city's papers, and his descriptions of New Orleans, its culture and characters, endures for its vividness and wit. In 1889 he went to Japan, learned Japanese, married a Japanese woman, and became a professor at the Imperial University. While he is known around the world for his writings about Japan, his New Orleans period is not as widely studied. "The Night of All Saints" is one of Hearn's sketches compiled after his death by Charles Hutson, and published in 1919 as "Fantastics and other Fancies."

Biography:

http://www.trussel.com/f_hearn.htm

Wikipedia:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lafcadio_Hearn

Fantastics and Other Fancies:

<http://ayerpub.com/Product.asp?ProductID=4400000018464&Res=T>

25. Walter Inglis Anderson (1903-1965) Anderson was born and spent his early years in New Orleans. He graduated from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and studied abroad before returning to live and work in Ocean Springs. During the WPA years he painted murals in public buildings, many of which survive. He struggled with mental illness throughout his adult life, and lead an increasingly isolated life. He spent many years going back and forth to Horn Island, studying the natural world around him and trying to capture it in his intense and lyric style. These years produced much of the art by which we remember this remarkable artist.

Walter Anderson Museum: <http://www.walterandersonmuseum.org/>

Biography:

[http://www.shs.starkville.k12.ms.us/mswm/MSWritersAndMusicians/writers/wanderson.html - bio](http://www.shs.starkville.k12.ms.us/mswm/MSWritersAndMusicians/writers/wanderson.html-bio)

26. Kate Chopin "Bayou Folk" (1851-1904) Kate O'Flaherty Chopin spent most of her life in her native St. Louis, but her literary legacy drew on the fourteen years she lived in Louisiana. At age nineteen she married Oscar Chopin, a cotton broker, and they lived in New Orleans and Cloutierville, Red River country. She returned to St. Louis in 1882, a widow with six children, and when she began to write it was about the Acadians and Creoles with whom she had lived. "Bayou Folk" was published in 1894, and describes, with colorful use of dialect, the people and customs of Acadiana.

Biography:

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/chopinawake/bio.html>

Kate Chopin PBS Special:

<http://www.pbs.org/katechopin/>

Biography/links: <http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/chopin.htm>

27. The Royal Barge The Royal Barge is a permanent float, complete with Royal Gryphon, and brings the Rex Procession of 2005 to a close.

