



An Exhibition of Works by Depression-era Texas Artist H.O. Robertson to Open at the Meadows Museum

Paintings and Other Newly-Acquired Works by the Texas Regionalist Go On View November 9

DALLAS (SMU), October 20, 2014 – The Meadows Museum at Southern Methodist University announces an exhibition of works by H.O. Robertson (1887-1970), an artist who lived in Dallas during the 1930s and 1940s and was active with the development of Texas Regionalism and the Dallas Nine circle.

The exhibition *H.O. Robertson: Self-Taught Texas Regionalist* runs November 9, 2014 to March 1, 2015 and celebrates the recent acquisition by SMU of nearly three dozen works by Robertson. Thanks to this recent gift from the artist's family, the University now holds one of the most comprehensive collections of the artist's work.

The works include ten paintings and four cliché verre plates given to the University Art Collection and nine drawings and ten lithographs given to the Jerry Bywaters Special Collections at SMU's Hamon Arts Library. A selection of these works will make up the exhibition.

"We are thrilled to exhibit these outstanding works which are such an important part of the history of art in Texas," said Mark A. Roglán, the Linda P. and William A. Custard Director of the Meadows Museum and Centennial Chair in the Meadows School of the Arts. "We are extremely grateful to H.O. Robertson's family for their generous gift to Southern Methodist University."

The gift was given by members of the artist's family – the artist's son and daughter-in-law, Dr. and Mrs. J. Dean Robertson, and granddaughters Mirinda Robertson Hyde, Sally Robertson Kern, and the late Julie Dean Robertson Leverett.

Horace Oakley Robertson grew up in Marion, Illinois, yet lived in Dallas in the 1930s and 1940s during the development of Texas Regionalism. Although a generation older than the artists of the Dallas Nine and their circle, Robertson befriended many of them, and their influence is evident in his simple and straightforward style, which he used to depict local scenes. His compositions of rural farms and rundown buildings were likely inspired by his immediate surroundings yet, like many of his fellow regionalist artists, Robertson painted his subject matter in a manner that related it to a universal human condition felt nationally during the years of the Great Depression.

Prior to his move to Texas, Robertson worked on the business side of both the lumber and oil industries, and later pursued his vocation of teaching in a business school. He moved to Dallas in 1929 to teach at the Metropolitan Business College but also devoted attention to his artistic practice and integrated himself into the younger circle of artists and members of the Dallas Nine, including Otis Dozier (1904-1987) and Everett Spruce (1907-2002).

Robertson displayed his work at nearly all of the major Dallas exhibitions and venues for the next two decades. This included the Dallas Art Association, beginning in 1930; the Texas Centennial Exposition, 1936; and American Federation of Art's "Texas Panorama" exhibition, 1943-44. Farther afield, he also

showed works at the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco and the New York World's Fair, both in 1939.

A 1937 *Dallas Morning News* article, "H.O. Robertson's Talent Realized in Local Circles," praised Robertson after his painting, *Winter Afternoon* (1936), received the Allied Arts Purchase Prize in the annual exhibition. Of Robertson, the article stated, "Self-taught artists who achieve commendable results without actually having received any form of artistic aid are extremely rare, a fact which makes the discovery of one [Robertson] in the midst of the Dallas group a real event."

In 1952, Robertson retired and moved to Oklahoma to be near his son, Dean, and family. Robertson lived with his wife, Annah, in Oklahoma City until his death in 1970, at age 84.

This exhibition has been organized by the Meadows Museum and is funded by a generous gift from The Meadows Foundation.

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About the Meadows Museum

The Meadows Museum is the leading institution in the U.S. focused on the study and presentation of the art of Spain. In 1962, Dallas businessman and philanthropist Algur H. Meadows donated his private collection of Spanish paintings, as well as funds to start a museum, to Southern Methodist University. The museum opened to the public in 1965 and today is home to one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of Spanish art outside of Spain. The collection includes medieval objects, Renaissance and Baroque sculptures, and major paintings by Golden Age and modern masters. Its holdings also include a significant collection of 20th-century sculpture, much of it on display in its outdoor plaza, as well as the University Art Collection, which features works by a number of noted Texas artists.

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