

From the Editor



I write this note sitting in a pleasant park in Helsinki, Finland. A statue surrounded by roses is my only companion as I watch people walking and cycling to work while trolleys and buses also roll past. The city is alive with the frantic tone of people squeezing the last warm moments out of summer before the onset of deep winter. Soon I will return to my city, Houston, where I will

frantically squeeze the last bit of cold air from my dying car's air conditioner in the midst of deep summer.

But even on a sixty-degree morning, the weather is not much on my mind. I think instead of how pleasant it would be to live in a perpetual Helsinki August. As I look around at ample mass transportation, beautiful urban spaces, old buildings and history treated with the dignity they deserve, and the lack of widespread poverty, I wonder if my city will ever grow into a mature metropolis.

Yet one thing has become clearer to me in working on this issue of *The Houston Review*. For all of its rough edges, Houston has come of age in one important area—the arts. Yes, even in comparison to the old European cities which we have envied and imitated for much of our history, Houston has developed a lively arts scene that adds greatly to the quality of life in our region.

The vitality of the arts in Houston reflects the dynamism of the city. But good museums and symphonies and theaters did not spring automatically from a thriving economy; individuals had to step forward and will them into existence. The articles in this issue show that time and time again those who loved the arts banded together and worked hard to bring them here, usually against great odds. Those who made their fortunes in our region generously supported these efforts; many of their wives took the lead in making sure that this was so. Many of us who were raised with little knowledge of high culture gradually came to appreciate the symphony along with Willie Nelson, an impressionist painting along with a Nolan Ryan fastball.

This issue could not encompass all of the arts in our region. Instead, we included articles on a representative sample of the arts. Many of the pieces emphasize the human face of the artists and those who supported the arts. For the cover we chose a photograph of "Virtuoso," a sculpture by David Adickes. Like all art, this was a matter of personal preference—the editor has always felt good when he walked past this whimsical monument to the arts in Houston.

ON THE COVER— *Virtuoso* by David Adickes
Cover photograph by Julie Coan

HOUSTON REVIEW BOARD

Spotlight



MARY SCHIFLETT, a consultant/vice president for the Texas Medical Center, first became involved with the *Houston Review* in 2001 when we began planning the issue about the Texas Medical Center. During our brainstorming sessions, she suggested ideas for articles and helped find authors to write them. Mary also wrote an introductory overview for the issue entitled, "The Second Downtown." Following publication of this issue in 2003, she graciously agreed to serve on our advisory board. She brought with her a wealth of experience, creative energy and deep commitment to make *The Houston Review* the magazine of our city's history.

Mary joined the Texas Medical Center in 1984 as associate director for planning and the following year she was asked to become director of public affairs. During her career, she has been a respected administrator and author. She has contributed chapters to several books and has published numerous articles on subjects as varied as biographic sketches, origins of music and art, ethnic groups in early Houston, and ranch life and folklore.

Throughout her career, Mary has made the time to get involved with organizations to help improve the quality of life in our city. Mary has served as a director on the original board for the Third Ward Redevelopment Council; president of the Downtown Club; president of the Houston Center for the Humanities; secretary and member of the executive committee of the Board for the Friends of Hermann Park; member of the Volunteer Service Council for the Southern Regional Office of the Institute for International Education (IIE); and president of the Rotary Club of River Oaks. Mary Schiflett's creative energy, wise counsel, and quiet elegance have been a welcome addition to our board of advisors and have enhanced the quality of our magazine.

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