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## MUST-SEE EXHIBITS

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February 29, 2016



### 5. DEBORAH COLTON

Two exhibits will be presented this month at the Deborah Colton Gallery. Proof and Broken Mirror's opening receptions will both be held on March 12. Houston-born artist Suzanne Paul's Proof highlights influential characters in Houston's art history and examines Suzanne's unique approach to creating photography. With the dedicated and continued support of Founder and Director Deborah M. Colton to the well-being of this art estate and Paul's daughter, Mercedes Mallard Paul, since 2005 when Paul passed away, Proof has been curated by Theresa Escobedo, appointed by Colton to carefully review the archives and help uncover these treasures of Houston art history. Oleg Dou's Broken Mirror is a solo exhibition of multimedia works. The international debut of his newest body of work, which, reminiscent of previous collections, explores the notion of exposing the inner self that hides behind our "social masks." [www.deborahcoltongallery.com](http://www.deborahcoltongallery.com)

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## Vintage *Proof* of Old Houston

At Deborah Colton Gallery, a photographer's vintage photos tell of an ever-changing Houston.

BY [LAURA GILLESPIE](#) • 3/17/2016 AT 8:00AM



IMAGE: [DEBORAH COLTON GALLERY](#)

**SORTING THROUGH HER FAMILY'S PHOTOS WAS A MONUMENTAL TASK** for 42-year-old Mercedes Mallard Paul. Her late mother's collection totaled in the thousands with boxes upon boxes of photographs, binders of negatives and envelopes fat with Polaroid photos. Along with family friend Deborah Colton, Paul spent more than 10 years sorting and restoring as much as they could.

“

**I think (my mother is) probably the only one that really documented (life in Houston) as real as it gets. It's not posing, she went in and photographed the situation.**

”

The collection had worth besides sentiment. Mercedes' mother, Suzanne Paul, was an acclaimed, born-and-bred Houston photographer, showcasing the rapid change of 20th-century Houston in photographs.

Suzanne, a UH alum and National Endowment for the Arts recipient, died in 2005, but Colton, founder of her own gallery, and Mercedes are showing her latest collection, *Proof*, part of this year's sprawling FotoFest.

In *Proof*, Suzanne Paul's photographs show artists, curators, gallery directors and others in the Houston art scene in vintage, film negative-esque collages. The photographs, curated by Theresa Escobedo, span the entirety of Paul's career, from the mid-1970s to the early 2000s.

Though the images take place over a wide period of time, they look similar enough to have been taken within days of each other. *Proof* marks the first time these images have been displayed.

“I think (my mother is) probably the only one that really documented (life in Houston)

as real as it gets,” explains Mercedes. “It’s not posing, she went in and photographed the situation.”



IMAGE: [DEBORAH COLTON GALLERY](#)

Colton met Paul in 2003, only two years before the photographer died, but the two became so close that Colton became the veritable keeper of Paul’s works. Together with Mercedes the two put together a memorial exhibition within days of Suzanne’s death.

“Suzie always had her camera,” Colton said. “When Suzie was at something, it was really something that was going to be big.”

# ELIZABETH AVEDON JOURNAL

PHOTOGRAPHS + BOOKS + ART + VINTAGE + CONTEMPORARY

3.21.2016

## SUZANNE PAUL: Exhibition in Houston Texas Deborah Colton Gallery



Self Portrait. Suzanne and Bob Paul, 1960's, Houston, Texas  
© Estate of Suzanne Paul / Deborah Colton Gallery

PHOTO + ART NOTES



**E** ELIZABETH AVEDON

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Interview: Amy Arbus

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Interview: Hiroshi Watanabe

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Interview: James Estrin

Interview: Jennifer McClure

Interview: Jessica Hines

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Interview: Lauren Henkin

Interview: Magdalena Sole

Interview: Martine Fougeron

Interview: Mona Kuhn

Interview: Neil Selkirk

Interview: Rania Matar

Interview: Ruben Natal-San Miguel

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Magdalena Solé



Edward Albee, 1999 Playwright

© Estate of Suzanne Paul / Deborah Colton Gallery



Dick Wray, Abstract Expressionist Artist

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PROOF : Photograph's by Suzanne Paul

Deborah Colton Gallery

2445 North Boulevard, Houston, Texas

to April 23rd, 2016

[www.deborahcoltongallery.com](http://www.deborahcoltongallery.com)

## Houston : Suzanne Paul, PROOF

MARINA LA BALLE - UNSTUD EXHIBIT, WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH AVEDON



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LABELS: DEBORAH COLTON GALLERY, FOTOFEST 2016, HOUSTON TEXAS, L'OEIL DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE, THE EYE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

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**1,456,012**

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Suzanne Paul, a

native Houstonian and pioneering female photographer, has made an inestimable contribution to representing the arts in Houston and to recording Houston's art history. Paul's introduction to the Houston arts scene and the launch of her career coalesced in 1976 when she was commissioned by James Harithas, then Director of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, to photograph artists and installations for the museum's publications and was offered the first solo photography exhibition by a woman at the museum. Paul photographed many of the artists, patrons, and community leaders who have shaped Houston's arts community since the 1970s and '80s, and, as an active participant, was able to check the pulse and fiber of the creative community over the course of three decades.

The collection of photographic negatives, slides, prints and related memorabilia from this work, left in the possession and care of Deborah Colton Gallery at the artist's passing in 2005, now exists as evidence and affirmation of the health, vitality, and creative vigor of Houston's alternative arts community from its early years to its present state. Emerging as a study of the present through the past, *PROOF* surveys this body of documentary photography and portraiture, highlighting the artist's extraordinary talent in capturing unfiltered impressions of her subjects, while offering an intimate glimpse into her creative praxis.

The multi-entendre title of the exhibition assumes its designation, in the first place, from the presentation of ten selected enlargements of the artist's proof sheets from the chemical darkroom. The contact proofs expose in revealing ways the artist's process of portrait-making, editing, and darkroom printing while demonstrating the gifted manner in which Paul was able to relate to her subjects.

The images presented in this exhibition not only offer candid vignettes of figures relevant to Houston art history — those who have actively shaped the state of the arts in Houston — but invite the viewer to investigate the true weight of Paul's talent for divining through photography to capture some essence of spirit within her subjects. If we follow the advancement of the photographer's film roll, as represented by each exhibited image, we become voyeurs into the her careful consideration and can detect a charged energy between photographer and sitter.

"There is a belief in many cultures that the camera is capable of stealing the human soul or spirit. [Suzanne] Paul's camera may not steal the soul, but it certainly captures it and the spirit within ... These are personal, intimate, compelling excursions into the humanity of her subjects ..."

- Clint Willour, Curator, Being Human, FotoFest, 2001

Recontextualizing Suzanne Paul's photography of Houston arts and artists, *PROOF* actively acknowledges the recognizable talent of key figures that represent the arts in Houston in the national and international arenas. In reviewing this selection from this artist's photo archive, it becomes very clear that there are hidden gems, many never before seen, to share across generations. We find left to us a treasure of brilliant images, an invaluable resource for our community that testifies to the artistic climate that has emerged and evolved in the city since the creative boom of the 1970s — preserved for us by one of its most dedicated participants.

Theresa Escobedo, Curator

\*Image: Suzanne Paul, *The Art Guys* (1999), 1999, Contact proof print, 8 x 10 inches



# LOST

COURTESY HIRAM BUTLER GALLERY



Forrest Bess' *Untitled #10*, 1957, at Hiram Butler Gallery

Two exhibitions this month, both mounted in Houston, present important lost works by seminal Texas artists that have emerged from the sands of time. At **Hiram Butler Gallery**, two canvases by an American visionary, the Menil- and

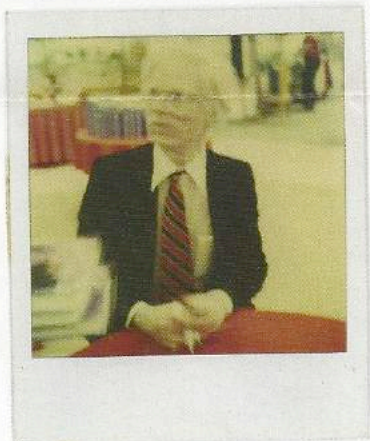
COURTESY THE ARTIST'S ESTATE AND DEBORAH COLTON GALLERY



Suzanne Paul's *Robert Rauschenberg and Lynn Wyatt*, 2001, at Deborah Colton Gallery

Whitney-exhibited **Forrest Bess**, have been discovered. One was last seen in 1957 at an exhibition at Betty Parsons Gallery, NYC; the other diminutive painting, a commission undertaken by the bait fisherman from Bay City, Texas, was completely unknown. See both masterpieces at

Hiram Butler, joined by two more, through May 14. FYI: Butler stepped on the Bess bandwagon in 1986, with a solo show way before the painter was enthroned in the pantheon of American art history. Closer to home, the late Houston lenswoman **Suzanne Paul** was ahead of her time in so many ways. While digging into Paul's archives, the artist's daughter, **Mercedes Paul**, unearthed a trove



COURTESY THE ARTIST'S ESTATE AND DEBORAH COLTON GALLERY

Suzanne Paul's *Andy Warhol*, circa 1980s, at Deborah Colton Gallery

of Polaroids, including images of art-world legends **Walter Hopps**, **Robert Rauschenberg**, **Mel Chin** and **Andy Warhol**. Paul — our own Jonas Mekas and Nan Goldin — was the first female photographer to show at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, in 1976. Represented in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston's collection by 13 images, Paul is the topic of a **FotoFest** show at **Deborah Colton Gallery**, curated by **Theresa Escobedo**. See the lost Polaroids in a time-capsule section of the exhibition (through April 23). *Catherine D. Ansporn*

COLLECTORS & CURATORS

## The Long-Lost Work of Two Legends Is Shown Off in Houston: It's a Rediscovered Art Moment

BY CATHERINE D. ANSPON

04.22.16

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*Catherine D. Anspou*



Forrest Bess' "#10," 1950

Suzanne Paul's "Robert Rauschenberg and Lynn Wyatt,"  
2001, at Deborah Colton Gallery.

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**T**wo exhibitions this month, both mounted in Houston, present important lost works by seminal Texas artists. At **Hiram Butler Gallery**, two canvases by an American visionary, the Menil- and Whitney-exhibited **Forrest Bess** (1911-

1977), have been discovered. One was last seen in 1957 at an exhibition at Betty Parsons Gallery, NYC; the other diminutive painting, a commission undertaken by the bait fisherman from Bay City, Texas, was completely unknown.

See both masterpieces at Hiram Butler, joined by two more, through May 14. FYI: Butler stepped on the Bess bandwagon in 1986, putting on a solo show long before the painter was enthroned in the pantheon of American art history.

Forrest Bess in his Bay City studio (undated, courtesy forrestbess.org)

Closer to home, the late Houston lenswoman **Suzanne Paul** (1945-2005) was ahead of her time in so many ways. While digging into Paul's archives, the artist's daughter, **Mercedes Paul**, unearthed a trove of Polaroids, including images of art-world legends **Walter Hopps**, **Robert Rauschenberg**, **Mel Chin** and **Andy Warhol**.

Paul — Houston's own Jonas Mekas and Nan Goldin — was the first female photographer to show at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, doing so in 1976. Represented in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston's collection by 13 images, she is the topic of a **FotoFest** show at **Deborah Colton Gallery**, curated by **Theresa Escobedo**. See the lost Polaroids in a time-capsule section of the exhibition (through Saturday, April 23).

Suzanne Paul's "Self Portrait," 2004 (courtesy the estate of the artist and Deborah Colton Gallery)



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