

CLEMENTS CENTER FOR
SOUTHWEST STUDIES
SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

You are invited to the Brown Bag Lecture Series

Wednesday, April 13, 2011
12 noon to 1 pm
Texana Room, DeGolyer Library
6404 Hyer (formerly Hilltop) Lane & McFarlin Blvd.

'The Miraculous Fall Upwards':
African American Culture and the Hall of Negro Life

Elizabeth HayesTurner

Clements Center Fellow for the Study of Southwestern America



"The Miraculous Fall Upwards" limns a quote from the 1932 work entitled "Juneteenth" by the African American folklorist and educator J. Mason Brewer. After decades of Jim Crow insults, the title implies positive change for black Texans, and indeed Juneteenth 1936 proved to be the most important celebration of black life and culture to that point in the state's history. Professor Turner will explore the relationship between Afro-Texas leaders and the creation of an African American presence at the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition in Dallas. A. Maceo Smith, executive secretary of the Dallas Negro Chamber of Commerce, among others, lobbied the U.S. Department of Commerce for a Hall of Negro Life at the Centennial Exposition. From June to November the works of thirty-eight nationally known black artists, including such Harlem Renaissance luminaries as Aaron Douglas, Palmer Hayden, Richmond Barthé, and Hale Woodruff, were exhibited in Dallas. The Hall, dedicated on June 19 and filled with artifacts and artwork depicting "Negro progress" since emancipation, represented the finest collection of African American painting and sculpture in the state. The cultural repercussions from this event reached far beyond the fair grounds as African Americans and whites alike lauded the sophistication of the New Negro in Texas.

Elizabeth Turner is a professor of history at the University of North Texas. She is spending the spring semester at SMU as a Clements Center Fellow for the Study of Southwestern

American completing her book manuscript, "Juneteenth: The Evolution of an Emancipation Celebration," for publication.

Image: Hale Woodruff, Returning Home. Woodcut, 1935. Exhibited at the Hall of Negro Life, Texas Centennial Exposition, 1936.

For more information or if you need special accommodations, email swcenter@smu.edu or call 214-768-3684.



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