



# THE **HOUSTON SEMINAR**

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Vallette Windham

The Houston Seminar was founded in 1977 for the purpose of stimulating learning and cultural awareness. Each spring and fall the nonprofit group offers lectures and study tours focused on varied topics that may include art, architecture, literature, music, theater, history, politics, philosophy, psychology, religion, the natural environment, and current trends and events.

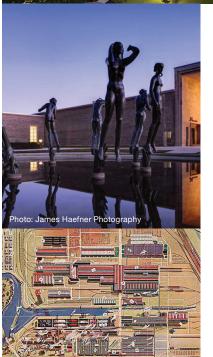
### Fall 2025 PAGE **Daytime** Art on the Fly: New Installations at 5 George Bush Intercontinental Airport Lone Star Legacy: Texas and Global 0 **IP** 8 Conservation A Guide to AI for the Techno Curious 9 0 Red. White, and Chic 10 Exploring Houston's First and Sixth IP 12 Wards Slow Looking at Art 14 **Evening** Behind the Curtains at Houston Ballet Nationalism, Populism, and Democracy: A Global Perspective Houston's Future: Leading the Alternative Energy Transition How to Read a Short Story Nurturing the Creative Spark

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Cover: *Blue Bayou*, 2023, Gerardo Rosales © Slyworks Photography

Ann Watson



## Motor City Renaissance: Architecture, Innovation, and Creative Transformation

Energized by billions of dollars in new investment and a growing population, Detroit is full of remarkable destinations, and we will explore many of them in June, including the recently transformed Michigan Central Station, Belle Isle with its new Piet Oudolf garden, the nearby Cranbrook Educational Community, and the Ford Rouge plant. Please join us!

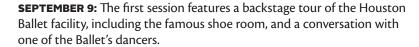
For trip pricing and further information, or to place your name on an interest list, please call 713-666-9000 or email registrar@houstonseminar.org.

# **Behind the Curtains at Houston Ballet**

Three Tuesdays, September 9, 5:30–7:00 P.M., and September 16, 6:15–9:00 P.M. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas, 77002. September 30, 6:00–7:30 P.M. Private residence. Directions will be provided to subscribers. Limited enrollment.

Join us for three evenings behind the scenes of three captivating ballet works: *Rooster, Illuminate,* and *Vi et Animo. Rooster* brings the spirit of the '60s to life with humor, style, and swagger. *Illuminate* explores the origins of ideas, inspiration, and human connections. *Vi et Animo* features nearly the entire company, blending virtuosic solos with dynamic ensemble work.

Learn how these innovative pieces blend diverse dance styles with iconic music, from the playful edge of the Rolling Stones to the inspiring energy of modern movement. Led by members of the Houston Ballet creative team, this course offers a deeper understanding of the choreography, themes, and creative processes behind each work, giving participants a unique opportunity to connect with the art of ballet.



**SEPTEMBER 16:** The second session includes a dress rehearsal for the Ballet's "Rock, Roll & Tutus" production (which comprises *Rooster, Illuminate*, and *Vi et Animo*) and a private discussion during intermission.

**SEPTEMBER 30:** The final session takes place in a private home with members of the Ballet's creative team.

# Art on the Fly: New Installations at George Bush Intercontinental Airport

**Tuesday, September 16, 10:30 A.M.–12:30 P.M.** Directions will be provided to subscribers. Limited enrollment. Subscribers will be required to provide identification in advance for airport screening.

Get ready to take an exciting journey through one of the world's most celebrated airport art programs. Public art curator **Alton DuLaney** will lead our small group on a tour at the intersection of culture, creativity, and travel as we take an in-depth look at eight new art installations in Terminals D and E. The newest installations promise to captivate, surprise, and inspire, including the largest piece of the new collection, *Paradise* (*Flight, Wind, Mix*), by Brazilian artist Regina Silveira, which transforms the space, inviting travelers to pause and appreciate the artwork as they move through the airport.





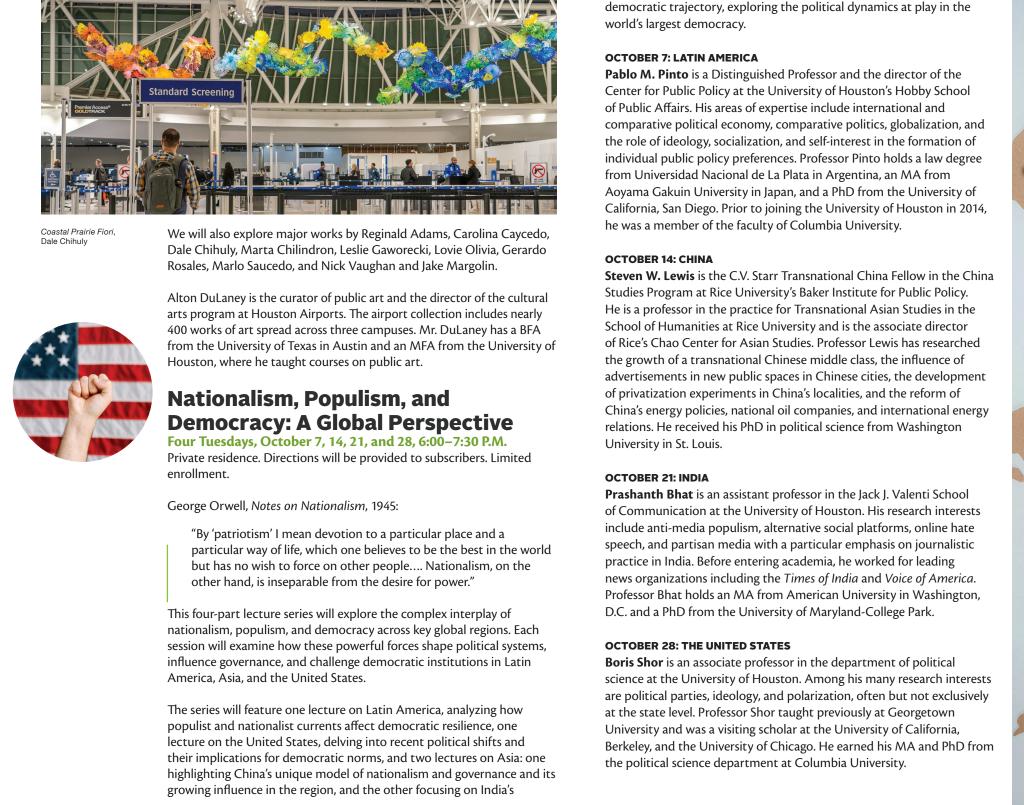
Courtesy: Houston Ballet

Paradise (Flight, Wind, Mix), Regina Silveira





world's largest democracy.





# Lone Star Legacy: Texas and Global Conservation

**Panel discussion: Wednesday, October 15, 11:30 A.M.–1:30 P.M.** Kilroy Visitor & Education Center, Bayou Bend, 6003 Memorial, 77007. Lunch will be provided.

**Private tour: Thursday, October 23, 9:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M.** Texas City Prairie Preserve, 4702 N. Hwy 146, Texas City, 77590. (Thursday, October 30, 9:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M. rain date). Limited enrollment.

In Texas, we are already feeling the effects of climate and biodiversity challenges facing our planet. Our cities are developing at some of the fastest rates in the nation, while our freshwater supplies continue to be overallocated. Droughts and flooding are growing more common, and our coastline is losing more than an inch each year as climate change contributes to sea level rise. In this two-part course, we will learn how collaborative solutions being implemented in Texas can be scaled up and exported globally to enhance resilience and equity.

OCTOBER 15: In the first session, "Texas Water: Efforts to Make Every Drop Count," Suzanne Scott, State Director for The Nature Conservancy in Texas (TNC), will moderate a panel discussion with TNC scientists and other experts that will explore nature-based solutions to protect critical water resources in Texas. Ms. Scott has dedicated a significant portion of her life to protecting and restoring the environment and connecting communities with the natural resources around them. A regional leader on water, she oversees the execution of landscape-scale conservation efforts, freshwater and marine protection initiatives, and the development of sound science and policy solutions to address climate change. Before joining TNC, Ms. Scott spent more than two decades with the San Antonio River Authority.

**OCTOBER 23:** The second session, "Reviving Houston's Roots: Native Grass and Coastal Prairie," will feature **Sonia Najera**, TNC Director of Landscape Initiatives, and **Aaron Tjelmeland**, TNC Restoration Program Director, who will introduce us to the 2,314-acre Texas City Prairie Preserve, an important demonstration site for native prairie restoration. The private tour will highlight the Preserve's role in stormwater mitigation, water quality filtration, wildlife habitat support, and conservation education in the greater Houston area and across the State.

Ms. Najera and her team collaborate with private landowners, government agencies, and conservation organizations to champion biodiversity and climate adaptation through innovative nature-based solutions across Texas' coastal, grassland, and forested regions. Prior to joining TNC, Ms. Najera worked as a wildlife biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and in the U.S. Mexico Affairs branch of the National Park Service.



Courtesy: The Nature Conservancy

With 18 years of experience in grassland conservation and research, Mr. Tjelmeland spearheads a range of regional grassland restoration projects and oversees the management of coastal tallgrass prairie, bottomland hardwood forest, and estuarine marsh preserves. Prior to working with TNC, he was an avian ecology researcher at the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute and later led an invasive plant research program.

## **A Guide to AI for the Techno Curious**

Two Mondays, October 20 and 27, 11:30 A.M.-1:00 P.M Rice University's Jones Graduate School of Business. Directions will be provided to subscribers. Lunch is included.

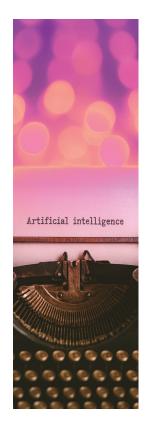
Learn about the transformative power and the possible implications of artificial intelligence (AI) from a thought leader in AI integration. During the first session of this course, linguist-turned-entrepreneur **Kathleen Perley** will provide a general overview of the current state of AI and will examine the benefits and pitfalls of AI implementation in our society, including ethical considerations, such as privacy and intellectual property concerns, and potential drawbacks associated with widespread uptake, from the empowerment of cyber criminals to the existential risk of artificial general intelligence. The second session will focus on available AI platforms, the positives and negatives of each, and a demonstration of the most useful ways to put AI to work in daily life.

Kathleen Perley is the founder and CEO of DemystifAI, an AI consulting and education firm. Prior to DemystifAI, she founded Decode, a healthcare digital transformation agency. At Rice University's Jones Graduate School of Business, Ms. Perley develops and teaches courses on AI strategy, generative AI applications, and AI implementation, providing students and executives with the skills to embrace AI confidently and strategically. Her background in linguistics and communication science informs Ms. Perley's approach to AI and her focus on human-centered technology adoption with a mission to make AI approachable and useful.

# **Houston's Future: Leading the Alternative Energy Transition**

Wednesday, October 22, 6:00-7:30 P.M. The Ion, 4201 Main, 77002.

Join a dynamic conversation with local energy experts **Bobby Tudor**, **Scott Nyquist**, and **Taylor Chapman** as they explore how Houston and Texas can position themselves as leaders in the transition to alternative energy. This panel discussion will focus on the critical challenge of balancing reliable, low-cost energy with the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



Panelists will delve into Houston's unique role as an energy capital and discuss strategies for reducing emissions in heavy industry, one of the most significant and complex challenges in the energy transition. The discussion will cover advancements in carbon capture, hydrogen, and renewable energy, as well as the policies, investments, and technological innovations needed to drive sustainable growth. Attendees will gain insights into the evolving energy landscape and the opportunities for Houston to lead in the shift toward cleaner, more efficient energy solutions while maintaining economic competitiveness.

Taylor Chapman is a native Houstonian and an investor in energytransition startups. At New Climate Ventures (NCV), he invests in decarbonization-focused companies, typically at the seed stage. NCV's investments range from bioplastics to carbon management to grid-analytics software. Previously, Mr. Chapman oversaw corporate venture capital and mergers and acquisitions at SEI, a publicly traded education conglomerate. He was an Engagement Manager at McKinsey & Company's New York City office and was an operator at two venturebacked startups. Mr. Chapman co-authored the 2023 report, "Houston's Climate Tech Ecosystem", and serves on the Steering Committee for the "Vision 2050" initiative led by the Center for Houston's Future.

Scott Nyquist is a senior advisor and former senior partner in the management consulting firm McKinsey & Company, where he advises energy and industrial companies on matters of strategy, organization, and performance improvement. During his more than 35 year tenure, Mr. Nyquist worked with major electric utilities, chemical, mining, oil and gas, private equity, and industrial companies at the center of the energy industry. Mr. Nyquist's Houston community involvement in the energy arena includes serving as Vice Chairman of the Greater Houston Partnership's Houston Energy Transition Initiative, Advisory Board Chairman of the University of Houston's Energy Transition Institute, and a member of the University of Houston's Energy Advisory Board.

Bobby Tudor is the founder and CEO of Artemis Energy Partners, an investing and advisory platform focused on companies involved in the global energy markets. Mr. Tudor is also a retired founder and CEO of Tudor, Pickering, Holt & Co. Prior to that, Mr. Tudor was a partner at Goldman Sachs and a leader of its worldwide energy practice. Over his 30-plus year career in investment banking, he has worked on many of the defining transactions of the period, across most energy subsectors and geographies. Mr. Tudor is the Chair of the Greater Houston Partnership's Houston Energy Transition Initiative and has served as the Chair of the Greater Houston Partnership and the Rice University Board of Trustees.

## **Red, White, and Chic**

Saturday, November 1, 10:30 A.M.-Noon. HCC Fashion Building, 3601 Fannin, 77004. Parking information will be provided to subscribers. Limited enrollment.



Embark on a unique fashion tour through a treasure trove of Americanmade haute couture and ready-to-wear pieces, as the Houston Seminar revisits the collection of the Houston Community College Fashion Archives. Subscribers will get an in-depth look at some of the iconic designs by legendary American designers, such as Geoffrey Beene, Bill Blass, Halston, Bob Mackie, Adele Simpson, and Kate Spade, and will have the opportunity to closely examine the garments, learning about the designers' influences, techniques, and the cultural significance of their work. The collection includes rare pieces, from classic dresses to statement-making ensembles, each representing a pivotal moment in the history of American fashion. This immersive tour offers more than just a view of historical clothing—it is an exploration of the craftsmanship, creativity, and vision that helped define American style over the decades.

Led by fashion archive ambassador and fashion department professor **Alexander Chapman** and librarian/archivist **Denise Hulett**, we will tour the physical collection and learn about how these examples of historical and contemporary clothing and accessories illustrate important trends in the past 280 years of fashion history.



Orange and White Dress Ensemble Bill Blass, 1922-2002 C Shane Quresh

## **How to Read a Short Story**

Three Tuesdays, November 4, 11, and 18, 6:30-8:00 P.M. The Jung Center, 5200 Montrose, 77006.

Anyone can do it, of course. You just have to get to the last page. But how can you read a story artfully? How can you read for literary experience, for aesthetic sensation, for craft, structure, character, and deep meaning? In these three seminars, novelist, poet, and professor **Kevin Prufer** will guide us through short stories by Flannery O'Connor, Raymond Carver, Michael Cunningham, ZZ Packer, and others, in search not only of story, but of artistic experience, literary complexity, and something like truth.

**NOVEMBER 4:** In the first session, "Metaphor, Symbol, and Big Ideas," we will discuss Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" read alongside Raymond Carver's "Popular Mechanics".

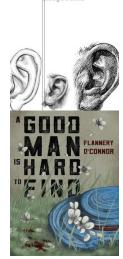
**NOVEMBER 11**: The second session, "Landscape and Perspective," will feature Michael Cunningham's "White Angel" read alongside Elizabeth Tallent's "No One's a Mystery".

**NOVEMBER 18:** The final session, "Trustworthiness and Social Ills," will focus on ZZ Packer's "Brownies" read alongside Carolyn Forché's "The Colonel".

Kevin Prufer is the author of ten books, most recently Sleepaway: A Novel (Acre Books, 2024) and The Fears: Poems (Copper Canyon Press, 2023), winner of the 2024 Rilke Prize for American Poetry. He is a professor in the Creative Writing Program at the University of Houston.



THE COLONEL





Albert F. Keller Grocery Store Building, c. 1913, Sixth Ward, Photo: Stephen Fox

# **Exploring Houston's First** and Sixth Wards

Two Saturdays, November 15, 10:00 A.M.-4:30 P.M., and December 6, 10:00 A.M.-5:30 P.M. Directions will be provided to subscribers. Limited enrollment. Tour fees are non-refundable. Sturdy shoes and the ability to walk with ease are recommended.

Houston's First and Sixth Wards offer an engaging study in contrasts. The First Ward dates from 1840, when the city's initial four wards (city council districts) were delineated. The final ward, the Sixth, was carved out of the Fourth and formally designated in 1895. First and Sixth Wards tell the story of immigration as waves of new people move through the neighborhoods to this day. While the ward system was abolished in 1905, the terminology remains alive in contemporary culture. Olivewood and Glenwood cemeteries attest to the story of initial settlement while new structures and residents speak to the wards' current vitality.

The Seminar will explore these neighborhoods, peeking behind the public face to learn about what animates their residents today. Be ready to meet new people, sample food, and see churches, houses, and cemeteries.

**NOVEMBER 15:** Bounded by Houston Avenue on the east and Glenwood Cemetery on the west, Sixth Ward is Houston's first National Register Historic District (1978) and its first City of Houston Protected Historic District (2007). The streets are lined with residential buildings from the 1850s to the early twentieth century representing Gulf Coast cottage, Victorian, Queen Anne, and Classic Revival architecture as well as bungalows and more recent renovations. We will visit the Dow School, St. Joseph Catholic Church, and several houses. Architectural historian **Stephen Fox** will provide the narrative for our walking tour of historic Sixth Ward.

**DECEMBER 6:** First Ward is located east of Studewood almost to I-45, and south of I-10 to Washington Avenue. The springs that initially made the First Ward area attractive to German farmers evolved into an industrial center served by the burgeoning railroads. Today we see vernacular cottages alongside new construction, and former factories, warehouses, and silos transformed into offices, artists' studios, exhibition spaces, and residences. Led by **Jim Parsons**, programs director for Preservation Houston, we will travel by bus and on foot through First Ward.

St. Joseph Catholic Church, 1902, Sixth Ward, Photo:





## **Nurturing the Creative Spark**

Wednesday, November 19, 6:00–7:30 P.M. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main, 77002.

The quest to increase our creative reservoir has always been central to the human experience. While we recognize how important creativity is in our lives, we might be uncertain about how to nurture it in the minds of young people, whether at home, in school, or at a museum. Does exposure to the visual and performing arts foster creativity? Join us for an exciting conversation as we explore key questions about the interconnection between creativity, the arts, and education. Drawing on decades of experience and success in their own fields, **Anthony Brandt**, **Francesca Fuchs**, and **Vehishta Kaikobad** will delve into the topic from the vantage point of a composer, a visual artist, and an arts educator, offering testimonies about their own creative process and techniques used to spark creativity in their students.

Anthony Brandt is Professor of Composition and Theory at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music and serves as Artistic Director of the music ensemble Musiqa, which presents inter-disciplinary public concerts and free educational programming for public school students. Professor Brandt and neuroscientist David Eagleman have co-authored The Runaway Species: How Human Creativity Remakes the World (Catapult, 2017), which has been published in fourteen countries. He is currently a co-investigator in several studies involving music, health, and creativity and has also pioneered a collaboration with the University of Houston BRAIN Center.

Francesca Fuchs has taught at the Glassell School of Art since 1997, where she is head of the 2-D department. She completed her BFA at London's Wimbledon School of Art (now Wimbledon College of Arts) and her MFA at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in Germany. Her work has been shown at institutions including the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. She has taught at Rice University, the University of Houston, and the University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Vehishta Kaikobad holds a diploma in Montessori education and has over 30 years of experience in the field of early childhood, middle school, and high school education. In 2024, Ms. Kaikobad was the recipient of two prestigious awards reflecting her dedication and passion for education and art, the Y. Ping Sun Educator Award by Asia Society Texas Center and the Dinshaw Framroze Joshi Excellence in Performing Arts, Painting or Literature Award. As a teaching artist at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston's Glassell Junior School, Ms. Kaikobad conducts innovative workshops and offers outreach programs to citywide schools.

PAGE



# **Slow Looking at Art**

Thursday, December 4, 10:30 A.M.-Noon.

The Menil Collection, 1533 Sul Ross, 77006.

Join Michelle White, senior curator at the Menil Collection, as she leads us through a session that encourages deliberate, mindful engagement with artworks. In a fast-paced world where museum visitors often spend only a few seconds viewing each piece, this course teaches participants to slow down, observe deeply, and connect with art on a more profound level.

Through guided exercises, we will learn techniques for looking at art with intention and purpose. Ms. White will highlight the ways in which slowing down can enhance perception, emotional response, and intellectual engagement with artworks. Participants will also explore the historical and contemporary significance of slow looking as an artistic and curatorial practice, a cornerstone of Dominique de Menil's educational philosophy. Whether you are an art enthusiast, student, or museum professional, this session offers valuable tools to transform the way you experience and interpret art, fostering a deeper appreciation for visual culture and its nuances.

Michelle White is the senior curator of modern and contemporary art at the Menil Collection. Her most recent exhibition was "Tacita Dean: Blind Folly, " and she has organized past exhibitions of the works of Richard Serra, Leslie Hewitt, Vija Celmins, Barnett Newman, Allora & Calzadilla, Roni Horn, and Mona Hatoum, among others.

#### Discounts

Teachers and students with a school I.D. may attend classes for a discounted fee. Please call the registrar for details.

#### Refunds

For refund requests that occur at least two weeks before a course begins, a 20% cancellation fee will be charged. If others have been turned away from a limited-enrollment course, no refund will be issued unless your place can be filled. Refund policies for courses involving travel will differ.

#### **Enrollment**

All courses are available on a first-come, firstserved basis. You may enroll by mail, email, phone, or online.

#### **Gift certificates**

These are available for a single session, a specific course, or a dollar amount, which the recipient may apply toward any course(s). Please call for more information.



#### Connect with us!



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Sign up for our email list to receive announcements of pop-up events, course updates, and other news.

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#### PLEASE ENROLL ME/US IN THE FOLLOWING COURSES:

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Behind the Curtains at Houston Ballet Three Tuesdays, September 9, 5:30–7:00 P.M., September 16, 7:00.–9:00 P.M., and September 30, 6:00–7:30 P.M., \$60 per session					IP September 9 IP September 16 IP September 30
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# THE HOUSTON SEMINAR

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# Daytime

Art on the Fly: New Installations at George Bush Intercontinental

Lone Star Legacy: Texas and Global Conservation

A Guide to Al for the Techno Curious

Red, White, and Chic

Exploring Houston's First and Sixth Wards

2025

Slow Looking at Art

# Evening

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Nationalism, Populism, and Democracy: A Global Perspective

Houston's Future: Leading the Alternative Energy Transition

How to Read a Short Story

Nurturing the Creative Spark

