

followed in his unique footsteps. This chapter contains beautiful copies of paintings by his early influences, the Europeans Turner and Corot, but also paintings by artists who followed Reaugh, for example, Alexandre Hogue and Melissa Miller.

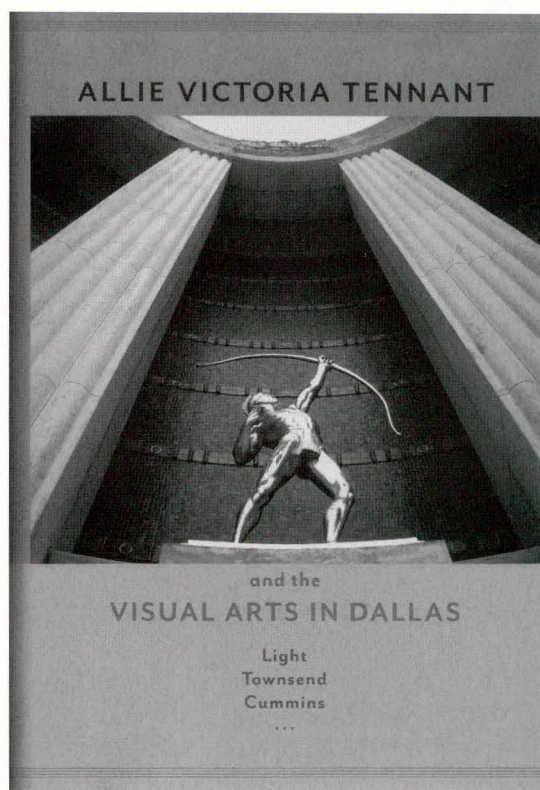
This book rightfully promotes the idea that Reaugh was, indeed, the “Dean of Texas Artists.” His works and those of his students and the students of those students are prized by collectors throughout the United States. Because the breadth of Reaugh’s influence on American art continues today, this book should be in the library of every collector of American art, not just collectors of early Texas art.

—Scott Chase

Light Townsend Cummins, *Allie Victoria Tennant and the Visual Arts in Dallas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2015, 336 pp., \$335)

As Dallas lawmakers and citizens once again debate the future of Fair Park and its art deco treasures, it seems a fitting time for historian Light Townsend Cummins’ biography of one of the park’s most significant artists, Allie Tennant. Even today, no one can visit Fair Park without glimpsing the monumental Hall of State and gazing up at Tennant’s golden *Tejas Warrior*, bow in hand and aiming skyward, fixed above the building’s massive doors.

Tejas Warrior is Tennant’s best-known work but, as Cummins demonstrates, only one point in a long and meaningful career that, besides art, included teaching, advocacy, and civic work. Cummins emphasizes that his book is not a work of art history. “I make no attempt to explain Tennant’s artistic aesthetic,” he writes. Rather, Cummins approaches Tennant from a historical perspective that examines not only her work, but also her impact on Dallas and the arts, and on



women’s history. Cummins is the Guy M. Bryan Professor of American History at Austin College in Sherman, and he served as the State Historian of Texas from 2009–2012. His previous works include *Emily Austin of Texas, 1795–1851*; *Louisiana: A History*; and *A Guide to the History of Texas*.

Cummins notes that researching Tennant was challenging because she left so few personal papers, never married, and never had children. Thus, Tennant’s voice is largely absent from the book. But Cummins’ extensive research in archives and historic newspapers, and the personal interviews he conducted with friends and extended family, bring her to life through her actions and accomplishments.

The book is arranged chronologically, starting with Tennant’s early childhood in St. Louis, where her artistic talent became evident. Tennant moved to Dallas in her teens and began studying at the

Texas Art League, a private art school in Dallas. In 1927 she left Dallas to study at the Art Students League in New York City. After she returned, she started creating work in the regionalist style (so called because the artists took their inspiration from the rural areas around them) and earning accolades and honors for her work.

The 1930s were Tennant's most prolific artistic years. Not only did she sculpt *Texas Warrior*, she made other public artworks that are still seen today, took on commissions, created garden sculptures, and exhibited her work nationally. Tennant joined the board of the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts (now the Dallas Museum of Art), a role she continued for thirty years. As a board member, she helped establish the museum's notable collection of ancient American art and, after World War II, helped the museum combat charges of displaying Communist art.

As Tennant grew older, she decreased her

artistic work and increased her involvement with the garden club and the Dallas Woman's Club. Tennant was an active member of both and did everything from planting trees to hosting society luncheons. Still, as time moved on, she became less of a public figure, and the memory of her achievements faded. She died in 1971.

Cummins' book does the State of Texas a service by resurrecting Tennant for the 21st century. Photos are included in the book, but one can always wish there had been more—especially of Tennant's artwork. Such are the restrictions of publication costs, I suppose. By touching on Dallas history, art history, the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition, and women's history, his book should have broad appeal to those interested in North Texas history.

—Evelyn Barker

The University of Texas at Arlington

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