

Robert Malcomb Rucker

The following biography is submitted by George L. Montoto of Baton Rouge, a long- time collector of Louisiana Art. His source is "Knute Heldner and the Art Colony in Old New Orleans", copyright 2000, a catalog purchased in the Jean Bragg Gallery in New Orleans.

Robert Malcolm Rucker was born March 28, 1932 in New Orleans, Louisiana, and died March 7, 2001 in Mandeville, Louisiana. He was an oil painter who occasionally used watercolor, and his style combined realism and impressionism. He was primarily known for landscapes but also did many paintings of plantation homes, steamboats, and other aspects of Louisiana life and culture. Most of his life he lived in New Orleans.

Rucker is really the heir to the nineteenth-century Louisiana landscape school of painting. He has a great kinship with the romantic descriptive images of Richard Clague (1821-1873), William Henry Buck (1840-1888) and Marshall J. Smith (1854-1923).

Robert Rucker grew up in New Orleans during the Depression. His early dabbling in paint led to him opening his own French Quarter gallery with the help of his mother. He was just 15 years old. He painted an average of five paintings a month from that time. When he was 17, he was stricken with polio. Because of this, The Louisiana Department of Education funded his education at the John McCrady School of Fine Arts in New Orleans.

His mature subjects recreate Louisiana in her golden past with amazing historical accuracy, in both detail and composition: sternwheelers steaming down the Mississippi (his father was a steamboat captain), colonial plantations set among cotton fields, rustic moonlit cabins, stands of old cypress in the bayous, and solitary live oaks garlanded with Spanish moss.

In his early career, Rucker taught painting in his own studio and courses in art and ceramic for the New Orleans Recreation Department. He worked as a textile designer and as a medical artist at Tulane University School of Medicine. Rucker passed away on March 7, 2001 of a heart attack. His beautiful work will remain with us forever.

SPECIAL AWARDS AND EXHIBITIONS:

Louisiana Legends Award - 1996

One-man shows in New Orleans at the Isaac Delgado Museum of Art, Royal

Orleans Hotel, Louisiana National Guard Convention and Trial Lawyer

Convention. His work is in the Baton Rouge at Louisiana State University's Library and Gerard Ruth's Gallery and at private galleries in St. Louis, Chicago and San Francisco.