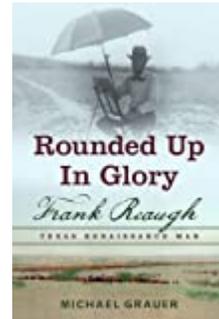




**Michael R. Grauer.** *Rounded Up in Glory: Frank Reaugh, Texas Renaissance Man.* Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2016. xxiii + 403 pp. \$39.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-57441-633-6.



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## The Renaissance of Texan Artist Charles Franklin (“Frank”) Reaugh (1860-1945)

Readers who are unfamiliar with the Texan landscape artist Charles Franklin (âFrankâ) Reaugh (1860-1945) but familiar with the more famous artists of the Hudson River Schoolâand, indeed, with nineteenth-century American historyâare advised to start *Rounded Up in Glory: Frank Reaugh, Texas Renaissance Man* at the conclusion. Here, Michael R. Grauer wisely situates Reaughâs work within the histories of American landscape painting and nineteenth-century American literature, contexts that are largely missing from the rest of his otherwise excellent biography. He also turns his attentionâfinallyâto pastel, which Reaugh not only favored but also technically reinvented. Here, too, we access Reaughâs thinkingâspecifically, his highly compelling description of the germination of a major painting, *The O Roundup, Texas* (1888).

Also in the conclusion, Grauer situates Reaughâs work in the context of the art of the American West, including paintings by Albert Bierstadt and sculptures by Charles Russell and Frederick Remington. While these three contemporaries are far better known than Reaugh,

Grauer convincingly argues that Reaugh has been unjustly overlooked and that he and his work deserve more universal attention.

Reaugh once wrote, âI think I am the only man who thought of painting the cattle in that early day of open rangeâ (p. 253). Known variously as the Dean of Texas Artists, the Cowboy Painter, and the Painter of the Texas Cow, Reaugh sought to preserve the landscape of the American Southwest before it was lost to overgrazing and settlement by whites from the East. Indeed, he was probably the only artist to paint the Texas trail-driving industry, as Grauer states, âwhile it was happeningâ (p. 17). Reaugh pictured this major economic and iconic activity in elongated, refined pastels that often recall the streamlined landscapes of the Luminists. He fully grasped the power of artistic abbreviation, capturing in two or three strokes what a lesser artist might realize only through conflict. As a result, his work immortalizes the majesty of the unfettered Texas panorama, with all of its ensuing evocations of the sublime and the divine.

Reaugh's path to an artistic career was hardly assured; born in Illinois, he had few role models when, at the age of fifteen, he settled with his family in Terrell, Texas. Still, with a mother who encouraged his close attention to objects in nature and a father who inculcated in him both a sense of wanderlust and a love of the well-made thing (pp. 22-23), Reaugh sought education in the art schools of St. Louis, where he learned composition, and Paris, where he studied at the renowned Académie Julian. In retrospect, Reaugh would derive more inspiration from the post-impressionist Paul Signac (1864-1927), whose painting *Le Talisman* (1888) helped to usher in abstraction, than from the impressionists. He was also impressed by the rococo pastels of Jean-Baptiste-Simon Chardin, Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun, and others, which he saw in the Louvre; indeed, he would work primarily in pastel for the rest of his life.

Grauer outlines, in exquisite detail, the rest of Reaugh's life, from the artist's return to Oak Cliff, Texas, in 1889 until his death. The *Dallas Morning News* and other newspapers tracked Reaugh's activities and reported on his work in juried and invitational art exhibitions, such as the Chicago (1893) and St. Louis (1903) World's Fairs. Equally important was Reaugh's work as an inventor of various mechanical pumps (whose patents seem to have cost more than their profits) and his influence as a teacher, especially as a prescient champion of

women artists. Grauer was fortunate to have interviewed at least two of Reaugh's former students and, as associate director for curatorial affairs/curator of art of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in Canyon, Texas, which holds the largest public collection of Reaugh's works, had easy access to the wealth of letters that Reaugh wrote and received.

Grauer's scholarly assiduousness resonates throughout *Rounded Up in Glory*; indeed, no detail of Reaugh's life seems to have been too small to include. While such passion can produce exceedingly thorough scholarship, it can also generate a tinge of hyperbole, as when Grauer refers to Reaugh as a "genius" and his paintings as "unparalleled in American art" (p. 2). It can also fill pages with somewhat trivial detail, space that might profitably have been devoted to more and better analysis of Reaugh's art and its significance. (A manifestation of this oversight is the absence of the word "art" or "artist" in the very title of the book.) Grauer or another scholar will surely take up this important challenge in an ensuing study. In the meantime, *Rounded Up in Glory* will be essential reading for anyone interested in Reaugh's work and, more broadly, in strengthening the fragile bridge between the study of nineteenth-century eastern landscape paintings and the often-overlooked but deeply inspiring art of the American West.

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