

Brief Organizational History

In the early 1980s, the Austin Photo Co-op was formed by a small group of photographers who banded together for cooperative film purchasing purposes. They reorganized in 1984 and incorporated under the name of the Texas Photographic Society. Within two years, TPS membership had grown to over 100 members, and the Society attained 'not-for-profit' status from the IRS. In 1990, the bylaws were amended to provide for a voting Board of Directors and a President who, together, would formulate and execute TPS policy and direction.

Because the society continuously refines and expands programs, participation in TPS programs is at an all-time high. Today, TPS boasts over 1,400 dues-paying members from 49 states and 12 countries, a substantial increase from the 1992 count of 139 primarily-Texas patrons. The Board of Directors, now 41 strong, includes educators, authors, curators, gallery owners, fine art and commercial photographers and other interested professionals.

TPS' has significantly increased the number and diversity of programs since 1993 when D. Clarke Evans was elected President. Annual TPS exhibits, such as the National Competition (formerly the Governor's Exhibition) and the Members Only Exhibit continue to provide amateurs and emerging professionals access to nationally prominent artists, critics, and curators, and subsequently, to have their images displayed in regional art and cultural venues. These exhibits have been shown in 15 Texas cities. Many notable figures in the photographic arts come to Texas to exhibit at TPS events, teach workshops and juror TPS exhibitions.

TPS further fosters the exchange of ideas and information through special events, such as the Visions of Texas/Visiones de Tejanos project, where work by 25 Texas photographers was exhibited in Europe in exchange for a TPS sponsored exhibit of corresponding foreign photography. In 2000, TPS was invited by the members of La Fontaine Obscure, a society of French photographers based in Aix-en-Provence, to participate in their annual exhibit during the Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie (RIP). This prestigious international festival, precursor of Houston's Fofofest, in Arles, France is attended by many of the world's renowned photographers, curators, critics, collectors, and gallery owners. The TPS exhibit consists of 70 photographs from 13 Texas Photographic Society members. La Fontaine Obscure contracted with TPS to tour the exhibit through Europe for 3 years.

Specific current programs include: 1] A traveling exhibit The Photo Project: An Act of Dedication and Perseverance; 2] Workshop – nationally recognized photographers and teachers share their expertise; 3] PHOTOTexas, held in Austin, but expanding state-wide with workshops, exhibition openings and lectures; 4] TPS 14: The National Competition – juried, in the past, by such notables as Anne Tucker (Curator of Photographs at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts), Clint Willour (Curator of the Galveston Art Center), Wendy Watriss (Co-founder of Houston's FotoFest); Roy Flukinger (Curator of Research Photography at the Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin); Arthur Ollman (Director of the Museum of Photographic Arts in San Diego, CA); and D. J. Stout (Art Director of Texas Monthly Magazine) 5] a collectors' print program featuring prominent state and national photographers; 6] the annual Members' Only Show (now in its 21st year) which opened in Dallas 1999; Houston 2000; Longview 2001; Lubbock 2002; El Paso 2003; San Marcos 2004; Galveston 2005; and will open in 2006 in San Francisco. 7] informal Push Pin Shows and meetings in various cities (Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Mason, San Francisco, CA and Austin); 8] Collector's Fine Print Auction with fine art prints donated by some of the world's leading photographers (Harry Benson, Eve Arnold, Jerry Uelsmann, Ruth Bernhard, Keith Carter, William Wegman and Kate Breakey to name a few); 9] a members' Print Exchange; and 10] Tech Sheets, now published 3 times a year, a publication offering advice and instruction on a variety of photographic topics authored by experts from throughout the state and country. TPS annually averages over 70% renewal rate of its members.

Exploring and understanding photography as a visual language for effective communication is a primary tenet in the philosophy of the Texas Photographic Society. TPS has grown beyond the small Austin based photographic cooperative, to an organization attaining national stature. In 1998, the Board of Directors added its first non-Texans: nationally recognized fine art photographer Chip Hooper from Carmel, California. Growth in TPS programs are evidenced below:

PROGRAMS:	1992	Current
Dues paying Memberships-states-countries	121 - 6 - 0	1,415 - 49 - 12
Advisory & Board Members	15 primarily from Austin	41 from across Texas & US
Contact Sheets-issues/number sent annually	4/2,000	6/9,000
Members Show-entrants/slides submitted	30/152	328/2,306
Workshops-classes/students	none	147/1,485 total since inception
Print Exchange-participants	none	689 total since inception
Auction participants/monies raised	none	900/\$206,832 total since inception
TPS Grants to members	none	36/\$20,950 total since inception