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Published: 15 May 2013 10:19 PM
Updated: 15 May 2013 10:19 PM

Artists Of The Once-Rambunctious Oak Cliff Five To Reunite

In the brief post-Laugh-In, pre-Watergate era, five artists ran wild in Oak Cliff and helped bring national attention to a burgeoning Dallas arts scene. The older, grayer and now well-established gang will be getting back together for the June 1 opening of the show *Made in Oak Cliff* at Gray Matters Gallery.

“In Oak Cliff, we thought of ourselves as being across the border from Dallas,” says Austin artist Bob “Daddy-O” Wade. “We were in these rough-and-tumble buildings and there was a real camaraderie. We were the wild boys.”

Daddy-O occupied a big space at Beckley and Jefferson Boulevard. “Mac Whitney was down a little ways where Officer Tippit was shot” after the JFK assassination,”

Daddy-O says. “George Green was over on Bishop and Jack Mims and Jim Roche lived in houses next door to each other.”

Established gallerists like Murray Smithers and Laura Carpenter served as respectable outlets for the cutting-edge artists.

Although the group was originally known as the Oak Cliff Four, Whitney was sort of like Eric Clapton, sitting in regularly with the others. So the Gray Matters show is billed as the Oak Cliff Five.

The show’s debut roughly coincides with the opening of the Dallas Museum of Art’s show “DallasSITES: Charting Contemporary Art, 1963 to Present,” which will celebrate the history of the Dallas art scene.

Whitney Museum trustee Joanne Cassullo, Dallas businessman Monk White and a coterie of the artists’ collectors are sponsoring the show.

Look for the June 1 opening to be a boldface-name bacchanal.