



Media Contact

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Left to right: June Wayne, *The Sacrificial* 1951. Oil and wax on canvas with artist designed frame. 47 x 38 in. Palm Springs Art Museum; Karl Benjamin, *FS #1*, 1961. Oil on panel. 42 x 50 in. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Museum Purchase; Llyn Foulkes, *Tama* 1964. Oil on masonite. 89 x 72 in. Norton Simon Museum, Gift of Dr. Kati Breckenridge.

Title

Pasadena to Santa Barbara: A Selected History of Art in Southern California, 1951 – 1969

On View

February 11 – May 6, 2012

Location

Santa Barbara Museum of Art
1130 State Street
Santa Barbara, California 93101

About the Exhibition

The Santa Barbara Museum of Art announces its official participation in the Getty Foundation's ***Pacific Standard Time Art in LA., 1945-1980*** initiative with its major exhibition, ***Pasadena to Santa Barbara: A Selected History of Art in Southern California, 1951-1969***.

Pasadena to Santa Barbara focuses on the legacy of two of Southern California's leading venues for contemporary art since the 1940s: the Santa Barbara Museum of Art (SBMA) and the Pasadena Art Museum (PAM) (known from 1941 to 1953 as the Pasadena Art Institute, and since 1975 as the Norton Simon Museum). These two institutions pioneered what is now perceived as a common strategy—exhibiting the work of contemporary artists in Southern California—alongside the work of influential modern and contemporary artists from other parts of the United States and Europe.

At a time when very few museums were exhibiting works by living artists, this bold approach not only provided a solid foundation for the growth of contemporary art in the region, but also became an inspiration and model for a number of institutions that followed. The exhibition presents works by artists who were featured at one or both venues during these years, and who were instrumental in establishing a Southern California dialogue as well as dialect regarding contemporary art.



Taking into consideration connections between both institutions, ***Pasadena to Santa Barbara*** features a selection of works from major exhibitions during pivotal times. These years coincide with the previously under-recognized contributions of ***Thomas W. Leavitt***, who served as Director at PAM (1957–62) and SBMA (1963–68). His legacy at both institutions will be one of the exhibition’s focal points, and include, at PAM, the scheduling of the famous ***Marcel Duchamp*** exhibition in 1963—the artist’s first U.S. retrospective—and the appointment of Walter Hopps, the mercurial curator who ushered PAM through its heyday. At SBMA, Leavitt brought significant exhibitions, such as the internationally traveling ***Optical Paintings*** the astoundingly popular Op Art exhibition originated by the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), and made a practice of acquiring from such exhibitions for SBMA’s permanent collection.

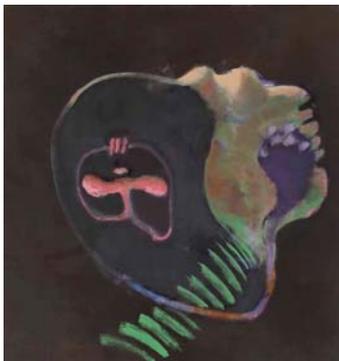


Above right: Thomas W. Leavitt, 1963; above left: Marcel Duchamp, ***Bottle Rack*** 1963(replica of 1914 original). Ready-made bottle-dryer of galvanized iron. 28-3/8 x 14 in. Norton Simon Museum, Gift of Mr. Irving Blum, in Memory of the Artist.

Pasadena to Santa Barbara is organized by Julie Joyce, SBMA’s Curator of Contemporary Art. The exhibition is accompanied by a 150-page catalogue with essays by Joyce, Leah Lehmbek, Associate Curator at the Norton Simon Museum, and influential critic Peter Plagens. It also includes color illustrations, an exhibition timeline/history, as well as entries for each artist in the exhibition. A comprehensive education program developed for the exhibition will include a family day, film series, lecture series, and extensive K-12 teacher programs.

Featured Artists

Artists in the exhibition include ***John Altoon, Karel Appel, Karl Benjamin, William Brice, Richard Diebenkorn, William Dole, Marcel Duchamp, Llyn Foulkes, Sam Francis, Philip Guston, Robert Irwin, Ynez Johnston, Ed Kienholz, Helen Lundeberg, John McLaughlin, Robert Motherwell, Lee Mullican, Larry Rivers, Richards Ruben, Mark Tobey, June Wayne, and Beatrice Wood.***



Left to right: John Altoon, ***Untitled (Sunset Series)***, 1964-1965. Oil on canvas. 60 x 56 ¼ in. 81 ½ x 84 in. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Museum Purchase, Ludington Deaccessioning Fund; John Altoon, ***Ocean Park Series #8*** 1962. Oil on canvas. Norton Simon Museum, Anonymous Gift.

John Altoon (1925–1969) held his first solo museum exhibition at SBMA in 1953, well before becoming a key member of the influential Ferus Gallery, which became known as the center of Southern California’s nascent postwar art scene. Ferus Director Irving Blum stated that “...if the gallery was closest in spirit to a single person, that person was John Altoon—dearly loved, defiant, romantic, highly ambitious—and slightly mad.” Beginning, like many of his peers, with an interest in Abstract Expressionism, Altoon developed a variety of painting styles throughout his career, including surreal, biomorphic forms and erotic, figurative drawings, many of which appear to overlap. In the early 1960s, Altoon returned to Los Angeles after spending several years in Europe and produced a number of iconic paintings grouped in series with titles associated with his Venice studios, including the ***Ocean Park Series*** (1962) and ***Sunset Series*** (1964–65), both represented in the exhibition.



Left to right: Richard Diebenkorn, *Woman and Chokerboard* 1956. Oil on canvas. 59 x 56 in. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Museum purchase, Second Pacific Coast Biennial Fund; Richard Diebenkorn, *Sissus and Lawn II*, 1959. Oil on masonite. 13 ¼ x 10 in. Santa Cruz Island Foundation.

Richard Diebenkorn (1922–1993) is recognized as much for his early, figurative work, as he is for his later abstraction, which roughly follows his move transition from working in the Bay Area to working in his Ocean Park studio in Santa Monica. His work was the focus of exhibitions in 1960 and 1962 at PAM, and his work was purchased out of SBMA’s Second Pacific Coast Biennial in 1958. Diebenkorn was not a stranger to Santa Barbara, having spent time with longtime friend Carey Stanton who lived on Santa Cruz Island in the Santa Barbara Channel. Stanton accumulated one of the largest collections of Diebenkorn’s works that later became part of the Santa Cruz Island Foundation, several of which are included in the exhibition.

William Dole (1917–1983) was a talented painter and draftsman who devoted most of his career to the art of collage. The medium’s ability to juxtapose divergent spaces, times and subjects appealed to the artist because it symbolized for him the simultaneity of modern life, as it did for the Cubists and Dadaists who pioneered the technique. Dole evolved this avant-garde practice into a highly personal style in which delicate planes of color and poetic typographical elements are integrated into Constructivist compositions. Like many established artists in Santa Barbara’s history, Dole took a teaching position at the University of California, Santa Barbara, working there until his death, becoming highly influential to generations of students.

Philip Guston (1912–1980) spent part of his childhood in Los Angeles, where he also attended Manual Arts High and the Otis Art Institute (he left after about three months). From the late 1940s through the mid-1960s, Guston was known as an abstract painter, having been part of a circle of artists of the New York School (the same title of the group exhibition his work was represented in 1954 at PAM). In 1967—the same year of a retrospective exhibition curated by Leavitt appeared at SBMA—his work turned toward a more representative style, incorporating symbols, cartoon-like forms, and figures, which resulted in a great deal of negative criticism but earned him a lasting representation as an individualist.



Philip Guston, *New Place* 1964. Oil on canvas. 76 x 80 in. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

During the 1930s, **Helen Lundberg** (1908–1999) was among a group of painters who formulated a style which they alternatively called “Subjective Classicism,” or more commonly known as “Post-Surrealism.” Their intended purpose was to retain Surrealism’s romantic penchant for fantasy while rejecting its emphasis on “intuitive expression and subconscious automatic recordings.” In the 1960s and 70s, Lundberg continued to push her work into deeper abstraction in works based on landscapes, interiors, as well as planetary and architectural forms. In the 1970s her paintings took a more minimalist form, with large planes of color that appeared closer to geometric abstraction, which solidified her association with California Hard-edge. Lundberg’s transition from the surreal to the abstract—a path traveled by many artists in the exhibition—can be seen in representations from both ends of the spectrum, even during this short time period.



Beatrice Wood (1893–1998) may be the most exhibited artist in SBMA’s history, presenting four times at SBMA from the 1950s to the 1960s (and just as many since), and twice at PAM (1959). In 1933 Wood moved from New York to Los Angeles and enrolled in a ceramics class at a local high school with the intention of making a matching teapot for set of dessert plates she had recently purchased. This rather humble encounter sparked her interest and marked the beginning of her famed relationship with clay. Wood’s experimentation with forms, as well as glazing and firing techniques, was bold and unconventional. In 1948 she eventually settled in the artistic community of Ojai, California, where she taught ceramics for the Happy Valley School (now called the Besant Hill School) and operated her studio and showroom for 50 years.

Beatrice Wood, **Bottle** n.d. Earthenware. 6 ¼ x 3 ¼ in. Collection of Forrest L. Merrill.

June Wayne (1918–2011) exhibited more than most artists at both institutions during the 1950s and 60s, and in several different types of media—painting, drawing, and lithography. Wayne, a self-taught painter, became interested in printmaking during a collaborative project in Paris with printmaker Marcel Durassier in the 1950s. In 1960, with assistance from the Ford Foundation, Wayne founded the Tamarind Lithography Workshop in Los Angeles. She is as noteworthy for her dedication to Tamarind as she is for her own work, particularly her prints, which often come in elaborate series and are remarkably complex as well as resonant.



Larry Rivers (1923–2002) made his mark in Southern California through two notable exhibitions—the first in 1961 at SBMA, who worked closely with prominent art dealer, Virginia Dwan, to realize the project, and in 1965 at PAM, who served as the only west coast venue for the artist’s first nationally traveling retrospective. To say that the exhibition was comprehensive is an understatement. While the quantities of work varied from venue to venue during its five-institution run, at one point it numbered 170 works. Several seminal paintings from the retrospective—including his controversial **The Greatest Homosexual** (1964)—will be featured in the exhibition.

Larry Rivers, **The Greatest Homosexual** 1964. Oil and collage on canvas. 80 x 61 in. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden.

Related Programs

Pacific Standard Time Santa Barbara Weekend, February 25–26, 2012

A weekend of community programs in conjunction with the University of California, Santa Barbara’s University Art Museum including an opening reception, various education and outreach programs, free community celebration, and a special dialogue between renowned critics **Peter Plagens** and **Hunter Drohojowska-Philp**. **For more information or tickets, visit www.sbma.net/pasadenatosb.**

About Pacific Standard Time Art in L.A. 1945 – 1980

Pacific Standard Time is a collaboration of more than sixty cultural institutions across Southern California, coming together for six months beginning in October 2011 to tell the story of the birth of the Los Angeles art scene and how it became a major new force in the art world. Each institution will make its own contribution to this grand-scale story of artistic innovation and social change, told through a multitude of simultaneous exhibitions and programs. Exploring and celebrating the significance of the crucial post-World War II years through the tumultuous period of the 1960s and 70s, **Pacific Standard Time** encompasses developments from modernist architecture and design to multi-media installations; from L.A. Pop to post-minimalism; from the films of the African American L.A. Rebellion to the feminist happenings of the Woman’s Building; from ceramics to Chicano performance art; and from Japanese American design to the pioneering work of artists’ collectives.



Initiated through \$10 million in grants from the Getty Foundation, **Pacific Standard Time** involves cultural institutions of every size and character across Southern California, from Greater Los Angeles to San Diego and Santa Barbara to Palm Springs. The presenting sponsor is Bank of America.

Lead support for *Pasadena to Santa Barbara: A Selected History of Art in Southern California, 1951-1969* provided by the Getty Foundation, with additional support from the Luria Foundation, Cyndee Howard, Jill and John C. Bishop, Jr., Anne and Houston Harte, the Community Events & Festivals Grant Program using funds provided by the City of Santa Barbara in partnership with the Santa Barbara County Arts Commission, and The Museum Contemporaries of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art.

About the Santa Barbara Museum of Art

The Santa Barbara Museum of Art is a privately funded, not-for-profit institution that presents internationally recognized collections and exhibitions and a broad array of cultural and educational activities as well as travel opportunities around the world.

1130 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA
Open Tuesday - Sunday 11 am to 5 pm
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