

Coming Up

December 7

9:15 Coffee
10:00 Lecture
Alex Solfroniew, Assistant Curator, Getty Villa, on the new acquisition, *The Lansdowne Dionysos*.

December 7

2:00 Keith Puccinelli Exhibition and Presentation, Atkinson Gallery, SB City College

December 12

Holiday Party
Jerry Jensen's home,
2:00-4:00

December 14

Board Meeting cancelled

January 9

Book Club meets
Sue Skenderian's, 1:30

January 18

9:15 Coffee
10:00 Lecture

Docent Trips for *Pacific Standard Time*

January 23 (Mon)

LACMA

February 27 (Mon)

Geffen Contemporary and Museum of Contemporary Art

March 28 (Wed)

Pasadena Museum of California Art



Papa's Got a Brand New Bag, 1964, Wallace Berman, Mixed media

Titled after a single released by "God-father of Soul" James Brown in 1965, this work combines images of the era's most potent cultural and political references. In addition to an image of James Brown at top right, it incorporates pictures of boxer Cassius Clay (who claimed the heavyweight title from Sonny Liston in February 1964), The Rolling Stones (who made their first US appearances in 1964) and Lee Harvey Oswald (who had assassinated JFK the previous year). ~PST

Dear Docents,

With the opening of Ridley-Tree, all the main floor galleries are now open. Eik Kahng has returned many of our favorites to Ridley-Tree, and with additional pieces has created an installation that renews our vision.

With the range of installations in the

surrounding galleries, the creative forces on display demand our making connections within and among galleries. Quite a stimulating and "wonder-ful" adventure!

On December 7 we have two very different experiences for you. At our Docent Council meeting, Alex Solfroniew, Assistant Curator at the Getty Villa, will discuss the restoration of the museum's new acquisition, *The Lansdowne Dionysos*. We also hope to see Dionysis installed in his new home in Ludington Gallery.

On the same day we have been invited to a presentation by Keith Puccinelli at the Atkinson Gallery, Santa Barbara City College, at 2:00 p.m. We will be hearing about his



Irene Stone

processes of creating art as he talks with Dane Goodman, his longtime friend and collaborator.

In Kathryn's message there is more information about the plethora of *Pacific Standard Time* exhibitions taking place all over Southern California. Our PST interest group has planned to make the Getty trip the first of several down south. Given the enthusiasm of the group, the following dates and trips have been planned:

Monday, January 23, to Los Angeles County Museum of Art;

Monday, February 27 to Geffen Contemporary and Museum of Contemporary Art;

Wednesday, March 28 to Pasadena Museum of California Art, the printmaking exhibit at the Norton Simon, and possibly the Pacific Asian Museum. This will be the official spring bus trip for the docents.

Save the dates now to join us for bus trips or car pooling. This is a stimulating time for art in Southern California. Let's take advantage of these opportunities. Please contact Laura DePaoli or Irene Stone. (Note that our Book Group (page 5) is also reading literature to tie into these exhibitions, and our editor, Lori, has included a book review of *Rebels in Paradise*—the Book Club selection this month—in this issue of *La Muse*).

Last, I want to share with you that I recently received a note from Karen Kawaguchi, Senior Development Officer, in which she wrote, "One of the museum's greatest assets is the Docent Council and among our most valuable treasures are our Docents. As I walked through the galleries today it was a bustle of activity with school groups, a Focus Tour, provisionals working with Active Docents and [two] private tours... Everyone was experiencing the museum through a Docent!" Please accept those words as an appreciation of the good efforts of every one of you."

May I add my appreciation and thanks as well.

We will end our December activities with our annual Holiday Party on December 12, from 2:00-4:00, at the home of Jerry Jensen and Nancy Lieberman, our generous hosts. We will look forward to welcoming our new provisionals and sharing holiday cheer together.

May I wish you all a wonderful holiday season and all best wishes for a healthy and happy new year.

~Irene 

Message from our Vice President



Kathryn Padgett

The holiday season affords us the opportunity to spend time with treasured friends, family, and loved ones. Thanksgiving serves as a reminder for us to express gratitude for all people and things that make our lives rich and meaningful. My life, quite simply, would not be as fantastic as it is without the truly remarkable Santa Barbara Museum of Art's Docent Council. You are an extraordinary assembly of people who are drawn together by a shared passion for art and for the beauty and thoughtful contemplation that art brings to those of us who inhabit planet Earth.

Your keen intellect and willingness to passionately share your information about art to all who will listen is a wonderful contribution to the Santa Barbara community. I

truly treasure, and am thankful for, your collegial spirit, your no-nonsense willingness to get the job done with verve and class, and your unabashed love of art. I am especially grateful for the loving kindness and support that you gave me during my "back explosion" episode. Your cards, flowers, calls, visits, offers of help, and emails were all greatly appreciated and most certainly facilitated my healing process.

As we move toward the December holidays, I encourage you to fully embrace those people and experiences that

you love, to continue living life with passion and interest, to nurture those in our community who need our love and assistance, and most importantly to nurture yourself. Life is certainly more meaningful when we slow down and take the time to appreciate and express gratitude for all people and things that make our life have meaning, color and texture.

The Holiday Party at Jerry Jensen's home from 2-4pm on December 12th will be an ideal way for us to share fellowship with our docent friends and for us to instill our passion for art into the new group of provisional docents, who will be wonderful additions to our council. I look forward to seeing you on December 12th so that we may collectively raise a glass of cheer for a truly blessed and happy new year! 🍷

On to things *Pacific Standard Time* related: Interesting PST Exhibits:

November 17, 2011- April 8, 2012, Pacific Asia Museum

46 N. Los Robles: A History of the Pasadena Art Museum

This exhibit will, "for the first time, trace the entire development of the Pasadena Art Museum, focusing on its years in the Grace Nicholson Building on North Los Robles Avenue, currently the home of Pacific Asia Museum. The exhibition will present more than 40 important modern and contemporary works shown at the Pasadena Art Museum in its groundbreaking exhibitions, including paintings, sculpture, prints, drawings, and documentation of performances. It will also feature installations, photographs of the exhibitions, and audio and video interviews with Pasadena Art Museum directors, curators, artists, and board members looking back at this extraordinary institution and time.

Artists featured in this exhibition include Peter Alexander, John Altoon, Alexander Archipenko, Walter Askin, Larry Bell, Wallace Berman, William Brice, Hans Burkhardt, Vija Celmins, John Chamberlain, Joseph Cornell, Richard Diebenkorn, Marcel Duchamp, Leonard Edmondson, Lyonel Feininger, Llyn Foulkes, George Herms, Robert Irwin, Alexei Jawlensky, Ynez Johnston, Wassily Kandinsky, Craig Kauffman, Ed Kienholz, Paul Klee, John Mason, Claes Oldenburg, Ken Price, Edward Ruscha, Kurt Schwitters, Edmund Teske, Peter Voulkos, Andy Warhol, and Emerson Woelffer."

http://www.pacificasiamuseum.org/on_view/index.aspx

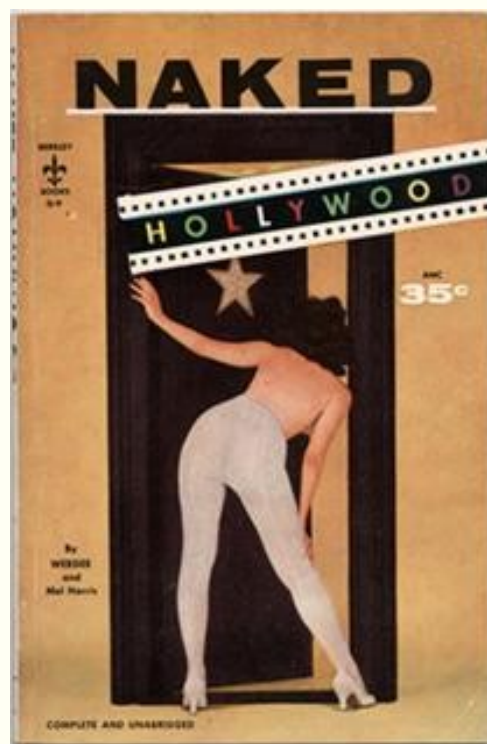
November 13, 2011-February 27, 2012, MOCA

Naked Hollywood: Weegee in Los Angeles

This is the first museum exhibition devoted to the work Weegee produced in Southern California and is held in conjunction with *Pacific Standard Times* exhibits.

"In addition to roughly 200 photographs, many of which have never before been shown or reproduced, the exhibition encompasses Weegee's related work as an author, filmmaker, photo-essayist, and genius self-promoter. Following the photographer's lead, the exhibition documents the lurid, irresistible undersides of stardom, fandom, commerce, and publicity in mid-century Los Angeles. Weegee's 1953 photo-book *Naked Hollywood* provides the title and point of departure for the exhibition. "

<http://www.moca.org/museum/exhibitiondetail.php?&id=450> 🍷



Student Touring



Dear docents,

The student teams are sailing along, but we are down a few docents and could use a helping hand. If anyone has the time and inclination, please call or shoot me an email—I'll schedule you in for a time that works for you. 🍷

~Ann

Ann Robinson, Student Teams , Chair

Adult Touring for October, 2011



Visitors to Henri Rivière contributed to the increase in touring numbers for October:

Highlights - weekend and daily	107
Focus Tours*	130
Picasso and Braque	338
Henri Rivière_	<u>97</u>
	672

Vikki Duncan

Adult Teams Co-chair • Includes 83 visitors touring Van Gogh to Munch as part of the European/Impressionism Focus tours.

Special Request Tours are in the Red Book and spotlight this month. Alumni of Brandeis College, students at Pierce College and Ventura College, and members of the French Club of Santa Barbara followed six different tours of Picasso and Braque. Supporters of the State Street Ballet, the French Club (yes, they requested tours of two exhibitions), a ladies group from Long Beach, California, and a trio of children toured Van Gogh to Munch on Special Request tours. 🍷

A Friendly Reminder



Dear Docents,

It's been awhile since we've had a docent miss giving a scheduled tour, but that is exactly what happened this month. If you have *any doubt* about whether or not you're scheduled for a tour, please contact your team leader, Vikki Duncan or me.

We are here to support you. 🍷

~Shirley

Shirley Waxman
Adult Teams co-chair



Sue Billig

Where was Andy Warhol's first commercial gallery show of soup cans? LA !

Where would you go to see the first Marcel Duchamp retrospective? LA!

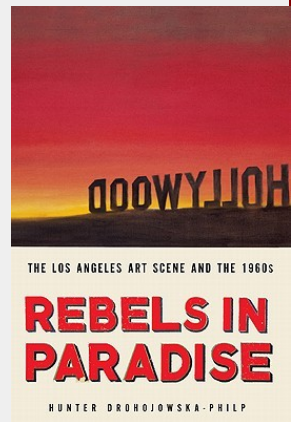
What major city had no differentiated art museum until 1961? LA !

What town had the first Pop Art group show? LA !

The Docent Book Club selection for January is:

Rebels in Paradise: The Los Angeles Art Scene and the 1960s

By Hunter Drohojowska-Philp



The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 9 at 1:30

Our hostess this month will be Sue Skenderian

5583 Calle Arena

684-6384

Please RSVP to her at skenderian@dock.net

Docent-to-Docent



Jan Lynch

The following exchange occurred while Jan Lynch was touring a group of 5th graders, along with one parent, a father, in the *Van Gogh to Munch* exhibit.

As she stopped at a small Van Gogh in the gallery, Jan asked if anyone knew who the artist was. One little boy eagerly spoke up.

"Oh yeah...he's the guy who cut off his ear and gave it to his girlfriend."

Jan, suppressing a smile, explained that, no, the infamous incident occurred following an argument Van Gogh had had with another artist named Cezanne.

With an 'oh, yeah' look on his face, the boy pointed to no one in particular and said, "That's right...Van Gogh was gay!"

"Van Gogh was gay?" the father asked.

"Van Gogh was not gay," Jan retorted, explaining that the two men were friends and fellow artists. When another question ensued, she pointed out that this was not the time or place for a discussion about sexual orientation, and that she had several more interesting works lined up to explore.

And with that, the group moved on. 🍷

Submitted by Jan Lynch, as reported via phone call to Lori Mohr

Book Review

Rebels in Paradise: The Los Angeles Art Scene and the 60s

By Hunter Drohojowska-Philp

Reviewed by Peter Plagens, The Wall Street Journal, July, 2011. Reprinted with permission



Joe Goode, left, Jerry McMillan, Ed Ruscha and Patrick Blackwell in their shared studio, 1959. (From Joe Goode/Henry Holt, LA Times Book Review, July 2011)

Where else would Andy Warhol have actually met his conceptual godfather, Marcel Duchamp, in the flesh but in Los Angeles in the 1960s? The occasion was the opening of Duchamp's first American retrospective, in 1963, at the old Pasadena Art Museum. There's a wonderful photograph in Hunter Drohojowska-Philp's "Rebels in Paradise," showing Billy Al Bengston, the dapper bad boy of the incipient local art scene, squeezing Andy's cheeks in that way that friendly bullies have of forcing the nerd to smile.

(Dennis Hopper looks on and laughs *page 8*.) Little more than a year earlier, Warhol's first solo show as a Pop artist—the infamous Campbell's soup-can paintings—had taken place in an L.A. gallery, and the meaning of the photograph is clear: Mr. Bengston is saying, "Thanks for the jumpstart, Andy, but we'll take it from here."

The result was a brief but incandescent heyday of what some critics blanketed as "the L.A. Look"—which ranged from Ed Ruscha's deft and light-touch Pop, through Larry Bell's ethereally Minimalist glass boxes, to Robert Irwin's hovering translucent discs that literally blurred the boundaries between the art object and its environment. The aesthetic common denominator was a "finish fetish" (or "fetish finish," your choice) borrowed from the southern California demimonde of hot rods and custom cars—i.e., the kind of slick, finicky attention to smooth perfection required when applying dozens of hand-rubbed coats of cherry-red enamel to an auto body. In art the upshot was, for example, De Wayne Valentine's casting a 6-foot disc of transparent blue polyester resin without a single 7-Up-sized bubble in it.

The attitudinal glue, though, was an offhand, ahistorical, surfer-dude casualness in arriving at such an aesthetic. As the author describes it: "One morning [artist Craig Kauffman] stopped in a doughnut shop to get a cup of coffee and noticed a sign shaped like molded plastic fruit and started wondering how it was made. He drove over to a small industrial plant in the suburb of Paramount called Planet Plastics, where he learned about molds and vacuum-form machinery. In 1964, he amplified and simplified shapes into low-relief wall pieces he called 'erotic thermometers.' He sprayed the reverse side of the clear plastic with acrylic paint in the intense colors of Jell-O."

The best of L.A.'s similarly inclined artists gathered in the Ferus Gallery, a joint enterprise run by brilliant and unreliable curator Walter Hopps ("Mad Men" appearance, madman methods), ur-assemblagist Ed Kienholz (probably the greatest artist the city has ever produced) and former Knoll salesman and Cary Grant lookalike Irving Blum, whose baritone mock-certainty could have provided the perfect voiceover for the whole scene. This snappy, gossipy book is, however, more about artists than art. This is as it should be. L.A.'s serious art of the 1960s veers either toward self-explanatory Pop or extreme, phenomenological abstraction, off which words

slide like raindrops off, well, a molded plastic fruit sign. The artists themselves, by contrast, present a fascinating profusion of kinship patterns, which mostly have to do with girlfriends and show business: "Ruscha made a small version of [his painting] 'Annie' for his intimate friend Ann Marshall, daughter of actor Herbert Marshall and best friend of Michelle Phillips, the gorgeous nymphet singer of the Mamas and the Papas. Along with Toni Basil, the dancer and choreographer who was dating Dean Stockwell, and Terri Garr, the dancer and actress who was dating Bengston, these adventurous and beautiful young women embodied the essence of California girls."

Want more? Walter Hopps married his wife Shirley at Simon Rodia's Watts Towers, the outsider-artist masterpiece. When the couple split, Shirley married Irving Blum; their son's middle name is Ferus. Meanwhile, Hopps enjoyed a 19-year-old extra-marital squeeze named Eve Babitz, who is the naked woman playing chess with Duchamp in the famous photo taken at his Pasadena retrospective. Ms. Babitz later became Ed Ruscha's inamorata.

The People-magazine-meets-modern-art tone might be tedious if it weren't for Ms. Drohojowska-Philp's way with capsule descriptions: "They were quite the odd couple: The square-jawed, sandy-haired Hopps was so often outfitted in a shirt and tie, sporting black, square-rimmed glasses, that his friends used to tease him about being in the CIA. In

contrast, Kienholz was a cherubic farm boy and aspiring Beat with a receding hairline, a goatee, and an expanding belly. Both were autodidacts who were seemingly incapable of getting along."

Not to shortchange the art history, though: In 1955, Kauffman, Hopps and Jim Newman mounted an art exhibition on a canvas "wall" covering the merry-go round on the Santa Monica pier. Paintings by the likes of



From Left: Robert Alexander, John Reed, Wallace Berman, Juanita Dixon and Walter Hopps, a co-founder of the Ferus Gallery in LA in 1959. Photo by Charles Brillin

Clyfford Still and Richard Diebenkorn revolved slowly to the accompaniment of a calliope, jazz platters, a dozen radios performing a John Cage score and recorded recitations by Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac. Ten years later, and four years before the Art Workers' Coalition was formed in New York, "a giant artists' 'Peace Tower' protesting the Vietnam war went up on a vacant lot on the Sunset Strip." Take that, Manhattan!

The relatively minor faults of "Rebels" have to do with a tinge of gushiness—which is understandable when, bottom line, you're trying to make a case for L.A.'s scene in the 1960s being in the same ballpark as New York's in the 1940s, when Hans Hofmann and Willem de Kooning had long since emigrated to the city and Jackson Pollock and Franz Kline were relatively young Turks. Ms. Drohojowska-Philp also takes a lot of artists at their word. Did Kauffman really get drunk and "power his Jaguar roadster in muddy circles on the well-manicured lawns of the [San Fernando] Valley?" Did Mr. Bengston really get into the Ferus stable by stepping in front of an

oncoming car and yelling "Halt!" while Kienholz watched? Maybe, but I'll go ahead and assume that Kienholz and his fourth-wife-to-be, Lyn, actually "went on a date at Edna Earle's Fog Cutter restaurant with [curator Maurice] Tuchman and his wife Blossom," because that's my segue into the second of these two necessary books on L.A. art, Lyn Kienholz's "L.A. Rising."

At this point, a little disclosure. I'm a critic who is quoted approvingly a few times by Ms. Drohojowska-Philp and a painter who is included in "L.A. Rising," which is a kind of yearbook that gathers more than 500 artists with birthdates from 1886 to the 1950s: Each artist receives a full page consisting of two color reproductions and a snippet or two of contemporary critical comment. Whatever salt-ingesting my confession should provoke, I can say without fear of contradiction that "L.A. Rising" is (a) wonderful simply for its existence and (b) a little more wonderful because Ms. Kienholz and her researchers and designers have done such a good job.

Oh, there are omissions—oversights go with the territory in such a project. I wish that a very good abstract painter (and, yes, a friend) Jim DeFrance had been given a page and that dealer Michael Walls at least had appeared in the appendix. But my complaints are quibbles.

Oddly, these two books present the West Coast art of the era as a kind of retroactive preview of the art world we have now. Mr.

Bengston thought that the whole Abstract Expressionist ambience still prevalent in New York was theatri-

cally abject and melodramatic. He advocated artists dressing well and turning goodly portions of their studios into showrooms for sales. He hobnobbed with actresses and manipulated the media. The "rebels" consorted with fashion designers (remember Rudi Gernreich and the monokini?), engaged in outrageous-lite behavior and made the art scene fully compatible with L.A.'s version of café society. A jump-cut to today's art fairs, gossipy Internet chatter, and ubiquitous and extreme extensions of what an L.A. artist said to me in the 1970s—"Hey Pete, I think I've figured out a way to make some paintings"—is hardly a jump at all.

Virginia Dwan, the owner of the influential 1960s L.A. art emporium the Dwan Gallery, says in "Rebels:" "It was a playful period. It wasn't that people weren't taking the art seriously but there was an openness to enjoyment and having fun in the process." True enough, but there was a downside. You've noticed that all the players were guys and the supporting cast was mostly female? Vivian Kauffman, one of Craig's many wives, recalls: "It was a boys' club, and I think it was pretty difficult to live with those people. They had to be so concentrated, they led very selfish lives, and all the women were left in the wake." That's since been corrected. Sort of.



Andy Warhol, Billy al Bengston and Dennis Hopper at the opening of Marcel Duchamp's 1963 retrospective at the Pasadena Art Museum. Photo by Jukian Wasser, The Wall Street Journal

—Mr. Plagens, a writer and painter, is at work on a book about the artist Bruce Nauman

Docents at The Getty Center

Nov 30, 2011



Not shown: Laura DePaoli, Karen Brill, Lori Mohr

PACIFIC STANDARD TIME AT THE GETTY CENTER

Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945-1980 is a unique collaboration among museums and other cultural organizations across Southern California. From one through Spring 2012, this unprecedented endeavor showcases the region's artistic production during an important period in the history of modern and contemporary art.

In conjunction with Pacific Standard Time, the Getty presents four exhibitions that explore diverse media and artists of the period. Look at the map at right for the location of the exhibitions and related installations. Additional information is also available on the Today at the Getty Center sheet.

Visit the Information Room in the West Pavilion, Plaza Level, to learn more about Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945-1980.

Pacific Standard Time Information Room
 Room: West Pavilion

FROM START TO FINISH
 The Main Vestibule's Gray Columns
 Nov. 10, 2011 - Mar. 4, 2012
 Curator: Catherine Peckham, West Pavilion

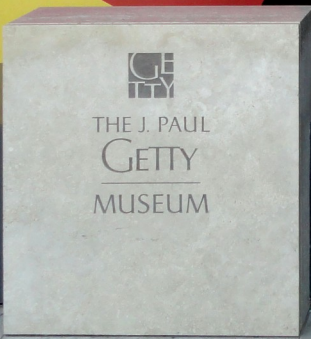
IN FOCUS
 Los Angeles 1945-1980
 Nov. 10, 2011 - Mar. 4, 2012
 Curator: Catherine Peckham, West Pavilion

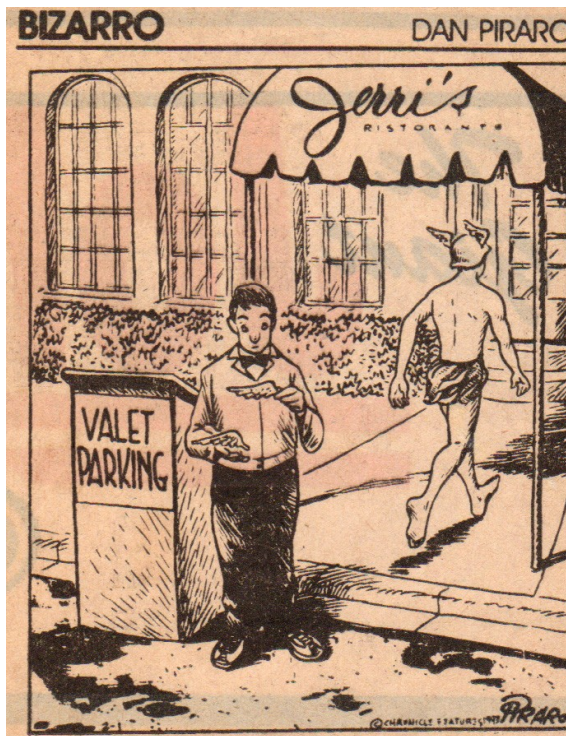
PACIFIC STANDARD TIME
 Crosscurrents
 in L.A. PAINTING AND SCULPTURE
 1950-1970
 Nov. 10, 2011 - Mar. 4, 2012
 Curator: Catherine Peckham

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 at the Getty Center
 FREE



PACIFIC STANDARD TIME
 An initiative of the Getty with arts and cultural organizations across Southern California.
 Sponsors: Bank of America





Submitted by
Jean McKibben Smith



Joaquín Sorolla Bastida, *Maria mirando los peces*, 1907, Oil on canvas, 81" x 108"

Comments?
Suggestions?
Mohrojai@aol.com

Lori Mohr, Editor

