

# The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

## CALIFORNIA PRINTS

CALIFORNIA PRINTS, a selection of 45 works from the collection executed by 26 artists living and working in California during the last decade, will be on view from March 1 to May 29 in the third floor Sachs Galleries of the Museum.

The exhibition, organized by Howardena Pindell, Assistant Curator in the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, includes a diverse range of prints by such artists as Ed Ruscha, Vija Celmins, Bob Moon, Joe Goode and Billy Al Bengston.

Only nine of the artists represented were born in California. The others migrated, seeking employment or education and settled in San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, Venice, Topanga Canyon and Hollywood. The visual traditions they encountered in California included Far Eastern mysticism, the reinterpretation of Abstract Expressionism by the San Francisco Bay Area figurative school, Pop Art and a form of West Coast Neo-Dada encompassing Funk and Assemblage and the subtle influences of Hollywood and Disneyland, as well as the expanding developments of space-age technology.

"As a result of the tremendous isolation during the post-war period into the early 1950's, many artists in California developed very personal, highly idiosyncratic ways of working," says Miss Pindell, who adds that fortunately, during this period, the University of California's network of colleges provided these artists with encouragement, employment and a source of communication. "Even though the instructors at the University of California stimulated a vigorous exchange of ideas, a sense of urgency about assimilating strict art historical categories was lacking. As a result, the artists' own daily lives and mental activity took precedence, making anything possible--free association, puns, satire, and ironical wit."

In Northern California, artists were influenced by the strong figurative tradition of the Bay Area, the post-war presence of Mark Rothko and Clifford Still at the California School of Fine Arts, the paucity of institutions and galleries willing to

(more)

exhibit the New York School or even promote local talent during the 1950's, the arrival of the beat poets whose disregard for aesthetic traditions led to the evolution of Funk art and the international recognition of Pop Art in the 60's which brought several California artists to national attention.

Southern California, an area rife with climactic, geographical and man-made contradictions, developed differently, in part, as a result of the vigorous group of institutions, galleries and collectors in the Los Angeles area which fostered a stronger aesthetic sense with an overlay of local folk traditions--a curious mixing of popular and high culture to the point where, according to Miss Pindell, they threaten to become indistinguishable.

Printmaking activities in Southern California, for example, were stimulated by the opening in 1960 of the Tamarind Lithography Workshop which brought visiting artists from the East to Los Angeles. Printers who were trained there later opened their own workshops, and many of the prints in this exhibition were pulled in those shops. Making prints was a new experience for some of these artists although most were accustomed to working in a variety of other media such as films, holography, photography, assemblage, ceramics, video and audio tapes and vacuum-formed plastics.

Billy Al Bengston and Tom Holland utilize special inks with pearly pigments to give luminosity to their work, while Joe Goode juxtaposes glass and mat surfaces. Others like Robert Bechtle and Ray Lauzzana and Kathan Brown employ photographic images while Wallace Berman produces multiple images for collage using a Verifax machine. Gerald Gooch, Craig Kauffman and Doug Edge use the print as a means of exploring the process of time and Bob Moon's work reflects his involvement with Yoga and the dimension of inner time. Ed Ruscha's work reflects a world devoid of human scale while Vija Celmins' recalls the monumentality of nature through the infinite multiplicity of detail.

"In a state such as California, whose history has been fictionalized by the motion picture industry and whose population is constantly shifting, a high degree of tolerance has developed," says Miss Pindell. "As a result, artists have developed, despite diverse visual traditions, a penchant for unusual ideas, exuberant self-reliance, as well as new forms of aggressive wit."

\*\*\*\*\*

Additional information available from Diana Goldin, Coordinator, Press Services, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53 St., New York, NY 10019. Phone: (212) 956-7297.

# The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

WALL LABEL

CALIFORNIA PRINTS

WALL LABEL

MARCH 1 - MAY 29, 1972

Visual traditions in California are relatively young and rather erratic, ranging from the Far Eastern mysticism of Morris Graves and Mark Tobey to the expressionism of Rico Lebrun; from the reinterpretation of Abstract Expressionism by the San Francisco Bay Area figurative school to Pop Art and a form of West Coast Neo-Dada encompassing Funk and Assemblage. In addition, there are the subtle influences of Hollywood and Disneyland, and the expanding developments of space-age technology.

As a result of tremendous isolation during the post-war period into the early '50s, many artists in California developed very personal, highly idiosyncratic ways of working. They combined the visual regional traditions of their geographical area with information learned from their peers and reproductions in international art magazines. Fortunately, the University of California's network of colleges encouraged the survival of the arts by being a source of employment, developing centers of communication in Northern and Southern California.

The San Francisco Bay Area during the '50s had a strong figurative tradition, one which Abstract Expressionism could augment but not completely uproot. The most widely known California artists at this time were mainly from this area and were mainly figurative, perhaps the best known being Richard Diebenkorn. Fortunately, the international recognition of Pop Art in the '60s brought artists such as Ed Ruscha, Wayne Thiebaud, Mel Ramos, and Peter Saul to national attention.

During the '50s, there was a paucity of institutions and galleries in the Bay Area willing to exhibit the New York School or even promote local talent.

(more)

Two New York School painters, Mark Rothko and Clyfford Still, acted as powerful forces in revitalizing the dialogue when they taught between 1946 and 1950 at the California School of Fine Arts (now San Francisco Art Institute). There was at that time a constant unrest and migration to and from the Bay area. Although Sam Francis, for example, attended school in the area, he left for Paris in 1950, not to return to California as a resident until 1962.

Even though the instructors at the University of California stimulated a vigorous exchange of ideas, a sense of urgency about assimilating strict art historical categories was lacking. As a result, the artists' own daily lives and mental activity took precedence, making anything possible—free association, puns, satire, and ironical wit. Funk art evolved mainly in Northern California, influenced by the arrival in the '50s of the beat poets and their attendant disregard for aesthetic traditions. Allen Ginsberg, Kenneth Rexroth, and Gary Snyder read poems to jazz at the Six Gallery in San Francisco. Although the simultaneous use of music and recitation occurred commonly as part of the Dada movement in 1916 at Zurich's Cabaret Voltaire, it was new for California, leading to a bizarre wedding of painting and sculpture. Funk, a word adopted from jazz jargon denoting approval, became a term for the artist meaning corny, grotesque, sensual. Funk art was personal and amoral, emphasizing not the didactic but the intuitive sense of humor of each artist.

A sense of flagrant machismo and aestheticism pervades Southern California. It is an area rife with contradictions: blinding light, smog, sea, desert, freeways, snow-capped mountains, bizarre vernacular architecture, all punctuated by clumps of palm trees, not even indigenous to the area.

(more)

As a result of a vigorous group of institutions, galleries, and collectors in the Los Angeles area, there has developed a stronger aesthetic sense with an overlay of local folk traditions--souped-up cars, motorcycle cults, Hollywood, and Disneyland, each having its own precise rituals and signals--a curious mixing of popular and high culture to the point where they threaten to become indistinguishable. Southern California artists have developed a concern for the aesthetic possibilities of scientific investigation, industrial materials, and the tools and fabrication of these materials to create new works of art with clean, precise forms. Coupled with this is their involvement with light and surface reflection and refraction.

Printmaking activities were stimulated, for example, by the opening in 1960 by June Wayne of Tamarind Lithography Workshop, which brought visiting artists from the East to Los Angeles. Printers who were trained there later opened their own workshops, and many of the prints in this exhibition were pulled in those shops.

Only 9 out of the 26 artists in the exhibition were born in California. The others migrated, seeking employment or education. For the many, making prints was a new experience, although most were accustomed to working in a variety of other mediums (Craig Kauffman, vacuum-formed plastics; Bruce Nauman, holography, audio tapes, videotapes and neon; Ed Ruscha, film; Tom Holland, resins; Ray Lauzzana, photography, holography; Wallace Berman, assemblage; Ken Price, ceramics).

(more)

Billy Al Bengston and Tom Holland utilize special inks, pearly pigments, to give luminosity to their work. Tom Holland, as well as adding luminosity, has developed free-standing, interlacing elements, imparting further dimension to his work. Joe Goode's single carefully drawn image of a torn photograph, isolated, floating in a void, is accentuated by varnish, juxtaposing gloss and mat surfaces.

Others, like Robert Bechtle, utilize a photographic image, retaining a snapshot quality and brilliant light. Ray Lauzzana capitalizes on the graininess of his negatives while Kathan Brown applies a contradictory tactile surface in Dog Leaping by contrasting the fuzziness of the flocking with the clarity of the photographic image and the gloss and transparency of the ink. Wallace Berman has developed a very personal technique using a highly impersonal tool, a Verifax machine, to produce multiple images juxtaposed in collage.

Gerald Gooch, Craig Kauffman, and Doug Edge use the print as a means of exploring the process of time. Doug Edge has documented the growth of his hair with strips of photographs from a dime store machine. Gerald Gooch has doused himself with water in what seems to be a cinematic documentation of time, frame by frame, while Craig Kauffman has explored the minute changes in an enormous magnification of blood cells.

Another dimension, inner time, is explored by Bob Moon, whose work reflects his involvement with Yoga. Swami Vishnu #5 depicts an androgynous male suspended in a Yoga position over the ocean. Ed Ruscha's work reflects a world devoid of human scale, while Vija Celmins reflects the monumentality of nature through the infinite multiplicity of detail caught in the mind's eye.

(more)

In a state such as California, whose history has been fictionalized by the motion picture industry, and whose population is constantly shifting, a high degree of tolerance has developed. Doubtless, without such a tolerant environment, Simon Rhodia would never have sustained his effort over 33 years to build his towers in Watts. As a result, artists have developed, despite diverse visual traditions, a penchant for unusual ideas, an exuberant self-reliance, as well as new forms of aggressive wit.

Howardena Pindell

# The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

226

## CALIFORNIA PRINTS Checklist March 1 - May 29, 1972

In the listing below, dates enclosed in parenthesis do not appear on the works themselves. Dimensions given are composition or plate size, height preceding width.

ALTOON, John. Born 1925, Los Angeles, California. Died 1969, Los Angeles, California.

1. Untitled. (1965). Lithograph, 19 13/16 x 26 7/8". Gift of Kleiner, Bell and Company. 1483.67. Photo: Mathews 5415.
2. Untitled. 1965. Lithograph, printed in color, 22 1/4 x 30". Gift of Kleiner, Bell and Company. 1488.69.

BALDESSARI, John. Born 1931, National City, California. Lives in Santa Monica, California.

3. I Will Not Make Anymore Boring Art. 1971. Lithograph, 22 3/8 x 29 9/16". John B. Turner Fund. 1.72. Photo:

BECHTLE, Robert. Born 1932, San Francisco, California. Lives in Berkeley, California.

4. Palm Tree. 1969. Lithograph, printed in color, 27 1/2 x 22 1/16". John B. Turner Fund. 2.72. Photo:

BENGSTON, Billy Al. Born 1934, Dodge City, Kansas. Lives in Venice, California.

5. Royal Viking Dracula. (1968). Lithograph, printed in color, 10 1/4 x 9 3/4". Promised gift of Kleiner, Bell and Company. 1004.68.

BERMAN, Wallace. Born 1926, Staten Island, New York. Lives in Topanga Canyon, California.

6. Untitled. (1965). Verifax collage,

*13/16 x 12" lent by the artist.*

BROWN, Kathan. Born 1935, New York, New York. Lives in Berkeley, California.

7. Dog Leaping. 1971. Serigraph and flocking, printed in color, 21 3/8 x 17 3/8". John B. Turner Fund. 626.71.

(over)

CELMINS, Vija. Born 1938, Riga, Latvia. Lives in Venice, California.

8. Untitled. (1970). Lithograph, printed in color, 20 3/16 x 29 3/16". Promised gift of Kleiner, Bell and Company. 303.70. Photo: Mathews 5422.
9. Desert. 1971. Lithograph, printed in color, 20 15/16 x 27 5/8". John B. Turner Fund. 627.71.

CRUTCHFIELD, William. Born 1932, Indianapolis, Indiana. Lives in Los Angeles, California.

10. Biplane from the suite Air Land Sea. 1970. Lithograph, printed in color, 5 3/16 x 8 1/4". Promised gift of Kleiner, Bell and Company. 307.70.5.
11. Art and Technology, poster. 1971. Offset and serigraph, printed in color, 29 1/2 x 21 9/16". John B. Turner Fund. 630.71.

DIEBENKORN, Richard. Born 1922, Portland, Oregon. Lives in Pacific Palisades, California.

12. L.A. Landscape. 1962. Lithograph, 8 13/16 x 13 1/2". Gift of Kleiner, Bell and Company. 846.67. Photo: Mathews 5416.
13. Reclining Woman. 1962. Lithograph, 13 1/16 x 22 7/8". Gift of Kleiner, Bell and Company. 845.67.
14. Untitled. 1970. Lithograph, printed in color, 29 1/4 x 18 13/16". Promised gift of Kleiner, Bell and Company. 310.70.

EDGE, Doug. Born 1942, Fennimore, Wisconsin. Lives in Saugus, California.

15. Self Portrait of a Shave and Haircut. 1970. Lithograph, printed in color, 7 7/8 x 11 1/8". John B. Turner Fund. 631.71.

FRANCIS, Sam. Born 1923, San Mateo, California. Lives in Santa Monica Canyon, California.

16. Five Stone Untitled. 1959-1968. Lithograph, printed in color, 16 3/16 x 20 1/4". Gift of the Celeste and Armand Bartos Foundation. 37.69.

FRIED, Robert. Born 1937, Brooklyn, New York. Lives in Fairfax, California.

17. Non-negotiable Eights. 1971. Offset, printed in color, with rubber stamp, 17 5/16 x 24 13/16". John B. Turner Fund. 7.72.

(more)

18. Dylan's Drifter. 1971. Serigraph, printed in color, with embossing and rubber stamp 20 11/16 x 15 7/8". John B. Turner Fund. 6.72.

GOOCH, Gerald. Born 1933, Mannington, West Virginia. Lives in San Leandro, California.

19. My Cup Runneth Over. 1968. Lithograph, 19 x 7 13/16". John B. Turner Fund. 8.72.1.
20. My Cup Runneth Over. 1968. Lithograph, 21 13/16 x 8 1/4". John B. Turner Fund. 8.72.2.
21. My Cup Runneth Over. 1968. Lithograph, 23 1/2 x 8 1/8". John B. Turner Fund. 8.72.3.
22. My Cup Runneth Over. 1968. Lithograph, 23 1/8 x 12 9/16". John B. Turner Fund. 8.72.4.

GOODE, Joe. Born 1937, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Lives in Los Angeles, California.

23. Feuille au Vent. 1969. Lithograph, printed in color, 22 1/8 x 29 7/8". John B. Turner Fund. 1034.69.
24. Untitled. 1971. Lithograph, printed in color, 18 x 29". John B. Turner Fund. 634.71. Photo: Mathews 5417.

HOLLAND, Tom. Born 1936, Seattle, Washington. Lives in Berkeley, California.

25. Hillegas. 1971. Lithograph, printed in color, 8 7/8 x 29 3/16". John B. Turner Fund. 10.72.

KAUFFMAN, Craig. Born 1932, Los Angeles, California. Lives in Laguna Beach, California.

26. Untitled. 1971. Lithograph, printed in color, 21 1/2 x 26 11/16". John B. Turner Fund. 12.72.
27. Untitled. 1971. Lithograph, printed in color, 21 7/16 x 26 3/4". John B. Turner Fund. 13.72. Photo:
28. Untitled. 1971. Lithograph, printed in color, 21 1/2 x 26 3/4". John B. Turner Fund. 14.72.
29. Untitled. 1971. Lithograph, printed in color, 21 7/16 x 26 3/4". John B. Turner Fund. 15.72.

(over)

LAUZZANA, Ray. Born 1941, Detroit, Michigan. Lives in Berkeley, California.

30. I Heard From Passing Renegades. 1971. Serigraph, printed in color, 11 3/8 x 16 3/4". John B. Turner Fund. 649.71.

MARADIAGA, Ralph. Born 1934, San Francisco, California. Lives in San Francisco, California.

31. Positive Print. 1971. Etching, printed in color, 12 7/8 x 12 11/16". John B. Turner Fund. 651.71.

MOON, Robert. Born 1941, Oregon City, Oregon. Lives in Woodacre, California.

32. Swami Vishnu #5. 1970. Lithograph, 20 1/2 x 26 5/16". John B. Turner Fund. 654.71. Photo: Mathews 5418.

NAUMAN, Bruce. Born 1941, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Lives in Pasadena, California.

33. Untitled from the suite Studies for Holograms. 1970. Serigraph, printed in color, 20 5/16 x 26 1/16". John B. Turner Fund. 453.71.3.
34. Untitled from the suite Studies for Holograms. 1970. Serigraph, printed in color, 20 3/8 x 26". John B. Turner Fund. 453.71.4. Photo: Mathews 5419.
35. Untitled for the suite Studies for Holograms. 1970. Serigraph, printed in color, 20 5/16 x 26". John B. Turner Fund. 453.71.1.

NUTZLE, Futzie. Born 1942, Lakewood, Ohio. Lives in Santa Cruz, California.

36. An Old Wound is Healed from the suite Empty Canoes. (1971). Lithograph, printed in color, 21 15/16 x 27 15/16". John B. Turner Fund. 18.72.
37. Peyote from the suite Empty Canoes. (1971). Lithograph, printed in color, 21 15/16 x 29". John B. Turner Fund. 19.72.

PRICE, Ken. Born 1935, Los Angeles, California. Lives in Venice, California.

38. Figurine Cup II. 1970. Lithograph, printed in color, 7 5/16 x 9 1/4". Gift of Gemini G.E.L. 189.70.

RAMOS, Mel. Born 1935, Sacramento, California. Lives in Oakland, California.

39. Rhinoceros. 1970. Lithograph, printed in color, 19 3/16 x 27 5/16". John B. Turner Fund. 21.72.

(more)

RUSCHA, Edward. Born 1937, Omaha, Nebraska. Lives in Venice, California.

- 40. Hollywood. 1968. Serigraph, printed in color, 12 1/2 x 40 13/16". John B. Turner Fund. 916.69. Photo: Matthews: 5139.
- 41. Hey. 1969. Lithograph, printed in color, 8 x 9 15/16". Promised gift of Kleiner, Bell and Company. 723.69.
- 42. Sin. 1969. Lithograph, printed in color, 7 5/16 x 9 3/16". Promised gift of Kleiner, Bell and Company. 717.69.

SAUL, Peter. Born 1934, San Francisco, California. Lives in Mill Valley, California.

- 43. Hoomin Consumn/Personal Torment. 1969. Lithograph, printed in color, 22 9/16 x 21 1/16". John B. Turner Fund. 31.72. Photo:

THIEBAUD, Wayne. Born 1920, Mesa, Arizona. Lives in Sacramento, California.

- 44. Pies. 1964. Etching and aquatint, 3 15/16 x 4 7/8". John B. Turner Fund. 514.71.
- 45. Boston Cremes. 1970. Linoleum cut, printed in color, 13 9/16 x 20 5/16". John B. Turner Fund. 513.71.