



PACIFIC STANDARD TIME

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Lauren Clark, NHM

lclark@nhm.org, (213) 763-3580

Kristin Friedrich, NHM

kfriedri@nhm.org, (213) 763-3532

Artistic Evolution: Southern California Artists at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, 1945-1963 **Contributes an Important Piece of L.A. History to Pacific Standard Time**

**Historic Institution Nurtured Important Artists Including John Baldessari, Larry Bell, Billy Al Bengston, Robert Irwin, Ed Ruscha, and Betye Saar
When It Was Los Angeles County's Singular Museum**

On View October 2, 2011 - January 15, 2012

Los Angeles, September 19, 2011 – The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (NHM) will present *Artistic Evolution: Southern California Artists at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, 1945-1963* as its contribution to the major initiative Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945 - 1980. On view October 2, 2011 to January 15, 2012, *Artistic Evolution* is inspired by works that were shown at NHM when it was the Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science, and Art, the first dedicated museum building in Los Angeles.



Mel Ramos, *The Atom*

The Exposition Park museum historically played a crucial role in nurturing the dynamism and richness of the Los Angeles art scene through exhibitions and the coveted annual purchase prize. In the mid 1960s, art exhibitions were moved from the Museum to the new Los Angeles County Museum of Art on Wilshire Boulevard, and NHM focused its mission on natural history.

Artistic Evolution is part of Pacific Standard Time, an unprecedented collaboration, initiated by the Getty, that brings together more than sixty cultural institutions from across Southern California for six months beginning October 2011 to tell the story of the birth of the L.A. art scene.

The works on view in *Artistic Evolution* were shown in the context of the Museum's "Annual Exhibition, Artists of Los Angeles and Vicinity" series and related contemporary exhibitions from 1940-1961. In addition to these annual showcases of contemporary local art, the Exposition Park site boasted world-class exhibitions of Renaissance and Baroque masters, such as Leonardo da Vinci and Rembrandt, Impressionist and Post-Impressionist shows featuring Van Gogh, Degas, and Renoir; and cutting-edge contemporary exhibitions originated by leading New York institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. It was a place for artists of all generations and inclinations to see and learn and respond to their predecessors, peers, teachers and students.

Guest curated by art historian Dr. Charlotte Eyerman, *Artistic Evolution* includes paintings, drawings, and prints that shed new light on post-war art in Los Angeles, including works by local favorites who are not widely known today outside of Los Angeles, as well as historically important artists. The exhibition features works by John Altoon, John Baldessari, Larry Bell, Billy Al Bengston, Karl Benjamin, Tony Berlant, Hans Burkhardt, Lorser Feitelson, Frederick Hammersley, Robert Irwin, Ynez Johnston, Craig Kauffman, Rico Lebrun, Helen Lundeborg, Ed Moses, John McLaughlin, Lee Mullican, Mel Ramos, Ed Ruscha, Betye Saar, June Wayne, and Howard Warshaw. The works on view are on loan from the artists, private collections, galleries, and museums.



Robert Irwin, *Lucky U*

The exhibition offers a kaleidoscopic view of this institution’s role in shaping an evolving art capital, underscoring the significant contributions of Los Angeles artists to the mid-century art world, which endure to the present day. “The revelation in working on this show,” said Eyerman, “was the range of work and artists that were presented in the Museum’s *Annual Exhibitions*. There was an intermingling of generations, and the emergence of young artists who went on to become titans of the L.A. art world. This Museum was *the* cultural center of Los Angeles before LACMA opened in 1965.”

Artistic Evolution will be on view in the rotunda of NHM’s historic 1913 building, designed by Los Angeles architecture firm Hudson & Munsell. The 1913 building was recently restored and seismically strengthened, revealing exquisite details of the rotunda’s 58-foot dome and 20-foot skylight designed by Walter Horace Judson. The 1913 building is today listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



John Baldessari, *Micropainting*

Special Event!

Panel Discussion

Thursday, October 6, 2011; 7 pm; FREE

“Still Evolving: Art at the Natural History Museum, Then and Now”

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Larry Bell, Billy Al Bengston, and Betye Saar were emerging L.A. artists. NHM exhibited the work of all three. The trio comes together for this occasion to share stories about the L.A. art scene past and present. Moderated by Charlotte Eyerman.

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 L.A. Pop to post-minimalism; from modernist architecture and design to multi-media installations; from the films of the African American L.A. Rebellion to the feminist activities 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. Pacific Standard Time is an initiative of the Getty. The presenting sponsor is Bank of America.

About NHM

NHM is located at 900 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles, near downtown. It is open daily from 9:30 am to 5 pm. The Museum was the first dedicated museum building in Los Angeles, opening its doors in 1913. It has amassed one of the world's most extensive and valuable collections of natural and cultural history — with more than 35 million objects, some as old as 4.5 billion years. The Natural History Family of Museums includes the NHM, the Page Museum at the La Brea Tar Pits (Hancock Park/Mid-Wilshire), and the William S. Hart Park and Museum (Newhall, California).

Photo Credits

Mel Ramos, The Atom, 1962

50" x 44," Oil on canvas. Crocker Art Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Thiebaud, © Mel Ramos / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

Robert Irwin, Lucky U, 1960

15 5/8" x 15 3/8," Oil on canvas. Collection Joni and Monte Gordon, Los Angeles, © 2011 Robert Irwin / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

John Baldessari, Micropainting, 1960

10" x 9," Oil on canvas. Private Collection, Courtesy of Marian Goodman Gallery, © John Baldessari

###



Mel Ramos, *The Atom*, 1962

50" x 44," Oil on canvas. Crocker Art Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Thiebaud.
© Mel Ramos / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.



Howard Warshaw, *Cat's Skull*, ca. 1946

12" x 16," Red chalk, charcoal, ink. Courtesy of Denenberg Fine Arts, Inc.,
West Hollywood, CA. © Estate of Howard Warshaw.



Robert Irwin, *Lucky U*, 1960

15 5/8" x 15 3/8," Oil on canvas. Collection Joni and Monte Gordon, Los Angeles. ©
2011 Robert Irwin / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



Karl Benjamin, *Vertical Stripes #3*, 1959

42" x 48," Oil on canvas. ©Karl Benjamin, courtesy of Lois Stern
Fine Arts, Photograph by Gerard Vuilleumier.



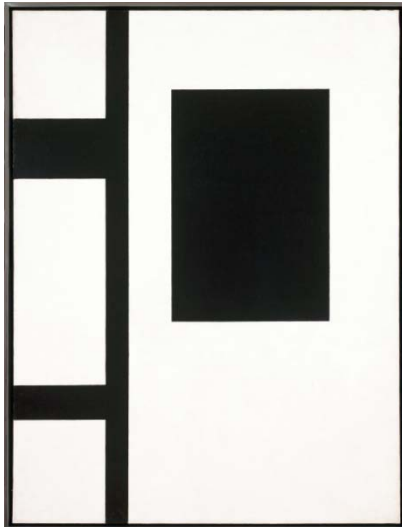
Ed Ruscha, *Annie*, 1965

20" x 22," Oil on canvas. Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, CA. Museum Purchase
with additional funds provided by the National Endowment for the Arts,
A Federal Agency. © Ed Ruscha.



John Baldessari, *Micropainting*, 1960

10" x 9," Oil on canvas. Private collection, courtesy of Marian
Goodman Gallery. © John Baldessari.



John D. McLaughlin, *Untitled Composition*, 1953
47 7/8" x 36," Oil on masonite. Collection Louis Stern Fine Arts, West Hollywood, CA. © Estate of John McLaughlin. Photograph by Gerard Vuilleumier.



Larry Bell, *Rice Tea, Encino*, ca. 1958-59
21 1/2" x 31 1/2," Watercolor. Collection of the Artist. © Larry Bell.
Photograph courtesy of Alan Shaffer Photography.



Frederick Hammersley, *Untitled Abstract Composition*, 1955
24" x 30," Oil on canvas. Collection Louis Stern Fine Arts, West Hollywood, California.
© Estate of Frederick Hammersley. Photograph by Gerard Vuilleumier.



John Altoon, *Untitled*, 1961
30" x 40," India ink. Museum Associates Purchase with Funds from the Junior Art Council. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California, USA. © Estate of John Altoon. Photo credit: digital image © 2009 Museum Associates / LACMA / Art Resource, NY.



Betye Saar, *Lo, The Pensive Peninsula*, 1961
21 1/2" x 27 1/2," Sepia etching. Courtesy of the Artist and Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York, NY. © Betye Saar.



Billy Al Bengston, *Gas Tank and Tachometer 2*, 1961
42" x 40," Oil on canvas. Collection of Ed Ruscha. © Billy Al Bengston. Photograph by Susan Haller.