

MEDIA CONTACT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Desire: Six Los Angeles Artists
July 18 - November 1, 2010



LEFT-RIGHT: Gajin Fujita, *Play Mate*, 2007, gold leaf, acrylic, paint marker, spray paint and Mean Streak on panel, 60 x 108 in., courtesy of LA Louver; Linda Stark, *Gypsy Love Potion*, 2007, oil, mixed media on canvas over panel, 9 x 9 inches, courtesy of Angles Gallery

Pasadena, CA - The Pasadena Museum of California Art (PMCA) is proud to present *Desire: Six Los Angeles Artists* from July 18 to October 31, 2010. The exhibition focuses on six Los Angeles-based artists whose works exemplify the contemporary landscape of desire in the City of Angels, a city known for commodifying sex through its various entertainment industries. Although desire is typically viewed only in terms of pleasure, these artists have also interpreted desire as a feature of alienation, spiritualism, consumerism, and cultural and gender identification. Featured artists include Gajin Fujita, David Grant, Iva Gueorguieva, Tom Knechtel, Monica Majoli, and Linda Stark.

With aesthetically opposite results, the works of Monica Majoli and Iva Gueorguieva view desire from an autobiographical vantage point. In her hauntingly beautiful and spare watercolors, Majoli approximates the contradictory yet simultaneous feelings of spiritual transcendence and loneliness that can result from an engagement with the desired in her serene depictions of S&M figures and past lovers. Gueorguieva also depicts emotional conflict through her narrative paintings by conflating explicit images with abstracted gestures, finding metaphors for passion and procreation in the act of painting itself. For both artists, the anomie that is characteristic of city life seems to influence their meditations on love and relationships.

The frenzied paintings Gajin Fujita view desire in terms of its societal implications. His appropriation of Japanese *shunga* erotica in his canvases, combined with graffiti, indicates his personal redemption of both his Japanese heritage and his East Los Angeles upbringing. The grittiness and explicit nature of his imagery perfectly capture the vibrancy of both cultures, using the metaphor of male virility to illustrate their newfound prominence in the era of globalism. In contrast, the assorted animals and figures in Tom Knechtel's paintings function in a free-associative way, deeply personal for the artist but deliberately vague in their roles as signifiers to the outside. The playfulness with which these characters engage in their sometimes hedonistic activities, however, parallels the pleasurable abandon and exaggerated sense of reality found in the work of Fujita.

Colorful and graphic, the works of Linda Stark and David Grant present desire as a formal exercise. The sculptural paintings of Stark relate to the painterly sculptures of Grant, and the pop sensibility of both echoes the Finish Fetish style specific to Los Angeles, but with the current return to handmade rather than machine-driven processes. With glossy finishes, candy colors and an engorged center, Linda Stark's works immediately speak to desire at first glance. Upon further inspection, one finds embedded in the many layers of oil paint insects, flowers, and trinkets representing historically talismanic objects. Grant, on the other hand, creates sculptures that resemble flowers and genitalia, but entice more by virtue of their color and texture than by any overtly salacious representation. Their playful interpretations of sex and love perhaps best represent the open-minded, somewhat reverential attitude towards sex that is often found in Los Angeles.

Desire: Six Los Angeles Artists is curated by PMCA Exhibition Manager Shirlae Cheng-Lifshin, who received her Masters Degree in Museum Studies and Art History from the University of Southern California, where she was the co-curator of the exhibition *Transfictions* at the Fisher Museum of Art. Since 2004, Cheng-Lifshin has overseen the PMCA's exhibitions and public programs, while also curating many of the museum's exhibitions and Project Room installations; most recently, *TRAFFIC!* and *Annie Lapin: Parallel Deliria Iteration*.



Iva Gueorguieva, *Absconding the Fog*,

OPENING RECEPTION

Saturday, July 17, 2010

7:00 – 10:00 pm

Opening Reception for *Desire: Six Los Angeles Artists, California Design Biennial: Action/Reaction* and Megan Geckler.

\$5 admission, Free for PMCA Members

RSVP: 626-568-3665, ext. 17

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About the PMCA:

The Pasadena Museum of California Art (PMCA) is dedicated to the exhibition of California art, architecture, and design from 1850 to the present. Informed by the state's rich mixture of cultures and inspired by its impressive geography, California art has long been defined by a spirit of freedom and experimentation. PMCA exhibitions and educational programs explore the cultural dynamics and influences unique to California that have shaped and defined art in all media.

Hours:

Wednesday – Sunday, 12:00 - 5:00 pm.

The Museum is closed July 4th, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas and New Year's Day.

Admission:

\$7 for Adults, \$5 for Seniors (65+) and Students with valid ID; free to PMCA Members and children under 12. Access for people with disabilities is provided.

Location/Parking:

The Museum is located at 490 East Union Street. From the 210 Freeway, take the Lake Avenue exit. Go south and take a right on Union Street. From the 110 Freeway/Downtown Los Angeles, follow the freeway until its end, then take Arroyo Parkway and turn right at Colorado, then left at Oakland to get to Union Street. Parking is available at the Museum.

PMCA Tours:

At this time, the museum does not offer regularly scheduled docent tours of our special exhibitions. However, docent tours are available to private groups for a fee of \$75. A non-refundable deposit of \$40 is due two weeks prior to the scheduled date in order to guarantee a tour. We regret that we are unable to accommodate tours for groups smaller than 10 or larger than 50 people. Before requesting a tour, please check the exhibition calendar to see which exhibitions will be available during your visit.

A discounted group rate of \$4 per person is available for groups of 20 or more, and free admission is offered to school groups of K-12 public school students. Please call to notify us at least one week in advance for these special admission rates.

For any questions or to make reservations for a tour or group rate, please call Shirlae Cheng-Lifshin at 626-568-3665 x17.

PMCA Information:

For information, the please call 626-568-3665 or visit the website: www.pmcaonline.org