



PRESS RELEASE

JIM MORPHEIS: Wounds of Existence

January 25–May 31, 2015



Destiny, 1982. Oil, magna, alkyd resin, and wood on wood panel,
68 x 64 inches. Collection of Laifun Chung and Ted Kotcheff.

Pasadena, CA — The Pasadena Museum of California Art (PMCA) is pleased to present *JIM MORPHEIS: Wounds of Existence*, an exhibition that examines the impressive oeuvre of one of the most influential members of the Neo-Expressionist art movement in Los Angeles. Taking its title from what Friedrich Nietzsche called “The Eternal Wounds of Existence,” the exhibition includes works spanning the past four decades. Like the work of Francis Bacon or Jean Dubuffet, Morphesis’s work examines the profound predicaments of human life and reflects the artist’s deep concern with the dehumanization of society over this and the last century.

Morphesis most often works serially on images and themes as varied as the Passion of Christ (influenced by his Eastern Orthodox heritage), nude torsos (inspired by Rembrandt and Soutine) and universal symbols of mortality such as skulls and roses. After a period of working abstractly, Morphesis turned to more specific religious iconography, encouraged by his Greek Orthodox upbringing in his native Philadelphia. He captures the Crucifixion through repeated images on panels layered with paint, charcoal, slabs of wood, fabric, cardboard, gold leaf, scrawled words and phrases, building the surfaces until the paintings appear as low reliefs. Morphesis’s paintings of the Passion are grounded in art history—sharing aspects of the Velasquez *Christ on the Cross* and Giovanni Bellini’s *Pieta*—but are made undeniably modern by his sensuous, textured surfaces.

Following the Passion series, Morphesis explored universal symbols of mortality through his paintings of skulls often juxtaposed with self-portraits or found objects. Many of his works, including his massive fleshy paintings of male and female torsos, are both beautiful and ominous. His most recent series of brilliant red roses in full bloom echo this abiding concern with mortality, their beauty made much more vibrant by the inevitability of tomorrow’s wilt.

The exhibition is organized by the Pasadena Museum of California Art and is curated by Peter Selz, Ph.D., and accompanied by a brochure.



Left: *Female Torso with Green Doors*, 1989. Oil, acrylic, gouache, charcoal, and collage on wood panel with wooden doors, 71 x 83 inches. Collection Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, CA; Gift of John and Phyllis Kleinberg.
Right: *Rose XV*, 2012. Oil, enamel, gouache, and collage on wood panel, 26 x 26 inches. Collection of the Artist.

Programs

Sunday, January 25, 2015 • 1:00pm

In Dialogue

The paintings of Jim Morpheus engage with the universal themes of the self, life, death, myth, and spirituality in personal and meaningful ways. Join the artist as he, exhibition curator Peter Selz, Ph.D., and independent curator Howard N. Fox discuss his oeuvre and its representation of life's triumphs and tragedies.

Saturday, January 31, 2015

SoCal Museums Free-for-All

Over twenty museums—presenting art, cultural heritage, natural history, and science—will open their doors and invite visitors free of charge. This offer is for general museum admission only and does not apply to specially ticketed exhibitions. For a list of participating museums and more information, visit socialmuseums.org.

Friday, March 13, 2015 • 6:00–10:00pm

ArtNight Pasadena

Enjoy free admission, extended hours, and complimentary shuttle transportation at the PMCA and other cultural destinations around Pasadena. For more information, visit artnightpasadena.org.

Saturday, April 25, 2015 • 1:00–5:00pm

Earth Day “Happening”

OFF-SITE EVENT @ Corita Art Center • 5515 Franklin Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90028

Corita's festive, participatory, highly-choreographed “Happenings” succeeded in breaking down barriers, encouraging creativity, and fostering a sense of community. In honor of Earth Day, the Corita Art Center presents a Corita-style “Happening” warm-up—followed by an earth-centric art lesson by former student, artist, and master teacher, Laurine DiRocco, hosted on the very grounds where Corita taught.

Part of a series of events leading up to the exhibition *Someday is Now: The Art of Corita Kent*—a full-scale survey of work by the innovative artist, activist, and teacher—opening in June 2015

Saturday, May 9, 2015 • 3:00–5:00pm

Family Day

Participate in fun art projects for the whole family based on our current exhibitions. Activities include painting, collaging, printmaking, and much more. All ages welcome!

Museum Information

MISSION

The mission of the Pasadena Museum of California Art (PMCA) is to present the breadth of California art and design through exhibitions that explore the cultural dynamics and influences that are unique to California.

HOURS

Open Wednesday–Sunday, 12–5pm; third Thursday of every month, 5–8pm; closed Mondays, Tuesdays, July 4, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s Day.

ADMISSION

\$7 for adults, \$5 for seniors and students; free for PMCA members and children under 12; free the first Friday of every month (12–5pm); free the third Thursday of every month (5–8pm). Access for people with disabilities is provided.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

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.

DOCENT TOURS AND GROUP RATES

The museum offers docent tours on the second Saturday of each month (2pm; free with admission). Docent tours are also available Wednesday–Friday, 12–5pm, to private groups for a fee of \$75. A non-refundable deposit of \$40 is due two weeks prior to the scheduled date. Self-guided tours for K–12 students are offered for free. We regret that we are unable to accommodate docent tours for groups larger than 35 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 \$3 per person is available for groups of 20 or more (K–12 student groups are free). 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, call our Bookstore and Membership Associate, Susan Wang, at 626.568.3665 x14 or email swang@pmcaonline.org.

For more information, please call 626.568.3665 or visit pmcaonline.org.