

**NEWS RELEASE  
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## **A Seed of Modernism: The Art Students League of Los Angeles January 20- April 13, 2008**

The Pasadena Museum of California Art (PMCA) is proud to present the first comprehensive museum exhibition and catalogue detailing the history of the Art Students League of Los Angeles. Founded in 1906 in the studio of Hanson Puthuff as a school where individuals could develop their artistic talents outside the academic tradition, the Art Students League of Los Angeles contributed to the development of modernism in Southern California. Although these gifted artists were trained primarily in traditional painting and drawing, they soon gravitated to the avant-garde styles of Post-Impressionism and abstract art. The League's role in the art history of Los Angeles can be measured by the diversity of artists that passed through its door and by the recognition of its contribution to the emergence of modernism on the West Coast in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



*Floral Still Life*, Luvena Vysekal, n.d. oil on board, on board, 21.5 x 23.5, collection of Mary and Anthony Podell

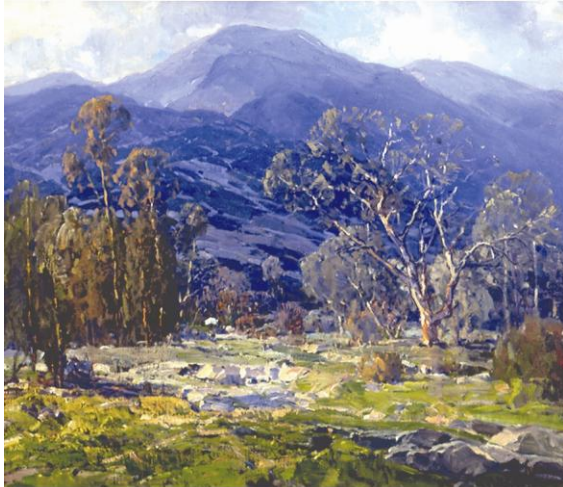
While the Art Students League of Los Angeles is mentioned in some publications on Southern California art, its importance as an art school has been overlooked and has never extensively been studied until now. The League “always stood for unacademic modernity in art instruction,” according to its co-founder, the *Los Angeles Times* art critic, Antony Anderson (1863-1939). Originally formed to offer afternoon and evening classes to individuals unable to attend a “regular academic school,” the League evolved into a mecca for those interested in the arts, philosophy and music.

Two of its early directors/teachers, Warren T. Hedges and Rex Slinkard, were both prodigies of Robert Henri, a member of the Ashcan school of Realist painters who encouraged individuality in the work of his students. Their early deaths left a void in the school, until Stanton Macdonald-Wright assumed the directorship in 1923 and restored the school to its former vitality. It was during his nine-year tenure that the League became



Randolph Chalfant Head, *Untitled [abstract]*, n.d., oil on canvas, 22 x 16 in., Collection of Randolph C. Head

even more diverse, stressing the art and philosophies of Western Europe and the Middle and Far East. Consequently, a unique style emerged at the League—the



Hanson Puthuff, *Transient Shadows*. c. 1926, oil on canvas, 26 x 30 in., The Buck Collection

blending of Japanese art techniques and themes along with Macdonald-Wright's color theories—that deeply influenced both the Asian and non-Asian students. This influence may also be seen in examples of WPA murals and paintings created by League members.

In 1932, Macdonald-Wright stepped down as director, and James Redmond, Don Totten and Benji Okubo, who had been disciples of Macdonald-Wright assumed control of the League. After Pearl Harbor and the incarceration of Japanese Americans, former Macdonald-Wright students, Okubo and Hideo Date, established an Art Students League modeled upon its predecessor at the Heart

Mountain Concentration Camp in Wyoming from 1942 until 1945. Fred Sexton, another former Macdonald-Wright student, revived the League in Los Angeles in 1949, continuing in the tradition until its final closing in 1953.

Over one hundred works of art along with relevant photographs and study material will be displayed. The catalogue presenting the League's history and development in Los Angeles is written by scholars Dr. Will South, Marian Yoshiki-Kovinick, and Julia Armstrong-Totten. In addition, the catalogue will contain a detailed chronology written by Phil Kovinick.

### **Exhibition Information**

What	A Seed of Modernism: The Art Students League of Los Angeles
When	January 20 – April 13, 2008
Hours	Wed. – Sun. 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Where	490 E Union St. Pasadena, CA. 91101
Admission	\$6, \$4 Seniors/Students
Parking	Free in the museum garage
Phone	626.568.3665
URL	<a href="http://www.pmcaonline.org">www.pmcaonline.org</a>

### **Opening Event**

Saturday, January 19, 2008

7:00 – 9:00 pm

\$5 admission, free for PMCA members

Wine and music

Also opening: *Timothy J. Clark: A Retrospective* and *Dane Picard: Screen Deaths: Visitations*

### **Programs**

#### **Sunday, January 20, 2008**

A special reception with a lecture and a tour by Marian Yoshiki-Kovinick and Julia Armstrong-Totten, exhibition curators and scholars.

Also on hand will be *Timothy J. Clark: A Retrospective* curator Jean Stern and artist Timothy Clark who will give a joint tour of the back gallery exhibition. Wine and hors d'oeuvres.

3-6pm

For more information call 626-568-3665 x12

#### **Saturday, February 9, 2008**

Curators Walkthrough for *A Seed of Modernism: The Art Students League of Los Angeles*

2-3pm

Free with admission, Free for members

#### **Saturday, March 18, 2008**

Panel Discussion about *A Seed of Modernism: The Art Students League of Los Angeles*

3-4pm

Free with admission, Free for members