

MEDIA CONTACT

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You See: The Early Years of The UC Davis Studio Art Faculty
May 31 – September 20, 2009



LEFT: Manuel Neri, *Dead Bee*, n.d., Mixed media on paper and cardboard none, bee 4 x 6 x 3", box 5 x 6 x 4", Collection of Richard L. Nelson Gallery, University of California, Davis

RIGHT: Wayne Thiebaud, *Sun Fruit*, 1963, Oil on canvas, 12" x 14", Collection of Richard L. Nelson Gallery, University of California, Davis

Pasadena, CA - The Pasadena Museum of California Art (PMCA) is pleased to present the largest public exhibition of work by UC Davis faculty members Robert Arneson, Roy De Forest, Manuel Neri, Wayne Thiebaud and William T. Wiley -- five of the most significant artists ever to live and work in Northern California -- in a new exhibition of 36 rarely seen works from the UC Davis Nelson Gallery's permanent collection.

"History was made in the Central Valley in the early '60s when five great artists came together on the same faculty for over a decade and changed the nature and perception of art in California forever," said Nelson Gallery Director Renny Pritikin.

The exhibition will include *The Palace at 9 a.m.*, Arneson's enormous ceramic ode to his '50s-era Davis tract home. The sculpture will anchor the show, together with three Thiebaud masterworks

and three of Neri's most admired figurative sculptures. *Crash*, Arneson's bronze homage to Jackson Pollock, is also included, together with paintings, drawings and prints by De Forest and Wiley.

All five artists came to teach at UC Davis between 1960 and 1965. Thiebaud, at 86 one of the most popular and respected American painters of the 20th century, continues to teach UC Davis art students. Arneson, who played a critical role in the elevation of ceramics from craft to fine art, remained on the faculty until his death from cancer in 1992 at age 62. Neri, regarded as one of America's most important figurative sculptors and the leading Latino artist of his generation, was a faculty member for 25 years. De Forest, who died in May at age 77, also spent nearly a quarter century on the faculty, amassing a body of work that continues to reflect and shape Northern California culture today. Wiley, who developed perhaps the most original and influential drawing style of his time, spent a decade teaching and creating art on the Davis campus. The three surviving artists continue to make strong work well into their 60s, 70s and beyond.

The five Davis artists are sometimes identified with "California funk," characterized by bawdy irreverence, iconoclasm and self-deprecating humor.

"This was an era when many intellectuals wanted to step back from high-minded, idealist projects and metaphorically bring it all back home again -- to become grounded again after the upheavals of the 1960s, to take possession of the country after the derangements of American engagement in Vietnam and Civil Rights," says UC Davis art historian Simon Sadler, who wrote an essay for the "You See" exhibit catalog.

Julia Marshall, an art historian at San Francisco State University, wrote a teacher's guide for the exhibition, intended to help elementary and secondary school teachers use the *You See* as a springboard to introduce a new generation to Bay Area modern art.

"The UC Davis campus was originally an offshoot of the Bay Area art world but soon became a center of its own, one that in many ways eclipsed the Bay Area scene and invigorated and shaped the entire region," she wrote. "Perhaps the biggest accomplishment of the Davis/Bay Area artists at this time was the development of an alternative to New York, a regional art that spoke to and for Northern California and replaced the pretensions of the East Coast art world with an earthy, honest and vital local West Coast authenticity.

"Whether it is Neri's serious and raw explorations of human existence, Wiley's mystical contemplations, Arneson's investigation of his identity, Thiebaud's celebration of the everyday, or De Forest's happy fantasies, this is not a highly intellectual art removed from life; it is engaged with life."

Funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, *You See* examines how a small art department in a rural liberal arts university, best known for its science, health and agriculture programs, made American art history by pulling together a remarkable faculty of innovative major artists in the sixties and seventies. Thiebaud's retrospective *Wayne Thiebaud: 70 Years of Painting* comes to the museum in October 2009.



Roy De Forest, *Every Trapper Should Have A Indian Dog*, 1960, oil, acrylic, polyvinyl acetate on canvas, 68.5" x 70.75", Collection of Richard L. Nelson Gallery, University of California, Davis

OPENING RECEPTION

Saturday, May 30, 2009

7:00 – 9:00 pm

Opening Reception for *You See: The Early Years of The UC Davis Studio Art Faculty*, *Traffic*, *Edith Heath: Tabletop Modernist*, *Annie Lapin: Parallel Deliria Iteration*

\$5 admission

Free for PMCA Members

RSVP: 626-568-3665, ext. 14

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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 at 626-568-3665 x17.

PMCA Information:

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