

MEDIA CONTACT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***Getting Upper:
Graphic Designers and Artists Reconsider the Alphabet***
May 15, 2011 - September 4, 2011



LEFT-RIGHT: Keith Knueven, *F*, 2011; Justine Mendoza, *X*, 2011

PASADENA, CA - The Pasadena Museum of California Art (PMCA) is proud to present *Getting Upper: Graphic Designers and Artists Reconsider the Alphabet*, an exhibition of screen printed posters by some of the state's best known and most accomplished graphic designers and artists in the museum's Project Room. Curator Amos Klausner charged twenty-six designers with re-imagining a letter from the alphabet using the illegibility and deconstructive nature of graffiti as a starting point and inspiration. The result is an alphabet that reconsiders our collective understanding of what a letter can be and how it functions to create language and meaning.

While researching the history of the modern graffiti movement, Klausner saw how today's graffiti artists are deconstructing letters — with a nod to architecture and within the context of reshaping language. It inspired him to look at how graphic designers could take traditional letters, the

workhorses of the trade, and without an expectation of legibility, redesign them based on their own narrative and experience.

In talking about the project Klausner explains, "I'm interested in language-based experimentation and the ways it can empower people or unlock new avenues of cultural expression. If 'getting up' describes the recognition that comes with frequent graffiti tagging, I like to say that 'getting upper' is what's necessary to break free from rules, from the culture of global marketing, and at times, from legibility itself." The resulting 26 works are as diverse and distinctive as the artists who created them.

Amos Klausner, a former director of the San Francisco chapter of the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA), also curated the PMCA exhibition *Edith Heath: Tabletop Modernist*.

Each of the final 26 letters has been published as a limited edition run of 100 silk-screened posters. The posters will be exhibited as a complete alphabet while individual letters will be made available for sale at the museum store and online. The production of these posters has been made possible through the generous support of Mohawk Paper Mills and Bloom Press.

Graphic designers and artists featured in this exhibition include: Martin Venezky, Mike Giant, Rebeca Mendez, Kali Nikitas, Caryn Aono, Gail Swanlund, Eric Adigard, Mark Fox, Bob Aufuldish, Brian Singer, Michael Worthington, Lisa Anne Auerbach, Volume Inc., and more. Concurrent with *Getting Upper* will be *Street Cred: Graffiti Art from Concrete to Canvas*, a group exhibition in the Main Gallery featuring paintings, sculptures, and works on paper by a selection of Los Angeles' most renowned and innovative graffiti artists.



Jon Sueda, S, 2010

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

OPENING RECEPTION

Saturday, May 14, 2011

7:00 – 10:00 pm

Opening Reception for *Getting Upper: Graphic Designers and Artists Reconsider the Alphabet*; *Clayton Brothers: Inside Out*; *Street Cred: Graffiti Art from Concrete to Canvas*.

\$5 admission

Free for PMCA Members

***Getting Upper* Panel Discussion**

Thursday, June 9, 2011

7:00 - 9:00 pm

The PMCA and the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) co-present a panel discussion on language-based experimentation in conjunction with *Getting Upper*. The panel features graphic designers Rebeca Mendez, Kali Nikitas and Jon Sueda, with independent curator Amos Klausner moderating.

FREE

RSVP to EventBrite (please see pmcaonline.org for details)

Family Day

Sunday, June 26, 2011

3:00 – 5:00 pm

Come participate in fun art projects for the whole family based on our current exhibitions. All ages are welcome. Refreshments provided.

Free with admission

Free for PMCA Members

RSVP to 626-568-3665 x17

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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