

## **Pacific Standard Time: Initiative on Southern California Art**

Pacific Standard Time (PST): Art in LA 1945-1980, a multi-venue Los Angeles art exhibition, looked back at, defined and documented LA (and adjacent cities) post-war art as it emerged onto the international art scene; PST, focusing on the people who made this movement happen and on the works they produced. PST ran from the fall of 2011 through early spring 2012.



**Edward Ruscha, *The Back of Hollywood*, 1977, at MOCA, Getty Foundation Initiative**

Pacific Standard Time, a collaboration of 100-plus museums and galleries, was initiated by the [Getty Foundation](#) to feature art of the post-war period. This initiative was established through grants of nearly \$10 million and coordinated with the Getty Research Institute. With participating art venues from San Diego to Los Angeles to Santa Barbara, east to Riverside and Palm Springs, PST represents a vast array of art styles under one movement.

Pacific Standard Time emphasized that the genesis and development of Los Angeles as a major art capital occurred in the decades following World War II. Life-changing events included the advent of the counterculture revolution, the opening of several emerging art schools here, and the development of the aerospace industry. The latter helped draw attention to this area, while providing artists with a variety of techniques and materials, including malleable plastics and acrylic resin/polymer emulsion paint that many (particularly California Light and Space artists) incorporated into their works. PST is a narrative of that great change.

### **LA - An Art Capital**

Consequently, Los Angeles (and surrounding environs) has become today an art capital, as important as New York, Berlin and London. The area has many significant museums. There are excellent art schools, and an active coterie of artists from those in their twenties to veterans of early LA art movements, now in their eighties.



Harry Gamboa Jr., *Asco Decoy Gang War*, 1974, at LACMA

Responding to the Getty initiative, many dozen public and private art venues have researched the works of numerous artists, art forms and styles, creating exhibitions that individually and altogether define this comprehensive period; this research is documented in about 40 catalogs.

Pacific Standard Time exhibitions featured: particular styles of art; specific artists and movements. Each participating institution makes its own contribution to this story of artistic innovation and social change, told through numerous displays and programs. PST encompasses L.A. Pop to postminimalism; modernist architecture and design to multi-media installations; the films of the African American L.A. Rebellion to the feminist activities of the Woman's Building; ceramics to Chicano performance art; and Japanese American design to the pioneering work of artists' collectives.

PST exhibitions demonstrated that many artists working during this PST period experimented with their art in supportive settings, often unfettered by academic or commercial pressures. The result is artwork of varied styles, medias and disciplines, most with honesty, integrity and depth of subject matter.

### **MOCA Exhibition**

Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Chief Curator Paul Schimmel, who organized its Pacific Standard Time exhibition [Under the Big Black Sun], wrote in the show's catalog, "It was an 'in-between' time when diversity and experimentation were the rule of the day, as some scrambled to find the next 'important' trend while others took advantage of boundaries coming down to

forge connections between previously distinct realms of practice, such as photography and conceptual art, or media critique and performance art...



**Robert Colescott, *My Shadow*, 1977, at MOCA**

"California had a special role to play as artists began to question seriously the assumptions of modernism - with its obvious connections to the similarly authoritative moral, political, and social institutions that were crumbling all around as well as the primacy of New York in determining what was art-historically valid."

Pacific Standard Time was an opportunity to learn about the emergence of Los Angeles as a major art center, its concurrent influence on the development of art nationwide, and about this art capital's increasing worldwide recognition, while enjoying works of many different styles and media.

On November 1, 2012, a study by Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation announced, "Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A., 1945-1980" spurred the economy by more than \$280 million and supported

almost 2,500 jobs in Southern California.” Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa said. "Pacific Standard Time solidified Los Angeles' place in art history and celebrated the regio's artistic contributions to society. But it provided Angelenos more tangible benefits as well, through creating jobs, driving tourism to the region and increasing the economic activity that generates revenue to fund public services."

Pacificstandardtime.org

*Liz Goldner*