

Getty Foundation Art Initiative



Ken Price, *BG Red*, 1963, fired clay with acrylic

The Getty Foundation Pacific Standard Time: Art in LA 1945-1980 (PST) region-wide art initiative (Oct. 2011 through March 2012) was composed of an astounding series of exhibitions in many forms and styles. On display at more than 100 SoCal cultural institutions, museums, galleries and performance venues, this movement was broad in scope and deep in scholarship.

The focus of this first Pacific Standard Time art initiative was postwar modern and contemporary art in Southern California. It was based on comprehensive research into this period and the publication of more than 40 catalogs. The engine running this initiative was this area's far-flung, yet cohesive community of art venues, artists, art schools and collectors.

Pacific Standard Time, with its generous Getty Foundation grants, featured work by thousands of artists, working in painting, sculpture, assemblage, photography, print work, furniture, installations, video and performance. The broad range of media included ceramics, plastics, resins, glass, chrome, bricks and car parts, while movements ranged from Abstract Expressionism to Hard Edge Painting to L.A. Pop to Conceptualism to Light and Space. There was even an Airstream Trailer, a Studebaker Avanti and Rudi

Gernreich's red knit dress at the L.A. County Museum of Art's "California Design" display, featuring functional and wearable art from the mid-20th century.

After World War II, Southern California began to transform into one of the nation's most important cultural capitals. Contributing to this dynamic growth was the opening of museums and galleries from San Diego to Santa Barbara, from Santa Monica to Palm Springs. There were also several new art colleges and the influx of numerous artists and the advent of the counterculture.



Ronald Davis, *Black Tear*, 1969, molded polyester resin and fiberglass

The expansion of the aerospace industry and its development of new materials drew attention to this area. Artists working in the "Finish Fetish" style borrowed this industry's new polyester resins; they created luminous sculptural works, polished to a high gloss. Several of these pieces were installed in the Getty Museum's Crosscurrents PST exhibition. Included were Peter Alexander's "Cloud Box," a cast polyester cube with fluffy clouds floating within, Frederick Eversley's circular see-through piece of three-layer cast polyester that changed colors and shape as the viewer moved around it, Ronald Davis' "Vector and Black Tear," a pair of large 12-sided wall sculptures of poured colored polyester resin, and DeWain Valentine's flawlessly polished "Red Concave Circle." Artist Helen Pashgian explained in a Getty catalog that the intention of these works, "is to be able to interact with the piece...to see into it, to see through it."

Pacific Standard Time was initiated in 2002 by the Getty Foundation and Getty Research Institute. With grants of more than \$11 million, the goal was to present exhibitions to, "preserve, explore and redefine Southern California art from the post-World War II era through the turbulent 1960s and 1970s," according to the Foundation. Deborah Marrow, formerly Director, Getty Foundation, stated, "The great legacy of Pacific Standard Time is that it has heightened awareness about the significance of art in Los Angeles and created a tremendous historical resource for future research and projects."

These exhibitions affirmed the magnanimity of this Getty Foundation initiative, of its ability to encapsulate and document these seminal, yet nearly forgotten post war artworks and to bring them to public attention.