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THE GETTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE PRESENTS
Greetings from L.A.: Artists and Publics, 1950–1980

At the Getty Research Institute, Getty Center
October 1, 2011 – February 5, 2012

At the Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin
March 15 – June 10, 2012



[Installation of The Artists' Tower of Protest], 1966. Charles Brittin (American, 1928 – 2011). Silver dye bleach print. Charles Brittin papers, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2005.M.11.37). © J. Paul Getty Trust

LOS ANGELES— ***Greetings from L.A.: Artists and Publics, 1950–1980***, on view at the Getty Research Institute from October 1, 2011 – February 5, 2012, surveys the emergence of a community of artists who developed innovative strategies for reaching out to, and even creating, diverse and varied publics.

Drawn from the Getty Research Institute's extensive archives of Los Angeles art, this exhibition features over 200 objects including photographs, ephemera, correspondence, and artwork—many on view for the first time. Part of *Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A., 1945–1980*, a Getty-led initiative designed to spotlight the dynamic postwar art scene in Southern California, ***Greetings from L.A.*** reveals how these artists, by engaging a wide range of different viewers and audiences, rethought ways art could intervene in the public sphere.

"The Getty Research Institute has pioneered research in this area, and has assembled one of the world's foremost archives related to postwar art in Southern California," says Thomas Gaehtgens, director of the Getty Research Institute. "*Pacific Standard Time* gives us the opportunity to share this remarkable collection and demonstrate the depth and breadth of our scholarship in this fascinating era. The exhibition also demonstrates the originality of L.A. art as well as its international connections."

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Greetings from L.A. opens with *Making the Scene*, a survey of the region's galleries as they developed from the 1950s through the 1970s. It acquaints the visitor with dealers and collectors who congregated on La Cienega Boulevard, such as Rolf Nelson, Riko Mizuno, and Betty Asher, and who contributed to the city's reputation as a hotbed for modern art. It also introduces less well-known venues active in Pasadena and other parts of the Southland.

Public Disturbances, the exhibition's second section, presents three important exhibitions that resulted in censure, and even arrest. This includes Wallace Berman's 1957 Ferus Gallery exhibition, and the police shutdown that followed; the 1961 controversy surrounding the "War Babies" exhibition at Henry Hopkins' Huysman Gallery; and the showdown between the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors over the inclusion of *Back Seat Dodge '38* at Ed Kienholz's 1966 museum retrospective.

The next section, *Private Assembly*, focuses on the unique artwork created by Berman, George Herms, Charles Brittin, and their circle in the fifties and sixties. The intimacy of these pieces resides not only in the distinctive traces of the artist's hand they bear, but also in their circulation among a select, almost private, audience. Largely operating outside the commercial gallery system, this group of assemblage artists focused their energies on private artworks that were distributed in person or by mail, as tokens of friendship.

By contrast, the fourth section presents artists who took the Mass Media as a model for their own artistic practice. Extending Pop Art's emphasis on popular culture into conceptual art's turn away from the traditional artwork, Ed Ruscha, Allen Ruppersberg, and Chris Burden looked to popular culture and mass production for alternative means of production and distribution. They worked with impersonal forms, such as commercially produced pieces sold as consumer goods, or even art that functioned as advertising. Bypassing conventional exhibition space to reach new audiences, these artists adopted an anonymous mode of address, one in which the identity of the artist and the viewer became secondary.

Art School as Audience, the exhibition's fifth section, illustrates the vital role that art schools played in the development of contemporary art, serving as important havens where, among other lessons, artists learned to be each other's viewers. CalArts and its predecessor, the Chouinard Art Institute, served as one central artistic community, as can be seen in the work of its students Ed Ruscha and Joe Goode, and its faculty, among them, John Baldessari, Miriam Schapiro, and Judy Chicago. Other important forums were the new departments of art that blossomed across the region's colleges and universities. The campuses at Irvine and San

Diego especially provided supportive audiences for experimentation by artists such as Martha Rosler, Barbara Smith, and Eleanor Antin.

The final section, *The Art of Protest*, investigates how social and political movements mobilized artists to take their work into the streets. In the 1960s, Los Angeles became the site of the first artist-led protests against the Vietnam War. The resulting *Peace Tower* (1966), built at the start of what was then the La Cienega gallery row, continues to serve as an inspiration for artistic activism. In the following decade, feminism similarly galvanized many artists to make social interventions through their work, as can be seen in Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Starus-Labowitz's *In Mourning and In Rage* (1977), a widely covered protest performance staged on the steps of City Hall.

"*Greetings from L.A.* offers a new perspective on art in Southern California by considering how, through unsettling conventional relationships between art and its audience, artists working in the region developed alternatives for art's public role and its place in society," says the GRI's John Tain, who curated the exhibition. "The archival materials reveal the novel forms and strategies devised by a range of artists for engaging, but also re-imagining, their publics."

The exhibition draws on the recently acquired archives of Betty Asher, Hal Glicksman, George Herms, Wolfgang Stoerchle, *High Performance* magazine, and the Rolf Nelson, Mizuno, and Jan Baum galleries, as well as the papers of Charles Brittin and Edmund Teske. They are supplemented by material from archives not typically associated with Southern California, such as the papers of New York-based art critics Irving Sandler and Barbara Rose and Lawrence Alloway, New Museum founder and curator Marcia Tucker; and the Kasmin Gallery in London.

Greetings from L.A. is currently scheduled to travel to [Berlin's Martin-Gropius-Bau](#) from [March 15 through June 10, 2012](#), together with the Getty Museum's exhibition, *Pacific Standard Time: Crosscurrents in L.A. Painting and Sculpture, 1950–1970*.

Greetings from L.A.: Artists and Publics, 1950–1980 is curated by John Tain, assistant curator of modern and contemporary collections at the GRI, with the assistance of Linde Brady, GRI research assistant.

Related exhibition events include a symposium on artists and archives, public programs and curator-led tours.

Note to editor: Object list available upon request

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The J. Paul Getty Trust is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that includes the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Getty Foundation. The J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs serve a varied audience from two locations: the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the Getty Villa in Malibu.

The Getty Research Institute is an operating program of the J. Paul Getty Trust. It serves education in the broadest sense by increasing knowledge and understanding about art and its history through advanced research. The Research Institute provides intellectual leadership through its research, exhibition, and publication programs and provides service to a wide range of scholars worldwide through residencies, fellowships, online resources, and a Research Library. The Research Library - housed in the 201,000-square-foot Research Institute building designed by Richard Meier - is one of the largest art and architecture libraries in the world. The general library collections (secondary sources) include almost 900,000 volumes of books, periodicals, and auction catalogues encompassing the history of Western art and related fields in the humanities. The Research Library's special collections include rare books, artists' journals, sketchbooks, architectural drawings and models, photographs, and archival materials.

About *Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A., 1945–1980*

Pacific Standard Time is a collaboration of more than sixty cultural institutions across Southern California, coming together for six months beginning in October 2011 to tell the story of the birth of the Los Angeles art scene and how it became a major new force in the art world. Each institution will make its own contribution to this grand-scale story of artistic innovation and social change, told through a multitude of simultaneous exhibitions and programs. Exploring and celebrating the significance of the crucial years after World War II through the tumultuous period of the 1960s and 70s, Pacific Standard Time encompasses developments from L.A. Pop to post-minimalism; from modernist architecture and design to multi-media installations; from the films of the African-American L.A. Rebellion to the feminist activities of the Woman's Building; from ceramics to Chicano performance art; and from Japanese-American design to the pioneering work of artists' collectives. Initiated through \$10 million in grants from the Getty Foundation, Pacific Standard Time involves cultural institutions of every size and character across Southern California, from Greater Los Angeles to San Diego and Santa Barbara to Palm Springs. Pacific Standard Time is an initiative of the Getty. The presenting sponsor is Bank of America.

Visiting the Getty Center

The Getty Center is open Tuesday through Friday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. It is closed Monday and major holidays. Admission to the Getty Center is always free. Parking is \$15 per car, but free after 5pm on Saturdays and for evening events throughout the week. No reservation is required for parking or general admission. Reservations are required for event seating and groups of 15 or more. Please call 310-440-7300 (English or Spanish) for reservations and information. The TTY line for callers who are deaf or hearing impaired is 310-440-7305. The Getty Center is at 1200 Getty Center Drive, Los Angeles, California

Additional information is available at www.getty.edu.