

The Getty Research Institute presents:

panel discussion & performance

Modern Art in Los Angeles: Okies Go West An Evening with Jerry McMillan, Ed Ruscha, and Mason Williams

Wednesday, January 24, 2007
7:30 p.m.

Harold M. Williams Auditorium, The Getty Center



Ed Ruscha, Jerry McMillan, and Mason Williams in McMillan's Studio, 1972



Ed Ruscha's photo of a car on a stick that he planted in the yard of the home he shared with McMillan and other students at Chouinard, 1959

Photographs by and courtesy of Jerry McMillan

panel discussion performance

In the 1950s, Oklahoma City produced three young men who would go on to have a profound influence on American photography, art, and music: Jerry McMillan, Ed Ruscha, and Mason Williams. They were childhood friends, neighbors, and classmates who, fresh from high school, drove west on Route 66 toward the seductive allure of California in pursuit of their artistic goals.

Once in Los Angeles, McMillan and Ruscha lived together in an apartment in Hollywood, shared one car, and worked at Cassell's Patio restaurant while studying commercial art at the Chouinard Art Institute. Although Williams's stint in the U.S. Navy prevented him from being a housemate, they each began to develop the talents that would make them distinguished artists in their respective fields.

McMillan initially focused on design, advertising, and abstract painting; later he would become known for his ground-breaking use of photography, particularly in his "photosculptures." Ruscha, meanwhile, transitioned away from commercial art to a lifelong preoccupation with vernacular language and culture, which he explored in his paintings, books, and works on paper. While in the Navy, Williams began his recording career. Though later hired as a comedy writer for the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour, he continued as a songwriter and became an award-winning composer and recording artist. The three artists have continued their friendship and artistic dialogue for more than fifty years.

This panel discussion brings these friends together to discuss their transition from Oklahoma to the City of Angels, their early careers, and the formation of an art scene in Los Angeles. Join us after the discussion for a musical performance by Mason Williams.

Admission to this event is free. To attend, please make a reservation by visiting www.getty.edu or calling (310) 440-7300. Note, late arrivals cannot be guaranteed seating. Parking is \$8.00 per car.

The Getty Research Institute is a program of the J. Paul Getty Trust. Other programs of the Trust include the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Getty Foundation.



The Getty Research Institute

1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 1100
Los Angeles, CA 90049-1688
www.getty.edu