

SECOND WAVE

Aesthetics of the 80s in Today's Contemporary Art

SECOND WAVE: Aesthetics of the 80s in Today's Contemporary Art explores the influences of the artistic styles and subject matter from the artists in the 1980s on a new generation of artists, who were born or raised in this period, and have expressed the importance of this decade from nearly thirty years ago on their own work.

The art world of the 1980s was a decade that saw the resurgence of painting, exploration of authenticity, the employment of appropriation, an embrace and critique of consumerism, along with the rise of graffiti art, gay activism, and multiculturalism. While not an exhaustive list, some of the more familiar artists associated with this time include Jean-Michel Basquiat, Ross Bleckner, Eric Fischl, Jack Goldstein, Gran Fury, Guerilla Girls, Peter Halley, Keith Haring, Jeff Koons, Barbara Kruger, Sherrie Levine, Robert Longo, David Salle, Julian Schnabel, Cindy Sherman, and Mark Tansey.

From a grand narrative perspective, much of the spirit behind their work could be viewed as a reaction to the prior decade of the 1970s that saw a rise of “anti-aesthetic” work with conceptual art, process art, earth art, and performance. The rising profile of the artist's voice that occurred in the 1980s might be best symbolized by the “culture wars” that happened at the end of the decade when senator Jesse Helms attacked the National Endowment for the Arts for supporting work that made visible what had been repressed socially: sexuality, desire, power, and more. In other words, the artist's voice was having such an impact that it attracted the attention of a senator, although negatively, and was underscored by the political atmosphere emboldened by Reaganomic deregulation.

Several exhibitions in the past ten years that have revisited the 1980s include *American Art of the 1980s: Selections From the Broad Collections* at the Gallery of Art at Washington University in St. Louis (2003); *Circa 1986* at the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, Peekskill, NY (2011); The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago's *This Will Have Been: Art, Love & Politics in the 1980s* (2013); and *Take It or Leave It: Institution, Image, Ideology* at the Hammer Museum, UCLA (2014), which surveyed the use of appropriation and institutional critique in art from the 1980s. Additionally, there have been retrospective exhibitions of artists from the 80s, such as *Jack Goldstein X 10,000* at Orange County Museum of Art (2012), focusing on an artist who helped initiate an avant-garde art movement referred to as the “Pictures Generation.” It is clear that there are mixed feelings about the decade contained within these titles. The resonance of the decade that they examine has only become more powerful over time, and is manifested in a new generation of artists who were

born and raised in the 1980s, but have only begun their artistic careers in the past five years. This dialogue between the decades is reflected in the title of the exhibition.

While the exhibition does not include works by the artists from the 1980s, it does, however, feature works by contemporary artists who have expressed how the 1980s has impacted their own work. The exhibition is organized loosely around aesthetic trajectories that are identified with the 1980s, such as Appropriation, Feminism, Graffiti Art, Neo-Expressionism, Neo-Geometric Conceptualism, Neo-Pop, Mass Media, and Identity Politics. A selection of artists in *SECOND WAVE* made the connections between a recent past art history and current studio practice. One note of distinction is that these artists have established their careers in Los Angeles and the southern California region. This is meant as a purposeful counterpoint to the careers of the artists in the 1980s that were established in the New York art world. Although, several studied in Los Angeles schools, such as California Institute of the Arts and UCLA, they then departed for the city where careers were being made at the time. However, it was in the 1990s and 2000s that Los Angeles' stature rose on an international level; a sentiment that underscores the selection of artists in *SECOND WAVE*.

OVERVIEW OF WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

The 80s saw resurgence in painting after being rejected by the 1970s avant-garde. Neo-expressionists, such as Jean-Michel Basquiat, Anselm Kiefer, and Julian Schnabel brought back figurative art. Content for art making was increasingly becoming rich as the era was being saturated with media from cable T.V. to video cameras and the personal computer. With these new technologies made accessible to the general public, painting began to dialogue with these electronic media.

A counterpart to this notion in *SECOND WAVE* is **Gregory Eberhardt's** painting *Bogey Downers* (2015), which unites two systems of visual images and information transmittal -- the television and the Internet. He combines figurative and abstract imagery to a complicated narrative illustrating the lost of visual information struggling for clarity through a hazy frequency. His intense mark making is achieved by the overlapping of figures that represent a blurring of viral images circulating the Internet. In the spirit of extreme demonstration of texture and expression of color in Neo-Expressionist paintings, **Jordan Christian's** work evoke an intense subjectivity of feeling and aggressive handling of materials. His works *Linda* and *Grunewald* (2011) are homages associated to him and are painted as phantom figures rather than as immediate bodies.

Commenting on the role of the artist in society, authorial authenticity, gender roles, and rampant consumerism, works featured by **D. Hill, Lisa Lapinski, Conrad Ruiz, Shizu Saldamando** and **Emilio Santoyo** touch on these issues. Their works grapple with the influence of images in the same regard as Jeff Wall's series of light boxes or Barbara Kruger's graphic design inspired slogans that incorporate the same techniques of advertising. They were also interested, in part, in revealing how the tropes of production influenced received meaning in a media-saturated society, along with other artists who explored this genre are painter Robert Longo and photographers Sherrie Levine and Cindy Sherman.

Selected artists in the exhibition examine topics that deal with identity. D. Hill's photographs and videos hover between commercial media and gender. His work take note from popular 80s music videos investigating the complexity and conventional ideas of femininity and masculinity. Lapinsky turned to painting and photography to explore history and narratives of objects to create a new meaning. Her untitled series featuring women drawn in the style of Patrick Nagel, examines the repetition of space and time. Ruiz's paintings reveal properties found in Hyperrealism prompted by comic books, video game or science fiction, while exploring adolescent impulses and male vulnerability. Salamando's portraits steer intense dedication to detail and focus on identity and subcultures. Her drawings of friends situated within large negative spaces share a kinship with the composition of Robert Longo's *Men in the Cities* series from the 1980s. Santoyo's paintings imply the genre of Neo-Pop in which he equates popular brand name products from the 80s to the identity of consumer behavior.

In the 80s, Graffiti art found its most popular voice with artists such as Keith Haring and Kenny Scharf, who worked in both the streets and in the studio. In *SECOND WAVE*, **Kristofferson San Pablo** repurposes the concept of graffiti art from its traditions by bringing elements found in urban environs inside an institution. His *Punk Dancing For Self Defense, Part 2* (2015) is a multimedia installation that takes a renegade approach in disrupting the art gallery's pristine white walls and appending a constellation of his own illustrations and paintings. The statement of this work is a whimsical play of deinstitutionalizing both graffiti as an art form found in the public space and the gallery as facility that houses fine art genres.

Neo-Geometric Conceptualism (Neo-Geo) was a reemergence of geometric art influenced by the style of earlier developments in twentieth century such as minimalism, pop art and op art. Artists producing Neo-Geo works in the 1980s include Peter Halley, Ashley Bickerton, Phillip Taaffe, and the Memphis design of Etto Stossass. Halley, who was strongly influenced by French theorist Jean Baudrillard, described the geometric form as a metaphor for the materialism and commercialism of modern society. In *SECOND WAVE*, the spirit of Neo-Geo is expressed in combination with other genres from the 1980s through works by **Mark Batongmalaque, Brian Bress, Chet Glaze, Valerie Green, Pearl C. Hsiung, Ryan Perez** and **Devon Tsuno**.

Mass Media art in the 1980s incorporated familiar print “languages” such as advertising used to great effect by Gran Fury and Barbara Kruger. Blending Neo-Geo aesthetics with Mass Media, Batongmalaque has created a sculptural narrative touching on irony, humor and the politically questionable. Brian Bress explore ways to fuse the language of video and abstraction. His “video paintings” combine colorful geometric shapes painted in a minimalist style with video vignettes. Chet Glaze blurs the lines between sculpture and painting by means of appropriating images from pop culture and domestic landscapes. His work relates to that of Robert Overby who constructed images by borrowing fragments of advertising, pornography, architecture, bookcover illustrations and other popular ephemera. Through photography, Valerie Green investigates the kaleidoscopic abstractions and pixelated surfaces of screens from smartphones and digital tablets. Her mediated pieces disclose a geometric landscape of lines and forms similar to Memphis designs. Pearl C. Hsiung's paintings resonate in the style of Neo-Geo and Biomorph Abstraction. The work of Gregory Amenoff correspond with Hsiung's work especially, whose composition offers the idea of escape and sanctuary from the dark realms of the cosmos. Perez uses materials



and techniques common to both commercial and art production. His sculptures and photographs attempt to reflect on how seduction and desire is located in both the mass-produced and the art object. The forms employed in Tsuno's work represent individual organisms and networks of contemporary urban existence. The lines, shapes and forms depicted in his paintings characterize the social landscape both in isolation and connectivity.

SECOND WAVE: Aesthetics of the 80s in Today's Contemporary Art is organized by UCR ARTSblock and is curated by Jennifer Frias, Curator, Culver Center of the Arts + Sweeney Art Gallery. Support provided by UCR's College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (CHASS), and the City of Riverside. Select related programming is made possible by the Gluck Fellows Program at UC Riverside through the Max H. Gluck Foundation. UCR ARTSblock would like to acknowledge the lenders to the exhibition: Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles, CA, Meliksetian and Briggs, Los Angeles, CA, Moskowitz Bayse, Los Angeles, CA, Yautepec Gallery, Mexico City, Charles Irvin, and all the artists in **SECOND WAVE**. Special thanks to Russel Altamirano and Joseph Valencia for their curatorial and research assistance in this project. Extended essay available at artsblock.ucr.edu

Images: (Cover) Devon Tsuno *Watershed Repeat* (Los Angeles River), 2015. Wallpaper, Dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist. (Insert) Pearl C Hsiung *Slow Creep*, 2010. Oil-based enamel on canvas, 60 x 72 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

RELATED PROGRAMMING

Saturday, November 14

OPENING RECEPTION | 6-9 PM | Culver Center of the Arts + Sweeney Art Gallery
Free admission and open to the public

FROM THE VAULT | Andy Warhol Photographs from the CMP Collection
4:30 – 6 PM at Culver Center of the Arts | 6-9 PM at California Museum of Photography | Print viewing | Open to the public | Free admission

FAR FROM NOSTALGIA, Panel Discussion | 5-6 PM | Culver Center of the Arts Screening Room

THE BINGS, Performance/Dueling DJ sets | 6-9 PM | Culver Center of the Arts Atrium

Thursday, December 3

CONTROL, 2007, Directed by Anton Corbijn | 7 PM | Culver Center of the Arts Screening Room | \$9.99 Admission

Saturday, January 30

SECOND LOOK ON SECOND WAVE Gallery Walkthrough
4:30 PM | Culver Center of the Arts + Sweeney Art Gallery | Open to the public

PERFORMANCE KILLED THE VIDEO STAR (Performance Series)

Transceiver – D. Hill + Takeshi Kanemura

5-6 PM | Culver Center of the Arts Black Box Studio

Dancing is a little too romantic for me – Kim Zumpfe + Satoe Fukushima

6-7:30 PM | Culver Center of the Arts Atrium

February 4

#SECONDWAVE | 6-9 PM | Culver Center of the Arts | First Thursday ArtsWalk Activity

COLLEGE NITE: Artist Gallery Talk on *Second Wave* with Mark Batongmalaque and Chet Glaze | 6-7 PM | Culver Center of the Arts | Open to the public
Free admission

February 9

CONRAD RUIZ - UCR Art Department Visiting Artist Lecture Series
4 PM | Art Building Rm. 335 at the UC Riverside campus | Open to the public
Free admission

March 3

COLLEGE NITE: Artist Gallery Talk on *Second Wave* with Ryan Perez and Kristofferson San Pablo | 6-7 PM | Culver Center of the Arts

March 5

IS IT REALLY SO STRANGE? | Screening and Conversation with director, William E. Jones | 7 PM | Culver Center Screening Room | \$9.99 Admission

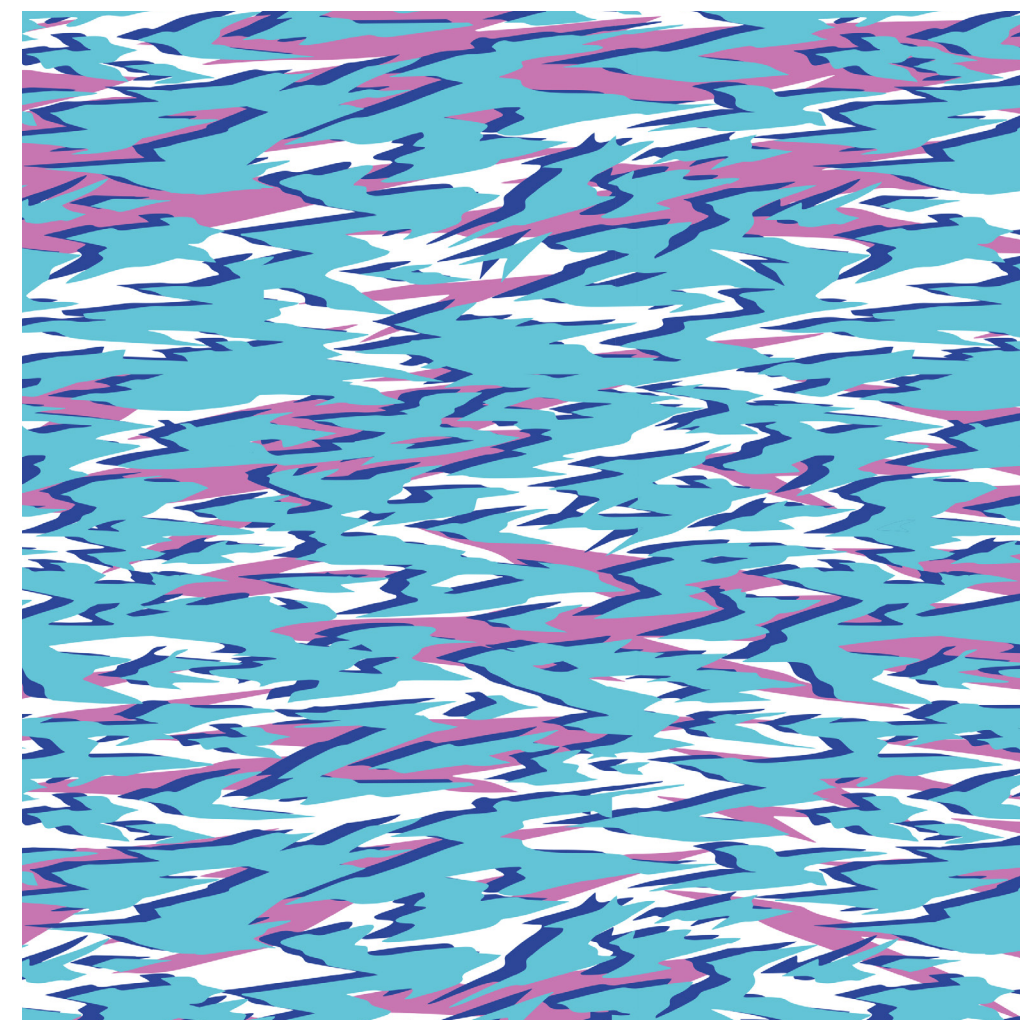
November 2015 – March 2016

CULVER CENTER DIGITAL MURAL PROJECT

SCHEDULE: D. Hill, *Trans* (November 14 – December 28, 2015), Emilio Santoyo, *Snack Attack* (December 31, 2015 – February 8, 2016), Mark Batongmalaque, *Set Themselves Above the Others* (February 13 – March 7, 2016)

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Brian Bress
Jordan Christian
Gregory Eberhardt
Chet Glaze
Valerie Green
D. Hill
Pearl C. Hsiung

Lisa Lapinski
Ryan Perez
Conrad Ruiz
Shizu Saldamando
Emilio Santoyo
Kristofferson San Pablo
Devon Tsuno

NOVEMBER 14, 2015 - MARCH 19, 2016

Sweeney Art Gallery at UCR ARTSblock | 3834 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92501 | www.artsblock.ucr.edu

