Part 2: Helene Winer at Pomona

Pomona College Museum of Art

December 3, 2011—February 19, 2012

Pomona College Museum of Art is pleased to announce the opening of the second of three exhibitions associated with It Happened at Pomona: Art at the Edge of Los Angeles 1969–1973. “Part 2: Helene Winer at Pomona” opens December 3 and continues through February 19, 2012. The public reception will be on Saturday, December 3, 2011 from 5 to 7 p.m. A press preview will be held Saturday, December 3, 2011, from 3 to 5 p.m.

In addition to the public reception, the Museum will host an artist conversation moderated by Helene Winer with artists in the exhibition including John Baldessari, William Leavitt and Allen Ruppersberg, on Sunday, February 19, 2012 at 3 p.m. in Pomona College’s Rose Hills Theater, followed by a reception at the Museum. All events are free and open to the public.

“Part 2: Helene Winer at Pomona” focuses on the cutting edge curatorial programs that Winer presented as gallery director and curator at the Pomona College Museum of Art from the fall of 1970 through the spring of 1972. During this time, Winer organized exhibitions of Bas Jan Ader, John Baldessari, Ger van Elk, Jack Goldstein, Joe Goode, William Leavitt, John McCracken, Ed Moses, Allen Ruppersberg and William Wegman. She also presented performance work by artists such as Chris Burden (Class of ’69), Hirokazu Kosaka, Wolfgang Stoerchle and John White. Winer gave Goldstein and Wegman their first solo exhibitions, provided significant early exposure for Ader, Ruppersberg, Leavitt, van Elk and Stoerchle, and offered exhibitions to established Los Angeles artists such as Goode, McCracken and Moses.

Building on the insights suggested in “Part 1: Hal Glicksman at Pomona,” the exhibition “Part 2: Helene Winer at Pomona” demonstrates how concerns with perception and phenomenology intersect with and develop differently in the post-conceptual work of a group of Southern California artists working in the early 1970s. Whereas Glicksman focused on artists who were producing phenomenologically-oriented abstract sculptures and environments, Winer championed a group of artists who were channeling the experiential qualities of minimalist and post-minimalist sculpture into performance art, video and, most significantly, conceptual photography featuring staged scenarios, realistic environments, and innovative, often wryly humorous uses of language. This transition has been specifically associated with the appropriation artists of the later 1970s, active in New York and often referred to as “The Pictures Generation.”
“Part 2: Helene Winer at Pomona” demonstrates the crucial link between Southern California artists in the early 1970s and the theoretically-informed investigations of post-modernism that would follow in New York and elsewhere. The exhibition documents Winer’s curatorial vision and her recognition of a uniquely Southern Californian interpretation of post-minimalism and post-Conceptualism that would alter the course of art history.

The influence of John Baldessari on the development of appropriation art in New York has been well documented; however, rarely is this influence explored in depth and across the horizon of the Southern California landscape. In fact, as Baldessari has acknowledged (in Richard Hertz’s Jack Goldstein and the CalArts Mafia), he regularly took his CalArts students on the 60-mile journey from Valencia to Claremont to see the exhibitions that Helene Winer curated at Pomona College: “She would show work no one else was interested in.” This exhibition includes two early works by Baldessari, including Evidence: A Potential Print (1970), which scatters, in a corner, ashes from Baldessari’s 1970 Cremation Project (a work in which he burned all of his paintings made before 1966 in a mortuary crematorium).

Another highlight of “Part 2” will be the recreation of two important early sculptures by Jack Goldstein. For his 1971 solo exhibition at Pomona, Goldstein exhibited a series of geometric constructions using large wooden blocks, nails, glass, and photographic paper. The current exhibition will re-create two of
Goldstein’s early sculptures—freestanding wooden constructions stacked precariously high, which in their potential threat of collapse, elicit physical responses in the viewer. While these sculptures have been all but forgotten, by Goldstein’s own testimony they were instrumental in shaping his approach to his films, which are seen as a cornerstone of the Pictures Generation. Goldstein’s sculptures illustrate how compositional forms can allude to images that do not necessarily appear in their material expressions, but through subtle references become images in the minds of viewers.

“Part 2” will also include major works from Winer’s exhibitions of Bas Jan Ader, Ger Van Elk, William Leavitt, Allen Ruppersberg and William Wegman, which were among the earliest exhibitions of significant work by these artists. The exhibition will bring together pieces which have rarely or never been exhibited since their creation, and works that have not been exhibited together since their original presentations at Pomona. This will include Bas Jan Ader’s monumental two-screen slide projection work, Untitled (Sweden), which has not been exhibited in the United States since its first presentation in 1971 at Pomona. The exhibition also includes Leavitt’s seminal California Patio and Ruppersberg’s conceptual masterwork, Where’s Al?, both of which were shown for the first time at Pomona.

In addition to her focus on the newest directions in conceptual art, Winer also intermittently programmed shows by a slightly older generation of leading Los Angeles artists, often exhibiting works that were unusual within the artists’ bodies of work. “Part 2” will include works from Joe Goode, John McCracken and Ed Moses, including a rare wall-hanging plank by McCracken, a staircase sculpture by Goode, and a resin painting by Moses. Winer’s interest in performance art will be represented by documentation of projects by Chris Burden, Hirokazu Kosaka, Wolfgang Stoerchle and John White, including a never-before-screened fragment from the controversial performance by Wolfgang Stoerchle that was long rumored to be the reason for Winer’s departure from Pomona in 1972.

“Part 2: Helene Winer at Pomona” will be supplemented by the January 21, 2012 “Performance at Pomona” as part of the Pacific Standard Time Performance and Public Art Festival. “Performance at Pomona” consists of a series of three performance pieces by artists represented in each of the three segments of the exhibition. John White will represent “Part 2” with the recreation of the 1971 performance Preparation F, involving the Pomona College football team. Also included are A Butterfly for Pomona, a new pyrotechnic performance by Judy Chicago, based on her Atmosphere performances of the early 1970s, and Burning Bridges, a recreation of James Turrell’s 1971 flare performance. Please see www.pomona.edu/museum to confirm exact schedule and locations.

The catalogue for the exhibition It Happened at Pomona: Art at the Edge of Los Angeles 1969–1973 chronicles the activities of artists, scholars, students and faculty associated with the College during this period. The first exploration of a creative hotbed of 1960s and 1970s Southern California art, it provides new insight into the relationship between post-minimalism, Light and Space art and various strands of Conceptual art, performance art and photography in Southern California, while contributing substantial new information about interconnections between artistic developments in Los Angeles and New York. Featuring scholarly essays by Thomas Crow, Rebecca McGrew, Glenn Phillips and Marie Shurkus, new interviews with Hal Glicksman and Helene Winer, archival reprints and 18 new interviews with artists of the era, the book contains 280 images, many never before seen. The catalogue is available for purchase for $49.95 through D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers and Artbook.com.
About It Happened at Pomona: Art at the Edge of Los Angeles 1969–1973

From 1969 to 1973, a series of radical art projects took place at the far eastern edge of Los Angeles County at the Pomona College Museum of Art. Here, Hal Glicksman, a pioneering curator of Light and Space art, and Helene Winer, later the director of Artists Space and Metro Pictures in New York, curated landmark exhibitions by young local artists who bridged the gap between Conceptual art and post-minimalism, and presaged the development of postmodernism in the later 1970s. Artists such as Michael Asher, Lewis Baltz, Jack Goldstein and Allen Ruppersberg, among others, formed the educational backdrop for a generation of artists who spent their formative years at Pomona College, including alumni Mowry Baden, Chris Burden and James Turrell.

Providing unprecedented and revelatory insight into the art history of postwar Los Angeles, the project It Happened at Pomona: Art at the Edge of Los Angeles 1969–1973 consists of three distinct, but related, exhibitions curated by Rebecca McGrew and Glenn Phillips—“Part 1: Hal Glicksman at Pomona” on view August 30 to November 6, 2011; “Part 2: Helene Winer at Pomona” on view December 3, 2011 to February 19, 2012; and “Part 3: At Pomona” (studio art faculty and students) on view March 10 to May 13, 2012. The exhibition will be accompanied by an illustrated timeline, a 386-page publication, and a series of public programs including a lecture by Thomas Crow on September 17, a reading by Judy Chicago on October 9, and “Performance at Pomona” on January 21, 2012 with projects by Judy Chicago, James Turrell and John White.
About The Pomona College Museum of Art

The Pomona College Museum of Art (330 N. College Ave., Claremont, CA) is open to the public free of charge Tuesday through Friday, from noon to 5 p.m.; Thursday, from noon to 11 p.m.; and Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. For more information, call (909) 621-8283 or visit www.pomona.edu/museum.

The Museum collects, preserves, exhibits and interprets works of art; and houses a substantial permanent collection as well as serving as a gallery of temporary exhibitions. Important holdings include the Kress Collection of 15th- and 16th-century Italian panel paintings; more than 5,000 examples of Pre-Columbian to 20th-century American Indian art and artifacts, including basketry, ceramics and beadwork; and a large collection of American and European prints, drawings and photographs, including works by Francisco de Goya, José Clemente Orozco, and Rico Lebrun.


Pacific Standard Time is a collaboration of more than fifty cultural institutions across Southern California, which are coming together for six months beginning 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 post-World War II years and beyond, Pacific Standard Time encompasses developments from modernist architecture and design to multi-media installations; from L.A. Pop to post-minimalism; from the films of the African-American L.A. Rebellion to the feminist happenings 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.