“PROJECT SERIES 49: SAM FALLS”
PRESENTED BY THE
POMONA COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART

“Project Series 49: Sam Falls” will be on view Sept. 2 through Dec. 19, at the Pomona College Museum of Art (330 N. College Avenue, Claremont). The exhibition represents the first solo museum exhibition of the Los Angeles and New York-based artist. For this exhibition, the artist presents new work, including several of his signature weather-driven paintings and a new site-specific outdoor sculpture composed of an altered pickup truck filled with succulents.

“Project Series 49: Sam Falls” will have a public reception on Saturday, Sept. 6, 2014, from 5-7 p.m. and an artist talk on Tuesday, Sept. 9, at 1:30 p.m. Both events will take place at the Museum and are open to the public. There is no cost to attend.

In his work, Sam Falls investigates the mutability of perception, examining entropy, the artistic process, and the natural processes of decomposition and deterioration, particularly the long-term effects of sunlight and weather. His newest rain-works, on display in the exhibition, expand his exploration of the shifting terrain between nature, place, and duration. By using sun and rain instead of a paintbrush or camera, the works echo Falls’s interests in process art and the dialogue between abstraction and representation.

Falls created the paintings in the exhibition by placing large sheets of raw canvas outside prior to a storm, then arranging organic material—palm fronds in California and ferns in Vermont—on the canvas, and, finally, spreading dry pigment over the plants and canvases. Where the plants masked the canvas from the vibrantly colored pigment, a silhouette image was created. The duration of the storm, the quality and amount of the rain, the randomly applied pigmentation, and the vegetal forms dictated the resulting images. Falls’s work emphasizes this open-ended process. The finished works are luminous and painterly, with layers of saturated colors.

Falls’s most recent sculpture, Untitled (Life in California), is located in the Museum’s courtyard. The altered Ford Ranger dates to 1984, the year of Falls’s birth in San Diego, Calif. To create the work, Falls sandblasted the truck in random patterns to reveal layers of red and tan paint and the steel base beneath. He clear-coated some parts to protect from rust while others were left raw. Over time, the sculpture will shift and transform—the succulents will grow, and the truck’s surface will change color and texture as it weatheres.
While influenced by 1970s art historical movements, including Minimalism, Earth art, Process art, and Los Angeles-centric Finish Fetish and Light and Space, Falls also embraces the very contemporary intersection of the digital, historical, and natural. His study of various photographic processes has guided his thinking about light, time, place, and elements.

Starting with his graduate work at the International Center of Photography-Bard program in New York, Falls has developed a rigorous yet open-ended conceptual and intellectual framework that guides his projects. He first experimented with the effects of sunlight fading craft paper in graduate school, creating natural “color photograms” in his New York studio. On trips to California, he experimented with scaled-up photograms on large sheets of fabric covered with simple objects like tires and wooden two-by-fours. The resultant photograms left a ghostly outline of the object in the weathered and faded image.

In Falls’s “photogram” works, a shadow image is left on the fabric, while the uncovered areas fade or deteriorate in the sunlight. In this way, he says, the works are “tied to a specific place and time. The place is the outdoors—a symbolic space imbued with layers of meanings. The time is extended into months and years, rather than seconds. In the time that passes during the work’s creation, many things happen to the piece itself, but perhaps more intriguingly, things happen in the world that impact our perception of the artwork.”

The Sam Falls exhibition is the 49th in the Pomona College Museum of Art’s Project Series, which presents Southern California artists in focused exhibitions and is curated by Rebecca McGrew. A catalogue, designed by Nicholas Gottlund, accompanies the exhibition and includes essays by McGrew and writer David Pagel. The Project Series is supported in part by the Pasadena Art Alliance.

About Pomona College Museum of Art
The Pomona College Museum of Art is located at 330 N. College Avenue, Claremont. The Museum is open to the public free of charge Tuesday through Sunday, from noon to 5 p.m., and Thursday, from noon to 11 p.m. For more information, call (909) 621-8283 or visit the museum’s Website: www.pomona.edu/museum.

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IMAGES AVAILABLE
Contact Justine Bae, at justine.bae@pomona.edu