

Experimental Diversity

The Greater West is a superregion, a super-region of transition between adjacent ecological communities. Once the region was inhabited it became a place of varied artistic exploration. This section explores the breadth of aesthetic expression that defines the region.

Ed Ruscha

Ed Ruscha was born in 1937. He is associated with the pop art movement. He has worked in the media of painting, printmaking, drawing, photography, and film. Ed Ruscha's artistic training was rooted in commercial art. His interest in words and typography ultimately provided the primary subject of his paintings, prints and photographs. Some of which are included in this exhibition.

Charles Atlas Landscape, 2003 - Galvanized steel pipes seem to force the canvas into a bloated shape. The bodybuilder Charles Atlas created a system of exercises called Dynamic Tension.

Cowboy Picture, 2003 features a silhouette of two cowboys on horseback against a modulated background. It conjures up images of old western movies, which helped define an American image.

Rancho, 1968 is painted in a trompe l'oeil style to create the appearance that the word Rancho is a liquid pooled on the canvas. It alludes to land grants meant to encourage settlement in California.

Agnes Pelton

Agnes Pelton was born in Germany in 1881 and moved to the United States as a child. During the 1920s she lived and worked in a windmill on Long Island, where she developed her surrealist style. Agnes Pelton moved to the Coachella Valley and settled in Cathedral City in 1931. She was one of the artists who made up the Transcendental Painting Group, which was founded in New Mexico in 1938. The group promoted abstract painting and intended to bring the spiritual experience into abstract images.

Abstract Symbolism is an esoteric type of symbolist paintings because it avoids identifiable motifs and tries to represent inner emotions in shapes and colors. Her ethereal images combined the colors and shapes of the nature with abstract symbolism. The two works included here, *Idyll*, 1952 and *Winter*, 1933 are examples of the ethereal images Pelton created.

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer was born in Mexico City in 1967. His parents were nightclub owners. He moved to Canada in 1985 to study and received a B.Sc. in Physical Chemistry from Concordia University in Montréal in 1989. Lozano-Hemmer is best known for creating and presenting theatrical interactive installations in public spaces using various forms of electronics. His work can be considered a blend of interactive art and performance art.

As with his piece *Solplano*, 2011, Lozano-Hemmer's art installations create a platform for public interaction. *Solplano* is made up of LED lights that respond when people

are nearby. The lights become activated by the presence of the visitor. It is an interactive piece that mimics our relationship with nature and the sun in particular.

Guillermo Bert

Guillermo Bert is a Los Angeles-based multi-media artist who was born in Chile in 1959. He incorporates electronic bar codes in his work. He traveled to Chile in 2010 where he worked with the indigenous Mapuche community and traditional weavers to incorporate handwoven QR codes into his textile designs. *Mapuche Portal #1*, 2014 is one of the results of that work. When scanned with a smartphone, the code takes the viewer to audio or video content by Mapuche elders, activists and poets.

Rodney Graham

Rodney Graham was born in 1949 in British Columbia. He is most often associated with the Vancouver School of photoconceptual artists. His work is often informed by historical literary, musical, philosophical and popular references. As is the case with *Paradoxical Western Scene*, 2006, which resembles the album cover for *More Gunfighter Ballads and Trail Songs* (1960) by Marty Robbins. Graham is dressed like a gunslinger in a western movie walking past his own “wanted” poster.

Bruno Fazzolari

Bruno Fazzolari was born in Mexico City and lives in San Francisco. His work explores perception and the senses. He works in paint, scent and sculpture, inspired by his experience of abstraction and synesthesia (seeing scents). For *Unsettled* he created a new scent to represent the exhibition using sandalwood oil from the South Pacific. The South Pacific had the most visible manifestation of the arms race due to the atomic weapons testing there.

Ana Mendieta

Ana Mendieta was born in Havana, Cuba in 1948 and died in 1985 in New York. Her work often focused on a spiritual and physical connection with the Earth. She felt that by uniting her body with the earth she could become whole again. During her lifetime, Mendieta produced over 200 works of art using earth as a sculptural medium.

The Silueta Works in Mexico, 1973-1977 were imprints of her body on sand and other materials. Most of these were documented in photographs. There is a hint of the Santeria religion of African slaves brought to Cuba in this work.

Mark Bradford

Mark Bradford was born in Los Angeles in 1961. Bradford is known for large-scale abstract paintings and collages that examine urban social issues. He uses fragments of found posters, billboards, newsprint, and other papers to create his images. *Rat Catcher of Hamelin IV*, 2011, is part of a series of paintings that focus on the case of a serial killer in Los Angeles called the Grim Sleeper. In this work he examines how photographs found by police in the killers possession were used on billboards.

Edgar Arceneaux

Edgar Arceneaux was born in Los Angeles in 1972. He works in drawing, sculpture, and performance. The works often explore connections between historical events and present-day truths. He played a seminal role in the creation of the Watts House Project, a redevelopment initiative to remodel a series of houses around the Watts Towers, serving as director from 1999 to 2012.

Peaks Above the Headlines (Tonight), 2017 is part of a series of shadow boxes with historical references and headlines layered over images of mountainous landscapes.