

# ART

## Falling Leaves, Rising Shows on Local Scene

After two years marked by mega-openings, 1996 features the normal swarm of fall events along with some notable changes in the gallery landscape.

By Suzanne Muchnic

All's quiet on the L.A. gallery front? No, it only appears that way in contrast to the last two fall seasons. At this time two years ago, art aficionados were gearing up for the opening of Bergamot Station, which drew thousands of people to the new arts complex in Santa Monica.

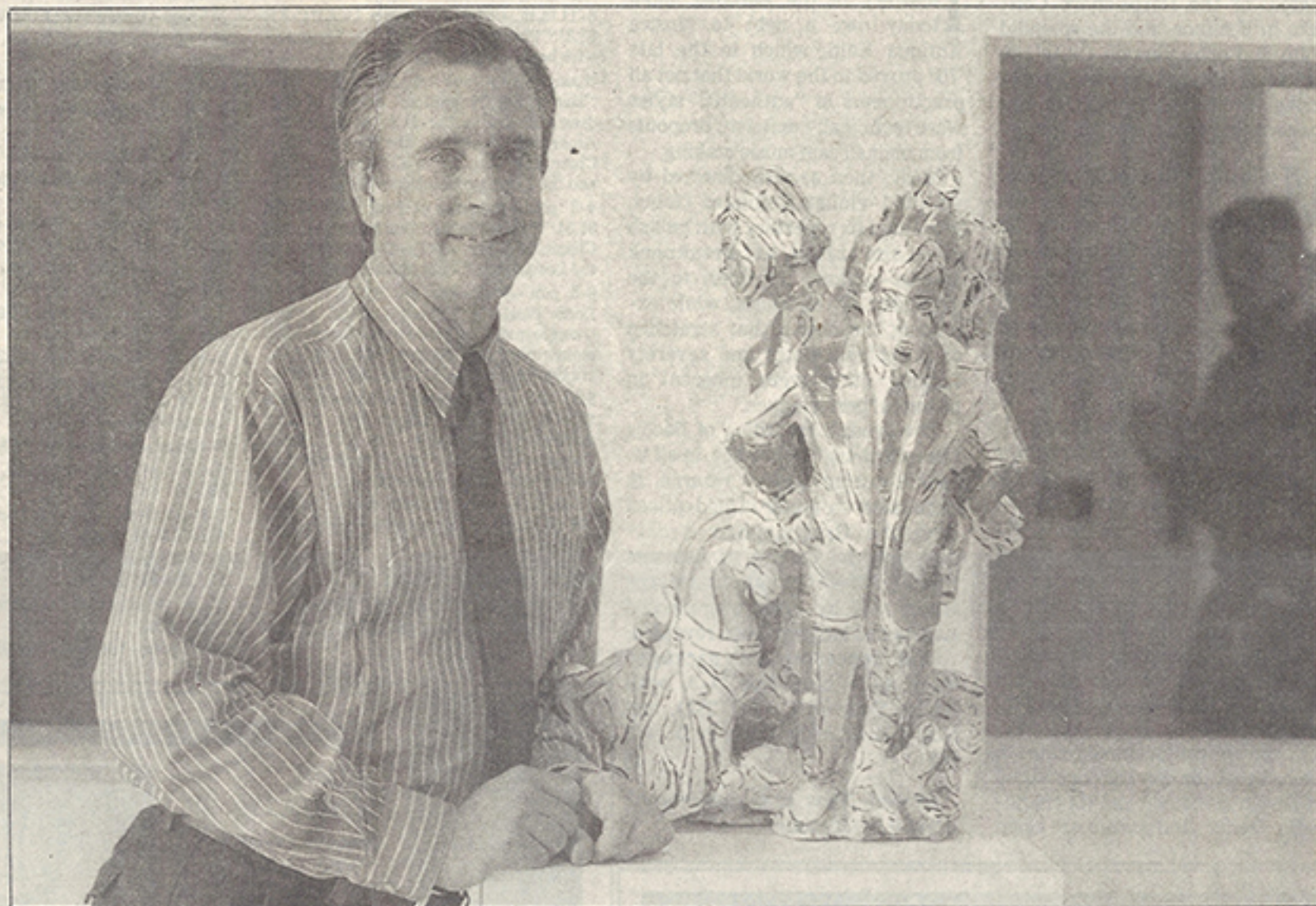
Last fall's big event was the arrival in Beverly Hills of two New York imports. PaceWildenstein, a mega-gallery with deep pockets and an impressive roster of blue-chip artists, moved into a Wilshire Boulevard space refurbished by architect Charles Gwathmey and held a splashy opening in September. The following month, Larry Gagosian, a leading dealer in contemporary art, launched a West Coast outpost on Camden Drive in an elegant building designed by Richard Meier.

So what is happening this year? Despite the local art market's painfully lingering malaise and a summer that some dealers privately describe as brutally bleak in terms of sales, the galleries are revving up for the fall season. More than 50 exhibitions open this month.

Ten West Hollywood galleries on Melrose Avenue, Almont Drive and Robertson Boulevard will host a joint opening Sept. 19 from 5 to 8 p.m. You can catch the scene and see new shows, including intimate fantasies and dreamlike visions by a perennial favorite in "Joseph Cornell: Collages and Box Constructions," at the Manny Silverman Gallery, and an ambitious survey tracing contemporary Surrealist art to its European roots in the work of Salvador Dali, Rene Magritte, Yves Tanguy, Max Ernst and many others in "Imaginary Realities: Surrealism Then and Now," at Louis Stern Fine Arts.

A couple of miles east, nine galleries along Beverly Boulevard and La Brea Avenue launched the season Saturday, offering photographer Richard Misrach's images of pure color in "Desert Canto XVIII: Skies," at the Jan Kesner Gallery, and a retrospective of the late Peter Krasnow's paintings, prints and sculpture at the Tobey C. Moss Gallery, among many other attractions.

In Santa Monica, a dozen new exhibitions at Bergamot Station opened Saturday, including Dutch sculptor Joep van Liesh-



IRIS SCHNEIDER / Los Angeles Times

**ON THE MOVE:** Frank Lloyd, with ceramic by Viola Frey, has joined the gallery lineup at Bergamot Station in Santa Monica.

out's Southern California debut at the Richard Heller Gallery, mixed-media conceptual work by Meg Cranston at the Rosamund Felsen Gallery and paintings by Allen Cox at the brand new Gail Harvey Gallery. A show of landscapes by Wade Hofer and paintings of wildlife by Blue McRight will go on view Sept. 21 at the Patricia Faure Gallery.

Also new this season at Bergamot is a plan to open the galleries on Thursday nights, beginning this week. "We'll continue until the crowds become too great," joked dealer Wayne Blank, who developed Bergamot with Tom Patchett and who owns the Shoshana Wayne Gallery with his wife, Shoshana Blank.

Elsewhere around town, the Margo Leavin Gallery in West Hollywood has an installation and paintings by Rudolf Stingel, and new paintings by Charles Gabaedian will go on view Thursday at L.A. Louver in Venice. In Beverly Hills, PaceWildenstein will open a show of Jim Dine's paintings of crows, hearts, owls and skulls Oct. 4, and Gagosian will exhibit New York painter Ross Bleckner's new work beginning Oct. 9.

As for the galleries themselves—which operate in a perpetually fluid art scene—there are notable changes in the landscape. Thomas Solomon's Garage has closed after a fire, three galleries have moved, several have recently arrived, and another is in the process of construction.

Among the moves, the Frank Lloyd Gallery has relocated from La Brea Avenue, above the Jan Baum Gallery, to Bergamot Station. Lloyd took over the Garth Clark Gallery in January, when Clark, a longtime ceramics dealer and author, decided to concentrate his business in New York.

Eager to build on Clark's foundation while establishing his own identity, Lloyd cited three reasons for moving: "First is to reach a wider audience. The gallery had an excellent reputation, but we were still upstairs and down the hall." Bergamot offers greater prominence, heavier traffic and a more convenient location, he said.

Second, Lloyd will double his space, to 2,400 square feet, allowing him to accommodate large-scale work by John Mason, Adrian Saxe, Roseline Delisle and other artists.

Third on his list is pressure from dealers Rosamund Felsen and Patricia Faure, who moved their galleries from West Hollywood to Bergamot two years ago and campaigned first for Clark and later for Lloyd to join them. "We wouldn't take no for an answer," Felsen said, noting that the ceramics gallery adds a new high-quality element to the complex.

"I was always for the idea," said Lloyd, whose new gallery, designed by architects Frederick Fisher and Partners, is located between Felsen and Faure, in a space formerly occupied by Digitalogue Gallery. And he's looking forward to a successful year. The ceramics market has not suffered the sharp downturn that has affected many other areas of art, he said. "We have loyal and committed collectors, and sales have not dropped off."

He will continue to show works by many artists Clark represents, but instead of maintaining an international stable, Lloyd will emphasize artists who are well known in California. He has already added two names to his roster: Viola Frey of the Bay Area and Peter Shire of Los Angeles. The opening show is "Six From California,"

Julius Shulman continues to eternalize California modernist architecture in "60 Years of Julius Shulman: Architectural Photography," opening today at the Palm Springs Desert Museum. Right: Palm Springs City Hall by Albert Frey.



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featuring Frey, Shire, Mason, Saxe, Ralph Bacerra and Beatrice Wood.

Another newcomer to Santa Monica, at 2307 Main St., is Galleria Las Americas. The 7-year-old gallery for Chicano and Latino art, run by artist Linda Vallejo, was established in downtown Los Angeles. It will open its new space Sept. 19 with "Arte de Las Americas 1996," featuring works by Vallejo, East Los Streetscapers (Wayne Healy and David Botello), Nik Fernandez (Venezuela), Mario G. Lopez, Isabel Martinez, Tony Ortega, Rodrigo Palacios (Colombia), Sara Palacios (Cuba), Danny Salazar, Teddy Sandoval, Rudy Torres and Rene Vasquez. A reception is scheduled for Sept. 20, from 7 to 11 p.m., and a "Meet the Artist Panel Discussion" Sept. 21, 2 to 4 p.m.

West Hollywood, which has endured as a solid gallery center, is the site of other significant changes on the scene. The Estelle Malka Gallery opened this summer at 8920 Melrose Ave. and will launch the fall season with new work by Rob Wynne.

Jose M. Tasende, a veteran dealer in La Jolla who shows the work of internationally prominent artists, is building a 7,000-square-foot gallery at 8808 Melrose Ave. After a long delay, the old brick structure has been gutted and construction is underway. An opening date hasn't been set, but it's expected late this fall. The new Tasende Gallery will christen its space with an exhibition of Eduardo Chillida's large granite and steel sculptures, smaller terra cotta pieces and works on paper.

Playing out a new version of a frequent L.A. scenario, another gallery has moved to the former home of two other showcases. Kohn Turner Gallery has closed its large Melrose space and moved a few blocks east to 454 N. Robertson Blvd.—a smaller building formerly occupied by the Earl McGrath Gallery and, before that, the Reiko Mizuno Gallery.

"My lease was up," dealer Michael Kohn said, so he took the opportunity to reduce expenses by cutting his space in half without losing a highly visible location. Although his interior exhibition space has diminished, he has gained a courtyard for sculpture.

And he is pleased with the change. "This building has a more domesticated interior," he said. Originally designed as a residence, the building was converted to a gallery in 1983, when architect Arata Isozaki added a wing and courtyard for Mizuno.

"It's the quintessential California gallery space," Kohn said. "I won't be able to do huge installations, but the paintings I show have never looked better than they do here." His fall exhibition, opening Thursday, features Darren Waterston's atmospheric paintings of flora and fauna.

Suzanne Muchnic is *The Times*' art writer.