



Otis College of Art and Design

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED ARTISTS & MULTI-CULTURAL INFLUENCES  
PRESENTED IN "OTIS: NINE DECADES OF LOS ANGELES ART"**

**Works of 77 Artists Represent 88 Years of Art Education in L.A**

***At the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery in Barnsdall Art Park***

***Opening January 20 through April 2, 2006***

**LOS ANGELES, CA 12/12/05**—A survey of Los Angeles art is by nature a cultural feast. Like the city itself, L.A.'s expansive art scene reflects the myriad of cultural influences that sets it apart from the work spawned in other urban centers. This framework of contrasts—from language and heritage to materials and media—informs the varied expressions of Otis College-trained artists in the upcoming exhibition, "**OTIS: Nine Decades of Los Angeles Art.**" The retrospective opens January 20<sup>th</sup> and runs through April 2, 2006 at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery in Barnsdall Art Park.

The show provides a trans-generational survey of some of L.A.'s most enduring—and newly created—contributions to painting, sculpture, drawing, ceramics, mixed media, installation and video projection. Featuring exemplary work by emerging, mid-career and long established names, ranging in age from 25 to 95, the impressive roster of artists—all **Otis College of Art and Design** alumni—includes: **Camille Rose Garcia, Gajin Fujita, Ruben Ochoa, Patssi Valdez, Alison Saar, Sandeep Mukherjee, Kim Fisher, Kevin Hanley, Edgar Ibarra Lepe, and Timothy Tompkins**, as well as **Barry Le Va, Bryan Hunt, Masami Teraoka, Ken Price, Robert Irwin, Billy Al Bengston, Kent Twitchell, John Mason, Richard Pettibone, Jeffrey Vallance and Bruce Yonemoto.**

“Over the last 88 years, Otis has prepared a diverse student body to enrich our world through their creativity, their skill and their vision,” said **Samuel Hoi**, President of Otis College of Art and Design. “Otis is everywhere in the city everyday—from freeway murals and art in public transportation hubs to works in world-renowned museums and galleries.”

Below a sampling of artists reflecting the intellectual and cultural diversity featured in the show:

### **Robert Irwin**

Robert Irwin, who attended Otis in 1950, has been a pivotal artist in American Art for more than 30 years, both as a practitioner and a theoretician. Irwin began his career in the 1960s as an abstract expressionist; however he is best known as one of the pioneers of California’s light and space movement. He has been recognized more recently for having created the monumental garden at the Getty Center in Los Angeles.

### **Sandeep Mukherjee**

Born in Pune, India, Sandeep Mukherjee attended Otis in 1996. Mukherjee’s paintings and drawings inhabit a fantastical realm in which images appear to be floating through space. His work has been described as being intensely sensual and obsessively visual, a celebration of color, texture, surface, sheer beauty and draftsmanship.

### **Bruce Yonemoto**

Media artist Bruce Yonemoto has collaborated with his brother Norman on video and film installations since 1978. Much of their work subtly plays off mainstream film and television, at times traversing both commercial and fine arts venues. In recent years the Yonemotos have produced a series of multimedia installations, many of which address issues of Japanese-American identity in the context of popular media representation, history, and autobiography.

### **Jeffrey Vallance**

Since 1975, Vallance has been expressing eerie coincidences in conceptualism. His work has juxtaposed the Virgin of Guadalupe with images of Jane Fonda and Charles Manson. His art explores boundary issues by placing a contemporary art practice amidst displays of pop culture.

### **Alison Saar**

Raised in L.A.’s Laurel Canyon, Alison Saar received her MFA from Otis in 1981. Her sculptures and installations explore themes of African cultural diaspora and spirituality, and her studies of Latin American, Caribbean and African art and religion have also informed her work. Saar’s fascination with vernacular folk art and ability to build an oasis of beauty from cast-off objects are evident in her sculptures and paintings.

### **Gajin Fujita**

Gajin Fujita juxtaposes traditional Japanese imagery with street graffiti to create vibrant paintings that mesh pop cultural references with the energy of urban tagger conventions. Fujita's roots as an Asian-American growing up in a predominantly Latino L.A. neighborhood infuse many of his hard-edged works with cultural icons and outsider concepts.

### **Liz Young**

Liz Young has been producing art that incorporate objects, installations and performance for more than two decades. In the past, she has created mixed media installations using organic materials—wood, leather, cloth—that she has carved, cast, woven, and welded, raising issues of physical endurance and survival. Recent work has focused on the use of man-made materials to explore dualities of attraction and repulsion in relation to the human body.

### **Camille Rose Garcia**

Camille Garcia's depictions of creepy cartoon children living in demented fairytales are meant as a critical commentary on the failures of capitalist utopias. Her influences include the writings of Philip K. Dick and William Burroughs and punk bands such as The Clash and The Dead Kennedys.

Committed to being the most culturally diverse art school in the country, Otis College of Art and Design has been home to an impressive population of Latino artists, several of whom are represented in the show. "Nine Decades" includes the works of: **Carlos Almaraz**, a founder of the art collective, **Los Four**, whose collaborations brought Chicano art to the mainstream art community in Los Angeles; painter **Patssi Valdez**, whose roots are in the Chicano art movements of the 1970s and 1980s; painter and muralist **Eloy Torrez**, whose large-scale murals can be seen throughout Los Angeles' urban neighborhoods; Argentinean sculptor **Carlos Mollura**, whose inflated sculptures create rooms within rooms; emerging Latino artist **Edgar Ibarra Lepe**, and **Ruben Ochoa**, who brings artwork to the masses in his mobile gallery, housed inside a working van.

"OTIS: Nine Decades of Los Angeles Art" was curated and assembled from private collections, and prestigious galleries and institutions such as the **Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA)**, the **Norton Simon Museum of Art** and the **Laguna Art Museum** by **Meg Linton**, Director of **Ben Maltz Gallery** + Public Programs at Otis College, who worked in concert with **Mark Steven Greenfield**, Executive Director, and

**Scott Canty**, Art Curator, both with the **Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery**. The exhibition is presented in partnership with the Los Angeles Municipal Gallery and the **Department of Cultural Affairs of Los Angeles**. **Sarah Russin**, Director of Alumni Relations at Otis College, organized this comprehensive show.

“Otis: Nine Decades of Los Angeles Art” opens January 20, 2006, with an artist reception on Sunday, January 22 from 2pm until 5pm, and continues until April 2, 2006. The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalog with an essay, “The First 88 Years” by author **Barbara Isenberg**. A digital presentation of public art created by Otis alumni, most notably **Kent Twitchell**, will also be featured. Film screenings and programming such as “art talks” on themes of the exhibition are scheduled throughout the duration of the show.

Additional information can be found at [www.otis.edu](http://www.otis.edu) or by calling the Otis Alumni Office at 310 665-6937. For gallery hours, directions and parking, call 323 644-6269.

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## **About Otis College of Art and Design**

Otis College of Art and Design, founded in 1918, offers an interdisciplinary education for architects and designers who will shape the future. The College prepares diverse students of art and design to enrich our world through their creativity, their skill, and their vision. Its programs embrace new technologies and emerging disciplines, uniting these practices with established strengths in fine arts and design. Otis' reputation attracts students from 39 states and 26 countries, making it the most diverse private art and design college in the U.S. Additional information can be found at. [www.otis.edu](http://www.otis.edu)

## **About the Cultural Affairs Department**

Originally formed in 1925 as the Municipal Arts Department, the Cultural Affairs Department of Los Angeles fulfills the city's responsibilities in the arts and manages 22 community arts centers, including Barnsdall Art Park, as a method of providing cultural services in neighborhoods. The goal of the department is to enhance the quality of life for Los Angeles' 3.9 million residents and 25.1 million annual visitors. In addition, the Department of Cultural Affairs celebrates the cultural diversity in Los Angeles, as well as the role of the artist in the community, by encouraging a network of artist voices as rich as the communities they represent. Additional information can be found at [www.culturela.org](http://www.culturela.org)