



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ben Maltz Gallery at Otis College of Art and Design is Pleased to Present the Exhibition

A Step Beyond: Contemporary Footwear, Functional to Fanciful

February 8 – April 25, 2020

Guest-curated by Jo Lauria

Contemporary footwear intersects gender and fashion in continually new and creative ways. In design and fabrication, both functional and fanciful footwear emerge from a collaborative process of creativity and craftsmanship. This process is focused on manipulating the four defining elements of footwear: the upper (entire part of the shoe that covers the foot), the insole, the outer-sole, and the heel. These essential components are shaped by the fashion and taste of the era. Therefore, footwear reflects the culture and period in which it is created and illustrates the imagination, innovation, and artistry of its time.

The exhibition focuses on contemporary footwear from a variety of perspectives, including custom shoes designed and handcrafted for a private client; luxury, limited-edition creations made for a privileged clientele; and shoes mass-produced for the consumer market. This selection of shoes and boots showcases designers who successfully merge functionality with freedom of expression. Included in the exhibition are examples of the designs and actual footwear from various sectors of the shoemaking profession. For example:

- Exquisitely handcrafted custom shoes and boots by makers **Amara Hark-Weber of Hark-Weber Studio**, **Lisa Sorrell of Sorrell Custom Boots**, and **Wes Shugart of Music City Leather**.
- A thirty-year selection of intricately designed shoes by **Paul Kaufman** that are produced in small factory settings.
- A grouping of shoes from the limited-edition collection of **UNITED NUDE** resulting from the collaboration of co-founder **Rem Koolhaas** and global architects and designers. An additional feature will be a series illustrating the evolution of Koolhaas' Möbius Shoe, from prototype to present.
- A selection of the latest sneaker releases in the marketplace provided by sneaker collector extraordinaire, **Twin Daniel**, including the coveted **Nike Air Jordan Retro 1** sneakers, among other popular styles.
- One-of-a-kind artist-created shoes—some sculptural, some wearable—by Norwegian artist **Elisabeth Thorsen**, and the late **Gaza Bowen**, the originator of “narrative” footwear that combined humor, unusual materials, invention, and attitude.

Additional shoe collections that narrate the story of fashion trends and provide an overview of the iconic styles that made their imprint on twentieth and twenty-first century design are included, as assembled by collectors **Pamela Weir-Quiton, Lucinda Smith, and Melissa Leventon**, a costume and textile curator and historian.

To enhance the viewer's understanding of shoes as more than purely utilitarian elements of dress, the exhibition includes shoe and fashion illustrators **Gregory Weir-Quiton and Joshua Wong**. And moving further beyond the shoe as literal object, a section features the paintings and sculptures of **Alex Becerra, Helen Chung, Phyllis Green, David Leitch, and Patsy Pitts** who feature the shoe as protagonist in their individual artistic narratives.

A step into pedagogy, a vignette is devoted to contributions by Otis alumni and faculty who have designed, fabricated, or illustrated footwear.

Artists, designers, and collectors in the Exhibition:

Alex Becerra, Gaza Bowen, Helen Chung, Twin Daniel, Steven Evans, Alexandra Felix, Phyllis Green, Amara Hark-Weber, Chaz Inouye, Paul Kaufman, Jacob Kim, David Leitch, Melissa Leventon, Anna Miller, Patsy Pitts, Luis Ramirez, Karen Regoli, Rebecca Reisman, Wes Shugart, Lucinda Smith, Lisa Sorrell, Elisabeth Thorsen, UNITED NUDE, Gregory Weir-Quiton, Pamela Weir-Quiton, Joshua Wong, Allison Zahorik.

Exhibition and programming funded in part by the Boardman Family Foundation in memory of Bob Boardman.

EXHIBITION PROGRAMS

Free, open to the public, and located at Otis College unless noted otherwise

Saturday February 8, 2020, 4-6pm: Opening Reception

Saturday, February 29, 4pm / 5pm Reception | Craft in America Center, 8415 W. Third St, Los Angeles, CA 90048

Lecture: *A Flair for Design*

Lisa Sorrell, custom cowboy boot maker and leather artist, discusses her path to becoming a master boot maker.

Saturday, March 28, 2pm, Otis Forum

Lecture: *Innovation and Style in 20th and 21st Century Shoes*

Melissa Leventon, costume and textile curator and historian, speaks on key developments, designers, and trends in footwear since 1900.

Location: Ben Maltz Gallery at Otis College of Art and Design, 9045 Lincoln Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90045

Parking & Admission: Free. Visitor parking in structure on La Tijera

Hours: Tue-Fri 10am-5pm / Sat 11am-5pm. Closed Sundays and Mondays

Gallery Contact: 310.665.6905, galleryinfo@otis.edu, www.otis.edu/benmaltzgallery



Images L-R: Ross Lovegrove for UNITED NUDE, ILABO Shoe, 2015, 3-D printed shoes; Gaza Bowen, *Little Woman AM*, 1995; Elisabeth Thorsen, *Geode Shoe with Crystals*, 2017; Time Magazine Cover, 2019; Lil Nas wearing Chelsea Boots by pskaufman...; Joshua Wong, *Sophia Webster Open Toe Bootie*, 2020; Amara Hark-Weber, *Muscle Memory, Regrounding*, 2013; Lisa Sorell, *A Satisfied Mind*, 2007