

Golden State

27 September – 7 December 2014

Great Hall

Edition of 25

Lucy Dodd

*Inclusion (Many
Layers Atmosphere)*

Liz Craft

My lovely assistant

*Beyond blues, seas,
skies, eyes, butterflies
and daisies*

2014

2011

Mixed media

2013

Pigment on cotton
thread

Lucite embedment

Amy Yao

*Skeleton, no. 4 (Asian
tigers +)*

2013

Fiberglass, polyester
resin, and aluminum

Samara Golden

*Mask (#38, #43, #49,
#57, #62, #33)*

Skeleton no. 7

(Confusion = sex),

2013

Polyester resin,
aluminum, fiberglass,
rubber

2012

Rmax, acrylic, gorilla
glue

*Inclusion (From
Halides to Borates)*

2014

Mungo Thomson

b/w

Lucite embedment

Pentti Monkkonen

The Merce

Cunningham

2008

Inclusion (Topaz)

2011

Mixed media

12" vinyl LP

2014

*Inclusion (How big is
the cosmos?)*

Lucite embedment

Scott Benzel

LAAIR/The Traveller's

Companion Addenda

2014

2013

Acrylic embedment

Lucy Raven

PR1

2013

11-color screenprint

Edition of 25

Kaari Upson

Untitled

2011

Smoke on aluminum
panel

2014

PR2

2013

3-color screenprint

Theodora Allen

Lucite embedment



Museum of Contemporary Art Tucson

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The Compass

Glass, solder, copper
foil
2014

The Metronome

2014
Glass, solder, copper
foil

Light Ray

2014
Glass, solder, copper
foil

Double Arch

2014
Glass, solder, copper
foil

The Artist as Curator

Drew Heitzler

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Southwest Gallery

*for Sailors, Mermaids, Mystics. for Kustomizers,
Grinders, Fender-men. for Fools, Addicts,
Wood-workers and Hustlers (Doubled)*

2012

Appropriated video

Southeast Gallery

*California Medley (A Piano Concerto Performed
by Gumby: Arnold Schoenberg, Piano Piece #1,
Opus 23/George Antheil, The Airplane/Hans
Eisler, Klavierstucke, Opus 3/Ornette Coleman,
Lonely Woman/Alice Coltrane, Altruvista/John
Cage, Metamorphosis III/LaMonte Young, Study
Number 2/Horace Tapscott, Piano Solo
1991/Brian Wilson, Surfs Up/Frank Zappa, The
Little House I Used To Live In/Flying Burrito
Brothers, Dark End of the Street/Captain
Beefheart, Evening Bell/Neil Young, Cinnamon
Girl/The Doors, Crystal Ship/Steely Dan, Babylon
Sisters/Black Flag, Screw the Law/Easy-E, Boyz In
Da Hood/Megadeth, Tornado of Souls/Slayer,
Seasons in the Abyss/Elliott Smith, Lost 'n
Found/Brian Jonestown Massacre, That Girl*

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Suicide/G-Unit, G'd Up/Beck, MTV Makes Me

Want to Smoke Crack/Earl Sweatshirt, Looper)

2014

Appropriated video (with Jay Israelson)

Video room

Spiral Jetty/Crystal Voyager/Region Centrale

(Bootlegged, Re-ordered, Combined, Sometimes

More, Sometimes Less)

2011

Appropriated video

Corridor

HD (Red, Orange, Yellow, Blue, Violet)

2014

Wood mounted Lightjet prints



The Artist as Curator

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MOCA was founded by artists and is committed to always being an “artist-centric” museum. Artists remain our guiding force, and at every opportunity we learn from artists and allow them to lead us, rather than us leading them. One of the most significant ways in which this happens at MOCA is through our *Artist as Curator* series, where we welcome the artist to subvert the curatorial authority of the museum and museological/art historical conventions in order to tell a more compelling and meaningful story of art, especially revelatory when it comes to the relationships between and among artists. Art historians and curators are classically trained to find the morphological and formal relationships between art objects, but it is often the emotional relationships—and especially the social relationships—among artists and art objects that are most informative. For *The Artist as Curator* series, we curate a small exhibition of the chosen artist to introduce their work to the public, and they in turn curate a group exhibition with a simple curatorial mandate: curate an exhibition of artists who interest you now, as a lens laser focused on one area of the vast, global contemporary art world.

Venice-based Drew Heitzler makes films and photographs, operated the well-regarded and intentionally short-lived Champion gallery in Williamsburg and Los Angeles, has organized numerous exhibitions, (most notably *Endless Summer* at Blum and Poe in Los Angeles in 2010), and is part owner of Culver City’s premiere watering hole, The Mandrake. This combination of production and social interaction, facilitated by owning a bar forms a foundation of relational give-and-take that bears a direct relationship to what artworks and contingent practices. As both an artist and curator, he has spoken of “a slow burn” that develops over a series of exhibitions through the “piling up of images.” Over time, the images begin to coalesce into a narrative. “I’m not a formalist,” he says. “I like to construct narrative structures and tell stories.” The story he tells in *Golden State* and his own work is concerned with the California—Los Angeles in particular—of popular imagination. For *The Artist as Curator* series, this mingling creates an unorthodox yet telling “portrait” of a place that has spawned countless dreams and schemes, and a mythology with an enduring global reach.

The Heitzler exhibition in the East Wing consists of three videos and a suite of photographs. In his films he utilizes appropriated imagery and emphasizes literary allusions and surf culture, re-ordering history as it is known through the media of movies and music, altering and re-fitting one’s perception of the world. The photographs of water damaged Harley Davidson parts catalogs, “either have something to do with water-damaged collectibles or water-logic” as it pertains to mechanical processes.” Perfectly, quintessentially Californian. The scenic and psychic landscape, with its plethora of meaning and elicited feelings, are evoked through Heitzler’s own work and those gathered in *Golden State*. A relationship to how people from Tucson to Timbuktu talk or think about California is a key facet of this exhibition’s reach and intellectual appeal. The reality is that the Golden State has had such an extensive and far-reaching influence globally, its countless affiliated tropes have become universally relevant.



Museum of Contemporary Art Tucson

For *Golden State*, Heitzler has brought together ten artists from Los Angeles into the Great Hall. Individually and in aggregate their work playfully, cryptically and sometimes menacingly puts one in mind of the characteristic spirit and aesthetic linked with that geographical and political entity formerly known as the *El Dorado State*. The artists are Samara Golden, Lucy Dodd, Kaari Upson, Lucy Raven, Amy Yao, Pentti Monkkonen, Liz Craft, Mungo Thomson, Scott Benzel and Theodora Allen. Though where they hail from is undoubtedly important, what really matters, in Heitzler's words, is that, "the artists make work that presents, in the best way possible, the arguments that make contemporary art interesting, not in terms of a relationship with other disciplines or concerns, but through a rigorous pursuit of the means through which art is meaningful on its own."

Heitzler's desire—which is precisely the motivation behind the Artist as Curator series—is to organize and present work outside of art historical pressure to categorize into neat thematic or formal "movements", or to "make meaning" for the work relative to things outside of the concerns of art. This is best expressed filtered through a quote he cites from Don DeLillo's 1985 novel *White Noise*.

Only a catastrophe gets our attention. We want them, we depend on them. As long as they happen somewhere else. This is where California comes in. Mud slides, brush fires, coastal erosion, mass killings, et cetera. We can relax and enjoy these disasters because in our hearts we feel that California deserves whatever it gets. Californians invented the concept of life-style. This alone warrants their doom.

Rightful or unjust doom aside, with its postmodern montage of tones and styles *White Noise* can be seen a foreshadowing of the pluristic coexistence of divergent artistic approaches in *Golden State* with its mix of photography, painting, sculpture, video, and sound pieces. As a hotbed of environmental calamities and a deserving recipient of comeuppance, a state that elicits envy and conflicted feelings, this particular state's aura is echoed and reflected in the work of the ten artists in the exhibition. And the notion of a dark side, and apocalyptic undertone to the exuberant sun-soaked and imported palm tree invested la-la-land is implicit in *Golden State*, as Heitzler makes clear:

To the big screen ad men, short sell hustlers, and S & L hucksters California is the land of celebrities, IPOs, and million dollar sunsets. The rest of us understand the sub-level. That's where the gold is, in the seams. The magic that makes the hour doesn't trickle down from above (It never rains). It bubbles up through the faults. California is a disaster. Made of Fire, Smog, Magic, Movies, Space/Time, and Technology. It's the Golden State. It's a 21st Century suicide trip. Brecht thought it was hell, but I like it here.

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Artist's Biographies

Theodora Allen was born in 1985 in Los Angeles, California, and lives and works there. She received an MFA in Painting from UCLA in the spring of 2014, and has a BFA from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena. In the summer of 2011 she was in residence at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine, and in 2013 her artist's book *49 Paintings: Theodora Allen for Saint Laurent* was published on the occasion of Hedi Slimane's second women's collection for Saint Laurent.

Scott Benzel was born in Scottsdale, Arizona, and lives and works in Los Angeles. He received a BA from the University of Arizona, and an MFA from The California Institute of the Arts in Valencia. In the summer of 2014 he presented a solo exhibition at Maccarone in New York and has an upcoming show at Various Small Fires in Los Angeles. Performances have included *The Stand-In* at Public Fiction in Los Angeles and *Variations IV, John Cage*, realized with Dave Muller as part of *Pacific Standard Time*.

Liz Craft was born in 1970 in Los Angeles and lives and works there. She attended Otis Parsons and received an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles. Solo exhibitions include *Temple of Folly*, LAND Project, West Hollywood, *Death Of A Clown* at Patrick Painter Inc., in Santa Monica, and *New Work* at Marianne Boesky Gallery in New York.

Lucy Dodd received her BFA from Art Center College of Design in 2004 and her MFA from Bard College in 2011. She has been featured in numerous group shows both nationally and internationally, including Blum & Poe, Los Angeles; Meyer Kainer, Vienna; and Balice Hertling, New York. Dodd had her first solo show at ProChoice in Vienna in 2010, and together with musician Sergei Tcherepnin was part of Performa 11 in New York in 2011.

Samara Golden was born in 1973 in Michigan and attended the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. She earned her MFA from Columbia University's School of the Arts in New York. At the Night Gallery in Los Angeles she has had two solo exhibitions, *Mass Murder* and *Rape of the Mirror*, and has been included in *Made in LA*, *Hammer Museum Biennial* and *There is nothing personal of yours to exhibit* at Galerie Crèvecoeur in Paris. A solo exhibition will take place in the fall of 2014 at MoMA PS1 in New York.

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Pentti Monkkonen was born 1975 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and lives in Los Angeles. He received a BA from the University of California, Los Angeles, and an MFA from Vermont College. He has had solo exhibitions at New Jersey, Basel, Switzerland, and at the Socrates Sculpture Park in New York. Group showings include *Los Angeles; Aspects of an Archaic Revival* at Uschi Kolb, Karlsruhe, Germany, and *Los Angeles Confidential* at Parc Saint Leger, Burgundy, France.

Lucy Raven is an artist who was born and raised in Tucson. Her films and installations have been included in *Greater New York* at MoMA PS1, the 2012 *Whitney Biennial*, and *Test Pattern* at The Whitney Museum of Art. Forthcoming shows will take place at Portikus in Frankfurt, Germany and the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco.

Mungo Thomson was born in 1969 in Davis, California and is based in Los Angeles. He attended the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program in New York and received an MFA from UCLA. He has had solo exhibitions, projects and performances at ArtPace, San Antonio, The High Line, New York, SITE Santa Fe, and The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

Kaari Upson was born in 1972 in San Bernardino, California, and lives and works in Los Angeles. She studied at the New York Studio School, and received both her BFA and MFA from the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia. Her *Hammer Projects* appeared at The Hammer in Los Angeles in 2007, and her exhibition *Sleep with the Key* was at Massimo De Carlo in Milan in 2013. She has an upcoming show in the fall at Ramiken Crucible in New York.

Amy Yao Lives and works in New York City and Los Angeles. She attended the Mountain School of Arts in Los Angeles and has an MFA, Sculpture, from the Yale University School of Art. One and two person exhibitions include *I don't care about anything else*, Paradise Garage, Venice, California, *Any Body In The Attic* at Important Projects in Oakland, and *Skeletons on a Bender* at 47 Canal, New York. A show is planned at Indipendenza, Rome, in the fall of 2014.