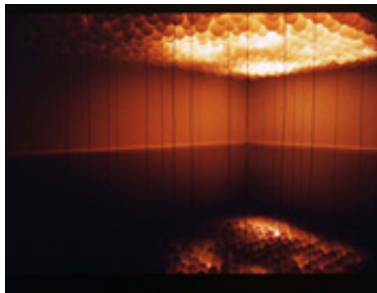
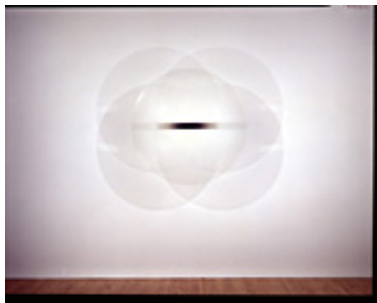


Print Article



Lloyd Hamrol, *Situational Construction for Pomona College*, 1969, from the Hal Glicksman Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles



Robert Irwin, *Untitled*, 1968-69, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles



Tom Eatherton, *Rise*, 1970, from the Hal Glicksman Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Pacific Standard Time IT HAPPENED AT POMONA

by Hunter Drohojowska-Philp

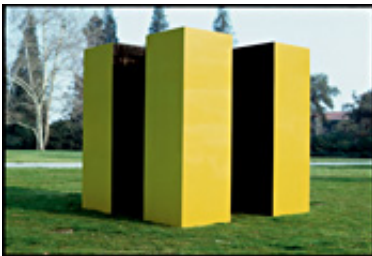
Pomona is only a small town at the eastern edge of Los Angeles County, yet the contemporary art exhibited at the Pomona College Museum of Art between 1969 and 1973 was as radical as any in the country. This magical confluence of minor institutional oversight and major curatorial ambition is being revisited in a three-part exhibition, "It Happened at Pomona: Art at the Edge of Los Angeles 1969-1973." Part one is on view through Nov. 6, 2011. Funded by the Getty Foundation initiative Pacific Standard Time, the exhibitions were organized by Pomona gallery curator Rebecca McGrew with Getty curator Glenn Phillips.

The chronicle begins with sculptor Mowry Baden, the art department chair, offering the position of gallery director to Hal Glicksman, who had worked with Walter Hopps and John Coplans as preparator at the Pasadena Art Museum. Having collaborated with everyone from Marcel Duchamp to Robert Irwin, Glicksman was emboldened to establish an "artist's gallery," and to let the creative types use the space as they chose. It was a time of great experimentation in materials and concepts, in L.A. as elsewhere, and the show documents some of what occurred during his brief one-year tenure.

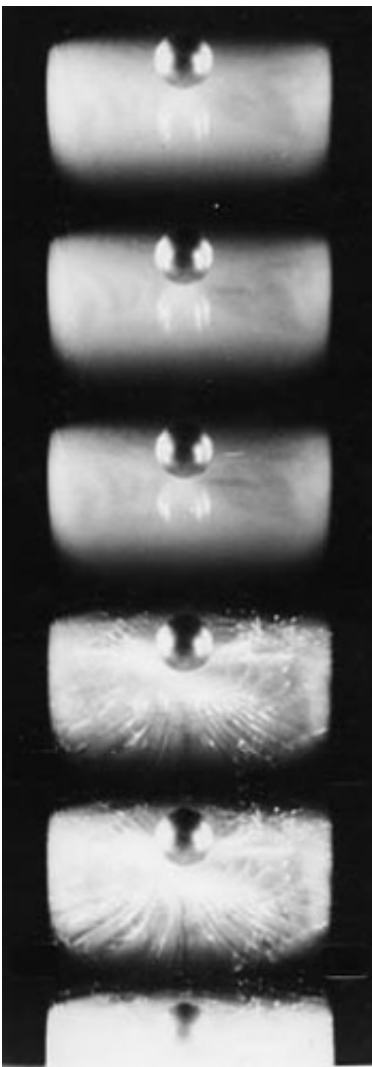
Glicksman had no formal selection process. Artists came to him with ideas and he facilitated them. The resulting artworks often lived on only as documentation, at least until now. For this exhibition, Glicksman helped the curators and artists recreate pieces such as Lloyd Hamrol's *Situational Construction* (1969): balloons inflated with helium cover the ceiling of a red room, while the floor is flooded with still, black water that reflects the round balloon shapes, like clouds hanging over the sea at sunset. Hanging rods of wire look vaguely like falling rain. This enticing scene is only visible through a small window, which distances yet intensifies the impression.

These were peak years for artists experimenting with the very nature of perception. The show includes a sensitively installed white aluminum disc by Robert Irwin, but the exhibition's big "wow" is a little known installation by Tom Eatherton called *Rise* (1970). I walked into a room where a pair of long concave walls emanated an otherworldly pale-blue light, which had a rather soothing effect. Considered a ganzfeld of sorts, the longer I stayed, the more disorienting the sensation, until I felt as though I'd been beamed up into a UFO.

Chris Burden was a student at Pomona in 1967 when he built a tool-shed-sized yellow cube with tall black recesses in the center of each side. The metal recreation stands on the lawn in front of the gallery, and the grass is worn away where people have stood within those recessed areas. I



Chris Burden, *Untitled*, 1967; photograph courtesy of the artist



Ron Cooper, *Ball Drop* (stills), 1969, collection of the University Art Museum Art Video Archive, California

did the same thing. The sculpture invites this sort of participation and now seems a harbinger of Burden's future in performance art.

Ron Cooper was influenced by Robert Smithson, who attended Cooper's *Ball Drop* (1969), a performance in which a wrecking ball smashed a series of glass windshields. Cooper's mesmerizing slow-motion film of the event is shown along with some cracked automotive glass relics. Lewis Baltz's black-and-white photographs, *Prototypes*, of suburban tract houses, and documentation of Judy Chicago's *Atmospheres*, colored flares of smoke set off in the rugged terrain of nearby Mount Baldy, are also in the show.

It was not possible to recreate the original open-door gallery that Michael Asher had devised in 1970, but he agreed to extend his "institutional critique" to the current situation by coming up with a newly subversive notion: the Pomona College Museum is open 24 hours a day for the duration of the show.

According to an interview with Glicksman in the catalogue, the former gallery director was interested primarily in the sort of art that couldn't be collected, that existed only for a certain period of time. "My principle the whole time I was doing exhibitions was to show artists who needed something that I could do for them -- that the art wouldn't exist without the opportunity and without the technical expertise that I could give to it," he says. "I didn't see any justification for the existence of curators just to be arbiters of taste. If you didn't do something for the art, for the artists, for the art world, I felt that you didn't really have a justification for your work."

The current exhibition testifies to the validity of such a notion. Glicksman's successor was Helene Winer, the co-founder of Metro Pictures. The second part of "It Happened at Pomona" documents her time there, and opens on Dec. 3, 2011.

"It Happened at Pomona: Art at the Edge of Los Angeles 1969-1973," Aug. 30, 2011-May 13, 2012, at the Pomona College Museum of Art, 333 N. College Avenue, Claremont, Ca. 91711.

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State University, Long Beach



A Michael Asher installation from 1970, presenting the view from inside the gallery toward the street; photo courtesy of the Frank J. Thomas Archives