



THE RICHMOND ART CENTER PRESENTS:
DAVID PARK: PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES and THE HUMAN SPIRIT:
CONTEMPORARY FIGURATION AS AN EXPRESSION OF HUMANISM

In conjunction with our 80th anniversary, the Richmond Art Center will present two important companion exhibitions that trace the human figure as vehicle in Bay Area art.

RICHMOND, CA -- JANUARY 29, 2016 -- From March 19 - May 22, 2016, dual exhibitions *David Park: Personal Perspectives* and *The Human Spirit: Contemporary Figuration as an Expression of Humanism* will focus on the historical and aesthetic development of Bay Area figurative art over the past 60 years. In conjunction with the exhibitions, the Art Center will offer enlightening public programs including performance, video, music, and a series of talks.

Jan Wurm, Exhibitions Director at the Richmond Art Center reports, “These complimentary and concurrent exhibitions establish a bridge from David Park as the catalyst for the development of Bay Area Figurative Art to the activities of contemporary artists who move between painting, drawing, sculpture, and photography to explore issues of figuration, identity, and humanistic perspectives.”

David Park: Personal Perspectives contains 37 works on paper in various media executed from the 1930s through 1960, the last year of Park’s life. Drawn from the artist’s estate and private collections, this exhibition includes works shown for the first time. Presented in the intimate South Gallery at the Richmond Art Center, visitors will have an unique opportunity to study his space, compositions, and very personal narratives.

David Park produced a late body of work extraordinary for its focus and direction. In a sharp shift from abstraction to figuration. Park’s move stands out as a re-orientation of radical proportion. Yet it is as a teacher and mentor that Park presides as the cornerstone of an entire art movement and perspective, which came to be known as Bay Area Figurative Art in the 1950s.

During those years, the Richmond Art Center mounted a series of pivotal exhibitions and workshops highlighting the figurative Bay Area artists through a series of exhibitions and programs. These programs provided a platform for several emerging artists to launch their careers. The Richmond Art Center was an important venue for David Park, Richard Diebenkorn, Elmer Bischoff, and other emerging artists active in their time.

Park set the stage and inspired his cohorts and the generations since to follow the singular and diverse impulses evident in figurative art explored in the drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, and performance represented in the Art Center’s companion exhibition, *The Human Spirit*.

The exhibition *The Human Spirit: Contemporary Figuration as an Expression of Humanism* bridges the Art Center's historical role in presenting formative exhibitions of the Bay Area Figurative artists in the 1950s, *The Human Spirit* will extend our consideration of legacy to the work of over 20 contemporary Bay Area artists who have expanded the figurative art tradition through paintings, sculpture, photography, video, and performance. This survey will include the work of Elmer Bischoff, Joan Brown, Terry St. John, Christopher Brown, Charles Garabedian, and Enrique Chagoya. Following a highly personal path with exuberant use of materials and iconography, these artists have forged visual language built on vocabularies including folk, medieval, aboriginal, and outsider art.

Pursuing other modes of autobiography, social commentary, and cultural reflection, the sculpture, film, video, and performance of Lava Thomas, Kota Ezawa, Farley Gwarzda, and Allan deSouza draw the painted dialogue into other media. From the intimacy of the photography of Judy Dater, Katy Grannan, and Richard Misrach, to the beading and capturing of images in the memorial hangings of Taraneh Hemami, the myriad manifestations of the human visage and the human spirit for survival extend this exhibition beyond the personal or the domestic. In a time of social, economic, and environmental instability, the art employing the human figure to illuminate the struggles and spirit of contemporary life is of greater power and significance than it has been in nearly a century.

Throughout the duration of the exhibitions, the Richmond Art Center will present a series of public programs. This program includes a discussion with Helen Park Bigelow, daughter of the artist, a plein air workshop exploring gouache and watercolor while referencing David Park, and a session for contemporary artists to draw from the model while referencing David Park's approach to the figure. A roundtable discussion with artists exhibited in *The Human Spirit* will establish contemporary concerns and visual approaches in the fluid movement across diverse media.

The Spring exhibitions are sponsored by Artists' Legacy Foundation, Blick Art Materials, Susan and Steven Chamberlin, James Curtis III, Richard Diebenkorn Foundation, Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson Charitable Foundation, Jacobs & CO., Oliver and Company, and Zellerbach Family Foundation.



Image:

Untitled (Seated Male)

Ink on paper, n.d.

17 x 13 3/4 in.

© Courtesy of Hackett | Mill representative of the Estate of David Park

The Richmond Art Center is the largest visual arts center in the East Bay, delivering exciting arts experiences to young and old alike who reflect the diverse richness of our community. The Art Center features hands-on learning,

well-equipped studios, traveling Art in the Community programs and contemporary exhibitions in its galleries.

Every year, the Richmond Art Center serves thousands of students through classes and programs taught by professional artists, both onsite at the Art Center and at sites throughout Richmond. The Art Center's four galleries mount rotating exhibitions that display the works of emerging and established Bay Area artists. Artists such as Richard Diebenkorn, Jay DeFeo, Wanxin Zhang, Hung Liu, Ed Rossbach and Peter Voulkos have been showcased here.

The Richmond Art Center originated in 1936, when local artist Hazel Salmi, who worked for the WPA, traversed the streets of Richmond with a suitcase packed with art supplies, eager to teach art to anyone interested. Today, everything at the Art Center continues to breathe life into Salmi's original vision: That within every person lives an artist.

Please visit the Richmond Art Center's website <http://richmondartcenter.org> for a full detail of activities and events relating to these exhibitions.

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