

ROBERT BERMAN GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PAID TO PLAY *illustrating Los Angeles: 1945 - 1985*
curated by Robert Berman, Dave Willardson & Charles E. White III

EXHIBITION: September 17, 2011 – November 12, 2011
RECEPTION: Saturday, September 17, 5:00 – 7:00 pm
LOCATION: Bergamot Station Arts Center
2525 Michigan Ave. / C2 Gallery
Santa Monica, CA 90404
GALLERY HOURS: 11 – 6, Tuesday – Saturday
RSVP: 310-315-9506
PRESS INQUIRIES: Email: info@robertbermangallery.com

ROBERT BERMAN GALLERY presents PAID TO PLAY – an overview of the oft overlooked Southern California artists rooted in illustration, commissioned to create imagery for record albums, magazines, advertisements, et al. A genre dirtily linked to commercialism but nonetheless full of innovation, technique, artistic expression and speed.

“Fueled by a combination of intense demand, sleepless nights and brutal competition, the four men at the center of LA’s airbrush market – Dave Willardson, Charles E. White III, Peter Palombi and Peter Llyod – embarked on careers that produced iconic work for *Playboy*, *Levi’s*, the Rolling Stones, along with major studio films such as *American Graffiti* and *Tron*.” - [Overspray: Riding High with the Kings of California Airbrush Art](#).

And the wrangler of these men was Mike Salisbury – the art director of *West* magazine, the Sunday supplement of the *Los Angeles Times*, beginning in the late 60s – who was for illustrators what Ferus Gallery was for beat artists – a platform to project Los Angeles cool to the world at large.

Though the visuals defined a generation, most west coast illustrators never landed the fine art jump with the aplomb of their east coast contemporaries like James Rosenquist, Tom Wesselmann and Andy Warhol. But perhaps the most convincing testament to the relevance of a movement largely branded as irrelevant would be the 1969 *West* magazine cover painted by Ed Ruscha, commissioned by Salisbury, which fetched \$578,500 at auction in 2009.

Included in the exhibition are works by Willardson, White, Palombi, Llyod, Lou Beach, Pat Blackwell, Tim Clark, Dante, Sean Douglas, William George, Bill Imhoff, Patrick Nagel, George McManus, Dennis Mukai, Martin Mull, Margo Nahas, Jayme Odgers, Neon Park, Everett Peck, Mark Ryden, Todd Schorr, Millard Sheets, Tommy Steele, Len Steckler, Ben Talbert, John Van Hamersveld, E. Franklin Wittmack, Zox and others.

PAID TO PLAY is part of Pacific Standard Time. This unprecedented collaboration, initiated by the Getty, brings together more than sixty cultural institutions from across Southern California for six months beginning October 2011 to tell the story of the birth of the L.A. art scene.



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About Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945 – 1980

Pacific Standard Time is a collaboration of more than sixty cultural institutions across Southern California, coming together for six months beginning in October 2011 to tell the story of the birth of the Los Angeles art scene and how it became a major new force in the art world. Each institution will make its own contribution to this grand-scale story of artistic innovation and social change, told through a multitude of simultaneous exhibitions and programs. Exploring and celebrating the significance of the crucial post-World War II years through the tumultuous period of the 1960s and 70s, Pacific Standard Time encompasses developments from L.A. Pop to post-minimalism; from modernist architecture and design to multi-media installations; from the films of the African American L.A. Rebellion to the feminist activities of the Woman’s Building; from ceramics to Chicano performance art; and from Japanese American design to the pioneering work of artists’ collectives.

Initiated through \$10 million in grants from the Getty Foundation, Pacific Standard Time involves cultural institutions of every size and character across Southern California, from Greater Los Angeles to San Diego and Santa Barbara to Palm Springs.

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