

ArtMag, *Expanding the Horizon: The First California-Pacific Triennial*, July 2013



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 Expanding the Horizon - The First California-Pacific Triennial
 City in Sight - Artists from the Deutsche Bank Collection look at urban life

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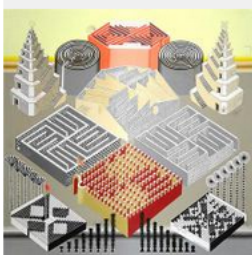
Expanding the Horizon
 The First California-Pacific Triennial

He believes in the power of memory, says Dan Cameron. The best art is the kind you can't get out of your mind. Now, the newly appointed curator of the Orange County Museum (OCMA) has brought together works by 32 artists from 15 countries for the first California-Pacific Triennial. Deutsche Bank is partner to the promising exhibition, which includes numerous artists from the bank's collection. A preview.

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Fernando Bryce, *Südsee* (detail), 2007, Courtesy of Michael Krichman and Carmen Cuenca



Pedro Friedeberg, *Industrial Lapinabrusa*, 2002, Collection of the Artist

Dan Cameron made nearly 80 studio visits in dozens of cities between China and the American west coast to bring together artists from countries like Guatemala, Indonesia, Vietnam, Mexico, and Australia. In the new California-Pacific Triennial, the 53-year-old curator seeks to demonstrate how varied and exciting the art of the Pacific region really is. To Cameron's mind, an important change in paradigm is currently taking place: the transatlantic exchange between New York, Paris, London, and Berlin that has left its mark on 20th-century art is increasingly being replaced by the cultural and artistic exchange among the Pacific coastal states. According to Cameron, national borders are becoming increasingly porous. This is why the curator found the Triennial's predecessor, the 1984-formed California Biennial, out of date. While the renowned show at the OCMA documented current trends on the west coast scene, the new concept radically expands the focus.

As was the case for the last four runs of the California Biennial, Deutsche Bank is once again the Triennial's main sponsor. The show promises to establish itself as one of the most important art events in the region. This is also due to the unconventional eye Cameron casts on art production on both sides of the Pacific. One very important new feature is that the OCMA does not only honor young artists; now, a majority of participants are so-called "mid-career artists" born between 1950 and 1980.

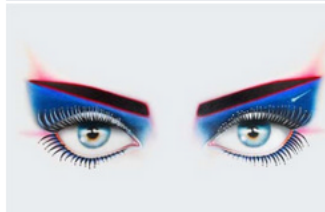
There are known positions such as Fernando Bryce and Darío Escobar, both of whom investigate the repercussions of colonialism in very different ways. Bryce's drawings resemble comic strips and are based on historical images and texts. His 89-part series *South Sea* from 2007 can be seen at the OCMA; the artist, who lives in Lima and Berlin, made drawings from entire pages of Wilhelmian magazines and newspapers for the work—an eerie expedition into Germany's much-repressed colonial past. On the other hand, Darío Escobar's sculptures made from baseball bats, skateboards, or soccer balls grouped in clusters point to the banalization of cultural values. The artist, who lives in Guatemala and New York, deconstructs everyday things into reduced objects that allude to folk and entertainment culture. For the Triennial, Escobar has created a large-scale installation.

Lin Tianmiao was one of the first Chinese women artists to experience an international breakthrough in the 1980s. She works with materials and techniques that carry "typically female" connotations: she weaves and sews with needle and silk thread. Lin Tianmiao became known for her everyday objects enmeshed in cotton thread. At the OCMA, her work *All the Same* (2011) is on view—a memento mori of wrapped skulls and bones.

The use of traditional techniques and formats is characteristic for many of the Triennial artists, including Michael Lin, who like Bryce is represented by the Deutsche Bank Collection and has created a large-scale commissioned work for the bank in Hong Kong. Li became known for his room-sized floral wall and floor pieces. The blossom motifs derive from old Taiwanese textile art and are a fixed part of the local image repertoire. Today they are reproduced industrially in the thousands. Lin's works have much to do with his biography: at the age of nine, he moved with his family to Los Angeles, where he later studied art. After returning to Taiwan, Lin became aware of the tension between his western upbringing and the eastern legacy—a tension that also characterizes Taiwan's social development.

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LEO XU PROJECTS



Michael Lin, *Sharawadgi*, 2013. Installation view, California-Pacific Triennial, Orange County Museum of Art (OCMA), Newport Beach. Photo Chris Bliss



Mark Dean Vaca, *Pete's Place*, 2013. Installation view, California-Pacific Triennial, Orange County Museum of Art (OCMA), Newport Beach. Photo Chris Bliss



Shaun Gladwell, *Broken Dance (Beatboxed)*, 2012. Two-channel video. Commissioned by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia, ©Shaun Gladwell

eastern legacy—a tension that also characterizes Taiwan's social development.

Mark Dean Vaca also works with traditional designs that can cover entire rooms, but they are from a completely different background: his works are based on the flower and tendril arrangements of 18th-century French fabrics and wallpapers, into which he inserts street art and comic motifs. The bright red and orange hues give the works an almost hallucinogenic effect that brings Californian psychedelic art of the late 1960s to mind.

A true rediscovery is Pedro Friedeberg. In his paintings, he combines religious symbols from all kinds of cultures. Their geometric structures are reminiscent of M.C. Escher and Nintendo computer games. The 1936-born artist is considered to be the last living Mexican Surrealist. Along with the *Hand Chair*, Friedeberg, as he explains, has "invented several styles of architecture, as well as one new religion and two salads." His bizarre paintings and objects have absolutely nothing to do with "good taste," and a certain sense of humor is required to appreciate them.

Of course, artists from the younger generations are also present at OCMA—for instance the American Farrah Karapetian, whose photograms depict demonstrations and public protests, the Australian video artist and freestyle skater Shaun Gladwell, and Eko Nugroho, one of the better known figures on the Indonesian art scene. His paintings, videos, and silhouette works investigate the social conditions in his native country. On the one hand, they bear a strong Islamic influence, and on the other they are influenced by a globalized western value system. Nugroho, whose work is also part of the Deutsche Bank Collection, often visualizes this contrast in the form of hybrid fantasy creatures who hide their faces behind masks or helmets. "Perhaps the most important aspect of my work as an artist," says Nugroho, "is communicating my experiences to audiences from different geographical, cultural, and social backgrounds."

This approach practically predestines Nugroho for the first California-Pacific Triennial. The show demonstrates how exciting and broadly based the artistic exchange can be within the Pacific region. Dan Cameron's decision to give up the local focus of the California Biennial and to open it to developments in the "neighboring countries" is a cogent one. In the final analysis, California is basically a multi-ethnic state whose everyday life and culture are in large part determined by the vast migration movements from South America and Asia.

2013 California-Pacific Triennial
6/30 – 9/22/2013
Orange County Museum of Art (OCMA)
Newport Beach, California

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