

**PRESS RELEASE**

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--Monterey Park, CA, USA

The Vincent Price Art Museum (VPAM) at East Los Angeles College will present a new exhibition, entitled *'Round the Clock: Chinese American Artists Working in Los Angeles*, from January 21 to May 25, 2012 as 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.

*'Round the Clock: Chinese American Artists Working in Los Angeles* showcases the work of George Chann, Jake Lee, John Kwok, Milton Quon, and Tyrus Wong, who employed their artistic abilities in their professional lives while remaining true to their own artistic pursuits in their personal lives. The exhibition features more than one hundred works by these Los Angeles-based artists, including paintings, watercolors, preproduction sketches, drawings, photographs, kites, and ephemera. The exhibition considers how these contemporary artists balanced their personal art making and their professional demands; how they achieved success on their own terms in their commitment to making art in Los Angeles; and the significance of their contributions to the region's artistic and cultural legacy.

Whether or not they were native Angelenos or even American-born, each of these five artists studied and settled in Los Angeles, joined in the war effort of World War II, and participated in multiple communities. They built careers in local creative industries, especially in film and advertising, working both for themselves and for others. In their endeavors, Chann, Kwok, Lee, Quon, and Wong became the beneficiaries and agents of Los Angeles' burgeoning art community.

Amidst the currents taking shape before and after World War II, these Chinese American artists were—by virtue of their ethnicity—raised, educated, and employed under the dark cloud of anti-Chinese legislation. Chinese Americans had been a vital part of Los Angeles's population since before the turn of the twentieth century. The World War II era ushered in legislative changes that improved Chinese American life and gave rise to shifting attitudes about Chinese living in America. During the war, China and the U.S. became allies. Congress repealed the Chinese Exclusion Acts, which had restricted Chinese immigration to the U.S. for six decades. For the first time since the 1870s, Chinese in the U.S. could apply to become naturalized citizens.

The tide of international relations and subsequent demographic changes were shifting just as bold new contemporary artistic directions inspired by the Far East were taking shape in the Western art world. Los Angeles was no exception. Tyrus Wong and Milton Quon worked at major film studios, crafting the look and feel of many award-winning and popular films, like *Bambi*, *Fantasia*, *Dumbo*, *Rebel Without a Cause*, and *The Wild Bunch*. Quon, Jake Lee, and John Kwok found work as freelance artists, executing portraits on commission, designing department store windows, and illustrating magazines. George Chann opened a gallery in the Farmers Market to produce and sell his art, though he rarely sold his own work. Kwok, Lee, and Quon also shared their creativity with others as watercolor instructors.

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These artists have yet to be properly recognized and considered for their contributions to Los Angeles's art history as well as Asian American history. This exhibition will explore the artists' agency and vision amidst the social and political complexity they negotiated on a daily basis. By bringing these artists together into one large group exhibition under the auspices of the Getty Foundation's initiative, the history of Chinese American art practice in Los Angeles and the impact of the achievements of these early artists can be shared with the broader public and more fully appreciated.

*'Round the Clock: Chinese American Artists Working in Los Angeles* is curated by Guest Curator and Project Manager, Sonia Mak.

**Programs** – All programs are free and open to the public

Opening Reception: Saturday, January 21, 2012 from 2:00 – 4:00 pm

Curator Walk-through: Saturday, March 3, 2012 from 2:00 – 3:00 pm; presented as part of Pacific Standard

Time Downtown/Exposition Park Regional Focus Weekend, March 3 and March 4, 2012. Free shuttles will be available to several partnering venues. For more information, visit [www.pacificstandardtime.org](http://www.pacificstandardtime.org).

Panel Discussion: Saturday, April 14 at 2:00 pm; Moderated by curator, Sonia Mak, panelists to be announced

**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.

Pacific Standard Time is an initiative of the Getty. The presenting sponsor is Bank of America.

**Sonia Mak** is a Los Angeles-based independent curator. She was a founding curator at the Chinese American Museum, where she curated solo retrospectives for John Kwok, Milton Quon, and Jake Lee.

**INFORMATION** Vincent Price Art Museum | East Los Angeles College

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