Lew Alquist	ARIZONA	David Pennington
Dan Collins	Richard Landis	Kenneth Shorr
Hoge Day	Michael Maglich	Jim Waid
Larry Bell	NEW MEXICO	Ted Kuykendall
John Connell	Harmony Hammond	Bruce Nauman
Allan Graham	Carl Johansen	Steina Vasulka
John Baldessari	SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA	Mike Kelley
Tim Ebner	Raul Guerrero	John M. Miller
Jill Giegerich	Jay Johnson	Lari Pittman
David Bates Jeff De Lude Susan Harrington	TEXAS Donald Judd Bert Long	Bill Lundberg Nancy O'Connor Dan Rizzie

Selection Criteria

The selection process for the 1967 Phoenix Alimonal involved contacting curutars, gallery directors, art critics, phondre space directors, and other art professionals for their recommendations. of artists for me to consider. I also compiled lists of my own, based on gallery, museum, and alternate space visits and on my ongoing knowledge of Southwestern contemporary art. From as wide a field of contemporary Southwestern artists as I was able to consider, I then named down the lot to artists whose studios I aushed to visit. I spent more than six weeks traveling throughout the four states looking at art, not to mention. the many months of screening and preparation that preceded my travels.

Why did we choose to concentrate on the regions of Southern California, Arlownia, Name Mosco, and Texas rather than the "four corner" states of parker (Rennals) A great deal of very important contemporary art is being produced in Southern California and Texas, which are geographically located in the Southwestern Links States. The museum staff failt that representing these two important status of our region would significantly enhance the Phoenix Biennial That we always want to represent the best consengutary art produced in our own state of Argena should go without saying. And we continue to mornsent New Mexico in the Phoenix Biennos' because it is our neighboring state and because many important artists live and work Trees.

I are very happy to write that in my extenuse travels throughout these four states I saw a. great deal of absolutely first rate contemporary art. Lam sure that I did not see all of the best art. in the region. No single person could possibly see it all in the time I had available to me.

This show is intended as a cross section of some of the good art being produced in this region, but we do not claim that it represents the best because claming that it did so would claim it leaser quality for the many high quality arteoriks. that could not be included because of space restrictions. No single-exhibition could possibly contain all of the good art that I saw, I am very okessed that there is a lot more good contemporary Southwestern art available for future exhiptors.

Certain artists were considered meligible for the 1967 Phoenia Bioonial Artists whose work had been included in provious Bienmais were not included unless their work had undergone a major development since we last showed it in a Bernal Jim Wart for example, was in our 1976 Biennial but his work has developed significantly since them, so it is included in the 1957 Phoenix Servicel Artists whose work has been fromined recomments in the museum recently were not considered. Artists whose work will be the subexts of future Contemporary Forum Matrix exhibitions also were not considered for the 1967 Phoenix Bennal.

Well established, internationally prominent artism as well as mid-career and emerging artists. are included in the 1987 Phoenix Biennas Showing that mid-career and emerging artists can hold their pain in the company of well established artists does more to further their careers than if they were shown separately. Also, including well known artists makes people more awars of the encertant role Southwestern contemposary art plays in the international scane.

I have attempted to make as many opportunities as possible for Southwestern artists to exhibit in the museum and to represent the full range of genders, races, and ethnic backgrounds. in the arisa. However, I decided very early in the selection process that I would not use a quotatustern of any kind.

Instead, I based my selections primarily on the quality of the art under consideration, admitand that audoments of quality in art are highly subjective. I also tried to keep in mind the objecown of enhancing sech artwork by placing it in the company of others which would compliment it. in other words. I tried to select an exhibition that a moze than the sum of its parts, that gives an overall impression of consistent high quality and at wast some degree of cohesiveness.

Contemporary art. like contemporary life, is complex and messy, consequently, no single theme or artistic sigwpoint dominates all of the selections. In fact: Southwestern contemporary artists' concerns are as wideranging as those of. me best artists producing art ebewhere in the world today.

I can make one more generalization about Southwestern contemporary art: the best of it is an good as the best contemporary art being produced almost anywhere else in the world 'yoday.

Bruce D. Kortz Curator of 20th Century Art, Phoenix Art Museum

This exhibition is appropried by the Contemporary Forum of the Phoenix Art Muteum

1987 Phoenix Biennial: Regionalism, Nationalism, Internationalism

Good contemporary art produced in the Southwest—or in any region—correlates with concurrent artistic explorations of a national or international scope. Some of the artists in the 1987 Phoenia Biennal reflect Southwestern subjects. Some do not it is the nature of good contemporary art to be national and international in scope, whether or not it reflects regional issues as well.

For example, in the early 1950s; Pop Art occurred more or less simultaneously in London, New York, and Los Angeles. It was as though artists in those three world capitals intuinively sensed the currentness of the ideas Pop Art represents. All three Pop Art manifestations are intelligible in each of the other locations and other world locations as well, such is the universality of the art. Good contemporary art must travel well, must be sufficiently universal to be intelligible throughout the free world.



Bertlang 1985

From Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas Michael Maglich. Lari Pittman, Carl Johansen, and Bert Long tend toward pastiche-the sometimes humorous combining of disparate elements from various loften non-arti sources. Pastiche is a key element of Postmodernism, a murkilydefined international artistic tendency beginning in the late 1970s and continuing to the present. Pastiche also characterizes much of the most recent. art first shown in New York City's East. Village galleries two or three years ago, called Neo-Geo or appropriation or simulationalism or a host of other fuzzy terms. (The artistic present is a very messy and complex one, with no single style or ortical opinion dominating.)

But to return to our main point, it is to proportion to remember in the contest of this exhibition that, while the above artists evidence regional issues in their art, their art also transcerds regionalism to parallel the artists mainstream elsewhere. And this largeness of geographic scope characterizes good contemporary art.

On the other hand, from respec-

tively the same states. Kenneth Shorr, John M. Miller, Bruce Nauman, and Donald Judd evidence absolutely no Southwestern regional subject matter or flavor in their art, yet two of the four (Nauman and Judd) are internationally respected as major Conceptual and Minimal artists. Miller works in a minimalistic style, and Shorr's appropriation of photographs from magazines and other printed sources parallels the international appropriators. And so, while we may take pride in Southwestern contemporary art that reflects. uniquely Southwestern themes, we do not want to neglect other high-quality contemporary art being produced in the region that does not have a regional flavor.

What makes the art in this exhibition good art? The conviction it conveys and the deep personal commitment of the artists are key factors, along with a lost of others. Judgments of quality in contemporary art—in the art of any period—are highly subjective and involve many factors that inevitably vary from one "judge" or another. But there is a difference between saying, "I like it" and saying "I think it is good art." Whether I or anyone else like or dislike an artwork has nothing at all to do with whether it is good art or not.

Of course, all of us like certain visual images which have absolutely no artistic ment:—anaphotos of loved ones, for example:—so liking an image that may not be good art is perfectly legitimate. But celling it good art only because you like it is not. Trying to figure out if an artwork is good or not involves a more complex lead of discrimination than "I like it" or "I don't like it."

Duestions one asks in trying to determine if an artwork is good or not include: What was the artists intention? How well did he or she achieve the intention? How well did he or she achieve the intention? What is the relationship between the artwork and other art by the same artist? Is it his or her best work, words work, or is it a puotal, transitional, or seminal work? What influence has the artist had no other artists? What is the artwork's relation to other contemporary art? What is the artwork's relation to other contemporary art? What is the artwork's relation to other artists? And so on. And we are still left with a subjective, is doment.

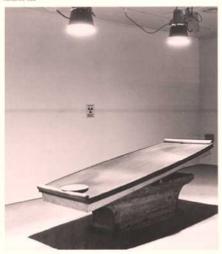
The question "What is the artwork's relation to other contemporary art?" is the one I will address in the sketchy remarks this small publication allows, keeping in mind that the best contemporary art produced anywhere correlates with developments elsewhere in the world. In Germany Gerhard Richter and the Czech Jiri Georg Dokousi, in New York City Philip Taelfe, and in Los Angeles Ed Ruscha—just to name a tew wildly disparate artists—practice appropriation and/or postiche, and/or radically change styles sometimes from one art exhibition season to the next. All symptomise an international condition, a loss of feath in, or at least a questioning of the possibility of the authorship of an original artwork in an age of image olds.

It is as though the swamp of pre-existing images in the world—the sheer incomprehensibility of their volume—prompts artists to interpret, not world, but mediations of the natural world, but mediations of the natural lorfl it nearly impossible to experience nature unmediated? mediations that have transpread in visual culture, the full mange of it from pinups for masteriences.

Being subject to the same world condition, many artists in the 1987 Phoenix Biennial variously evidence similar questionings of the possibility of authoriship. In his Standing Figure. Carl Judicians on vierlays Southwestern. Kachina doli imagery with the image of a Jackson Pollock painting Johansen save picture in Art News. Unknown to Johansen, the Pollock was based both on Native American art and on a Ceanne and a Picasso Pollock had seen at Niew Yorks Museum of Modern Art. Judiansens Old Black borrows from Picassol Cubist constructions, his Deported lifts imagery from Max Beeckmann and Picasson.

Lew Alquist Hist Lunch, 1986

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Living in the New Mexico desert somethy that telephone lines don't reach him, Johnsen intatively tuned into international wavelengths. Art historically, the concurrent development of similar ideas in different places in the world without communication between the principals occurs rather often, affirming the ideas' currentness and validity.

Lair Pittman amalgamates and overlays imagery taken from various surrealist and surrealistic styles, from surrealist paintings themselves and from the surge of decorative art adaptations surrealism spawmed in the forties and fifties. Nowhere is the surrealist-inspired decorative art binge more evident than in Los Angeles. Native Los Angelino Pittman takes his visual environment as a giner, treating it without irony or parody, simply using it as an earlier artist might use a sunset.

Arizonan Michael Maglich makes pastiches of Southwestern Native American nottery—which he makes breaks and reconstructs to look like archeological museum artifacts-then overlays with fortiesstyle illustrations from exercise manuals (Dumbbell Zen Bowls A + B and Barbell Zen Bowls A + B). Texan Bert Long assembles actual objects and frames into his pointed and mixed media. constructions which often include richly colored surrealistic forms, evocative patternings, and the inventive freedom with materials that typifies the best Mexican folk art. always. a strong influence on Southwestern land especially on Texasl art.

Lew Alquist, John Baldessan, Jill Gegenich, Rauf Guerrem, Jay Johnson, Miles Kelley, Nancy O'Conno, Dave Pennington, Dan Rizzie and Kenneth Shorr all appropriate and/or simulate, sometimes overlaying, pre-existing images, objects, or narratives from various sources. And so the adoption or appropriation of previously existing images, objects, and ideas is widespread within our own Southwestern region as well as throughout the world today.

Related to questioning the possibility of the authorship of an original artwork, many contemporary artists are utilizing both minimalistic styles and conceptual art strategies.

Minimalism in our exhibition is represented by two of its originators, Larry Bell and Donald Judd, who represent Minimalism's austerely elegant abstraction at its best. Resolutely not anthropomorphic, allusive or illusive, Minimalism's concrete singleness of isoleton of sculptural phenomen redefined abstraction in the 1950s and continues to be a rish loan from which minimalistic artists have grown.



Carl Johansen Standing Figure, 1986

With extraordinary singleness of purpose, John M.Miller has worked with the same rigorously limited compositional format since 1972. About his painting he said "To engage it you must leave all your references behind. for the experiencing of it is only about. itself," a concept extending from Minimal artists' preoccupation with isolating experiences unique to their artworks, experiences lacking references to anything outside their art. Purely optical interactions within a rigorously disciplined and minutely nuanced structure of this kind are experiences uniquely obtainable in the medium.

of painting.

A dialogue about what painting is as distinct from soulpture and from all other thrings preoccupes. Alan Graham, too. This latter minimalistic artist extends the notion of painting as paint on a flat, two dimensional convas into three dimensional forms and tactile sensations more typical of soulpture, creating an abstract dielectic between notions of what painting and soulpture are

Richard Landis's richly nuanced colors and optional interactions are about as distant as possible from Minmalism's austerity, yet they belong to the same family of recent geometric aboractions which they emich with a new range and depth.

Tim Ebner's Color Cue paintings derive from Minimaliant's sparse gone etry but start you strategies taken from Conceptual art as well. Emerging in the 1900s, Conceptual artists stressed the decisions, strategies, and ideas represented by their artworks more than the visual appearances or the actual making of their artworks.

For this series Ebner adopted color combinations suggested by anonymous decorators through color chips in paint stores, thus relinquishing what formerly might have been considered the most important artistic decision in favor of an overriding conceptual scheme which amalgamates not only Minimasism and Conceptual Art but smulation and appropriation as well.

Two of Conceptual arts founders and most consistently important practitioners, John Baldessari and Bruce Nauman, live in California and New Mexico.

For his photographic pieces. Baldessari chooses images from various sources and juxtaposes them to create often puzzling or humorous meanings by their placement and visual syntax, thus using pre-existing images the way a writer uses the alphabet Conceptual art's de-emphasis of the sensuous in favor of more linguistically derived meanings radically opposed abstract painting's mid-1960s dictum that painting be about purely ontical experience. Baldessarik-and other Concentual artists'---use of pre-existing photographs as a strategy for circumventing painting's traditions challenges abstraction's hermeticism.

Many of Bruce Naumaris works identify discrepancies between inguistic and visual meanings, often through the device of licibits. Fland to Mouth, for example (not in our exhibition), is a sculpture depicting a personshouth, chin, shoulder, and arm: literally, hand to mouth. The arms something altogether different Both meanings are attogether different Both meanings.

the same but they are totally different, an unresolvable radde that is at once logical and absent A Dark and Stormy. Niight likewise depicts a circular inguistic structure of crystal clear logic but absurd outcome in the color video, a clown repeats a dialogue that keeps returning upon itself like a dog chasing ist tall. In their quest to de-emphasize visual appearances in order to emphasize concepts and ideas, Conceptual artists often use untraditional art mediums. In the case of Nauman and Bill





Michael Maglich Qumbbell Zen Bowls A.B.H. 1991

Lundberg, who use video and film, the main protagonist, or at least the most visible maker of the event, is not even the artist himself but a surrogate performer. Performance Art gained impetus in the late 1950s and early 1960s, first as "happenings," "events," and "actions," then more formalized—if we can use such a word for an often improvisatory art form—as "performanos" and "wides art."

Bill Lundberg's art is completely unique and original within perhaps the most iconoclastic art realm in recent history. Con Tent creates an environment that completely envelopes viewers and metaphorically transports us from the museum to another place to "ghost story" time on a camping trip. An aspect of Conceptual art is is challenging of traditional mediums like painting, sculpture, and photography. Is Con Tent a sculpture or a film or a performance? Is A Dark and Stormy Night a sculpture, a video, or a performance? Of course, the answer is "Both are all three, and more."

Dan Collins's Virtual America III is a video sculpture which, like the two preceding works, causes to exist when the electricity is turned off, a dimension of Conceptual arts often intended sphemerality. Collins's work compellingly deals with a most simple perceptual phenomenon; the primacy of "point of view." The video camera's raking angle "perceives" as a map of the United States (seen on a small monitor) what appears from a head-on perspective to be an amorphous shape.

Lew Alquist's Hot Lunch homorously plays with discrepancies between linguistic and visual meanings, like Nauman's work often does. A radioactive plate sides from one end to another of a motorized tilting table, activating a gieger counter at each end and creating an eerie chatter. Humor characterizes this and many other Conceptual artworks, yet the humor incibly clothes a deedly serious subject.

Since the late 1970s an internancial tendency toward figurative, narrative imaginy has flourided. Artists rediscovered the potency of myths, literary themes, tales, contemporary events, and mass media sources for art's subjects. In the last flev years, many artists have turned their rarrative focus toward poetic or metaphysical subjects, perhaps as anticides to the nuclear age's perious threats. Could they be seeing personal refuge in the sprintual realm from day Mes harshness? And might we find some confirct these?

David Bates's Freeding the Dogs Purple Galinule minte us into affable works inhabeta by nurturing king things. Jim Walds Sea Ania and Nogales undulate and bloom in idylicworks where all things compliment each other. Nancy O'Donnor's Hot inno-Sharp Finde and My Big Mistake in the Dark tell, in their own words, the poetcally worded stories of block Peass cowboys. Hoge Day's Woman in There and Television-window imbue ourse construction selvage materials with a sleep-walker's invosible dreams. Harmony Hammond's Camposanto I makes a celestial event out of a field of lish color, leff De Lude turns mundane. settings into infernally glowing parables. Space and scale coalesce in Susan Harrington's epic Telling the Roes John Connell evokes nature's rhythms in his waterbird sculptures of cranes and herons which migrate over New Mexico. Ted Kuykendall's eerie. sinted and bleached photographic self normality metancholically place his face in another time. And Steina Vasulka's video installation, Scapes of Paradoxy, initiaciones the landscapes of her nativo iceland with New Mexico's magical terrain. Altogether, these poetical and metaphysical evocations emotionally affirm that life's underpinnings transcend the daily grind.





Questioning the possibility of the authorship of an original artwork, mining Minimalism and Conceptual art, and evoking poetic and metaphysical ruminations represent wide ranging artistic explorations which typidy much of the best contemporary art being produced in the world today. Attuned to the worldwide scope, the 1987 Phoenix Biennail represents some of the best art of these persuasions being produced in the Southwest today.

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