

encourages such a preoccupation because it is so “generative, with the ocean, the mountains, the desert, an urban environment that exists in many climates, visual, and variously lit zones.” In other words, for Suderburg, living in Los Angeles, and its depiction within her films is about negotiating its terrain, literally, in regard to its geography, but also its politics, such as the history of queer culture in *Somatography* (2000).

Her last completed feature film to date, *Decline & Fall* (2007), and is in the exhibition, reflects a shift from Los Angeles to Berlin. For Suderburg, it was an opportunity to go to a country from which her mother’s side of her family hails. She went there just after reunification. For Suderburg, these two factors made Berlin a city resonant with meaning.

In the film, Suderburg explores the layers of the war, post-war, her heritage of Americans once fighting Germans, East/West split, it was all palpable but still being figured out—should the statues of Marx and Engels be removed? What should be in the Holocaust Museum? She has said that for her it was also the only place where she had been in which a past war was clearly visible still—bullet holes still present in some buildings. The larger discussion within the film is memorialization, remembrance, and how wars color how we proceed ethically. This exploration is perhaps symbolized best by a long sequence of walking down the spiral ramp of the new Reichstag—drilling down into history and culture.

Suderburg does not shoot with script. Rather, she goes on site and shoots a lot of material, creating an archive. Later, in the editing room, she assembles the disparate work into a meditative narrative, and sometimes produces smaller works, with the same footage appearing in the larger work too.

Notably, Suderburg employs very long takes. This method creates space and time for scenes to reveal themselves in detail, as opposed to the short take and quick cut that makes it “seem like things are happening,” as she says. This approach is reminiscent of the long, unedited takes by experimental filmmaker, James Benning, as in *One Way Boogie Woogie* (1977), or with Pat O’Neill’s *Water and Power* (1989). These influences reflect the heyday of structuralist film when Suderburg was a student. But the long-take approach also reflects a time when Suderburg was part of an early generation who had access to video cameras. You could just let it keep running, unlike the expense of film. It is a tendency that still runs through Suderburg’s recent films.

Suderburg has made myriad shorts and four feature films and is currently in pre-production on her fifth feature experimental documentary about Wunderkammern, Kunstkammern, collecting and the miniature. Her films have been screened internationally in various festivals, museums, galleries and on television including the Pacific Film Archives, Berkeley, the Millennium Film Workshop, New York, Capp Street Projects, San Francisco, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, The American Film Institute, Los Angeles, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, among many other venues. She has written about art, performance, television and film and is co-editor of *Resolutions: Contemporary Video Practices*, and editor of *Space Site Intervention: Situating Installation Art*.

--Tyler Stallings, Artistic Director, Culver Center of the Arts & Director, Sweeney Art Gallery, University of California, Riverside

Podcast interviews with artists, checklist, and other information at sweeney.ucr.edu.



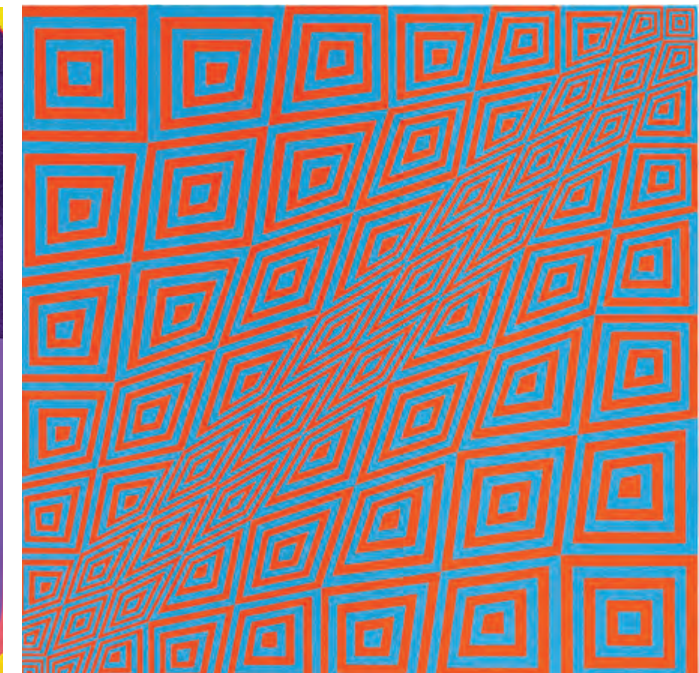
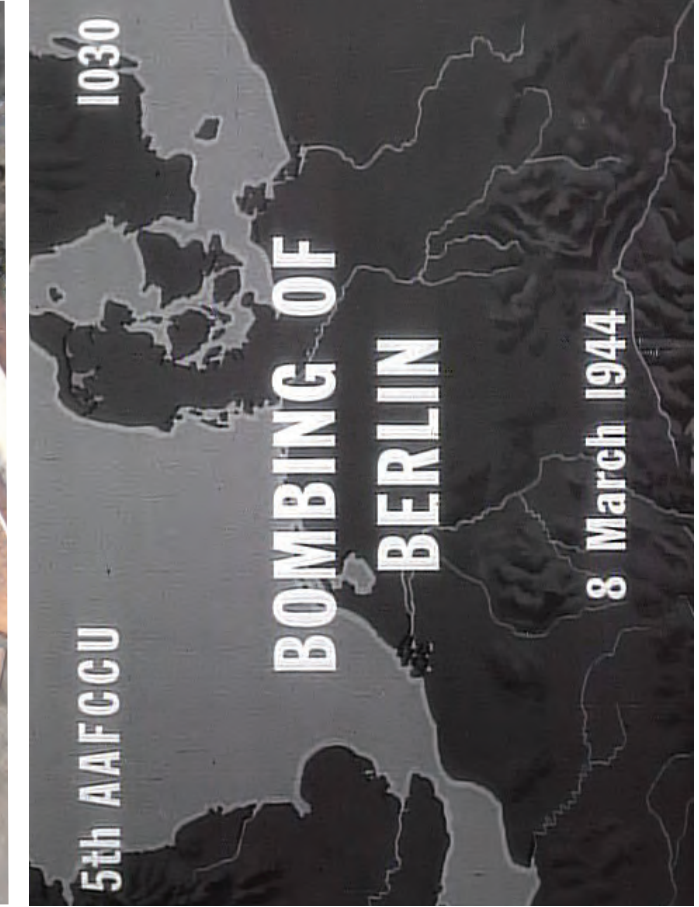
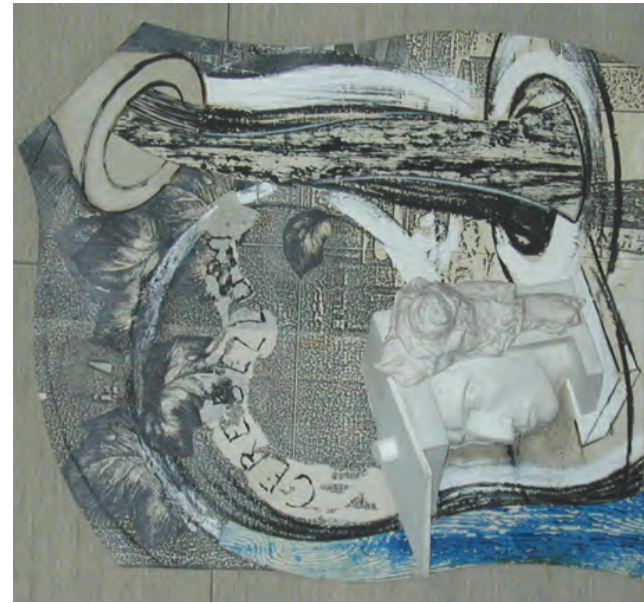
RELATED EVENTS

Decline & Fall, USA, 80 min. | Film and Discussion
Saturday, March 3 | 4:30-6:30 PM | free admission
Limited seating for film | RSVP for free tickets online

Erika Suderburg’s *Decline and Fall* is an experimental feature-length documentary about aerial bombing, reconstruction, mass protest, and monumentality. Spanning historical and present day images from Rome, Yucatán, Berlin and Los Angeles this work examines empire; its artifacts, structures and collapse. Through archival footage of the bombing, aerial reconnaissance and rebuilding of WWII Berlin, contemporary footage of a 2.8 million person peace march in Rome at the start of the Iraq war, a neighborhood candlelight vigil in Los Angeles, and stock footage of astronomical events in and around Chichén Itzá in Yucatán, Mexico this work decomposes the macro and micro movements of destruction, memorialization and everyday life. A discussion and Q&A follow the screening with curator Tyler Stallings and filmmaker Erika Suderburg.

Post Pacific Standard Time: Three Artists in Los Angeles from the 1980s has been organized by Sweeney Art Gallery, University of California, Riverside, and curated by Tyler Stallings, Artistic Director, Culver Center of the Arts & Director, Sweeney Art Gallery.

(Front cover from top left, clockwise) Jim Isermann, *Untitled* (Shag Painting), 1988, enamel paint and orlon acrylic yarn on wood, 96 x 96 x 2 in., Laguna Art Museum purchase from funds provided by the Contemporary Collectors Council. Erika Suderburg, *Still from Memory Inversion (Los Angeles)* in collaboration with Lynne Kirby, 1988, 16 min. 30 sec., courtesy of the artist. Jill Giegerich, *Untitled*, 1988, mixed media on plywood with bust, 36 x 28 x 8.5 in., collection of Capital Group. Jim Isermann, *Untitled*, 2008, acrylic latex paint on canvas over panel, 48 x 48 in., courtesy of the artist and Richard Telles Fine Art. Erika Suderburg, *Decline & Fall*, 2007, 80 min., courtesy of the artist. Jill Giegerich, *Untitled* (Vase spilling), 2008, oil on canvas, 60 x 48 in., courtesy of the artist. (Insert from left to right) Jim Isermann, Installation view of at Inn of Tomorrow, Anaheim, California, 1982. Jill Giegerich in her studio at Joshua Tree, California (Photo courtesy of UnknownForces, Doug Beale). Erika Suderburg, *Decline & Fall*, 2007, 80 min., courtesy of the artist. (Back cover) Installation view of exhibition.



POST PACIFIC STANDARD TIME Three Artists from Los Angeles in the 1980s
Jill Giegerich Jim Isermann Erika Suderburg



POST PACIFIC STANDARD TIME *Three Artists in Los Angeles from the 1980s*

Jill Giegerich Jim Isermann Erika Suderburg

February 4 – March 24, 2012

Post Pacific Standard Time: Three Artists in Los Angeles from the 1980s is an exhibition in dialog with the Getty Foundation's city-wide initiative, Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945-1980 presented in multiple venues from fall 2011 to winter 2012. While the Getty exhibitions focus on art movements and artists that developed in Post-World War II Southern California, this exhibition picks up where the time period under examination ends. *Post Pacific Standard Time* feature three artists—Jill Giegerich, Jim Isermann, and Erika Suderburg—who graduated just before or in the 1980s, then began to exhibit soon thereafter, followed by critical attention, solo exhibitions, and inclusion in museum collections.

They represent divergent approaches in art making that includes painting, sculpture, and video. While not comprehensive of the L.A. art world in the 1980s, they do represent several tendencies that arose during that time, such as Jill Giegerich's redefinition of figuration and crossing sculpture with painting, Jim Isermann's blurring boundaries between fine art and design, and Erika Suderburg's extension of experimental, structuralist filmmaking into documentaries. In essence, the exhibition represents the questions to be asked next about the L.A. art scene after the *Pacific Standard Time* exhibitions. The exhibition juxtaposes works from the 1980s alongside current work in order to show each artist's development over a span of thirty years.

Jill Giegerich graduated from California Institute of the Arts in 1977. Soon thereafter, she began to show her sculptural paintings nationally and internationally. Her early influences included Elizabeth Murray, Richard Artschwager, and Judy Pfaff, all of whom were at the forefront of asking what a painting or a sculpture can be. However, they were on the East Coast. Giegerich was perhaps the advocate for this aesthetic here on the West Coast.

Her unique aesthetic utilized materials from the hardware store—plywood, sandpaper, and plaster, for example—that were combined with mounted, enlarged photocopies of architectural, decorative motifs, along with three dimensional elements, such as musical instruments. She would often combine the varying textures in a manner as to create a trompe l'oeil quality in which the original materials would suggest other objects. For Giegerich, the yoking together of disparate materials reflected her interests in Cubism, Russian Constructivism, and the mind games of Marcel Duchamp. Generally, the works employed a "worker's sensibility," emphasizing a stripped down color palette of browns, blacks and whites, reflecting the original material's inherent nature.

But, by wringing out of them iconic figures, she played with visual and symbolic flipflopping, ala Duchamp. Her work was full of "potentials;" something like quantum physics in which elements can be both particles and waveforms simultaneously, depending on the position of the observer. In a recent conversation with Giegerich, she mused that perhaps her fascination with signs and symbols came not only from being immersed in the theories of semiotics taught at CalArts, but also from growing up with her dad, a New York "Mad Men" ad executive. In other words, years before college, she heard word at the dinner table that an image can mean something else based on context.

After numerous solo and group exhibitions in the 1980s, Giegerich took a hiatus from the artworld in the 1990s. Although in 2002, she had a retrospective at the Armory Center of the Arts in Pasadena, California. For 30 years, Giegerich lived and worked in Los Angeles, but in 2005, she moved her studio to a remote area of Joshua Tree, California. It's a small town, rife with artistic sensibilities and self-imposed exiles. Its more avant-garde artistic lineage is said to have begun with rock musician Gram Parsons, but in the past decade, many visual artists have moved there too. While there, away from the pressures of the L.A. artworld, she decided to reskill and teach herself Old Master, oil painting techniques.

In the past years since 2005, the results have been paintings full of color on canvas stretched over bars; as opposed to irregular shaped pieces of wood with resin, tar, and cork attached. However, we can still see Giegerich's vocabulary of forms in these paintings that she developed in the late-1970s, such as vessels, or hair instead of rope, or painted, bust-like portraits instead of plaster statues. Many of the images feel like clichés. But, Giegerich seems to have always had an impetus to want to challenge clichés, to find the kernel of truth down deep in them, whether it be the use of traditional oil painting techniques, or a vase that has often been a stand in for the image of woman.

Giegerich is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship. Her work is in the collections of The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Eli Broad Foundation, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Brooklyn Museum. She had a solo show of her paintings at Cardwell Jimmersion Contemporary Art in 2011.

Jim Isermann is also a graduate of California Institute of the Arts, receiving his MFA in 1980. Perhaps one of the most significant decisions that Isermann, like Giegerich and other peers such as Mike Kelley and Jim Shaw made, was to remain in Los Angeles. Instead of heading to New York, as many young graduates did at the time, he remained in a city whose swap meets and mid-century architecture, along with being the international epicenter of pop culture, would be of significant influence on Isermann's aesthetic—a conflation of post-war industrial design, popular culture, and fine art. His already clear-sighted inclination to blend these aesthetics is exemplified by one of Isermann's early solo shows in 1982, *Motel Modern*, with Richard Kuhlenschmidt Gallery: the exhibition of a suite of motel furniture held its opening reception at The Inn of Tomorrow, a motel across from Disneyland in Anaheim, California, and was then reconfigured back in the gallery in Los Angeles for the run of the exhibition.

Isermann was so ahead of the curve on the collapse of design and fine art aesthetics that it took decades for critics to catch on; and perhaps only after other artists who came after Isermann began to explore similar territory and created an aesthetic critical mass, such as Pae White, Jorge Pardo, and Andrea Zittel. Before that time, the critics were misguided, wondering aloud whether Isermann was a designer trying to be an artist, or vice versa. Granted, they were issued in a time when "the end of painting" was proclaimed following the advent of conceptualism and minimalism.

But the saving grace, and perhaps missed at the time, was that Isermann handmade all of his works, even though it would have appeared that he could have bought them at the Rose Bowl Flea Market—a time before Ebay and mid-century modern became trendy again. The importance in the nuance of the handmade was that it challenges the desire to pigeonhole the work—were they sculptures or were they furniture? It was "a complication of use-value," as Isermann stated during the course of organizing this exhibition. In effect, Isermann becomes the example of an individual who has internalized the utopian values of Bauhaus and mid-century modern design, who then attempts to apply what he has learned. Even though many art writers thought that Isermann was being ironic in his references, he was in fact very sincere about his pursuit of modernism's essential tenet: an affirmation of the human ability to improve their environment through experimentation, science, and technology.

However, on the flipside of the handmade, Isermann began to use a computer to design manufactured elements in the late 1990s for large scale installations and major public art projects. He applied what he learned to creating vacuum formed and decal elements for gallery exhibitions. Examples of such works are not in this exhibition, but they do offer a foil to some of the more recent work in the show. In 2008, Isermann returned to making his first paintings on stretched canvas in over twenty years. He incorporated the modular algorithm that he developed with the vacuum forms and decals, creating a simple system in which only slight twists and turns of the same module or group of modules would produce an inordinate amount of variation and delight for the eye.

In 1998, Isermann had a fifteen-year survey exhibition organized for University of Wisconsin Milwaukee's Institute of Visual Art that traveled to six venues. Most recently Isermann has mounted solo exhibitions at Mary Boone Gallery, New York in 2011 and 2012, Deitch Projects, New York in 2007, Corvi-Mora, London in 2008 and Richard Telles Fine Art, Los Angeles in 2009. Commissioned projects were completed in 2006 for the UCLA Hammer Museum, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, in 2007 for Yale University Art Museum, in 2008 for Princeton University and in 2009 for Stanford University and University of California, Riverside.

Erika Suderburg is an installation artist, writer, and filmmaker, but this exhibition focuses on her films exclusively. Raised in Minneapolis, Suderburg moved to Southern California from the midwest, like Isermann, who was born in Wisconsin, where she attended graduate school at University of California, San Diego, and then moved to Los Angeles afterwards in 1986. She was particularly fascinated by the film community running parallel to Hollywood's film industry, embodied by experimental filmmakers such as Maya Deren and Pat O'Neill. She chose to attend UCSD in the early 1980s because Jean-Pierre Gorin was and still is a professor there, as he had worked closely with Jean-Luc Godard during his "radical years." Together, they founded the collective Dziga Vertov Group in 1968, and produced a series of overtly political films. Suderburg said that she basically wanted to get as close to Godard's vision as she could.

Suderburg considers the films that she makes today, largely feature-length, as poetic, essay films. She has abandoned the pursuit of soliciting galleries and museums to show her installations, and opted for the control of the edit room, and the theatricality of the screening room with an audience sitting rather than milling about in a gallery. For her, considering the philosophical importance of what it means to make a film and how to present it came from influences such as Chantal Akerman, Alexander Kluge, Yvonne Rainer and Harun Farocki, among others. They were pioneers in developing a hybrid genre of film that is a cross between documentary, political subversion, and discursive narration. In essence, they asked what can be called truth, and how can this question be represented in film?

A motif that appears in Suderburg's films from the 1980s forward is an emphasis on landscape, especially topographic, aerial views. In other words, there is an overriding sense of surveillance, as in *Memory Inversion (Los Angeles)* (1988). While preparing this show, Suderburg did comment that for her Los Angeles