Last chance to see *Radiant Impressions*

*Radiant Impressions* closes on August 14, 2021. Don’t miss the opportunity to see the exhibition that considers the various ways painters working in California during the first half of the 20th century have used light to create meaning and convey emotion. Presenting over 30 works organized in thematic groupings, *Radiant Impressions* brings together a diverse selection of landscapes, portraiture, and genre scenes depicting people at work and play.
Featured Work: *The Johnson Girl*

Belle Baranceanu (1902 – 1988) was born to Abram and Mary Agnes Goldschlager, Romanian immigrants who separated when she was a young child. She and her sister, Teresa, were raised by
their maternal grandparents on a farm in North Dakota. In 1924, Baranceanu completed her undergraduate studies at the Minneapolis School of Art. She remained at the school to pursue graduate studies under painter/printmaker Anthony Angarola, and within a year followed him to the Art Institute of Chicago, where she studied, taught, and exhibited her work. (sandiegohistory.org)

As described by Erin Stout, IMCA curatorial and research associate, Baranceanu's *The Johnson Girl*, pictured above, "diverges from the complexity or intensity of light seen in many of the other paintings on display in *Radiant Impressions*. Here, viewers witness a portrait that is set indoors with no obvious light source or light and shadow interplay. Instead, the focus is on the elusive sense of interiority that the sitter possesses. The sitter offers an inward gaze and placid demeanor that makes her emotional state difficult to discern. The notion that she is withdrawn into thought or daydream is reinforced by the painting's emphasis on surface and enclosure."

The San Diego History Center pronounced *The Johnson Girl* Baranceanu's most charming portrait: "It depicts a young neighbor named Murial Johnson. The Botticellian lyricism of the figure is set against a background of geometric patterns and a blue pot which perfectly complements the random pattern of fans on the robe. Usually overlooked, this painting contains what must be the most subtle self-portrait in the history of art. Reflected in a mirror behind the sitter is the back of her easel as well as part of the artist's shoulder, a sliver of neck, and a bit of hair."

IMCA is pleased to include Belle Baranceanu's *The Johnson Girl* (circa 1930) in its collection.
Frank J. Gavencky was born in Chicago, IL on June 10, 1888. He studied at the Art Institute of Chicago from 1913 – 1914 and continued his training at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts, founded in 1902 by artist Carl Werntz (1874 – 1944).

Gavencky’s work was exhibited often at the Art Institute of Chicago (from 1920 – 1938) and at the Palette and Chisel Club’s annual exhibitions (from 1920 – 1930) where, in 1925, he was awarded a gold medal for meritorious painting. Established in 1895, the Palette and Chisel Club boasted founding member Edgar Alwin Payne (1883 – 1947), a prominent California Impressionist artist whose work is represented in IMCA’s collection, alongside other students primarily enrolled in evening classes at the Art Institute of Chicago. They joined together for Sunday sketching sessions to work in color from a live model under daylight conditions. The club soon became an important gathering place for social activities and independent exhibitions.

During the 1920s and 1930s, Gavencky painted frequently in California and became known for his landscapes, seascapes, desert scenes, and street life depictions. As seen in On Fisherman’s Wharf, Monterey (pictured above), he emphasizes the passing moment by capturing the distinct coloration of light at a single point in the day. Gavencky is part of a long tradition of artists who have employed light as both subject and medium, exploring the ways in which it affects a scene or landscape. The harsh shadows of the late day and the intense golden wash of sunlight on the
pedestrians and surfaces of the buildings are fundamental elements in Gavencky’s composition, conjuring a sense of theatricality in an otherwise unremarkable street scene.

In the 1960s, Gavencky retired to Ramona, CA where he died on February 13, 1967.

IMCA is pleased to include On Fisherman’s Wharf, Monterey (after 1930) in its collection.
California Photographer: Pat Martin

Born and raised in Los Angeles, CA, photographer Pat Martin continues to call the city
home. According to his website, "He uses photography to connect with personal memories, while also working to understand his own relationship with time. Martin sees the present as an opportunity to build upon an empty family album, while also finding new connections through portraiture." Martin was selected as the 2019 Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize winner for portraits of his late mother, Gail, from the series, *Goldie (Mother)*.

Writer and journalist Alex Hodor Lee wrote about Pat Martin for *Document*. “The California photographer takes us beneath the golden washes of West Coast sun, toward a deeper study of the American family. . . .Martin’s portraits contain a radical tension: deep lush reds and inviting gold tones—hues owing much to the Los Angeles native’s sun-drenched sensibility—wash over contemplative and private moments. . . .Centered and still, Pat’s subjects often occupy the center of the photographic frame. They feel heavy, pulling the lower edge of the frame towards us with an extraordinary gravity and incisive gaze. And there is no escaping their gaze. His subjects equally cannot escape our gaze.”

For the online creativity platform *It’s Nice That*, Ellie Robertson wrote, “Despite the diverse characters that feature in his work (a range of friends, family and strangers), there is one common denominator—glorious lighting, be it the golden beams of Los Angeles sunshine or moodier shadows mirroring even gloomier subjects. . . .With established signatures (photographing at sunrise and sunset and setting subjects in a doorway), Pat’s work is satisfyingly assured in style, thoughtful and coherent throughout, and often with an unexpected, playful undercurrent.”

Listen to this episode of *A SHOT* podcast (transcript provided) where Martin discusses in depth a portrait he made of his biological father.

Follow @patmartin__ and check out Martin’s takeover of *Paper Journal’s* IG.
Alfred Mitchell was born in York, PA in 1888 and grew up in New Jersey. Mitchell moved to California in 1908 and began his art training in 1913 at the San Diego Academy of Art, founded by California Impressionist Maurice Braun (1877 – 1941). Two years later, he received a silver medal at the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego, which celebrated the opening of the Panama Canal and promoted the city as the first US port of call for ships traveling north after passing westward through the canal. Braun held Mitchell in high regard, and it was at his urging that in fall 1916 Mitchell enrolled in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia, the country’s first museum and art school. In 1920, Mitchell was awarded the prestigious Cresson European Traveling Scholarship and the Edward Bok Philadelphia Prize, allowing him to spend the following summer traveling and painting throughout Europe. After returning to the States from his sojourn, he served two years in the United States Army.

Mitchell eventually settled in the nascent San Diego art colony in Southern California. He was president of the San Diego Art Guild from 1922 to 1923 and a founding member of the La Jolla Art Association. Along with Braun and other artists, Mitchell formed the Associated Artists of San Diego.

Collection Work: *In Morning Light*

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(later changed to Contemporary Artists of San Diego) in 1929, which as a group represented the burgeoning art community of the area.

Mitchell often worked *en plein air* (outdoors) and his paintings were influenced by French Impressionism. In the painting *In Morning Light* (pictured above), Mitchell captures the atmospheric quality of ocean mist and the warm light of the morning sun on the sandstone cliffs of La Jolla. Martin E. Peterson described Mitchell's work in the 1973 issue of the *San Diego Historical Society Quarterly*. "While Mitchell may have sympathized with the new, he was essentially a realist, a product of the academy, a colorist whose approach to art was less theoretical and more straightforward. His work was based on sound academic training. In 1937 it was said of his work: ‘Alfred Mitchell paints drama too, but in a different way. He paints not nature’s moods but her portrait in jewel-like brilliance. Delighting in strong color, he paints dramatic contrasts rather than subtleties’" (M. Loring, San Diego Sun, May 16, 1937).

Alfred Mitchell died on November 9, 1972, in San Diego, CA.

IMCA is pleased to include *In Morning Light* (1930) among many works by Alfred Mitchell in its collection, and to present *Main Street, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania* (circa 1919), an important early work by the artist on loan from the Peter and Gail Ochs Collection, in the current exhibition *Radiant Impressions*. 
Staff Pick
What is the secret in Helen Pashgian's *Blue Secret*? My initial response points to the single, radiating, brushstroke-like mark that interrupts the green-blue, curved, rectangular plane hovering between the surface and the wall. This mark, however, poses more questions to me than it answers. Pashgian is an artist increasingly recognized as one of the most influential members of the Light and Space movement. In her practice, the object is not the artwork. In *Blue Secret*, light is not merely that which illuminates the work, but instead forms its very matter.

The secret of *Blue Secret*, in my view, is two-fold: the internal illuminated stroke produced through the artist's use of different materials as well as the obscure workings of light itself. Here, rather than simply revealing an image, light is rendered mysterious. It is not only an exterior transmission between the artwork and the viewer, but matter with its own strange corporeality. *Blue Secret* exposes the materiality of light, toying with its impenetrable and alien logics. For me, the work simultaneously evokes an atmosphere of reflection—the calm, blue, minimal plane and its singular interruption—and a feeling of destabilization. Embodiments of light, like the ghostly mark in *Blue Secret*, are all around me and form my visual world. Rather than revealing the world to me, perhaps these moments of light hide themselves as I navigate a universe of secrets.

Zachary Korol-Gold
IMCA Graduate Student Assistant Researcher (Curatorial Department)
UCI Alumni Spotlight
Taiji Terasaki is a Japanese American artist based in Honolulu, HI who grew up in a family of scientists and creatives. According to the artist, he has spent more than 30 years exploring avant-garde innovations in his practice working in photography, sculpture, and immersive and large-scale installations; and pioneering mediums like video projections on mist. Terasaki earned a BFA in Mixed Media Arts from University of California, Irvine and studied in the MFA programs at California State University, Long Beach and Hunter College (NY).

For the exhibition Transcendients: Heroes at Borders, Terasaki collaborated with the Japanese American National Museum (Los Angeles, CA) to honor individuals who advocate and fight for those who face discrimination, prejudice, and inequality at borders—both physical and psychological. Through video projections on mist, photographic weavings, and audience participation, visitors to this multimedia exhibition were invited to learn about, reflect on, and celebrate local and national heroes, and those within their own lives. Terasaki expanded the project with new work he created during the COVID-19 pandemic: Transcendients: 100 Days of COVID-19 and Memorial to Healthcare Workers.

Writer and reporter Anna Almendrala wrote about these extraordinary projects for Kaiser Health News.

Art curator and writer Sara Raza reviewed Terasaki’s newest project in ArtAsiaPacific Magazine. “Responding to one of the most atrocious attacks this year, the fatal shooting of eight people at three Atlanta area spas, Hawaii-based artist Taiji Terasaki created Past-Present (2021), a digital lenticular billboard that drew from historical events from the collective memory of 20th and 21st century Asian American history. The word PAST runs alongside a black-and-white photo of three Japanese boys standing behind a barbed-wire fence—a stark reminder of the Japanese American internment camps during the early 1940s. This is juxtaposed with a contemporary image of peaceful protestors participating at a vigil, accompanied by the word PRESENT.” Past-Present is installed in Atlanta, GA and part of an AAPI Solidarity Campaign from For Freedoms.

Follow @taijiterasakistudio
Making Together: *En Plein Air*
An activity designed for ages 5+, or younger with assistance

*En plein air* is a French phrase meaning “in the open air” and refers to the act of painting outdoors. With the invention of tubed paint in 1841, artists were able to take their practices outside of their studios and into nature. This enabled pure and immediate studies of how sunlight interacts with its surroundings, pioneered by a group that is now revered: the Impressionists. Observable color is often most vibrantly seen through natural light. Working outdoors also adds the dynamic of chance as the shifting light ignites color relationships. *Plein air* artists capture the essence of a landscape or subject through direct observation, responding to the light, color, atmosphere, and movement of a place.

**Gather Your Materials**
Tote or box to transport your materials; acrylic or watercolor paint; watercolor paper, canvas, or canvas board (9 x 12 inches or smaller); soft, flexible brush; palette (or paper plate); water container; cloth or paper towel; and any type of sturdy board (with clips to hold your paper)

*Optional: easel, folding chair/stool*

Don’t forget a hat, sunscreen, water bottle, and comfortable shoes!

**Step x Step**
Join Arturo Vizcaíno Cortés, Community Engagement Assistant at IMCA, and Yidan Cao, IMCA
Gallery Guide, *en plein air* during this Making Together video where they demonstrate the activity below.

- Choose the time of day and outdoor painting location in advance. If you are the social type, consider inviting a friend or group of friends to join you.
- If you are new to painting, spend some time at home getting to know your materials before heading outside.
- Once you are on location, set up your space.
- Use pencil or paint to sketch, or block out, the basic shapes of the scene on your paper, canvas, or canvas board. For example, the sky, water, clouds, buildings, rocks, mountains, or trees.
- Observe the effect of sunlight on the scene you've chosen. What colors do you see in the highlights and shadows?

How did this experience change your perception of the place you painted?

Consider returning to the same place to paint on another day and then compare your paintings.

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**Upcoming Exhibition**


*The Resonant Surface* encourages viewers to slow their gaze and experience paintings in an embodied and immersive way. Musical landscapes, rhythmic abstractions, sound and color experiments, and other multisensory subject matter play with the immediacy of visual perception.
This exhibition considers these kinds of explorations in movement, image, and sound in early to mid-20th century California painting. It traces the ways artists have long used painting to investigate the complex nature of perception beyond vision, building connections across time, space, images, objects, and sensations.

Four main themes develop these connections: correspondences, rhythm and abstraction, dynamism and flux, and visual music. By activating multiple senses—looking, but also listening and feeling—the presented works of art can be experienced as vibrant, interconnected surfaces that “resonate” within and beyond the spaces they occupy.

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**Image credits**

Visitors to *Radiant Impressions*. Photos by Julie Delliquanti and Arturo Vizcaíno Cortés

Belle Baranceanu, *The Johnson Girl*, circa 1930, Oil on canvas, 34 x 28 in. The Buck Collection at UCI Institute and Museum of California Art

Frank J. Gavencky, *On Fisherman’s Wharf, Monterey*, after 1930, Oil on Masonite, 24 x 36 in. The Irvine Museum Collection at University of California, Irvine

Pat Martin, Selection of photographs, 2020 - 2021

Alfred Mitchell, *In Morning Light*, 1930, Oil on Masonite, 44 x 56 in. The Irvine Museum Collection at University of California, Irvine

Helen Pashgian, *Blue Secret*, 1994, Industrial epoxy resin in acrylic frame, 36 x 26 x 5 in. The Buck Collection at UCI Institute and Museum of California Art © Helen Pashgian August 6, 2018


Still from *Making Together: En Plein Air* video by Arturo Vizcaíno Cortés

Knud Merrild, *Asymmetric Symmetry*, 1943, Oil flux on Masonite, 18 x 15 in. The Buck Collection at UCI Institute and Museum of California Art

Arthur F. Mathews, *Monterey County Landscape*, 1907, Oil on canvas, 26 x 30 in. The Irvine Museum Collection at University of California, Irvine

IMCA’s ongoing collections research continues to provide new information, which will result in updates, revisions, and enhancements to object records. At the time of publication image credits are reviewed by IMCA’s curatorial staff and reflect the most current information the museum has in its database but may be incomplete.