UCI Announces North Campus Home for Langson IMCA

Late last month, UC Irvine leadership revealed the site of the new home for Jack and Shanaz Langson Institute and Museum of California Art. The facility will be prominently positioned on the university’s North Campus property along Campus Drive near Jamboree Road. Nestled within its natural environment with views of the San Joaquin Marsh, the building will be intentional about permeable connections between interior and exterior, serving as a physical manifestation of Langson IMCA's mission and vision. “Our new building and the activities housed within will create a dynamic community crossroads reflecting the art of California and the pioneering artists who captured their varied experiences of the State,” said Kim Kanatani, Langson IMCA's inaugural museum director. The site, adjacent to UCI Health’s new medical center, also provides opportunities for interactions among art, health, and wellness.

The above image illustrates how a sample gallery in the new Langson IMCA building might appear, although actual design won't take place for another year. UCI is preparing to soon hire an architectural programming consultant to determine the functions, scale, and size of the building, as well as cost estimates for design and construction. The university anticipates hiring a design architect in mid-2023 and breaking ground in late 2024 or early 2025.
Cultivating Curiosity

Musician, author, and Harvard professor Arthur C. Brooks recently published “Art Should Be a Habit, Not a Luxury” in the January 2022 issue of The Atlantic. In it he notes, “Engaging with art after worrying over the minutiae of your routine is like looking at the horizon after you’ve spent too long staring intently at a particular object: Your perception of the outside world expands.”

Journalist Ezra Klein mused in an April 2021 conversation with Alison Gopnik, professor of psychology and philosophy at UC Berkeley, “Here’s a sobering thought: The older we get, the harder it is for us to learn, to question, to reimagine. This isn’t just habit hardening into dogma. It’s encoded into the way our brains change as we age. And it’s worsened by an intellectual and economic culture that prizes efficiency and dismisses play.” According to Gopnik, there is “this really deep tension, which I think we’re facing all the time between how much are we considering different possibilities and how much are we acting efficiently and swiftly. There’s, again, an intrinsic tension between how much you know and how open you are to new possibilities.”

Austin Kleon (featured in this month’s Making Together) posits that the ways physicist Carlo Rovelli talks about science—in terms of ignorance and curiosity—could also be applied to talking about art. In his provocative book Helgoland: Making Sense of the Quantum Revolution, Rovelli writes, “I believe that one of the greatest mistakes made by human beings is to want certainties when trying to understand something. The search for knowledge is not nourished by certainty: it is nourished by a radical absence of certainty.
Thanks to the acute awareness of our ignorance, we are open to doubt and can continue to learn and to learn better. This has always been the strength of scientific thinking—thinking born of curiosity, revolt, change.”

Curiosity begins with noticing. One way to do this is to follow Brooks’ advice to incorporate art into regular routines. Readers of *Monthly Muse* are off to a good start by exploring works in Langson IMCA’s permanent collection. Consider *Inlet* (circa 1910), pictured above, in which Elanor Colburn invites the viewer into the immediacy of a moment through her observation of place. Langson IMCA also encourages cultivating a beginner’s mind by regularly visiting the interim museum where there are ongoing opportunities to observe and engage with art, artists, and ideas.


### In Remembrance: De Wain Valentine (1936 – 2022)

De Wain Valentine was a seminal voice of the Light and Space movement of the 1960s and 70s in California. He died on February 20, 2022 at the age of 85. Valentine is “regarded today among the earliest pioneers in the use of industrial plastics and resins to execute monumental sculptures that reflect the light and engage the surrounding space through its mesmerizingly translucent surfaces that arrest one’s gaze,” wrote art historian Joachim Pissarro in 2017.

Born in Fort Collins, CO, Valentine credits how he “started to look at things” to a childhood fascination with rocks, observing and collecting them in Colorado’s mines with his great-uncles, and polishing jade and moss agate found in the bombing ranges where his father worked in Lander, Wyoming during World War II. After the war, Valentine’s family moved back to Colorado where he was introduced to the wonders of polyester resin by his junior high shop teacher. Valentine went on to pursue an education in the visual arts and earned a bachelor’s degree in 1958 and an MFA in 1960 from the University of Colorado.

“Valentine experimented with painting and welding in his parents’ auto body shop while growing up, and he had a good grasp of industrial processes—as well as classical sculpture and painting—by the time he moved out to Venice, California, to teach fine art plastic use at UCLA in 1965. His love of the ocean kept him there, he says, and he’s long
talked about capturing the ‘sea and sky’ in three dimensions. In Venice, along with a group
now known as Light and Space artists, he explored the stunning possibilities of
transparency, refraction, and reflection (architecturaldigest.com).”

Langson IMCA is pleased to include several works by De Wain Valentine in its collection,
including *Circle Grey-Rose* (1970), pictured above.

For more on the artist, revisit the September 2020 issue of *Monthly Muse*. Langson IMCA
sends its condolences to Valentine’s family and friends.

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**California Artist and UCI Professor: Ulysses Jenkins**

*Ulysses Jenkins: Without Your Interpretation*, the first retrospective of work by Ulysses
Jenkins, is currently on view at UCLA’s Hammer Museum through May 15, 2022. PBS
NewsHour’s Jeffrey Brown recently sat down to talk with the artist and UCI professor who
has taught in the art department since 1993.

“A pivotal influence on contemporary art for over 50 years, Ulysses Jenkins (b. 1946) is a
groundbreaking video artist who emerged in the late-1970s. His video and media work is
remarkable for its fusion of forms to conjure vibrant expressions of how image, sound, and
cultural iconography inform representation. Using archival footage, photographs, image
processing, and elegiac soundtracks, Jenkins pulls together strands of thought to construct
an ‘other’ history that consistently interrogates questions of race and gender as they relate
to ritual, history, and state power (Bloomberg Connects Digital Museum Guide).”

Bridget R. Cooks, UCI associate professor of African American Studies and Art History and
interim associate director at Langson IMCA, recently joined a panel discussion at the
Hammer with her colleague. She spoke about Jenkins’ formative years at Southern
University (Baton Rouge, LA), where he earned his undergraduate degree: “He had family
members on his mother’s side who had attended Southern and being in a black college
environment appealed to him. His education first began on a train ride to Louisiana when
he realized how West Coast he really was when it came to his sense of self and how that
conflicted with the way that he was perceived by others. . . . At Southern, he met Black professors, art historians, and abstract artists and he began exploring art in multi-media. . . . [and] learned more about Black people, his cultural history; he learned about art, art making, and the world. And I think that this was part of his foundation that set a path for the art he created upon returning to Los Angeles after graduating from Southern in 1969.”

Cooks continued, “I think of Ulysses as creating a multicultural vision of Los Angeles and public art and that is just huge, and we don’t have a lot of models for that. It is really wonderful to honor Ulysses in this way and pay attention to part of the legacy that he has left. . . . through the performances and the video and the television work that we see represented in Erin and Meg’s incredible exhibition.”

The exhibition was curated by Meg Onli, director and curator at the Underground Museum (Los Angeles) with Erin Christovale, associate curator, and Ikechukwu Onyewuenyi, curatorial assistant, at the Hammer Museum. About Jenkins, Christovale says, “He truly is a dreamer and a visionary, and he truly honors his Black, radical imagination. I think with that you see this sort of DIY agency and ability and rebellious nature that has empowered a younger generation of artist.”

Watch *Ulysses Jenkins: Without Your Interpretation* (1983)

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**Musings**

When was the last time you experienced a full, deep-bellied laugh? I’ve been thinking a lot about comedy and joy lately. It’s so much harder to make someone laugh than it is to make them cry. So much simpler to keep moving than to pass on a word of kindness or elicit a smile. The world has felt so heavy these last two years. We all could use some laughter.
Many reading this may be familiar with the artist Roger Armstrong, an Orange County darling who launched his career in animation working for the likes of Disney and Warner Bros. Known for creating funny animal comic books, he was also recognized for his talent as a Southern California oil and watercolor painter of the everyday. *Crazy Drawing* (2007), painted by Armstrong in the last few months of his life, made me stop, look, and giggle. What *is* this brightly colored, unusual cast of characters up to? The capacity for this small work to spark joy is, frankly, delightful. I invite you to pause and experience just that. And maybe share a joke with the next person you see.

Kate Heusner  
Executive Director of Development, Langson IMCA

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**Making Together: Paste-up Poem**  
An activity designed for readers of all ages

Celebrate National Poetry Month and the California artist known as Jess (1923 – 2004) whose collage-based artistic practice generates an ongoing dialogue between visual images and written words drawn from poetry, photography, literature, comics, magazines, newspapers, and other printed matter.

**Gather Your Materials**  
Pencil, pen, scissors, glue stick, old magazines or catalogues, newspaper, or other print material  
*Optional: colored paper, stickers, and washi tape*

**Step x Step**  
*Follow along with Sebastián Vizcaíno Cortés*, community engagement assistant at...
Langson IMCA, who merges Jess’ paste-up technique with a method of blackout poetry championed by Austin Kleon, author of the book *Newspaper Blackout*. Blackout poetry is a process of altering existing text on the page of an old book or newspaper to create a new poem.

- Find an old book or newspaper that you don’t mind altering.
- Select and remove a page from which to work.
- Read the text and keep an eye out for words or short phrases that will guide your poem.
- Circle the words or phrases that work together.
- Read your new poem out loud.
- Use a pen and the collage technique to “black out” the words not included in your poem.
- Consider how your chosen collage images are in dialogue with the words of your poem.

For more visual inspiration, check out the before and after pages of *A Humument* by Tom Phillips and follow @makeblackoutpoetry.


**Credits**

Rendering of sample Langson IMCA gallery for its new facility. Actual building design concept to be developed in 2023-24. Shimahara Visual for UCI.

Elanor Colburn, *Inlet*, circa 1910, Oil on canvas mounted on board, 10 x 12 in. UC Irvine Institute and Museum of California Art, Gift of The Irvine Museum

De Wain Valentine, *Circle Grey-Rose*, 1970, Cast polyester resin, 18 x 18 x 2 in. The Buck Collection at UCI Institute and Museum of California Art

Still from PBS NewsHour conversation between Jeffrey Brown and Ulysses Jenkins, March 18, 2022

Roger Armstrong, *Crazy Drawing*, 2007, Watercolor, crayon, and soft-tip pen on wove-screen paper, 29 x 37 x 2 in. The Buck Collection at UCI Institute and Museum of California Art

Still from *Making Together: Paste-up Poem*, video by Sebastián Vizcaíno Cortés

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Jack and Shanaz Langson Institute and Museum of California Art
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Irvine, CA 92697-1010

949-476-0003  imca.uci.edu

Langson IMCA is temporarily closed through June 10, 2022

Interim Museum Location: 18881 Von Karman Ave, Irvine 92612
Interim Museum Hours: Tuesday – Saturday I 10 am – 4 pm
Office Hours: Tuesday – Saturday I 8:30 am – 5 pm
Langson 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 Langson IMCA's curatorial staff and reflect the most current information the museum has in its database but may be incomplete.

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