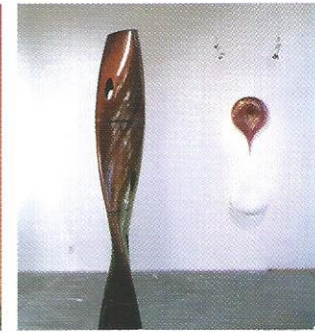
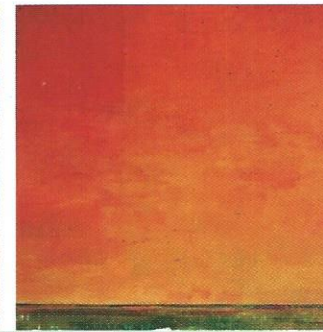
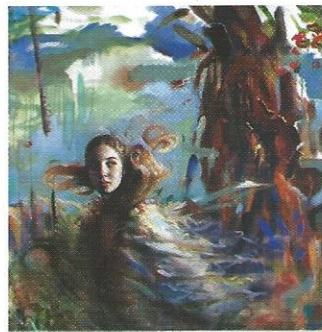
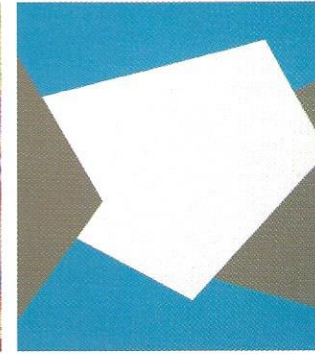
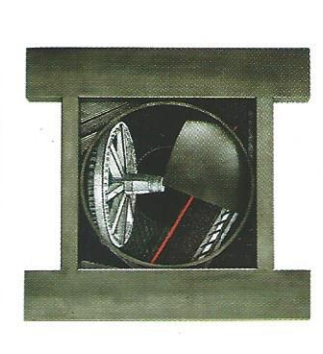
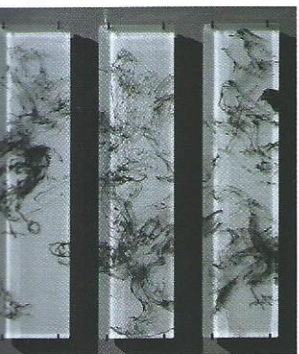
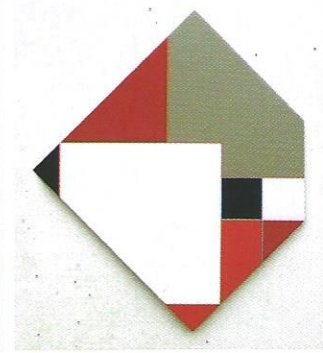
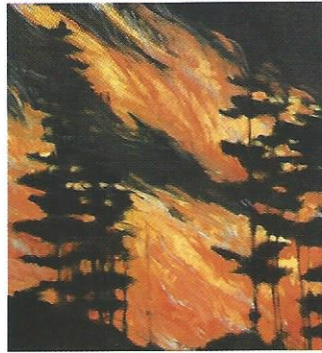
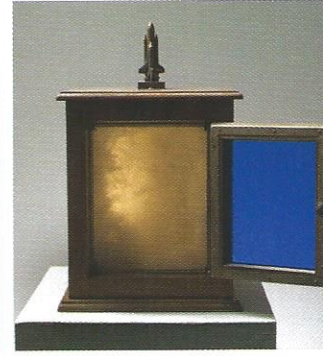
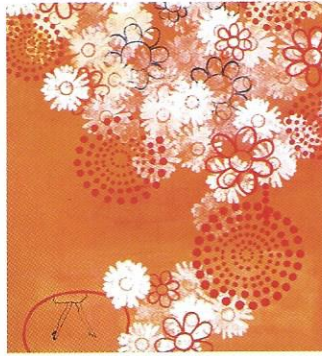
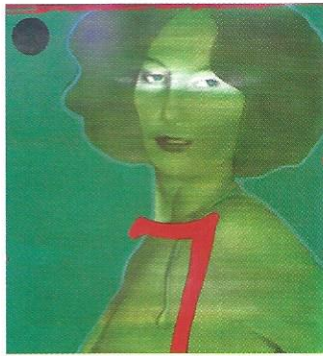
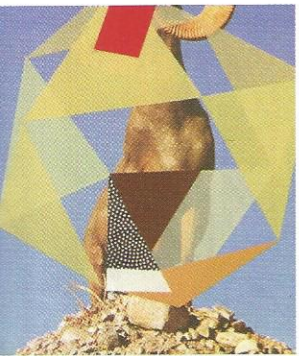
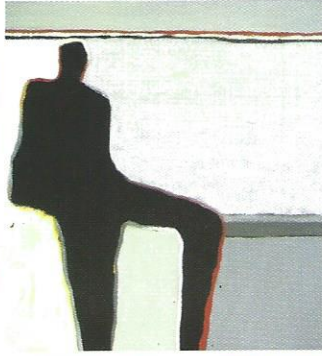
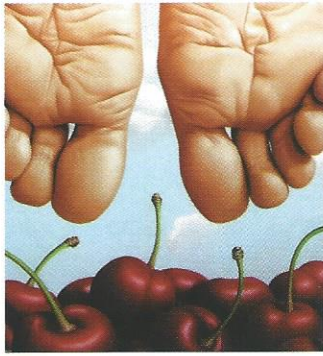
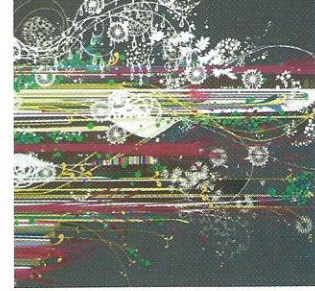


# art ltd.

## FALL PREVIEW ISSUE

Weisman Collection, Land Art, Michael Darling  
Special San Francisco Supplement



U.S. \$5.99/CAN \$6.99 Sept/Oct 2009  
www.artltdmag.com



# At Home With The Masters

Extravagant, elegant, eclectic, and largely unknown to the general public, the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation collection ranks among L.A.'s hidden gems.

By George Melrod

There's something unnerving, even intoxicating, about viewing top-flight artworks in a private home. The effect is not unlike arriving at a small private cocktail party and seeing dozens of celebrities and other public figures whom you've admired for years from afar, from all different backgrounds and eras, suddenly up close and personal, rubbing elbows, sipping Chardonnay and munching Terra chips while chatting amiably. At first it seems unseemly, almost too casual. You stand self-conscious by the doorway in the foyer, not knowing what to do with your arms, not wanting to elbow anyone famous by mistake—"Sorry, Brancusi! Mr. Bacon! I'm a big fan!"—while getting your bearings. That sensation lasts all of five minutes. But once it becomes clear that you're actually welcome here amid such exclusive company, you start to relax. You smile, start to mingle. Then you join the conversation.

And what a conversation. The names span the 20th century, from Cubism to Surrealism, from Expressionism to Pop, from early modern European masters to the big guns of the American century to their edgy young inheritors. Bacon, Gorky, Magritte, Miró, the Giacometti brothers (both Alberto and Diego), Clyfford Still, Anselm Kiefer, Andy Warhol, Donald Judd, George Segal, Ed Ruscha ... the list goes on. Yet these are just some of the houseguests you can gawk at, if you go visit the private showcase villa for the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, tucked amid the affluent greenery of L.A.'s upscale Holmby Hills.

Although Weisman himself passed away in 1994, the renowned collector remains very much the host for this gathering, as his dedicated, energetic widow, Billie Milam Weisman, has striven to maintain and display—and expand—the collection in keeping with his eclectic tastes and philanthropic spirit. Building on Weisman's commitment to making his works accessible to the general public, Billie—who serves as President and Director of the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation—has made a dedicated effort to preserve the collection and maintain the house as an active showcase for it. Which is to say that committed art lovers (including, yes, you) can actually come visit the Weisman House for them(your)selves. Tours are only given in groups; you must schedule in advance and fill out forms providing contact information. These forms, which contain lots of boldface and underlining, also set out ground rules for the visit: i.e., because the house is located in a residential neighborhood, you can't arrive more than five minutes in advance; young children aren't allowed; you must stay with the docent at all times. If it's a large group (as mine was), you may find your car pressed up to other cars. Do not be perturbed. Do not be deterred. Just fill out the forms, then make your way through Beverly Hills.

Your eyes will thank you for it.

LIBRARY IMAGE BY DAVID MOORE

**Alan Siegel** SMALL ZEN GARDEN 1985 WOOD

**Robert Motherwell** STRAVINSKY: SPRING 1974 ACRYLIC AND PAPER ON UPSON BOARD

**Max Ernst** TORTUE (TORTOISE) 1944 (CAST 1962) BRONZE

**Josef Albers** HOMAGE TO THE SQUARE: "AFTER-NOON" 1969 OIL ON BOARD

**Duane Hanson** MARY WEISMAN 1994 BRONZE, PAINT, CLOTH

**Alberto Giacometti** PORTRAIT OF VICOMTESSE 1947 GRAPHITE ON PAPER

**Hans Hofmann** ORBITING SHAPES 1959 OIL ON CANVAS

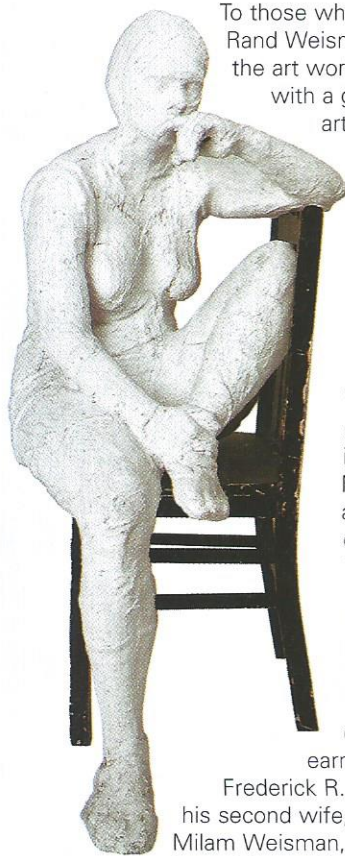
**Duane Hanson** EXECUTIVE IN RED CHAIR 1988 BRONZE

**Ken Price** UNIT 1, 1972-1977 1977 CERAMIC AND WOOD

**René Magritte** LA JOCONDE (MONA LISA) 1967 BRONZE







To those who don't know his name, Frederick Rand Weisman was the sort of collector that the art world, justly, loves: a self-made man with a genuine passion for modern art and artists, and the resources to indulge that passion liberally. There are numerous personal commissions and portraits of Weisman and his wife and family strewn among the collection; the story goes he once hired Popsters Joe Goode and Ed Ruscha to paint his corporate jet. Born in Minneapolis, and a Los Angeles resident since age seven, Weisman made his fortune by developing Hunt Foods, and getting in on the ground floor as the U.S. Mid-Atlantic regional distributor for a then-little-known Japanese auto company called Toyota, in the late '60s and '70s. Through his first wife, Marcia, he was brother-in-law to fellow cultural tastemaker Norton Simon; after the couple's amicable divorce in the 1970s, they divided the collection and he continued to expand his share in earnest. In 1982, he founded the

Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, and with his second wife, curator and conservator Billie Milam Weisman, continued to augment the collection, adding major pieces by the Surrealists, Pop artists, and photorealists, as well as contemporary California artists.

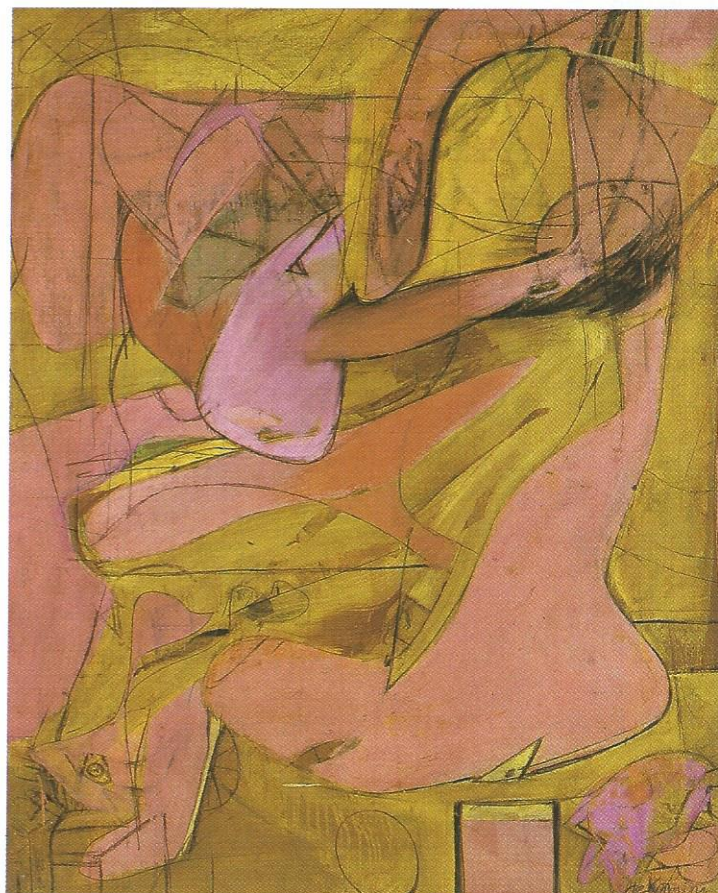
The house itself is the farthest thing from a chilly neutral space. It was designed in a cozy Mediterranean Revival style, with tile floors and wood-beamed ceilings, in the late 1920s by LA architect Gordon B. Kaufmann, whose later commissions include the LA Times Building and the facade for Hoover Dam. Weisman moved into the estate in 1982, finding it the ideal venue for his overflowing art collection; much of the furniture that adorns the house predates his purchase. From the get-go, Weisman envisioned the house as a jewel-like residential gallery for his artworks, drawing inspiration from previous grand collectors, like turn-of-the-century industrialist Henry Clay Frick and New York's ardent connoisseur of modernist art (and artists) Peggy Guggenheim. Weisman's collection aptly includes a Red Grooms sculpto-pictorama of Venice, Italy, featuring Guggenheim's showy palazzo on the Grand Canal. Weisman's vision was to fill the house and its surrounding grounds with artworks, spread out to every available niche, from the dining room to the stairwell to the bedrooms; from the doorway to the poolside veranda to the ambling gardens beyond. Turn left, there's Ad Reinhardt. Turn right, there's Mark Tobey.

So the pleasure of the Weisman House derives as much from the juxtapositions of the artworks as from the works themselves. Depending on your level of purism, some of the contrasts might raise eyebrows: angst-filled Francis Bacon blobs facing off with bouncy cartoon figures by Keith Haring? Hmm ... if you say so. But for the most part, the groupings are giddily invigorating. At their best—as in the intimate dialogue in one corner of the foyer between Gorky's anxious, organic blood orange canvas from 1947 with Brancusi's serene bronze ovoid head from the 1920s entitled *Sleeping Muse II*; and a modest pastel and watercolor drawing of the

same Brancusi sculpture by Claes Oldenburg, from 1973—these capgily mediated dialogues cross over into the outright sublime. To anyone who has come to know modern art via the rigorously choreographed, coolly impersonal galleries of such eminent institutions as New York's MOMA, it is a revelatory experience. For all his vaunted eclecticism, Weisman's choice of artists is rarely transgressive in itself; his eclecticism comes from his personal, intuitive response to sundry artists that allowed him to embrace both Rothko and Christo with equal enthusiasm, and his tendency to set lesser-known, second-tier artists whom he liked next to top bananas. That pluralistic approach, which at first seems jarring, turns out to be quite appealing. You don't expect to see such disparate works juxtaposed so freely, and the freedom is liberating.

The collection currently encompasses over 1500 works, spanning all scales and media, of which roughly 500 are actually on display. A colorful Léger mosaic by the entrance and a bronze portrait of Picasso by noted '60s sculptor Marisol lead to a genuine Picasso depiction of a mother and child just inside. Upon entering, one is greeted by a massive Clyfford Still from 1954—a field of deep sunflower yellow with patches of red and black—which contrasts to an earlier, far more brooding Still, of jagged midnight blacks, from 1947, around the corner. A blocky seated bronze figure by Henry Moore and a spindly walking man by Alberto Giacometti loiter nearby. Look outside, there's Barry Flanagan's giant hare leaping over a bell (it had to be lowered over the house by a crane).

In the adjacent living room, one can find the sumptuous canvas *Pink Angels* (ca. 1945) by Willem de Kooning; a fragmentary black de Kooning painting from 1948; a radiant lime-green-and-papaya Rothko from 1953; another Picasso *Mother and Child* (this one from his Blue period, in 1901); and, almost as an afterthought, an unusually diminutive but no less authoritative Barnett Newman canvas from 1950, tucked in the corner. Presiding over the entire room: a white marble cardinal by Italian Communist sculptor Giacomo Manzù. And did I forget to mention the Noguchi landscape sculpture or the works by Sam Francis, or the brooding Anselm Kiefer canvas, or the white patinated female nude by Robert Graham? In other words it's just like your grandmother's living room, but with the addition of over a dozen world-class modern artworks (and without your grandmother).



ABOVE:  
"GIRL ON CHAIR, FINGER TO MOUTH," 1967, **George Segal**  
PLASTER AND WOOD, 52" x 42" x 16"

"PINK ANGELS," 1945, **Willem de Kooning**  
OIL AND CHARCOAL ON CANVAS, 52" x 40"

PHOTOS: COURTESY FREDERICK R. WEISMAN FOUNDATION, LOS ANGELES



ANNEX IMAGE: **Donald Judd** UNTITLED 1980 GALVANIZED STEEL AND RED PLEXIGLAS ON SIDES AND FRONT

**Andy Warhol** FLOWERS 1980 GROUND GLASS AND SYNTHETIC POLYMER SILKSCREENED ON CANVAS

**Ron Arad** SOFA-B 1994 POLISHED STAINLESS STEEL

**James Rosenquist** WHITE DREAMS 1983 OIL ON CANVAS

**Andy Warhol** PORTRAIT OF FREDERICK R. WEISMAN (4 PANELS) 1974 SILKSCREEN ON PAPER

**George Segal** WOMAN IN COFFEE SHOP 1983 PLASTER, METAL, WOOD, GLASS

**Morris Louis** MU 1961 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS

**Donald Judd** UNTITLED 1978 BRASS AND VIOLET PLEXIGLASS

**Lita Albuquerque** REFLECTION 1990 STEEL, GOLDFLEAF, GRANITE

**Frank Stella** MADINAT AS-SALAM I 1970 POLYMER, FLUORESCENT, PAINT ON CANVAS

**Peter Erskine** SLICE OF HEAVEN SERIES 1991 GOLD LEAF ON FIBERGLASS

**Claes Oldenburg** TYPEWRITER ERASER 1970-75

**Keith Haring** UNTITLED (MOTORCYCLE) 1987 MIXED MEDIA

**Duane Hanson** ROCKER 1972 POLYESTER RESIN, FIBERGLASS, OIL AND MIXED MEDIA

**LA II** UNTITLED (MOTORCYCLE) 1987 MIXED MEDIA

For all his vaunted eclecticism, Weisman's choice of artists is rarely transgressive in itself; his eclecticism comes from his personal, intuitive response to sundry artists that allowed him to embrace both Rothko and Christo with equal enthusiasm, and his tendency to set lesser-known, second-tier artists whom he liked next to top bananas.

Another stand-out is Weisman's library. What was designed as an austere, wood-paneled chamber is given an unexpected make-over with the addition of a suite of vivid-yellow artworks: a near electric Josef Albers, *Homage to the Square*, from 1969; a striking yellow and black and dark blue Hans Hofmann push-pull composition from 1959, and a bookcase filled with angular, early Ken Price ceramics (a Ken Price egg baskets in the sitting room). In the midst of these works is a lifelike polychromed depiction of Weisman's own parents created by famed 1970s hyperrealist sculptor Duane Hanson. (In fact Weisman's collection is notable for other figurative sculptures: Hanson's far more downwardly mobile *Florida Shopper* from 1973 stands shambling in the hallway ignoring the Bacon, while pensive nudes by John De Andrea adorn the rooms upstairs and George Segal's alienated white or black patinated bronze urban dwellers bide their time outside, and next door in the annex). The library is completed by a rare René Magritte sculpture and a grinning self-portrait of Northern California funk ceramicist Robert Arneson, gazing out knowingly from behind Weisman's desk.

"MOONMAD," 1944 (CAST 1975-76)

**Max Ernst**

BRONZE, 36 3/4" x 13" x 12 3/4"

PHOTO: COURTESY FREDERICK R. WEISMAN FOUNDATION





BILLIE MILAM WEISMAN AT THE ESTATE'S ENTRANCE, NEXT TO MOSAIC BY FERNAND LÉGER AND STATUE OF PICASSO BY MARISOL.

BELOW:  
 "FENESTRATED REBUS #2," 1991  
**Ida Kohlmeyer**, PAINTED ALUMINUM  
 "SOBBUSTER," 1984, **Luis Jiménez**  
 FIBERGLASS  
 "RESTING MAN," 1986, **Viola Frey**  
 CERAMIC  
 BACK GARDEN IMAGE BY BRIAN FORREST

There's even a striped trapezoidal abstraction by Kenneth Noland on the ceiling, for those who bother to look up. The dining room, which tilts toward a European Surrealist theme, is no less inspired. Another bronze sculpture by Magritte is augmented by one of the artist's most haunting paintings, featuring three men in bowler hats standing under three crescent moons. Striking sculptures by Max Ernst, Giacometti again (a rare haggard dog, which Weisman purportedly won from his first wife in a coin flip when they were dividing the collection) and Constructivist Naum Gabo are balanced by canvases by Joan Miró and Yves Tanguy, among others. By contrast, Pop Art moves to the fore in the hallway (the two glorious anguished Bacons excepted). A sculpture by Lichtenstein lead upstairs to canvases by Stella, Wesselmann, and Alex Katz, and other copacetic works by Arman, Ellsworth Kelly and David Hockney, to name but a few. A Mod, early-70s vibe is provided by works by Michelangelo Pistoletto, Nam June Paik, Op Art icon Victor Vasarely and Allen Jones, whose gleefully fetishistic table made from a kneeling green female figure lends an edgy "Clockwork Orange" ambiance to the otherwise sunny, green-carpeted TV room.

The Master Bedroom features the most unlikely contrast between artwork and furnishings, centered on an extravagant canopied bedroom set of floral yellow chintz. The color scheme of the fabric is offset by a Warhol-style portrait of Frederick and Billie above the bed (there are actual Warhols of Frederick on display elsewhere); large, oddly complementary canvases by Helen Frankenthaler and Joe Goode; a unique, lacquered folding screen by Ed Ruscha depicting a blue skyscape on one side and a sunrise on the other; and several works by Yves Klein, including a female torso, in the artist's trademark Yves Klein Blue. As with the nearby guest bedroom, featuring works by Christo, Max Ernst, Rosenquist, and John De Andrea, it is hard to imagine the dreams stirred in such a setting being much more visually improbable than the one in which they were hatched.

For those who prefer to view their art in a less confined setting, there is also an airy modern annex designed by Franklin Israel, built in 1992. The structure features a central gallery upstairs with 30' ceilings, for the display of works such as Frank Stella's 25' long 1970 canvas of fluorescent interlocking semi-circles, and Donald Judd's Minimalist column of ten stacked red rectangles, mounted off the wall. Duane Hanson's motorcycle cop stands guard by Keith Haring's painted motorcycles, over other works such as George Segal's lonely plaster diner, Morris Louis' sweeping poured color rivulets, Andy Warhol's flowers, Claes Oldenburg's giant pencil eraser, Lita Albuquerque's towering gold-leaf pendulum, Ron Arad's sinuous stainless steel bench, and Joseph Cornell's understated mixed-media construction *Untitled (Hotel de l'Etoile)* from 1950-1954, which in contrast to the other hulking works, could fit in a large shoebox.

But the estate is just one part of the Foundation's assets. Weisman also funded several other institutions in his name around the country: the Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art at Pepperdine University, just up the coast at Malibu, and the Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum at the University of Minnesota. His other gifts include a wing at the New Orleans Museum of Art specifically for the display of works by contemporary Louisiana artists.



(A similar partnership with San Diego's Museum of Contemporary Art in the early '90s was dissolved amicably).

Today his widow Billie is working vigorously to maintain, and expand, Frederick's vision. "It's from Fred's point of view," she says, in a small private office near the back of the complex. "His legacy and philanthropic nature are really important. [He believed] when you're successful in business, you have an obligation to give back ... He was sort of a Renaissance man, in the sort of things he would do. He believed everyone should support local artists," she adds.

Today, the collection is notable for its inclusion of many contemporary California artists, from established pioneers like Sam Francis, John McCracken, Ronald Davis, Joe Goode and Ed Ruscha, to up-and-coming sculptors like Christopher Taggart and Joel Morrison, who gained attention with the Hammer's "Thing" show in 2005. Morrison was in fact the Foundation's first Artist-In-Residence, in 2003-2004: a strikingly daring and astute choice for a foundation esteemed for its blue chip holdings. Many of these works have been purchased since Weisman's death. "We're not interested in filling in blanks in the collection," she says simply. "We're looking for works that hit us passionately."

A woman of enormous energy and vivacity, Billie was already a successful art world professional—she got post-graduate training at Harvard in art conservation and worked as head of sculpture conservation at LACMA, and later in decorative art conservation at the Getty—by the time she met Frederick. "I used to be constantly hyperactive, and did lots of projects," she explains, "and that worked well to Frederick, who always wanted things done yesterday."

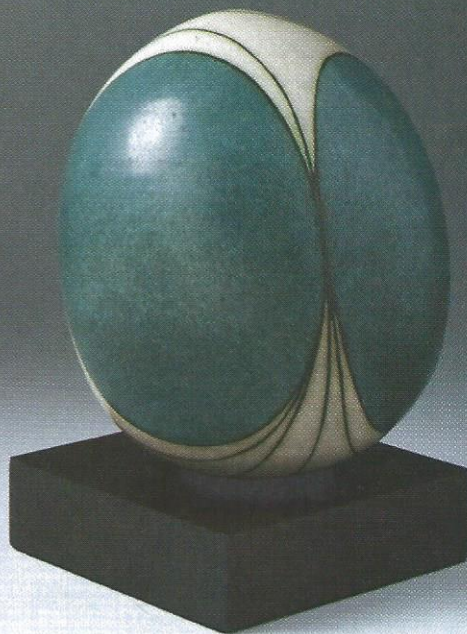
Among the many projects she oversees for the Foundation are curating its numerous themed traveling shows. As of late May, she had just returned from the Susquehanna Art Museum in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where a show of works from the collection had been on view for eight months, after being extended two terms. Billie tries to gauge each show according to the audience and helps arrange for school groups and minority kids to see the work, as part of a broader goal of putting the artworks before a diverse, decidedly non-exclusive audience. "People in general are intimidated by what they don't understand," she observes.

Closer to home, two other shows of works from the collection can be seen this fall in Southern California. Starting in late August, "Elements of Nature" goes on view at the Weisman Art Museum at Pepperdine University. Meanwhile, a second show, centered on photography and digital media, entitled "Photos and Phantasy," will be opening in September at Beverly Hills City Hall. For Los Angeles residents, at least, that means two more excuses for discovering one of the city's greatest hidden public/private treasures.

## American Museum of Ceramic Art *presents*

# HARRISON MCINTOSH

## A TIMELESS LEGACY



**September 12, 2009 through January 9, 2010**

HARRISON MCINTOSH EXCLUSIVE APPEARANCE  
IN CLAREMONT AT HIS 95TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

**Saturday, September 12, 6-9pm**

\$100 reservation, \$90 for members

Space is limited, for reservations please call (909) 865-3146

HARRISON MCINTOSH PERSONAL APPEARANCE & BOOK SIGNING

**Saturday, October 10, 6-7pm**



# AMOCA

American Museum of Ceramic Art

340 South Garey Avenue

Pomona, CA 91766

909/865.3146

[www.ceramicmuseum.org](http://www.ceramicmuseum.org)

Open Wednesday - Saturday, 12-5 pm & 'Second Saturday' of each month to 9 pm, or by appointment  
This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.