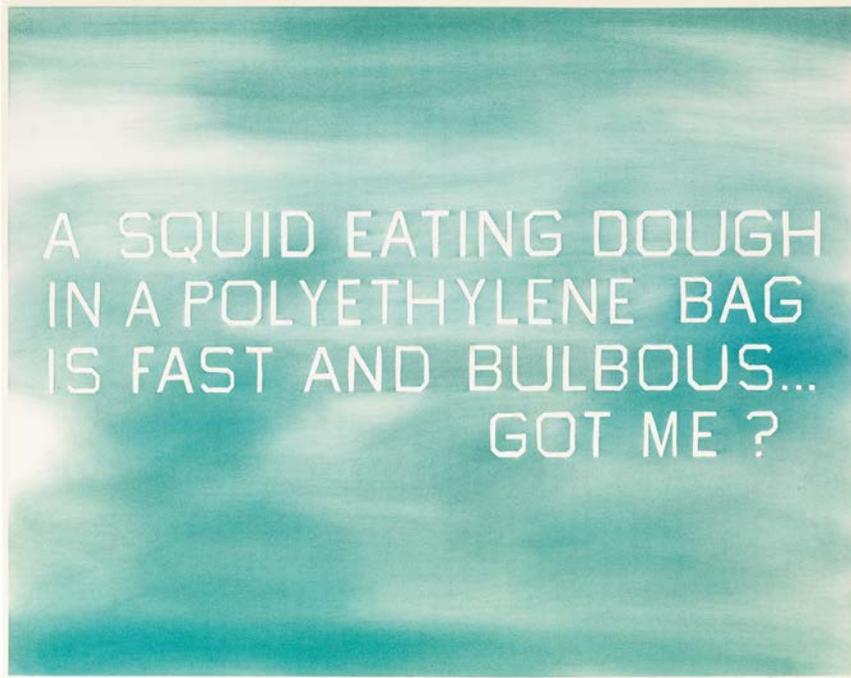


# *Valley of Gold: Southern California and the Phantasmagoric*

297 TENTH AVENUE

MARCH 5–APRIL 11, 2020

OPENING THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 2020



Kasmin is pleased to present *Valley of Gold: Southern California and the Phantasmagoric*, curated by Sonny Ruscha Granade and Harmony Murphy. On view at 297 Tenth Avenue from March 5–April 11, 2020, *Valley of Gold* explores the aesthetic legacy of the European surrealists and others who worked with similar sensibilities on the art of Southern California. Examining the influence of this charged period, the exhibition traces how its effects percolated through later movements such as California abstraction, conceptual art, and Light and Space.

Man Ray nurtured the seeds of an art liberated from long-established rules in California beginning in the 1940s, spending the most prolific decade of his career in Los Angeles. He found the conditions of the place “surrealist by nature.” To him, the driving forces of the city—films, cars, and fast-paced expansion—lent themselves to a freedom of experimentation and to the history-eschewing innovation that was paramount to the European surrealist cause. As art historian Susan M. Anderson remarked in her book on the subject, *Journey Into The Sun: California Artists and Surrealism*, “The impulse to merge genres and to eliminate traditional boundaries between art forms grew equally out of dada and surrealism [...] What emerges from this picture is an untidy but vigorous history of cross-pollinations and complex interconnections. European surrealism has had a powerful influence on the art of California.” This awakening was punctuated by the introduction of other key Surrealists such as René Magritte, Joseph Cornell, Yves Tanguy, Roberto Matta, and Max Ernst to California through William N. Copley’s eponymous Beverly Hills gallery in

1948–1949. Presenting quintessential art of this period through the lens of the phantasmagoric, the exhibition conjures aspects of dada, the uncanny, and a transcendental approach to traditional art practices.

A selection of vintage gelatin silver prints by Man Ray depicting contemporary celebrities in the entertainment industry highlight the influence of show business on the atmosphere of the city. Reciprocally, Helen Lundeberg—one of Los Angeles’ most significant post-surrealist artists, who published *The New Classicism Manifesto* in 1934 along with her husband Lorser Feitelson—recalls the other-worldly natural surroundings of the region in *Untitled Composition (Landscape)* (1948).

Additionally, the show features work by central figures of Post-Modern California art, such as John Baldassari and Ed Ruscha, who utilize a Magritte-esque approach to text (‘Le Trahison des Images’/‘is not a pipe’) and a legacy of collage-making rooted in a dadaist tradition. Also on view are three works by famed occult artist Marjorie Cameron, *Alien Assemblage*, *Hekas Hekas (dancing pair)*, *Untitled (from the Lion Path series)*, that address tapping into the subconscious to explore, sexuality, desire, and the supernatural.

*Valley of Gold* purports that later developments such as Light and Space—oft aligned with East Coast minimalism—owe a great debt to the perception-altering, phenomenological notions that were born from surrealist imagery. As Robert Irwin, whose 1959 painting *Daisetz* is on view for the first time since his inaugural Ferus exhibition that same year offers, “...what we are dealing with is our state of consciousness and the shape of our perceptions.”

Under this umbrella, a traceable legacy of influence is revealed that unites artists beyond time and intention. Instead, a flicker of mischievousness, an uncompromising approach, a re-writing of rules congeals in a common geography.

The exhibition includes: John Baldessari (1931–2020), Larry Bell (b. 1939), Billy Al Bengston (b. 1934), Karl Benjamin (1925–2012), Cameron (1922–1995), William N. Copley (1919–1996), Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968), Lorser Feitelson (1898–1978), Raul Guerrero (b. 1945), Philip Guston (1913–1980), Frederick Hammersley (1919–2009), Luchita Hurtado (b. 1920), Robert Irwin (b. 1928), Helen Lundeberg (1908–1999), Paul McCarthy (b. 1945), Lee Mullican (1919–1998), Salvador Dali (1904–1989), Man Ray (1890–1976), Ed Ruscha (b. 1937), Robert Therrien (1947–2019), Don Van Vliet (1941–2010), and Beatrice Wood (1893–1998).

Image: Ed Ruscha, *A Squid Eating Dough in a Polyethylene Bag is Fast and Bulbous... Got Me?*, 1982, pastel on paper, 23 x 29 1/2 inches, 58.4 x 74 cm. © Ed Ruscha. Courtesy of Gagolian.

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