

--- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ---

A unique exhibition of contemporary regional art entitled Ceci n'est pas le surréalisme --- California: Idioms of Surrealism will open at the Pratt Manhattan Center Gallery, 160 Lexington Avenue at 30th Street in New York City, on Saturday, September 8 with a reception from 5 to 7 pm. This show of paintings, prints, drawings, and mixed media works by 28 artists comprises the contemporary segment of a larger, historical exhibition on the topic organized by Marie de Alcuaz of the Fisher Gallery at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. These art works, truly indigenous to California and part of a tradition of surrealist work dating back to the 1930s there, have never been seen before in New York in such a grouping. Their appearance at Pratt's Manhattan and Brooklyn galleries will be the only opportunities for New Yorkers to see this highly original collection of art before it is returned to its lenders.

As Ms. de Alcuaz explains in her catalogue essay, the art works chosen for this show fall into several distinct categories of style inspired by both well-known expressions of traditional surrealism and by somewhat broader notions of the surreal as interpreted by the artists themselves. For example, in a painting categorized as "social surrealist", Run Slowly, Slowly, Horses of the Night, artist Phyllis Davidson juxtaposes incongruous elements to create a dream-image in a typically surrealist fashion, but her crisp photo-realism and commercial polish reflect a wholly

contemporary outlook. A well-developed man in his prime, dressed only in running shorts, gazes upward past a trio of stone horses atop a monument, while from the background three opulently-clad figures look on, their faces dark and forbidding. The inevitability of death and decay expressed here is rendered all the more intense by the artist's sleek surfaces, firm and youthful forms, and clear light.

Other categories of contemporary surrealist art --- "classic romantic", "classic abstract surrealist", and "visionary utopian" --- include works in such diverse media as ceramics, metal, cast paper, assemblage, and box constructions as well as numerous paintings, drawings, and prints. The artists represented are James Albertson, Martha Alf, Nicholas P. Brigante, Dan Burkhart, Dario Campanile, Phyllis Davidson, Nat Dean, Roy De Forest, Maxwell Hendier, Bruce Houston, Lance Jackson, Chitrakar Kottler, Beverly Mayeri, Michael C. McMillen, Pamela Mower-Conner, Arnold Mesches, Irving Norman, Harold Perisco Paris, Lari Pittman, Patricia Powers, Bruce Richards, R. R. Roehl, Bobby Ross, Tom Stanton, Joan E. Tanner, Gordon Wagner, Doug Webb, and Robert Yarber.

California: Idioms of Surrealism will be on view September 10 through October 6 at the Pratt Manhattan Center Gallery, where visitors' hours are Monday - Friday, 10 - 6, and Saturday, 10 - 5. The exhibition will then open November 1 at the Institute Gallery on Pratt's Brooklyn campus and continue there through November 30. A catalogue of the exhibition, containing two essays and many large, full-color illustrations, will be available at both galleries. Press photographs will be provided upon request. For further information, please call 636-3517 after August 27.