A Foundation for the Future

This issue of OMG highlights the Foundation Program, a beloved first-year educational experience that generations of Otis alumni have credited for much of their success and penchant for lifelong learning. Otis is the only college of art and design on the West Coast that offers a full Foundation Year curriculum. The program is also unique in its approach to preparing students for the competitive, fast-paced 21st century while continuing to honor time-tested fundamentals.

Throughout Foundation, students learn aesthetic fundamentals, sharpen their visual acuity, develop their cultural and information literacy, begin a connection with the larger community as emerging artists and designers, and hone the essential “thinking and making” skills required for creative professionals who will enjoy career success. The faculty—all of whom are working artists and designers—serve as role models. Talented, passionate, and thoughtful, they will lead a fulfilling life as art and design professionals and engaged citizens.

Students share their first-year engagement within a learning community of 18 peers. Research shows that students are more creative, motivated, and willing to stretch academically when bonded with a cohort group. At the close of Foundation, Otis students emerge as creative, skilled and collaborative individuals, ready to continue focused study in the upper levels.

Foundations students have the unique opportunity to partner in a project that addresses the Academy of Southern California’s “Splendid Entities: 25 Years of Objects.” Their work was exhibited at the 2011 LA Art Show. A second and third partnership with Southern California’s official sponsor of design, Donghia, has also been announced. Foundation students will partner with Donghia to explore the concept of a future chair.

We are proud to see two featured Otis alumni: Mark Caneso and Artie and Kent Twitchell. The former is a professor at the University of Southern California’s Roski School of Art and Design and the latter is an artist who owns the Twitchell Gallery. This issue’s cover, Dismantled, is a mixed media assemblage that explores the idea of sustainability.

Otis prepares diverse students of art and design to enrich our world through their creativity, skill, and vision.

Founded in 1918, Otis is L.A.’s first independent professional school of visual arts. Otis’ 2000 students pursue BFA degrees in advertising design, architecture/landscapes/interiors, digital media, fashion design, graphic design, illustration, interactive product design, painting, photography, sculpture/new genres, and toy design. MFA degrees are offered in fine arts, graphic design, public practice, and writing. Otis has trained generations of artists who have been in the vanguard of the cultural and entrepreneurial life of the city. Nurtured by Los Angeles’ forward-thinking spirit, these artists and designers explore the landscape of popular culture and the significant impact of identity, politics, and social policy at the intersection of art and society.

Samuel Hoi, President

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In the first semester, students take two drawing courses (Life Drawing and Drawing and Composition) and two design courses (Principles of Design, and Form and Space). They spend eighteen hours in these studio classes and nine hours in Liberal Studies classes each week. In the second semester, they continue in Life Drawing or select Creative Practices and Responses. They also choose an elective, which is based on one of the upper-division majors. In addition, students can also select the elective class to travel to Paris where they study French art, history, and culture during spring break.

Students’ choices allow for varied experiences; a student who chooses creative practices and the sculpture/new genres elective will have a very different experience than one who continues with the core and takes an advertising design elective. Each choice helps to define a path of personal vision. In the spring, students take their first Integrated Learning (site-based team project) class. Because of the focus on sustainable practices in the professional world, most students work with community environmental groups such as Friends of Ballona Wetlands.

In the Foundation year, students learn skill sets that support the informed making of art and design, as well as thinking skills for all visual arts. Very basic to the creation of art and design is “construction of meaning.” Students learn that each visual choice they make in constructing their work carries meaning. They ask what their choice means in the context in which it is meant to be seen or used. Why select a certain color? Why choose a jagged rather than a curved line? What does the choice of scale imply?

I learned things I never thought I’d have opportunity to, I tried things that I never thought I would, and honestly, I’ve turned into someone I never thought I’d be. I went from being a distant wallflower to being a bold, confident nutcase! The people I’ve met along the way have been incredibly inspiring, unbelievably annoying, simply beautiful, and everything in between.

Kelly Dawn Hopkins (’13)
In Drawing and Composition, students develop the ability to confidently organize and construct a drawing (and drawing-driven painting) in which spatial organization is supreme. They visually communicate from a chosen point of view and construct the perspective that goes with it. By observation of increasingly complex still life set-ups, they develop the ability to depict the three-dimensional world in roughly three zones: foreground, middle ground and background. On field trips, they sketch and create mixed media drawings. Media experiences shift from initial graphite line, to charcoal tone, pastel color, Adobe Illustrator, and mixed media water-based painting. In the final landscape project, they create a three-dimensional illusion of the world through diligently rigorous observational accuracy synthesized with their own unmistakable personal mark-making.

Form and Space is a uniquely challenging course for many students because it focuses on three-dimensional design, or composition in-the-round, a method of visual organization that manifests clearly from all angles and perspectives. This demands visual sensitivity that counters today’s highly pictorialized experience. Form and Space introduces students sequentially to the exciting possibilities of form-making. They investigate primary building blocks of Western form such as cubes, tetrahedra, and polyhedra as a basis for composition, use negative and positive volume interactions to activate forms and the spaces between them, and develop relationships between liner, planar, and volumetric elements to engage all three in complex, visually organized, and beautifully constructed compositions.

Students then apply the fabrication, visual organization, and spatial skills gained from early compositions to more individualized and expressive works: connotations of meaning in form result from themes that inform visual and media decision-making, the human body is used as a basis for design in fabrics and fibers, and architectonic scale is achieved by means of modular construction, or multiples. By the end of the 30-week course, students transfer compositional, fabrication, and meaning-making skills to all endeavors of art and design to heighten the visual and expressive quality of their work in any discipline or media.
Learning to draw from the human figure is at once natural and overwhelming. Each successive layer or mark translates the 3D skeleton to the 2D picture plane, and then the figure is depicted in a system that indicates perspective and volume. Life drawing is based on the principle of structural drawing as students analyze the figure in order to plot visual relationships and positions in space. They begin drawing from the inside out—starting with the gesture, and considering proportion and scale. As they develop the drawing, they add muscular structure. They gain an understanding that the Otis system of life drawing is transferable to any object they wish to record by observational drawing.

Developing facility in two-dimensional design is fundamental to the study of visual arts. We live in a three-dimensional world, so translating that world into reductive two-dimensional forms is basic to constructing a visual language. Although paint is the most-used medium in two-dimensional designs, other mediums as well as digital skills such as Photoshop are introduced. Students learn basic organizing principles based on visual patterning, and study and apply symmetries, compositional weightings, rotations and tessellations, as well as value, color, and scale to enhance meaning in their compositions. They examine line, form and value, and the stylistic attitudes of design.

During the first semester, students visit a museum for a lecture on the semiotics of visual construction. In the second semester, Connections through Color and Design, they begin the Integrated Learning sequence, in which they solve problems presented by their community partner. They also participate in an intensive study of color theory and continue developing Photoshop skills.

I went to business school for two years, and the entire time I was painting and creating things. Then I decided that’s what I wanted to do what I love as a career.
Creative Practices and Responses

Creative Practices and Responses is an individual educational adventure. In this second-semester elective, students respond to two prompts: the first involves line and the development of iterations in the creative process, the second considers pattern, research and project development. Students are free to create their own projects using any material and process. They identify and question individual assumptions to break out of familiar ways of making and thinking. As they move beyond their comfort zones, they become increasingly aware of the value of observing their thinking process to develop a creative practice that is constantly refined, and redefined.

Philosophy

Otis’ Foundation Program integrates critical thinking with aesthetic practice. As Chair Katie Phillips explains, “Aesthetic fundamentals have not changed, but the way we teach them has.” Foundation faculty members have been working on the problems associated with teaching and learning for many years, and consider education their life’s work. They have developed a research-based first-year curriculum that promotes individual expression by helping students to move from solving problems posed by instructors to defining and solving problems for themselves. Students learn to become successful students of art and design by critiquing their own work and pursuing a spirit of investigation.

The alignment of Foundation and Liberal Arts and Sciences leads students to examine how meaning is constructed during the creative process. The program supports students in the development of strong critical thinking skills through courses such as Critical Analysis and Semiotics and Introduction to Visual Culture, in which they learn both to question everything and to see that everything is connected. It is important that future artists and designers recognize the relationship and interplay between text and image, making and thinking. In the spring semester, the Form and Space project, “The Meaning of Form,” reinforces critical thinking in preparation for more individualized final projects.

After the Foundation year, students have built a strong and broad base on which to continue developing their individual voices in the major of their choice.

Semesters Credits Studio Hours
Fall 6 hrs per week
Spring —
2.0 X

Tips from the Pros

Several Foundation faculty members, many of whom have been teaching for more than 30 years, have created YouTube “how to” videos that have attracted thousands of viewers.

Gary Geraths
Structural Life Drawing
140,000 views

Portrait Drawing
80,000 views

Planar Head Drawing
37,000 views

Barry Fahr
Cross Contour Drawing
30,000 views

Randy Lavender
Building a Six-Inch Cube
7,500 views

Chris Mounger
Graphite Pencil Value Drawing
19,000 views

Gouache Color Harmony
20,000 views

Gouache Value Step Scales
23,000 views

Chris Warner
Digitally Photographing 2D Art
7,500 views
Think Different: Profit, People and the Planet

Now that I know more about the importance of sustainability, I approach design differently,” says fashion designer Rosemary Brantley, Chair of Otis Fashion Design. “The new ‘triple bottom line’ is profit, people and the planet. If you take care of people and the planet, profit will follow.” She believes that we have no choice, that tomorrow is the new now, and that the whole fashion system has to change. Brantley is certain that sustainability is the megatrend that will dominate the fashion industry for years to come.

Over the last seven years, Brantley has introduced design problems that address issues of local traditions and production; building supply communities; recycled, vintage, and found materials; and reuse, with mentors such as Alabama Chanin, Todd Oldham, Anthropologie and Yoshiee Tang. Last year, working with industry leader Patagonia and avant-garde designer Isabel Toledo, students designed multi-functional, fashionable garments, with the goal of doing the least harm to the environment.

Otis students are on the front line of these changes in the industry. “Re-generation—Revolution,” their current project exemplifies this shift. As Brantley explains, “For the past twelve months, with support from Nike and Hurley, we have retooled our curriculum to teach the Whole System Change—a business model that considers profits, people and planet altogether. What can we create that reduces waste, uses less resources, and is more respectful of human life? Because of Nike and Hurley’s generosity, not only are talented and deserving students receiving scholarships for an innovative design education, but these students will eventually make our world a much better place.”

Students are working in three teams in collaboration with Hurley Senior VP of Design John Cherpas and design team members Nimma Bhute and Nadid Baranbricks, Nike VP of Apparel Product Creation, Diana Cruz, and Director of Design Connections at Nike/Hurley/Converse/Umbro, Betsy Parker. The teams consider garment design in terms of its regenerative, heirloom, and sustainability aspects, with a focus on youth appeal. They explore personalization, self-expression, consumer participation, and input. Using reversible fabrics and clean stitching, they create garments with a “second life” rather than a “closed look.” They design incorporation seamless looks; wrapping, tying and folding for flexible fit, detachable collars and cuffs; educational care labels; and repair kits. Youth leads the way, as Hurley’s tagline “Micophone for Youth” proclaims. Convinced that consumer habits are changing, Otis fashion design students intend to educate shoppers about the environmental issues that design and fabrication pose, including washing, excessive consumption of low-priced clothing, and the value of “heirloom” and multipurpose clothing. Their goal is to design investment-quality garments with sustainable materials and methods, always considering the global impact. Some were inspired by last June’s clothing diet, the “Six items, 31 days” web-based experiment in which people across the world selected a handful of garments, wore only these garments for a month, and blogged about their experiences. As one student states, “There is much more consumer awareness of ecological impact, and multifunctional fashion is becoming a trend.”

No Finish Line
Designing for Athletes and the Planet

Where do I start? asked Fashion Design faculty member Jackie Wickser during a visit to the Nike cubitalia in the first week of her two month sabbatical. The company’s commitment to sustainability in everything they do was evident in the variety of Clearly labeled recycling bins and the eco-friendly cutlery, plates, bowls and cups. She quickly became part of the flow of ideas, meeting designers in the Advanced Innovation Technology Group: Their Considered Design Project lead by Rich Macdonald, represents Nike’s ongoing commitment to sustainable design innovation. As they phrase it, “When it comes to finding the best solutions for both athletes and the planet, there is no finish line.” For example, Nike has recycled the ground-up soles of 21 million shoes for flooring in 285 sports courts. Their football jerseys for South Africa 2010, made from 100% recycled polyester, diverted 15 million plastic bottles from landfill.

Wickser soon began working with Nike’s Advanced Innovation Technology and Materials team, experimenting with woven fabric rather than knit, to come up high performance garments. Woven fabric is more eco-friendly than knit because it uses less yarn.

Nike’s “Whole System Change” approach depends on changes in technology. Using AI software, their tech designers create patterns and saw them together, place the garments on an avatar, and motion test them with the 3D figures, all within virtual reality. They send the virtual designs to Nike offshore prototype centers so that the contractors can more closely execute their prototypes.

For the last six years, Scott Williams (’90) Design Director for Olympic Apparel, has worked with industrial and fashion designers to meet Nike’s goals of performance and sustainability. Designed and built over seven years with a six million dollar investment, Nike’s environmental apparel design tool measures and reduces the impact of their products on the environment. Their designers evaluate new sports apparel design based on the “considered index,” which measures pattern marker efficiency (waste), garment treatment (dyeing, laundering, distressing), and material and chemical energy consumption, water use. As CEO Mark Parker stated, “We’re equally committed to leading our industry in climate change and sustainability. We’re entering a new era of open-source collaboration that connects to sharing intellectual and patent property. It’s the kind of behavioral change that can help lower carbon emissions, reduce waste, and close the loop on the resources required by product manufacturing.” Nike’s invitation to Wickser and Department Chair Rose Brantley to visit their Oregon campus and present “old school—new school” hands-on techniques such as draping was one step in the whole system change that is now fully implemented in Otis’ curriculum. This collaboration and sharing of ideas will inspire others in the fashion design industry to move more quickly toward a sustainable future.
The Clay’s the Thing
by Alexandra Polyea

“Clay in LA,” a one-day symposium, drew several hundred Visiting Artists Ruby Neri and Adam Silverman. Adrian Saxe, Peter Shire, Jo Lauria (MFA ’90), and Boardman ceramics fans to Otis on March 12. Panelists included Ruby Neri and Adam Silverman.

“I never took ceramics and really want to learn,” says painting major Marisa Gattard. “I want to see how I like the materials and how I feel I can send my message through this medium.”

“It’s a totally different mindset from painting,” explains Carlos Ochoa, painting major. “It helps me out as a painter to think in these dimensions.”

The experiences of these students and many more signal the re-birth of clay at Otis over the past five years. Long revered for artist/teachers Peter Voulkos and Ralph Bacerra and their students who revolutionized clay as art, Otis now reflects 21st-century realities.

“The goal for the return of clay at Otis were much larger. We decided that we would develop a program that looked at clay’s industrial and fine arts uses, and maybe discover a middle ground,” explains Cranston. “One student could use rapid prototyping to make ceramic tiles for interiors or other industrial purposes, and another could hand-build a sculpture; and they could be working together in the same room. We’ve shown that students using clay in different ways can live peacefully together.”

Fine Arts now offers at least one clay/ ceramic course every semester. “Ultimately, the palpability of working with clay is profoundly rewarding,” observes Cranston. “If you grew up playing video games and pushing buttons, it feels good to work with clay. You use your body in all media but in clay in particular it has weight. It is a body; it doesn’t want to stand up; it doesn’t want to be handled in any way. Clay creates a tight community. We share the triumphs that come out of the kiln.”

Joan Takayama-Ogawa came to Otis as a Continuing Education student interested in learning glaze chemistry. She became a ceramics major, and joined the faculty, teaching over the years in several departments. Her ceramics classes include a Product Design elective, where students use 3d software and render by rapid prototype, then cast in plaster and create multiples. “We make things that I would not be able to make by hand,” says Ogawa. Learning the process helps students become much more informed designers.

One aspect of clay she has noticed over the years is its capacity to help students develop fine and gross motor coordination. “I can’t think of any material but clay that can give feedback as to how good your hands really are, and how well your hand and your mind work together,” says Ogawa. “Within the first class I can see growth in students’ abilities; their hands actually start talking with their brains.” She has also observed that clay builds the capacity of students to express themselves. “I can’t make things that I would not be able to make by hand,” says Ogawa. Learning the process helps students become much more informed designers.

Phyllis Green, Artist

I’ve never had the chance to see all my work together before. I can remember the excitement of making them. Twenty-five years is a long time but it seems to be so short. When I emplaced ceramics again it was particularly to challenge the notion that considers clay and other materials made out of craft as women’s work or second class. It’s privileged in the art world now. There’s a lot of interest in clay from students.

Splendid Entities: 25 Years of Objects by Phyllis Green at the Ben Maltz Gallery, January 18 - March 19

It’s unusual to see a show with so much ceramics, and wonderful that Otis is exhibiting Phyllis’ work. She is a great example for our students. She has been a frequent resident at Otis, mentoring students in many different departments. Her ceramics classes include a Product Design elective, where students use 3d software and render by rapid prototype, then cast in plaster and create multiples. “We make things that I would not be able to make by hand,” says Ogawa. Learning the process helps students become much more informed designers.

Phyllis’ show is a great springboard—her work bridges the gap between the decorative and the contemporary art worlds. It was an enriching experience to work with an artist who has a definite vision of who she is and what her work says.

Jo Lauria (MFA ’90), Independent curator, artist and design educator, and co-curator of “Splendid Entities.”

Phyllis is a good example of an artist who employs clay in a thoughtful and meaningful way. Adrian Saxe, Brooks Director of World Ceramics, Boardman Artist in Residence.
In 2010-2011, MFA Public Practice students worked with artist S.A. Bachman and Krista Calabria to produce DISMANTLED, an innovative visual arts collaboration. As students across California faced tuition hikes, emerging artists from Otis participated in an exploration of public education, critical pedagogy, and the privatization of our school systems. This statewide project acknowledged California’s unique history while simultaneously questioning what the future holds if our institutions of learning are no longer shaped by the core principles of accessible and affordable education for all. It was shown in San Diego in November and in Fresno in early December.

Dismantled opened my eyes to different challenges of education in California and how access can be blocked by systems of power. I realized that one should take action for her/his belief rather than neutrally sit and watch the failure of the system. As an immigrant, this project was a launching point for my own take action for her/his belief rather than neutrally sit and watch the failure of the system.

Class participants, working in teams, considered two modes of architectural inquiry: figuration and configuration. For the first exercise, they investigated the techniques of tailoring, upholstery, and weaving, and explored various ways in which these techniques may evolve three-dimensionally at the scale of interior architecture, developed through geometry, material behavior, and methods of assembly.

In the second half of the Master Class, the five teams of students proposed interventions between two buildings on Otis’ campus, producing form and structure using the upholstery techniques of tailoring, weaving, piloting, drafting, and tailing. The interventions included canopy, a walk transforming into a canopy and an arched tunnel-like form (with petals of floor, walls and roof) squeezed between the two buildings.

Toehlim and Johnston concluded their residency with Nip-Tuck-Diptyp, a Combined Perspective on Creativity and Perspective, a lecture at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Though Toehanim and Johnston work on opposite coasts, they had collaborated on the award-winning eco-conscious design for Helix Hive, a B9 gas station in L.A. that is the first LEED-certified gas station in the U.S. Its canopy of 90 solar panels supplies energy for the station, landscape planting is drought tolerant, and recycled glass is mixed into the concrete pavement to store heat gain.

Toehlim, currently principal of NADAAA and Professor and Head of the Department of Architecture/Landscape/Interiors at the MIT School of Architecture and Planning, spoke of his exploration of material qualities in conjunction with both traditional and digital techniques of design and assembly. He showed projects from around the world that marry local craft and digital techniques of design and assembly. It’s important to bring Dismantled to Fresno, Ca. because there is a struggle for education in the Central Valley. By projecting onto the city’s vacated Metropolis Museum of Art, Dismantled not only brings the struggle to light, but calls for action from every person on the street.

Sherry said, “I hear the most beautiful music, it made me cry. It was his first lesson—he’s in prison for murder, age 15. What if he had met the piano before the gun?”

—Community member

Sherry saw how, through Dismantled, a local group of artists brought the public together to examine the complexities of the educational system.
Resounding applause greeted the message “Creativity cannot be outsourced. Innovation stays onshore,” at the release of the third annual Otis Report on the Creative Economy of the Los Angeles Region. The capacity audience at Zipper Hall, Colburn School, gathered on November 11 to hear NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman, University of Minnesota Professor Ann Markusen, and Irvine Foundation President James Canales speak about “The Power of Art and Artists.”

Days before the event, gubernatorial candidate Jerry Brown stated that “creativity and imagination are what California needs.” The data produced by the LAEDC for this report provided real numbers to support his assertion.

Creativity is serious business in Southern California: one of six jobs in the region are in the creative sector; it is the second largest business sector in the region; impact amounted to $286.3 billion in 2010; the average salary in digital media is $136K, and this sector has the highest growth prospect through 2014 (10.4%). In fact, despite manufacturing downturns, employment in the creative sector is projected to grow faster than other sectors in the next five years.

Creativity provides a long-range and sustainable competitive edge for the U.S. economy. As Rocco Landesman stated, “When you bring arts organizations and arts workers into a neighborhood, the place changes to a vibrant and sustainable community. The arts complement and complete other sectors of the economy.” Ann Markusen’s policy brief, Los Angeles: America’s Artist Super City, demonstrates that artists are L.A.’s hidden developmental dividend, and offers policies and programs to make the region a more supportive place for artists. Her analysis indicates that L.A. has the largest pool of artists of any U.S. metropolitan area; gained two artists for every artist who left from 1995-2000; and has a concentration of artists that is eight times as prominent as in the U.S. as a whole.

According to President Hoi, “The Otis Report measures more than the impact of the creative economy. It is the story of possibilities made real by a combination of education, talent, entrepreneurial drive, and opportunities.”

The Otis Report focuses on Southern California and its role as a global cultural capital. As arts sector leaders increasingly understand, acknowledge, and champion their financial value, they will influence policy makers, business leaders, and other key constituencies. Otis’ advocacy role for the creative economy is consistent with the spirit of innovation that guides the College’s approach to 21st century education.
The MFA Program in Graphic Design graduated its first class in the summer of 2010. I am happy to say that I could never have anticipated so many successes from a newly formed program.

Several of the alumni and current students have already begun their careers and post-graduate adventures that speak to the spirit of diverse practices that are embraced in our curriculum. Coursework, visiting artists, workshops, hosting international symposia, and field trips have all been major contributors to defining our graduate program. Students have lectured nationally and internationally; published texts; won national and international awards for their work; been selected as top talent and won prestigious scholarships. It is with great pride that I introduce to the reader a selection of stories.

We trust that it’s only the beginning...

**New York**

**Ramon Tejada**

Ramon is in New York, working in his studio, teaching, and skiing through the snow. The rest of his time has been spent doing work for the Brooklyn Philharmonic.

**UC Irvine**

**Diane O’Brien**

“The MFA program opened my mind to new ways of thinking about design and entirely new ways of making work. It probably sounds cliché, but I truly feel that a new world opened up to me as a result of my experiences with my classmates and instructors. Much to my surprise and delight, my studies at Otis have led me to continue as an artist and pursue a second MFA. This time in studio art at UC Irvine where I am focusing primarily on drawing and painting.”

**Amsterdam**

**Hanif Mandipanya**

“This year the MFA Graphic Design program has really shifted my point of view on the possibilities of all design and how it is defined. Currently I am working on the graduation project that I began in my final summer in the MFA program, a five art educational program for young girls in under-privileged areas of Los Angeles.”

**LACMA**

**Gilbert Garcia**

“A distinct characteristic I particularly enjoyed about the MFA program is the bond between the students. We were actively involved with one another in a shared environment, creating a true sense of ‘family.’ During these eight weeks, we grew and developed as creators. I currently work at LACMA on a number of projects, ranging from websites and galleries, installation graphics, special event brochures, and the monthly film series posters.”

**Los Angeles**

**Sarmista Pantham**

“As an independent design consultant, my current practice includes print design, apparel design, identity, graphics and illustration for fashion as well as personal work such as souvenirs. My clients are the fashion brand Bebe, Otis (poster above), and a yet-to-be-launched cultural non-profit organization. I am also doing further research and collaboration on my thesis project, a design-based schooling system for a ‘globalized’ India. Having been an apparel designer for almost seven years, it was extremely exciting to have spent the last two-and-a-half years at Otis, experiencing the crossovers between different design disciplines with my classmates while adding several layers to my interests such as education and culture. I have discovered that the parameters of these disciplines, whether through real-time projects or in theory, are sometimes in collision, sometimes in harmony and at other times mutually exclusive.”

**Berlin**

**Sam Amrani**

“During the past two years I’ve learned a new meaning for the word ‘design.’ I’ve learned that a designer can use any material at hand to establish communication and engage with society. The MFA program has helped me to build my self-confidence and make quick judgments based on thorough research.

Last year I began working under the supervision of professor Dr. Erik Spiekermann, studying ‘P-English’ (Persian-English) and researching the phonetic usage of the Latin alphabet used by Persians to communicate in Paris over the Internet. This is a typographical (typo-grapheme) approach to write a non-Latin language that has no standard yet. My internship at Edenspiekermann AG in Berlin also involves an info-graphic poster design, and micro website designs, as well as the design for an exhibition in March 2011 at the Bauhaus archive in Berlin.”

**San Francisco**

**Sarminta Pantham**

“I was selected as one of ‘20 under 30’ in PRINT magazine’s annual international competition, New Visual Artists. For the last thirteen years, the magazine has identified the most promising rising talents in graphic design, advertising, illustration, digital media, photography and animation under the age of 30 from nominations made by art directors, designers, critics, and industry professionals.”

**Bad Bellingen**

**Patrick Lean**

“I am currently working on a project to print a series of ‘paper books’ with my students at the State Academy of Arts.”

**Amsterdam LACMA**

**Kali Nikitas**

“OMAG is a bi-annual publication that has been published by the MFA Graphic Design program, and has recently been selected as one of 20 under 30 by PRINT magazine.”

**Beverly Hills**

**Daniel O’Rourke**

“OMAG is a bi-annual publication that has been published by the MFA Graphic Design program, and has recently been selected as one of 20 under 30 by PRINT magazine.”

**Los Angeles**

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“The Mural Conservancy of L.A. was born out of the Freeway Lady’s demise. Bill Laskov, publisher of Art Scene (and founder of MCLA in 1987), and arts attorneys Amy Nieman (one of its original board members) raised their voices to get me to see the importance of standing up for artists’ rights. She made me understand that although property owners have the right to do as they wish, the law states that they must be civilized and perhaps notify the artist, who may want to remove the mural, or at least document it one last time. It hit me that all good laws simply keep us at least acting civilized, even during times when we don’t feel like it.”

Year later, when the Puente casa came to light, Twitchell had legal experience under his belt. Even though pushing the boundaries—for art’s sake—a thing that’s proud of, he nonetheless acknowledged “it wasn’t a very productive time for my art. It’s hard getting into and then staying in the art-making zone while pursuing a lawsuit, but it’s good that we did it.”

And although his 2009 Berlin Wall project didn’t involve activism, he ended up in the middle of a slight controversy—this time about art censorship. The Wende Museum of the Cold War, which sponsored the project, requested that Twitchell complete only the Kennedy half of his Kennedy-Reagan diptych, due to space limitations. To quell the firestorm, Twitchell’s solution was to include portraits of both presidents, each on a single wall panel.

“So I decided to attend Otis was to get scrawled down with an MFA. I’d continue doing my street art afterwards, but maybe with a chance of being considered as serious as the artists painting pictures for galleries. I remember while putting the finishing touches on my Steve McQueen Mural in 1971, someone came by and told me there was a picture of it on the Otis bulletin board. I was elated. To think someone at Otis actually liked it! So, four years after the McQueen mural and one year after the Freeway Lady, I decided I needed a shot of seriousness to apply to Otis’ grad school. I didn’t make myself seriously enough to explore and push Otis had successful artists who also taught, wrote books, etc. and I needed to be accountable to people like that in order to get to the next level.

“Originally, Trippy Noir and I were asked to paint on an exact replica of the wall that was to be made, to cover ten segments (approximately 12 ‘x’ 4’ each). Trieny was possibly the first artist to paint on the Berlin Wall. He could see the ugly face of tyranny each time he looked out his kitchen window. One night in the mid-70’s he painted a cartoon face on it so it wouldn’t seem so intimidating. It’s kind of like picturing a mean boss wearing long underwear. Eventually he and other artists painted more and more. Justinian Jampert, Wende Museum founder and City Councilmember Tom LaBonge invited me to paint on an exact replica of the Wall as part of L.A.’s celebration of the 20th anniversary of its tearing-down. Berlin then offered to ship pieces of the actual wall. I found out that ten segments were coming, and decided to paint half faces, leaving segments for other artists. Artists Farrah Karapetian and Maria Astrid Gonzalez were selected to join us. I requested a particular photograph of Kennedy from the Wende and visited the Reagan Library to study a chunk of the real wall and look for Reagan images that had the same lighting and perspective as my JFK portrait.”

These days, Twitchell is working on a mural that includes George Washington, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and Benjamin Franklin in the main lobby of the Bob Hope Patriotic Hall in downtown L.A. He also plans to paint a new and larger version of the Freeway Lady, slated for a new building at L.A. Valley College. And his Steve McQueen Monument is almost fully restored, having been painted over by accident. Twitchell has been working on it with Fresno School, which now oversees most of his mural projects, allowing him to spend more of his time doing the art. Twitchell also wants to paint a monument to his mentor Carlos White (on the south wall of the original Otis Art Gallery, overlooking Wilshire Blvd).

As part of Twitchell’s graduate thesis project, he drew a two-foot-high version of White that is now part of LACMA’s permanent collection. “That’s the pose I want to use for the mural, casting a shadow off to the west,” says Twitchell. “The school is now the Charles White Elementary School. Seems like a good fit.”

Reminiscing on how he got to the present, Twitchell recalls, “Before Otis, I was considered a leading street artist, but that meant nothing serious then (1975). Today it’s all the rage, but in the late 60s and early ’70s when the LA Fine Arts Squad (Terry Schoonhoven and Vic Henderson) worked in Venice and Ocean Park, and I worked in Downto L.A. and Hollywood, we were considered second-class by most of the ‘artworld.’ Rozelle and Rodenrich, Sylkes and Alonzo Davis (’73) painted amazing murals in South Central L.A. Alonzo, both artist and administrator at his Brockman Gallery Productions, changed the face of South Central. In East L.A., the Guss Gallery, David Botello, Willie Herron and Los Four (Carlos Almaraz, ’74; Judith Hernandez ’74), etc. did street art of another kind. Judy Baca came along, carved out the Citywide Mural Program and later SPARC, and was instrumental in getting grants and government funding for mostly Latino murals. Jane Golden started painting murals under Citywide in the mid-’70s and is now in Philadelphia running the most successful murals program in the world. Baca’s murals programs brought large numbers of artists into the mural movement, and all these traditions together made L.A. the ‘Mural Capital of the World.’

One reason I decided to attend Otis was to get scrawled down with an MFA. I’d continue doing my street art afterwards, but maybe with a chance of being considered as serious as the artists painting pictures for galleries. I remember while putting the finishing touches on my Steve McQueen Mural in 1971, someone came by and told me there was a picture of it on the Otis bulletin board. I was elated. To think someone at Otis actually liked it! So, four years after the McQueen mural and one year after the Freeway Lady, I decided I needed a shot of seriousness to apply to Otis’ grad school. I didn’t make myself seriously enough to explore and push. Otis had successful artists who also taught, wrote books, etc. and I needed to be accountable to people like that in order to get to the next level. At Otis I met Charles White, who started my love for drawing. His love for and experience with murals gave me more confidence that I was on the right track, just doing what was natural for me—street art—but then, suddenly, I wanted to master color, to paint in the streets as if it were for a museum. I may not have done that on my own."
Editor's Note:
There are excerpts from a lecture given by Visiting Editor, Dick Hebdige, at the Broad Stage in November.

From Punk to Pornetration to ‘Let’s Be Facebook Frendz’!!

Or how contemporary art and media culture, ideas about and attitudes toward youth and youth culture, consumerism, embodiment and bonding, the power of perversion, the politics of insubordination, friendship, sex and love have changed in the three decades since punk first exploded on the scene.

Editor’s Note: https://video.except from a lecture given by Visiting Editor, Dick Hebdige, at the Broad Stage in November. on otis.edu/faculty.html

I’d like to end by shifting the focus to the place where I live a lot of the time now in the States—with some remarks on the subcultures I’ve become affiliated with or have been living alongside for the past ten years or so in the Mojave Desert, because I believe that continuities and discontinuities with ‘70s punk are discernible there too. North of my house is Joshua Tree, 800,000 acres of protected wilderness, some of it sacred territory to the nomadic bands of California Indians who’ve inhabited the region for hundreds of years—a pristine New World paradise. Nearby is the 29 Palms Marine Base—860 square miles of military-owned desert—an area larger than the state of Rhode Island on which the military test weaponry and rehearse for engagements with the enemy in other deserts on other continents. I’m situated geographically, ideologically, spiritually, in a sense in a place that’s somewhere near the current epiphenomen of what I like to call the apocalyptic drama of American becoming. I always say if the wind is in the right direction I can stand on the edge of my property and lean into Armageddon.

I’d like to end by shifting the focus to the place where I live a lot of the time now in the States—with some remarks on the subcultures I’ve become affiliated with or have been living alongside for the past ten years or so in the Mojave Desert, because I believe that continuities and discontinuities with ‘70s punk are discernible there too. North of my house is Joshua Tree, 800,000 acres of protected wilderness, some of it sacred territory to the nomadic bands of California Indians who’ve inhabited the region for hundreds of years—a pristine New World paradise. Nearby is the 29 Palms Marine Base—860 square miles of military-owned desert—an area larger than the state of Rhode Island on which the military test weaponry and rehearse for engagements with the enemy in other deserts on other continents. I’m situated geographically, ideologically, spiritually, in a sense in a place that’s somewhere near the current epiphenomen of what I like to call the apocalyptic drama of American becoming. I always say if the wind is in the right direction I can stand on the edge of my property and lean into Armageddon.

Punks were always positioning themselves at the awkward point of intersection between the politics of identity and the politics of consumption and consumerism.
I would encourage those thinking about becoming involved with the Otis Legacy Society to consider what the arts mean to society and how graduates of art colleges can and do make contributions to our society.

Mei-Lee Ney and the Art of Legacy

Some work at developing their art. Others work at developing their business. Rare are those such as Mei-Lee who are committed to bridging the chasm between the worlds of business and art.

Mei-Lee Ney, who hails from Hong Kong, is an investment adviser who loves the arts. Five years ago, at a dinner party hosted by Brand Lyn Kimmel, she met Otis President Samuel Hoi. He invited her to tour the Otis campus.

“I was so impressed by the energy I felt as I observed classes in progress and saw work by students,” recalls Mei-Lee. “As Sammy and I became better friends, I learned more about Otis and admired its mission—and also developed great confidence in its ability to awaken and nourish leadership. Sammy is one of the most effective leaders I’ve ever met, this sounds like an eventment, but it’s true. Everyone who knows Sammy likes and respects him, and wants to follow his lead.

Mei-Lee has never been content to sit on the sidelines, even while making significant contributions to the College via Otis’ Legacy Society. Her multi-faceted involvement with the College runs deep. The Saturday art history class with teacher Bill Kelley changed the way she looks at art. She eagerly awaits Otis’ annual Creative Economy Report event, which she believes just keeps getting better. She has also enjoyed Otis-sponsored lectures, in particular the one by French intellectual philosopher/journalist Bernard-Henri Lévy. She looks forward to activities with the Patron Circle, which she joined in 2010.

Other annual events on her calendar are the Scholarship Benefit and Fashion Show and the annual year-end exhibition by graduates.

“It’s always very inspiring to see the work of the graduating classes in the different departments and to share in the excitement of the students whose work is on display. The air is filled with electricity, energy. Every floor of Otis is abuzz with activity. The students’ excitement spills over on all the visitors. I love to ask students questions about their work and hear what they have to say. I still enjoy two paintings by a senior that I bought three years ago—even more so now than when I first saw them.”

“And the Scholarship Benefit, with its fashion show and silent auction, is a knockout every year—nothing short of spectacular. The highlight is the fashion show, in which student designs are displayed on the runway by professional models who really help bring the fashions to life. The designs are sophisticated, hip, and in many cases, stunningly beautiful. The entire evening is quite a blast. I also love seeing the excitement of the winners of the student design awards.”

And with regard to Mei-Lee’s philanthropic involvement, she adds, “Including Otis part of my Living Trust, via the Legacy Society, is in my way of participating and making a contribution to a better world, of going back and building on the side of what’s good in life. What’s good in life is what makes you happy. I don’t mean the happiness that comes from transient experiences (although I have nothing against them). There is a happiness that sticks with you from the joy of learning and understanding and finding at peace with yourself and the world. While this is always a work in progress, the arts facilitate that process like nothing else can. My gift to the Otis Legacy Society is one of the ways I can give meaning to my own efforts and life. I enjoy thinking about the lives of the students, most of whom I’ll never know, but whose lives I’ve been able to touch and influence by supporting Otis. Small stories can have big impacts. And on a larger scale, it makes me feel that I can leave something behind that will continue to benefit mankind and make the world a better place.”

“I would encourage those thinking about becoming involved with the Otis Legacy Society to think about what the arts mean to society and how graduates of art colleges can and do make contributions to our society. I believe that if they do, they will discover—and I truly do—that Otis is a place bursting with creativity, a vision for a better future and a deep love for the arts with the kind of leadership that can facilitate that process like nothing else can. And the Scholarship Benefit, with its fashion show and silent auction, is a knockout every year—nothing short of spectacular. The highlight is the fashion show, in which student designs are displayed on the runway by professional models who really help bring the fashions to life. The designs are sophisticated, hip, and in many cases, stunningly beautiful. The entire evening is quite a blast. I also love seeing the excitement of the winners of the student design awards.”

Mei-Lee Ney by George Wolfe

For information on the Legacy Society, please contact Sarah Russoin, Assistant Vice President, Institutional Advancement, (310) 665-6937 or srussoin@otis.edu

Ways to Give

The easiest and most convenient way to give is by visiting our secure giving site at otis.edu/giveness.

By Mail

Call in your gift to the Annual Giving office at (310) 665-6869.

Your participation makes a difference. It doesn’t matter how much you give.

Annual Gifts provide support to a variety of areas, including:

Scholarships

Technology for teaching and learning

Campus upgrades

New initiatives, such as Integrated Learning

Alumni participation affects Otis in many ways. Your gifts to Otis underscore the value of your education.

Every gift, no matter the size, makes a significant difference in the lives of Otis students. Your contribution also helps us increase our alumni participation rate—a key statistic used by corporations and foundations for awarding grants.
CANNES
A Cinematographic Experience
Olivier Chatard | Fine Art ('07)

Do we intuitively connect our actions to something bigger? How spontaneous and determined must we be to achieve and create what we feel?

As a creative artist, these two questions have always resonated with me. The definition of “to create” is “to bring into being.” And that is exactly what drives me—constantly pushing my boundaries to pursue and express innovation.

Possessing a keen interest in environmental issues, I selected water awareness as the topic for my senior thesis. I researched the pressing issues concerning water on our planet, and created an interactive visual tool to convey that information. My efforts were successful, and I was honored by first prize in an artistic design competition sponsored by the gaming company Electronic Arts. It was then that I decided to create a film—one day that would represent our everyday life in relation to water.

After graduating from Otis and working at Yahoo! for two years, I decided to produce and film this short film. Although I had no prior movie production experience, I had a specific vision in mind, guided by my intuition, that would transform “Awareness” into reality. (The best advice I can offer any artist is to trust in and connect with yourself and your artistic vision, no matter what hurdles may seem to exist.)

I began working on a storyboard, cast two amazing actors, Joe Kottas and Olivier Riquelme, and asked my very good friend Laurent Vezzachero to work on editing. With less than $2,000, I filmed “Awareness” in just four days. After several months of editing and many hours creating the 3D effect at the end, I was finally pleased with the result. (I spent less than $1,000, I filmed “Awareness” in just four days. After several months of editing and many hours creating the 3D effect at the end, I was finally pleased with the result.)

This passion for pushing my boundaries to pursue and effect innovation, however, was just how critical it was to me to convey the message embodied within “Awareness.” My insistence on following my goals and belief in what I created sustained and film this short film. Although I had no prior movie production experience, I had a specific vision in mind; guided by my intuition, I set forth to transform “Awareness” into something different from L.A. The super-low rent and abundance of galleries (traditional, phantom, and DIY) in this city were a source of inspiration, not to mention the abstract novel concept of starting a new life, one detached from ours as college art students. Many of the most vibrant contemporary art scenes in Europe reside in Berlin but Nate and I began longing for a more contextualized art community, eventually applying to the most visible and experimental fine art academy in Europe, Städelschule, in Frankfurt am Main, which was originally suggested to me by my Otis mentor, Alex Stade. “It goes without saying that we were both utterly elated when we received our acceptance letters from our respective professors.

In the ensuing year, I adapted to the harsh, hyper-critical Städelschule environment and came out of it with a more clear and confident understanding of what I want from life and why I make art. Going back to school was very familiar to me. The feel of the institution, its cold white walls and exposed construction, the membership, the peer competition and air of anxiety all reminded me of my past experiences inside those sorts of spaces. I navigated the exceptionally free-class environment, enjoying the social scenes behind the regular monthly class dinners and frequent bar nights, as well as the customary studio dinners, brelätern, and lunches, where we would often attempt to make Mexican food in Germany, and drink espresso in between, and with, every meal. It goes without saying that I ended up taking quite a liking to the notably international student body. I expect them immensely as artists, and some have become my closest friends.

My four months back in Los Angeles have been extremely busy. I immediately began writing, and was awarded a Durfee ARC grant for my recent show at 3001 Gallery at USC. Artist Morgan Cuppett ('08), with whom I have been in close conversation during these past few years, along with artist and professor Sharon Lockhart, invited me to install my first solo L.A. show at USC, and later invited Nate to exhibit in the neighboring space, Station. I was able to pursue a project long under development on southern California pastiche architecture, working with artist and designer Aria Smith ('09). Possessing a keen interest in environmental issues, and many hours creating the 3D effect at the end, I was finally pleased with the result. I adapted to the harsh, hyper-critical Städelschule environment, and came out of it with a more clear and confident understanding of what I want from life and why I make art.

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The Otis Times, the new alumni blog, launched in October as a forum and format for alumni to share news and opportunities, post images and video, and connect with fellow alumni. Please continue to use the Otis Alumni Facebook page to keep in touch with us. Go to otis.edu/alumni for links to both The Otis Times and Facebook. Let us hear from you at alumniupdate@otis.edu

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"The Measure of Value"
Las Cienegas Projects, L.A.

Lawrence Gipe
'86 MFA Fine Arts
Tucson Museum of Art
Hespe Gallery, San Francisco

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"The Word of God: Sandow Birk’s American Qur’an"
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**ALUMNI CONNECT**

**LA**

Aaron Kopfman  
'08 Digital Media  
Compositing Lead, Sony Pictures Imageworks team for “Alice in Wonderland,” winner of Academy Award for Outstanding Visual Effects

Ashokam Shaparin  
'06 Digital Media  
Designed sketch shoes as a guest artist for Circa Skateboards

Chin Kim  
'06 Digital Media  
Virtual Design Development Artist, Dreamworks, “Magamag”

Brian Catarci  
'06 Digital Media  
3D stereoscopic compositor, “Chronicles of Narnia: Voyage of the Dawn Treader”

**IN PRINT**

Amaris Davis  
'55 MFA Fine Arts, ’71 MFA Arts The Ruebe-Mac, Eltham

Terrace Zdunich  
'96 Communication Arts, 55th issue of The Slab, “Mother’s Day”

Rhia Fontana  
'02 Communication Arts Amagantine, Zero-Publishing, Inc.

Aaron Philip Clark  
'73 MFA Ceramics, ’77 MFA Art Residencies at Bard and San Francisco State, Amsterdam

Andrew Clinks  
'90 Fine Arts  
Member of Iconic Abraham band, described on NPR as “defiantly infusing generations of rock music into a graceful and subtly innovative product”

**IN MEMORIAM**

Edouardo Lescure  
90 Fashion Design  
Fall/Winter 2010 Collection at ROAUG’s “Fashion, Reform” for L.A. Fashion Week

Dorck Thompson  
’94 Communication Arts  
Post-story artist lectured and led workshops on creative design and storytelling for Microsoft

Consuelo Aguero Valdes  
’91 Fashion Design  
“Coco Lascivita” Spring 2011 line presented at Fashion Week NY

Zoe Ang  
’92 Fashion Design  
Collection featured in “Project San Francisco” runway show

Hillary Cox  
'94 MFA Fine Arts  
Art Director, ad campaign for “Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare”

Bubon Ocho  
’97 Fine Arts  
One of 20 shortlisted artists for the Future Generation Art Prize (Vadich Pinchuk Foundation)

Christopher Rowland  
’00 MFA Fine Arts, ’10 Arts  
Completed documentary, “Bad Hop! The Blacklisting of Hopa Poya: Her Story, Her Song”

Ben Go  
’00 Digital Media  
Director, Brand New School “Honda CVY5” TV ad featured in Regional Super Bowl Spot

Kenneth Cowan  
’84 MFA Fine Arts and Whitney Houston  
’84 MFA Arts and Design for “Jeunes Talents” Project, France

John Boshill  
’89 MFA Public Practice  
LACIE Exhibition “Portable City Projects”

Hans Mandeljono  
’83 Graphic Design, ’85 Arts and Design for John Doe, Amsterdam

Andrew Clinics  
’90 Fine Arts  
Member of Iconic Abraham band, described on NPR as “defiantly infusing generations of rock music into a graceful and subtly innovative product”

**DOIN’ IT IN PUBLIC: FEMINISM AND ART AT THE WOMAN’S BUILDING**

On October 1, Otis’ Ben Maltz Gallery will open the exhibition Doin’ it in Public: Feminism and Art at the Woman’s Building, a project directed by Meg Linton, Director of Galleries and Exhibitions, and Sue Maberry, Director of Library and Archives. Frolics, a Getty initiative, will explore and celebrate the legacy of contemporary art in Southern California. For far too long the achievements of this region’s artists and art movements—some of which have spread far beyond its geographic borders—have been under-recognized and under-documented.

Critic Arthur Danto has defined the “art world” as composed of artists and “certain curators, dealers, critics, collectors.” Now in Southern California, we will add a handful of colleges and universities that have contributed to the essential strength and vitality of our cultural universe—with Otis College of Art and Design key among them.

Since 1984 Otis has served as an incubator for innovation. In the post-war era, pivotal was the arrival of Paul Voulkos in 1954 to set up the ceramics department at the Los Angeles County Arts Institute (later Otis). His work with ceramics had quickly moved into the sculptural. Architectural, theatrical, and glass-making projects of his created an aesthetic that paralleled the Abstract Expressionist movement in painting on the East Coast. The work was revolutionary, especially because clay was generally considered more craft than art in those days.

Through his own work and its exposure in art galleries, Voulkos challenged this concept and revolutionized the practice of ceramics. He also deeply influenced a generation of students, among them John Mason (’57) and Kent Polk (’72), who became two of the most respected ceramic artists today. While their work is very different from Voulkos’, they internalized the lesson that an artist can study anything to materialize his or her expression. Mason had been interested in ceramics as the first time he attended Otis, traveling from Nevada in 1945.

From left to right: Clothing, jewelry, and furniture designed by Leta Eames. Photos by George Hurrell. A project for Hollywood’s most glamorous stars in the 1930s-1940s. (Photo: Courtesy of LACMA.)

The exhibition is part of Public Southern Time: Art in L.A. 1945-1980, an unprecendented celebration that brings together more than 60 Southern California cultural institutions for six months to tell the story of the birth of the L.A. art scene. Public Southern Time is an initiative of the Getty. The presenting sponsor is Bank of America. Additional support for Doin’ it in Public has been provided by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Arts, the Henry Luce Foundation, Supporters of the Woman’s Building and the Barbara Lee Family Foundation.

Doin’ It in Public: Feminism and Art at the Woman’s Building

By Scarlet Cheng

Beginning in October 2011, Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945-1980, a Getty initiative, will explore and celebrate the legacy of contemporary art in Southern California. For far too long the achievements of this region’s artists and art movements—some of which have spread far beyond its geographic borders—have been under-recognized and under-documented.

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At the time ceramics was craft-oriented and decorative, and the classroom was minimally equipped. He returned to Otis when he met Voulkos, who arranged a scholarship. “The main thing for me was to get off the craft track.” Mason says. “Voulkos’ vision was that you could be an artist and still work in clay. It was that making that made the difference. If you think about innovation, it’s always about that—it’s a social construct that’s not in the old linear progression.”

The gravitational pull of Voulkos’ energy was powerful. Baby Al Bringon (’57) remembers the moment he and fellow Otis student Ken Price (’57) witnessed a demonstration Voulkos gave when he first arrived in L.A. Bringon found his own medium as one of the leading lights of the Finish Pop movement in the 1960s, which used new materials such as paints designed for the automotive and aerospace industries.

Another landmark for the school was when Ralph Baca took over the ceramics department in 1985, with an aesthetic as practiced extensively as “enqueño” was rough-hewn and quintessentially expressive. Baracca covered smooth surfaces with eye- popping geometric forms created through multiple layers of over-glazing. He slowed down on both an Asian and Western motif. No, too, reached the lives of many students, including Paul Soldnor (’36), who went on to make ceramics or teach or both. Although he made very different art, Voulkos and Baracca shared the ethos of hard work, combined with a fearless willingness in using any art and all materials that served their expression.

Lynn Zevelyak, former LACMA curator, wrote “But even under the best of circumstances, museums only provide part of the support needed for contemporary art. In the absence of a diverse critical press and a strong art market, since the 1920s the 64 schools have been the glue that has held together Los Angeles art world together.”

Yes, the glue....and the spawning ground for new ideas and ways of working, as well as the incubator of the next great talent that will roll off this long and successful track.