

KOHN GALLERY

Joe Goode @ Contemporary Art Museum St Louis

Joe Goode

January 16 - April 11, 2015

Joe Goode traces half a century of selected works by one of America's most innovative yet under-recognized painters. Often identified with Southern California pop art, Goode ultimately transcends this classification, creating bodies of work with influences ranging from Midwestern iconography and environmental destruction to pop culture and the sublime.

Goode first gained international recognition following his inclusion in Walter Hopps's seminal exhibition *New Painting of Common Objects*, organized at the Pasadena Art Museum in 1962. That same year, a key example of Goode's milk bottle painting series appeared on the cover of *Artforum*; another commences CAM's exhibition.

In *Purple* (1961), Goode positions a milk bottle in front of a domineering monochrome canvas, both of which have been applied with layers of purple oil paint. The usually transparent—but now paint-encrusted—bottle foregrounds Goode's concept of seeing through the picture plane, allowing the viewer to contemplate their own personal and cultural associations within, and through, Goode's pictorial spaces.

In addition, the exhibition features representative works from several of the artist's other series, including bodies of work created in large part through acts of destruction. In his *Torn Cloud* series (1967–76), Goode often uses razor blades to slash through compositions of illusionistic skies, forming jagged clouds. He then layers excised canvases on top of each other to allow viewers to peer through their torn surfaces. Goode's performative surface violations increase in intensity with his introduction of firearms in the *Environmental Impact* series (1978–83). In these works, Goode literally draws with shotgun pellets, using a shotgun to blast through the monochromatic surface of the canvas. The bullets pierce and abrade the surface, forming seemingly chance compositions.

Tornado Triptych (1992), a monumental sumi ink painting, calls upon the lived Midwestern experience as source for the work's iconography. Goode's tornado paintings depict the progression of formidable natural forces, combining the visual liquidity of ink with nature's raw energy in an uneasy relationship between beauty and violence. In his more recent body of work, titled *Flat Screen Nature* (2012–current), Goode uses an industrial hand saw to cut through sheets of painted fiberglass, creating allegorical landscapes of jagged edges and menacing peripheries; the artist's visual vocabulary comes full circle to represent our environment's vulnerable sky, land, and sea.



Joe Goode demonstrates how depictions of the sublime can speak to contentious American issues ranging from environmental vandalism to the Second Amendment. CAM's presentation repositions Goode's critical importance through an in-depth investigation of his concept of beauty through destruction as intrinsically tied to a Midwestern regional sensibility—milk bottles, big sky, tornadoes, and shot guns, for example—that has never before been explored in depth. In conjunction with the exhibition, CAM will publish a catalog on the artist's work with an exhibition history and bibliography, a foreword by CAM Executive Director Lisa Melandri, and critical essays by Chief Curator Jeffrey Uslip and art historian Thomas Crow.

Joe Goode (b. 1937, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma) lives and works in Los Angeles. Recent solo exhibitions have been held at Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles (2014); Texas Gallery, Houston (2002, 2004, 2010, 2012); Franklin Parrasch Gallery, New York (2009); and Manny Silverman Gallery, Los Angeles (2001, 2005). Goode's work is included in numerous major museum collections, including the Saint Louis Art Museum; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Minneapolis Institute of Arts; the Victoria and Albert Museum; the Smithsonian Institution; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Whitney Museum of American Art; and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Joe Goode is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Jeffrey Uslip, Chief Curator.

This exhibition is generously supported by Eve Stelle and Peter Gelles and Joan and Mitch Markow.