



**Armory Center for the Arts**

*Fifty Years*

## **Dedication**

*This book is dedicated to the memory of Rowe Giesen,  
trustee of the Pasadena Art Museum and founding  
member of the Pasadena Art Workshops. Without his  
generosity, advocacy, vision, and dedication, there would  
be no anniversary to celebrate today.*

## **Acknowledgments**

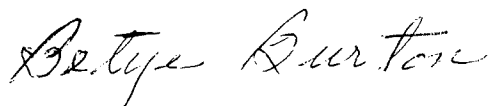
The board, staff, and the Anniversary Committee of the Armory Center for the Arts would like to thank all those who have made the publication of this book possible. Our patrons, whose names appear with the visual record of our history, have been extraordinarily generous. Andrea Clark at the Norton Simon Museum of Art provided many of the images from the Museum's archives. The work of the Pasadena Historical Society, documenting and preserving the history of this community, was also invaluable. Three dedicated volunteers from the early days of the Pasadena Art Workshops—Susan Caldwell, Jane Olson, and Valerie Read—preserved that remarkable era through tireless photographing, clipping, and pasting. John Caldwell Design and Leslie Baker Graphic Design provided special assistance. Special thanks go to our author, Kathy Register, our graphic designers, Harry Pack of Tri-Arts & Associates and Gina Phelps, and our printer, Typecraft, Inc. But perhaps the most important acknowledgment belongs to the hundreds of volunteers, artists, teachers, directors, and trustees who have served the Pasadena Art Museum, the Junior Museum, the Junior Art Workshop, Pasadena Art Workshops, and the Armory Center for the Arts.

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*We, as members of the Honorary Committee for  
A Celebration of 50 Years of Art in Pasadena, salute  
the remarkable achievements of the Armory Center for  
the Arts and its predecessors, the Pasadena Art Museum  
and the Pasadena Art Workshops.*

*Half a century ago, a group of forward-thinking women  
from the Junior League and the Pasadena Art Museum  
created a program based on the idea that a museum  
should not just be a place to exhibit art, but to encourage  
the creativity of children. Their legacy lives on today in  
the innovative programs of the Armory Center for the Arts.*

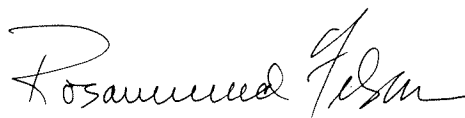
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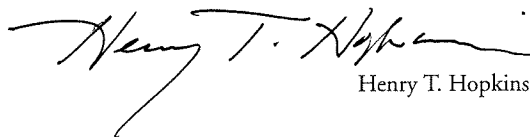
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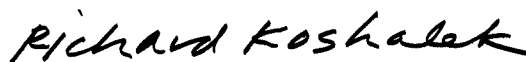
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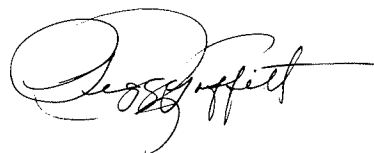
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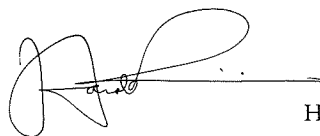
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## Timeline

**1947**



The Junior Museum  
Pasadena Art Institute  
Grace Nicholson Building  
Alice Goudy, *Director*  
Mrs. Gwladys Scott, *President*,  
*Junior League of Pasadena*

**1956**



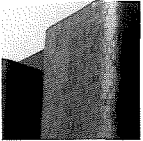
Junior Art Workshop  
Pasadena Art Museum  
Grace Nicholson Building  
Thomas Leavitt, *Director*  
Robert Ellis, *Education Director*

**1965**



Junior Art Workshop  
Pasadena Art Museum  
Grace Nicholson Building  
Walter Hopps, *Director*  
Gwenda Davies, *Education Director*

**1969**



Art Workshop  
Pasadena Art Museum  
111 West Colorado Boulevard  
Thomas Terbell, *Director*  
Nancy Watts, *Curator of Education*

**1974**



Pasadena Art Workshops  
Lincoln Avenue and  
Orange Grove Boulevard  
Deborah Brewer, *Director*

**1980**



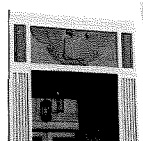
Pasadena Art Workshops  
390 South El Molino Avenue  
Joel Safranek, *Director*  
Robert Carasso, *Program Director*

**1989**



Armory Center for the Arts  
145 North Raymond Avenue  
Elisa Greben Crystal,  
*Executive Director*  
Doris Hausmann, Sue Maberry,  
and Mark Niblock-Smith,  
*Program Directors*

**1999**



Armory Center for the Arts  
145 North Raymond Avenue  
Elisa Greben Crystal,  
*Executive Director*  
Jay Belloli, Lorraine Cleary, Molly  
Cleator, Doris Hausmann, and Lilia  
Hernandez, *Program Directors*

# 50 Years of Art in Pasadena

## The Story of the Pasadena Art Museum's Historic Education Program, the Pasadena Art Workshops and the Armory Center for the Arts

Katherine E. Register

**F**rom the seeds a group of early-Pasadena arts patrons planted at Carmelita Park have grown some wondrous—and enduring—institutions. The founders of the Pasadena Art Institute would be proud of the organizations that have sprouted up as a result of their idea in 1922 to establish an art museum at the corner of Colorado and Orange Grove Boulevards.

Today, more than 75 years later, after several name changes and a couple of relocations, there is, indeed, an art museum—the Norton Simon Museum—at this western gateway to the city. And those civic-minded founding fathers and mothers could never have foreseen how innovative and adventuresome the Institute's successor—the Pasadena Art Museum—would become. Nor could they have imagined the organizations that were born there and continue to support art in Southern California today.

The Pasadena Art Alliance and the Fellows of Contemporary Art, two very vital non-profits, started as Pasadena Art Museum support groups. But perhaps the organization with the most enduring legacy began as the Pasadena Art Institute's landmark children's education program, established in 1947 as a Junior League pilot project. After more than 50 years—and several changes of name and location—it continues today as Pasadena's Armory Center for the Arts.

### A Shaky Start

It all started with a good idea in the early '20s, but it came together slowly, with numerous fits and starts. In 1922, a group of wealthy businessmen, known as the Carmelita trustees, bought the former Carmelita Gardens property for \$215,000 with the idea of establishing an art museum at the site. The northeast corner of Colorado and Orange Grove Boulevards had originally been the garden estate of Dr.

Ezra Carr. He sold the property in 1892 to Amanda and Simeon Reed of Portland, Oregon, the founders of Reed College, who used the lush property as their winter home. Remnants of their gardens and the 22-room Carmelita House, built by Amanda Reed after her husband's death, stood at the corner until 1967, when the house was razed to make way for the new Pasadena Art Museum building.

In 1924, a non-profit organization, the Pasadena Art Institute, was formed, but its founders ran into financial difficulties during the Depression. They did manage to retain control of the Carmelita Park property and eventually negotiated, in the early '40s, an agreement to give title of the property to the City of Pasadena, while the Art Institute acquired the use of the Grace Nicholson house at 46 North Los Robles Avenue. However, in their agreement with the city, the Pasadena Art Institute trustees retained the right to reacquire the Carmelita property after 20 years, if they could raise the money to erect a new building at the site.



*The Grace Nicholson Building*

By 1943 the Pasadena Art Institute had a new home in the old home of one of its founding trustees, Grace Nicholson. A successful dealer and collector of Native American and Asian artwork, Nicholson began building her spectacular “Chinese Treasure House” on North Los Robles Avenue in 1924. It was finished in 1929 and provided space downstairs for her shops and galleries, and an upstairs apartment for her living quarters—all built around a sizable central courtyard. In 1943 Nicholson gave her Imperial Palace Courtyard-style house to the City of Pasadena specifically “for the benefit of and home for the Pasadena Art Institute,” according to Jeanne Devereaux Perkins, Nicholson’s biographer. The gift was made in lieu of back taxes, according to Perkins, and Nicholson continued to live in her apartment in the northwest corner of the building until she died in 1948.

With a 25-year agreement to occupy the Nicholson Building—located in the center of town—the Pasadena Art Institute began what some have called its golden years.

### **The Junior Museum**

In the years following World War II, armed with a new and growing awareness of the emotional needs of children, Junior Leagues around the country began initiating volunteer opportunities in the arts. The Junior Museum of the Pasadena Art Institute was just such an effort, launched in 1947 by the Pasadena chapter of this national service organization.

Under the direction of Gwladys Scott, the innovative children’s arts education program was one of the first of its kind in Southern California. Alice Goudy, Pasadena Art Institute director, had designated the entire North wing upstairs in the Nicholson Building for the Junior Museum. And the Junior Leaguers gamely tackled the job of transforming the dilapidated quarters into usable space—enlisting the volunteer help of architects, engineers, city work crews and purchasing agents, and Pasadena school officials.

Serving children in third grade through junior high school, the program was an instant success. Within

two months 1,355 children were signed up as members (at \$1 a year) and enjoyed the free Saturday (and later after-school) programs. Those early Saturday sessions included morning tours through special children’s galleries, followed by a puppet show, or an educational movie or play. Afternoons were spent in the workshop, using paints, clay, crayon, wood and other materials. An important part of the program were the guest artists who demonstrated in their chosen media during the workshops. “At no time will there be classes or instruction, as it is not the purpose or wish of the museum to



*Robert Ellis*

duplicate the excellent work being done in the public schools or by private teachers,” stressed a 1947 Junior League newsletter.

The Pasadena Junior League ran the Junior Museum program for nine years until 1956. This pilot project for the Pasadena chapter served as a model for Junior Leagues all over the country, was widely copied by other institutions and gained the League—and the museum—national attention.

When the Pasadena Art Museum itself took charge of the program in 1956, it hired a young artist and teacher, Robert Ellis, as its new curator of education.

The museum also changed the name of the program to the Junior Art Workshop. The San Marino League stepped in at that time to provide financial support. According to Ellis, few alterations were made when the program changed hands. "It just evolved," he said. "We greatly expanded the program, offered more Saturday and after-school classes. We eventually had hundreds of kids coming through." Classes were offered in art, dance and music, and satellite programs were established in Glendale and Fullerton.

With a core group of creative teachers—including Lucille Krasne, Susana Guevara Mueller, Nancy Watts, Gwenda Davies and Hilda Mullin—who set the tone early on, Ellis stressed that the Workshop staff all had the same goal. "We wanted as free an environment as we could make it. It didn't matter if you spilled paint—that was very different from how things were in public school art classes at that time."

"And we wanted to leave the decisions to the kids," said Ellis. "When they came into the classroom, they could decide what to work on—and what medium to work in. So, kids were doing different things the minute they walked in the door."

Nancy Watts, a Workshop instructor (and later director), recalled using the galleries as part of her classes. "We tried to integrate the whole art experience," she said. "We'd take the painting students up to the galleries and do movement in front of the Kandinskys." And she let the kids really get into the materials. "I let them feel the clay. The little ones wanted to POUND, and I let them pound!"

A scholarship program was launched in the summer of 1962 to provide underprivileged youngsters

with the opportunity to attend classes at the museum. And in 1963 the Junior Art Workshop received a grant

from the Rosenberg Foundation to test whether a creative art experience could improve the reading skills of a group of disadvantaged fifth-grade boys. This project, one of the first in the country to systematically explore the overall psychological benefits of such an arts program, was supervised by Dr. Florence R. Diamond, a psychologist at California State University Los Angeles. The boys participated in the Workshop for one semester and were tested before and after the experience. According to Ellis, the boys' reading skills didn't improve as much as everybody had hoped. "But what did improve tremendously was the self-image of the child," he said.

Although inconclusive in terms of the effect on reading skills, the study established a milestone in the development of the relationship between education and the arts, simply by recognizing that arts experiences were able to effect positive change in children. It also went hand-in-hand with the beginning of the idea that an arts organization could reach out beyond the traditional middle and upper-income audience. "Everything was geared towards the individual creativity of the child being unique and not being afraid to be different," said Ellis. "The Junior Art Workshop became a major influence for many children."

One of those youngsters was Miriam Roberts, now an independent curator and museum consultant, who attended the Workshop faithfully from the age of 6 to 16 (from 1959 to 1969). She recalled two distinct things about the Workshop: "First of all, you were treated like you were an artist," said Roberts. "The teachers were professional artists and they treated you like you were an equal." Among the many artists teaching classes during that time were John Altoon, George Baker, Karl Benjamin, Robert Graham, Kelly Foulkes, Carol Sarkisian and Guy Williams.

"And, secondly," continued Roberts, "the great thing about it was being with other kids who were like you—i.e. misfits. I didn't really fit in at Pasadena High School," she said. "We so looked forward to those Saturdays. Sometimes, it seemed like I'd barely survive the week just to get to the museum to be with my friends."



Nancy Watts

With the support of museum director Thomas W. Leavitt (hired in 1957 and the father of young children himself), the program became increasingly popular locally and was also recognized as an innovative way to foster creativity in children. National publications, such as *Better Homes & Gardens* and *Dance Magazine*, published articles featuring and quoting Junior Art Workshop teachers.

### **Center of the L.A. Art Scene**

During the '50s and '60s, in its intimate but quirky Chinese-style building, the Pasadena Art Institute began to make a name for itself, too. Through the efforts of a series of young, energetic directors and a core of dedicated volunteers, the small museum gradually shifted its focus to collecting and showing the work of living artists. This move toward modern art received a major boost in 1953 with the acquisition of the Galka E. Scheyer Collection. This group of some 400 works by 20th Century German Expressionists Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Lyonel Feininger and Alexei Jawlensky, known as The Blue Four, was held in trust by the museum for the people of California. These works—one of the world's finest collections of Klee and Jawlensky in particular—immediately raised the status of the Institute.

In 1954 the name was changed to the Pasadena Art Museum. Through a series of remarkable exhibitions—featuring the works of Lorser Feitelson, Rico Lebrun, Helen Lundeberg, Millard Sheets and Peter Voulkos, among others in the '50s, as well as by Joseph Cornell, Robert Irwin and Frank Stella, among others in the '60s—the museum became the center for contemporary art in Southern California. It gained national attention for organizing the first retrospective exhibitions of Marcel Duchamp, Wayne Thiebaud, and Richard Diebenkorn.

And the Art Alliance, founded in 1954, was crucial to the transformation. This seemingly traditional women's support group became rather untraditional and very hands-on almost immediately as the young museum changed its focus. Art Alliance members did everything

from painting galleries and hanging shows to cataloging the collections and collaring their husbands to tend bar at the openings. According to founding member and museum trustee Eudora Moore, "This was when the Art Alliance was really fun. Because of the fact that, of course, the museum had no money. But they did have nerve. And they had really interesting shows."

And, since there were few places to see contemporary art at that time, "everybody"—artists, dealers, collectors—came to the Pasadena Art Museum's openings. "I think the museum was the only place in Los Angeles where you could really see contemporary art," Moore said. "And that was true for a long time. ... The openings were small, but choice." Robert Ellis, who left the museum in 1964, remembers the period from the mid-'50s to the mid-'60s as "the innocent years." Since the art world was then centered in New York, he explained, there was no pressure on the Pasadena Art Museum. It could present wonderful, challenging exhibitions by young, relatively unknown artists.

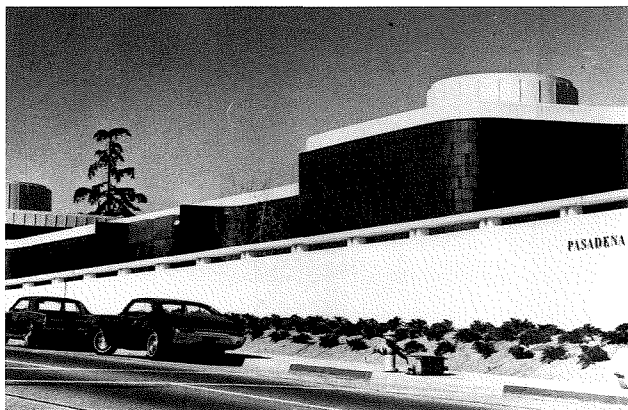
And the momentum just kept building. Jerry McMillan, a young Pasadena artist, was given a one-man show at the end of 1966 by then-director Walter Hopps, who was hired in 1962. McMillan recalls being totally caught off guard by the attention his 3-D photographic works generated. "I sold practically the whole show," he said. "The museum bought a piece, all the big collectors bought stuff. And all these people came to my house—I had people coming to my house at 10 o'clock at night, wanting to talk to me. I got a big write-up in *Artforum* magazine. It was surprising to me."

This enthusiasm for contemporary art spilled over onto the young people attending the Junior Art Workshop as well, according to Miriam Roberts. "That was the golden era of the Pasadena Art Museum and we kids were free to go into the galleries anytime," she said. "We saw a changing array of incredible art—I mean, we saw Rauschenberg's white paintings, Reinhart's black paintings and Warhol's Elvis paintings. We saw Duchamp, Cornell and Mondrian, and lots and lots of the permanent collection—especially The Blue Four."

## A New Building

During the late '50s, in the midst of all this excitement, a very astute Eudorah Moore discovered the clause in the Pasadena Art Institute's agreement with the city stating the institution could move back to the corner of Orange Grove and Colorado Boulevards within 20 years if the trustees could build a new facility on the site. "I was reading through the old minutes," said Moore, "when I suddenly came upon this paragraph, and I said, 'This is really important—and it's about to end, within a year.' And that brought us all into action.

"We had been saying the facilities on Los Robles were not adequate for the on-going growth of the museum," Moore recalled, "so perhaps now was the time to move." In 1961 the board reclaimed title to the Carmelita Park property and a capital campaign was launched to construct a new Carmelita Cultural Center. Over the next few years millions of dollars were raised toward a new home for the Pasadena Art Museum, but controversy dogged the endeavor practically every step of the way. To many in the local community, the museum's increasing focus on contemporary art was unwelcome. Indeed, the trustees themselves were split over just how close to the "cutting edge" they should go.



*Pasadena Art Museum, 1969*

When the new H-shaped facility covered with brown tiles opened in November 1969, the \$3 million budget presented to architects Thornton Ladd and John Kelsey had swollen to \$5 million. The cost overruns ate

up any funds the trustees had set aside for an endowment, and raising money for programming and operating expenses was a problem from the moment the doors opened. Yet curators John Coplans, Barbara Haskell and director William Agee managed to mount some memorable exhibitions in the new space.

People still talk about the Andy Warhol show when the artist showed up at the opening with his entourage. A Richard Serra exhibition filled the galleries with twenty 10,000-pound redwood logs. But Martha Padve, then vice president of the board in charge of fund raising, recalled the uphill battle to find money. "We had those Richard Serra logs, and Allan Kaprow's happenings—we had his ice houses being built and one time he filled an entire room with old tires. But, boy, was it hard to fundraise," she said.

"I tell you I never went to a party of any kind when I didn't get backed into a corner about the museum," said Padve. "People would say, 'I'm not giving any money, not with that stuff you show up there.'"

Things also changed for the Junior Art Workshop with the move to the new building. The word "Junior" was dropped from the name and the program became the Art Workshop. Nancy Watts returned as the new curator of education, after launching and running the education programs at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. But when she came back to Pasadena, Watts said, the atmosphere was completely different. "We had this wonderful new building and no operating money," she said. "Suddenly, everybody was looking at my department as not making any money, when in fact it never had. The tuition we charged barely covered the teachers' salaries." Padve remembers that the educational program—and any others that weren't generating income—were in danger of being cut by the trustees. "In the new building, just saving the Art Workshop was our goal," Padve said. "The board's idea was to close it down to save money. But I wasn't about to let that happen."

As the only female member of the executive committee, Padve called in three friends of the Art Workshop—all men: Rowe Giesen, Albert Hibbs and



Richard Schuster. Their job, she told them, was to convince the men on the executive committee that the Workshop should stay, and they did the job. The Art Workshop continued and, to those on the outside, it appeared to be flourishing. When the new building opened, thirty-six Workshop courses were offered for children, teenagers and adults, taught by artists such as Shiro Ikegawa, David Bungay, Curtis Tann, Jirayr Zorthian and John Outterbridge. Deborah Brewer assisted Watts as program director.

"We had wonderful rapport with the Pasadena Unified School District. All the schools would come and tour the galleries," recalled Watts. "And we began working with disabled children at Roosevelt School. We did a wonderful 'Feininger Regatta'—he was one of The

Blue Four and painted sailboats. So, we used those paintings as a point of reference to stage a community event. We had entire families come, the kids were encouraged to make their own boats and we sailed them in the reflecting ponds outside the museum."

Ironically, in light of the museum's increasingly dire finances, the Workshop's programs were, for the first time, completely funded for the coming year in the

fall of 1973. Under the direction of William Agee, the museum received a National Endowment for the Arts grant of \$25,000 for support of the Workshop. An additional \$28,000 was raised from Southern California foundations and individuals to match the NEA grant.

But there was no end in sight to the Pasadena Museum of Modern Art's financial problems (the name

had been changed, yet again, in 1973). The trustees desperately looked to the County of Los Angeles to take over the museum. When that overture failed, they turned to wealthy businessman and art collector Norton Simon, whose brother-in-law, Frederick Weisman, had been a museum trustee. For years Simon had been loaning out his priceless collection of predominantly Old Masters and Asian art to museums and university galleries throughout the country. And although he repeatedly insisted he wasn't interested in building his own museum, in April of 1974 Simon agreed to assume the museum's considerable debts—as well as control of the board of trustees. By agreeing to the merger, the trustees were relieved of a pressing debt, but the book was essentially closed on the Pasadena Art Museum.

Simon shut down the facility for nine months to install his collections, (and make unanticipated, costly repairs), quickly brought in his own staff, and let the museum support groups and the Art Workshop know they didn't fit in with his new plans. A fabulously revamped Pasadena Art Museum reopened in March of 1975—and in October was renamed the Norton Simon Museum of Art at Pasadena. The Norton Simon Museum has flourished at the old Carmelita Park site and is known today as one of the finest private museums in the country. It continues to house the collections of the Pasadena Art Museum, including the Galka E. Scheyer Collection, and rotates works from those collections in its galleries.

### **Lincoln School**

Suddenly, after 27 years, the museum's education program found itself without a home. Undaunted, a core group of Art Workshop supporters, directors, and parents—spearheaded by Rowe Giesen, Deborah Brewer, Susan Caldwell, Jane Olson, Valerie Read, Adelaide Hixon, Ted Behr, Dick Davis, and Fran Jeffries—elected to form an independent non-profit organization. (Other Pasadena Art Museum support groups also became independent non-profits: the Art Alliance became the Pasadena Art Alliance, the Fellows became the Fellows of Contemporary Art, and the Men's



*The Feininger Regatta*

Committee became the Pasadena Men's Committee for the Arts.) The Pasadena Art Workshops were created in the summer of 1974 and moved into surplus Pasadena Unified School District property, the former Lincoln Elementary School located at 143 West Peoria Street near the corner of Lincoln Avenue and Orange Grove Boulevard in northwest Pasadena. Caldwell was the first president of the new board. "When it became clear the museum would close, we got



*Susan Caldwell and Jane Olson*

together to figure out how to stay together and move," explained Caldwell. "This was a group of program leaders and parents of children who had attended the Workshop, and they were just not going to let it die."

According to Caldwell, Brewer mobilized the parents and Giesen negotiated with the school district for a site, came up with the name, the board of trustees and the logo. And through a trust he'd set up in memory of his wife, Gayle Gibbs Giesen, that had provided scholarships to the museum Art Workshop program, Giesen provided start-up funds—along with several other individuals and foundations, she said.

"I think our first-year budget was \$33,000, including the rest of our bank account from the museum and the equipment from the old facility that Norton Simon gave us," Caldwell added.

They moved into the elementary school's huge cafeteria and kitchen, and some classrooms upstairs. Of the space, Caldwell remembers: "We were glad to have it. It was workable—and it wasn't precious," she said, laughing—meaning the kids could feel free to spill paint.

Brewer, who became the first Pasadena Art Workshops executive director, recalled the move as being a test of everyone's adaptability. "At Lincoln, it was an entirely different experience. We no longer had

the museum or galleries, so we had to realign ourselves and the program." Consequently, the teachers showed slides in their classes. "We had a great slide collection of artworks from all over the world," she said.

The Art Workshops' clientele also changed. "At Lincoln School the program became more ethnic," according to Steffen Williams, who attended classes at the museum as well as the new site. "The neighborhood kids came." Caldwell agreed. "Lots of neighborhood kids came," she said. "Debby was very comfortable with low-income kids and they gravitated to the Workshops. The children just came over and Debby made room for them." Brewer remembers it well. "We had an interesting situation," she said. "We had kids from the deepest poverty you could imagine, as well as children and adults from San Marino. That's what was so neat. It brought everybody together in the studio."

During the first year in its new location the Art Workshops served



*Deborah Brewer*

more than 3,500 children and adults with a variety of offerings, including tuition-based classes in art, drama and dance, "ethnic art workshops," and free programs for children with special needs. During the six years the Workshops were at Lincoln School, popular classes such as animation, film-making, creative percussion and batik were offered, and eventually 450 children a week were coming through the doors. Among the artists who taught were Riua Akinshegun, Robert Akeke Carroll, Anya Fisher, Sonnie Bustion, John Matthews, Bobby Matos, Pam Mislove and Teresa Toliver.

### South El Molino Avenue

In the spring of 1980 the school district sold the Lincoln School property to the federal government and Pasadena's Main Post Office now stands on the site. But the sale meant the Pasadena Art Workshops were home-



*Pasadena Art Workshops at Lincoln School*

less again. By that time Joel Safranek was director and he presided over two moves. "Ray Cortines (the Pasadena Unified School District superintendent) offered us the gymnasium upstairs at McKinley School on El Molino Avenue, but for some reason we couldn't move in until the fall," explained Safranek. "So we moved to Neighborhood Church for the summer, and then to McKinley in the fall."

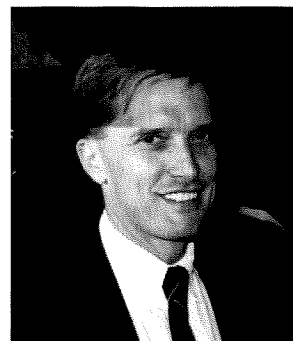
Roberta Carasso, then program director, said she'll never forget the first time she saw their new quarters on El Molino. "The place hadn't been opened in years and there were *hundreds* of dirty tennis shoes, socks and T-shirts all over the floor," said Carasso. "It was dirty, disgusting and smelly. It was a gym!"

But the clean-up crews worked wonders. "It turned out really well," recalled Safranek. "It felt

good—like we were coming home. It was our own space." Caldwell remembers the space fondly—"I always liked walking up those stairs. It gave you the feeling you were going someplace special." Again, the Workshops program flourished. "There was a huge increase in clientele," said Carasso, who left in 1982. One of her innovations was to introduce the summer day-program that allowed kids to take a morning class, eat lunch on-site, and stay for an afternoon class. "As a mother, I catered to what parents wanted," she said.

Yet, the overall Art Workshops organization was missing something. "We were functioning really well in certain ways—in terms of programming," said Dianne Magee, president of the Workshops board from 1980 to 1983. "But we were lacking crucial skills in the financial management area." By 1983, the Workshops was \$50,000 in debt. The IRS was owed \$25,000 in back employee payroll taxes, and the Pasadena Unified School District was owed \$25,000 in back rent. To top it all off, the IRS had slapped a lien on the Workshops' bank account.

The organization's fiscal shortcomings had finally caught up with them, Magee explained. "There had always been problems," she said, "and often Rowe Giesen, before his death in 1982, would take out his checkbook and help cover it. But this time, as the program began to grow, we had increased staff—and had all these increased payroll payments. And we were expected to write a rent check every month to the school district." The hole they found themselves in seemed so deep that some members of the board felt the organization should just close down. "I think our entire budget at that time was \$155,000, so that \$50,000 we owed was a big



*Joel Safranek*

chunk," said Magee. "Even though Rowe Giesen was no longer with us, it was his passionate belief in the Workshops that kept me going in those hard days. We could not lose this." So she and a dedicated group of board members kept things going.

After Magee and board member Wendy Munger approached the IRS to negotiate a payment plan and got nowhere, Ted Behr, a founding board member, offered to lend the organization the money to pay off the tax debt. The board then had to take out a bank loan—which six or seven board members signed as guarantors—to pay him back. “That’s when I learned what it means to be on a board of trustees,” said Magee. “You’re the last resort.”



*Dianne Magee*

Next, the board had to decide how to proceed: Hire a new executive director to move forward with the Workshops’ mission, or shut down altogether. “We had formed a board steering committee to run the Workshops,” Magee explained. “In the meantime, this bright young woman named Elisa Crystal came to our attention. Maureen Carlson and I interviewed her and we thought, ‘This lady is too incredible to let go. She’s the answer.’ And that’s when Adelaide Hixon stepped up to the plate.” The board wanted to hire Crystal as director, but didn’t have the money, said Magee. “So, Adelaide and Alex Hixon gave us a three-year grant to pay Elisa’s salary. Without Rowe Giesen, Ted Behr, and the Hixons, the Workshops would be gone!”

Magee describes the years 1982 and 1983 as one crisis following another. “But once Elisa was onboard, it became apparent she’d manage things,” she said. Crystal, hired in 1983, negotiated with the school district to work off the back rent in services—the Workshops was already providing extensive classes and school-room visits for district students—and the board never had to write that other \$25,000 check. She also negotiated a “cashless lease” for future years.

“Elisa has a rare talent, combining programming vision and smart budgeting,” said Magee. “She was in here six months and she had us financially sound. Elisa brought us the sophisticated fiscal management that our programs had always warranted.”

With the Workshops’ finances finally under control, Crystal began writing grant proposals to increase income and focused on improving programming and outreach. “We didn’t have the neighborhood on El Molino,” said Caldwell. “Children had to be driven there, so our clientele wasn’t ethnically as mixed. We realized if the children wouldn’t come to us, we’d have to go to them.” The Workshops’ extremely popular “Walk to Art” program was sparked by a phone call from Fran White, wife of the late artist Charles White, explained Crystal. “Fran called up one day and asked us if we’d come and do a program for the kids at Charles White Park,” in Altadena. The “Walk to Art” program gradually expanded and now serves children all over the Pasadena/Altadena area, offering free classes in neighborhood sites.

More programs were developed and offered through the school district, including the Workshops’



*The Workshops on El Molino Avenue*

innovative outdoor/environmental art program, “Children Investigate the Environment,” begun in 1985. Yet, as the programming expanded, so did the clientele, and the Workshops were beginning to run out of room on South El Molino Avenue.

### **The Armory**

The move to the former National Guard Armory building in Old Pasadena began in 1985 with a phone call from Dan Flamming, a member of a city-appointed

task force charged with identifying underutilized city property. Flamming phoned Caldwell, then president of the Pasadena Art Alliance, and Jay Belloli, director of Caltech's about-to-be-closed Baxter Art Gallery, knowing that a group of Baxter supporters were looking for a new gallery site. Belloli called Crystal and asked if she'd like to come along for a city-sponsored tour of the old Armory building at 145 North Raymond Avenue.

Despite the dilapidation and birds' nests they encountered, Caldwell, Belloli and Crystal liked what they saw: A space big enough to once again unite the Art Workshops with a gallery program. The Baxter supporters had formed a new organization, the Pasadena Gallery of Contemporary Art, and along with the Pasadena Art Workshops began negotiating with the city in 1986. "Then," said Caldwell, "it was just a

matter of wending our way through the city process—and raising \$1 million for a capital campaign."

Crystal insisted they form a third board of directors—an Armory board—to facilitate negotiations and keep the finances separate. When, later that year, the Pasadena Gallery of Contemporary Art dropped out (and folded entirely), the Armory board absorbed some of the key gallery supporters, including art patron Peggy Phelps. After re-

grouping, they redefined their plan to create one new organization—comprised of an exhibitions program and an education program—and continued negotiating. According to Crystal, three men were crucial to that process: Craig Watson, Armory founding board president, Walter Milner, then general manager of

ARCO's Pasadena office, and the late William Reynolds, then Pasadena's Director of Planning. "Bill Reynolds really wanted the Armory to happen," explained Crystal. "He knew that if only commercial interests came into the Old Pasadena area, it would be much less of a draw or a community."

And Milner stepped in and acted as chief negotiator—and general contractor when renovations began. "I didn't know who the heck the Armory was," said Milner, whose chance meeting with Crystal sparked his interest in the project. "But I knew how to manage things. I'd go see Bill Reynolds, and at that time the building was occupied by a badminton club and the city was getting about \$100 a month from those guys—there were pigeons living in there and stuff," he said. "So, I just kept telling the city they'd be proud of what was going to happen down there." Crystal again negotiated a "cashless" lease, and the renovation of the building began in 1988.

The Armory Center for the Arts opened in 1989 and according to Crystal, things haven't been the same since. "Our whole world changed," she said. "Suddenly we became a community center instead of a school. Participation doubled in the first year, then doubled again the next—all with the same staff! Our budget was \$300,000 and now it's \$1.7 million."

Programs offered now number sixteen and include after-school art classes at the Armory and in the community; and long-term mentorship programs bringing artists together with teenagers. Armory programs such as "Children Investigate the Environment" and "FLARE, Fun with Language, Arts and Reading" not only integrate the arts with the curriculum of local schools, but also help train current and future teachers in the use of the arts in the classroom. An innovative public-art program, launched with the Pasadena Public Works and Transportation Department, resulted in new park signs at all city parks decorated with tiles painted by neighborhood children. A popular performing arts program provides on-site concerts by Southwest Chamber Music, dance and theater performances, and poetry readings. And the exhibitions program, under



*Elisa Crystal and Jane Treister*

the direction of Belloli, has begun traveling some of its shows around the nation.

And these accomplishments have gained national attention. The Armory is now recognized as an innovator in the field of community-based arts education. Its "Artist Mentorship Programs for Youth" was one of only 200 programs throughout the country featured in the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities publication, "Coming Up Taller: Arts and



*The Armory Center for the Arts*

Humanities Programs for Children and Youth At Risk." Harvard University's Project Co-Arts included the Armory as one of five institutions in its multi-year study of community arts centers. And the Armory has consistently been awarded grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, even as federal funding for the arts has been drastically cut.

"We've really come full circle," said David Spiro, the Armory's Development Director since 1989. "We began as an education program in a museum, then we became an arts education program without a gallery, and now we have a unique dual focus on education and exhibitions."

Caldwell recalled her feelings when the Armory first opened: "It felt like we'd made it to the big time," she said. "We had this big impressive building, right downtown. We'd come a long way from Lincoln School to be here.

"It felt like going back to our roots," she continued, "back to what had been conceived in the beginning, in the old days at the museum."

## **Past Presidents**

### **Pasadena Art Workshops**

Susan Caldwell, *1974–1978*

Jane Olson, *1978–1980*

Dianne M. Magee, *1980–1983*

Jane Treister, *1983–1986*

Joan Palmer, *1986–1989*

### **Armory Center for the Arts**

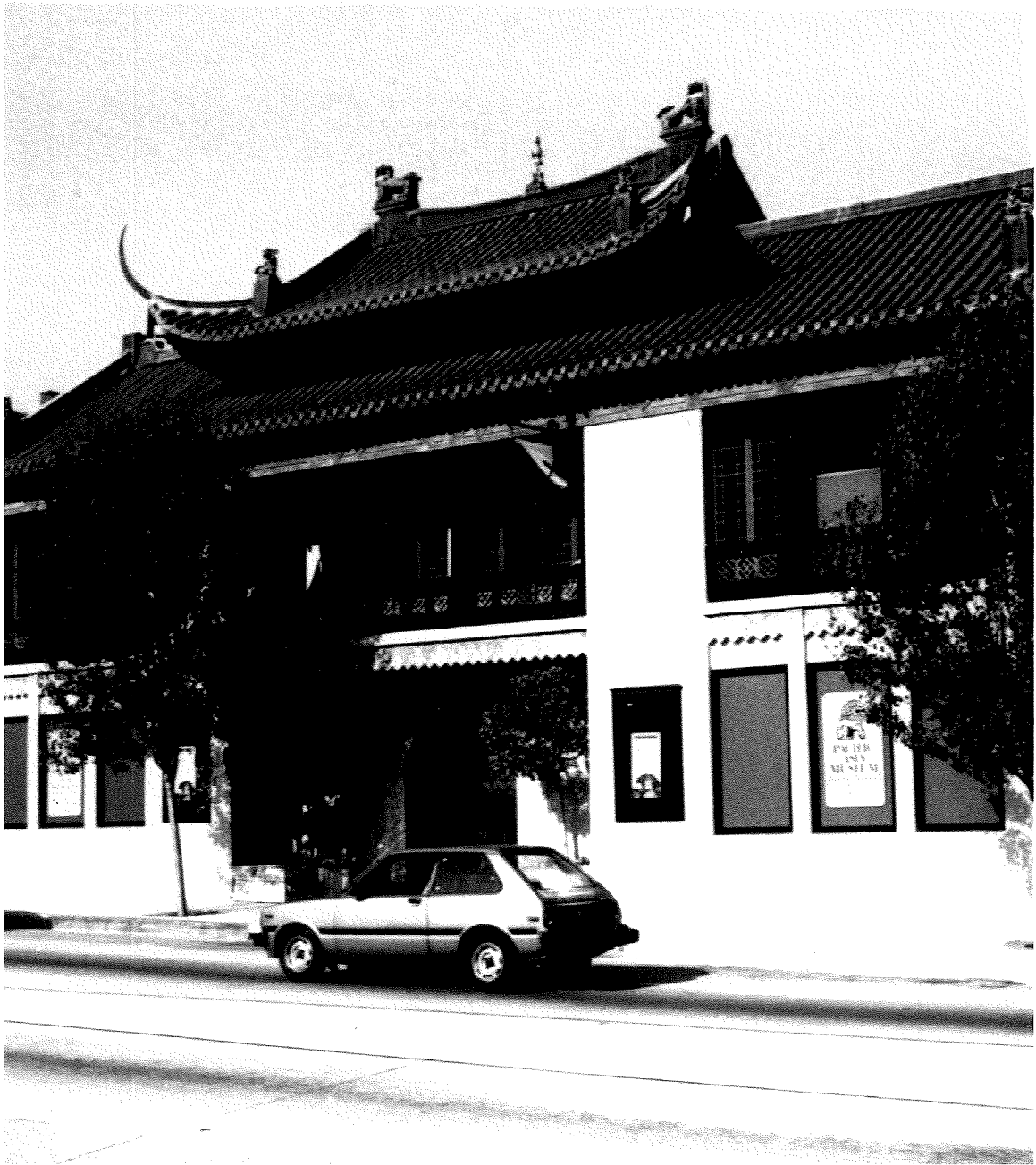
Craig Watson, *1987–1989*

Susan Caldwell, *1989–1991*

Joan Fauvre, *1991–1994*

Jetty Fong, *1994–1996*

Dianne M. Magee, *1996–1999*



## Pacific Asia Museum

*Where it all began, the Grace Nicholson building*

*Photo by Susan Caldwell*

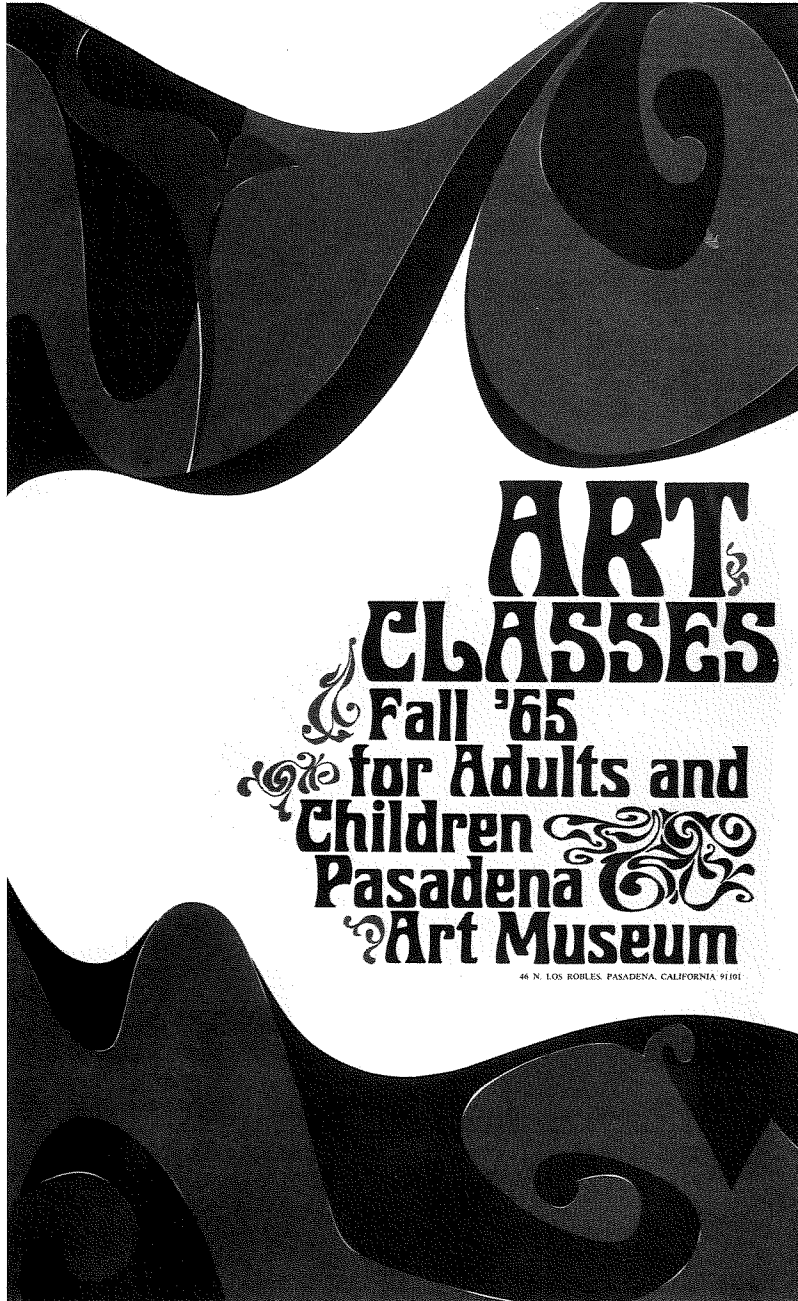




**Junior League of Pasadena**

*Opening Day of the Junior Museum*

*March 1, 1947*



**Matthew White and Thomas Schumacher**



**Claire and William Bogaard**

*Drawing in the Museum courtyard*



**Anne Lasell**

*Sarah, Betsy, and Susan Lasell, 1962*

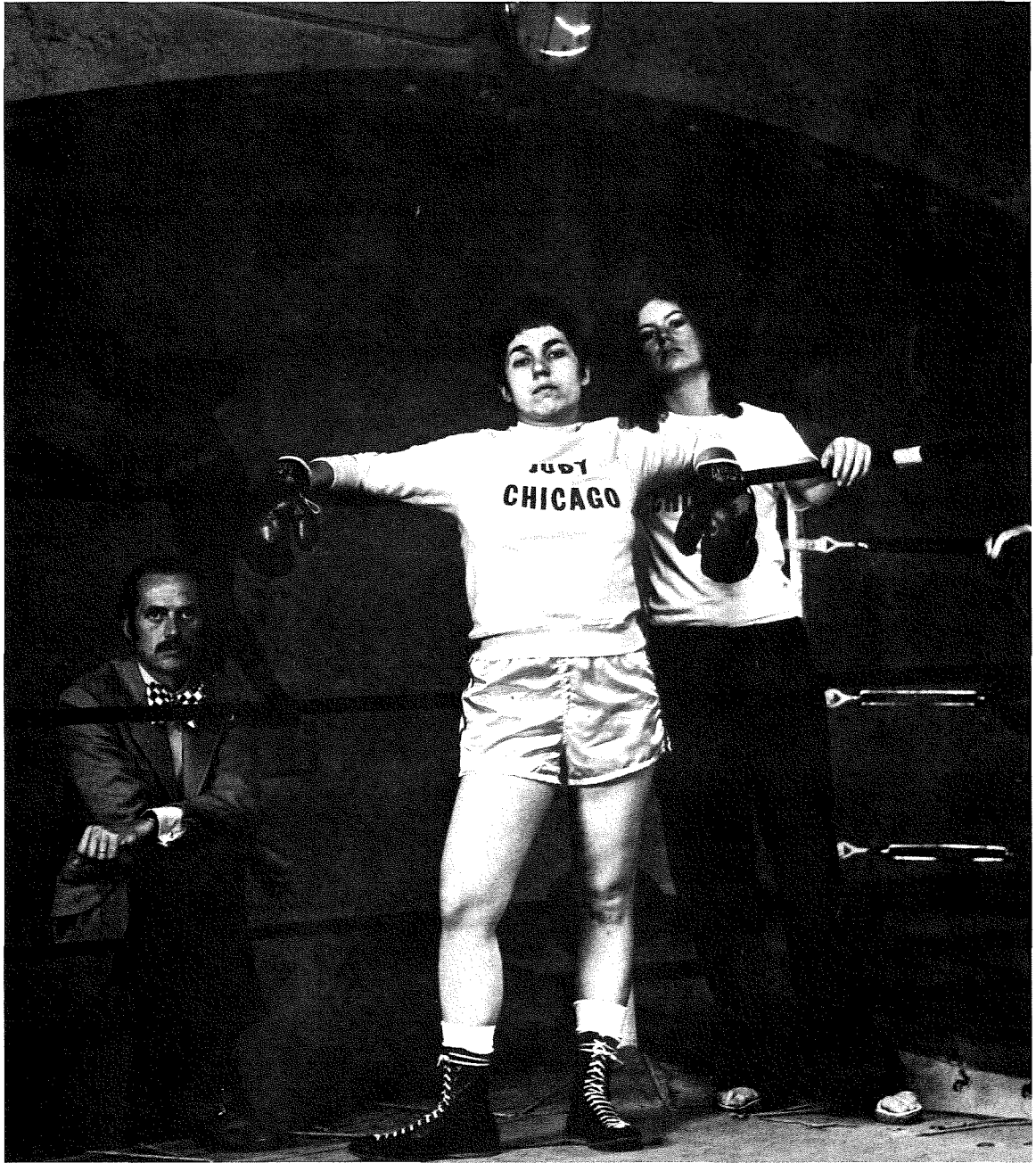




THE HUNTINGTON  
LIBRARY, ART COLLECTIONS, AND BOTANICAL GARDENS

*Through the Looking Glass*

*DeWain Valentine, 1969*



**Al and Marka Hibbs**

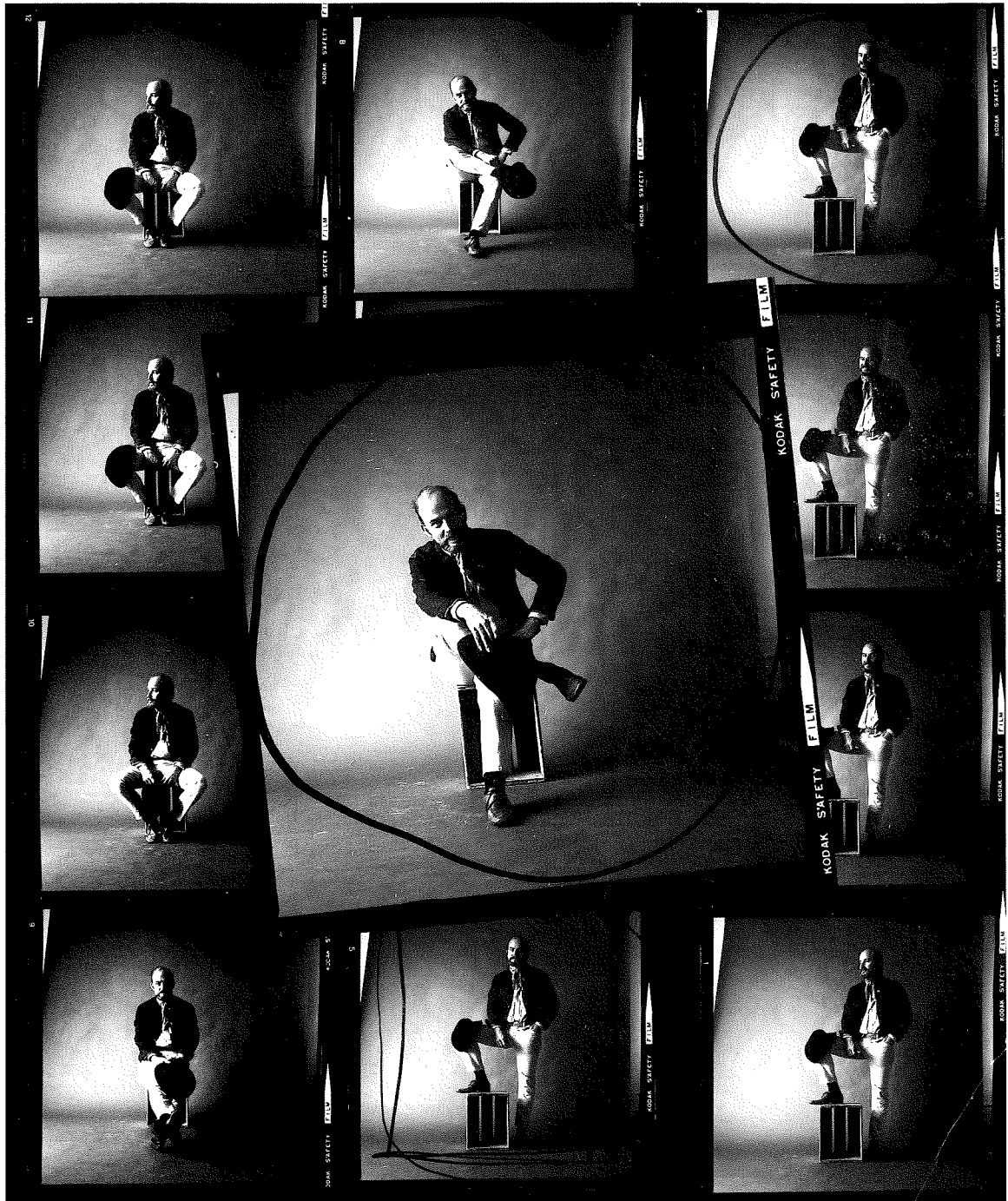
*Pasadena artist Judy Chicago*

*Photo by Jerry McMillan*



**Stephen A. Kanter, M.D.**

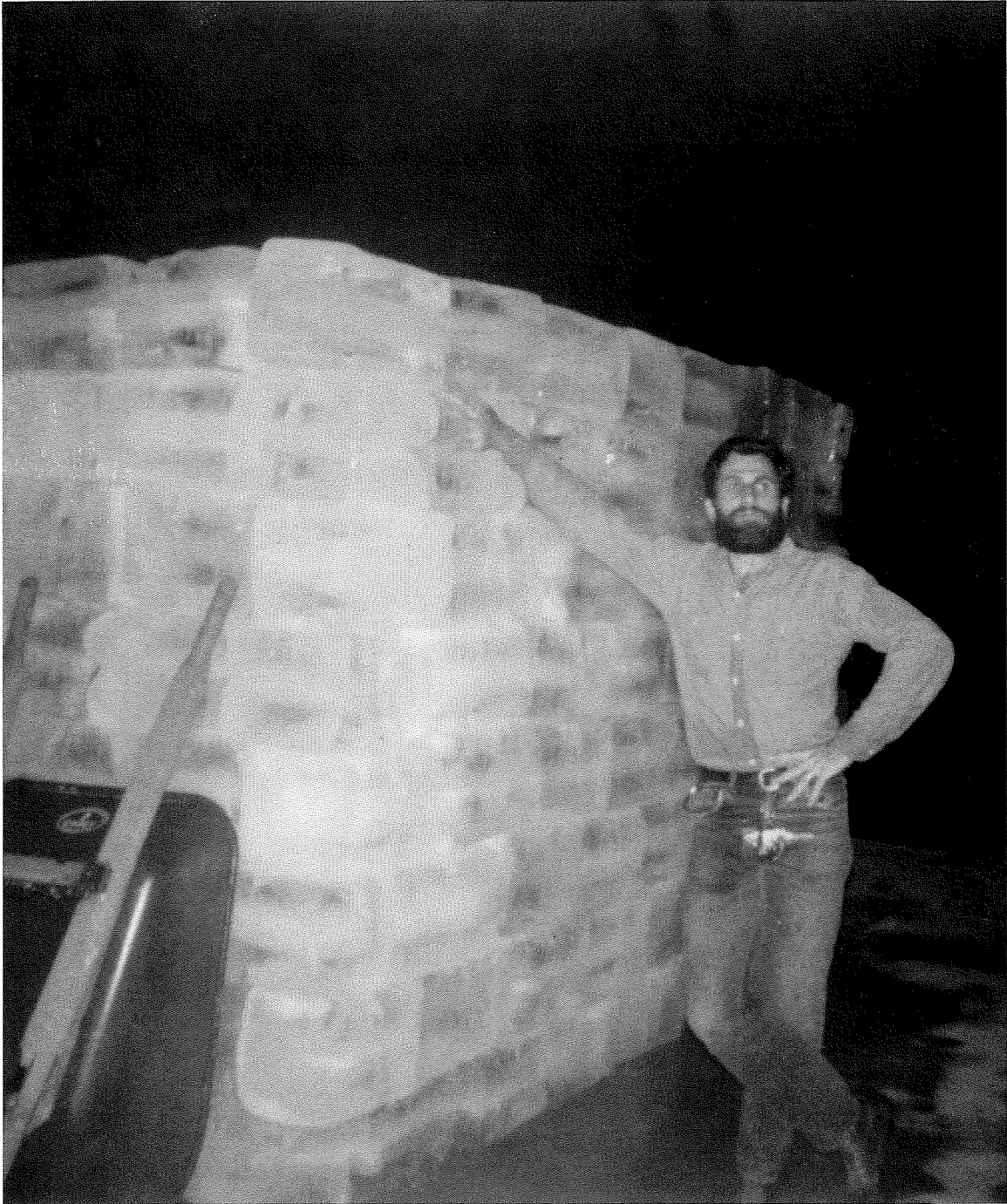




**Peter and Liz Goulds, LA Louver Gallery**

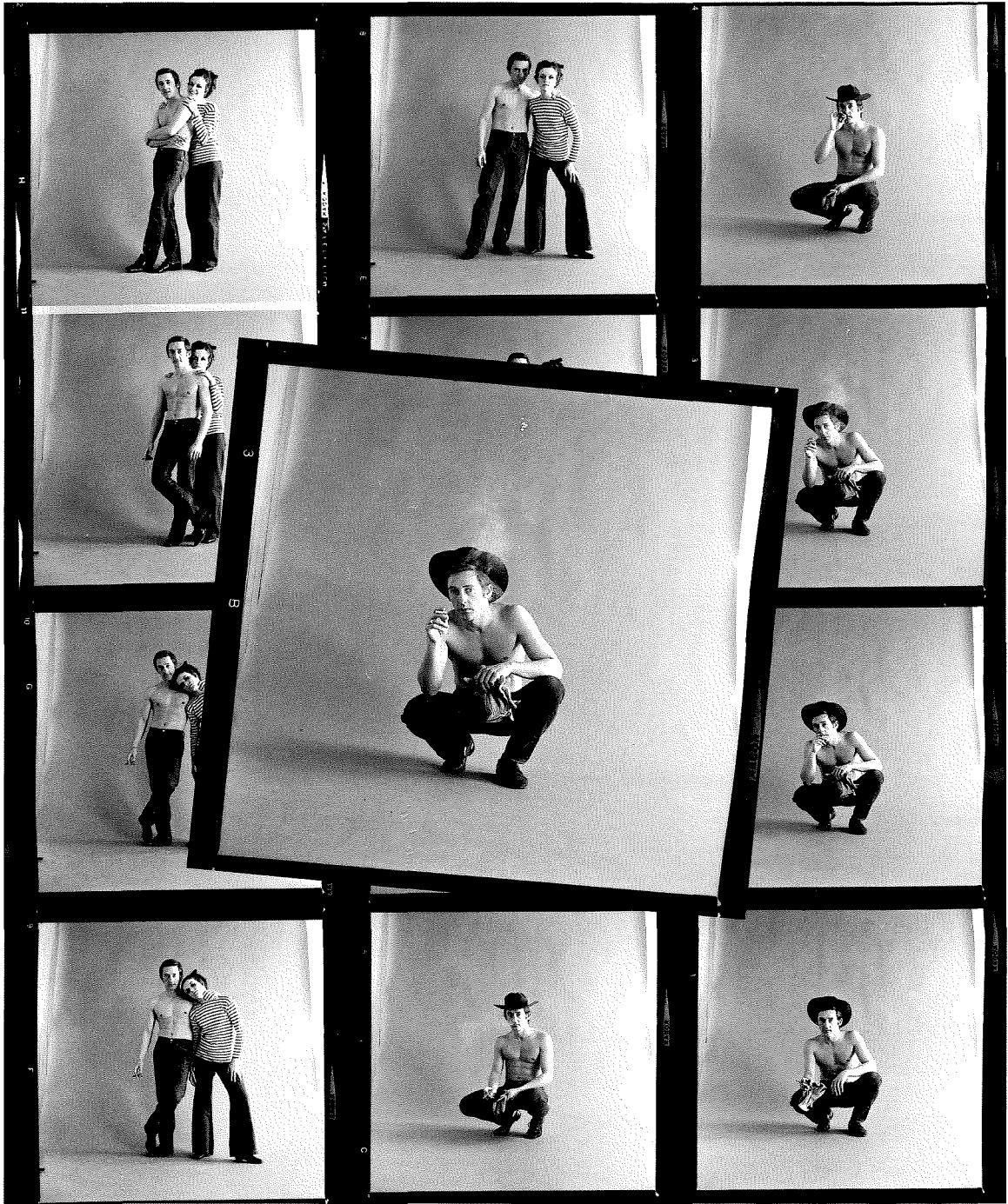
*Robert Irwin, 1968*

*Photo by Jerry McMillan*



*Allan Kaprow, 1967*

*Environment in Ice*



**Marsha and Vernon Bohr**



**Betty and Brack Duker**

*Inspired by Kandinsky, 1968*



To celebrate the opening  
of the new  
Pasadena Art Museum  
the Board of Trustees  
requests the pleasure of your company

at a  
Preview Reception  
on Sunday, the twenty-third of November  
from seven until eleven o'clock in the evening

Colorado and Orange Grove Boulevards

Present enclosed - Admittance Card  
at the door

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Colorado and Orange Grove Boulevards  
Preview Reception

Admittance Card  
Friday, November 21, 1969  
9 P.M.

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Admit Two  
Present at the door

In honor of  
the Founders and Patrons

The Board of Trustees  
of Pasadena Art Museum  
requests the honor of your company  
at dinner preceding the reception  
on Friday, the twenty-first of November  
at half after six o'clock

Colorado and Orange Grove Boulevards

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7160 Jarvis Avenue, La Canada 91011

Black tie  
Cocktails at half after six o'clock  
Dinner at half after seven o'clock

Music for the Opening Night

Premiere of fresco performance  
in the entrance court  
of two composition  
especially commissioned by Encounters

Museum Piece by George Heussenstamm  
Games: Collage No. 1 by William Kraft

Performed by the Los Angeles Philharmonic  
Brass and Percussion Ensembles

Conducted by William Kraft

Performance coordinated by Leonard Stein,  
Music Director, Pasadena Art Museum

Performance at nine o'clock

The Opening Exhibitions

Painting in New York 1944 to 1969

West Coast 1945 to 1969

Stone Sculptures of India and Southeast Asia  
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**Peggy Phelps and Nelson Leonard**

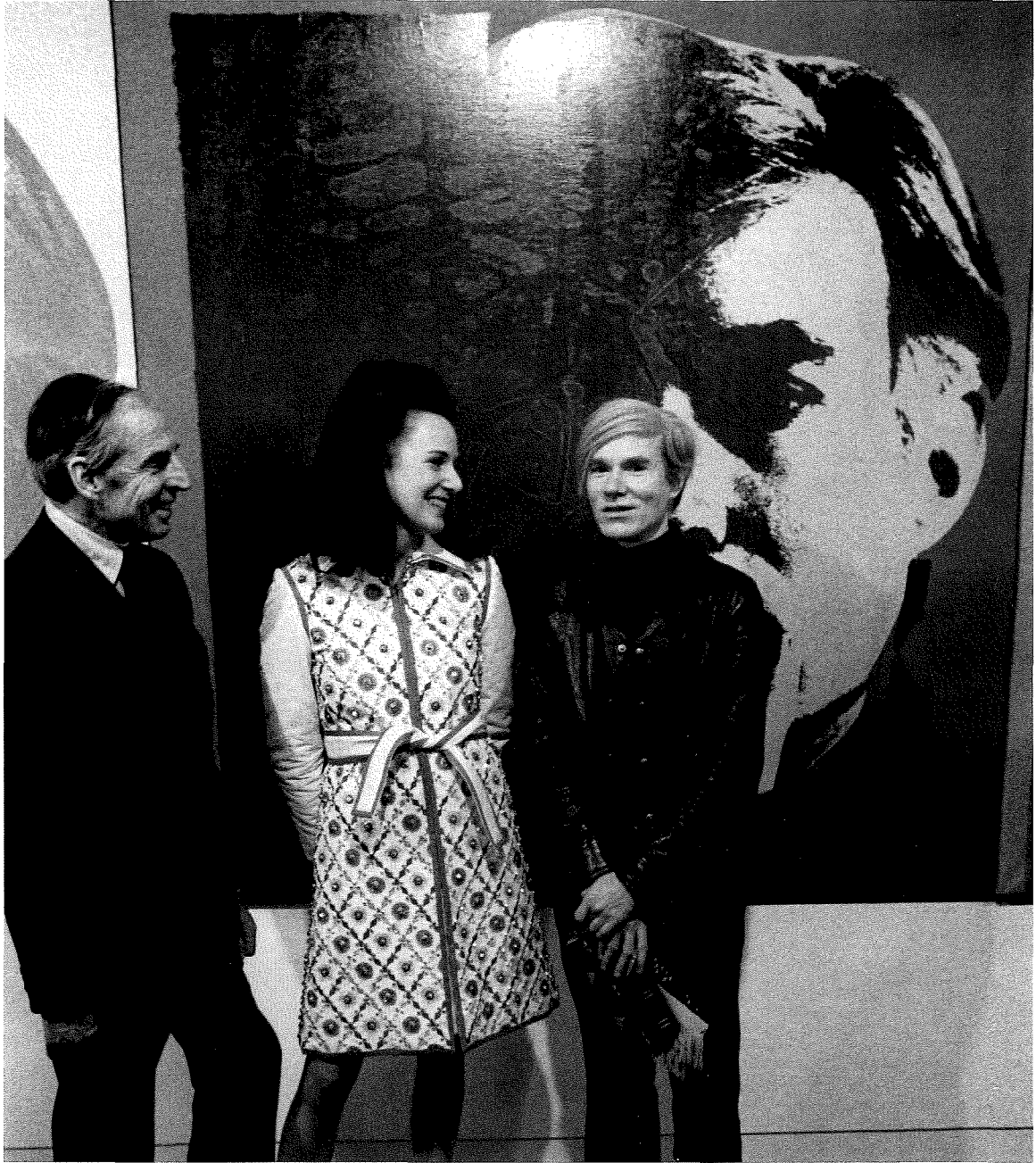
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**Alexander and Adelaide Hixon**





LACMA  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art

*Robert Rowan, Carolyn Rowan, and Andy Warhol*

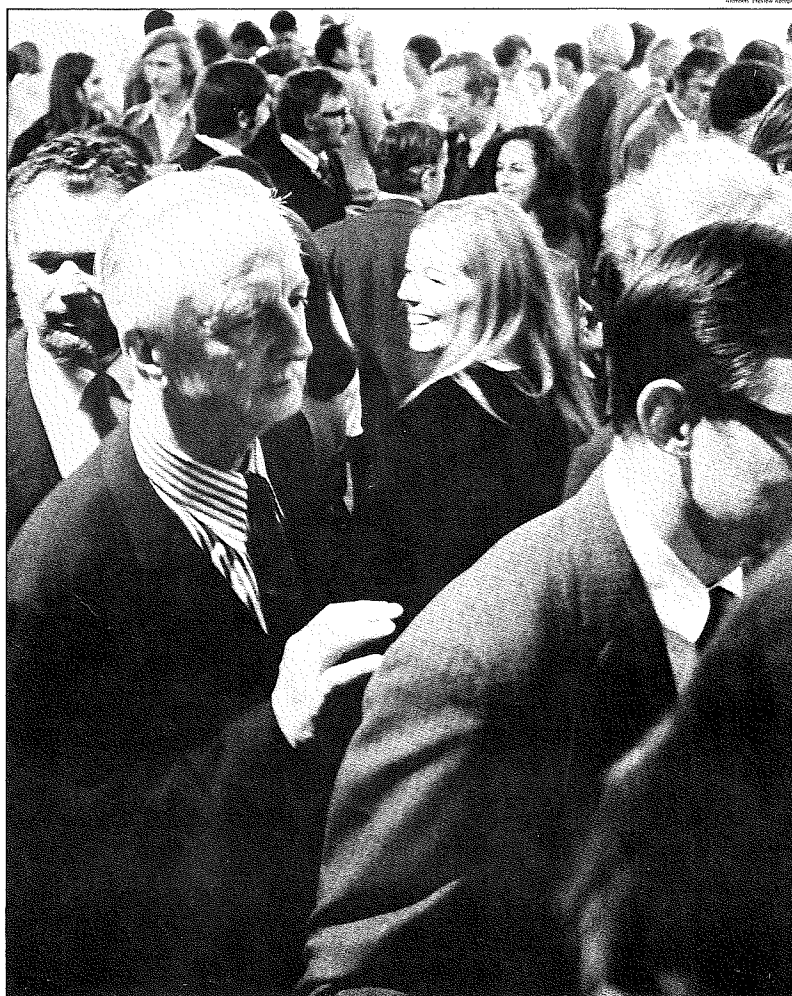
*Opening of the Warhol retrospective, 1970*



**Debby and Bill Richards**

*Roy Lichtenstein signs his billboard for his first solo museum retrospective, 1967*

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**Lenore and Bernard Greenberg**



BARBARA HASKELL ↗  
 - CURATOR AT PAS -  
 NOW AT THE WHITNEY

↗  
 ROBERT IRWIN

RICHARD SERRA  
 & BETTY ASHER ↙

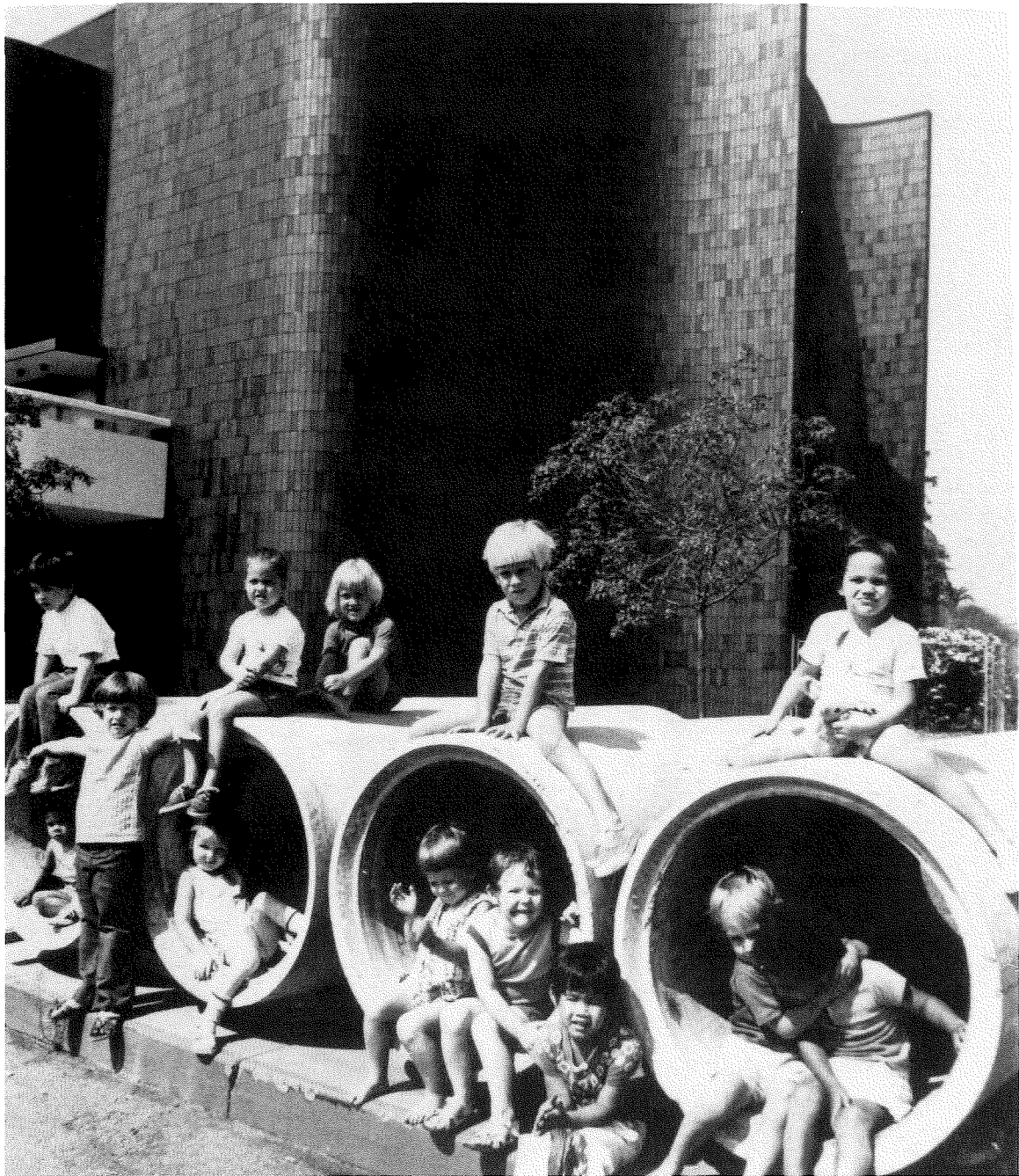
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 PETER ALEXANDER

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**Jetty and Miller Fong**



**Mr. and Mrs. Fitch M. Behr**

*Open house at Lincoln Avenue, 1970s*



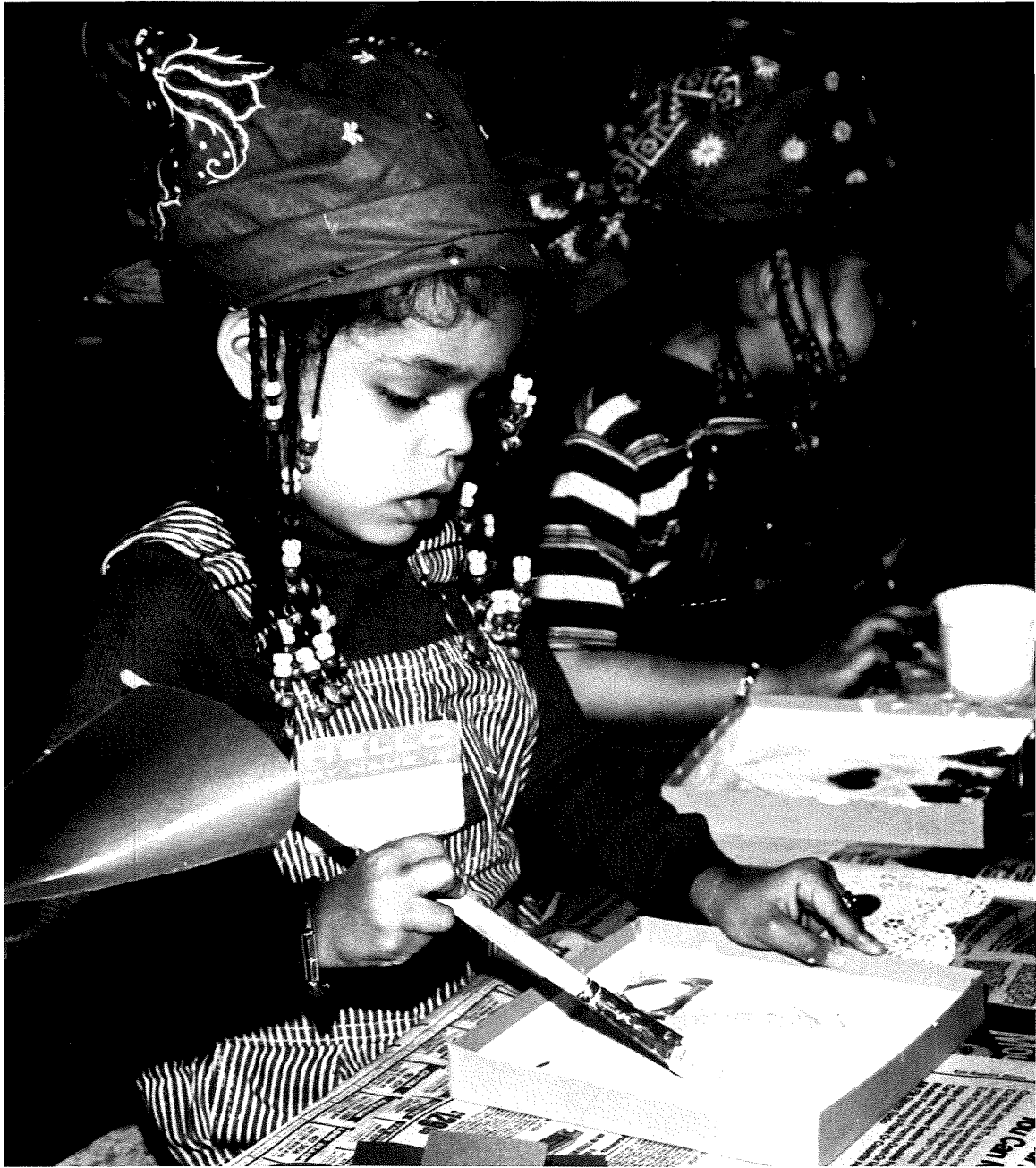
**Rowe and Gayle Giesen Trust**

*Photo by Susan Caldwell*





**Elizabeth Chandler**

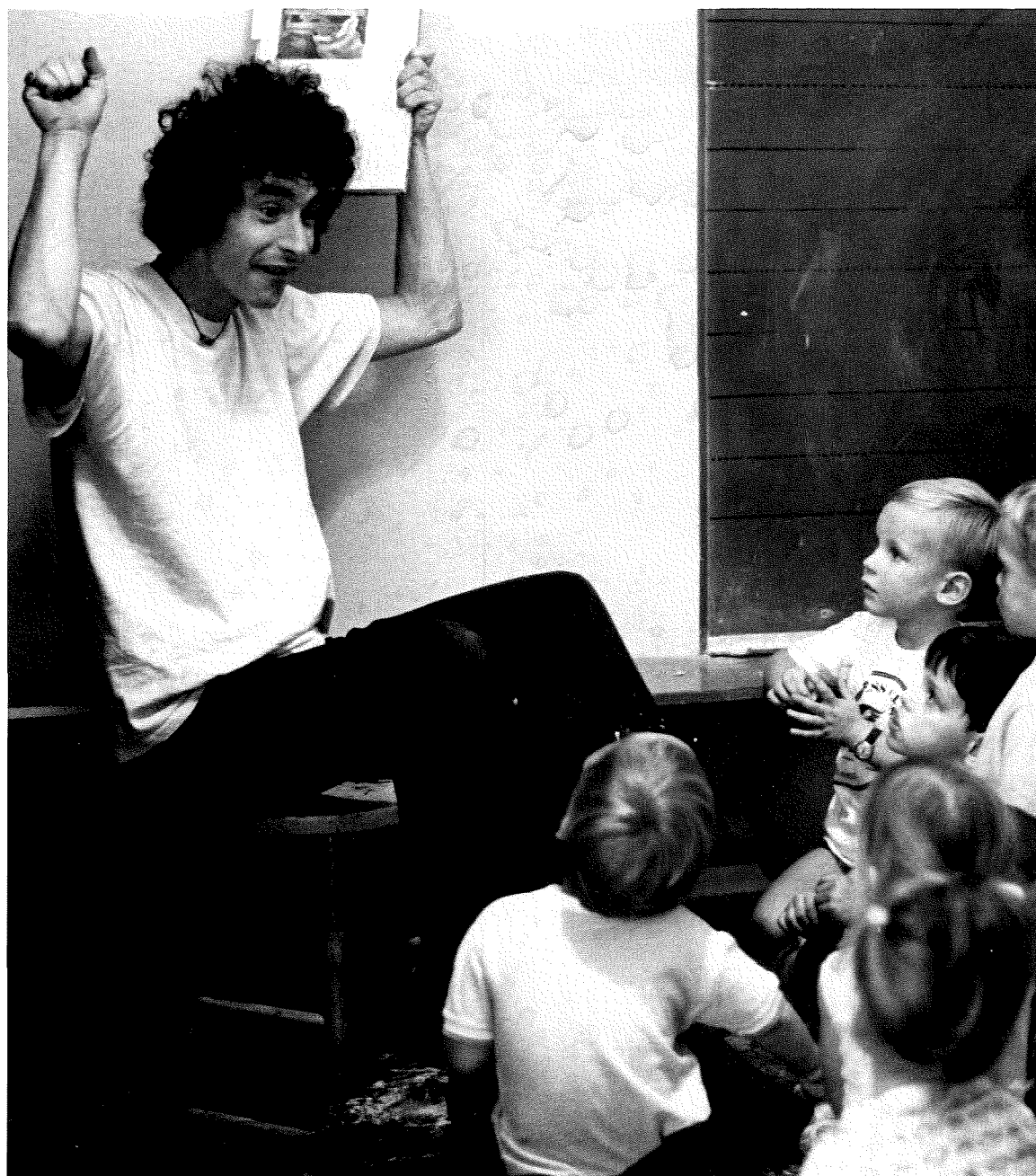


**Wendy Munger and Leonard Gumport**



**Rowe and Gayle Giesen Trust**

*Steffen Williams, Becky Caldwell, and Kristin Olson painting a mural at Plaza Pasadena, 1977*



**Elena Phleger and Tom McHenry**

*Don Francis, artist and teacher, 1974*



**Carolyn and Chuck Miller**

*Concentration in the studio, 1976*

*Photo by Jane Olson*





**Jane and Ron Olson**

*Art in process, 1976*

*Photo by Jane Olson*



**Takako and Victor Suzuki**



**Camilla Chandler Frost**

*Curtis Tann, master artist and teacher, 1981*





**Maureen and Robert Carlson**

*Self-portrait, 1982*

*Photo by Walt Mancini*



**Polly Goodan**

*Mask workshop, 1986*

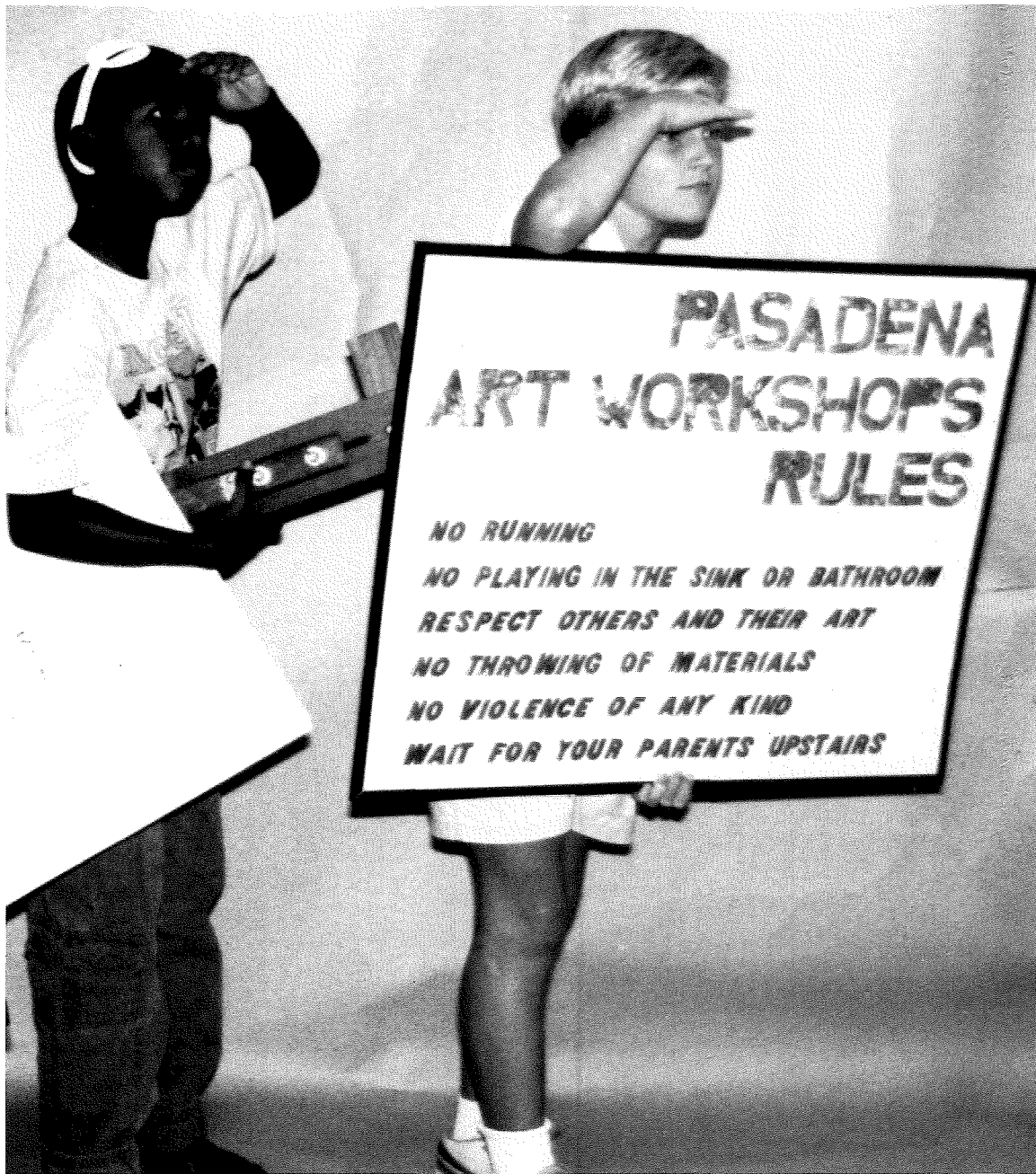
*Photo by Walt Mancini*



ARCO ⇄

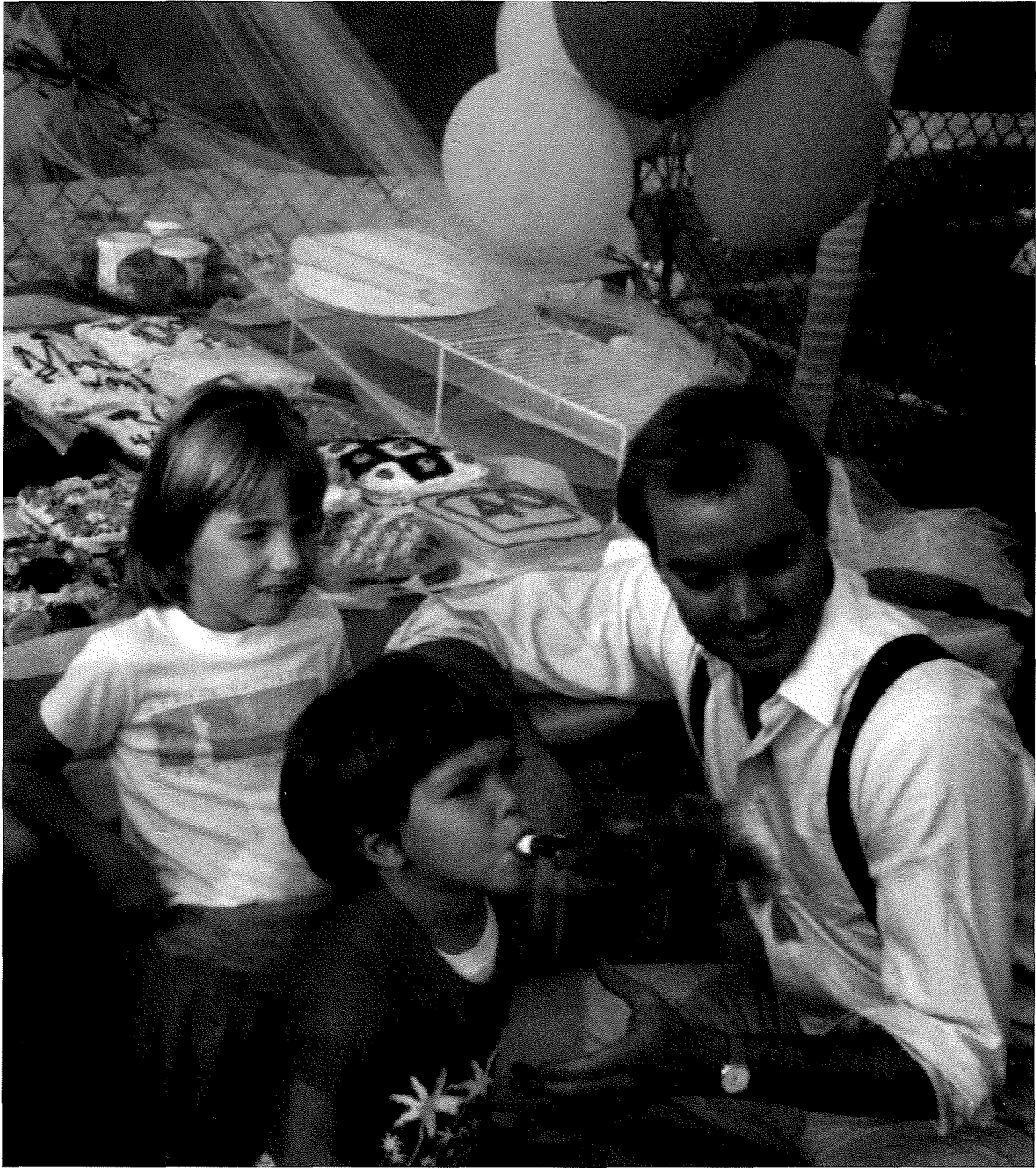
*Meriel Stern, artist and teacher, 1986*

*Photo by Walt Mancini*



UNION  
BANK OF  
CALIFORNIA





**Betty Chin Ho**

*Curtis Giesen and friends celebrate the Workshops' 40th birthday*



**Mr. and Mrs. Francis D. Logan**

*Connie Ransom, artist and teacher at Devil's Gate, "Children Investigate the Environment," 1987*

*Photo by Walt Mancini*



**Dr. Nancy Moss and George Moss**

*Sandy Biery, artist, dancer, and teacher, 1988*





**The Eli Broad Family Foundation**

*Mark Niblock-Smith, artist and teacher, 1987*



**LTJG Caroline E. Magee USN, Margee Magee, Dianne M. Magee**

*Margaret Magee, young artist at work, 1983*

*Photo by William Smith*

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**WALK  
TO**

*Camine al Arte*



Armory  
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Arts

**FREE COMMUNITY ART CLASSES**



WELLS FARGO BANK

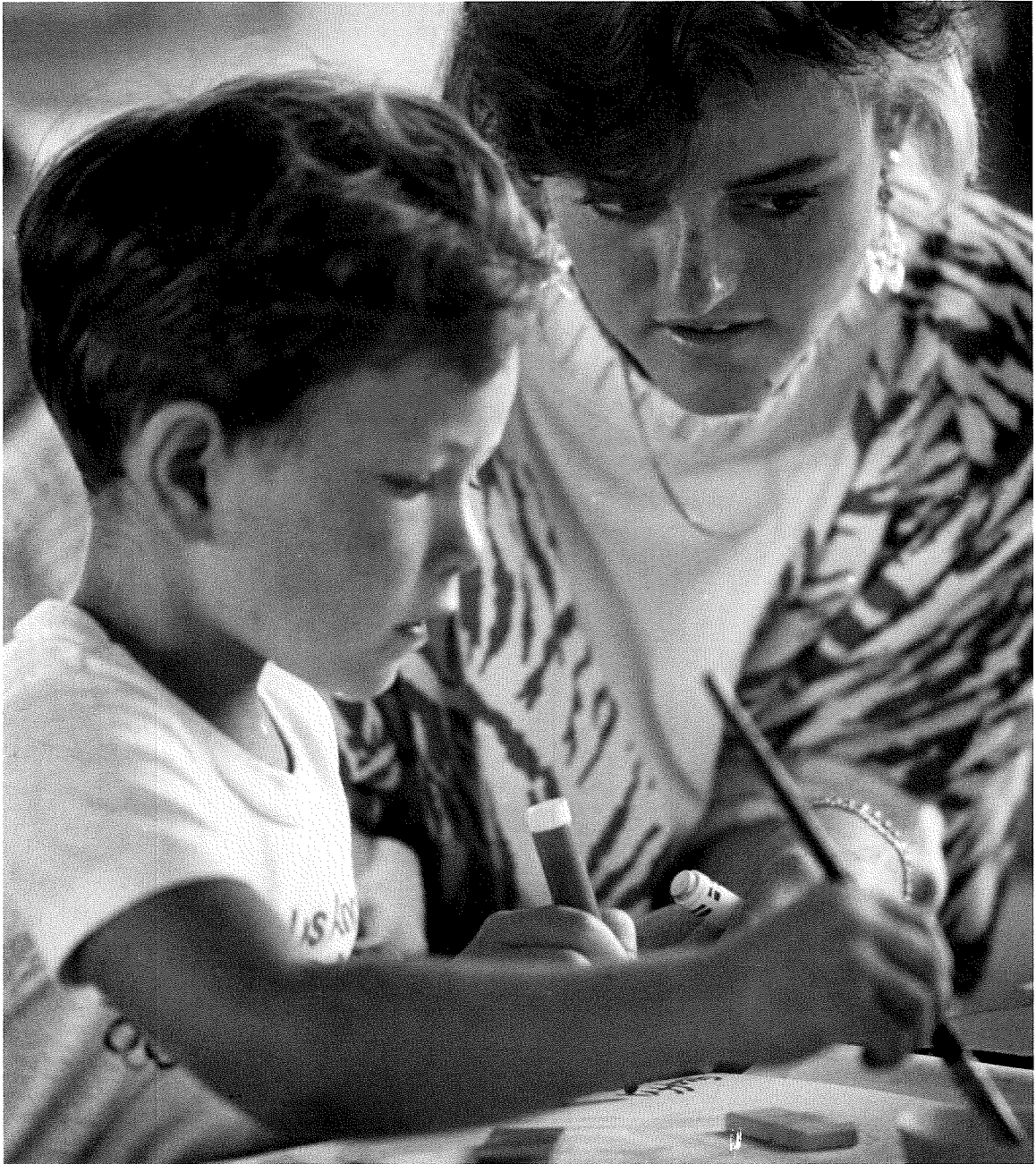


**Rhonda Stone**

*The first "Walk to Art" program, Charles White Park, 1983*

*Riua Akinshegun, artist and teacher*





**Ann and Olin Barrett**

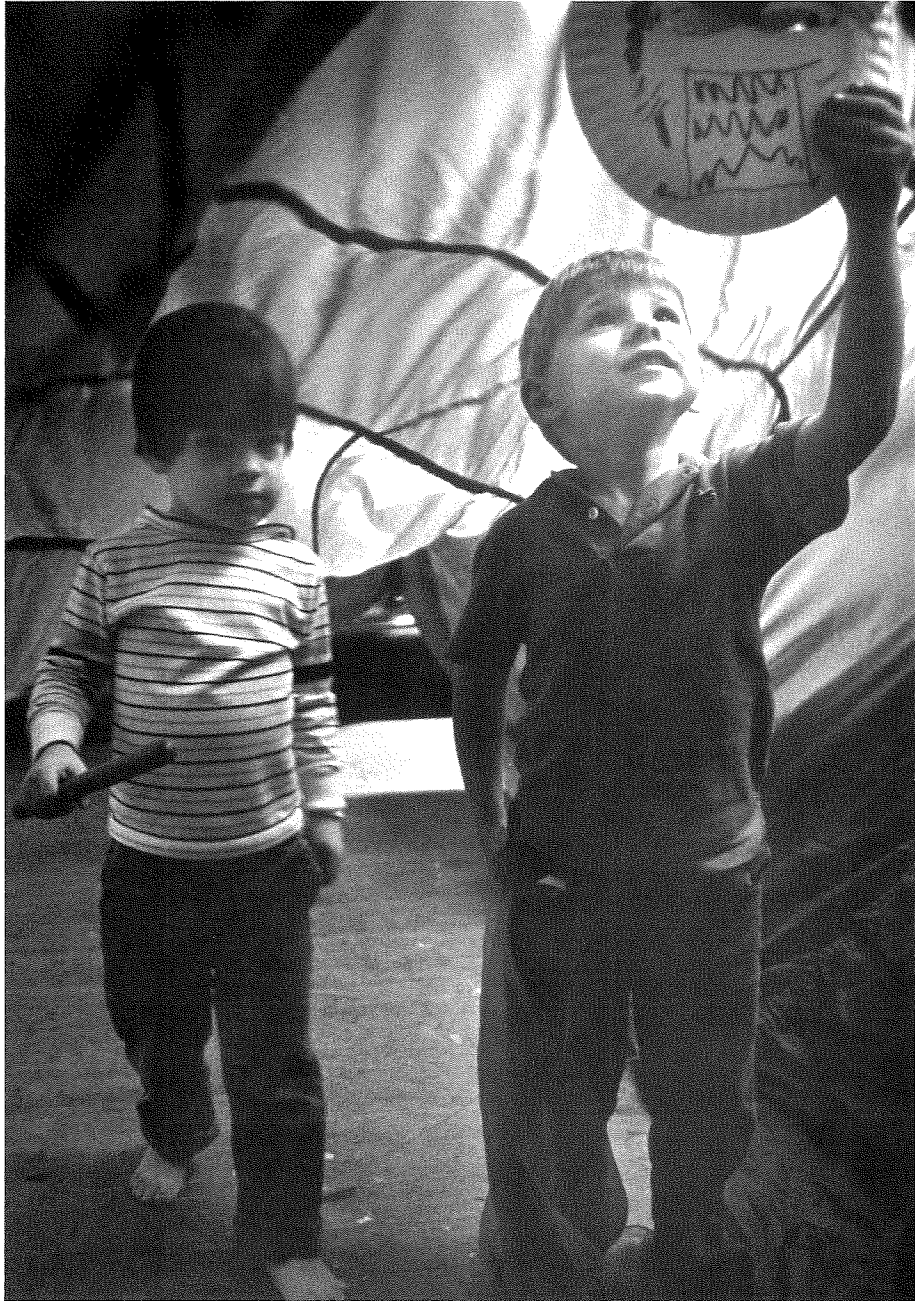
*Margaret Caldwell, teaching assistant, 1985*

*Photo by Walt Mancini*



**Sally and Bill Hurt**

*Jim Biery and Workshop students at Baxter Gallery, CalTech, 1984*



**Judith Kelly**





FARMERS

*Carolyn Potter, artist and teacher, preparing for the Doo Dab Parade, 1985*

*Photo by Walt Mancini*



**Joan and Jeffrey Palmer**

*Photo by Susan Caldwell*



 WESTERN ASSET

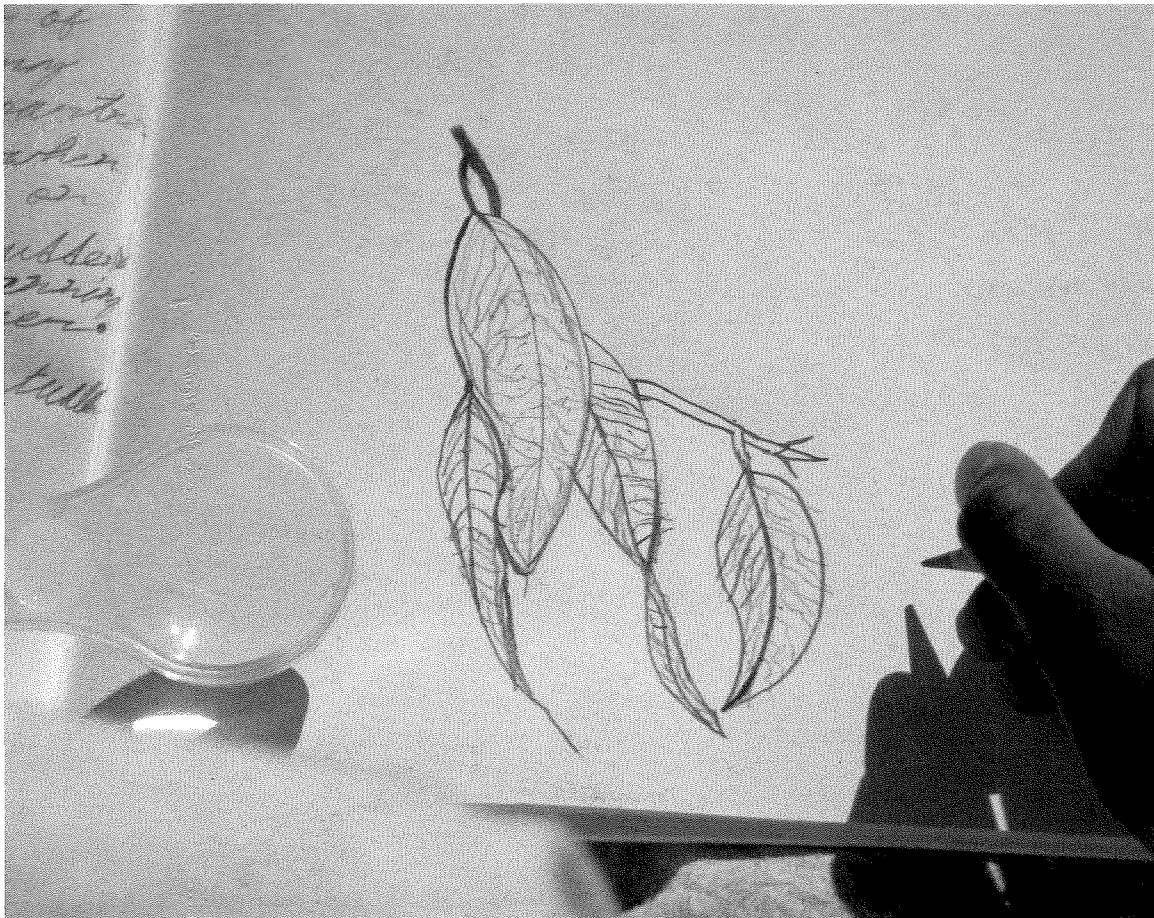
*Judi Garratt, artist, mime, and teacher, 1989*





**Harvey and Ellen Knell**

*Research for a painting*



**Harvey and Ellen Knell**

*Drawing from nature, "Children Investigate the Environment," 1996*





**Northern Trust Bank**  
*PRINCIPLES THAT ENDURE*

*The Armory Center for the Arts then*



**Northern Trust Bank**  
*PRINCIPLES THAT ENDURE*

*The Armory Center for the Arts now*



**Pasadena Art Alliance**

*Robbie Conal inspires students at "Unauthorized History," 1990*



**Flintridge Foundation**

*Art at La Pintoresca Library, 1990*

*Photo by Walt Mancini*



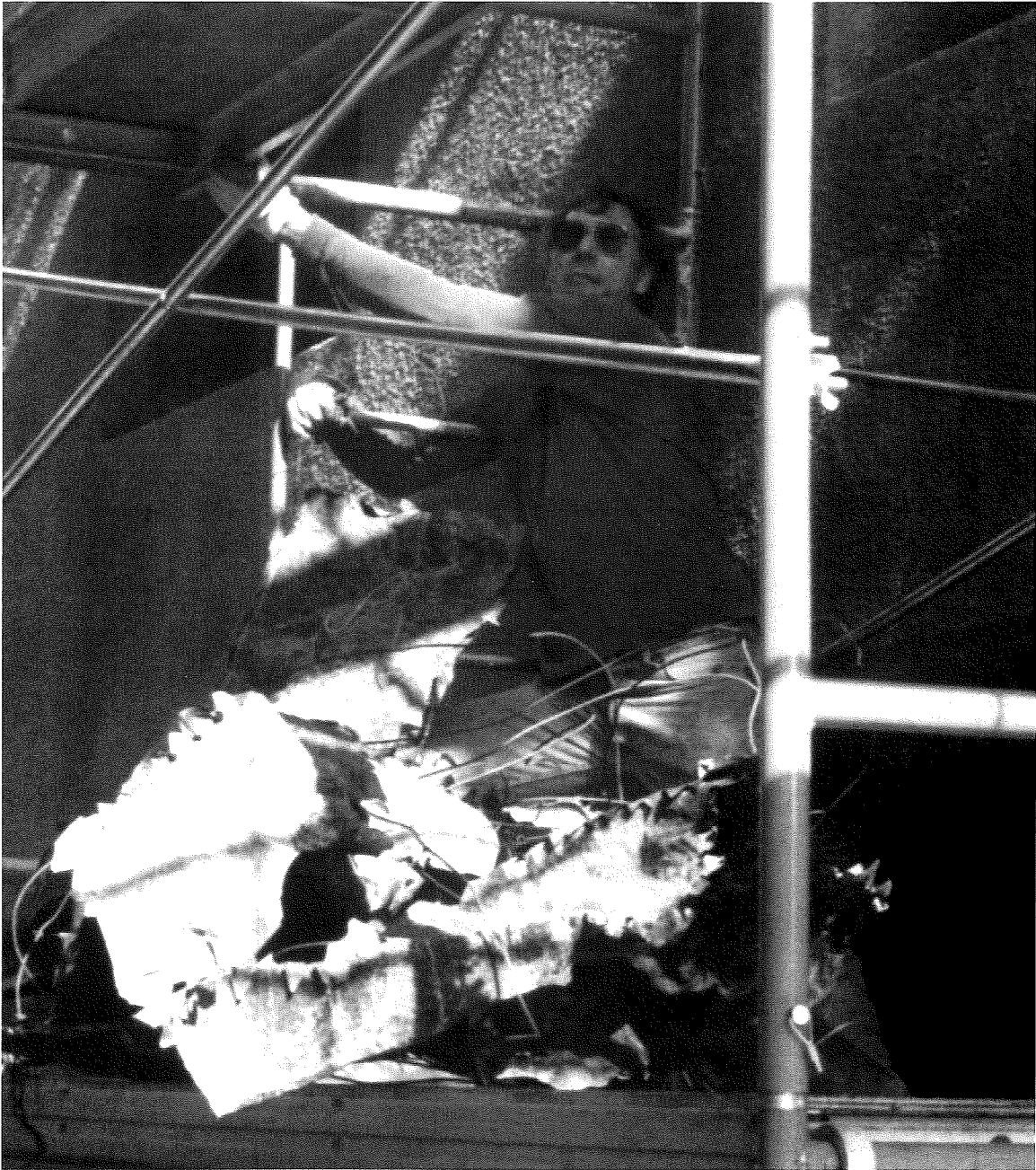


**John and Susan Caldwell**

*In the artist's studio, Becky and Margaret Caldwell, 1991*

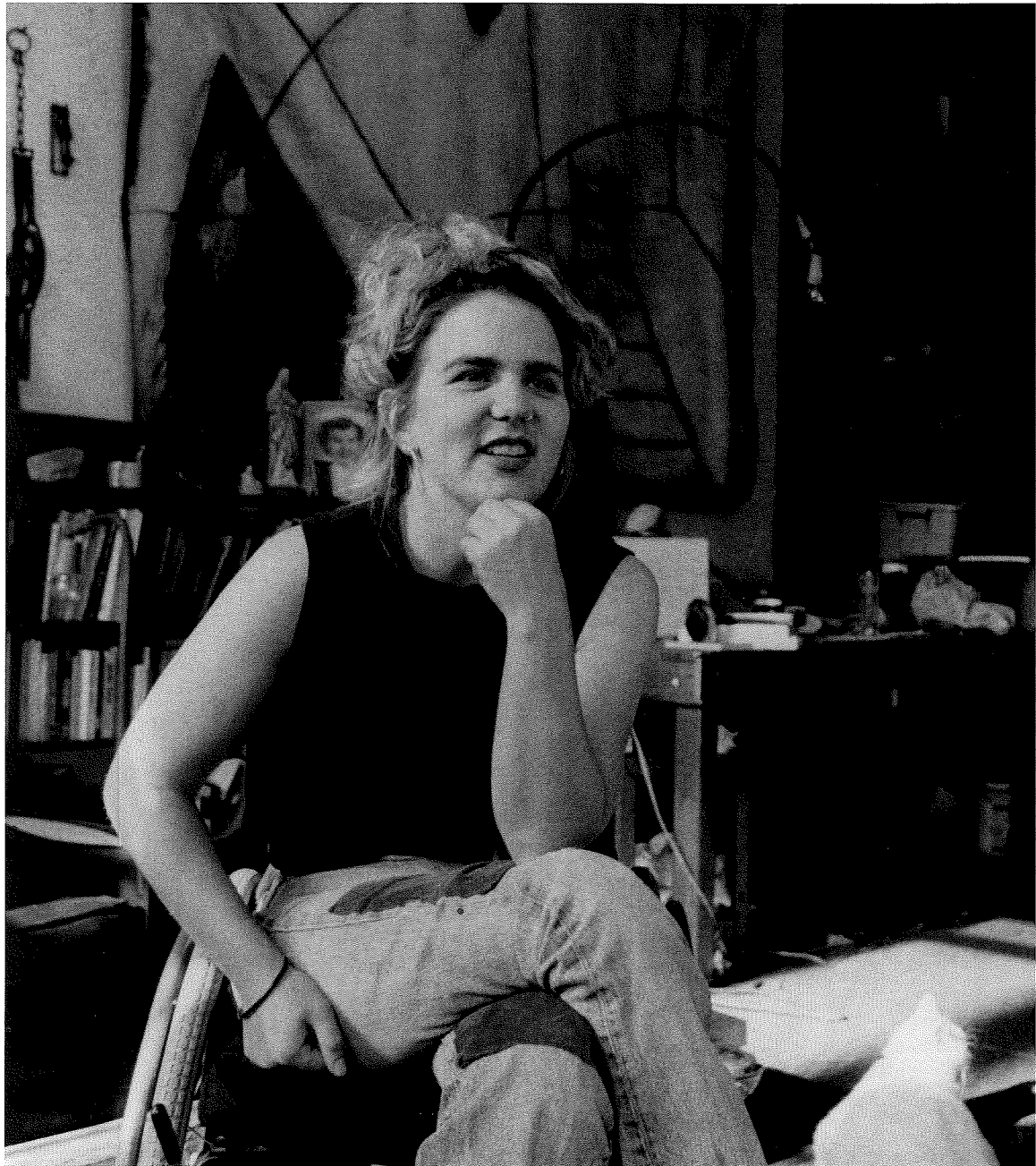
*Photo by Susan Caldwell*





**Francine Tolkin Cooper, Jonathan Tolkin, The Tolkin Group  
and Its Related Partnerships**

*George Herms installing "Alley Art, an Urban Archaeology" in Old Pasadena, 1991*



**Susan and Robert Dulin**

*Liz Young, artist in "Objects: 16 L.A. Sculptors," 1993*

*Photo by Richard Higashi*