

NEWS RELEASE

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Sotheby's
INSTITUTE OF ART

at
Claremont
Graduate
University

The Broad Stage and Sotheby's Institute Of Art – Los Angeles Present

Larry Bell, Billy Al Bengston, Robert Irwin, Ed Moses, and Ed Ruscha

Artists Talk: LA Legends

A Conversation with California Art Icons

Moderated By Author And Art Critic Hunter Drohojowska-Philp

Wednesday, January 18, 2017 at 7:30pm

Reception and On-Stage Conversation

Los Angeles, CA., The Eli and Edythe Broad Stage in Santa Monica and Sotheby's Institute of Art - Los Angeles, a partnership with Claremont Graduate University, will present Larry Bell, Billy Al Bengston, Robert Irwin, Ed Moses, and Ed Ruscha on stage in *Artists Talk: LA Legends - A Conversation With California Art Icons*, on January 18, 2017, the first of a series of talks with influential California-based artists, established to explore the living legacy of Los Angeles' vibrant contemporary arts scene.

The evening begins at 6:00pm with a reception, followed by conversation on stage. The artists will speak about their work, process, histories, and lives in this historic public event moderated by author and critic Hunter Drohojowska-Philp.

Forged in the spirit of L.A.'s unique disciplinary fluidity across cultural and institutional boundaries, the *Artists Talk* series is part of a new, multi-year collaborative arts initiative between the two organizations, bringing the living history of Southern California's art to the stage and providing educational and career opportunities for arts management students and public alike.

The executive producer of *Artists Talk* is William Turner. Tickets go on sale Wednesday, December 21, 2017 at 12pm Pacific Time at www.thebroadstage.com and by calling 310-434-3200.

Los Angeles is now internationally recognized as a center of great contemporary art production, scholarship, and world-class institutions, but its history is a comparatively young one. L.A.'s exportable contemporary art "scene" as we know it now came to cohesive life in the late 1950s, largely due to a renegade group of artists championed by the legendary Ferus Gallery on N. La Cienega Boulevard, the gallery that presented Andy Warhol's first solo show in 1962 and helped create a postwar California vanguard.

This group of artists was anointed the "Cool School," a moniker used to describe their collective departure from the gestural painting styles that had long defined West Coast art production for a more ruthlessly cool combination of minimalism, pop, and precise abstraction. The "Cool School" was to become a fabled L.A. institution, and its members, known as much for their swashbuckling antics as their work. These artists, however, espoused a complex and varied set of stylistic tenets and were bound by camaraderie, the moment, and their youth rather than adherence to any single manifested movement.

Larry Bell, Billy Al Bengston, Robert Irwin, Ed Moses and Ed Ruscha were all part of that historical founding moment, setting the stage for L.A.'s vibrant contemporary art scene. Each continues to work and produce art today as living witnesses to, and beacons of the cultural history that has shaped and continues to define L.A.'s cultural landscape. This is a rare opportunity to observe these greats in conversation as they share thoughts on their earliest beginnings and apocryphal tales from their storied pasts.

About the Artists

Larry Bell (b. 1939) is most commonly known for his Minimalist sculptures—transparent cubes that thrive on the interplay of shape, light, and environment — that champion the ideas of the Light and Space Movement of the 1960s. Although Bell had early success with Abstract Expressionist painting, a side job at a frame shop led him to experiment with excess scraps of glass, thus beginning his fascination with the material's interaction with light. Bell's first series of cubes combined three-dimensional glass forms with transmitted light, creating illusions of perspective through angles, ellipses, and mirrors. His later purchase of industrial plating equipment allowed him to create sculptures with metallic-coated glass and, eventually, drawings on mylar-coated paper. At age 46, correction of a lifelong hearing disability brought depressive hallucinations, which Bell channeled into collages of coated materials for catharsis.

Billy Al Bengston (b. 1934) is a flamboyant character, who beginning in the late 1950s, combined art with professional motorcycle racing and quickly became a key player in the Ferus Gallery circle. He had five solo shows at Ferus from 1958 to 1963 as well as his first retrospective at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1968 and later a major three decades exhibition in 1988. The motorcycle imagery in several early works associated Bengston with West Coast Pop, as did his use of techniques and materials drawn from custom-car and motorcycle culture, while the polished surfaces he achieved with spray lacquer also connected him to early conceptions of Finish Fetish.

For over six decades, **Robert Irwin** (b. 1928) has explored perception as the fundamental issue of art. Irwin, who began his career as a painter in the 1950s and became a pioneer of the Light and Space movement in the 1960s, has, through a continual breaking down of the frame, come to regard the role of art as "conditional" — working within and responding to the specific surrounding world of experience. He has conceived over fifty-five site-conditional projects, including the Central Gardens for the Getty Center, Los Angeles (1992–98) and the architectural and grounds design for Dia: Beacon, New York (1999–2003). His large-scale permanent installation at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas (2001–16) is the first freestanding structure devoted exclusively to his work. Irwin received the Guggenheim Fellowship in 1976, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur "Genius" Award

in 1984, and was elected as an Academician at the National Academy in 2012. Pace has represented Irwin since 1966.

Ed Moses (b.1926) has been the subject of several major solo exhibitions nationwide, most recently, William Turner Gallery's comprehensive retrospective exhibition, *Moses@90*. In 2015, Los Angeles County Museum of Art mounted a solo exhibition of Moses' drawings from the 1960s and 70s, curated by Leslie Jones. Moses was the subject of a major retrospective at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles in 1996, and in 2014, was featured in a retrospective at The University of California Irvine, entitled *Cross-Section*. His works are featured in the collections of some of the most prominent cultural institutions nationally, including the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Hammer Museum, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, and The Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Ed Ruscha (b.1937) in Omaha, Nebraska, moved with his family to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, in 1941. In 1956, Ruscha moved to Los Angeles, where he attended Chouinard Art Institute. Ruscha's early paintings attracted notice as part of the Pop art movement of the 1960s; his art also has antecedents in Dada, Surrealism, and Abstract Expressionism, and would be central to Conceptual art. His work includes paintings, drawings, prints, photographs, artist's books, and films, and is in the collections of major national and international museums. Ruscha lives and works in Los Angeles. He is represented by Gagolian Gallery.

Los Angeles-based art critic and journalist **Hunter Drohojowska-Philp** writes about art, design and architecture. *Full Bloom: The Art and Life of Georgia O'Keeffe*, her first book, and the most definitive biography of the artist to date, was published by W.W. Norton in September 2004. Her most recent book, *Rebels in Paradise: The Los Angeles Art Scene and the 1960s*, was published in 2011 by Henry Holt. Both were best-sellers. *Rebels in Paradise* was chosen by the L.A. Public Library Association as one of the best books of 2011.

Drohojowska-Philp is weekly art critic for KCRW radio. (89.9 fm or kcrw.com/arttalk). Author of numerous monographs and catalog essays on modern and contemporary art, she contributes to the London-based magazine *Wallpaper** and *The Times of London*. Over the years, she has written for *ARTnews*, *Artnet*, *Art in America*, *Artforum* and *Architectural Digest*. She was chair of liberal arts and sciences at Otis College of Art and Design (1987-1996) and California Collections Specialist for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution (2012-2015). The complete collection of her writing can be found at www.hunterdrohojowska-philp.com.

In 2013, **Sotheby's Institute of Art** established an historic partnership with Claremont Graduate University to offer graduate Art Business and Arts Management programs that draw upon faculty and curriculum from the The Masatoshi Ito and Peter F. Drucker School of Management, the Getty Leadership Institute, and the University's School of Arts and Humanities. Students in both programs are offered a rigorous education in the creation, management, and leadership of a wide range of arts organizations and initiatives while also enjoying unparalleled access to L.A.'s excellent cultural institutions and arts professionals. The *Artists Talk* series is just the first of a number of public and educational programs that The Broad Stage and Sotheby's Institute of Art – Los Angeles will be presenting together over the next two years.

Evolving from a small connoisseurship program begun by Sotheby's Auction House in 1969, Sotheby's Institute of Art is now the leader in art-business education and object-based learning. Its faculty represents the best of the art world, helping students master the unique forces at play at the intersection of art and commerce. With programs in London, New York, and Beijing in addition to Los Angeles, Sotheby's Institute of Art offers Master's Degrees, 15-week semester intensives, study abroad, summer study, online learning and executive education.

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