



Contact: Katrina Carl  
805.884.6430  
[kcarl@sbma.net](mailto:kcarl@sbma.net)



**Left image:** Hong Hao, *Things No 1*, 2002. Chromogenic print. SBMA, Museum purchase, Photography Acquisition Fund. **Right image:** Grant Mudford, *Self-Portrait* 1989. Gelatin silver print, ed. 1/5. SBMA, Museum purchase with funds provided by the Challenge Fund.

***SBMA Continues Celebration of 70-Year Anniversary with Summer Exhibitions***  
***Distilled Moments*** and ***New Faces of the Collection*** Feature Strengths of Permanent Collection

Both Exhibitions On View: May 28 – September 18, 2011

**May 11, 2011** – The Santa Barbara Museum of Art (SBMA) is pleased to round out the summer offerings with two exhibitions featuring works from the permanent collection – ***Distilled Moments: Still Lives from the Permanent Collection*** and ***New Faces of the Collection***. These join the other extraordinary presentations including:

***Drawn to Modernism Selected Gifts from Wright S. Ludington*** (April 16 – July 24)

***Ori Geshit: Lost in Time*** (May 20 – September 4)

***Van Gogh to Munch European Masterworks from the Armand Hammer Foundation and Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation*** (June 4 – August 28).

In this 70<sup>th</sup>-anniversary year, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art is proud to reflect on its collection and accomplishments through all of these summer presentations. Through the support of legendary founders, community leaders, gifted connoisseurs, and artists, SBMA has sustained its commitment to igniting the imagination, stimulating thought, and generating rewarding experiences through art.

***Distilled Moments: Still Lives from the Permanent Collection***



Pierre Bonnard, ***Flowers in a Pitcher***; n.d. (19th-20th c.). Oil on canvas. SBMA, Gift of George S. Kendrick.

Within a seemingly benign bowl of flowers or a succulent arrangement of fruit, a still life secretes social and cultural messages. Still lifes can be a mirror of society or of the soul, a rediscovery of quotidian objects, or an expression of artistic harmony that coalesces light, color, and form into a synchronous relationship. Eluding precise definition, a still life is simply a group of objects arranged into a coherent picture, yet the resulting composition is never simply literal.

The ordering and classification of objects has been a subject for artists for centuries, yet some photographers and painters create artistic order out of the chaos of over-abundant consumer products, while others employ everyday objects to lead the viewer away from content and toward the discovery of form, volume, and color. Still others create a narrative with the object as metaphor or memento mori, reminding viewers of their inevitable mortality.

This exhibition of 34 still life paintings and photographs, beginning with Pierre Bonnard's *Flowers in a Pitcher* produced in the early years of the 20th century and ending with Guillermo Srodek-Hart's *Gauche Gil Sandoz* from 2006, hints at the range and scope of the genre that has existed since classical Greece. The messages still lifes impart have changed over the centuries, but the genre still offers the artist nearly limitless possibilities for expression – political messages, spiritual exploration, societal and cultural reflection – with the only limit being the artist's imagination.



Ori Gersht, *Time after Time Untitled 8* 2007. Lambda Print. Collection of Manny and Jennifer Simchowitz.

This exhibition gives nod to another SBMA exhibition, *Ori Gersht: Lost in Time* (see full release [here](#)), concurrently on view. Through the use of stop-motion photography and slow-motion film, Gersht draws inspiration from timeless still lifes, and then proceeds to destroy them—creating new hauntingly beautiful scenes and powerful narratives.

### ***New Faces of the Collection***

American Essayist Oliver Wendell Holmes hailed photography as “the mirror with a memory.” Certainly, portrait photography presents us with a mirrored likeness. Yet portraits reveal more than the physiognomy of the sitter; like a mirror, they invite us to reflect on ourselves. *New Faces of the Collection* features 27 photographs—all recent additions to the Museum's collection—that celebrate a range of themes, styles, and approaches to the contemporary portrait while exploring the introspective nature of portraiture.

Rather than presenting the viewer with the facts about a person, these portraits provoke inquiry and engage the viewer in a dialogue. What can we learn from a portrait? What do we read into a portrait?



**Left image:** Grant Mudford, *Rane Patropoulos* 1989. Gelatin silver print, ed. 1/5. SBMA, Museum purchase with funds provided by the Challenge Fund.

**Right image:** Grant Mudford, *Chris Burden* 1989. 15 Gelatin silver prints, ed. 1/5. SBMA, Gift of Barry Sloane.

No series evokes these questions as poignantly as Grant Mudford's unique assemblage of gelatin silver prints. Mudford's larger-than-life works, made in the late 1980s, offer an unvarnished look at the Southern California artists who were his friends. Like passport photographs, with the subject placed against a white background and in harsh light, they seem to reveal both everything and nothing.

To create the 15 large-scale gelatin silver prints of the series, Mudford invited these Southern California artists to collaborate with him to create their portraits. The artist-subjects chose what they wore and presented themselves as they wished to be seen. For instance, Renée Petropoulos had just returned from a trip to Turkey and brought a Turkish wedding outfit to wear.

In spite of the unrelenting honesty that the camera reveals about the physical appearance of these artists, Mudford's images urge the viewer to reconsider the deceptive nature of the photographic portrait. Mudford notes, "I think photography, at its most interesting, and at its best, is full of illusion and abstraction. That's kind of what photographs do to things. They transform them into photographs. The photographs are no longer reality.."



**Left image:** Roger Eberhard, *Untitled (Delbert)*, 2007, From the series "In Good Light," Lambda print. SBMA, Gift of Susan Jorgenson.  
**Right image:** Roger Eberhard, *Untitled (Brett)*, 2007, From the series "In Good Light," Lambda print. SBMA, Gift of Susan Jorgenson.

In some cases, portrait photography can be deceptive; in other cases, it can be affirming. Roger Eberhard's work compels us to look long and hard at the face of homelessness in Santa Barbara. While the tendency on the street is often to avert one's gaze—whether from fear, disgust or shame—these images reveal some larger truths about our society and ourselves.

Framed *In Good Light* (from which the series takes its title) against a gray background, each person was given free rein to pose and offered the opportunity to include any props or significant others they desired. Cool and self-possessed, smiling broadly, or locked in an embrace, these participants were in control of the image they projected. Eberhard made a contract with and paid each of the participants. He spent a long time talking with his subjects in order to gain their trust, but the actual photo session lasted only five to ten minutes. At the end of the session, Eberhard gave a Polaroid print to each of his subjects and later he sent a larger print to each person who could supply an address.

For more information on any of the summer exhibitions or related programming, visit our website at [www.sbma.net](http://www.sbma.net) or blog at [blog.sbma.net/](http://blog.sbma.net/)

**The Santa Barbara Museum of Art** is a privately funded, not-for-profit institution that presents internationally recognized collections and exhibitions and a broad array of cultural and educational activities as well as travel opportunities around the world.

**Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1130 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA.**  
**Open Tuesday - Sunday 11 am to 5 pm. Closed Monday.**  
**805.963.4364 [www.sbma.net](http://www.sbma.net)**