

For Immediate Release
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The San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art honors the legacy of Steve French in TWO new exhibitions



Overture: The Art of Steve French

Encore: The Legacy of Steve French

November 12, 2017 – February 4, 2018

SAN JOSE, CA – November 2017 – The San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) is pleased to announce the opening of two new exhibitions in November. The **Opening Reception** will be held on **Sunday, November 12**; Members Preview 1-2pm and Public Reception 2-4pm.

San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art
560 South First Street, San Jose, CA 95113
Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 10am-5pm and Saturday & Sunday, 12pm-5pm



Overture: The Art of Steve French
 November 12, 2017 – February 4, 2018
 Main Gallery and Cardinale Project
 Room

Steve French (1934-2014) was a noted visual artist, scholar, teacher and tenacious advocate for the arts in San Jose until his death in 2014. He influenced generations of artists who studied with him at San Jose State and often benefitted from his mentoring well after the

conclusion of their formal studies.

In the spirit of the musical term to which the title refers, *Overture* introduces the audience to a story about a dedicated professor and sharp observer. The exhibition spans French's career: introducing his early groundbreaking shaped prints in the 1970's, to monochromatic prints that emulate light in the 1990's, to bronze assemblages in the 2000's, and his most recent paintings inspired by his backyard garden that he lovingly tended with his wife, Wanda Waldera.

Keen on documenting the nuance of the everyday, French was prolific in his art making. He paired thick textures, shapes, and gestures to build artistic compositions that explored growth, changes, and cycles of the seasons. Spanning more than 30 years, it is clear to see reoccurring themes punctuated throughout his pieces – archways inspired by the Spanish architecture of San Jose, dashes and lines that mimic the branches of trees that surround his home, and his love of music and literature. *Overture* provides an intimate introduction to an artist who was passionately dedicated to the practice of seeing, sharing and teaching.

Along with his practice, French was also a dedicated member of the San Jose Museum of Art's Board of Trustees and a member of the museum's Acquisitions Committee, a former San Jose Arts Commissioner, and a long-time loyal supporter of the ICA, Works/San Jose, San Jose Jazz and Opera San Jose.

***Overture: The Art of Steve French* is supported by the members of the ICA's Director's Circle**



Encore: The Legacy of Steve French

November 12, 2017 – February 4, 2018

Focus Gallery

In addition to being an accomplished visual artist, Steve French was a scholar, a mentor, a leader, and a dedicated teacher who influenced

generations of artists who studied with him. From 1966 to his retirement in 1998, French rose from a regular faculty member at San Jose State University (SJSU) to the Associate Dean of the College of Humanities and the Arts. During those 32 years, French served as an exemplary role model of how to balance a career in education and maintain a prolific studio practice. His students credit him with having a lasting affect on their work and lives. He was a generous mentor, passing on his knowledge, expertise and contacts to the next generation of artists.

In conjunction with *Overture: The Art of Steve French*, we are proud to honor French's teaching legacy with an exhibition of work by his former students, many of whom have remained in the Bay Area since graduating from SJSU, earning acclaim both regionally and nationally. *Encore: The Legacy of Steve French* features work by Marcia Briggs, Erin Goodwin-Guerrero, Eric Hoffman, Howard Ikemoto, Katherine Huffaker Jones, Tony May, Valerie Patten, Steve Pon, and Jeff Alan West. *Encore* includes works on paper and large-scale paintings reflecting a variety of styles, mediums, and subject matter.

Marcia Briggs earned her MFA at SJSU. She has taught at deAnza College for nearly 30 years and credits Steve French for helping her launch her teaching career. Her work has been exhibited in venues throughout the region, including at the ICA.

Erin Goodwin-Guerrero was born in Seattle, Washington, attended the University of Washington, the University of Puget Sound and earned her MFA from SJSU in 1991. Upon graduation, she taught at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, the San Francisco Art Institute and eventually at SJSU. Her work



has been exhibited throughout the Bay Area, in Washington state and in Japan, Mexico and Australia. She currently maintains residences in Seattle, Washington and Mazatlán, México.

Eric Hoffman received his BA, MA and MFA from SJSU and studied computer graphics, filmmaking and video editing at local community colleges in the Bay Area. He has also taken classes at Kala Art Institute in Berkeley and Bullseye Galss Factory in Portland, OR. He has had exhibitions throughout California, in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Grenoble, France. His work is in numerous public and private collectinos including the Albright-Knox Museum, the Monterey Museum of Art, and the City of Dublin, Ireland.

Howard Ikemoto is a second generation Japanese American who was born in Sacramento in 1939. He began drawing at the age of four and produced a series of poignant works that documented his family's imprisonment at the Tule Lake internment camp during WWII. He received his BFA and MFA from SJSU with a concentration in printmaking and painting. Upon graduation, Ikemoto began a 34-year teaching career at Cabrillo College, retiring in 2000.

Katherine Huffaker Jones' paintings have been strongly influenced by her transient upbringing – she moved several times a year throughout the rural west, attending more than 30 schools. She finally settled in the San Francisco Bay Area and studied art at SJSU, where she received both her BA and MA in painting. Her work has been exhibited throughout the Bay Area at galleries and museums including Bucheon Gallery, Terrain Gallery, the San Francisco Art Institute, Mills College Museum, Sacramento City College, and the San Jose Museum of Art. Her work has also been included in exhibition in Okayama, Japan and New York City.

Working in a variety of media, **Tony May's** work has often taken the form of site-responsive installations and has a strong leaning toward the conceptual, the quasi-functional and the whimsical. His art has been shown widely in California including shows at San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco Art Institute, 80 Langton Street, Capp Street Project, the San Jose Museum of Art and the deSaisset Museum at Santa Clara University. In 2010, the ICA presented *Tony May: Old Technology*, a 40+ year retrospective. May is Emeritus Professor of Art at SJSU where he taught from 1967 until 2005. At SJSU, he was a colleague of Steve French. However, he was French's student at the University of Wisconsin-Sheboygan, where he earned his MFA.



In **Valerie Patten**'s paintings, color, space and light play an important role in her open-ended narratives. Her work has been exhibited at venues throughout the region including ProArts in Oakland, the deSaisset Museum at Santa Clara University, Southern Exposure in San Francisco, the Triton Museum in Santa Clara, and the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle, Washington. She earned her MFA from SJSU in 1981 with a concentration in Pictorial Arts.

Steve Pon is currently employed at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Artists Gallery, an annex gallery of SFMOMA. Although he is still a practicing artist, having earned his MFA at SJSU, more recently, he is best known in the Bay Area for his curatorial work. He curates exhibitions for the Artists Gallery and has an exceptional background in gallery and museum exhibition production and project management.

Jeff Alan West has a 30-year career as an illustrator and graphic designer in Silicon Valley. Since retiring four years ago, West has returned to his fine arts roots in printmaking and his classes with Steve French at SJSU. He considers his current work a "contrary artistic response in process, content, and intent to my years of working in a highly structured environment as a professional illustrator."

Encore: The Legacy of Steve French is supported, in part, by the Members of the ICA.

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560 South First Street, San Jose, CA 95113
Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 10am-5pm and Saturday & Sunday, 12pm-5pm

Opening Reception

Sunday, **November 12**

Members preview, 1pm-2pm

Public reception, 2pm-4pm

The reception is open and free to the public from 2pm-4pm. ICA members are invited 1pm-2pm. Participating artists will be in attendance.

Talking Art

Conversations, workshops, panel discussions and artist professional development programs. Open to the public. Ticketed events.

ICA Members, Free admission to select Talking Art events

Non Members, \$10

Students, Free

Sunday **December 10**, 3-4PM *Overture: Opera San Jose*

Opera San Jose will play a dedicated set to honor Steve French's legacy.

Sunday, **January 14**, 3-4PM *Encore: Artists' Panel Discussion*

The Artist Panel Discussion will feature Tony May, Steve French's colleague, and other artists in the exhibition. Discussion topics include mentorship, tools to succeed in school, and ways in which French's practice impacted artists' careers.

ICA Live!

Presented during South First Fridays, *ICA Live!* explores the role of performance art in contemporary society. Free and open to the public.

Friday, **December 1**, San Jose Chamber Orchestra and *Carmina Eliasson: Café Con Leche*

Friday, **February 2**, *Scott Toby: Sonic Mirror*

Images:

Image courtesy of **Wanda Waldera**

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Image courtesy of **Howard Ikemoto**