

15 of the Best Art Galleries Enlivening SoCal College Campuses

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Tanja M. Laden | August 15, 2018 | [LINK](#)

Best Of L.A. Arts

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Hollywood may be known as a mecca for movie dream-chasing creative types, but all that talent can't be restricted to the 30-square-mile bounds of Tinseltown — or even the silver screen. The truth is, the visual arts have long been a vital and integral part of the local cultural scene, with generations of artists living and thriving here. These days, though, with so much art to experience throughout Greater Los Angeles, it's exceedingly apparent that Southern California isn't just attracting movie-industry dreamers — world-class visual artists are here to stay, too. Maybe it's the weather; maybe it's the light; maybe it's the wave of new local, national and even international art galleries opening their doors in L.A.



Installation view of "MANIFESTO: A Moderate Proposal," curated by Ciara Ennis and Jennifer Vanderpool Pitzer College Art Galleries

One major factor, however, is undeniably SoCal's abundance of colleges and universities that take arts education so seriously that they've invested in impressive art galleries for the benefit of students and the public alike. In fact, we had some trouble narrowing the list of excellent on-campus art galleries to 15 — but we wanted to focus on not just the best but the more hidden gems that folks are least likely to know about. While you're making the rounds, take a look around your own neighborhood and explore your community's institutions of higher learning: You might just find a cultural treasure in your own backyard.

Vincent Price Art Museum at East Los Angeles College

Vincent Price was a famous Hollywood Golden Age movie villain who also happened to be a big art aficionado. At Yale, he studied art history, not drama — and as he got paid as a character actor in film noir flicks, he collected so much art that in 1957, he and his wife, Mary Grant, donated 90 pieces to East Los Angeles College (ELAC) to create the first teaching art collection at a community college. Price went on to collaborate with Sears in the 1960s by establishing the Vincent Price Collection of Fine Art: a direct-to-consumer art enterprise that made its way into department stores across the country. Meanwhile, the museum named in his honor has presented more than 100 shows, and the collection itself has increased 10 times over since Price's donation way back when. Vincent Price Art Museum, East Los Angeles College, 1301 Avenida Cesar Chavez, Monterey Park; (323) 265-8841, vincentpriceartmuseum.org; free.

Pitzer College Art Galleries

Part of the Claremont Colleges, Pitzer is well known for its progressive curriculum and diverse, creatively inclined student body. Maybe that's why the school has not just one but two galleries on campus. The Nichols Gallery, located inside the Broad Center at the intersection of Platt Boulevard and Mills Avenue, is dedicated to showcasing the work of both local and international artists. At the north of Atherton Hall on Pitzer Road, the Lenzner Family Art Gallery is a multimedia haven for risk-taking experimentalists. Both galleries aim to intrigue, inspire and inform visitors on the state of the art, literally. Pitzer College Art Galleries, Pitzer College, 1050 N. Mills Ave., Claremont; (909) 607-8797, pitzer.edu/galleries; free.



"Outsideln" opening reception at Williamson Gallery Alyce de Roulet Williamson Gallery at ArtCenter College of Design

No proper art school would be complete without its own gallery, something Pasadena's ArtCenter College of Design knows all about. And again, there's more than one. Exhibition spaces include ArtCenter's Student Gallery, the Hutto-Patterson Exhibition Hall and the Hoffmitz Milken Center for Typography. But perhaps the best known is the Alyce de Roulet Williamson Gallery, which at almost 5,000 square feet puts on three exhibits a year, drawing from all disciplines taught at the school. It's not just about the students, though: The Williamson Gallery proudly showcases works by artists from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. With past shows such as "OutsideIn: The Ascendance of Street Art in Visual Culture," "Curious World of Patent Models/Future of Objects" and "Mars: Astronomy and Culture," it's safe to say this world-renowned institution is not afraid to take risks with its mind-expanding exhibits. Alyce de Roulet Williamson Gallery, ArtCenter College of Design, 1700 Lida St., Pasadena; (626) 396-2200, artcenter.edu/about/campus/hillside-campus/facilities/alyce-de-roulet-williamson-gallery.html; free.

University Art Museum at California State University, Long Beach

The University Art Museum (UAM) is Long Beach's only museum where admission is free. Cal State Long Beach has a student body that's 43 percent more diverse than the national college average in the U.S., something that's consistently represented within UAM's groundbreaking exhibitions. With such a multifaceted approach, it's no wonder UAM has received support from such esteemed institutions as the National Endowment for the Arts, the Getty Foundation, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and many others. University Art Museum at Cal State Long Beach, 1250 Bellflower Blvd., Long Beach; Free; (562) 985-5761, csulb.edu/university-art-museum.



Installation view of "Next to Nothing" Coastline Art Gallery at Coastline Community College

Pete and Susan Barrett Art Gallery at Santa Monica College

In 2000, Santa Monica College debuted a performing arts center, which is home to not only the music department and a performance space but also the renowned Broad Theater. But no self-respecting arts building should exist without a gallery, which is where the Pete and Susan Barrett Art Gallery comes in. Barrett Art Gallery exhibitions have included "Andy Moses: A 30-Year Survey" and "StudioEleven at Work," the latter a group show and fundraiser closing Aug. 4. Thanks to its rigorous curatorial approach, future exhibits promise to be just as interesting and relevant. Pete and Susan Barrett Art Gallery, Santa Monica College Performing Arts Center, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica; (310) 434-3434, smc.edu/Barrett; free.

California is home to 114 community colleges, many of which come with their own galleries, like the one at Coastline Community College, which began as a correspondence school in 1976 and has since evolved into an esteemed institution with three mini-campuses. Coastline Art Gallery is dedicated to hosting year-round events, but it's not all about hanging pictures. The gallery prides itself in its programs, panels, workshops and art sales, all of which focus on works by local SoCal artists with a variety of backgrounds and styles across a range of experience levels, just like the population of California it serves. Coastline Art Gallery, Coastline Community College, 1515 Monrovia Ave., Newport Beach; (714) 241-6213, coastline.edu/community/art-gallery; free.



Viewer Cherie Benner Davis examines artist John David O'Brien's series "Lo Scarto (Immanent) - The Remains (Immanente)" Courtesy of the artist and Causey Contemporary/Photo: Rabat Moussa

The Art Gallery @ GCC

Nearly a century ago, Glendale Community College launched when 139 students signed up for college-level classes at the Glendale Union High School. Since its start as a small junior college back in 1926, the school's student body has grown to more than 25,000, and the institution has expanded to include four locations. It's the original location at the Verdugo Campus where you'll find the Art Gallery @ GCC, which hosts exhibitions reflecting the diversity and talent of not just the students but the professors, too. Past exhibitions include an immersive sound installation by L.A.'s own Silvie Deutsch, along with an all-faculty exhibition in honor of the college's latest development, the opening of the Sierra Vista Building. If the past is any indication, the Art Gallery @ GCC is poised to grow and change just as much as the college has. The Art Gallery @ GCC, Glendale Community College — Verdugo Campus, 1500 N. Verdugo Road, Glendale; (818) 240.1000, glendale.edu/students/campus-resources/art-gallery; free.

Mt. San Antonio College Art Gallery

The Mt. San Antonio College Art Gallery has been breaking boundaries since its Beat-era birth back in '54. Since then, its exhibitions have spanned an array of cultures, genres and traditions united in their eclecticism only by the fact that they've come through the doors of the gallery. "Regardless of our program specialty in contemporary art, we continually examine historical and cultural influences through presentation of events and exhibitions such as the Tillett tapestry, the monks of the Dreprung Monastery mandala sand painting, and Norman Rockwell's view of the American home front," Mt. SAC's gallery director and curator, Fatemeh Burnes, explains in an online statement. This couldn't be a better-worded summation of the variety of shows you'll find at this remarkable gallery. Mt. San Antonio College Art Gallery, Mt. San Antonio College, Building 1B/C, 1100 N. Grand Ave., Walnut; (909) 274-5814, mtsac.edu/art-gallery; free.

Cerritos College Art Gallery

Associate professor of art history James MacDevitt is the director and curator of the Cerritos College Art Gallery, so you know the exhibitions are legit. Not only do the shows focus on works by artists of all training levels but they also include the regularly scheduled Cerritos College Student Art Exhibition, which focuses on works by the 63-year-old college's talented art students. Throughout all the exhibits, there's a special emphasis on critical issues in the contemporary arts, often in conjunction with an impressive roster of workshops, panels and performances. Cerritos College Art Gallery, Cerritos College, Fine Arts Building, Room 50, 11110 Alondra Blvd., Norwalk; (562) 860-2451, cerritosgallery.com; free.

The Galleries at PCC

Technically, the Galleries at PCC includes two venues: the Boone Family Art Gallery and Gallery V. Each one presents several exhibitions throughout the year, highlighting the work of the students as well as the faculty and those participating in the school's annual artist residency program. There's also a sculpture garden, not to mention the impressive architecture of the edifice itself. With more than 25,000 students, it should come as no surprise that many of those enrolled in the two-year college's Visual Arts Division continue to pursue their studies at four-year schools such as California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) or Pasadena's esteemed ArtCenter College of Design. The Galleries at PCC, Pasadena City College, 1570 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena; (626) 585-3285, pasadena.edu/campus-life/the-arts/the-galleries; free.



Installation view of “The Great Wall of Los Angeles: Judith F Baca’s Experiments in Collaboration and Concrete” CSUN/Photo: Michelle Nunes

CSUN Art Galleries

It's something of a tradition to make fun of the idea that there's no culture in the San Fernando Valley. The CSUN Art Galleries prove that idea is very, very wrong. Since 1980, Cal State Northridge has hosted more than 500 exhibitions, with an annual average of 25,000 people coming through to see the art in the Main Gallery and the West Gallery, which collectively comprise nearly 3,500 square feet of exhibition space. That means the galleries not only serve the students but also have helped raise the cultural profile of the San Fernando Valley itself. CSUN Art Galleries, Cal State Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff St., Northridge; (818) 677-2156, csun.edu/mike-curb-arts-media-communication/art-galleries; free.



Installation view of "Polly Apfelbaum: Face (Geometry) (Naked) Eyes," 2016 Ben Maltz Gallery at Otis College of Art and Design Department of Art and Architecture College Gallery at Los Angeles Pierce College

Speaking of the Valley, Pierce is best known as a community college with roots geared toward the study of agriculture, but in 1968, a gallery opened that sowed the seeds of a blossoming Department of Art and Architecture. All the happenings at the College Gallery are geared to the work of SoCal artists, under the auspices of gallery director, artist and art professor Monika Ramirez Wee. Certain budding artists actually sell their works as well, which not only benefits the student but also puts some money back into the gallery. Department of Art and Architecture College Gallery, Los Angeles Pierce College, 6201 Winnetka Ave., Woodland Hills; (818) 710-4100, piercecollegeart.com/gallery; free.

Ben Maltz Gallery at Otis College of Art and Design

Otis College of Art and Design has quite the history, beginning in 1916, when it opened as the Otis Art Institute of the Los Angeles Museum of History, Science and Art. The Great Depression trimmed the student body and shortened the name to Otis Art Institute, which became the Los Angeles County Art Institute in 1954, then under the direction of famed local artist and architect Millard Sheets. Less than a decade later, it rebranded itself as Otis Art Institute of Los Angeles County, which evolved into the Otis Art Institute of Parsons School of Design in 1978. Forty years later, it's now known as the Otis College of Art and Design, and it's where the Ben Maltz Gallery continues to operate since the gallery's inception under the auspices of Sheets back in the 1950s.

Its current show, up through Aug. 25, is "Supplies and Demands," a group exhibition featuring Carmen Argote, Will Benedict, Maryam Jafri, Nonfood, Michael Queenland and Asha Schechter, that explores the social, personal and use values associated with consumer goods. Ben Maltz Gallery, Otis College of Art and Design, 9045 Lincoln Blvd., Westchester; (310) 665-6905, otis.edu/ben-maltz-gallery; free.



Installation view of "William Lane: Then and Now" Rio Hondo Art Gallery/Photo: Wendybird Fotos
SCI-Arc Galleries

Like most other art schools, SCI-Arc has more than one gallery on campus. Unlike most other art schools, though, SCI-Arc is dedicated to showcasing contemporary works by groundbreaking architects and designers, from the emerging to the established. The SCI-Arc Gallery opened in 2002 and has since hosted more than 50 exhibitions. Its popularity grew to the point that, just two years later, the school opened the Library Gallery to exhibit even more shows that examine relatively practical artistic disciplines taught at the school, including urban planning, design and, of course, art and architecture. SCI-Arc Galleries, SCI-Arc, 960 E. Third St., downtown; (213) 613-2200, sciarc.edu/institution/facility/galleries; free.

Rio Hondo Art Gallery

Rio Hondo College is named after an L.A. River tributary that flows from Irwindale to South Gate, and just like its namesake, the school attracts a steady stream of artists to exhibit their work at the community college's titular Rio Hondo Art Gallery. Past exhibitions include "William Lane: Then and Now," which features minimalist paintings inspired by travel, as well as "Excavations," which has its roots in a show curated by artist Bill Radawec back in the 1990s, and acclaimed solo shows by artists such as Nicole Cohen and Salomón Huerta. There's also the regular Rio Hondo College Student Art Show, Faculty Art Show and even the occasional holiday art sale, where the public can invest in local artists firsthand. Rio Hondo Art Gallery, Rio Hondo College, B-14, 3600 Workman Mill Road, Whittier; (562) 908-3492, riohondo.edu/arts/front-page/programs-offered/arts-cultural-programs-events/art-gallery-showing/; free.

[Ed. note: This story erroneously stated that the University Art Museum at CSULB is the only museum in the CSU system to be accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). The Robert and Frances Fullerton Museum of Art (RAFFMA) at CSU San Bernardino also is accredited by the AAM.

Tanja M. Laden is a native Angeleno who writes about arts, culture, technology and travel.