

Saturday Art: Julian Wasser: Duchamp in Pasadena Redux at Bergmot

The past becomes the historical present in pivotal new show.

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MIRROR STAFF

By Samuel Huntington

A new exhibition at Bergamot Station is offering a rare glimpse into art history, revealing the meticulous documentation of a 1963 Duchamp exhibition, captured by a young photographer at the time.



Courtesy photo
Julian Wasser: Duchamp in Pasadena Redux

“It’s a show within a show, within a show,” explained Robert Berman, owner of The Robert Berman Gallery, describing his current exhibition Julian Wasser Duchamp in Pasadena Redux, which is running at his gallery through March 26.

The show is so titled because it pays homage to an exhibition that took place at The Pasadena Museum of Art in 1963.

This was groundbreaking at the time for being renowned artist Marcel Duchamp’s first North American retrospective, noteworthy that The Pasadena Museum of Art, an unsung gallery won the exhibition.

Duchamp, who was in his 70s in 1963, was considered one of the forefathers of conceptual art and the opening of the original exhibition was attended by such luminaries as Ed Ruscha, Billy Al Bengston, Larry Bell, Dennis Hopper, and a boyish looking Andy Warhol who flew in from New York to attend.

Julian Wasser, now living in Santa

Monica, was a young photographer who had settled in Hollywood after serving in the Navy. He earned his stripes shooting crime scenes as a cub photographer during the 1950s while he was a teenager in his native Washington DC.

Wasser was assigned to cover the opening as a contract photographer for *TIME* magazine. Although, the photos were

never published, his efforts at the opening produced iconic images inside the world of art including his photo reenactment of Duchamp's painting *Nude Descending a Staircase*, an image of the artist sitting at a table studying a chess board while sitting across from a young buxom nude model faced away from camera.

The portrait created a buzz inside the art world because the model, Eve Babitz, who would later go on to become an iconic artist and writer in her own right, was having an affair with the gallery director at the time.

“Duchamp was in his mid to late 70s

and Julian is now in his late 70s so it was appropriate to me to do this exhibition,” Berman explained. “Most of these photos had never been seen before. The photos show what led up to the exhibition.”

The exhibition also includes recreated

works of art, otherwise known as appropriated works, by LA-based artist Greg

Gibbs, to help round out the experience.

Julian Wasser Duchamp in Pasadena Redux

originally opened in San Francisco and moved to Santa Monica location based on

the success of its run.

Robert

Berman Gallery is located at Bergamot Station Arts Center, 2525 Michigan

Avenue, Suite B7, Santa Monica. The gallery is open Tues-Sat, 11am-6pm, phone

310.315.1937.

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