

UC SANTA BARBARA

# THE *Current*

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## **University Art Museum Presents 'Signs of His Times,' a Gary H. Brown Collection**

Last fall, dedicated artist and avid collector Gary H. Brown lost his home in the devastating Tea Fire. Brown, a professor emeritus of art at UC Santa Barbara, and his family lost everything, including his extensive art collection.

However, thanks to Brown's generosity over time, a portion of his vision remains intact. Since 1984, Brown has donated 95 art objects to the University Art Museum. A new exhibit, "Signs of His Times," honors Brown's commitment to the museum and UCSB by highlighting selections from these many gifts.

The exhibition, which is open now, will run through June 14, with a special celebration scheduled for April 24 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

The works on display roughly correspond to Brown's years teaching at UCSB, from the 1960s to the present. Only one work breaks from that time frame: a 1931 self-portrait by Käthe Kollwitz. Brown donated the small print last fall, a few weeks prior to the blaze. Although the museum offered to return the work to Brown to begin his collection anew, he insisted that the museum retain his gift.

The exhibition will include selections of Brown's own works, which demonstrate his background in figurative drawing and present his most recent work of art, a wood

and paper piece entitled "Fortune," completed in March. Other objects in the show reflect his engagement with artistic circles in which work was meant to be easily exchanged or distributed. Notable examples include Joseph Beuys' multiple "Rose für direkte Demokratie, [Rose for Direct Democracy]" (1973); street posters by Robbie Conal and Ernest Pignon-Ernest; and Sue Coe's print, "Bush AIDS" (1990).

Collages by Ray Johnson are also a part of the exhibition. Brown had participated in Johnson's network of Mail Art contributors.

Many selections also reveal Brown's passionate interest in political issues, from R. Fried's, "Non-Negotiable Eights" (1971), which was made in response to the 1970 shooting at Ohio's Kent State University, to the John Bommer collage that implored those affected by AIDS to not give up hope. Brown's collected gifts demonstrate not only his ongoing interest in art but also his desire for all to keep learning from these objects.

Other artists whose works are included in this exhibition are Jim Crawford, Allen Ginsberg and Robert LaVigne, Edward Kienholz, Dimitri Kozyrev, Harvey Leepa, Mike Mandel, Matt Tasley, and Andy Warhol.

To complement some of the works on display, the University Art Museum invited five members of the UCSB community with connections to Brown to write explanatory labels for selected works. Contributors include Pat Fish, BA, 1979, tattoo artist; Colin Gardner, professor and chair, art department; Penelope Gottlieb, MFA, 2004, artist; Kenneth A. Linberg, staff research associate, Neuroscience Research Institute; and Alfred Moir, professor emeritus, history of art and architecture.

The University Art Museum stimulates active learning about art and its role in society through a changing schedule of world-class exhibitions and unique educational partnerships. For information about the exhibition, visit <http://www.uam.ucsb.edu>

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[University Art Museum](#)

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The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.