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Debra Herrick

Pooch’s World

Step into the world of graphic designer and fine artist Keith Puccinelli (1950-2017), affectionately known as Pooch, in an exhibition that offers a rare glimpse into the hidden corners of an artistic life.

Welcome to “POOCH: The Art Full Life of Keith Julius Puccinelli” (Sept. 7-Dec. 15) at the Art, Design & Architecture Museum, a solo exhibition featuring the work of Puccinelli, alongside selections of work from the folk and contemporary art collection he and his wife, Frances Garvin Puccinelli, built over their 33 artful years together.

“Whether Pooch was working for a client or making his own art, his goal was to communicate ideas and emotions,“ said Meg Linton, who guest curated the exhibition, culling from six decades and more than 600 drawings, sculptures, posters, sketchbooks, videos and ephemera. “He was inspired by his environment and mined his life experiences for content to connect with others.”

Pooch was a long-time Santa Barbara resident who began his artistic career as an award-winning graphic designer with his studio Puccinelli Design (1983-1996). In 1998, after surviving cancer and at the urging of his wife, he began working full-time as a fine artist and became an active and recognized contributor to the Southern California art scene. This exhibition investigates how humor, tragedy and wit animated Puccinelli’s art and design.

“The AD&A Museum is excited to celebrate the life and work of Keith Puccinelli, an accomplished graphic designer and beloved figure of the Santa Barbara arts

community, ” said Gabriel Ritter, AD&A Museum director and an associate professor of art history. “The exhibition not only commemorates the 2018 gift of Keith's complete archive to UCSB, but also recognizes the important role both he and his wife Fran played as pillars of the local arts scene. The inclusion of over 40 loaned artworks by longtime friends of the couple serves as a moving tribute to their legacy.”

Furthermore, the exhibition situates Puccinelli’s career within the constellation of his local and regional contemporaries including Dane Goodman, Hugh Margerum, Hilary Brace, Joan Tanner, Richard Ross and Lily Guild, as well as artists Philip Guston, Robbie Conal, Wayne Thiebaud and many others who influenced his practice more broadly.

“POOCH” also celebrates the gift of more than 600 original works of art and the full artist’s archive including design and documentary materials made to the AD&A Museum in 2018.

Additionally, the show’s catalog — which will come out later this fall — documents the exhibition and provides insight into Puccinelli’s artistic process, including texts by Linton, Puccinelli, Goodman, Ritter and Elyse A. Gonzales, director of Ruby City (San Antonio, Texas). Designed by Tom Stanley with assistance from graphic designers Ginny Brush and Lily Guild, the catalog will be printed by Mike Szanger at V3 Printing: a National Graphics Company.

Puccinelli received his Bachelor of Fine Art from San Jose State University in 1973. As a fine artist and self-taught graphic designer, he founded Puccinelli Design in 1983 in downtown Santa Barbara and ran a successful studio until 1995 when he closed the business to pursue other creative interests.

For more than 40 years, Pooch has exhibited artworks in numerous solo and group exhibitions at galleries, museums and contemporary art spaces. His work is included in private and public collections, including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Westmont Ridley-Tree Museum of Art, Wildling Museum of Art & Nature, Weatherspoon Museum of Art and the AD&A Museum.

Additional artists include: Todd Anderson, Sandow Birk, Jeff Brouws, Ginny Brush, Wendy Burton, Hilary Brace, Nell Campbell, Robbie Conal, Bob DeBris, Ann Diener, Linda Ekstrom, David Gilhooly, Howard Finster, Julia Ford, Colin Fraser Gray, Rollin

Fortier, Marlin Garien, Dane Goodman, Penelope Gottlieb, Lily Guild, Philip Guston, Nathan Hayden, Mary Heebner, the Wixárika people, Patricia Hedrick, Neal Izumi, James Harold Jennings, Susan Jørgensen, Philip Koplin, Dan LeVin, Holly Mackay, Hugh Margerum, Penny Mast McCall, Wayne McCall, Virginia McCracken, Barbara Parmet, Jens Pedersen, Rafael Perea de la Cabada, Gail Pine, Fran Puccinelli, Harry Reese & Sandra Liddell Reese, Richard Ross, Alison Saar, Marie Schoeff, Judith Scott, Tom Stanley, Nicole Strasburg, Joan Tanner, Masami Teraoka, Wayne Thiebaud, Susan Tibbles, Richard Tullis, Dug Uyesaka, Beatrice Wood and Seyburn Zorthian.

An opening reception will be held at the AD&A Museum on Saturday, Sept. 7, 4-6 p.m. For more related programming, visit the museum website.

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