



COURIER photo/Steven Felschundneff

CLAREMONT montage

Noted Claremont artists, back row from left, James Hueter, John Svenson, Aldo Casanova and, front, Harrison McIntosh and Karl Benjamin, pose for a photograph on Friday during the opening reception for Claremont Modern: The Artists of the GI Bill show in Claremont. The exhibit is sponsored by the Claremont Museum of Art as part of the ongoing celebration of California artists. Story on page 10.

Life is sweet

Community members and high schoolers find common ground with jam

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Tents come down at Occupy Claremont

With the camping ordinance going into effect Friday, Occupiers plan a gathering to celebrate the movement

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Your week in **9 days**
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Head over to Seaver Theater for the fantastic musical-comedy **The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee**. More information on page 12

FEATURES



COURIER photo/Steven Felschundneff
 Artist Karl Benjamin, center, shares a laugh with friends on Friday during the opening reception for Claremont Modern: The Artists of the GI Bill at the Ginger Elliot Exhibition Space at Garner House, Memorial Park. The show is the third in the Claremont Modern Series put on by the Claremont Museum of Art.

Exhibit brings artists' creative beginnings front and center

Claremont's Ginger Elliot Gallery at Memorial Park has been transformed into a walking WWII art history book.

The Claremont Museum of Art debuted Claremont Modern: Artists of the GI Bill at the Claremont Heritage Ginger Elliot Exhibition Space last weekend, surrounding viewers with the works of prominent local artists and WWII veterans. The free exhibit will close this Sunday.

ART

Artists of the GI Bill is the third installment by Claremont Heritage and the Claremont Museum of Art inspired by the Getty Foundation's Pacific Standard Time (PST) celebration. In 2010, Getty Foundation began PST with the goal of bringing together art and cultural institutions across southern California to celebrate the Los Angeles art movement from 1945 to 1980.

Under the stewardship of great local artists such as Millard Sheets and Sam Maloof, this installment recognizes those Claremont WWII veterans, several of which continue to sculpt and paint today.

"These are the artists that continue to make Claremont an artists' colony," said Ginger Elliot, the gallery's namesake. "After WWII we saw tons of artists moving into town. It helped set a tone that we still feel today."

The GI Bill brought about a resurgence of art in Claremont that may have otherwise been lost, according to local artist and Scripps Professor Emeritus Aldo Casanova.



Artist Aldo Casanova, standing, speaks with noted ceramicist Harrison McIntosh at the opening reception of Artists of the GI Bill at Memorial Park's Garner House. The one-week exhibit will close this Sunday, February 26.

"A lot of these guys were already interested in art, but when they came out of the army they had very few dollars left," Mr. Casanova explained. "[The bill] provided the bucks."

"It was like a grant just landed right on their heads," Mr. Casanova described it. Several of the artists present at Friday's gallery opening, whose works adorned the walls and center of the exhibition space, could attest to Mr. Casanova's sentiments. Money provided through the GI Bill, passed in 1944, made an art education possible for those that would have otherwise not been able to afford it.

"It helped me to continue ceramics," said 97-year-old Harrison McIntosh, who studied art at the Claremont Graduate College (now University) from 1949 to 1953.

Though GI funds helped back the endeavors of these influential artists, many said their passion for art was present prior to the war. The GI Bill simply allowed that passion to continue and flourish. Mr. McIntosh's appreciation for art developed as a young boy visiting museums in the company of his older brother. Before enlisting in the US Army, Mr. McIntosh studied art in Los Angeles and was profoundly touched by a ceramics class taken at the University of Southern California.

"It was a turning point in my life," Mr. McIntosh shared of delving into the world of ceramics. "There was something so satisfying in creating something so technical."

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COURIER photo/Steven Felschundneff
 From left, Claremont artists James Hueter, John Svenson, Aldo Casanova, Harrison McIntosh and Karl Benjamin pose for a photograph on Friday during the opening reception for Claremont Modern: The Artists of the GI Bill show in Claremont.

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He returned from the war and took to making that passion into a lifetime of creation. He claims he has contributed more than 9,000 ceramic creations since graduating from CGC. One of the pieces he

created during his studies, titled "Mystic Symbol," is on display at this week's exhibit.

Millard Sheets opened the Graduate School Masters of Fine Arts program at the Claremont Colleges in 1943, which helped draw great artists like Mr. McIntosh to the Claremont area. Among them was John Svenson, whose pieces such as

"Crab with Starfish," a wood-worked sculpture, are also on display.

"The great thing [about the GI Bill] was it helped us keep connected," said Mr. Svenson about his Air Force comrades.

Mr. Svenson's wife encouraged him to return to school after enlistment and, with her prodding, went on to study at CGC and Scripps and became an assistant to famous sculptor Albert Stewart. At 88, Mr. Svenson continues to devote his attention to art, spending 4 to 5 hours a day on his work.

"I will sit outside and work until the bats come in," Mr. Svenson joked.

Despite their common bond of service, the work adorning the gallery is vast, from oil paintings to woodwork, etchings and sculptures. The variety speaks to the vast culture of art in Claremont both then and today.

"These artists help give our town its character," Ms. Elliot said, "It's something that drew people to the Claremont area and continues to do so. We are just so lucky."

The exhibit will continue to run from noon to 5 p.m. every day through this Sunday, February 26. The gallery is located behind Claremont Heritage's Garner House in Memorial Park. For more information visit www.claremontmuseum.org or call 621-3200.

—Beth Hartnett



Ceramicist Harrison McIntosh, far right, takes in the show on Friday during the opening reception for Claremont Modern: The Artists of the GI Bill at Garner House in Memorial Park. Mr. McIntosh's work is part of the exhibit which was sponsored by the Claremont Museum of Art.