



Padua Hills Art Fiesta to Feature Millard Sheets Film

The Claremont Museum of Art will host the 12th Annual Padua Hills Art Fiesta on Sunday, November 1 with an outdoor art show, art and craft demonstrations, music and more. The recently produced film *Design for Modern Living* will be shown throughout the day and an exhibition will feature paintings by one of California's most recognized artists, Millard Sheets.

Some local residents still recall the popular Padua Hills Art Fiesta held through the 1950s. Since 2011, the Claremont Museum of Art has continued the tradition with Claremont area artists showing their work under the shady olive trees of the beautifully restored Padua Hills Theatre.

- **Sunday, November 1**, 11am to 4pm at the Padua Hills Theatre, 4467 Padua Ave., Claremont. Admission is \$8 for adults, \$6 for CMA members. Children under 18 are free.
- **Twenty five area artists** will display and sell their paintings, prints, ceramics, glass, sculpture, textiles and jewelry. Area art organizations will provide **art and craft demonstrations**.
- A Claremont Museum of Art exhibition, ***Millard Sheets: Hills and Horses*** will show how a love of horses inspired the artwork of Padua Hills artist Millard Sheets in the 1940–60s.
- The new documentary film ***Design for Modern Living: Millard Sheets and the Claremont Art Community 1935-1975*** will be shown throughout the day.
- ARTstART students will lead children in creative **Art Activities**. A **Music Stage** will feature local performers. **Festive foods** will be served with traditional Jamaica punch and fresh lemonade.

First held in 1953, the Padua Hills Art Fiesta was organized by local artists to bring art into the community. The studio art movement that flourished here in the 1950s centered on the use of natural materials and traditional sensibilities – watercolor, pottery, woodworking, sculpture in stone, bronze and ceramic, mosaic, textiles as well as painting. Visitors came from miles around to meet the artists and watch “art in action” at the popular festival. Today the tradition continues with a new generation of artists sharing their talents.

THE EXHIBITION

MILLARD SHEETS: Hills and Horses

The exhibition *Millard Sheets: Hills and Horses* will feature paintings, drawings and lithographs from the years that Sheets lived and worked in Padua Hills in the 1940s-60s.

Born in 1907 on a ranch in Pomona, Millard Sheets showed early promise as an artist and attended Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles. There he became accomplished in many media - painting, printmaking, mural painting and architectural design. An early trip to Europe introduced him to German Expressionism and Turner's watercolors. His interest in Regionalism produced paintings of rural California as well as scenes of Los Angeles in the Depression. In 1930 he arrived to develop the fledgling art department at Scripps College and form the Graduate art program. Under his leadership, Claremont became a significant artistic center. He built his house in the Padua Hills where so many of his artist friends lived.

The war years saw him designing flight-training schools and working as an artist-correspondent for Life magazine where he painted many scenes of India and Burma. After the war he returned to Scripps and the Claremont Graduate School to mentor returning GIs in their art careers. Many of these young men and women were drawn to the Abstract Expressionism and while it was not Sheet's preferred style he encouraged them. Sheets was put in charge of the Fine Arts program at the L.A. County Fair in the early fifties and his students were put to work preparing the galleries and often being shown there. In 1953 Sheet's became the director of the new Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles but he maintained his studio in Claremont. Here he designed many of the Home Federal Savings Banks with their stunning mosaic murals and worked with many architects on other projects. He retired to northern California where he died in 1989.

THE FILM

Design for Modern Living: Millard Sheets and the Claremont Art Community 1935-1975

Two years in the making, the one-hour documentary film *Design for Modern Living: Millard Sheets and the Claremont Art Community 1935-1975*, produced by Paul Bockhorst in partnership with the Claremont Museum of Art, tells the story of the remarkable artistic community that took root at Scripps College and made Claremont an important center of Mid-20th Century Modern design.

The film provides a vivid and illuminating account of the important art community that emerged in Claremont in the years following World War II under the leadership of Millard Sheets, with profiles of nearly two dozen artists and craftspersons.



In the years following World War II, the community of Claremont in Southern California emerged as an important center for the visual arts, due in large measure to the inspired efforts of the artist and educator Millard Sheets. In Claremont, painters, sculptors, ceramists, enamel and mosaic artists, woodworkers and fiber artists devoted themselves to their creative pursuits with great imagination and energy, creating works that express the spirit of Postwar Modernism in California.

In the film, artists who were active in Claremont in the postwar period share their memories of the time and place. They include Betty Davenport Ford, John Svenson, James Strombotne, Paul Darrow,

Harrison McIntosh, Barbara Beretich, and Martha Longenecker. Other artists featured in the documentary include William Manker, Jean and Arthur Ames, Albert Stewart, Henry Lee McFee, Phil Dike, Milford Zornes, James Hueter, Jack Zajac, Karl Benjamin, Roger Kuntz, Rupert Deese, Susan Hertel, and Sam Maloof. Additional insights are provided by Tony Sheets, Carolyn Sheets Owen-Towle, Christy Johnson, Harold Nelson, James Elliot-Bishop, and Catherine McIntosh.

The documentary was produced by Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Paul Bockhorst, in cooperation with the Claremont Museum of Art. A veteran writer, producer, and director, Bockhorst has produced dozens of programs that have appeared on PBS, NBC, ABC, Turner Broadcasting, and the Disney Channel. He recently received an Honorary AIA Award for his many documentaries on art and architecture.

Principal funding for *Design for Modern Living* was provided by The Ahmanson Foundation and Howard and Roberta Ahmanson, The Windgate Charitable Foundation, Gerald and Bente Buck, E. Gene Crain, Marguerite and Harrison McIntosh, Tom & Carolyn Sheets Owen-Towle, and the Family of Helen Bockhorst. Additional support was provided by the Historical Collections Council of California, Peter and Gail Ochs, Robert and Nadine Hall, Jim and Perry Jamieson, Beverly Maloof, the Family of Karl Benjamin, and Betty Davenport Ford and Harold Ford.

CLAREMONT: A CENTER FOR MODERN DESIGN

The three decades following the end of World War II stand out as a golden age in Claremont and the surrounding Pomona Valley. The work created in that time and place gave vibrant physical expression to Southern California's informal lifestyle, commanding both national and international attention.

American confidence was high, and so too was the desire for the good life promised in the American Dream. After fifteen long years of economic crisis and war, there was enormous pent-up demand for modern housing and well-designed home furnishings. Another important factor was the GI Bill, which allowed large numbers of returning veterans unprecedented access to higher education, including art instruction. The alignment of these factors in the late 1940s and early 1950s set the stage for an explosion in craft production in Southern California—and for Claremont's emergence as an important center for modern design.

MILLARD SHEETS: ADVOCATE FOR THE ARTS

If the conditions were favorable for an artistic boom, a spark was still needed to ignite it. Millard Sheets was at once a painter, a muralist, an architectural designer, a teacher and art administrator, an entrepreneur, and an inspired cheerleader who tirelessly preached the importance of art in daily life. Handsome and energetic, daring and resourceful, he was a passionate ambassador for the arts. Sheets began by creating the art department at Scripps College and the Claremont Graduate School in the 1930-40s. He went on to develop the Art Department at the Los Angeles County Fair, planned and designed dozens of Home Savings & Loan Association branches throughout California, and became a powerful voice for the arts in the Southland.

Photo Captions:

Barry Vantiger shows his ceramics at the Padua Hills Art Fiesta on November 2, 2014.

Jan Wheatcroft displays her weavings and prints at the Padua Hills Art Fiesta on November 2, 2014.

Additional photos are available upon request. For more information on the Claremont Museum of Art visit our website at www.claremontmuseum.org.