Drawing on The Past
Works on Paper by California Artists

Drawing on The Past is a remarkable display of drawings, pastels, watercolors and etchings by California artists dating as far back as the 1880s.

Many of the drawings on display were produced when these artists were art students in Europe in the late nineteenth century. The traditional academic method of art training required the student to study drawing for the first two years before getting instruction on using paint and color. These classes would progress from drawing objects to eventually drawing the human figure.

Paul Grimm (1891-1974), best known as the premier painter of the desert near Palm Springs, learned to paint at the Düsseldorf Royal Academy, in Germany. The wonderful series of charcoal portraits in our exhibition were done while he was an art student there. The models are ordinary people who were hired to pose.

Pastel painters create art using a stick consisting of pure powdered pigment held together by a binder. Dating back to the Renaissance, pastel paintings show intense colors and a soft surface texture. Laguna Landscape, by William Griffith (1866-1940), painted in August, 1924, retains the “brightness” characteristic of the medium. Also included are contemporary pastel works by two award winning artists: Sally Strand and Clark Mitchell.

The exhibition also features works by some of our most prominent watercolor painters, such as Phil Dike (1906-1990), who for many years taught art at Scripps College in Claremont; Arthur E. Beaumont (1890-1978), who is nationally noted for his paintings of U. S. Navy ships; Emil Kosa Jr. (1903-1968), who spent a career as a movie artist at MGM and won an Academy Award for his work on the 1963 movie Cleopatra; Arthur G. Rider (1886-1975), a colleague of Kosa at MGM, who often painted in Mexico.

One of the most popular subjects for artists in California was the historic chain of missions established by Spain when California was a small part of the Empire. Henry Chapman Ford (1828-1894), a veteran of the Civil War, moved to California in 1875, and in his horse and buggy, visited nearly every one of the twenty-one missions, creating a historically important portfolio of watercolors, oils, and etchings. His monumental work added to the revival of interest in the state’s Spanish heritage and spurred the restoration of the Missions.

Exhibition continues July 7 through October 4, 2018
**Director’s Letter**

Our current exhibition, *Drawing On The Past*, consists of works on paper, namely drawings, watercolors, pastels and etchings. How are these various media defined and how do they differ from each other?

**Drawing** is a form of visual art produced by the artist where they use various implements to create an image, usually onto paper. A drawing can be produced with graphite pencils, pen and ink, colored pencils, crayons, charcoal, chalk, and markers. Today, many artists use electronic media to create a drawing.

For hundreds of years, drawing was a required discipline in European art academies. In addition to creating a unique work of art, drawing is also used to explore a potential subject for a painting. Here the drawing is not the final work, but rather a preliminary method of observation and problem-solving for a subsequent painting. This aspect of drawing is often called a "study" or a "sketch."

**Watercolor** is a painting method in which the pigments are suspended in a water-based solution. The term “watercolor” refers to both the medium and the resulting artwork. Watercolor is transparent, showing the pencil lines of the initial drawing.

Watercolor is an ancient art medium. The paint used by Paleolithic people in cave paintings throughout Europe was water based. Also, the images in manuscript illustration dating to Egyptian times, but especially in the European Middle Ages, were also painted in watercolor.
Gouache is the opaque form of watercolor. The lines of the preliminary drawing do not show through. Today, gouache is used most consistently by commercial artists for posters, illustrations, comics, and other design work. It was used in the background paintings for most 20th-century animated movies.

Pastel artists use sticks consisting of pure powdered pigment. These pigments are the same as those used to produce oil paints and watercolors and are formed into a stick by use of a binder. Pastel is a time-tested medium that was used as early as the 1400s, in the Renaissance. During the 1700s, pastel became fashionable especially for portrait painting. With proper care, the colors of a pastel can remain strong and bright indefinitely.

Etching is one of the Graphic Arts, and as such is used to produce multiple examples of a work of art. Etching uses a strong acid to cut into the surface of a metal plate, usually of copper, to create incised lines in the metal. The plate is prepared by coating all surfaces with a waxy material, called the etching ground that is resistant to acid. The artist then draws the design by scratching through the ground with a pointed tool where he or she wants lines to appear in the finished piece. The plate is then immersed in acid, which slowly eats through the exposed lines on the plate. As the artist draws new lines, the old lines are again exposed to the acid and become deeper, thus darker than the newer lines. When finished, the plate is stripped of its waxy coating. Ink is applied onto the plate, allowing it to penetrate into the acid-eaten grooves of the design. The surface ink is cleaned off and plate and paper are run through a press. The press forces the paper into the inked grooves, thus creating the image. The printing process also results in an impression of the edges of the plate and is characteristic to identifying an etching. The printing process reverses the image, a fact that must be taken into consideration when the artist first draws the lines.

—Jean Stern, Executive Director
Education and Outreach | Phil Dike

Philip Latimer Dike was born in Redlands, California in 1906. Dike was exposed to art at an early age as his family home was filled with paintings by his grandmother, Eliza Twigg. While attending Redlands High School, he received encouragement to pursue art from his teacher, Louise Arnold, and in June of 1924, he submitted one of his drawings into a competition and was awarded a scholarship to the Chouinard School of Art in Los Angeles. For the next three years, he studied under the guidance of noted artists F. Tolles Chamberlin and Clarence Hinkle. It was during his time at Chouinard, that he met and married fellow student, Betty Woodward. In 1928 he traveled to New York to further his studies at the Art Students League with George Bridgman, Frank DuMond and privately in the studio of noted artist George Luks.

Returning to Los Angeles in 1929, Dike spent a year teaching at Chouinard before embarking on a trip to Europe to further hone his craft. Between 1930 and 1931 he studied mural decoration at the American Academy of Art in Fontainebleau, and while there, exhibited a still life at the Paris Salon. He then traveled to Italy to study lithography; then to France, England, Spain, and Morocco to paint.

After returning from Europe, he taught intermittently at Chouinard for 20 years, at the same time, working in the art department of Disney Studios (1935-1945). At Disney, he was the drawing instructor, color coordinator, and advisor. He assisted in a number of animated feature films including Fantasia, Bambi, Dumbo, Pinocchio and Snow White. During this period he continued to teach, exhibit, and receive awards for his work. Always willing to push boundaries, he was the first artist to add color to Disney cell animation, and incorporated calligraphy and geometric-abstractionist ideas into his artwork.

Best known for his Regionalist watercolors of the 1930s and 1940s, he is considered one of the most artistic and innovative leaders of the California Watercolor style. Phil Dike is remembered as a particularly popular teacher and mentor, and remains an inspiration to the art community.

—Dora James, Curator of Education

Phil Dike (1906-1990), Sail Symphony, watercolor on paper, The Irvine Museum Collection at the University of California, Irvine
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_Bunker Hill_, by Emil Kosa, Jr. (1903–1968), watercolor on paper, Private Collection

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