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**Exhibition Announcement:**

**Speaking in Tongues: Wallace Berman and Robert Heinecken, 1961-1976**

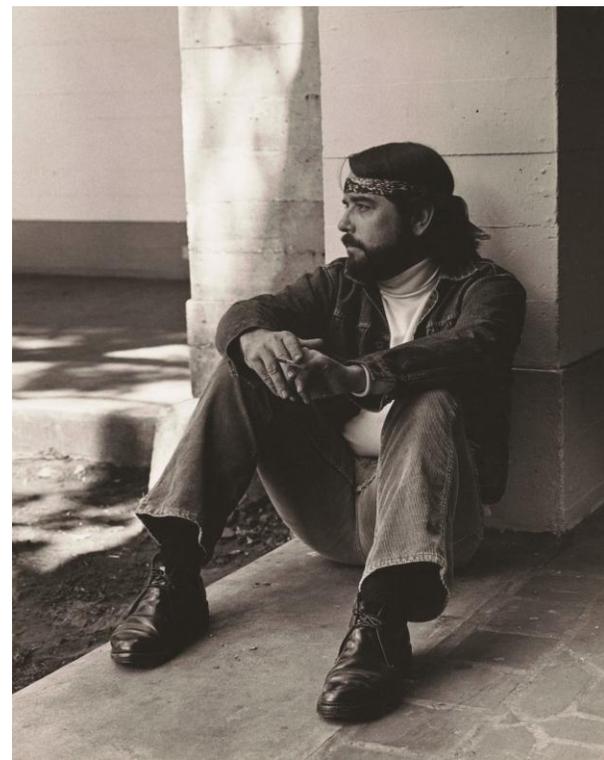
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Exhibition: *Speaking in Tongues: Wallace Berman and Robert Heinecken, 1961-1976*

Dates: March 27, 2012 - June 17, 2012

*Speaking in Tongues: Wallace Berman and Robert Heinecken, 1961-1976* brings two seminal yet under-studied Los Angeles artists into close conversation with one another for the first time. The archive of Robert Heinecken resides at the Center for Creative Photography and this is the first major exhibition of his work to be shown at the Center. Organized by the curatorial team of Claudia Bohn-Spector and Sam Mellon, with supporting research by Carolyn Peter, this exhibition examines how these two artists bridged modernist and emerging post-modernist trends by ushering in the use of photography as a key element of contemporary avant-garde art. Focusing on language and the creation of new visual codes, as well as on the little-known friendship between Berman and Heinecken, their works are explored within the unique cultural milieu of 1960s and 1970s Southern California, as it fueled and amplified each artist's highly original approach to making images.

The exhibition comes to the Center for Creative Photography after opening at the Armory Center for the Arts in Pasadena, California, as part of the celebrated 'Pacific Standard Time', an unprecedented collaboration of 70 museums and galleries tracing different histories of Southern Californian art between 1945 and 1980. This is the last chance to see the artists exhibited together.



Joan Murray, *Robert Heinecken in California*, 1972, Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.

Through an interdisciplinary display of original art works and ephemera, the exhibition captures the spirit of irreverence and innovation that permeated this important era in Southern California art. Notes curator Claudia Bohn-Spector: “Our exhibition hopes to show that Berman and Heinecken were transitional figures, who took as their point of departure the art of the historical avant-garde and updated its subjects, techniques, and irreverent stance for contemporary use. Their friendship adds a new chapter to the story of how post-modernism arrived in Southern California.”

Throughout his career, Robert Heinecken (1931-2006) amused, educated, and often shocked viewers with his pointed, irreverent photographic works. So provocative were Heinecken’s subjects—the Vietnam War, pornography, sexual politics, the media marketplace—that many critics and other observers rank either as avid fans or staunch detractors.

Heinecken was born in Denver, Colorado. In 1942 the family moved to Southern California. Following a stint in the Marine Corps as a fighter pilot, Heinecken earned his MA from UCLA. He stayed on in the Department of Art, founding the department of photography in 1962.

When Heinecken emerged in the Southern California art scene in the mid-1960s, he was one of a growing number of artists who had begun to incorporate photographs and other images into their art as a way to renegotiate the nature and meaning of contemporary art. It has always been difficult to call him a “photographer” in the strict sense of the word, because he rarely used a camera to make his pictures. Rather, Heinecken worked on the fringes of the photographic medium, and in the margins of what might be considered acceptable subject matter, as an artist who used photography only as a means to an artistic end.

Wallace Berman (1926-1976) was born in Staten Island, New York and came to Los Angeles with his parents when he was four years old. In 1955 he founded the small but influential mail art publication *Semina* – a brilliant, loose-leaf compilation of the most advanced artists and poets of his time, including William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, and Jess (Collins) to name a few. Today, Berman is best known for his Verifax collages, softly sepia-colored works created with a forerunner of the photocopy machine. Influenced by surrealism, assemblage, and contemporary artists such as Robert Rauschenberg, John Cage, and Andy Warhol, Berman produced multi-layered works that combined the picture of a hand-held transistor radio with images culled from newspapers and popular magazines.

Works in the exhibition will include some of Berman’s earliest experiments in composite imagery, such as his individual Verifax collages of hands holding a transistor radio with inlaid photographs, and his explorations of the interstices between image and text. It also shows Heinecken’s *Are You Rea* portfolio, his early projection pieces and collages of pin-ups, which articulated his desire to excavate cultural meaning through multi-layered imagery. In addition examples of Berman’s mail art and *Semina* publication will be exhibited, as well as Heinecken’s magazine interventions and photo sculptures, *Le Voyeur/Robbe-Grillet* and *Cliché Vary* series, among others.

## Additional Programming

### **Artist’s Talk: Carter Mull**

March 29, 2012

5:30pm

CCP Auditorium, Free Admission



Carter Mull is an American artist working in Los Angeles who creates pictures through a process of rephotographing and altering existing images to recompose an understanding of our shared social imagination. His practice has been discussed in publications and periodicals, including *Artforum*, *Art In America*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The New Yorker*. Mull's work has been exhibited widely, most recently at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Presentation House, Vancouver, and Domaine Departement de Chamarande, Paris, and is in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Walker Art Center, the UCLA Hammer Museum, and The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

Image Credit: Carter Mull, *Before and After*, 2009

***Kenneth D. Allan: Radio-Mastery of the Ether - Wallace Berman and Materiality in 1960s Los Angeles***

April 12, 2012

5:30 pm

CCP Auditorium, Free Admission

Kenneth D. Allan's research focuses on the rise of the Los Angeles art scene in the 1960s and has included the work and influence of Wallace Berman. A central figure in development of the postwar Los Angeles art world as the editor of the journal *Semina*, Berman's work spanned the media of photography, collage, assemblage sculpture, and film. This talk will consider how his interest in the history of radio technology, Jewish mysticism and ideas of transmission and reception come together in his later work with stones and Hebrew lettering inspired by a prized 1923 book in his library, *The Story of Modern Science Vol. IX: Radio-Mastery of the Ether*. Kenneth Allan is Assistant Professor of Art History at Seattle University and received his MA and Ph.D. from University of Chicago. His recent publications include essays for the Getty Museum catalog, *Pacific Standard Time: Los Angeles Art, 1945-1980*.

***Curator's Talk: Claudia Bohn-Spector***

April 19, 2012

5:30pm

CCP Auditorium, Free Admission

Claudia Bohn-Spector will discuss the current CCP exhibition, *Speaking in Tongues: Wallace Berman and Robert Heinecken, 1961-1976*, that she co-curated with Sam Mellon. Claudia Bohn-Spector is an independent scholar and curator in Los Angeles. She received her Ph.D. in Art History from the University of Munich, Germany. A specialist in American art and culture, she has curated numerous fine art exhibitions, including a critically acclaimed survey of Los Angeles photography at the Huntington Library in San Marino, CA, entitled *This Side of Paradise: Body and Landscape in L.A. Photographs*. With Sam Mellon, she is currently working on a book-length study entitled *WRONG: Rules and Irreverence in American Art, 1945 to 1975*, for publication in 2013.

***Luke Batten: Robert Heinecken, Object Matter***

April 24, 2012

5:30pm

CCP Auditorium, Free Admission

Luke Batten, Director of the Robert Heinecken Trust, will discuss the editing of a new monograph published by Riding House detailing Heinecken's artistic output from 1957-1997. The monograph, *Robert Heinecken*, expands our knowledge of his artistic practice by including several unpublished works from the 1950's and reassembled magazines created in the 1990's. The focus of the discussion will concentrate on Heinecken's penchant for experimenting with photographic processes and materials. Batten is Associate Professor of Photography at the School of Art and Design at the University of Illinois. He received his MFA in photography from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

*All events are free and open to the public.*

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### **About the Center for Creative Photography**

The Center for Creative Photography, part of the University of Arizona Libraries, holds more archives and individual works by 20th-century North American photographers than any other museum in the world. The archives of over 200 major American galleries, curators, historians and photographers—including Ansel Adams, Harry Callahan, W. Eugene Smith, Edward Weston, and Garry Winogrand—form the core of a collection numbering over 90,000 works. The Center for Creative Photography has an integrated program of preservation, access, and education that celebrates the history of photography and its contemporary practice.

For More Information: 520-621-7968 or <http://www.creativephotography.org>

Gallery Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; weekends, 1 to 5 p.m.

Admission: Center for Creative Photography exhibitions and education events are always FREE and open to the public.

Location: The CCP is located on the University of Arizona campus, Fine Arts Complex, 1030 N. Olive Rd., Tucson, AZ.

Parking: Parking is available at the Park Avenue Garage at the NE corner of Park and Speedway Blvd. The pedestrian underpass gives you direct access to the CCP. Parking directly behind the CCP (off 2<sup>nd</sup> Street) is free after 5 pm on weekdays and all day Saturday and Sunday.

**end**