

March 11 –

April 9, 2016

Void California: 1975–1989

Curated by CCA's Graduate Program in Curatorial Practice
Class of 2016

Opening reception: March 11, 6:30–8:30 pm

Void California surveys punk-inflected media that emerged from California subcultures in the late 1970s and 1980s. Encompassing zines, photography, collage, video montage, documentary film, and sound collage, the exhibition presents its artists and musicians as subcultural anthropologists, documenting a world at the brink of disaster.

The exhibition takes as its starting point the aftermath of the Vietnam War and Ronald Reagan's first bid for the presidency. Under the leadership of Reagan, California had become ground zero for neoconservative attacks on the social contract as well as the context for an array of violent episodes, including the Manson Family murders, the SLA abductions and bombings, the assassination of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk, and the Jonestown massacre. To some of those who lived through it, the future looked bleak—a void, indeed.

The resulting desperation prompted artists and musicians to create powerful, visually striking work that reflected their disillusionment, and to disseminate it in new ways. New access to portable recording equipment, VCRs, and photocopy machines allowed them to unravel top-down mass media

control over communication . By appropriating and mocking the imagery of newspapers and TV in cheap , reproducible media , artists created an alternative account of the period .

In doing so they formed a self-invented community . Informed by extensive archival research among a network of artists , musicians , writers , and collectors , the exhibition charts a constellation of California artists and art forms that—despite certain of its participants later achieving a more traditional art-world success—have until now received little serious attention , beyond an oversimplified nostalgia for the punk moment .

Publications and artists included in the exhibition are Melody Sumner Carnahan , Randy Hussong , Cameron Jamie , Negativland , NOMAG (Los Angeles) , Raymond Pettibon , Ruby Ray , Search & Destroy (San Francisco) , Greta Snider , Matt Heckert , Survival Research Laboratories , Joe Rees/TargetVideo77 , Vile (San Francisco) , and We Got Power (Los Angeles) .

An accompanying publication reproduces works from the exhibition and supplementary ephemeral material used in the making of several pieces , as well a curatorial project inspired by Melody Sumner Carnahan ' s *The Form* (1979) .

Events :

March 11 , 7 pm : a performance by Brontez Purnell

March 18 , 6 pm : a screening of film and video works curated by San Francisco-based filmmaker Craig Baldwin

April 1 , 6 pm : a panel discussion

April 8, 6 pm : a catalogue launch

This exhibition is curated by the 2016 class of the Graduate Program in Curatorial Practice at California College of the Arts : Shelley Carr , Meeyung Chung , Ziyang Duan , Hannah Novillo Erickson , Teresa Goodman , Rashel Ruixuan Li , and Kathryn Wade .