



Palo Alto  
**ARTCenter**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

(Images available on request. To view exhibition images go to: [www.cityofpaloalto.org/artcenter](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/artcenter).)

**The Palo Alto Art Center Presents...  
Summer 2008 Exhibitions / June 22 - September 7, 2008**

***"NATHAN OLIVEIRA: The Painter's Bronzes"***  
***Major survey examines painter's achievements in sculpture***

***"TIMOTHY BERRY: More Missing Magic"***  
***Bay Area debut of drawings and paintings of masks***

**~ Public Preview: June 22, 2008, 3:00-5:00 PM ~**

**PALO ALTO, CA** – Two compelling exhibitions, "*Nathan Oliveira: The Painter's Bronzes*" and "*Timothy Berry: More Missing Magic*," will be showcased by The Palo Alto Art Center (PAAC) from June 22 through September 7, 2008. "*Nathan Oliveira: The Painter's Bronzes*" is the first comprehensive exhibition and catalogue to focus entirely on the bronze sculptures of the internationally-celebrated artist, while "*Timothy Berry: More Missing Magic*" debuts haunting and evocative paintings of masks that symbolically grapple with origins of fear in our society. A public preview of the exhibitions will be held at PAAC on June 22, 2008 from 3:00-5:00 p.m. Admission is free. In addition, docent-led tours, "*Art Dialogues*," will be offered on most Saturdays at 2 pm. Please call 650-329-2366 for more information.

"*Nathan Oliveira: The Painter's Bronzes*" presents the artist's bronze sculptures, 1960- 2008. As acclaimed art historian Peter Selz observed in his monograph on the artist, Oliveira "used his painter's brush on the surface of the bronze," while creating his rich variations of patinas. Their distinctive character comes from the fact that they are, as the artist contends, "sculptures made by a painter." Oliveira conjures invented worlds in his bronzes with compelling heads and masks, striding figures, and mysterious landscape sites. The exhibition and catalogue explore ways that their unexpected surfaces differ from sculpture of the past. Included in the exhibition are Oliveira's bronze masks with unique variations of patinas. Created in 2007, they are part of a series entitled "*From the Green Zone*."

The haunting oil, encaustic, and gold leaf paintings in the exhibition "*Timothy Berry: More Missing Magic*," address how we are taught to mediate fear and learn deception by trying on other identities as children during All Saints' Eve (Halloween). The juxtaposition of the two exhibitions highlights how contemporary masks may, like their historic indigenous counterparts, speak of cultural scripts or hold clues to political realities.

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## **About "Nathan Oliveira: The Painter's Bronzes"**

"Nathan Oliveira: The Painter's Bronzes" is the first major survey exhibition examining the painter's achievements in sculpture. Nathan Oliveira was born in 1928 and was a Professor of Studio Art at Stanford University from 1964-1996. He has been widely celebrated as one of America's most prominent artists over the past fifty years. His work is represented in such prestigious public collections as The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and San Francisco Museum of Art; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C.; Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, and Whitney Museum of Art in New York; and the Tate Gallery in London. While his paintings have been heralded as part of the Bay Area Figurative Movement, they are, in fact, rooted in European Expressionism. In addition, Oliveira has been identified as a seminal figure in the revival of lithography during the 1950s and 1960s and of the monotype medium in the 1970s and 1980s. This exhibition reveals that his sculpture is an integral part of his creative process and a potent chapter within the entire body of his work.

Primarily due to the expense and technical details of bronze casting, Oliveira has made sculpture during three periods of his life. All of Oliveira's surfaces are as unique as the surfaces in his paintings and prints. Like Edgar Degas, Oliveira creates his initial wax sculpture by layering liquidized wax with a paint brush, as well as by carving. According to Oliveira, wax is a seductive medium because "there is this wonderful translucency, a transparency that can not be translated into bronze." The wax sculpture is cast in bronze using the *cire perdue*, or lost wax process. Color varies widely within an edition due to Oliveira's unique brush patinas. That possibility of varying the surface in each bronze by laying down different minerals has sustained the interest of Oliveira, who expanded the boundaries of monotype as a painterly print with his sequential revisions.

The exhibition features small sculptures from Oliveira's first experimentation in bronze in 1960, when he went to see the ceramic sculptor, Peter Voulkos, demonstrate a bronze pouring at the Garbanzo Works Foundry in Berkeley, California. It also includes Oliveira's entire repertoire of sculptures from 1982-1983 in which he conjured invented worlds. The 1982 sculptures, "*Head One*," "*Head Two*," and "*Head Three*," are reminiscent of timeless effigies from antiquity. Six mysteriously elongated feminine figures, 1982-1983, are absorbed in thought or have mask-like faces that relay an emotional truth. Nine sculptures of "*Sites*" place the viewer in an unusual vantage point for sculpture, an all-encompassing view from above. Vision is rewarded, as if viewing a landscape, as well from discrete views at eye level. These pieces are conceptually unique within the history of sculpture due to their evocative sense of place and artifact. The mysterious bundles, paddles, and other magical implements seen in Oliveira's monotypes and paintings are present here.

Lyrical figures created in 2007-2008 expand upon earlier sculpture in which a frozen gesture relays movement as tension. His haunting series of masks, 2007-2008, are about the war. According to Oliveira, "They are inventions of faces that belong to the 'Green Zone,' a place where the United States has extra protection." Color variations in the patinas range from a solemn silver to a potent green. Brilliant reds, terracotta and yellow are patinas seen in variants of *Mask VI*, 2007.

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In conjunction with the exhibition, the Palo Alto Art Center is publishing a full-color, 76 page catalogue that features a foreword by Peter Selz, Professor Emeritus, University of California at Berkeley, a curatorial essay by Signe Mayfield, Curator, Palo Alto Art Center, historic photos by Leo Holub, and images of the sculptures by M. Lee Fatherree. The exhibition and catalogue have received support from the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation, the Arts Council Silicon Valley, in partnership with the County of Santa Clara and the California Arts Council, Gretchen and John Berggruen, the Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson Charitable Foundation, John and Sue Diekman, Kenneth and Barbara Oshman, John and Jill Friedenrich, Drew and Katie Gibson, Robert and Ruth Halperin, Smith Andersen Editions in Palo Alto, the Irv Weissman Family, Gail and Jim Young, Zazzle, and anonymous donors.

### ***About "Timothy Berry: More Missing Magic"***

*"Timothy Berry: More Missing Magic,"* showcases a visual inquiry in paintings and drawings by the artist that he initiated, when thinking of the question of how we begin to "mediate fear" in our culture. Berry, who teaches at the San Francisco Art Institute and the University of California at Davis, is clearly creating the most moving work of his thirty year career through his body of evocative, process-oriented drawings and paintings with gold leaf, encaustic and tar that symbolically grapple with origins of fear in our society. To the Bay Area artist and educator, fear has surfaced as a dominant, emotional component driving many Americans' decision-making process since the aftermath of 9/11. The "culture of fear" seems to have supplanted "the age of anxiety."

Berry's visual inquiry began with the question of how children are taught to mediate this primal emotion through masks during the ritual celebration of All Saints' Eve (Halloween). He created anthropomorphic "characters" with masks and related costumes, dating from his own childhood. To his delight, many of the dimensional, vintage masks have "collapsed" to speak of the passage of time. Berry's expressive interpretations echo a long lineage in art history, ranging from those of James Ensor, the 19th century Belgian painter and printmaker, to those of indigenous cultures. The issues behind Berry's work raise awareness of cultural scripts that are manipulated by those in power to coerce emotional reactions on the part of the public in perceiving the other or in responding to threats of security.

The exhibition has received additional support from Jeffrey N. Dauber and Sue Greenwood Fine Art, Laguna Beach, CA.

### ***About the Palo Alto Art Center***

The Palo Alto Art Center (founded 1971) is a nationally acclaimed, regional visual art center whose exhibition program focuses on documenting – and celebrating – the art and artists of the San Francisco Bay Area. The Center's mission is to foster creative process and thought by forging a greater appreciation and understanding of the visual arts through exhibitions, studio experiences and related educational programs. The Palo Alto Art Center, Division of Arts and Culture, City of Palo Alto, is funded in part by support from the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation and the Arts Council Silicon Valley, in partnership with the County of Santa Clara and the California Arts Council. The Center is open to the public without charge from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday; 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. Sunday; and 7:00 -10:00 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday. The Center is located at 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto, CA 94303. For further information: Phone: 650-329-2366 / E-mail: [artcenter@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:artcenter@cityofpaloalto.org) / Website: [www.cityofpaloalto.org/artcenter](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/artcenter)

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