

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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The transformation of Los Angeles into one of the most exciting, vibrant cities of the world testifies to the power of imagination to overcome natural limitations. During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, civic leaders challenged the isolation of their town by building an artificial harbor that is now the nation's second busiest port. They captured control of train routes into the region and engaged in a worldwide marketing campaign to attract tourists and settlers. The most important project for the future of the region, however, was engineer William Mulholland's proposal to transport water from the Sierra Nevadas across hundreds of miles of desert and mountains. In the 1910s, he designed and constructed for the city of Los Angeles one of the world's most ambitious hydrological projects, perhaps the largest ever built by a city instead of a national government. Mulholland's team succeeded brilliantly in solving technical obstacles and eradicated the limits that relatively limited local water sources placed on growth.

Often enough as the region grew in a series of spectacular projects, failure revealed the nightmares lingering close to ambition. While Mulholland built his aqueduct system, real estate developer Abbott Kinney hoped to create a replica of Venice complete with canals and gondolas in the Ballona Lagoon south of Santa Monica. Kinney dreamed of recapturing for his hometown the glory of the once great Mediterranean city. However, he could not solve the problem of how to keep the canals from silting, and his project quickly decayed into a slum, where decomposing stucco arcades spoke to the fear of degeneracy haunting modern dreams of unlimited progress. The price of rapid growth dictated largely by the desire of local entrepreneurs to capitalize on the region's clement weather has been urban sprawl, air pollution, and racial tensions that three times in the twentieth century fueled deadly urban riots.

As home to the motion picture industry, Los Angeles is one of the most important cultural capitals of the world. Hollywood imagery had contributed to the glamorous mythos of the region, while simultaneously promoting an image of Southern California as superficial and tawdry, as a place where the shade of one's tan carries greater weight than the depth of one's thought. The image may not be entirely unfair, but it offers an incomplete representation of a complex urban center. Southern California has developed into an important center for research in many scientific fields, with particular strengths in astronomy, genetics, and organic chemistry. Continued investment over many decades in schools,

museums, and other civic institutions has led to an impressive body of cultural assets that are outstanding by any standard. Los Angeles in particular has been home to scores of prominent writers, artists, musicians, architects, scientists, and educators. Distinctive and innovative approaches to literature and the arts have emerged from the region, yielding a rich artistic legacy, often exceptionally engaged with the moral and aesthetic dilemmas of a culture organized around unlimited progress. For local boosters, rapid growth demonstrated the productive power of imagination. For the many critics of Southern California life, the most insightful of whom have been local residents, regional history has demonstrated instead the destructive effects of greed. Neither booster nor critic is wrong. To understand the cultural and intellectual life in the region requires keeping the perspectives of both in mind.

Conquest and a Culture of Growth

The Tongva, Chumash, and Tataviam peoples occupied the coastal plains and valleys along the Santa Barbara channel for thousands of years. In 1769, Franciscan missionaries landed at San Diego to establish a chain of missions along the coast as far north as the San Francisco Bay region. Secular settlement from Mexico followed and, in 1781, forty-four migrants founded the pueblo of Los Angeles. The first literature from the region were accounts by Franciscans of their work, memoirs by members of the landowning aristocracy, and descriptions

by French, British, American, and Russian travelers of the climate and social life during the Spanish and Mexican periods.

To these foreign commentators, the peoples of the area, be they Mexican or native, failed to grasp the value they could extract from the land upon which they lived. The historian Richard Henry Dana, in his classic account of California under Mexican sovereignty, Two Years before the Mast (1840), enthused, “In the hands of an enterprising people, what a country this might be!” (p. 179). Visitors affirmed the beauty and abundance of the land, which they credited to a beneficent nature that would generate untold wealth once labor tamed it. In the late twentieth century, ethnobotanists and ecological historians stressed that the wealth of the region before European conquest had been a product of the original inhabitants’ expertise and technique. The philosophies and myths that guided their labors were largely invisible to commentators, who saw the ease with which the native peoples enjoyed their land as evidence of a corrupt moral state. The pre-existing wealth of the area was both allure and temptation, for even conquerors might become sybarites. One early “explorer,” Thomas Jefferson Farnham noted in his Life, Adventures, and Travels in California (1849), a bountiful nature seduced Californians to put pleasure ahead of work, and Dana worried that Americans who settled in the far west would become lazy.

For thirty years after the American military conquest of 1846, Southern California remained a quiet pastoral region. Yankees arriving in Los Angeles, a

town of 1,600 inhabitants in 1850, styled their new home the “Queen of the Cow Counties.” The city’s population grew slowly to nearly 6,000 by 1876, the year that the railroad arrived. By 1885, two rail companies, Southern Pacific and Santa Fé, were competing to draw tourists and settlers to the region from the eastern United States. Both railroads established literary bureaus to fund books and magazine articles extolling the potential of the land. Works by Charles Nordhoff (California for Health, Pleasure, and Residence: A Book for Travellers and Settlers, 1872), the California Immigration Commission (California, the Cornucopia of the World, 1883), and Jerome Madden (California: Its Attractions for the Invalid, Tourist, Capitalist, and Homeseeker, 1892) extolled the climate and the possibilities for a new culture that would blend Anglo-Saxon initiative with Mediterranean comfort.

The boosters of the region were extraordinarily effective. In the 1880s alone, the population of Los Angeles more than quadrupled and then doubled in each of the next two decades. By the 1910 census, the city had joined the ranks of the major urban centers in the United States. Between 1880 and 1930, new residents were predominantly middle-class, white Americans from the Midwest. The great waves of European immigration that transformed the major cities of the nation, including San Francisco to the north, largely bypassed Los Angeles. Carey McWilliams’s Southern California: An Island on the Land (1946) and Robert M. Fogelson’s The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930 (1967), the two

classic works on the development of Los Angeles prior to World War II, argue that public life in Los Angeles developed around a stark racial divide. A white, Protestant majority zealously guarding its American identity dominated a large minority of distinct non-white groups, fragmented and competing with each other for the lowest occupations but all equally excluded from the political process and even from many basic public services.

Although the white population of the city tended to despise the racial minorities who lived there, romantic interest in the history of the region and the cultures that the Americans had replaced found many adherents. Charles Fletcher Lummis, the first city editor of the Los Angeles Times, came to Los Angeles from Cincinnati in 1884 and quickly developed an enthusiasm for native culture, California's "Spanish" period, and the austere natural beauties of America's Southwest deserts. Lummis collected native crafts, and the work he saved in many cases remains the most extensive evidence of tribes destroyed by the Spanish and American conquests. Lummis launched a monthly magazine, Land of Sunshine (later renamed Out West), that encouraged exploration of the west. With considerable support from local businesses, he offered subsidies for eastern writers and artists who wanted to experience the wonders of the region. His home, El Alisal (The Sycamore), an eclectic mixture of styles that he believed synthesized the spirit of the land he had adopted, was the center of a small community of locally based intellectuals and bohemians who shared his

enthusiasms, including the feminist writer Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the painter William Wendt. Lummis founded the California Landmarks Club in 1895, the beginnings of a regional historic preservation movement. In 1910, he launched the Southwest Museum, which has since built upon the personal collection he donated to the new institution. Lummis was a prolific writer, and his many books helped create a romantic geography of the region with often accurate but sometimes fanciful interpretations of the landscape and the history of the peoples who have lived there.

The cultural and intellectual life of the city developed in the context of nonstop boosterism. Regional elites wanted maximum growth in all fields, including the life of the mind. The eastern and midwestern towns they had left behind provided their models for a good cultural life. The migrants who arrived in Los Angeles after 1880 brought with them a commitment to chautauqua culture. Los Angeles was a lucrative destination for public lecturers, theater touring companies, and traveling musicians at the end of the nineteenth century. In her autobiography, Emma Goldman wrote that audiences in Los Angeles prior to 1917 were the largest she encountered anywhere in the United States and the most enthusiastic. Much of her public was hostile to her radical anarchist and feminist ideas, but she could count on drawing large numbers of informed listeners interested in debating virtually every topic she might propose.

Cultural Infrastructure: Learning, Libraries, and Museums

Boosterism merged with a progressive culture of moral uplift to encourage the construction of schools, libraries, and museums, institutions that ensured that a rapidly expanding commercial society in a foreign land could remain attached to the best of its cultural heritage. As of 1990, there were thirty-two four-year colleges and universities in Los Angeles County and twenty-seven junior colleges. The three leading research universities in the county are the University of Southern California (USC), started in 1880 by the Methodist Episcopal Church as a school open to students of all faiths; the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), founded in 1919 as a southern branch of the older Berkeley campus; and the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), established in Pasadena in 1891 as Throop University, but reorganized and renamed in 1920 when the physicist Robert A. Millikan became president.

Academic prestige has been particularly notable in science and medicine. The Nobel laureates Max Delbrück and Linus Pauling, among many others, helped establish the area as a center for research in chemistry and genetics. Los Angeles is also a focal point for astronomy and space exploration. In 1917, the astronomer George Ellery Hale opened a 100-inch telescope on Mount Wilson in the San Gabriel Mountains above Pasadena, followed within a few years by a 200-inch refractor telescope at Mount Palomar near San Diego. The Jet Propulsion Laboratory, started in 1958, has designed and managed the National

Aeronautics and Space Administration's expeditions to Mars, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, and other planets, and has been responsible for the scientific aspects of lunar exploration.

The Los Angeles Public Library quickly developed into one of the largest and most used public systems in the United States, while universities of the area also developed excellent libraries. The University Research Library at UCLA is the third largest academic library in the United States. There are several specialized research libraries in the Los Angeles region. The Henry E. Huntington Library, Art Gallery, and Botanical Gardens in San Marino opened to the public in 1928. The library has over 3 million rare items, including Shakespeare folios, manuscripts pertaining to British and American literature, politics, and culture, and a Gutenberg Bible. The art collection focuses on eighteenth-century British painting. The William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, deeded to UCLA in 1934, has extensive holdings in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British literature, as well as books related to the life and work of Oscar Wilde. The surgeon Elmer Belt developed a superb collection of old books and manuscripts relating to Leonardo da Vinci and his time. Belt donated his collection to UCLA, where it is now a special library. The Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities at the Getty Center has collected over 800,000 volumes dealing with art history, as well as extensive manuscript collections. This relatively new library has already become, thanks to a several

billion-dollar endowment, an essential place for the study of French postimpressionism and modernism, dada and neodada art movements, and a large variety of other art historical topics.

The Getty Center is also famous for its J. Paul Getty Museum, which has particularly strong collections in Greco-Roman antiquity, medieval manuscripts, old master painting, and photography. It is one of over two hundred museums in the greater Los Angeles region. The Norton Simon Museum of Art in Pasadena houses one of the finest private collections of old master, modern, and Asian art to be found anywhere in the world. The museum is also home to the Galka Scheyer Collection of German expressionist painting, as well as to excellent modern collections assembled by the Pasadena Art Museum between 1942 and 1974. Other particularly notable museums are the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, founded in 1910, with superb holdings in most fields; the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, founded in 1979 to showcase art produced since 1940; the Autry Museum of Western Heritage; the Southwest Museum, with strong holdings in the cultures of the indigenous peoples of the region; the Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art at Pepperdine University, with particularly strong holdings in twentieth-century California art; the California African American Museum; the Japanese American National Museum; and the Museum of Jurassic Technology.

Los Angeles cultural institutions flourished to the degree that wealthy

benefactors supported them with financial donations and personal leadership. Impressive amounts of money facilitated the acquisition of the best items available at any given time in the art or book markets. Money as well assured that the best professional talent came to Los Angeles to develop and administer collections built virtually from scratch in extraordinarily short periods. The strength of museums and libraries in the area makes them fitting cultural symbols for a region historically committed to an ethos of growth. Most collections have nothing to do with the region, California, or the American West. Materials with recognized timeless value and validated as important by the leading experts of the eastern United States and Europe received first priority.

For a city that claims to be, and very likely is, the most multicultural city in the world, Los Angeles's cultural monuments are decidedly Eurocentric. Further, though the city has been home to many lively contemporary literary and arts scenes, few cultural leaders of the region have made support of local work a personal priority. Local talent may receive excellent training in area schools, but afterward they have historically encountered a marked indifference to contemporary culture that is not part of the entertainment industry. Nonetheless, the region has developed strong autonomous traditions in literature, art, architecture, music, and dance, in large part thanks to the presence of Hollywood.

The relocation of the motion picture industry to Los Angeles in the 1910s was an important factor in spurring the development of the local arts scenes. The

industry brought perennial waves of writers, artists, and musicians, as well as actors, dancers, and theater talent to the city. Their numbers far exceeded the employment capacities of Hollywood, even in its heyday, but thousands kept coming and many born in the region stayed. Despite the inadequacies in cultural support typical of American provincial cities, a lively cultural world emerged unlike that found in any other American city other than New York. As pervasive and catalytic a presence as Hollywood has been for the region, however, the motion picture industry did not set the limits of the city's cultural life. Indeed, it may be that themes indigenous to Southern California writers and artists shaped the development of American motion pictures and helped create the mythic image of Los Angeles that the movies then projected around the world.

Los Angeles Literature and Fiction

The first locally produced work of fiction was Horace Bell's Reminiscences of a Ranger (1881). A humorous account of Americans living in Los Angeles between 1850 and 1870, the book is marked by a broad humor reminiscent of Mark Twain's Roughing It (1872) and the satires of Artemus Ward. Rather than glorify Yankee heroism, Bell poked fun at the perpetual naïveté of Americans dumb enough to leave their comfortable homes and fling themselves into a completely strange country.

The first best-selling book to emerge from the region was Helen Hunt

Jackson's Ramona (1884). During the 1870s and early 1880s, Jackson traveled extensively in Southern California and became friends with several Californio families. She decided to write a novel that would dramatize for the American public how Yankee greed had led to the mistreatment of the Mission Indians and dispossession of the "Spanish" landowners. Jackson celebrated the culture of the Californios as one of refinement and personal integrity, as well as more caring of the Indians for whose care they were responsible. Synthesis between Yankee, Latino, and native peoples however was not yet on the agenda. Despite her sympathies, Jackson concluded Ramona with its attractive heroes, the son of a Mexican land grant owner and his Indian beloved, quitting the United States and settling in Mexico, where they could find refuge from their persecutors.

Though Jackson was highly critical of how California had developed under the Americans, her romantic enthusiasm for the region's Spanish roots fit in quite well with how real estate speculators were marketing the region. Developers responded to the novel with tour packages and the construction of a series of attractions for tourists. For at least two decades, fans of the novel poured into the region expressly to visit the "actual sites" where the fictional characters of Jackson's novel had lived and struggled.

Jackson was a tourist herself, as were most writers who initially came to the region. Mary Austin was one of the first serious writers of Southern California to speak from years of personal experience. In 1888 at the age of

twenty, she moved from the East to Tejón Pass, a ranching area in the mountains north of Los Angeles. She married and moved with her husband to Owens Valley, where she raised a family for the next fifteen years. Her first novel, Land of Little Rain (1903), is a powerful evocation of her life as a working farm wife in the Southern California hinterlands. Austin wrote of the desert as a powerful, indifferent presence looming over the region. In her work, the desert refuses to recognize human aspirations, but provides spiritual liberation to those who learn to appreciate a beauty transformable into wealth only with great difficulty. She also wrote of the interaction of the peoples of the region and their learning from each other in the course of a common struggle.

Like the desert, Hollywood has remained a staple theme in regional literature. Here, Hollywood is not simply a setting but exteriorizes a moral state; the movie business serves as a symbol for a complex of ideas about the role of ambition and self-deception in the modern world. The first novel about modern, urban Los Angeles was Harry L. Wilson's Merton of the Movies (1922), a comic novel set in the newborn motion picture industry. Wilson's work—indeed, the Hollywood novel at large—inverted the boosters' myths of Southern California as a place of unlimited growth and opportunity by foregrounding the greed, failure, and moral crudeness of lives devoted to stimulating and satisfying desires. Among the most famous of the many works produced on this theme are Nathanael West's The Day of the Locust (1939), Aldous Huxley's After Many a Summer Dies the

Swan (1939), John Fante's Ask the Dust (1939), F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Last Tycoon (unfinished, published 1941), Budd Schulberg's What Makes Sammy Run (1941), and Evelyn Waugh's The Loved One (1948). William Faulkner, who also made the trek to Hollywood and worked for some as a screenwriter, contributed to the genre with his short story, "Golden Land" (1935).

In the 1930s, the detective novel emerged as a staple of Los Angeles literature. James Cain's The Postman Always Rings Twice (1934) and Double Indemnity (1936) established the basic themes of greed and sexual desire combining to pervert all human relationships. Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe novels, particularly Farewell, My Lovely (1940), and Ross Macdonald's Lew Archer series, beginning with The Moving Target (1949), set high literary standards for subsequent writers, and established a vocabulary of plot twists for a style that came to be called L.A. noir. Dreams turn rotten in a tawdry, quickly built cityscape that, however young, is already decaying. In Macdonald's work, generational strife saps the victories of the founding fathers, whose hidden crimes emerge inevitably to reveal the hypocrisy of an ethos centered on growth, while Chandler foregrounded the inability of men and women to trust each other or arrive at a union that will ensure continuity.

In the late twentieth century, Joseph Wambaugh, a former Los Angeles Police Department officer, established a new standard of brutal realism for the genre with The New Centurions (1970) and subsequent novels that explored the

culture of policemen and their spiritual confusions. The corruption of the public order marks the novels of John Gregory Dunne, such as True Confessions (1977). In the 1990s, Walter Mosley and Michael Nava adopted the genre to explore the dark side of the city's racial and sexual histories by creating detective heroes based in the African American and gay communities, respectively. Mosley's work follows the precedent set by Chester Himes in If He Hollers Let Him Go (1945), which uses noir conventions to describe the experiences of African Americans in wartime Los Angeles. Like many writers, Himes came to Los Angeles to work as a screenwriter in Hollywood. He landed a job at Warner Bros., but the racism he encountered overcame his determination to succeed. In 1944, he left Los Angeles to return to New York, but ultimately moved to Europe. Several of his novels refer to his experiences in Southern California.

Noir conventions shape many novels about life in Los Angeles that are not otherwise in the Hollywood and detective genres. Joan Didion's Play It As It Lays (1970) uses the freeway system as a metaphor for the aimless wandering life of its main character, while John Rechy's classic of gay literature, City of Night (1963), presents a chilling portrait of male hustlers in Hollywood. Upton Sinclair's earlier Oil! (1927) is more realist and less symbolic, but its detailed picture of the oil boom in the Long Beach area and its corrupting effects anticipated many of the noir motifs, as did Horace McCoy's They Shoot Horses, Don't They (1935), a brilliant examination of the devastating consequences of the

Great Depression symbolically represented by a marathon dance held on a Southern California pier jutting out into the Pacific Ocean. Christopher Isherwood's A Single Man (1964) tells the story of an expatriate dying in Los Angeles in the 1940s and horrified by the doom falling simultaneously upon him and the city. Many critics consider Isherwood's book the finest novel on the émigré experience in Southern California. The poetry of Charles Bukowski, perhaps the best-known poet of the city, with themes of isolation in the midst of decay, strongly reflects noir conventions.

“Los Angeles literature” is too often limited to work that is explicitly set in the region. Authors such as Ray Bradbury, Anaïs Nin, and Octavia Butler, whose work has not privileged the region as either a setting or a theme, are not widely recognized as “Los Angeles writers,” even though their creative careers were largely or entirely spent in the city. Hundreds of writers live and work in the region. They reflect the diversity of the communities and the cultures that make up an urban center of over 10 million people. In the 1980s, fully 25 percent of foreign immigrants to the United States settled in Southern California, more than double any other location in the country. These new residents have complicated the racial divisions of the region by adding a layer of ethnic diversity that is transforming the social and political life of the region. The literature of the new Los Angeles will likely intersect with the older themes that established a global symbolic understanding of the region. Nonetheless, the genres that presented Los

Angeles to the world as the archetypal symbol for modern decadence will have to be transcended if experiences of taking root and making connections are also to find expression.

Art and Architecture

Cave paintings by the Chumash people have survived, as well as handcrafts. They provide evidence of the values of the native peoples, but the primary expression of visual art in the preconquest period was body painting, an intimate and fragile medium that requires contact with people and not simply with images. Franciscan missionaries trained native artists in European techniques, and some paintings and sculptures by these artisans have also survived, particularly in the San Gabriel Mission, where Spanish and native visual traditions are occasionally juxtaposed. Nothing survives of Tongva, Chumash, or Tataviam buildings. The Chumash had an elaborate wood construction technology, while the other native peoples built more temporary enclosed spaces from boughs and reeds.

In the American period, companies interested in promoting tourism and settlement sponsored visits by painters who would capture the natural beauties of the region. By the 1890s, permanent arts communities had taken root in the Arroyo Seco area around Charles Fletcher Lummis's home, as well as in several other semirural communities. In 1898, the then well-known French floral painter

Paul DeLongpré moved to Los Angeles from France, and his gallery became a principal tourist attraction in the region. Local painting was largely derivative of the Barbizon school, but with stronger emphasis on capturing the sharp contrasts of light and shadow typical of the region on sunny days. Stanton Macdonald-Wright, a veteran of pre-World War I Paris, founded Los Angeles's first modern-art society in 1916. A lively modernist scene developed through the 1920s and 1930s with a primary interest in chromatic effects that would match the colorful environment. Rex Slinkard and Mabel Alvarez were the most talented painters associated with early regional modernism. During this time, the Italian immigrant Sabato (Simon) Rodia constructed the Watts Towers, which inspired many subsequent assemblage artists in the state.

Los Angeles was an important center for the development of modern architectural styles. For several decades after the American conquest, builders shifted from the adobe used by the Mexicans to wood and brick, utilizing materials and construction techniques familiar to them from their homes in the East. In the 1890s, architects and builders began giving serious thought to how they might take better advantage of the natural environment that was the primary attraction to settlers. At the same time, the real estate booms involved widespread development of large tracts with relatively uniform style of homes. The California bungalow, popularized throughout the country by Craftsman magazine, became a ubiquitous feature of the Southern California landscape. Its relatively

simple but elegant lines opened interior spaces to allow for greater connection to yards, while wooden porches, eaves, and porticoes presented warm façades that suggested both Japanese and European influences. The architectural firm of Charles and Henry Greene in Pasadena built versions that were more elaborate for the many wealthy easterners who wintered in that suburb.

At the same time, the quest for a distinctive regional identity encouraged a revival of Mexican building styles. Adobe construction did not reappear, but concrete and stucco superimposed a “Spanish” look upon floor plans developed for the California bungalow house. Shortly after 1900, Irving Gill developed a poured-concrete construction technique that he used to add arcaded patios and porches to homes with otherwise sleek modern lines. By 1915, the so-called Mission revival style dominated new construction, both for private housing and public buildings. Bertram G. Goodhue’s pavilions for the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego established an impressive body of public buildings that combined simple planes of white wall with bands of elaborate baroque ornamentation. The 1925 Santa Barbara earthquake demolished much of the town’s Victorian-era center, and the city council ruled that all reconstruction be limited to the Spanish style.

Mission revivalism was particularly popular, but it was only one expression of a broader movement to link California to a fictitious Mediterranean legacy. George Allison’s design for the UCLA campus in the 1920s used a neo-

Byzantine style, self-consciously imitating monuments in Ravenna and Milan. Adding to the romantic mixture increasingly defining Los Angeles buildings, there were free adaptations of Chinese and Japanese architectural styles. Frank Lloyd Wright designed several homes constructed with steel-reinforced concrete blocks that he used to evoke Aztec and Maya monumentality. There were also a number of amusing programmatic buildings, such as the now demolished Brown Derby restaurant shaped like a derby hat, or the Tail O' the Pup hot dog stand shaped like a hot dog in a bun.

Two Austrian immigrants, Richard J. Neutra and Rudolf Schindler, were the foremost exponents of the International style in Los Angeles. Schindler came to the United States before World War I to study with Frank Lloyd Wright in Wisconsin. He moved to Los Angeles in 1920 to supervise the construction of Wright's Hollyhock House. He decided to stay and over the next several years built his own home in West Hollywood. This building, now restored to its original design and open to the public as a museum, synthesized Craftsman, Japanese, and Spanish motifs into a distinctively experimental, avant-garde look that attracted commissions. Neutra settled in Los Angeles in 1926, where he found a congenial clientele in Hollywood and in the city's professional circles receptive to his theories of "biological realism." Neutra's Lovell House (1929) overlooking Griffith Park became his signature building. His design alternated horizontal bands of fenestration circling the building with brilliant white panels

that served both to reflect the hot sun and to bring attention to the building in its steep hillside setting. In the interior, Neutra achieved an illusion that the floors are hovering weightlessly over the canyon the home overlooks. Schindler and Neutra designed both homes and public buildings that set a path for further developments in California architecture. While both were interested in designing large-scale housing tracts and Neutra did construct prefabricated housing for war workers in the Channel Heights Housing Project (1942-1944), neither had much influence on the tract housing that came to dominate the Southern California landscape.

West Coast painters in the 1920s and 1930s followed European modernist developments closely, but their work was seldom directly imitative and often moved in distinctive directions. Surrealism, for example, found an echo and a riposte in postsurrealism, a school led by Helen Lundeberg and Lorser Feitelson. The postsurrealists sought to examine the relation of self and environment through a focus on the normal associative processes of the mind and its ability to transform sensations into ideas. During World War II, these painters shifted their interest to exploring the space and light effects inherent to abstract geometric forms.

After World War II in Los Angeles as elsewhere, modernism became the predominant form in both architecture and painting. In vernacular architecture, the ranch house spread across the region. Cliff May developed the style in the

1930s as a modification and simplification of the Spanish revival building. The ranch house with its concrete slab flooring proved to be particularly economical for rapid construction of low- to middle-income housing. In an effort to counter the low design standards of most tract homes, John Entenza's journal Art and Architecture launched the Case Study House program. Entenza selected young architects to design homes that might demonstrate how scientific form improved quality and reduced costs. Entenza then found clients who would pay for having the home constructed. Between 1945 and 1966, thirty-six model homes were designed and the majority built. Spectacular photographs by Julius Shulman did much to publicize the work of the contributors, who included Gregory Ain, Craig Ellwood, Charles and Ray Eames, Pierre Koenig, John Lautner, Raphael Soriano, and William Wurster.

Simultaneously, Richard Neutra and his partner Robert Alexander developed Baldwin Hills Village as a model for privately funded, multi-unit low-cost housing. These efforts to change the nature of mass housing, as well as explorations with the aviation industry into the development of prefabricated homes, were frustrated by opposition from the real estate industry, private building contractors, and the building trades unions. The Case Study Homes, although designed as prototypes for low- to medium-cost housing, remained unique buildings that displayed the taste, daring, and distinction of their owners,

while Baldwin Hills Village became a much-sought-after and expensive condominium complex.

While abstract expressionism dominated painting in New York and San Francisco immediately after World War II, Los Angeles artists continued working in the areas that had long been of interest to them. Oskar Fischinger and Jules Engel, both working as animators in the motion picture industry, presented forms, lines, and colors in the process of an unfolding development. In addition to painting, both worked in abstract motion pictures, a development that would find many followers in the region. Rico Lebrun and Howard Warshaw were the leaders of the so-called romantic surrealists. Lebrun's emotional imagery of the crucifixion and other religious themes received both critical and popular acclaim. John D. McLaughlin, Lorser Feitelson, and Helen Lundeberg developed an impressive body of color-field paintings. Lundeberg returned to figurative subjects after a long period of pure abstraction, and her canvases of the Los Angeles skyline under various lighting conditions were very influential. At first glance, the work of Emerson Woelffer, William Brice, and Hans Burckhardt appears close to abstract expressionism, but their gestural explorations of mark, form, and line are more in dialogue with contemporaneous French and Italian painting than with the New York school. Los Angeles painters did not have a large regional market, nor did they receive critical attention from New York. Nonetheless, the twenty years after World War II saw a remarkable explosion in

the number of painters working in the region. The education provisions of the GI Bill led to dramatic increases in art school. A new arts community came into being that was completely separated from and often hostile to both the entertainment industry and to the regional tradition of boosterism. By the end of the 1950s, two new trends emerged within the local art scene that both received considerable international attention: the funk and the cool.

Funk art preserved as much as possible the raw feeling of the materials artists used, whether they were paint, clay, or found objects. The California assemblage school was one of the major expressions of the funk aesthetic. Artists scoured junkyards, abandoned factories, and desert ghost towns to find abandoned objects with unusual shapes and textures then recreated them into imaginative figures and scenes. Often the work addressed political and social themes, with particular emphasis on militarism, capital punishment, racial oppression, and sexual hypocrisy. A thoroughgoing critique of the cult of growth underlaid the genre. By emphasizing the use of discards assemblage artists challenged conventional public attitudes about beauty in art and preferences for sleek, modernist design that were prominent in the 1950s and 1960s. Well-known assemblagists from Los Angeles include Edward Kienholz, Wallace Berman, and George Herms. Noah Purifoy, the director of the Watts Towers Art Center in 1965 at the time of the Watts rebellion, put together an exhibition of pieces he and several other artists constructed from debris recovered from buildings burned out

and looted during the conflict.

Cool art appeared to be more distant from social critical themes. The work usually had a well-polished finish and often focused on exploration of light and space, a long-standing regional interest. Robert Irwin, for example, eliminated chromaticism on his disks by using reflective paint that captured ambient light and created a variety of ephemeral coloristic illusions as viewers moved and changed their relationship to his paintings. Larry Bell and Craig Kauffman adopted new plastic materials and industrial paints developed in the aerospace industry. Other painters addressed symbols common to the region. Billy Al Bengston evoked hot rods, surfing, and military insignia in his paintings. Ed Ruscha painted and photographed gas stations, palm trees, the Hollywood sign, as well as many other mythic icons of the region. Both painters lavished technical brilliance on subjects redolent with boosterist overtones, but their work nonetheless succeeded in resisting and deflating the mythic emotional registers long associated with the images they reworked. Critics often posed cool and funk art as antagonistic trends, but many artists moved back and forth between the schools. The influence of the French artist Marcel Duchamp linked both groups. His phenomenal popularity in the local art world led to Walter Hopps curating the first retrospective that Duchamp had anywhere in the world, mounted at the Pasadena Art Museum in 1963.

Despite fluctuations in the art market, Los Angeles has continued to grow

rapidly as a contemporary arts center since the mid-1960s. It has been a center for conceptual art. Judy Chicago's Womanhouse (1971) is a landmark in the development of feminist art. The Chicano artist collectives Los Four, Asco (Nausea), and the Self-Help Graphics and Art, Inc., emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s to reclaim the Mexican heritage of the region from the legacy of appropriation. Mural painting had a rebirth in the region, particularly in Latino communities, but also elsewhere. One of the best known murals is The Great Wall, painted by Judy Baca and neighborhood youth in the San Fernando Valley in the mid-1970s. The mural presents a history of the United States as one of conquest and racial struggle, but extends the promise of an eventual triumph of hopes for justice, equality, and democracy. African American arts activists challenged the exhibition and collecting policies of local museums and forced local art critics to give more attention to exhibits by African American artists. The watercolorist William Pajaud assembled an impressive collection of African American art for Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company, the largest black-owned business in the state. Alonzo Davis, Samella Lewis, John Outterbridge, Noah Purifoy, Betye Saar, and Carrie Mae Weems are among the numerous African-American artists working in Los Angeles in 2000.

Los Angeles has become a center for pop, postmodern, and deconstructive architecture. In the 1970s and 1980s, Frank Gehry emerged as the region's best-known architect. Gehry's California Aerospace Museum (1984) is a sculpture of

geometrical shapes that explode out of the ground. In his work for Loyola Law School (1984), Gehry incorporated playful quotations of older styles relevant to concepts of law and justice. In the Temporary Contemporary (1983, a branch site of the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art) and in his own home in Santa Monica, he has used throw-away building materials such as sheet metal, cyclone fencing, and particleboard for decorative effect.

Music and Dance

In the late 1930s, Los Angeles was home to a host of conductors and composers, including Otto Klemperer, who served as the conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic; Kurt Weill; Ernst Toch; Arnold Schoenberg, who had come in 1934 to teach at UCLA; Igor Stravinsky; Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco; and Ernst Krenek. The weekly Monday Evenings on the Roof concert series, hosted by the Los Angeles Chamber Music Society, featured new music and premiered many of the new works by the prominent composers in the region. However, modern music remained an enclave, a specialized taste that did not interact significantly with other parts of the Los Angeles community. Efforts by Nicolas Slonimsky to introduce the work of Charles Ives and Arnold Schoenberg into the repertoire of the Los Angeles Philharmonic in the 1930s were spectacularly unsuccessful.

Nonetheless, the presence of so many important figures in modern music

may have stimulated experimentation by a younger generation of Americans. Schoenberg held private classes at his home as well as at UCLA and taught the avant-garde composer John Cage twelve-tone composition techniques. A native of Los Angeles, Cage developed his musical style in his hometown before moving to New York in the 1940s. Los Angeles was a center for the California microtonalists. Cage, Conlon Nancarrow, and Harry Partch were among a number of composers who independently explored the possibilities of musical scales using more than the twelve tones developed in European music. Partch in particular became a cult figure on the West Coast. His hobo songs and his transcriptions of graffiti invoked noir traditions, while his mythic dance dramas synthesized European and East Asian musical forms with those of the peoples native to the American Southwest. Only the strong support of a few music patrons such as Betty Freeman and the presence of strong colleges and universities allowed experimental music to survive, if not precisely flourish.

Jazz came to Los Angeles with the motion picture industry. In 1919, Kid Ory formed the first large-scale African American jazz orchestra in the city. His success in finding audiences generated many imitators and fostered the subsequent development of big band music. Benny Goodman's orchestra originated in Los Angeles before leaving to find greater success in New York. The number of African Americans living in Los Angeles jumped dramatically during World War II. A lively club scene developed in the Central Avenue area.

Charles Mingus, Dexter Gordon, Eric Dolphy, Ornette Coleman, Buddy Collette, Horace Tapscott, Quincy Jones, Art Pepper, Gerry Mulligan, and Chet Baker are among the Los Angeles jazz musicians who developed international reputations. Between 1945 and 1965, a distinctively cool and intellectual jazz style developed in clubs in San Francisco and Los Angeles, often referred to simply as “West Coast jazz.” After 1950, however, the club scene shrank, and musicians in the area were increasingly dependent upon recording motion picture and television scores for their incomes. While jazz remained a part of Los Angeles life, institutional support for innovative jazz music was limited. Many of the best and most innovative musicians left for New York or Europe to pursue their careers.

Los Angeles was also a center in the development of modern dance. Both Isadora Duncan and Ruth St. Denis began their careers in the region at a time when the pageant movement encouraged interest in the dramatic use of free dance form. Lester Horton, however, was the only important modern dance choreographer to maintain his base in Los Angeles between the 1920s and the 1950s. He trained a number of dancers and choreographers, including both Alvin Ailey and Bella Lewitzky. Ailey followed the usual pattern of relocating to New York where there was greater support available. Lewitzky remained in Los Angeles, successfully guiding a dance company that lasted from the 1960s to the 1990s.

Los Angeles and the Culture of the Future

Given numerous strong schools, a flourishing high-technology sector, the continuing presence of the entertainment industry, and a growing core of wealthy donors and patrons, Los Angeles is likely to remain an important global center of intellectual and cultural life. The city's art and architecture scenes have achieved global visibility and in the 1990s received considerably more infrastructural support than in times past. No longer are artists and architects limited to regional imagery or themes, yet their work is often richer for its relation to a long history of concern for specific issues such as light and space. Contemporary boosters of the city refer to the international fame its artists and architects have achieved to argue that the city has finally achieved "world-class" status.

The city has long been an important center for twentieth-century world culture, but it also has had, and continues to have, many features more typical of a provincial town. Literature, theater, music, and dance could be equally strong, but they suffer from inadequacies in local infrastructure. While the cultures of Latinos, Asians, and African Americans started to receive greater visibility and some modest support, toward the end of the twentieth century, multiculturalism remains more a slogan rather than an actuality. A multicultural intellectual and cultural life is impossible if the city remains divided along racial and ethnic lines—a brutal fact that reflects nearly 150 years of deliberate exclusion and separation. To overcome the actual, everyday culture of the region will involve

fostering a new culture that has confronted legacies of racial division and romantic appropriation. Exemplars for this culture do not yet exist elsewhere, and the provincial model for heritage preservation that has been dominant in Los Angeles—the collection of classic works from traditions important to people who have migrated into the region—will not meet the challenge. A heritage preservation particular to Southern California might entail recognizing innovations that have occurred in the course of people creating new lives for themselves in a new society. Engaging the culture that is in development needs as much if not more support than heritage continuity.

Current talk of Los Angeles as having become a global capital elevates the city's booster heritage to new levels and repeats hoary patterns. Perhaps, however, dangers can turn into assets if the provincial nature of cosmopolitan ambitions is cheerfully acknowledged. If Los Angeles has joined the ranks of world-class cities, then any place can, be it Miami, Minneapolis, or Oklahoma City. The success of Los Angeles suggests that a model of the world divided between a few cosmopolitan centers surrounded by layers of increasingly backward hinterland might some day be replaced by one in which nodes of concentrated human capital are widely dispersed in overlapping networks of shared concerns and projects across a large, diverse world. Certainly a romantic conception, but less dreary than the equally romantic image of Los Angeles as “capital of the twenty-first century.”

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