

Lee Mullican

b. 1919, Chickasha, Oklahoma, USA
d. 1998, Los Angeles, USA



Mullican's paintings are characterised by dense, vibratory fields of mark-making built from thousands of small, rhythmic strokes that generate an almost hallucinatory sense of energy and depth.

Drawing on Surrealism, cosmic mysticism, and his early training as a topographical draughtsman, his work occupies a singular position between abstraction and spiritual vision.

In the 1980s he extended his practice into early computer-generated imagery, applying the same obsessive mark-making logic to digital tools.

His work is held in the permanent collections of MoMA, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, SFMOMA, MOCA Los Angeles, and LACMA, among others.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2025

Lee Mullican: Works from the 50s, 203 Fine Art, Taos, New Mexico, USA

2023

Lee Mullican: The Nest Revived, James Cohan, New York, USA

2021

Lee Mullican: Computer Joy, Marc Selwyn Fine Art, Los Angeles, California, USA

2019

Cosmic Theater, James Cohan, New York, USA

Lee Mullican: Drawings, Art, Design & Architecture Museum at UC Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, California, USA

2018

The Marble Drawings: 1966-1970, Marc Selwyn Fine Art, Los Angeles, California, USA

2017

Lee Mullican: 1960s, James Cohan, New York, USA

2016

Lee Mullican, James Cohan, New York, USA

Lee Mullican, Susan Inglett Gallery, New York, USA

2015

Lee Mullican: Shatter Special, Equitable Vitrines, Beverly Hills, California, USA

Paintings 1956-1977, Texas Gallery, Houston, Texas, USA

2014

Meditations on a Line, Marc Selwyn Fine Art, Los Angeles, California, USA

2011

Important Paintings from the 1950s, Marc Selwyn Fine Art, Los Angeles, California, USA

2009

Works from Rome, Marc Selwyn Fine Art, Los Angeles, California, USA

2008

Paintings from the 1970s, Marc Selwyn Fine Art, Los Angeles, California, USA

Master Works, Fenix Gallery, Taos, New Mexico, USA

2007

Lee Mullican: Paintings 1952-1968, John Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco, California, USA

Lee Mullican: Paintings from the Sixties, Marc Selwyn Fine Art, Los Angeles, California, USA

2006

Lee Mullican: An Abundant Harvest of Sun, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California, USA

Lee Mullican: An Abundant Harvest of Sun, Grey Art Gallery, New York, USA

2004

Lee Mullican: Drawings from the Estate, Marc Selwyn Fine Art, Los Angeles, California, USA

2001

Lee Mullican, Drawing Retrospective, Hammer Museum, UCLA, Los Angeles, California, USA

1999

Lee Mullican: Selected Drawings 1945-1980, Hammer Museum, UCLA, Los Angeles, California, USA

1995

Lee Mullican, Pavilion at the Botanic Garden, Munich, Germany
Realizing the Possible: The Art of Lee Mullican, University of New Mexico, Hardwood Foundation, Taos, New Mexico, USA

1993

Pueblo Drawings, Thibaud Campbell Gallery, San Francisco, California, USA

1989

Lee Mullican, Heritage Museum, Santa Monica, California, USA
Tribal Shots, Herbert Palmer Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

1987

New Painting and Sculpture, Charles Campbell Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

1986

Mullican at LACE, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibition, Los Angeles, California, USA
Lee Mullican, Heritage Museum, Santa Monica, California, USA

1985

Herbert Palmer Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

Galerie

Greta Meert

1980

Lee Mullican, Selected Works, 1948-1980, Galerie Schreiner, New York, USA

Lee Mullican: Retrospective, Los Angeles Municipal Gallery, Barnsdall Park, Los Angeles, California, USA

1977

Stables Gallery of the Taos Art Association, Taos, New Mexico, USA

1976

Lee Mullican: Paintings and Drawings, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, California, USA

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California, USA

1974

Rose Rabow Gallery, San Francisco, California, USA

1973

Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, California, USA

1972

Contemporary Art Gallery, Patrick Shannon, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA

1971

Jodi Scully Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

Esther Bear Gallery, Santa Barbara, California, USA

Jodi Scully Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

1970

Rose Rabow Gallery, San Francisco, California, USA

Galerie

Greta Meert

1969

Lee Mullican Paintings 1965-1969, UCLA Art Galleries, Los Angeles, California, USA

1968

Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago, Chile

1967

Willard Gallery, New York, USA

Silvan Simone Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

Oklahoma Art Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

1966

Esther Bear Gallery, Santa Barbara, California, USA

1965

San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, California, USA

Silvan Simone Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

1964

Mount St. Mary's College, Los Angeles, California, USA

1963

Rose Rabow Gallery, San Francisco, California, USA

1961

Pasadena Art Museum (retrospective), Pasadena, California, USA

Gifford Phillips Collection at UCLA Art Gallery, Santa Monica, California, USA

Willard Gallery, New York, USA

Paul Kantor Gallery, Beverly Hills, California, USA

Galerie

Greta Meert

1959

Santa Monica Art Gallery, Santa Monica, California, USA

1958

Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, California, USA

1955

Alexander Rabow Gallery, San Francisco, California, USA

1954

Paul Kantor Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

1953

Gump's Gallery, San Francisco, California, USA

1952

Willard Gallery, New York, USA

1951

Philbrook Art Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Oklahoma Art Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

1950

Willard Gallery, New York, USA

1949

San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, California, USA

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2025

Once the Block is Carved, There Will Be Names, Galerie Greta Meert, Brussels, Belgium

All About 25, James Cohan, New York, USA

Tending and Dreaming: Stories from the Collection, San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, California, USA

Second Wave: The Beginning of a Post-War Era, 203 Fine Art, Taos, New Mexico, USA

2024

Reverberations, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, California, USA

James Cohan at The Campus Inaugural Exhibition, The Campus, Hudson, New York, USA

Particles and Waves: Southern California Abstraction and Science, 1945-1990, Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Springs, California, USA

Digital Capture: Southern California and the Pixel-Based Image World, California Museum of Photography and the Culver Center of the Arts, Riverside, California, USA

Digital Witness: Revolutions in Design, Photography, and Film, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California, USA

Lee Mullican, Masaomi Yasunaga, and Keita Matsunaga, Marc Selwyn Fine Art, Camden Annex, Beverly Hills, California, USA

2023

Work in Progress: The Weisman Museum Collection, Weisman Museum of Art, Malibu, California, USA

What Has Been and What Could Be: The BAMPPFA Collection, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, California, USA

2021

Outward Sight and Inner Vision: Paul Klee and Lee Mullican, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California, USA

Le Surréalisme dans l'art américain, Centre de la Vieille Charité, Marseille, France

2019

Landscape Without Boundaries, Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem
Museum of Art, Davis, California, USA

2018

Under the Night Sky, Albertz Benda, New York, USA

2017

Way Back, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley,
California, USA

Everything we do is music, The Drawing Room, London, United
Kingdom

Dream Machines, James Cohan, New York, USA

2016

Art of Northern California: Three Stories, San Francisco Museum of
Modern Art, San Francisco, California, USA

2015

Soldier, Spectre, Shaman: The Figure and the Second World War, The
Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA

Transcendence: Abstraction & Symbolism in the American West, Nora
Eccles Harrison Museum of Art, Logan, Utah, USA

The Art Show, Art Dealers Association of America, New York, USA

All Watched Over, James Cohan, New York, USA

Selections from the Joann and Gifford Phillips Gift, New Mexico
Museum of Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA

This is not a Connection, Cirrus Gallery, Los Angeles, California,
USA

2014

Lee Mullican & Cameron, Marc Selwyn Fine Art, Los Angeles, California, USA

Western Light, Ecstatic Landscape, Sun Valley Center for the Arts, Ketchum, Idaho, USA

Santa Monica Originals, Arena 1 Gallery, Santa Monica, California, USA

Highlights from the Gus Foster Collection, The Hardwood Museum of Art, Taos, New Mexico, USA

California Contemporary Modernists: a Virtual Exhibition, Tobey C. Moss Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

2013

Down to Earth: Modern Artists and the Land, Before Land Art, LACMA, Los Angeles, California, USA

Unruly, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, California, USA

Highlights from the Harwood Museum of Art's Collection of Contemporary Art, Harwood Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California, USA

Selections from the Grunwald Center and the Hammer Contemporary Collection, Hammer Museum, UCLA, Los Angeles, California, USA

2012

Local Color, San Jose Museum of Art, San Francisco, California, USA

Selections of American Modernism, Aeron Payne Fine Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA

Conversation with the Curators: Pasadena to Santa Barbara: A Selected History of Art in Southern California, 1952-1969, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, California, USA

Pacific Standard Time Art in Los Angeles 1950-1980, Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, California, USA

Pasadena to Santa Barbara: A Selected History of Art in Southern California, 1952-1969, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, California, USA

2011

Proof: The Rise of Printmaking in Southern California, Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, California, USA

Abstract Now and Then Exhibition, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, California, USA

Taos Moderns, Aaron Payne Fine Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA

2009

Collection: MOCA's First Thirty Years, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, California, USA

The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia: 1860-1989, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA

2008

Traces du Sucre, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France

100 Works/100 Artists - A through Z, The Annex Galleries, Santa Rosa, California, USA

2006

Drawings: The Hand of the Artists, Tobey C. Moss Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

Shifting Dimensions: Sculptors on Paper, Tobey C. Moss Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

Driven to Abstraction: Southern California and the Non-Objective World, 1950-1980, Riverside Art Museum, Riverside, California, USA

2005

California Gold, Tobey C. Moss Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

2003

Holiday Highlights, Tobey C. Moss Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

2002

Creative Transitions, Tobey C. Moss Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

Creative Transition II, Tobey C. Moss Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

2000

Made in California: Art, Image and Identity 1900-2000, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California, USA

Flight Patterns, Museum of Contemporary Art at the Geffen, Los Angeles, California, USA

1996

Fifteen Profiles: Distinguished California Modernists, Fresno Art Museum, Fresno, California, USA

1995

Pacific Dreams: Currents of Surreality in Early California Art, Wight Gallery, UCLA, Los Angeles, California, USA

1992

Paintings of the Inner World, Color in Space, Herbert Palmer Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

Dynaton, Before and Beyond, Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art, Pepperdine University, Malibu, California, USA

Light and Color - Dynaton Painters, Herbert Palmer Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

1990

Turning the Tide: Early Los Angeles Moderns 1920-1950, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, California, USA

1989

Mullican & Mullican, Johnson Gallery, University Art Museum, Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA

1988

Computer Art, IBM Gallery, Syracuse University, New York, USA
Moderns in Mind, A Rothko Foundation Exhibit, Artists Space, New York, USA

1987

Visions of Inner Space, Wight Art Museum, UCLA, Los Angeles, California, USA
The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985, Hague Gemeente Museum, Netherlands

1986

New California Painting, Rancho Santiago College Art Gallery, Santa Ana, California, USA
Moderns in Mind, Artists Space, New York, USA
Dede Bazyk/Lee Mullican, LACE, Los Angeles, California, USA
The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985, Los Angeles, California, USA

1985

Sunshine and Shadow, Fisher Art Gallery, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California, USA
Sculptors and Their Graphics, Herbert Palmer Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

1984

Surrealism in California, Fisher Art Gallery, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California, USA

1983

Drawings by Painters, Oakland Museum, Oakland, California, USA

1982

Exhibition of Contemporary L.A. Artists, Nagoya City Museum, Nagoya, Japan

L.A.: Contemporary Paintings, Municipal Art Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

1981

Abstraction in L.A., 1950-1980, University of California, Irvine, California, USA

1980

Contemporary Painting in California, High Museum, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

California Painting - The Essential Modernist Framework, California State University, Los Angeles, California, USA

History of California Painting, San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, California, USA

Light and Color: Images from New Mexico, Sheldon Memorial Gallery, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska, USA

1977

Painting & Sculpture, Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco, California, USA

Five Footnotes to Modern Art History: Dynaton Revisited, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California, USA

Private Images - Photographs by Painters, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California, USA

1976

Paintings and Drawings in the Museum's Collection, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, California, USA

California Painting and Sculpture: The Modern Era, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California, USA

Galerie

Greta Meert

1972

Tamarind: A Renaissance of Lithography, The International Exhibitions Foundation, Washington D.C., USA

1969

West Coast, 1945-1969, Pasadena Art Museum, Pasadena, California, USA

Biennial, Pennsylvania Academy, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

1967

10 Selected Artists, Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, Iowa, USA

1966

Some Continuing Directions, selected by Mr. and Mrs. Gifford Phillips, Balboa Pavilion, Newport Beach, California, USA

Centenaire de Toulouse-Lautrec, Paris, France

1965

Tamarind Artists, Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles, California, USA

75th Anniversary Exhibition, Three Distinguished Artists from Oklahoma: Lee Mullican, Joseph Glasco, Leon Polk Smith, Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, USA

1964

Mount St. Mary's College Art Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

1961

50 California Artists, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA

New Object, Pasadena Art Museum, Pasadena, California, USA

Philadelphia Art Alliance, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Mount St. Mary's College Art Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

1955

III Bienal, Museu de Arte Moderna, Sao Paulo, Brazil
Detroit Museum of Art, Detroit, Michigan, USA

1953

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA

1952

American Art Annual, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA

1951

Dynaton, San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, California, USA

Stanford Art Gallery, Stanford University, Stanford, California, USA

American Painting Today, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA

The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, USA

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California, USA

1950

American Painting Today, 1950, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, TX, USA

The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Colorado Springs, CO

Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO

Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, CA

Fowler Museum at UCLA, Los Angeles, CA

France Phillips Collection, Washington D.C.

Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK

OK

Hammer Museum, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA

Galerie

Greta Meert

Harwood Museum of Art, Taos, NM
The Huntington Art Collections, San Marino, CA
Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art, University of California Davis, Davis, CA
Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, CA
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA
Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA
Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego, CA
Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, La Jolla, CA
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX
Museum of Modern Art, NYC
Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art, Logan, UT
North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC
Oklahoma City Museum of Art, Oklahoma, OK
Orange County Museum of Art, New Port Beach, CA
Pasadena Museum of California Art, Pasadena, CA
Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, OK
San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, CA
San Francisco Municipal Collection, San Francisco, CA
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA
Santa Barbara Museum of Art, CA
Smith College Museum of Art, Smith College, Northampton, MA
Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.
The Syracuse University Art Galleries, Syracuse, NY
Toledo Art Museum, Toledo OH
UC Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA
Vincent Price Art Museum, Monterey Park, CA
Weatherspoon Art Museum, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

2018

Pagel, David; *Review: The longer you look at Lee Mullican's 'Marble Drawings,' the more or less you will see*; The Los Angeles Times

2016

Holte, Michael Ned; *Best of 2016*; Artforum

Sutphin, Eric; *Exhibition Review: Lee Mullican*; Art in America

Ostrow, Saul; *Western Culture: Lee Mullican's Californian Abstraction*; arcritical

Plagens, Peter; *Eastern Influence, a 'Sculpted Ecosystem,' and English Abstraction*; The Wall Street Journal

2014

Pagel, David; *Lee Mullican's colors crackle with energy*; The Los Angeles Times

2011

Buckley, Annie; *Lee Mullican*; Artforum

2006

Duncan, Michael; *Mullican's Magnetic Fields*; Art in America

Smith, Roberta; *Lee Mullican's Countercultural Vision at the Grey Gallery*; The New York Times

2005

Knight, Christopher; *Lee Mullican: a Modernist whose sun rose in the West*; The Los Angeles Times

1999

Knight, Christopher; *Taking the Long View*; The Los Angeles Times

Galerie

Greta Meert

SELECTED AWARDS

1964

Fellowship, Tamarind Lithograph Workshop, Los Angeles, California,
United States

1963

Institute of Creative Art, University of California, Los Angeles,
California, United States

1959

Guggenheim Fellowship, New York, United States