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.

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SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2026
Ritual Sounds, Galerie Greta Meert, Brussels, Belgium

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

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

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

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 BAMPFA 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

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
Hammer Museum, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA

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*; artcritical
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

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