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A California State of Mind

"Rediscover the birth of California cool" is what the Museum of Photographic Arts intends to do this February, with two very cool events – VINTAGE and State of Mind: A California Invitational.

The Museum of Photographic Arts (MoPA), past exhibitions of which include the deeply moving Lou Stoumen Award Winners: The Legacy, the sunny student-created Writing With Light and the spellbindingly moody Edward Steichen: The Early Years, introduces a new photographic series entitled State of Mind: A California Invitational. An exhilarating celebration of California photography in the 21st century, State of Mind features the work of 21 California photographers (all nominated by esteemed California-based curators, writers, gallery owners, publishers, and academics) who are currently producing unique, thought-provoking work. The variance in theme equals that of the photographic mediums used, from wet-collodion (a 19th-century practice); three-dimensional collage; film- and digital-based imagery; combinations of each. State of Mind illustrates how photography continues to evolve and push the envelope of expression, and how images can continually be captured in fresh and exciting ways.

While the photographers are regional, the issues within the visceral and engaging photographs from State of Mind are global. Exceptional pieces include Mona Kuhn's mossy-green triad Triptych; Stephen Berkman's sepia-toned Wandering Jewess, featuring a man transporting a large wooden chair – with a woman seated in it – on his back; Susan Rankatits' oddly-calming Interception #4; and Todd Hido's gorgeously eerie, deserted country road graphic #8596. State of Mind's exhibition runs February 6–June 6, 2010.

Also very cool is the beautiful and "quintessentially California" home of MoPA patrons Scott and Carolyn White, site of this year's Fine & Rare Wine Tasting. The tasting, which kicks off MoPA's 12th Annual VINTAGE series, is February 20 from 4-6:30pm and features small culinary dishes paired with a broad array of rare American, Italian, French and Spanish wines from stellar past vintages. Every bottle presented at the event – formerly known as the "100-Point Wine Tasting" – is curated from San Diego's most exclusive – and private – estate cellars. Tickets are \$500 per tasting, and attire is 'California Cool.'

VINTAGE continues on May 22 with the Grand Tasting & Auction (6-9:30pm), held amidst the inspiring exhibition of California's contemporary photography at the Museum of Photographic Arts in Balboa Park. The evening of "cool glamour" and "breezy elegance" pairs the best California wines with local farm-fresh dishes prepared by the finest San Diego restaurants, complemented by a fabulous auction of rare vintages and elite lifestyle packages. Tickets are \$80 for MoPA Members, \$95 General Admission; attire is 'California Glamour.' Prepare to raise your glass.

by Robin Hatfield