



An Homage to Hollis Benton
Curated by Aaron Moulton
Over the Influence Los Angeles
Exhibition Dates: May 25 – June 24, 2018
Opening Reception: May 24, 2018 from 6-9 PM

May 8, 2018 [Los Angeles] – Over the Influence Los Angeles is proud to present this unprecedented homage to Los Angeles gallerist Hollis Benton in his show titled ***An Homage to Hollis Benton***. In 1980 the Hollis Benton Gallery opened its doors on Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills. Architect Michael Graves gave the architectural concept pro bono. Decked out in chrome, marble surfaces, and harsh accent walls; it was a loud bullhorn for the day's visual culture. In its nearly ten-year run the gallery broke all the rules for selling out and became an aspirational pioneer in the process.

Hollis Benton was a brash British collector with family connections to Hollywood. He bought Memphis furniture, Patrick Nagel paintings, and Robert Graham sculptures. His scene was never part of the mainstream art world of Los Angeles and for him that made him a maverick. In 1979, thanks to Benton's long friendship with Hugh Hefner, the artists Patrick Nagel and LeRoy Neiman both began collaborations with Playboy magazine. It would rocket their fame making them voices of a generation. For nearly a decade both artists would paint multiple exclusive images for every issue of Playboy. Neiman became the Playboy Mansion's artist-in-residence.

Benton presciently understood the potential for getting his artists' work into print, on television and in film. Sylvester Stallone's appreciation of LeRoy Neiman's paintings would land Neiman a bit part as the ring announcer in *Rocky III* (1982). Patrick Nagel's work made the cover of Duran Duran's *Rio* album, was set design for David Copperfield and became an advertiser's dream. The gallery would furnish movies with artworks to backdrop scenes in classic films like *Wall Street* and *Less Than Zero* (both 1987). Director Martin Brest made the Hollis Benton Gallery the focal point for his 1984 hit *Beverly Hills Cop*. When Eddie Murphy enters the gallery a solo show of LA artist Don Sorenson's "Greek Temple" paintings can be seen on view. In the film's deleted scenes Benton himself plays a small role as a posh collector at an opening.

Exhibitions that were important to the gallery's legacy are referenced throughout this homage presentation at Over The Influence. Among them is Benton's 1987 hit "Slippery When Wet: Fresh Painting Now" which placed late works of Patrick Nagel among Don Sorenson, James Havard, Robert Yarber and LeRoy Neiman. "Videodrome: Art, Consciousness and the Cathode Ray" (1988) was his effort to explore media-driven artworks presenting Mark Mothersbaugh, Trent Harris and Vuk Cosic amongst other artists. His long relationship to Memphis artist Peter Shire is made tribute in the artist's large chandelier work hovering above Shire's own version of the famous table seen in *Beverly Hills Cop*. This exhibition mixes in a survey of contemporary artists from Los Angeles and afar whose work synchronizes with Hollis Benton's legacy.

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In 1989 amid financial trouble from the Black Friday Crash, Hollis Benton suddenly shut his doors. He would die months later from a drug-related heart attack. He's buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery a few hundred yards from Michael Jackson, a long-time collector of both Neiman and Nagel. The storied gallery was later converted into a shoe store; many of the gallery design elements were left intact. This tribute to his legacy is a celebration of Los Angeles and the 80s as well as art worlds past and parallel: a hagiography. Hollis Benton is that low-hanging fruit that hindsight discovers in nostalgic avant-gardes.

Participating artists: Kathryn Andrews, Dan Attoe, Mike Bouchet, Ellen Carey, Vuk Cosic, Cayetano Ferrer, Clement von Franckenstein, Sayre Gomez, Robert Graham, Trent Harris, James Havard, Gregor Hildebrandt, Evan Holloway, Alex Israel, Paa Joe, Matt Johnson, Lazaros, Joep van Liefland, Mike Z Morrell, Erin Morrison, Mark Mothersbaugh, Patrick Nagel, LeRoy Neiman, Ry Rocklen, Ed Ruscha, Anja Salonen, Camille Scheffer, Max Hooper Schneider, Peter Shire, Don Sorenson, Alexis Smith, Mungo Thomson, Andy Warhol, Jennifer West, Jonas Wood, Robert Yarber.

About Aaron Moulton

Aaron Moulton is a curator based in Los Angeles. He was the Creative Director at VENUS LA and previously the in-house curator at Gagolian. Prior to his arrival in Los Angeles he was the Senior Curator for the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art in Salt Lake City. He was founder of the exhibition space FEINKOST in Berlin. He was editor for Flash Art International in Milan and worked as an editor for a variety of exhibition catalogues in addition to working as an arts journalist around Europe and America.

About Over the Influence

Launched in 2015, Over the Influence Hong Kong has served as a unique platform in Asia for an ambitious exhibition program of internationally acclaimed artists. The inaugural program of Over the Influence Los Angeles boasts a strong selection of local and international artists including Ron Arad (UK), Nobuyoshi Araki (JP), Alexandre Farto AKA Vhils (PT), Invader (FR), Kathryn MacNaughton (CA), and Cleon Peterson (CA), along with a curated series of group exhibitions.

Location

Over the Influence
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