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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SANTA BARBARA MUSEUM OF ART ANNOUNCES 2026 FALL/WINTER EXHIBITION SCHEDULE

2027 Exhibitions to Feature Installation and Survey of LA-Based Artists FriendsWithYou, and landmark exhibition *Martin Mull: The Joys of Indoor/Outdoor Living*

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. – The Santa Barbara Museum of Art (SBMA) has something for everyone over the next twelve months — from prints and pastel by American artist Mary Cassatt and her European contemporaries, and dramatic Pictorialist photography, to the joyful art installation and mid-career survey of FriendsWithYou and the cool and surreal paintings and drawings of the American dream by artist and actor Martin Mull.

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Cassatt & Friends
September 20, 2026 – January 3, 2027



Mary Cassatt, *Reine Lefebvre and Margot*, 1902.
Pastel on paper mounted on canvas.
32 3/4 × 26 5/8 in. (83.2 × 67.6 cm).
The Armand Hammer Collection, Gift of the Armand Hammer Foundation. Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

Though Mary Cassatt is best known for her paintings, she was also a printmaker, and we are proud to have in the permanent collection a number of Cassatt's printed works. Among these works is a unique type of print called a counterproof, produced by dampening a pastel drawing and pressing it on to another piece of paper, allowing the transfer of pigment to create a mirror image. The resulting print, *Simone in a White Bonnet Seated with Clasped Hands (No. 1)*, is the centerpiece of an upcoming exhibition that explores the intimate relationship between drawing and printmaking among Cassatt and her contemporaries. The techniques used in these artists' works often hinge on the tactile; the evidence of the artist's hand is undeniably present, a refreshing contrast to more polished mass-produced printed material of the same period. Emmons & Von Romberg Galleries.

Stage Craft: Pictorialist Photography and Performance
October 4, 2026 – January 31, 2027



Anne W. Brigman, *The Breeze*, ca. 1910.
Gelatin silver print. SBMA, Museum
purchase with funds provided by the
SBMA Women's Board, 1995.19.2.

At the turn of the twentieth century, like-minded photographers known as Pictorialists challenged the notion that photography was primarily documentary or commercial, instead advocating that photographs could be fine art. They portrayed scenes from literature, classical mythology, history, or their own imaginations, employing stage-like sets and collaborating with models, actors, and dancers as if performing plays.

In their portraits, Pictorialists rejected the straightforward clarity of commercial photo studios, opting instead for dramatic lighting, soft focus, and unconventional compositions to evoke the mood and personality of their sitters. Similarly, they imbued their landscapes and cityscapes with poetic drama through innovative camera, printing, and editing techniques. In the 1910s and 1920s, Pictorialists helped define the visual language of early cinema, while also drawing inspiration from the larger-than-life theatrics of the developing Hollywood film industry. *Stage Craft* illuminates how performance became critical to the Pictorialists' revolutionary claim that photography could be art. Ala Story Gallery, Photography Gallery. *Stage Craft* is co-curated by Lily Allen, Guest Curator for Photography & New Media; Andrew Witte, Curatorial Assistant; and Allyson Healey, Permanent Collections Researcher.

Elegies of Abstraction
October 11, 2026 – March 14, 2027



Kenzo Okada, Japanese, 1902-1982 (active USA).
Insistence, 1956. Oil on canvas.
Museum purchase,
Donald Bear Memorial Fund, 1959.69

Elegies are usually for the departed, but these paintings are still here, speaking to us in a meditative and somber voice. Dating from the 1960s and 1970s, these paintings are neither historical nor contemporary but sitting in a transitional space. The decades of their creation are year-by-year shifting out of living memory into archives, libraries, and databases for future preservation. Regardless of the passage of time, these paintings teem with fresh energy, as if they only just left the artist's studio. Loeb Family Galleries.

Portraits Revealed
Now Through March 21, 2027



Mary Grace, *Self Portrait*, c. 1760s.
Oil on canvas.
SBMA, Gift of Mrs. Lenore Adams, 1961.35.

Portraiture returns! Alongside a selection of collection highlights in Preston Morton Gallery, this beloved installation has extended into Ludington Court.

The essence of portraiture is that it depicts or alludes to a person or people. From ancient Roman sculptors to contemporary painters, the artists in this exhibition have told stories, fantasized, and revealed invisible emotions and beliefs. Portraits can be meditations on life and existence, opulent displays of status, or both. This exhibition presses on what counts as a portrait by including a few still-life paintings that use objects to suggest an unseen person or situation. Ludington Court and Preston Morton Gallery.

FriendsWithYou: Sonarium and Survey Exhibition
April 18, 2027 – January 2, 2028



FriendsWithYou
Little Cloud's Dream, 2021
Fiberglass & automotive paint
47.5" H x 32" W x 22" D
Edition of 6 + 3 AP's

The Santa Barbara Museum of Art is excited to announce two exhibitions by the renowned duo FriendsWithYou (Samuel Borkson and Arturo Sandoval III) both opening on April 18, 2027. Ludington Court will debut a yet-to-be-completed commission, *Sonarium*, a large musical instrument. Its mediative music will bring together people in a shared sonic environment as they listen, meditate, and gather. The Court will be filled with pews for conversation or contemplation of the instrument, a collective space of wonder and community. Meanwhile, a survey exhibition in an adjacent gallery is a focused introduction drawing on the past 15 years with sculptures of Little Cloud, their most well-known character, Frog God, and a rainbow sculpture titled *The End*. Besides newly commissioned work, there are also examples of their vibrant clay low-relief sculptures, such as *It Was All a Dream*. These meld together corporate logos, toys, video game and cartoon characters to show that these are a shared cultural vocabulary fueling our collective imaginations.

All of these artworks convey FriendsWithYou's deep engagement with Jungian archetypes and animism—the belief that inanimate objects possess spiritual energy—and how those ideas illuminate contemporary culture. These complementary exhibitions will be truly impactful turning the Museum's galleries into transcendent spaces for ritual, connection and empathy. Ludington Court and Preston Morton Gallery.

Martin Mull: The Joys of Indoor/Outdoor Living
June 27 – October 17, 2027



Martin Mull, *Shepherd*, 2006.
Oil on linen, 72 x 60 in.
Collection of Juliana Marina Overmeer.

The Santa Barbara Museum of Art (SBMA) is organizing the exhibition *Martin Mull: The Joys of Indoor/Outdoor Living*, curated by Steve Martin and Ann Philbin, set to run next year from June 27 to October 17, 2027. Martin Mull (1943–2024), well known as an actor, comedian, and musician, studied painting at the Rhode Island School of Design in 1967 and throughout his long entertainment career never stopped making and exhibiting his art. This will be the first major museum exhibition of Mull's artwork in 20 years.

This presentation of 50 paintings and dozens of drawings will feature Mull's cool, surreal, and often dark takes on postwar American life. Extraordinarily skilled with a brush, Mull combined scenes drawn from his childhood in the Midwest and sourced from old photographs to create physically impossible situations. Women float above trains, streets transform into rivers with splashing swimmers, or tightrope walkers scale tiny bedrooms. Frequently set in the newly built suburbs of 1950s and 1960s, these paintings undercut the period's consumerism and homogeneity, when economic growth fueled a baby boom and better standards of living. They depict an underbelly of tension and darkness behind the prosperity of postwar "white culture" in America. A catalogue for the exhibition will feature writing by Steve Martin, Hilton Als, AM Homes, Dave Hickey, and SBMA Chief Curator James Glisson. Emmons & Von Romberg Galleries.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fall Opening Party
November 13, 2026 | 6 – 8 pm



Otis Kwame Kye Quaicoe, *Vince on Couch*, 2020.
Oil on canvas. SBMA, Gift of Lynn and Craig Jacobson,
2024.21. ©OtisQuaicoe, courtesy of the artist
and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles.

Celebrate the opening of three fall exhibitions: *Cassatt & Friends*; *Stage Craft: Pictorialist Photography and Performance*; and the extended *Portraits Revealed*. The event will include music by DJ PTRKLMR and DJ Ananas, artmaking, a photo booth, an artist-designed cocktail tasting, a cash bar, and nibbles. The SBMA Store will have a special pop-up with new merchandise as well! Tickets now available for purchase online at SBMA.net. Event is 21+.

[EVENT DETAILS & TICKETS](#)

ABOUT SBMA

The Santa Barbara Museum of Art is one of the finest museums on the West Coast and is celebrated for the superb quality of its permanent collection. Its mission is to integrate art into the lives of people through internationally recognized exhibitions and special programs, as well as the thoughtful presentation of its permanent collection.

Location: 1130 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA, 93101

Hours: Tuesday – Sunday, 11 AM – 5 PM; Free 1st Thursdays, 5 – 8 PM and 2nd Sundays 11 AM - 5 PM (for Tri-County residents)

Website: sbma.net