

Foreword and Acknowledgements

by
Charles Desmarais

THE HISTORY OF THE LAGUNA ART MUSEUM IS, IN one sense, the history of art in Southern California. The same struggles over artistic turf (the “moderns” vs. the conservatives), the same search for identity, and the same waxing and waning of institutional fortune that have affected the Museum have had a strong impact on art and its support structures throughout the region.

Reflected in Nancy Moure and Joanne Ratner’s story of the Laguna Art Museum, the reader will see Southern California’s emergence from a self-centered parochialism into an interaction with the larger world of art. If this Museum lagged behind the rest of the region, particularly in its middle years, it must be remembered that the institution also led the way in 1918, when it was among the first venues in the region for art exhibitions, and again in 1929, when it opened the first permanent building exclusively for the display of painting and sculpture.

The last pages of Ratner’s essay argue that the Museum has once again asserted its leadership in Southern California. Such progress is the result of extraordinary contri-

butions on the part of many people: Board and staff, both current and past, and the many donors, artists, scholars and others who make an institution work.

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