



A Matter of Sense, Not Dollars

CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT

L.A.'s art scene is not lacking in fine art. What seems to be lacking (still)

fickle, prepared to move
next passing fancy, &
committed.

Sense, Dollars and Art

Regarding "A Matter of Sense, Not Dollars," commentary by Times art critic Christopher Knight (Dec. 19):

Knight's extraordinary polemic affirming the importance of John McLaughlin as the "first, major, postwar Modern artist to have emerged in Southern California" is well-taken.

How many California artists of that era are represented by works in the collections of some 35 top museums, including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Art Institute of Chicago, Baltimore Museum of Art, Corcoran Art Gallery, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, National Museum of American Art and Whitney Museum of American Art?

I would dispute Knight's statement that "there is no place in the world . . . to see a full, representative display" of McLaughlin's art. The Kawamura Museum, near Tokyo, has a very fine, carefully assembled collection of nine paintings, including a rare diptych, and 13 lithographs. Of course, this fact serves only to emphasize a central point of Knight's article: that our region does not sufficiently attend to its own cultural heritage.

A photo caption printed with the article (surely written by an editor, not by Knight) claims, "No major exhibition of [McLaughlin's] work has been compiled." Before his death in 1976, McLaughlin retrospectives were mounted by several museums around the country.

The Laguna Art Museum will present the first posthumous retrospective of McLaughlin's paintings, which I am organizing, from next Oct. 28 to Jan. 15, 1995, after which a version of the show will travel to art museums in Baltimore, Newark, N.J., and Oakland.

At the same time, we will publish the first major book on the work of this very important artist from Southern California.

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