

Oakland Museum of California



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**OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA PRESENTS
CAREER RETROSPECTIVE OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
ARTIST MICHAEL C. McMILLEN**

**GALLERIES TURNED MULTISENSORY INSTALLATIONS
TRANSPORT VIEWERS TO ANOTHER WORLD**

**Mixed-media artist transforms OMCA galleries
into a conceptual “made-up reality”**

(OAKLAND, CA) March 1, 2011—The Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) presents *Michael C. McMillen: Train of Thought*, on view April 16 through August 14, 2011, in the Museum’s Gallery of California Art. Spanning the 40-year career of the internationally renowned Southern California-based mixed-media artist, the exhibition features large-scale multisensory installations, assemblages, sculptures, paintings, drawings, and films that invite viewers into a made-up world—a skill for which McMillen is best known. Opening in stages, with large-scale installations *Lighthouse* and *Pavilion of Rain* (a constructed habitat featuring rain pouring down on a shack of corrugated metal surrounded by a 30-foot pool of water) currently on view, the exhibition features work from OMCA’s holdings as well as select loans from private collections.

“The Oakland Museum of California is honored to once again present Michael C. McMillen as one of the most distinguished and individual artists working today in California,” says Executive Director Lori Fogarty. “McMillen’s work cannot help but bring to mind—as if from a distant memory of a Hollywood film or the back cover of a record album—the nature of the California terrain. With this exhibition we also celebrate Chief Curator Philip Linhares’ long and committed career as an artist’s curator. Phil has had a long friendship and association with the artist, having presented one of the first major surveys of McMillen’s work in his premier exhibition as a curator at OMCA in 1991. Phil concludes his 20-year tenure here with *Michael C. McMillen: Train of Thought*.” As a child, McMillen learned to make simple toys from crate wood and used nails from his grandfather; today he continues to create art from a backyard repository of found objects. Using architectural references as a metaphoric language, he expresses a continuous state of flux and entropy, while transporting the viewer into a distinctly

different conceptual reality. The rough-hewn elegance of his fabrications challenge the concepts of time and change, often drawing on elements of Dada and Surrealism. The exhibition features several of McMillen's well-known installation works such as *Deliverance*, 1992; *Train of Thought*, 1990; *Red Trailer Motel*, 2003; and sculptures including *Dracula's Daughter*, 1994; *The Locker*, 1991; and *Picasso's Last Words*, 1995. Works such as *Lighthouse (Hotel New Empire)*—McMillen's most recent installation—incorporate new media, a characteristic of his newer work. A selection of paintings and drawings dating from 1970 to the present and short films produced since 1996 will also be on view.

"McMillen is an energetic and inquisitive artist, and is constantly working with new ideas," says Chief Curator of Art Philip Linhares. "In recent years he has gained vast expertise with computers, manipulating images from the Internet; producing short films; creating new sculptures, drawings, and installations; and traveling, speaking, and meeting an ever-expanding group of enthusiastic participants in his enchanting brand of art. McMillen's 40-year career is a testament to his talent as a seminal California artist. But his legacy doesn't stop here; it is a work in progress."

Born and raised in Los Angeles, McMillen earned both an M.A. and M.F.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles. His solo exhibitions include presentations at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1977; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1978; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia, 1980; and the Oakland Museum of California, 1991–92. He has also been featured in many group exhibitions at museums that include Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; San Diego Art Museum; and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. McMillen has earned a number of grants for his installation projects, receiving support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation, the Getty Center for the Arts—and most recently the 2010 Painters and Sculptors Grant from the Joan Mitchell Foundation. McMillen's work is housed in many public collections, including the Oakland Museum of California; the National Gallery of Australia; Art Gallery of New South Wales; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia; The Glasgow Museum of Modern Art, Scotland; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

"My goal has always been to create an altered sense of reality," says McMillen. I want viewers to come away from the experience seeing the world in a slightly different way."

Michael C. McMillen: Train of Thought is on view at the Oakland Museum of California April 16 through August 14, 2011. A 190-page catalog accompanies the exhibition and will be for sale in the OMCA Store. The exhibition is curated by Chief Curator of Art Philip Linhares.

Philip E. Linhares has served as Chief Curator of Art at the Oakland Museum of California since 1990. He has organized numerous exhibitions on contemporary art, including solo exhibitions of the work of Leon Golub, Joan Brown, Jim Nutt, Bruce Nauman, and Ruth Asawa. In the Oakland Museum of California's recent gallery transformation and reinstallation, Linhares directed the installation on Folk Art and Counter Culture including works by Peter Mason Bond and Martin Ramirez (Folk Art) and Wally Hedrick, Jay DeFeo and Bruce Conner (Counter Culture). Linhares has known and worked with Michael C. McMillen on exhibition projects since 1974.

ABOUT THE OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA

On May 1, 2010, the Oakland Museum of California welcomed back the public with a dramatically different presentation of its renowned collections of California art and history. Created in 1969 as a "museum for the people," OMCA has revived its founding vision by introducing innovative exhibitions and programming, setting a new paradigm for the way a museum engages the public. OMCA's transformation is enhanced by the renovation and expansion of its iconic building. Renovation and reopening of the Natural Sciences Gallery is scheduled for 2012. OMCA's groundbreaking exhibits tell the many stories that comprise California with many voices, often drawing on first-person accounts by people who have shaped California's cultural heritage. Visitors are invited to actively participate in the Museum as they learn about the natural, artistic, and social forces that affect the state and investigate their own role in both its history and its future.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Museum admission is \$12 general; \$9 seniors and students with valid ID, \$6 youth ages 9 to 17, and free for Members and children 8 and under. OMCA offers onsite underground parking and is conveniently located one block from the Lake Merritt BART station, on the corner of 10th Street and Oak Street. The accessibility ramp is located at the new 1000 Oak Street main entrance.

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For more information and visuals, please contact:

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