



Craig Kaufman in His Studio - Eagle Rock, CA. © 1992 Jim Mohrugh

## IN MEMORIAM

R. Craig Kaufman  
Professor of Art  
UC Irvine  
1932 – 2010

Craig Kaufman (b. 1932), artist and Professor of Art Emeritus in UC Irvine's Department of Studio Art, passed away at his home in Angeles City, Philippines on May 9, 2010.

As an original member of the group of artists associated with Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles (founded 1957), Professor Kaufman played a central role in the history of contemporary art in Southern California. Along with such peers as Edward Kienholz, Wallace Berman, Ed Moses, Robert Irwin, Larry Bell, Andy Warhol and Ed Ruscha, he put the region on the global map as an art- world zone so fertile it could not possibly be overlooked. It was from within this milieu that the future trajectories of deeply influential movements such as Pop, Light and Space, Minimalism and Conceptualism were indelibly affected.

As a sculptor Professor Kaufman earned his prominence with his innovative use of industrial acrylic materials, primarily by using the commercial vacuum- form process to achieve smoothly- molded shapes that advertised the human hand's lack of direct involvement in their creation. Finished with glossy coats of strikingly colored enamel, among other types of treatment, these emblematic works from the mid-1960's epitomized a movement in modern sculpture described by contemporary critics as "finish fetish", or, more broadly, as belonging to the "cool school" of pop- and minimalism- inflected Southern Californian art. These works have been shown extensively in major national and international exhibitions, most notably in the recent 2006 survey "Los Angeles, Birth of an Art Capitol", at the Georges Pompidou Center in Paris.

Professor Kaufman's commitment to painting was equal to his engagement with sculpture. While his acrylic wall- reliefs represent his best- known work, these evolved as three- dimensional solutions to formal and technical problems Professor Kaufman encountered as a painter in the late- fifties and early- sixties when exploring techniques for adhering paint to non- traditional surfaces. Throughout his career he continued an intensive practice as a painter and printmaker alongside his work as a sculptor, acquiring an extensive record of achievement in these disciplines as well.

Many at UC Irvine will remember Professor Kaufman as a key member of the Department of Art's luminous group of instructors from the 1970's (which included fellow Ferus Gallery artists Larry Bell, Ed Moses and Robert Irwin). His commitment to UC Irvine's aspiring art students proved steadfast; most of his peers did not aspire to long- term academic careers. An instructor and Professor in the Department of Studio Art from 1967

to 1989, he taught an illustrious group of students who went on to international careers of their own, such as Michael Asher, Chris Burden, Alexis Smith, Nancy Buchanan, Kim Abeles. Professor Kaufman played an integral role in establishing and maintaining the worldwide reputation of the Department of Studio Art, and will be deeply missed by the art community in Southern California and by the academic community of UC Irvine.

Miles Coolidge  
Associate Professor  
Chair, Department of Studio Art