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ART & ARCHITECTURE / YEAR IN REVIEW

## A Wealth of Shows and Fund-Raising

*Art: Buying artworks wasn't the only acquiring institutions did over the last 12 months.*

December 27, 1998 | CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT | Christopher Knight is The Times' art critic

Los Angeles' 10 most notable art exhibitions and events, in no particular order, for 1998:

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3. "Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949-1979" (MOCA): A big, sprawling, undeniably flawed attempt to chart the convoluted, international postwar relationships between artists' performance activities and the art objects that arose from them as a kind of residue, this ambitious, globally minded effort at understanding recent art history is the kind of show that's hardly ever seen in American museums these days. Except, that is, at MOCA, where it's been a distinctive, periodic, always exciting staple.
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7. "The Progress of Life," Mural Restoration (City of Hope): A long-forgotten mural in a former library in Duarte's City of Hope National Medical Center was carefully restored and returned to public view. To the surprise of scholars and art lovers, the 1935-36 allegory of youthful hope and the resignations of old age turned out to be a very early painting by the team of Reuben Kadish, who is little-known today, and Philip Guston, who went on to be a major artist of the New York School. Guston's stunning conversion in the 1970s from abstract to figurative painting was a harbinger of things to come in the 1980s, and the City of Hope mural--painted when Guston was just 23--now stands as an important early signpost in his distinguished career.
8. Annals of fund-raising, Part 1: For an undisclosed sum, LACMA rented from New York's Museum of Modern Art three dozen paintings and more than 70 prints, drawings and books by Picasso--the perennial box-office champ of museum shows--and pretended the haphazard array was a major artistic event. The blunt marketing goal: Inflate the museum's membership rolls by charging a ticket premium that would make buying a LACMA membership a bargain. A sure sign of the show's artistic insignificance: MOMA is willing to pocket the big rental fee, but unwilling to host the "show" in its own august galleries.
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10. Repealing the 1960s: The conservative culture war, launched by right-wing Republicans nine years ago in an ultimately successful assault against the National Endowment for the Arts, moved from the periphery of the federal government to ground zero in the impeachment of President Bill Clinton. The salacious image of Robert Mapplethorpe and his infamous bullwhip was transformed into Monica Lewinsky and the president's cigar, in an astounding attempt at a bloodless coup.



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### Abstract

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#### Illustration

Caption: PHOTO: Chaim Soutine's emotional expressive- ness and strong brushwork are reflected in "The Bride," a portrait in the LACMA exhibition.; PHOTOGRAPHER: The Whitehead Collection

Credit: Christopher Knight is The Times' art critic

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