



**MARIA NORDMAN FILMROOM: SMOKE, 1967–PRESENT**  
**SEPTEMBER 4, 2011–MAY 20, 2012**  
**ART OF THE AMERICAS BUILDING, PLAZA LEVEL**



(IMAGE CAPTION ON PAGE 2)

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) is pleased to present Maria Nordman's *FILMROOM: SMOKE, 1967–Present* as part of its Pacific Standard Time exhibitions. Nordman is internationally known as one of the most significant artists to emerge from Los Angeles in the 1960s and 70s. *FILMROOM: SMOKE* is one of her earliest artworks, made at the time she left UCLA graduate school.

"Nordman is so often categorized as part of LA's so-called 'Light and Space' movement, but in fact her work comes from a completely different—and appropriately Los Angeles inspired—point of view, demonstrated not only by her numerous projects in Europe and the U.S. in the last decade, but also by this early landmark artwork," said Michael Govan, CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director.

**About *FILMROOM: SMOKE***

A single room silent double projection that incorporates a real chair and documents two actors interacting with the same chair on the beach at the ocean's edge, *FILMROOM: SMOKE* is founded on the relationship with the film camera and the eye of viewer and artist. The side-by-side projections, divided by a wall, describe two distinctly different camera compositions: one largely active and detailed, and one more still and general. The filmic picture plane is literally aligned with the meeting of earth and

water along the L.A. coastline. Comprising a holistic vision, the film also depends on the fire of the sun for light; the air is visualized in the breath of the actors smoking a cigarette, which harmonizes with the breathing of ocean waves that lap at the actors on the chair next to a huge rock on the shoreline. The sound of the waves and human breath are visually conjured. The actual presence of the real chair from the film in the gallery in front of, and part of, one projection brings the moving image into the real space of the viewer and overlaps the original experience of the actors as the film's first viewers with our subsequent experience in the room.

**FILMROOM: SMOKE AT LACMA**

The artist has also created a new sculpture on the museum's outdoor plaza near the entry to *FILMROOM: SMOKE*. Comprised of geometric lines in space that echo the dimensions and arrangement of the gallery walls that hold and divide the two projections of *FILMROOM: SMOKE*, the construction, titled *Yang Na, 2011-*, further inscribes the FILMROOM into real space and unwittingly frames museum visitors exploring the sculpture into interaction with their present circumstance and each other, analogously to the actors in *FILMROOM: SMOKE*, and further identifying the viewer, in present-day Los Angeles, as participant in Nordman's art.

In the antechamber of *FILMROOM: SMOKE* at LACMA Nordman has also assembled a vitrine of her books, including *DE MUSICA*, which function as an extension of her sculpture and interests in public spaces.

LACMA's presentation of *FILMROOM: SMOKE 1967-Present*, organized by Jose Luis Blondet, Associate Curator of Special Initiatives, and Stephanie Barron, Senior Curator of Modern Art, is a rare opportunity to see Nordman's art, little seen recently in Los Angeles, or even in the U.S. The show is one of five exhibitions LACMA is presenting in conjunction with Pacific Standard Time, an unprecedented collaboration initiated by the Getty, bringing together more than sixty cultural institutions across Southern California to tell the story of the birth of the Los Angeles art scene.

## **FILMROOM: SMOKE AND OTHER NORDMAN WORK**

After her pioneering *FILMROOM: SMOKE* work, Nordman went on to construct a series of "black rooms" which were in fact subtle immersive experiences of bits of light of the sun—in her Pico Boulevard studio in Santa Monica, and at the Pasadena Museum in 1972—that catapulted her into international prominence as a leading figure of the emerging LA art scene. One of these rooms is permanently present as the cornerstone of Count Panza di Biumo's museum in Varese, Italy (now managed by Fondo Ambiente Italiano).

*FILMROOM: SMOKE* makes obvious the relationship of the film projection to her later rooms of pure light. In her dark rooms, viewers replace actors, but with no less central importance to the function of her art. It is a characteristic of Nordman's art that the viewers of her work become actors in its composition. The artist has noted *FILMROOM: SMOKE* is "for two persons at a time," more specifically identifying the actors in the film as viewers, and viewers of the artwork as actors.

### **Credit:**



### **About LACMA**

Since its inception in 1965, LACMA has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography and represent Los Angeles's uniquely diverse population. Today, the museum features particularly strong collections of Asian, Latin American, European, and American art, as well as a contemporary museum on its campus. With this expanded space for contemporary art, innovative collaborations with artists, and an ongoing *Transformation* project, LACMA is creating a truly modern lens through which to view its rich encyclopedic collection.

**Location and Contact:** 5905 Wilshire Boulevard (at Fairfax Avenue), Los Angeles, CA, 90036 | 323 857-6000 | lacma.org

**Hours:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: noon-8 pm; Friday: noon-9 pm; Saturday, Sunday: 11 am-8 pm; closed Wednesday

**General Admission:** Adults: \$15; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+: \$10

**Free General Admission:** Members; children 17 and under; after 5 pm weekdays for L.A. County residents; second Tuesday of every month; Target Free Holiday Mondays

### **Images (page 1)**

Installation view of film projection, *Maria Nordman FILMROOM: SMOKE, 1967-Present*, © Maria Nordman, Photo © 2011 Museum Associates/LACMA

**Press Contact:** For additional information, contact LACMA Communications at press@lacma.org or 323 857-6522.

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