

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On Boxing

Blum & Poe, Los Angeles

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In the late '60s and into the mid '70s, if there was a boxing match on TV my father and I watched it. Didn't matter who was going at it, from buzzy flyweights to lumbering heavyweights. We sat on the orange couch. He poured himself a giant glass of Gallo's chablis on ice and I had a Mom's Root Beer straight from the bottle. I felt like a badass. And he would teach me how to read what happened in the ring. He saw it all as art.

My father had been a boxer in the Navy. His close friend and fellow boxer once told him that he had been knocked out but miraculously stayed on his feet. He only later realized he had fought through a round and then into another, unconscious and on automatic, doing what he was trained to do which now came naturally, going through the motions, until he came back into himself, back in the fight. He was there, he was not there.

It was 1973 when I was 12 that Pops started taking me to the Olympic Auditorium on Friday nights to see the fights. This experience was far from watching at home on television. In the crowd it was always dark in there, it seemed like everyone was either smoking a cigarette or a cigar, the voices could be loud, quiet violence in the air. But the focus was on the one place that was lit. The ring. Bright white lights flooded the canvas. Here a ritual played out. I once witnessed a myth.

Such a ceremony. The boxers came toward the ring like shapes moving in the distance toward that square of light. Then ascending up and in between the ropes and entering that place of action in robes that often touched the ground. In a moment those robes came off, the men nearly naked, exposed, intimate. Hammer hitting a bell to start match. Such a clear simple piercing line that I could hear it and see it.

Pops made the abstract clear. He would explain that the chaos was controlled, that you often had to get hit to hit, that this was the only pure sport. Raw. If you look long enough patterns emerge. You can see how boxers use the defined canvas to cut off and control the edges or dominate the middle. Action can happen anywhere within that ground. You see how every boxer has a different way of dancing jabbing cutting striking. Everything in motion, legs moving and arms working from the tight quick jab to the wild roundhouse

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and everything in between. Their process played out before us. Often red blood would fly, the inside splashed out. Style defining authorship. Winning and losing in real time. I was lost in it and I loved it. Still do but in a different way, now, here.

— Jeff Poe

About Blum & Poe

Blum & Poe was founded by Timothy Blum and Jeffrey Poe in Santa Monica in September of 1994 as a space to show local and international contemporary art in all media. Blum's extensive experience in the Japanese art world combined with Poe's keen knowledge of emerging artists in Los Angeles, together resulted in an international program of influential artists. Throughout a twenty-six-year history, Blum & Poe has shaped the trajectory of contemporary art by championing artists at all stages of their careers—cultivating the lineages that run between emerging and established practices, and working with artist estates to generate new discourse surrounding historical work.

In 2003 the gallery moved to a larger space in Culver City, and in 2009 Blum & Poe purchased and renovated its current 22,000 square foot complex on La Cienega Boulevard. In this location the gallery has since held museum-caliber surveys, examining the historical work of such movements as the Japanese Mono-ha school (2012); the Korean Dansaekhwa monochrome painters (2014); the European postwar movement CoBrA (2015); Japanese art of 1980s and '90s (2019); a rereading of Brazilian Modernism (2019); and a revisionist take on the 1959 MoMA exhibition, *New Images of Man* (2020). To produce these exhibitions, Blum & Poe has worked with celebrated curators such as Joan Kee, Mika Yoshitake, Sofia Gotti, and Alison M. Gingeras.

In 2014, Blum & Poe opened galleries in New York and Tokyo to focus on intimately scaled projects in tandem with an expansive program of exhibitions, lectures, performance series, screenings, and an annual art book fair at its base in Los Angeles. In 2015, Blum & Poe was certified as an Arts:Earth Partnership (AEP) green art gallery and consequently became one of the first green certified galleries in the United States. Blum & Poe's own publishing division focuses on sharing aspects of its program via original scholarship and accessible media ranging from academic monographs, audio series, magazines, and artists' books. In 2020, the gallery launched Blum & Poe Broadcasts, an online platform showcasing artists' projects in conjunction with physical installations or as standalone digital endeavors.

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