

PASADENA  
ARTS  
COUNCIL

# FOLIO

The publication of the Pasadena Arts Council



CURATORIAL  
VISION

DIALOGUES IN  
ART AND SCIENCE

CULTURAL  
LEADERSHIP

ARTIST

TEACHER

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LEFT BRAIN/RIGHT BRAIN

NATIVE SON

ADVOCATE OF  
FREE EXPRESSION

SYNTHESIZER OF IDEAS



GOLD CROWN HONOREE FOR 2009

## Stephen Nowlin

*Vice President,  
and Director,*

*Alyce de Roulet Williamson Gallery,  
Art Center College of Design;*

*President,  
Board of Trustees,  
Pasadena Arts Council*

PRESENTATION OF GOLD CROWN AWARD

Wednesday, June 10, 2009 • 6:00 pm

**The Pasadena Arts Council is grateful to these Artists and Arts Advocates for their generous support. Thank you!**

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**From the editor**

You can see why, around the office, we have been referring to this as "the Steve issue." Stephen Nowlin has been such a great and good friend to the Pasadena Arts Council during his tenure as a Trustee, currently our President, and you will see on the coming pages some of the exceptional contributions made by this very special person. We are so proud to recognize Steve and celebrate the work that he's done at the Williamson Gallery, around the city of Pasadena, and in the arts community overall. Please join us on Wednesday, June 10th—it's going to be a smashing party!

I'd like to extend a personal invitation to everyone who has been working hard on the question of public art at the Pasadena Center—and I mean everybody, on both sides of the issue. Whether you're from the government arena, work for a nonprofit, are a private citizen, an artist or a business person, let's take a moment to gather at Alyce Williamson's and toast Steve and our extraordinary community. We have so much to be grateful for, and it would be wonderful to be together on this special occasion.

I have three important thanks to offer.

Alyce de Roulet Williamson has graciously offered to host this year's Gold Crown event at her home. Alyce has long been dedicated to the visual and performing arts communities of Los Angeles, and has served on the boards



of many major cultural institutions in this area. In particular she has taken a leadership role at Art Center College of Design, as a trustee, founding Chair of Art Center 100, and sustaining patron of the Alyce de Roulet Williamson Gallery. Alyce is a philanthropist extraordinaire and it is a distinct honor for the Pasadena Arts Council to present the Gold Crown Award at the home of Alyce and Warren Williamson.

Gloria Kondrup and Archetype Press are responsible for our beautiful invitation. Gloria is quite simply a force of nature, and under her direction, Archetype Press serves as a unique facility at Art Center College of Design's South Campus that continues the tradition of an older, but not outdated, technology-letterpress printing. The mission of Archetype Press is the advancement and preservation of visual language through printed



text and image, and to explore the vital link between past and present technologies. (Learn more at [www.artcenter.edu/archetype](http://www.artcenter.edu/archetype).)

And what can you say about the Pasadena Art Alliance that hasn't already been said? This group of really remarkable women has been knocking the socks off the arts community for decades while pursuing their passion for contemporary art. They are the generous sponsors of this issue of **FOLIO** (yes, the Steve issue) and we thank them for their enduring commitment. Don't miss their 2009 benefit, **SNAP TOO**, coming soon!

-Terry LeMoncheck

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From the Editor



A unique collaboration between the Pasadena Art Alliance, Art Center College of Design and the Armory Center for the Arts. **Opening night Saturday, May 16; exhibition runs through June 6.**



Photo credit: Lee Salem Photography

Seventeen  
Years of  
a Singular  
Vision

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WILLIAMSON GALLERY  
EXHIBITIONS 1992-2009

Christopher LeBrun:  
Recent Paintings, 1992

Contact: Photojournalism  
Since Vietnam and Artists  
of The Nation, 1992

Facing The Finish: Some  
Recent California Art,  
1992

Siege: An Installation by  
Michael C. McMillen,  
1992

Art as Activist: Revolutionary  
Posters from Central and Eastern  
Europe; America Today, 500  
Years Later: An International  
Poster Commentary; The Art of  
Propaganda: Smuggled Posters  
from Mainland China, 1993

James Rosenquist: Recent Paint-  
ings, 1993

Road Rebel: The California Hot  
Rod, 1993

Telling Tales: 19th Century  
Narrative Painting, 1993

Objects: Sixteen L.A. Sculptors,  
1993

Produce for Victory: Posters  
on the American Home Front,  
1941-1945; and Voices of  
Protest: Underground Graphics  
Since 1980, 1994

Xu Bing: Cultural Negotiations,  
and Dan Qing Chen: Recent  
Paintings, 1994

Robert Morris: The Fallen and  
the Saved, 1994



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THE PASADENA ARTS COUNCIL AND ALYCE WILLIAMSON

INVITE YOU TO HONOR



# Stephen Nowlin

RECIPIENT OF THE 2009 GOLD CROWN AWARD

*Wednesday, June 10, 2009, at the home of  
Alyce and Warren Williamson  
760 Holladay Road, Pasadena, California*

ALSO PRESENTING THE 2009 YOUNG ARTIST AWARDS

6:00 pm COCKTAILS 7:30 pm PRESENTATION BUSINESS ATTIRE

*rsop by May 30, 2009*

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• • •

LETTERPRESS PRINTED BY GLORIA KONDRUP AT ARCHETYPE PRESS, ART CENTER COLLEGE OF DESIGN

*Images of Penance, Images of Mercy: Santos and Ceremonies of the Hispanic Southwest*, 1994

*The Art of Romance*, 1994

*The Art of the Motorcycle*, 1995

*Selections from the Robert A. Rowan Collection*, 1995

*Digital Mediations*, 1995

*Judy Pfaff*, 1995

*New to L.A.: Dagmar Demming*, 1996

*Drawn from L.A.*, 1996

*Anthropropulsion: Human-Powered Vehicles*, 1996

Stephen Nowlin is the consummate creative thinker for Pasadena in the 21st century. Deeply insightful, passionate about the creative experience and dedicated to artistic freedom, Nowlin is known internationally as someone committed to nurturing artists and their art, and for his ongoing explorations into the relationship between art and science. In addition to his role as Director of the Alyce de Roulet Williamson Gallery at Art Center College of Design, he has served as a Trustee of the Pasadena Arts Council—currently as President—and on the Advisory Board of Pasadena Conservatory of Music and the Gallery Committees of the Armory Center for the Arts and Descanso Gardens. In 2001, he created the online resource Pasadena CultureNet, and in 1999 he joined with the Armory's Jay Belloli and others to create ArtNight Pasadena. Stephen Nowlin has been curating arresting exhibitions, writing the collectors-item catalogues to accompany them, and organizing interdisciplinary collaborations in Pasadena for over 30 years. His participation in a project resonates instantly with his many supporters, friends, students and colleagues, and it is our very great pleasure to honor his commitment to this community with the 2009 Gold Crown Award.



# A Conversation With Stephen Nowlin

## Tell us about your roots in Pasadena.

My dad came to Pasadena from Michigan, and my mom to Monrovia from Illinois. They met as musicians in the Pasadena Symphony—then they got married in 1940 and it was a big deal, lots of newspaper stories about the orchestra romance. Mom was concert-mistress for twenty years and dad sat in the first bassoon chair. I remember the

conductor, Richard Lert, who used to pat me on the head and come over to the house on holidays. And the faux-curtain wallpaper in the Civic Auditorium impressed me. It looked so three-dimensional—I used to touch it to make sure it was flat.

My grandfather had a lot of different jobs in Pasadena, and one was in a place that made neon signs in the 1940s. He was a serious amateur photographer and filmmaker, and for this job he went around taking pictures of a bunch of neon signs in Pasadena—and of course he captured a lot of architecture in the process. He died when I was eleven and I was about twenty when my grandmother moved out of their house on Mountain Street. In his darkroom behind the garage I found all his cameras and film negatives that my parents were going to give away. I scooped them all up and dragged them off to college and somehow managed to keep them together for the last forty years.

I met Anne, my lovely wife of 33 years, in Pasadena—and that's where each of our three children was born.

## Can you talk about your relationship with art and design, especially as it relates to your own work as an artist?

When I was young and in college, I wanted to do everything—painting, architecture, advertising design,



## What or who were the seminal influences on you as an artist and curator? Who inspires you today?

At an early age I was fascinated by Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Brueghel, but later on it was the New York School, especially Franz Kline, Robert Motherwell, Willem DeKooning, Joan Mitchell, who I loved. And the post-painterly people like Frank Stella, Morris Louis, Helen Frankenthaler. And then there were the architects, Mies van der Rohe, Marcel Breuer, and Richard Neutra, who I met. I studied the Bauhaus artists and designers.

And Charles and Ray Eames. And then in 1970 I got a job at Caltech drafting computer parts for the Mount Wilson and Palomar Observatories, in order to qualify for participating in a program they had on art and technology. I met John Whitney there, a pioneer computer graphics filmmaker who had also worked with Eames, and he was a powerful influence. But I think by far my most persuasive influence has been classical music—from Frederick Delius to Ralph Vaughn Williams to Aaron Copland and Charles Ives, to name just a few.

Nowadays I'd add inspiration from science to my long list of influences. Science could seem like a dispassionate pursuit by comparison to the arts, but not for me. In a way, I think science IS the new art.

## What captivates you about the territory where art and science meet?

Being at a design school, it occurs to me that a good definition of design is "the intersection of art and science." But in some sense, the question of where art and science meet is unanswerable. The quest is buried in the deeply puzzling uniqueness of human consciousness, in the interplay between emotion and intellect, intuition and reason, and the yin and yang that allows humans the capacity to both write a symphony and build a rocket. It is about a sense of wonder and a sense of power, of humility and dominance at confronting the vast universe. The degree of porosity of the assumed barrier between art and science, their undulating and illusively changing boundaries or lack thereof, is the whole point. Simply because it is a complex and fascinating question, it is worth exploring. The journey is what's most important for me, like Charles Ives' *The Unanswered Question*.

## You have been at Art Center for thirty-one years. What is it about the institution and the community that inspires that commitment?

Art Center is an idea—about quality, commitment, innovation, and most of all hard work. The other day I overheard a student telling someone he was going home to crash—that he hadn't slept in twenty-four hours in order to finish a project. I love that, and most people there thrive on it. It's such a rich, creative, environment, where every other person is a big talent and a visionary and willing to go the extra mile. With the creation in 1992 of the beautiful Williamson Gallery space, my fate was sealed. I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to play on such a playground.

graphic design, film, photography. I began as an Illustration major at California College of Arts and Crafts, then switched to Printmaking, then switched to California Institute of the Arts where I received my Bachelor's Degree in Design, then went to Art Center for a Master's in Fine Art. I painted and showed my work in L.A. for several years and then became a curator. So I think I ended up in exactly the right place, given my eclecticism.

*Sol LeWitt: Wall Drawing #886, Black Bands*, 1998

*Radical P.A.S.T.\* Contemporary Art in Pasadena, 1961 – 1974*, 1999

*Public Notice: Art and Activist Posters 1951 - 1997*, 1999

*Kenneth Tyler: 30 Years of American Prints*, 1999

*Anna Castelli Ferrieri: Architecture and Design*, 1999

*Stiffs: An installation by Jennifer Steinkamp and Jimmy Johnson*, 2000

*<img src="" /> an exhibition of art fabricated on the internet*, 2000

*Mathematica...A World of Numbers and Beyond*, 2000

*Resonant Messages: Media Installations by Paul DeMarinis*, 2000



*Russell Crotty: The Universe from my Backyard*, 2001

*Telematic Connections: The Virtual Embrace*, 2001

*The Theater Posters of James McMullan*, 2001

*Christian Möller*, 2001

*Open House (L.A. Artists Create Rooms)*, 1996

*Czech Avant Garde: European Art and Photography in Book Design, 1922 – 1940*, 1997

*Memory, Recollection, Transformation: Reactive Works by Jim Campbell*, 1997

*Video Art: The First 25 Years*, 1997

*Masterworks, Italian Design, 1960-1994*, 1997

*Physical Fiction, interactive electronic-media installations by Sara Roberts*, 1998

*Archigram: Experimental Architecture, 1961-74*, 1998



# Stephen Nowlin and the WILLIAMSON GALLERY

Stephen Nowlin's story and the story of the Alyce de Roulet Williamson Gallery have been inextricably linked since 1992. The gallery owes its existence to the efforts of Art Center Trustee Alyce Williamson, and the vision of then-president of Art Center, David Brown. Alyce Williamson's gift in 1990, along with funding from the James Irvine Foundation, made possible the conversion of a former atrium into a gleaming 4,600 square-foot gallery designed by noted architect Frederick Fisher, and it enabled the exhibition series to begin its transformation from a small but thoughtful program in Southern California's cultural landscape to becoming one of its most influential—an evolution that continues to this day

The Williamson Gallery draws inspiration from all the fertile domains of Art Center's educational programs. Its mission is to be an active partner in the education of intelligent and spirited students who will shape visual culture in the future, and to engage the broader public community in a progressive dialogue about art and design for the 21st century. To accomplish this mission the gallery connects the college's curriculum and student population to both established and emerging artists, looks to history as well as to the present, and has become a leader in the exploration of products, concepts, and expressions forged at the intersection of art, science, and new technologies. Every exhibition is perceived as an educational hub extending directly into the classroom and the quality of student education, as well as a magnet for drawing the community into a profound experience of art and design.

The exhibition program and Williamson Gallery benchmark provides a means by which Art Center's students can immerse themselves in the products and lessons of art/design history and contemporary practice, enabling authentic insights to be based upon first-hand experience and prolonged, enriched, contact.



Aware of the opportunities represented by the unparalleled set of resources existing in the surrounding community, the gallery has been at the forefront of investigating and promoting the unique interweaving of art, science and technology that defines both the history and future of Pasadena, resulting in a series

To demonstrate the changes brought about by a younger generation of artists and designers coming of age in a digital world, Nowlin organized the exhibition *Digital Mediations* in 1995, presenting digitally-based innovations from around the world. Since then, exhibitions featuring artists and designers who use digital and interactive technology in their work have become a regular staple of the Williamson Gallery's offerings.



of collaborations between the Williamson Gallery and California Institute of Technology. In 2003, the exhibition *NEURO*, organized by the Williamson Gallery in collaboration with Caltech's National Science Foundation Center for Neuromorphic Systems Engineering (CNSE), connected six contemporary artists with the knowledge and technology resources of CNSE. The results were installed on both campuses and featured the collaborative efforts of artists and scientists from Caltech and the Universities of California at Berkeley, Irvine, and UCLA.



"Science and technology," says Nowlin, "are undermining many of our established social and intellectual conventions, and as a result human culture is moving toward new definitions, opportunities, and dilemmas. We see this everywhere, in business and politics as well as the arts. Such a nexus of change always beckons artists, and the collaborative nature of these projects

blend contemporary science, art, and design into works that are uniquely of and about this new century."

Supplemented by support from the Williamson Gallery Patrons and from the Pasadena Art Alliance and sustained by a philosophy of finding clever and inexpensive solutions to installation challenges, the Williamson Gallery has been able to maximize its budget—undertaking more adventurous projects than would otherwise be possible and engaging a range of artists and cultural thinkers that have deepened the educational experience for Art Center students and the greater Pasadena and Los Angeles communities.

In organizing Williamson Gallery exhibitions, Nowlin has often worked with curatorial collaborators, such as Los Angeles artist John O'Brien, Art Center's Fine Art Chair Laurence Dreiband, and in particular Jay Belloli at the Armory Center for the Arts. With Belloli, Nowlin took a leadership role in organizing citywide multi-venue collaborative efforts such as *Radical Past* in 1999, which led to ongoing twice-yearly *ArtNight* Pasadena events; the *Universe* (2001), *Tender Land* (2004) and *Skin* (2007) partnerships; and the upcoming fifteen-plus partners' *Art & Ideas 2009* offering, *Origins*. The Pasadena CultureNet ([www.pasadenaculture.net](http://www.pasadenaculture.net)) website and public email list, serving nearly 1,000 subscribers, was created in 2001 as a service to the people of Pasadena, furthering the gallery's mission to connect and form partnerships with the unique cultural and intellectual wealth of the region.

*Sufficient Latitude: Interactive Wood Machines* by Bernie Lubell, 2008

*American Illustration: 25 Years*, 2008

*OBSERVE* (a collaboration with the Spitzer Science Center, Caltech), 2009

*The Storyteller's Art: A Retrospective of the Work of Designer Kit Hinrichs*, 2009

## COMING SOON...

*André Kertész: On Reading*  
June 20 – August 23, 2009

*On Reading* is a series of photographs made by André Kertész (1894–1985) in Hungary, France, and the United States over a fifty-year period. The series illustrates the pioneer photographer's penchant for the poetry and choreography of life in public and also private moments at home, examining the power of reading as a universal pleasure.

## TOOLS

October 9, 2009 –  
January 20, 2010

Co-curated by Williamson Gallery director Stephen Nowlin and artist/curator John O'Brien, *TOOLS* will focus on the interplay between invention, biology, and evolution, drawing on material culture from art, science, and natural history.



*GHz: The Post-Analog Object in L.A.*, 2002

*Situated Realities: Where Technology and Imagination Intersect*, 2002

*Reactions (to 9/11)*, 2002

*Space Invaders: Emerging British Architecture*, 2002

*NEURO* (a collaboration with the Center for Neuromorphic Systems Engineering, Caltech), 2003

*Paradise Now: Picturing the Genetic Revolution*, 2003

*Hiroshi Sugimoto*, 2003

*sELECTIONs*, 2004

*Steve Roden: EAR(th)*, 2004

*Michael Naimark: Interactive and Immersive Film Environments, 1977 – 1997*, 2005

*Reverence: Poetics and Polemics of Sustainability*, 2005

*Drawn to Expression: A Survey of Illustration Alumni*, 2006

*B(yikes!): Eccentric Mobility*, 2006

*Inventing Kindergarten*, 2007

*Regeneration (new photography)*, 2007

*SIX (Art Center alums)*, 2007

*In the Dermisphere*, 2007

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Parson's Nose Family Theatre

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Pasadena Art Alliance  
salutes Stephen Nowlin  
and we thank him for  
his unflagging support  
of our mission.

[www.pasadenaartalliance.org](http://www.pasadenaartalliance.org)

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## Mission Statement

The mission of the Pasadena Arts Council shall be achieved by:

- Encouraging the appreciation of and participation in the arts among community members and organizations.
- Facilitating and coordinating communication among arts organizations and the community at large.
- Recognizing community members who show outstanding promise or make significant contributions to the arts.
- Advocating for financial support for the arts from public and private funding sources.

## FOLIO

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## Pasadena Arts Council

*Facilitating, Empowering and  
Advocating for the Arts*

Williamson Gallery images, pg. 4: *Xu Bing: Cultural Negotiations*, March 20 – May 15, 1994, Dissident artist from communist China. *Jennifer Steinkamp: Stiffs*, February 13 – April 23, 2000; Multi-channel interactive projections by noted Art Center alumnus. *Sol Lewitt: Wall: Wall Drawing #886, Black Bands*, October 25 – December 23, 1998; Site-specific installation for the Williamson Gallery. pg. 6: *Telling Tales: Nineteenth-Century Painting*, June 20 – August 22, 1993; Selections from the collection of the Pennsylvania Academy for the Fine Arts. *Drawn to Expression*, February 12 – April 21, 2006; Painting and sculpture by alumni of Art Center's Illustration Department. pg. 7: *Mathematica: A World of Numbers and Beyond*, July 30 – October 1, 2000; Charles and Ray Eames' seminal mathematics exhibit. *Hiroshi Sugimoto: Architecture*, November 22, 2003 – February 8, 2004; Photo series by noted Art Center alumnus. pg. 8: *Ken Goldberg/Pietro Perona: Infiltrate*, April 15 – June 29, 2003; From *NEURO*, a Williamson Gallery/Caltech collaboration bringing together artists and scientists. *Reverence: Poetics and Polemics of Sustainability*, October 7 – December 21, 2005; Sustainable design, its intellectual and emotional appeal. *B(yikes!): Eccentric Mobility*, June 25 – August 31, 2006; Innovative engineering in bike design. pg. 9: *Radical Past: Contemporary Art in Pasadena, 1960-1974*, February 7 – April 25, 1999; Painting and sculpture from the Norton Simon Museum collection. *In the Dermisphere*, October 14 – December 21, 2007; An exhibition surveying the art, science, and culture of skin. For Art & Ideas '07: *SKIN. OBSERVE*, October 10, 2008 – January 11, 2009; Lita Albuquerque's installation; A collaboration with the Spitzer Science Center, Caltech.