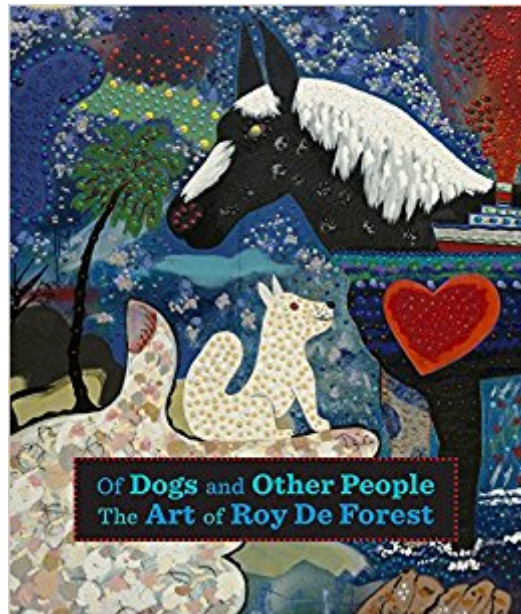


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Of Dogs And Other People: The Art Of Roy De Forest



Synopsis

Roy De Forest's brightly hued, crazy-quilted paintings and sculptures are dotted with nipples of color and inhabited by a cast of characters uniquely his own, a perennial favorite being his instantly recognizable, wild-eyed and pointy-eared dogs. Published in conjunction with a retrospective exhibition of the American painter's fifty-year career, *Of Dogs and Other People* reassesses De Forest's art-historical position, placing him in a national rather than solely West Coast context. Despite the playfulness of his work, close study of De Forest's art reveals deep layers of meaning. He was a fan of adventure stories, pulp fiction, and underground commix, but he also commanded a vast knowledge of art history and read widely in a variety of disciplines, including poetry, literature, philosophy, psychology, science, and mathematics. He enjoyed secreting obscure art-historical references into his work: animals assume postures found in Medieval or Renaissance art, and his compositional strategies draw from sources ranging from the romantic landscape painters of the Hudson River School to the austere geometric abstractions of Piet Mondrian. This engaging publication presents gorgeous color reproductions of De Forest's finest artworks, plus a variety of figure illustrations that illuminate the artist's diverse sources and freewheeling social and creative milieu in Northern California. Published in association with the Oakland Museum of California. Exhibition dates: Oakland Museum of California: April 29–August 20, 2017

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Customer Reviews

"It is a major book, a deeply researched biography of De Forest and an analysis of his art and career." (Charles Desmarais The San Francisco Chronicle)"...the accompanying catalog is as thorough a job as we are likely to have [on DeForest]." *Hyperallergic*"In this thoroughly professional, immaculately organized, and factually overflowing book, the reader is set to be inspired by the adventure that was Roy De Forest." *New York Journal of Books*"...a richly illustrated catalogue written by the show's curator, Susan Landauer." *The Bark*

Susan Landauer holds a Ph.D. from Yale University and is an independent curator and writer based in the San Francisco Bay Area. She was chief curator of the San Jose Museum of Art from 1999 to 2009 and is the author and coauthor of many books and exhibition catalogues, including *The San Francisco School of Abstract Expressionism; California Impressionists; The Lighter Side of Bay Area Figuration; Elmer Bischoff: The Ethics of Paint; Dream Games: The Art of Robert Schwartz; The Not-so-Still Life: A Century of California Painting and Sculpture; Tragic Kingdom: The Art of Camille Rose Garcia; Todd Schorr: American Surreal; John Paul Jones: The Pursuit of Beauty's Perfect Proof; Richard Diebenkorn: The Ocean Park Series; Hassel Smith: Paintings, 1937-1997; Yosemite: A Storied Landscape; and Women of Abstract Expressionism* and has contributed essays to *Richard Diebenkorn: The Ocean Park Series; Yosemite: A Storied Landscape; and Women of Abstract Expressionism*.

I haven't yet finished this lovely and well-written catalogue and biography of Roy De Forest, one of the most interesting Bay Area artists in an extremely interesting period for Bay Area art. He was a contemporary of Robert Arneson, Joan Brown, and William Wiley, among others; and taught at UC Davis when the art department became famous for its freewheeling, wonderfully experimental ethos. I wish I'd gone there! I was at UC Berkeley, where I studied with Elmer Bischoff, Joan Brown, and Robert Hartman, so that wasn't bad at all; but Roy De Forest's startlingly non-pious attitude about art was a tonic to me, having grown up in NYC where art was viewed for the most part with a lot less humor. The catalogue has many terrific color reproductions, including details of some of his complex works, and I'm learning more about his influences and antecedents, his profound knowledge of art and cultural history. Interspersed in a genial way are photos of De Forest, friends, and family. I highly recommend this book detailing the life and career of a visionary, non-mainstream artist.

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