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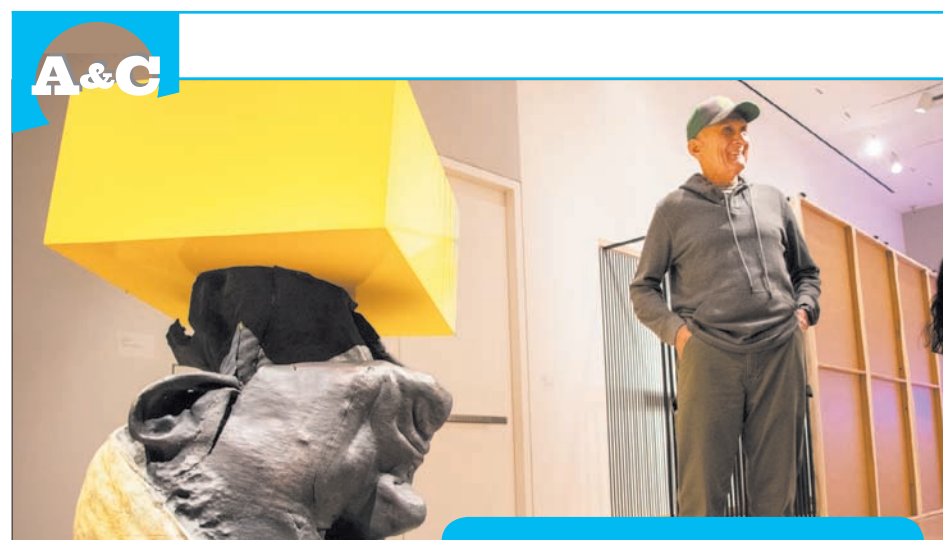


PHOTO BY ASHLEY HAYES-STONE

Richard Jackson with his sculpture "Self Portrait."

Kicking modern art

BY MOZES ZARATE / mozesz@newsreview.com

Hanging latex work gloves bloated with colorful paint are a recurring object in Richard Jackson's latest Crocker Art Museum exhibit. They represent the process, something the 80-year-old Sacramento-born artist cherishes.

There's also a playful element: He likes to think those five-finger balloons could pop at any moment, making a vivid mess of the museum's pristine floors.

"It makes them nervous," he told SN&R, laughing. "The anticipation that something could go wrong, and they can't control it."

The "floor problem" exists everywhere in the art world, Jackson says. Plain flooring, usually white and uniform, fit the modern motifs he's tried to combat through his art for decades: elitist, abstract and contentless. Or, "decorative bullshit," as he put it.

If that line resonates, you'll enjoy **BIG IDEAS: Richard Jackson's Alleged Paintings**, which opened at the Crocker on April 28. It's "alleged" since many of the works are machines that Jackson built from scratch and that paint on their own. When hooked up to an air compressor, steel sculptures such as "Duck In A Bucket" and "Beer Bear" can ooze and spray primary colors from their duck and bear orifices.

BIG IDEAS shares works primarily from the last two decades. In "La Grande Jatte," a pointillist painting by Georges Seurat is recreated with a pellet gun holes. Duck-face sculpture "Dick's Big Duck" represents a list of Jackson's favorite things. Pheasant hunting is one. The duck's eyes are breasts.

Jackson had his first solo exhibit at the Crocker in 1961. Since then, he has been celebrated internationally as an

artist with unconventional approaches, sharp wit and humor that pokes fun at "fascist" art thinking. His primary message: Make your own rules.

"I encourage people to keep trying to change things, rather than move to Los Angeles and be part of it," he says. "Come to Los Angeles and kick the shit out of it. Question it. Try to upset it."

In "1000 Pictures from 5050 Stacked Paintings," Jackson painted exactly 1,000 canvases to form a wall, evidence of how he passes his time, he says.

"Up until not too long ago, I worked a job every day," Jackson says. "I was doing all this on my time after work. ... That's what's interesting to me is, how much can one person accomplish on their own."

Then there's the *Little Girl's Room*. In it, a rotating giant steel girl hugs a unicorn standing on its horn. Red, blue and yellow paint violently disrupts the room's rainbow- and cloud-painted walls. A jack-in-the-box hangs with an upside-down smile, and a stuffed clown lounges with an erection. Attendees can view it from an open door, or from different angles on a monitor.

"What I'm most concerned about is that art's becoming sort of an inbred language that only other artists and art aficionados ... can talk about or understand," Jackson says. "I'm just trying to humanize painting a little more, so people can kind of react and relate to it a little better." □

BIG IDEAS: Richard Jackson's Alleged Paintings runs April 28 to August 25. For more info, visit crockerart.org.