



## THE HUMAN BEAST:

*The Art of Jan Stussy & Maxine Kim Stussy*

August 27 - September 21, 2019  
**RECEPTION: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 5-8 PM**  
Walkthrough: September 14, 3 PM

In the late 1940s, powerhouse Los Angeles art couple, Jan Stussy (1921-1990) and sculptor Maxine Kim Stussy Frankel (b.1923) first received attention for their gutsy, fantastical approaches to figurative art. Jan and Max had met briefly at UCLA where Jan taught and Max was a teaching assistant. In 1949, they reconnected and married after a whirlwind romance and embarked on a remarkable lifetime relationship dedicated to art-making and aesthetic experimentation. Both exquisite crafts-persons, they revealed in their early works a mutual interest in a fantastical approach to the figure, melding human and animal traits. Often exhibiting together throughout the 1950s, they each enjoyed solo shows at the prestigious Esther Robles Gallery and later at Ceeje Gallery. Their works were reviewed favorably and associated with those by Los Angeles artists such as Stanton Macdonald-Wright, Rico Lebrun, Howard Warshaw, and Lorser Feitelson.

Max's early plaster and ceramic sculptures led in the 1970s and 1980s to remarkable amalgam sculptures of wood, cast wood, and metals. A wildly prolific artist, Jan produced large bodies of prints, drawings, and paintings that developed a variety of metaphorical and lyrical ideas about the human form. Begun in 1963, his best known series of paintings, "Man in a Box", was widely acclaimed and featured in a review in Time magazine. In 1975 he received an Academy Award for his short film, "Gravity Is My Enemy", which documented the life and work of Mark Hicks, a quadriplegic UCLA student.

While their works differ in styles and media, they shared a sensibility focused by self-investigation. Jan's man-beasts and Max's sentinels are guardians of the inner psyche, warding off hostile forces from beyond. Like the best figurative artists, they never hesitated to present human frailty while shaping iconic images intended to conserve and protect, both from within and without.

Presented by Elyse Wyman and Don Paglia, (Master Class students of Jan Stussy), and Lindsay Shields, (former Executive Director of the Mendocino Art Center). Excerpted from an Essay by Michael Duncan (Independent curator and Corresponding Editor for Art In America) from the upcoming book, "The Human Beast: The Art of Jan Stussy and Maxine Kim Stussy."